

THE ROAD TO SENECA FALLS

**THE ROAD TO SENECA FALLS:
THE ORIGINS OF THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES, 1800-1848**

**By
CATHERINE MAYBREY, B.A.**

**A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts
McMaster University**

Copyright by Catherine Maybrey, May 1998

**MASTER OF ARTS (1998)
(History)**

**McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario**

**TITLE: The Road to Seneca Falls: The Origins of the Woman's Rights Movement in the
United States, 1800-1848**

AUTHOR: Catherine Maybrey, B.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor D. Russo

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 112

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to offer an explanation to the question of why Seneca Falls occurred. It attempts to examine those movements and societal conditions which prompted women to demand an improvement in female life. The thesis specifically explores the areas of female education, abolition, and legal reform. The material suggests that women in the nineteenth-century underwent a gradual change in consciousness wherein they became more aware of their subordinate position in society and began to seek ways of changing it. While the study does not introduce any new historical figures, it does examine them in a new context. Sources have indicated that women such as Catharine Beecher and Lydia Maria Child, who held strongly conservative views, managed to advance the cause of gender equality, regardless of their personal convictions. By examining the actions and consequences of leading female reformers in the nineteenth-century, I have demonstrated the gradual move towards feminism and woman suffrage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor David Russo, for his help over the course of the past two years. His guidance, patience, and insight have made this project both fruitful and enjoyable.

I would also like to thank Professor Craig Hanyan, from Brock University, for his help regarding sources and approaches for the legal reform section.

Finally, I would like to thank the people at Interlibrary Loan, without whom this project would not have been possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION1

CHAPTER ONE: EDUCATION10

CHAPTER TWO: ABOLITION40

CHAPTER THREE: LEGAL REFORM68

CONCLUSION87

NOTES90

WORKS CITED108

A Convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman, will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel, at Seneca Falls, N. Y., on Wednesday and Thursday, the 19th and 20th of July, current; commencing at 10 o'clock A.M. During the first day the meeting will be exclusively for women, who are earnestly invited to attend. The public generally are invited to be present on the second day, when Lucretia Mott, of Philadelphia, and other ladies and gentlemen, will address the convention.¹

This announcement appeared in the *Seneca County Courier* only five days before the Convention was scheduled to begin. While Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the two founders of the Woman's Rights movement, had always planned to launch an official movement to ameliorate woman's position in society, they had not anticipated the consequences which their actions would bring forth. Newspapers branded these feminists as "Amazons," and mocked their claims to equality.^a Yet this did not deter women from joining the fledgling movement in great numbers. Within a month of the original Convention at Seneca Falls, reformers held a second meeting in Rochester. Shortly thereafter, suffrage societies began to appear, and Conventions were organized in Ohio, Indiana, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New York City. In that great bastion of democracy known as the United States, women had decided that those rights accorded them were not enough, and they would not be silenced until equality was achieved.

Most histories chronicling the Woman's Rights movement begin with the Seneca Falls Convention and move forward to document the ensuing struggle for equal suffrage. Yet, these studies cannot adequately explain what prompted women to risk their respectability in order to achieve equality. In the Declaration of Sentiments, the document which Elizabeth Cady Stanton patterned after the Declaration of Independence, the women listed a number of grievances against the

^a A sampling of newspaper articles reacting to the Convention can be found in History of Woman Suffrage, 1:802-806.

patriarchal authorities governing their lives. The list included denying woman the elective franchise, oppressing woman with arbitrary laws which govern both her property and her person, denying her access to a “thorough education,” and designing a sphere of action for woman which does not consider either her desires or her potentialities.² However, Stanton and Mott did not stop with listing the complaints of women, they urged both women and men alike to circulate tracts, to petition the government, and to enlist the help of the Church and the press in order to correct those evils which oppressed women throughout the nation.

Still the question remains, what had aggravated these women to such an extent that they felt compelled to speak out on their own behalf? In the History of Woman Suffrage the editors note the impact of three issues: education, abolition, and married women’s property laws.³ In her address to the Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton provides some insight as to why these particular topics had spurred women to activism.

Regarding education, Stanton attempted to debunk the myth of man’s mental superiority, stating that the question could not be fairly answered as woman had not yet had a fair trial.⁴ She pointed out that women paid taxes to support colleges, yet they could not enter these institutions as they were reserved for young men. In addition to this, women gathered to form charitable societies to provide for the education of young men, while the education of young girls was ignored by society. As Stanton argued, “physically, as well as intellectually, it is use that produces growth and development.”⁵ Without a proper education, women were doomed to live in an intellectual stupor, while men denied them their rights on the basis of mental incompetence.

Next, Stanton made the connection between women and slaves in one sentence, stating that “so long as your women are slaves you may throw away your colleges and churches to the winds.”⁶

Garrisonian abolitionists fostered the idea of human equality, and this branch of the anti-slavery movement also encouraged its female members to voice their opinions in both an oral and a written format. In the History of Woman Suffrage, Stanton attributed a great deal of importance to the connection between anti-slavery and woman's rights:

In the early Anti-Slavery conventions, the broad principles of human rights were so exhaustively discussed, justice, liberty, and equality, so clearly taught, that the women who crowded to listen, readily learned the lesson of freedom for themselves, and early began to take part in the debates and business affairs of all associations.⁷

Hence, by identifying themselves with the slaves, women began to work for their own emancipation. The anti-slavery movement constantly reinforced the idea of human equality, and it also provided women with an opportunity to develop their organizational skills through conventions, meetings, and daily reform activities.

Finally, Stanton, like most female reformers, was outraged at the insensitivity and impracticality of the legal system. The laws reflected the absence of female representation in both the State and National Legislatures. Specifically, feminists pointed to those laws which made women a nonentity in the eyes of the courts. At this time, married women could not own property, nor could they withhold their wages from their spouses. Moreover, in cases of separation the children remained in the father's custody. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton explained to her audience, "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."⁸

The Woman's Rights Convention held at Seneca Falls in 1848 succeeded in launching what was perhaps the most significant reform movement of the nineteenth-century. Those ideas of

democracy which had fuelled the American Revolution were now being applied to woman's position in society. While individual reform movements such as education, abolition, and the law had spurred feminists to action, they were united by their ultimate goal: equality. For the first time in the history of the United States, women gathered together and demanded the elective franchise, promising that, if given the opportunity, they would make the country a better place. After seventy-two years of agitation and protest, the suffragists finally succeeded in obtaining the elective franchise, due in no small part to the efforts of those women who provided the Woman's Rights movement with its foundation.

In researching the origins of the Woman's Rights movement, I have noticed that this area has remained relatively untouched by historians. One study has attempted to bridge the gap between the domestic arena and female activism. Keith Melder's doctoral dissertation, *Beginnings of Sisterhood*, attempted to chronicle the evolution of woman's sphere from the home to the first woman's rights convention. While this study tries to explain the emergence of the Woman's Rights movement, it does not consistently manage to emphasize the achievements of female reformers. For instance, after examining the careers of Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, and Mary Lyon, Melder concluded that "the seminary movement's total impact was ambiguous."⁹ He argued that although educators had succeeded in expanding woman's sphere, they had not rejected the traditional female role. Unfortunately, Melder did not consider the fact that if female educators had attempted to forge completely new gender roles, then they would not have had any public support. Similarly, Melder misjudged the actions of female anti-slavery workers. In his chronology of the anti-slavery movement, he mentioned Charles Burleigh's visit to the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1836. Burleigh openly gave his support to those female reformers who spoke in public against the

practice of slavery. Melder concluded that this gave great comfort to all of those women who had been doubting the correctness of their actions. This conclusion appears to support the idea that numerous women delivered lectures and speeches to large audiences, when, in fact, the number of women speaking in public at that time was rather small.¹⁰ Finally, Melder devoted only one paragraph to the subject of legal reform in New York, suggesting that he did not find this to be a significant component of the early Woman's Rights movement.

In contrast to Melder, I have chosen to examine education, anti-slavery, and legal reform from the perspective of the reformers. With this study, I have attempted to shed light on the empowering effect of engaging in reform activities. For instance, none of the educational reformers discussed in the first chapter (Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, and Mary Lyon) joined the Woman's Rights movement; in fact, one of them steadfastly opposed female suffrage. However, despite this seeming contradiction, these women broadened woman's traditional sphere by demanding an equal education for young girls. These educators believed in the mental equality of the sexes and they also believed that women had a *right* to receive the same quality of instruction as young men. Even though they did not believe in woman's political equality, Willard, Beecher, and Lyon all appealed to those legislative bodies which held the power to institute their educational plans.

Although these women contributed to the foundation of the Woman's Rights movement, most studies have ignored the empowering aspect of education reform in favour of examining its political or religious implications. In fact, those studies which recognize the woman's rights ideology inherent in educational reform have focussed their attention on woman's quest to gain access to the nation's colleges and universities. Thus faced with a lack of scholarship to shape my views, I have relied primarily on the words of the reformers, and I have used biographies to provide a more complete

image of each activist.^b With the increased interest in gender history, I can only hope that historians will examine this issue in the near future.

In contrast to education, historians have written studies which discuss the connection between anti-slavery activities and the rise of woman's rights in the United States. For the purposes of this project, I have consulted two opposing sources which clearly present both sides of this historical argument.^c In Debra Hansen's study of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, she argues that the majority of female abolitionists rejected those ideals of gender equality, making women like the Grimké sisters the exception, rather than the rule. Conversely, Ellen Dubois clearly discusses the connection between abolition and woman's rights, arguing that anti-slavery was one of the main forces in initiating the Woman's Rights movement. The primary materials available (essays, letters, speeches, diaries. . .) support Dubois' theory that the abolitionists developed and reinforced an ideology which led to the rise of woman's rights.

Unlike abolition, the connection between legal reform and feminism has largely been ignored by scholars. Legal historians, like Norma Basch, have approached the reform of property laws from a legal and economic standpoint. In such instances, the value of female activism is lost, as legal historians attribute little influence to the reformers. I believe that by ignoring the ideas, and the

^b For the purposes of this study I have chosen to use some older biographies instead of basing my conclusions on more current research. In particular, I have decided not to use Kathryn Kish Sklar's study as it does not refer greatly to Beecher's early educational endeavours in Hartford. The thrust of the books seems to favour the religious tensions inherent in the Beecher family. Likewise, I have chosen not to use Gerda Lerner's biography of the Grimké sisters as she has based some of her conclusions on questionable materials.

^c See Debra Gold Hansen, Strained Sisterhood (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); Ellen Dubois, "Women's Rights and Abolition: The Nature of the Connection," in Antislavery Reconsidered, Lewis Perry & Michael Fellman, ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979).

actions of the reformers, we are misconstruing the events. The motivations of the legislators are not relevant when one examines the connection between legal reform and woman's rights. The reformers *believed* that *they* had swayed the State Legislature with their arguments and their petitions. This encouraged women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Ernestine Rose to continue to employ these reform strategies in the future. It also convinced them that their claims to equality and Constitutional rights should become the focus of a movement for all women across the nation.^d

Seneca Falls marks the beginning of the movement for gender equality, a movement which still exists in various forms today. Education, abolition, and legal reform were the three main contributors to Woman's Rights. However, other issues like religion, and labour, also played a role in shaping women's attitudes to themselves and to the world around them. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the scale of the project, and a lack of resources, I was not able to explore this topic to its fullest potential. For similar reasons, I have chosen to examine a select group of women, rather than immersing myself in the prosopography of the reform movement. In my opinion, the women whom I have chosen for this study represent the overall character and direction of each movement. Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, and Mary Lyon believed in the necessity of a proper education. The ideas which these women employed eventually helped to shape the common school system which emerged in the late nineteenth-century. In the case of abolition, I have chosen women whose experiences demonstrate the empowering effects of reform work. For instance, Lydia Maria Child was quite conservative in her ideas of woman's proper sphere, yet through her work as an

^d For the purposes of this study, I have focussed the legal section on New York State, as property laws were the responsibility of the state, rather than the federal government. New York amended its married women's property laws in 1848, several months prior to the Convention held at Seneca Falls, N. Y.

abolitionist, she managed to write groundbreaking essays about slaves and about women. Similarly, the Grimké sisters broke with tradition by speaking in public. Lucretia Mott represents all those women who felt insulted and outraged by the behaviour of the delegates of the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, 1840. Regarding legal reform, I have examined Ernestine Rose and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as these two women were the driving force of the movement. These women represent the collective experience of female reformers in the early nineteenth-century. While this small sampling of activists cannot speak for the experiences of all individuals, they can indicate the general trends which occurred both within and outside of the reform organizations. By using biography as a methodological tool, I believe that we gain a more intimate and insightful view of the nature of reform and of the reformers. In her biographical study of Catharine Beecher, Kathryn Kish Sklar openly supports biography as a valid methodological approach, describing it as “an effort to use the biographical density and motivational impulses of one person to uncover and isolate significant questions about the relationship between women and American society.”¹¹

Through my research I have become more aware of the struggles which preceded the Woman's Rights movement. I feel strongly that studies need to explore those issues which inspired women to break with tradition, and to risk everything which they had been taught to value. How can we, as members of the historical community, hope to understand a movement whose origins we have not yet sufficiently examined? Despite the growth in women's history, we have not yet accorded Seneca Falls its proper place in American History. Nowhere is this more clear than in the plans for the 150th anniversary celebration of the first Woman's Rights Convention. Forty members of Congress requested that the United States Postal Service consider issuing a commemorative stamp to mark the anniversary celebration. The request was denied, despite the fact that commemorative

stamps have been issued for sports figures and cartoon characters. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and all of those brave women who advocated woman's rights changed American society irrevocably, yet we continue to accord them a subordinate role in American History. Perhaps we should look to Stanton and Mott, who always faced opposition with the certainty that one day women would be recognized as equals:

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. Undaunted 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."¹²

CHAPTER ONE

History . . . shows many whose legislatures have sought to improve their various vegetable productions and their breeds of useful brutes, but none whose public councils have made it an object of their deliberations to improve the character of their women.

Emma Willard, *A Plan for Improving Female Education*

In the early national period, politicians at all levels of the American federal system began a discussion on education that would last for nearly a century. From the inception of America's independence, legislators attempted to create a national system of education, an attempt which resulted in the creation of a 'common school' system by 1860. As early as the 1790's, eighteenth-century republicans such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Rush wanted some entrenched system of education to be provided to help assimilate immigrants and to help children grow into responsible citizens of a self-governing republic.¹ Thomas Jefferson summarized his views on education in his "Bill For the More General Diffusion of Knowledge," which he presented to the Virginia Assembly in 1779. As Sol Cohen notes, "Jefferson proposed the establishment of a system of elementary and grammar schools, wholly under the auspices of the civil authority, and wholly supported by public funds."² Rush took Jefferson's initiatives one step further. Not only did Rush urge the creation of a "general and uniform national system of education," but he also advocated the education of females.³ His conception of female education embodied teaching literacy, arithmetic, bookkeeping, geography, history, some science, Christianity, and the arts.⁴ In his estimation, this would prepare women for motherhood, the support of their husbands, and the raising of good citizens. Unfortunately, as Cohen further notes, "the Constitution was silent on education; the responsibility for the establishment of schools remained vested in each of the individual states of the Union."⁵ The states, in turn, passed the responsibility on to the local school districts. Consequently, due to the utter lack of regulation and legislative guidelines, schools in all areas of the country fared badly.⁶

According to Cohen, "what helped American education break out of the vicious cycle was the development of the graded primary school, the emergence of the woman teacher, and the development of the normal school."⁷ However, in order for women to become teachers, they first

had to be educated. Although most districts permitted girls to attend town schools by the 1780's and 1790's, one must note that early school laws ignored the existence of female students.⁸ These laws stated that "the word 'children' is to be interpreted to mean 'boys.'"⁹ Apparently, holding on to the tenet that girls would have no use for education, the legislators neglected to extend to the daughters the same privilege which had been proffered to the sons of the republic.

By 1848, with the emergence of the Woman's Rights movement, the dispute over the education of girls had still not been settled. Sarah Owen, a speaker at the Rochester Convention, addressed the issue and the bias which had prevented women from receiving an equal education:

It is a generally received truth, that the proper study of mankind is *man*; virtually denying that *woman* is included in the intelligent part of creation; that she is endowed with mental powers that could properly be extended beyond the narrow bounds of the domestic circle.¹⁰

Other women also addressed the plight of women's education. Margaret Fuller, an influential writer in the nineteenth-century, discussed female education in her controversial essay "Woman in the Nineteenth Century": "'her mother did so before her,' is no longer a sufficient excuse. Indeed, it was never received as an excuse to mitigate the severity of censure, but was adduced as a reason, rather, why there should be no effort made for reformation."¹¹ While many women spoke against the contemporary system of education, three women defied societal conventions and provided superior education for women. Emma Hart Willard, Catharine Esther Beecher, and Mary Lyon all opened female seminaries in the first half of the nineteenth century with the express intention of correcting the wrongs of the current system of female education.

Perhaps the best explanation for why these women felt compelled to form female seminaries can be found in the words of one of the reformers- Emma Hart Willard. In her document, "A Plan

for Improving Female Education," Willard lists many of the deficiencies inherent in the educational system in relation to her sex. In her eyes, "the great cause of the defects [in female institutions] consists in a state of things in which legislatures, undervaluing the importance of women in society, neglect to provide for their education."¹²

As the purpose of this document was to persuade the New York State Legislature that permanent female institutions were necessary, Willard demonstrates the widespread repercussions of the transitory nature of female schools. As the preceptresses of these boarding schools had no endowments, their primary object was to augment their personal wealth.¹³ This, in turn, affected the students in many ways. Pupils lacked suitable accommodations, and their classes took place in rooms "where there is a heterogeneous mixture of different kinds of business."¹⁴ This impeded the pupils' progress in their studies and made teaching a nearly impossible task.

Furthermore, the lack of funding prevented preceptresses from providing libraries and other apparatus, such as globes or maps, which were necessary for the instruction of the various branches of learning.¹⁵ Not only did the schools suffer from material deficiencies, but they also suffered from a lack of order. "Preceptresses of these [female institutions] are dependent on their pupils for support, and are consequently liable to become the victims of their caprice."¹⁶ As the headmistresses were legally accountable to no individuals, these women were more likely to teach their pupils "showy accomplishments" rather than intellectual subjects.¹⁷ In this way, parents could observe the talents which their daughters had developed, and the fiscal future of the teacher would be secured.

Moreover, students stayed for varying lengths at these institutions as no set limits had been entrenched for commencing and concluding the school term.¹⁸ In addition to this, preceptresses had no educational standards for acceptance into their private establishments; students began their studies

at dissimilar levels, thus impeding the overall progress of the girls.¹⁹ Finally, Willard notes that the preceptresses could create any set of regulations which they wished, yet they could not purchase the compliance of their students.²⁰ All of these problems combined to create generations of women whose primary aim lay in "displaying to advantage the charms of youth and beauty,"²¹ rather than creating generations of intelligent mothers ready to form and to control the characters of America's future citizens.²²

The solution to the problems plaguing female education lay in following the example of their male counterparts. Boys' schools had the security of both public authority and permanence. These schools had funding, which allowed them to procure libraries and apparatus as well as other advantages. Furthermore, instructors and overseers possessed sufficient authority to create regulations and to enforce their code of rules.²³ For example, male institutions regulated the "qualifications for entrance, the kind and order of their studies, and the period of their remaining at the seminary."²⁴ After comparing the educational opportunities for both sexes, Emma Willard posed this question:

When the youth of the two sexes has been spent so differently, is it strange, or is nature in fault, if more mature age has brought such a difference of character that our sex have been considered by the other as the pampered, wayward babies of society, who must have some rattle put into our hands to keep us from doing mischief to ourselves or others?²⁵

Despite the logical argumentation of Emma Hart Willard, the first permanently endowed female institution would not be opened until November 8, 1837, with Mary Lyon as its principal. However, much of the success of Mary Lyon's institution can be attributed to her two forerunners- Emma Hart Willard, and Catharine Esther Beecher.

EMMA WILLARD

Emma Willard was born on February 23, 1787 in Berlin, Connecticut. Her father, Captain Samuel Hart, was a veteran of the American Revolution, and he passed his Republican ideals on to his daughter. Emma Hart received her primary education in the home, listening to her father read by the fireside. Later in life, she recalled that he would often call her from her domestic duties to enjoy a passage of an author, or to read an essay which he had written.²⁶ He believed firmly that the state should provide education for its children, and to this end, he appeared before the Legislature as a special delegate asking for educational measures.²⁷ Hence, when the district school opened, Emma began to receive her formal education.²⁸

Willard's biographer, Alma Lutz, notes that "it was unwomanly to hold opinions on serious subjects...[and that] a woman who discussed politics or government, who held unorthodox views on religion or presumed to enter the educational sphere of men, was ridiculed as unwomanly."²⁹ However, this did not deter Emma Hart. After a few years of study at the Worthington Academy, Emma began her teaching career. She taught in Berlin, Westfield, and finally settled in Middlebury, Vermont where she met and married Dr. Willard in 1809.³⁰

It was in Middlebury, that Emma Hart Willard began to make a significant contribution to the advancement of female education. In order to aid her financially embarrassed husband, Emma Willard opened a boarding school in their home in the spring of 1814. Although her primary motive in opening the school was to relieve the financial burdens placed on herself and her husband, one must not discount her ambition to formulate a plan for the superior education of girls.³¹ During the early years of her marriage, when Emma did not find herself employed, she studied with her husband's'

nephew, John, who was attending the local College. She borrowed his textbooks, and found herself thoroughly ensconced in the study of geometry. When she had finished his text, she asked him to give her an examination, which she passed quite successfully.³²

Even though Willard ran the school from her home, it bore no resemblance to the type of school which she ridiculed in later documents, such as her *Plan*. Willard divided the studies into two categories: higher subjects, and lighter subjects. The higher subjects would include classes in mathematics, history, and languages. The other category included music, drawing, and penmanship. In this way, Willard hoped to challenge the idea that education undermined the health of young girls.³³

In addition to the subjects of study, Willard attempted to introduce new methods of teaching. She broke her method into three stages. In the first stage, Emma worked to make her students understand the material through asking frequent questions which required short answers. The second stage involved recitation, where the students would recite passages in order to encourage them to remember the details. Finally, students had to communicate the ideas which they had learned in order to prove themselves capable of taking the examinations.³⁴

Similar to male academies, Emma Willard wrote and conducted examinations in all of the studies which she offered. Furthermore, she invited professors from the nearby Middlebury College to attend the examinations. She felt that this would inform the public that girls could, in fact, understand more difficult studies.³⁵ However, this practice of public examinations sometimes made her methods and opinions appear rather controversial. The first public examination by a female student on the subject of geometry occurred at Willard's Waterford Academy for Young Ladies in 1819. Matilda Joslyn Gage notes that this examination "created as bitter a storm of ridicule as has since assailed women who have entered the law, the pulpit, or the medical profession."³⁶

After several successful years at Middlebury, Emma focussed her thoughts on the larger world. Understanding that if she wished to realize her goal of directing a permanently endowed institution she would need financial support, Emma worked to increase her knowledge and fame in order to interest some prosperous gentlemen in her cause. Her tactics worked well, and around 1818 Emma became acquainted with General Van Schoonhoven, who offered to show her manuscript of "A Plan for Improving Female Education" to Governor DeWitt Clinton, of New York State.³⁷

Ignoring social conventions, Emma Willard travelled to the New York State Legislature, where she addressed large groups of men, attempting to persuade them to support her *Plan*.³⁸ As her biographer notes, "Mrs. Willard, discussing her views on education with legislators, was probably the first woman lobbyist."³⁹ As a result of Emma's tenacious behaviour, the Legislature passed an act which granted a charter to the Waterford Academy for Young Ladies, which Emma would direct. The legislators further voted to include the Waterford Academy in the list of schools which received a share of the Literary Fund, but this measure was later defeated by the Legislature.⁴⁰ One of the most striking features of these events lies in the fact that for the first time, perhaps, government had formally recognized a woman's right to education.

The *Plan* which had prompted the legislators to act on the issue of female education outlined both the materials needed and the regulations which Willard planned to implement. In regard to materials, Mrs. Willard asked for a building with rooms for both lodging and teaching.⁴¹ The school would also require a library, musical instruments, maps, globes, and other apparatus necessary for teaching the various subjects.⁴²

Like Benjamin Rush, Emma Willard desired to help her country prosper through the proper use of education. To this end, Willard wanted to educate women in order to make them good

mothers capable of raising patriotic and intelligent citizens.⁴³ The other way in which she believed that she could help her country lay in training women to become teachers. In her own words, female institutions "would probably place the business of teaching children in hands now nearly useless to society, and take it from those whose services the State wants in many other ways."⁴⁴ She further observed that as women could teach more cheaply, men should defer from teaching in order to pursue one of the thousand occupations from which women were debarred.⁴⁵

To educate women to become teachers, Emma had developed a comprehensive plan. She began by evolving a system of laws and regulations which included qualifications for entrance, the subjects for study, behaviour, and the length of study at the institution.⁴⁶ Perspective students had to have reached the age of fourteen, and their course of study would last for three years.⁴⁷ Upon completion of their studies, students would participate in public examinations, and, if successful, the school would grant them a certificate or diploma.⁴⁸ By following these regulations, Emma Willard expected her graduates to act "more from the dictates of reason" rather than caprice.⁴⁹ Although Emma Willard denied that her *Plan* attempted to provide a male education for her girls, one can clearly observe the similarities between this proposed seminary and the description of boys' academies; Emma Willard had appropriated male ideas concerning education, and had applied them to her own gender in an attempt to equalize the educational system.

Acting on the decision of the Legislature, Emma moved her school from Middlebury to Waterford, New York in 1819. Believing that mathematics, more than any other subject, would train women to think rationally, she began to take lessons from a local teacher. When his instruction proved insufficient, Emma decided to teach herself mathematics, trigonometry, and conics, all of which she subsequently mastered.⁵⁰ Even though the decision of the Legislature had effectively

declared some responsibility for providing female education, controversy continued to surround the issue. In 1819, the public examination of Mary Cramer again brought attention to the debate over female education. "Many insisted that Mary Cramer's examination was pure memory work, for no woman ever had been or ever would be able to understand geometry."⁵¹ Thus, one can see that Emma Hart Willard had a great deal of opposition to contend with; yet, this did not deter her from seeking equality of education for her pupils.

Again, around 1819-20, Governor Clinton appealed to the Legislature for funding for Emma Willard's school. A bill granting the academy \$2,000 was passed by the Senate. However, the bill failed in the Assembly, and it was decided that the Waterford Academy should receive no portion of the Literary Fund.⁵² Mrs. Willard, realizing that the battle for State funding was lost, accepted an offer from Troy, New York, and moved her school there in March of 1821, where her institution reopened as the Troy Female Seminary.⁵³

Continually evolving her ideas on education, Emma improved the curriculum by adding advanced courses in history and natural philosophy.⁵⁴ In addition to this, she turned to Professor Amos Eaton to instruct her in the various scientific branches of knowledge.⁵⁵ After she had finished her own course of studies, Emma introduced classes in science which were in advance of those offered at most men's colleges.⁵⁶ Examining the curriculum as a whole, one notes the variety of courses available, ranging from drawing and dancing to trigonometry and chemistry.^a As one can see,

^a Students were required to study certain subjects, such as the Bible, composition, elocution, drawing, singing, gymnastics, and dancing. Pupils also studied languages, in which they had a choice of Spanish, Italian, French, and German. In regard to the more advanced courses, the school offered Latin, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, moral and natural philosophy, logic, botany, chemistry, geology, astronomy, zoology, natural theology, rhetoric, literature, and history. For more information on courses, see Alma Lutz, Emma Willard Pioneer Educator of American Women, p 92.

Emma Willard attempted to conform to societal conventions by teaching the arts, and yet she put an end to the male monopoly on such subjects as mathematics and the sciences.

In 1838, Mrs. Willard turned the control of her Seminary over to her son, John, who became the Principal of the Troy Female Seminary. Even though her career as a headmistress had concluded, Emma Willard never stopped advocating the rights of woman to an equal education. While she supported equality in education, Emma chose to remain publicly impartial on the issue of woman's rights. In a letter to Catharine Beecher, one observes her reasons for abstaining from the debate. "I cannot but believe you will agree with me that we cannot, without endangering those interests [female education], interfere with the affair in question."⁵⁷ To support woman's rights was to sabotage the efforts of educational reformers; as Emma Willard's primary goal was to achieve equality in education, she could not publicly support woman's rights without jeopardizing the tenuous position of female institutions.

Although Emma Willard never openly declared herself as an advocate of woman's rights, an examination of her writings demonstrates that she may have personally agreed with the woman's rights movement. In a letter to the wife of Governor Skinner, written in 1815, Mrs. Willard wrote that the reason why legislators had failed to reform female education was "partly from inattention to the subject, and partly from the absurd prejudice that, if women's minds were cultivated, they would forget their own sphere, and intrude themselves into that of men."⁵⁸ She went on to write "the truth is that, when men suffer from mortification in being rivalled by women in point of strength, either of body or mind, they suffer a thousand times from their weakness."⁵⁹ These citations illustrate the seemingly ambivalent nature of Willard's opinion on the subject of gender equality; Willard believed that women could equal men academically, yet she stated that men's fear of women entering

the male professions was absurd. In one sense, she believed that women could equal men mentally, yet she also upheld the tenet that women should remain socially subordinate to men.

Several years later, she published a book of poetry for her students. The poem entitled "Prophetic Strains" again provides evidence of her conflicting position regarding woman's rights. In this poem, Willard foreshadowed the rise of the Woman's Rights movement. "There shall be a council held/ Of matrons, having power to legislate/ In woman's province."⁶⁰ Furthermore, Willard wrote that no woman should attempt to hasten the day when men would allow women to share in government. The poem reflected Willard's idea that women could not achieve equality either socially or politically until they had sufficiently educated themselves; "And much must woman learn, and much reflect,/ Ere she such council could with profit hold."⁶¹ Hence, this poem serves to clarify the position of Emma Willard- the reform of women's education would naturally result in the reform of woman's rights. The two issues were not mutually exclusive; rather, woman's rights was the natural corollary of educational reform.

Again, under the guise of female education, Emma Willard spoke on the issue of woman's rights. In 1833, Mrs. Willard, published a series of addresses which she had given in support of establishing a female seminary in Athens, Greece. Fifteen years before Seneca Falls made its appearance, Emma Willard spoke of the coming battles. "Justice will yet be done. Woman will have her rights. I see it in the course of events. Though it may not come till I am in my grave- yet come it will."⁶² Emma argued that women would seek equality for several reasons. First, women lacked equal opportunities for education. The legislators neglected women by spending millions of dollars on male academies, and by failing to fund female seminaries.⁶³ Moreover, legislators refused to legally protect female education, and some politicians went so far as to insidiously oppose the rights

of woman to receive an education.⁶⁴ The second reason lies in the oppressive use of the law regarding women. Property laws, according to Willard, deprived women of their financial independence, and made them dependent on the generosity of the heirs.⁶⁵ Taking all of this into consideration, Willard remarked that "it is not strange that some among us of impetuous spirits, madly seek to break the social order, and dissolve that golden link which God himself has instituted, and in which woman...acknowledges man as her head."⁶⁶ Hence, Emma Willard argued that in the face of these injustices, women felt compelled to act on their own behalf. Women had become dissatisfied with the social order, and they were no longer willing to allow men to make decisions for them; women would demand their rights to equality, beginning with education.

While Mrs. Willard had previously directed her criticisms toward the United States government, in 1848 she directed her attention to France. She published a letter to Dupont de l'Eure in the *American Literary Magazine* of Albany. Emma recommended that the French women send delegates to Paris to aid in the formation of a new Constitution. The delegates should have advisory powers in areas related to the rights, duties, and liabilities of women. In support of this idea, Mrs. Willard made several controversial assertions. First, she claimed that in new constitutions, the legislators remembered the slaves, and forgot the women. Moreover, "women were persons and as such their rights were sacred."⁶⁷ Finally, she reminded the legislators that female rulers, such as Isabella, Elizabeth, and Catherine II, had proven capable of handling matters of law and policy. Therefore, legislators should recognize the fact that women possessed the ability to judge their own rights.⁶⁸

Throughout her career as both an educator and an author, Emma Willard drew attention to the disparity between the two sexes in regard to education. By appearing before the Legislature,

Emma Willard stepped out of woman's traditional sphere and challenged the government to live up to its ideal of equality. However, Emma Willard was not the only woman interested in furthering female education. Other women, such as Catharine Beecher, devoted their lives to ameliorating the condition of women through education.

CATHARINE BEECHER

Catharine Beecher was born on September 6, 1800 in East Hampton, Long Island. Her father, Lyman Beecher, would become one of the most prominent Congregational ministers of the nineteenth-century. Lyman Beecher maintained an important influence on the direction of Catharine's life. In her reminiscences, Catharine stated that "all the children were in habits of prompt obedience, were healthful, cheerful, and full of activity."⁶⁹ Catharine remained very close to her father throughout her life, and she also attempted to follow his advice whenever possible, in order to please him.

In addition to a strong father, Catharine was greatly influenced by her mother. Roxana interested herself in Chemistry and mathematics, because she enjoyed exercising her mind.⁷⁰ Catharine attributed her later success in life to the training which she received from her mother. Roxana taught her daughter to maintain a "high ideal of excellence," to examine all knowledge in the context of practical usefulness, and to persevere "till the object sought was attained."⁷¹ Moreover, Roxana's approach to life encouraged Catharine to disregard some of the barriers accorded to her gender. "I think that my mother's natural and acquired traits tend to prove that there is in mind no distinction of sex, and that much that passes for natural talent is mainly the result of culture."⁷² One

must note that culture, in the mind of Catharine Beecher, referred to education and learning. Hence, from an early age, Catharine was encouraged to apply herself to her studies.

Although Catharine had the support of both of her parents, schooling did not yet interest her. When the family moved to Litchfield Connecticut, Catharine attended the school of Miss Pierce. During her years at this institution, she completed courses in geography, grammar, arithmetic, history, natural and moral philosophy, and chemistry.⁷³ Catharine also assisted Miss Pierce in teaching until she left her position in the fall of 1818. She resumed her teaching in the summer of 1821 at a school in New London.⁷⁴

However, Catharine's career did not last long, as she had become involved with Alexander Metcalf Fisher, and expected to marry in the near future. In January of 1822, Fisher visited Litchfield, and Lyman Beecher consented to the marriage.⁷⁵ Fisher planned to travel to Europe, and to return and marry Catharine in one year. Tragically, Alexander's ship did not reach port safely, and Lyman Beecher wrote his daughter that "it is all but certain that Professor Fisher is no more."⁷⁶

Following this letter, Catharine left her home to visit the family of her fiancé. After spending several months with the Fishers, Catharine turned her thoughts to the future. In February of 1823, Catharine wrote her father of her plans. She stated that "there seems to be no very extensive sphere of usefulness for a single woman but that which can be found in the limits of a school-room."⁷⁷ In order to prepare herself for her return to teaching, Catharine had abridged a Chemistry text for the Fishers' daughters, and had ensconced herself in the study of arithmetic and algebra.⁷⁸ Furthermore, while visiting Hartford, Catharine had spoken with Mr. Hawes, who had lamented the deficiency in female education in the area. Intrigued by the idea, Catharine proposed to her father that she open a school. Little realizing how time consuming her job would be, Catharine further stated that she

would take the task of superintendence upon herself, and would still have time left for self-improvement.⁷⁹

In answer to Catharine's letter, Lyman Beecher wrote his daughter in March of 1823 that a school was greatly needed and that enough pupils existed to proceed with her plans. He then went on to berate his daughter for her ideas of superintending the school and leaving the bulk of the work to fall on other teachers. "It is expected to be of a higher order; and, unless you are willing to put your talents and strength into it, it would be best not to begin."⁸⁰

Conceding to the demands of her father, Catharine and her sister, Mary, developed a curriculum, and announced the opening of their school in the Hartford newspapers in April, 1823. Catharine and Mary would offer courses in the higher branches of female education, including geography, grammar, rhetoric, science, and literature. Prospective pupils had to be at least 12, or unusually advanced in their education. The term was scheduled to begin one month later.⁸¹

In a chamber above a store, Catharine and Mary Beecher opened their school and began instructing their seven pupils. As word of the school spread throughout the area, the number of students increased, causing the Beechers to move the school to a larger chamber, and eventually to the basement of a church. By this time, the school had enrolled nearly one hundred young women, and still employed only two teachers. All of the learning took place in one room, and the Beechers had no apparatus such as globes, maps, or even black-boards.⁸²

Attempting to create some kind of order from the chaos of her school, Catharine divided the girls according to their personal advancement in their studies, and created classes. Due to the number of students, and the differing degrees of knowledge, "scarcely ten minutes could be allowed to each class for recitation."⁸³ In later life, Catharine recalled that the chief aim in the early years of her

school lay in attempting to maintain order, and to discover how much each student had retained in her memory. Unfortunately, Catharine could not discern how much was memorization, and how much the students clearly understood.⁸⁴

After four years of teaching under these conditions, Catharine developed a plan for the creation of the Hartford Female Seminary. Her plan asked for a building which would house a study hall, a lecture room, and six recitation rooms.⁸⁵ Although her proposal excited some ridicule, Catharine Beecher was granted an act of incorporation in May, 1827.⁸⁶ Moreover, the women of Hartford came to Catharine's aid, and soon the project became a reality.⁸⁷

Like Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher continued to evolve her curriculum and to develop new teaching methods. As the reputation of her Seminary had grown, Catharine Beecher felt confident that she could obtain an endowment of \$20,000 for her institution. To this end, in 1829, she composed and presented her views on female education. Unfortunately, the endowment was denied in favour of constructing a college.⁸⁸ However, Catharine had so impressed the board of trustees with her presentation that they asked her to publish her educational suggestions.

Like Emma Willard's *Plan*, Catharine Beecher began her discussion by illustrating the deficiencies in education. First, Beecher pointed to the lack of qualified teachers. She stated that most of the defects in education stemmed from the fact that teaching was a profession which did not secure wealth, influence, or honour to those engaged in it.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the teaching profession did not require examinations to prove competency, which allowed unqualified teachers to cloud the minds of children.⁹⁰

Next, Beecher attacked the reputations of schools by stating that parents had no methods by which to class schools or to determine the degree to which the students had improved.⁹¹ "Parents

have no sure method of knowing which are really good schools, and which furnish only *show*, instead of *substance*."⁹² The solution to these educational deficiencies, in the eyes of Catharine Beecher, lay in training women to become teachers.

She supported this argument by stating that

if all females were not only well educated themselves, but were prepared to communicate in an easy manner their stores of knowledge to others; if they not only knew how to regulate their own minds, tempers and habits, but how to effect improvements in those around them, the face of society would speedily be changed.⁹³

In order to make the idea of female teachers more acceptable, Catharine used religion and tradition to justify her position. She stated that Providence supported female education, as the teaching profession, which offered influence, respectability, and independence, had been thrown open to women.⁹⁴ Moreover, Catharine assured the male audience that woman would continue to honour and obey "those on whom she depends for protection and support, nor does the truly feminine mind desire to exceed this limitation of Heaven."⁹⁵ Hence, by assuring men that women would continue to remain the subordinate sex, Catharine made her proposal appear less objectionable.

Regarding the education of teachers, Catharine described her methods of teaching at the Hartford Female Seminary. Catharine had instituted a regular course of study, and had divided her students into four regular classes. In order for students to advance to the next class, they had to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency.⁹⁶ Miss Beecher also proposed changes to traditional teaching methods. She observed that schools for females and for young children often employed only one teacher to instruct between eighteen and twenty branches of learning. Furthermore, all of the learning in these institutions took place in one room.⁹⁷ In contrast to this disorderly method of teaching, the Hartford Female Seminary employed eight teachers, with each one teaching no more

than two disciplines. The school also employed eight to ten assistant teachers, and each teacher had her own recitation room.⁹⁸ In addition to this, class size remained small, and the classes included students of equal intellect, thus providing a homogeneous learning environment.⁹⁹

Shortly after Catharine's presentation failed to secure the endowment, she had to resign her position as headmistress of the Hartford Female Seminary. Failing health, and the problems of keeping the institution functioning smoothly had taken its toll on Catharine Beecher.¹⁰⁰ Even though her teaching career had ended, Catharine never ceased crusading for improvements in woman's education.

Although Catharine supported the instruction of women, she did not wholeheartedly support the cause of woman's rights. In fact, while Miss Beecher may have supported some of the ideas of female equality, she remained steadfastly opposed to woman suffrage. Her attitude regarding woman's rights was quite ambiguous. As her biographer, Kathryn Kish Sklar notes, Beecher was "torn constantly between her evangelical loyalties and her personal needs, she mixed innovation with conservatism, honesty with dissemblance, and feminism with antifeminism in her lifework."¹⁰¹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the original leaders of the Woman's Rights movement, recalled a conversation she had with Catherine Beecher which helps to define Beecher's contribution to the Woman's Rights movement. "Catharine said she was opposed to woman suffrage, and if she thought there was the least danger of our getting it, she would write and talk against it vehemently."¹⁰² However, disbelieving that female suffrage would ever become a reality, Catharine was willing to allow the debate to continue, as it helped her cause of female education. Stanton's reply may have held more truth than she realized when she retorted that "it is rather paradoxical...that the pressing of a false principle can help a true one; but when you get the women all thoroughly educated, they

will step off to the polls in spite of you."¹⁰³

While Catharine Beecher appears to have held an anti-suffrage position, her writings indicate that she may personally have agreed on a great number of areas in which the reformers demanded improvements. For example, after losing the endowment for her Seminary, Catharine wrote, "but the new college must come, and my seminary must wait till a better day, when women will seek and secure equal advantages with their brothers--a day which as yet is only at its dawn."¹⁰⁴ Although this appeared in her reminiscences, which she did not publish until 1874, one must note her acceptance of the struggle for gender equality, and her belief that the advocates of woman's rights would succeed.

Moreover, Catharine referred to the quest for woman's rights as a "noble object...sought by wrong methods."¹⁰⁵ She proposed to achieve the same goals as the reformers by safer, and more socially accepted methods. Miss Beecher believed that through proper education, and through employment as teachers, women would have the independence which they desired. Furthermore, if women found laws to be unjust, she suggested that they use their influence with the lawmakers.¹⁰⁶

To continue, in her presentation to the board of trustees in 1829, Catharine stated, "it is believed that the time is coming, when educated females will not be satisfied with the present objects of their low ambition."¹⁰⁷ She further stated that in the past, woman's training consisted of learning to become a good housewife, "and no intellectual refinement or erudition was esteemed of any value, but rather a disadvantage."¹⁰⁸ Again, she reiterated her view that the problems could be solved by placing women in the classroom.

One notes the limited scope of Catharine Beecher's views in her writings. In her opinion, every object which the Woman's Rights movement sought to obtain could be granted through the employment of women as teachers. The foundation of Beecher's ideas rests on two sources. Like

Emma Willard, Catharine did not want to jeopardize the advancements in female education by drawing negative attention to herself. Secondly, the Calvinistic environment in which she was raised played a large role in shaping her views. One can see this in her letter to her father after the death of her fiancé. She acquiesced to teach only because she could find no other source of employment which would be deemed socially acceptable. Never, in any of her writings, has Catharine admitted to enjoying teaching, yet she continued to advocate instructing as the panacea for all of woman's societal ailments. Despite her naïvete in regard to gender equality, Catharine Beecher managed to advance the cause of woman's education, which in turn aided the cause of woman's rights. Like her predecessor, Emma Willard, and her successor, Mary Lyon, Catharine Beecher had dedicated her life to female education, and enjoyed a great deal of success for her efforts.

MARY LYON

The efforts of Emma Willard and Catharine Beecher culminated in the life of Mary Lyon. She was born on February 28, 1797, in Buckland, Massachusetts. As a very young child, Mary attended the nearest district school. However, by age six, the school had moved farther away, and Mary could no longer make the journey regularly.¹⁰⁹ Around the same time, Mary's father passed away, leaving her mother with eight children, and few resources.¹¹⁰ By the time Mary had reached the age of thirteen, her mother remarried, and left Mary in her brother's care.

During the next year, Mary kept house for her brother, and he in turn paid her one dollar per week. After his marriage, Mary continued to live at the house, and she soon obtained a teaching position for which she was paid seventy-five cents. Between the money earned as her brother's

helper, and as a teacher, Mary saved enough to occasionally attend school for a term or two.¹¹¹ In 1817, Mary made her break with her brother, and left his home to attend the new academy at Ashfield.¹¹²

Mary described the academy as "one of those schools where they do nothing but study and recite.... You just learned what was in the book."¹¹³ However, this traditional, staid, style of learning did not deter Mary from studying for twenty out of every twenty-four hours.¹¹⁴ When her funding ran out, Mary's performance so impressed the trustees that they voted her free tuition and provided her with a teaching position to help defray the cost of her education.¹¹⁵ At Ashfield, Mary studied a variety of subjects, including geography, arithmetic, logic, rhetoric, and grammar.¹¹⁶ Although she disapproved of the teaching style, in later life Mary Lyon credited Sanderson Academy with providing literary advantages to those who, like herself, could not ordinarily afford to pay for their education.¹¹⁷

After finishing her courses at Sanderson Academy, Mary attended Amherst Academy (the precursor of the college) where she studied chemistry.¹¹⁸ Shortly thereafter, Miss Lyon enrolled in Joseph Emerson's seminary at Byfield. Here, Mary encountered one of the most influential people in her life- Joseph Emerson. He believed strongly in the rights of woman to receive an education. Emerson summarized his views on the subject in his address, Female Education. In this document, he stated "the school room is unquestionably the most important sphere of female activity."¹¹⁹ He further advocated that girls study a wide variety of subjects.^b However, while Emerson encouraged women to gain knowledge in many areas, he cautioned teachers to focus on only one or two subjects

^b Among the subjects which Emerson endorsed were mental arithmetic, reading, spelling, geography, defining, writing, penmaking, composition, history, grammar, punctuation, rhetoric, logic, natural history, geometry, algebra, and philosophy. For a complete list of subjects, see Joseph Emerson, Female Education, p. 21-2.

at a time in order to allow the students to gain deeper insight into the subjects of study.¹²⁰ Finally, Emerson predicted that in the future, "female institutions, very greatly superior to the present, will not only exist, but be considered as important, as are now our colleges, for the education of our sons."¹²¹ With these sentiments, Emerson endeared himself to Mary Lyon and, in turn, influenced the course of her life.

Upon completion of her studies at Byfield, Mary received an offer to teach at her alma mater, Sanderson Academy. Significantly, no other woman had ever taught at this institution before. Within five years of accepting the position, the trustees elected her preceptress of the school.¹²² While Mary Lyon furthered her own career, her friend and colleague, Zilpah Grant, had become the headmistress of Derry-Ipswich. Thus, Mary taught school at Derry-Ipswich during the summer term, and she continued to teach in either Ashfield or Buckland in the winter term.¹²³

It is at Derry-Ipswich that one first notes the influence which Emerson had on Mary Lyon's conception of female education. Here, Mary substituted the multiplicity of subjects in favour of teaching a few courses which the pupils studied thoroughly.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Lyon and Grant continually enlarged the course of studies, and divided the students into classes, according to the abilities of the pupils.¹²⁵

In order to accommodate the number of girls desirous of obtaining a good education, Derry-Ipswich began to run courses year round. Circa 1829-30, Mary Lyon gave up her other teaching positions and immersed herself in the work at Derry-Ipswich full time.¹²⁶ As the school increased its fame, Zilpah Grant and Mary Lyon decided to seek permanent security for their institution. In 1833, Mary Lyon presented the plan to the board of trustees. The idea was received apathetically, and the board dissolved. Several months later, Lyon tried again, but this attempt also met with failure.¹²⁷ The

success of the school, tempered with the lack of public concern, led Mary Lyon to consider the importance of establishing a permanently endowed institution.

With the ideas of Joseph Emerson and Zilpah Grant echoing in her mind, Mary Lyon decided to dedicate her life to founding a permanently endowed female seminary. She opened her campaign in the winter of 1834, with her circular addressed "To the Friends and Patrons of Ipswich Female Seminary." In the opening lines of this document, Mary lamented the lack of affordable female instruction, and proposed forming a permanent school for girls. Appealing to the public, she asked, "to effect such an object, could not a separate and independent institution, similar in character to the Ipswich Seminary, be founded and sustained by the Christian public?"¹²⁸

Like Emma Willard and Catharine Beecher, Mary Lyon asked for buildings, furniture, and other material necessities. However, Mary Lyon's proposal differed greatly from the other two. Miss Lyon proposed that the structures be funded through *voluntary contributions*, rather than through a grant.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Mary proposed to save money by having the students perform all necessary domestic work, instead of hiring a staff to perform the various tasks.¹³⁰ Unlike the independent preceptresses whom Emma Willard described, Lyon asserted that tuition would be placed at cost, or as low as possible. She further stated that any surplus income would be placed in a fund to aid in lowering the expenses for the ensuing year.¹³¹

Having taken the first steps, Mary Lyon committed herself to this endeavour, and resigned her position at Derry-Ipswich in the fall of 1834.¹³² Following this, Miss Lyon began to solicit funds for her new seminary. She needed a thousand dollars to finance the fund raising effort, and Mary decided that the initial donations should come from women to demonstrate their passionate interest and good faith. Two months after she began to collect donations, Mary Lyon had raised one

thousand dollars from students, teachers, town women, and from past pupils.¹³³ In September of 1834, Miss Lyon held a meeting which resulted in the creation of a committee which would petition the legislators for legal recognition of the school.¹³⁴

The struggle for the seminary continued in 1835. In a circular addressed to "Friends of Christian Education," Mary announced that the school would be constructed at South Hadley, Massachusetts. The seminary was designed as a permanent institution, which would house two hundred young ladies.¹³⁵ Again, Lyon reiterated her views that the costs of tuition would allow the middle classes to take advantage of this institution. "Indeed, it is for this class principally, who are the bone and sinew and the glory of our nation, that we have engaged in this undertaking."¹³⁶ Finally, Mary informed the public that a sum of thirty thousand dollars was needed for construction.¹³⁷

To achieve her goals, Mary Lyon set out on an arduous journey to gather the donations which would ultimately secure female education. William Seymour Taylor, a professor at Amherst College in 1836, remarked that "it was unbecoming her sex to solicit subscriptions in person, to address public meetings, to ride all over the country with Mr. Hawks, and ask for sixpenny contributions."¹³⁸ In response to this, Mary Lyon stated that "it was better to violate taste than not to have the work done."¹³⁹ By breaking societal conventions, which allowed her to raise a substantial sum, Mary Lyon had concrete evidence to prove to the legislators that the public did support female education. In February of 1836, Mary Lyon was rewarded for her efforts when the Governor signed a charter which empowered the trustees to hold property valuing one hundred thousand dollars.¹⁴⁰

Later that year, in October, the cornerstone of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary was laid. On this occasion, Miss Lyon stated that "the stones & brick & mortar speak a language, which vibrates through my very soul."¹⁴¹ Shortly after this event, Mary compared the founding of her

seminary to the American Revolution. "It is like the signing of the Declaration of Independence; the battles were still to be fought, but the question of independence was then settled."¹⁴² This statement contains more truth than one might think. Although she had obtained an act of incorporation, and had gained a great deal of public support, Mary Lyon now had to deal with the prejudice of men who did not subscribe to her views.

In April, 1837, an article appeared in the *Religious Magazine, and Family Miscellany* which attacked the new seminary, and its parent seminary Derry-Ipswich.¹⁴³ The author criticized Mount Holyoke for a number of reasons. First, he asserted that the teachers of the new seminary were not qualified to teach, as their own education at Derry-Ipswich was "strikingly deficient." Furthermore, the critic attacked Mary Lyon's idea of having the students fulfil the domestic obligations of the institution. He called this idea nothing more than "servile labor." Finally, the author objected to the "process of unsexing" that the seminary encouraged in the young girls.¹⁴⁴

Despite opposition, the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary opened its doors on November 8, 1837. The first catalogue printed in the spring of 1837 listed a wide variety of subjects, including arithmetic, history, geography, grammar, logic, philosophy, and "Sullivan's Political Class Book."¹⁴⁵ One must note the importance of this last text- while women did not have any voting privileges, Mary Lyon still found it relevant to teach politics to her students. In a pamphlet prepared for the centennial celebration of America's independence, the author also noted the teaching of politics. "She was a far-seeing woman, however, and wished her pupils to be intelligent on great subjects, even outside the field where their personal duties were expected to lie."¹⁴⁶

In addition to the wide variety of subjects taught at the seminary, students had to pass examinations in order to secure their acceptance at the institution. These examinations included such

subjects as grammar, geography, history, arithmetic, and Watts on the Mind.¹⁴⁷ Mount Holyoke Female Seminary met with a great deal of success in its first years. Due to its solid reputation, by the school year 1838-9, Mary Lyon had received almost 200 applications for the 90 available places. Moreover, she was now able to demand that students attend her school for a full year, and she also increased the standards of the entrance examinations.¹⁴⁸ If one compares the enrolment figures for Mount Holyoke and Amherst College, one sees that by 1847 Mary Lyon had received over 500 applications for 235 placements, while Amherst averaged only 135 students, and often encountered financial difficulties.¹⁴⁹

Even though Mary Lyon had succeeded in founding the first permanently endowed female educational facility, she continued to meet with a great deal of criticism. By examining some of the writings from the anniversary celebrations, one sees an inordinate amount of attention placed on the abilities and duties of woman. In 1839, Reverend Rufus Anderson stated that "not till you change the laws of nature and the whole frame-work and structure of society, can the female sex be thrust upon the sphere of action designed for men."¹⁵⁰ He went on to say that women had not yet achieved equality in education, but they had no rights to equality on any other issue.

Moreover, at the graduation ceremony in 1840, a reporter from the Boston Recorder termed the conferring of degrees as an "evil." He further stated that "twelve young ladies, without parents, rising in a crowded church to receive a broad diploma with its collegiate seal, presented to my view the least attractive spectacle of a most interesting day."¹⁵¹ Mark Hopkins, who delivered the graduate speech at the ceremony in 1840 also noted that woman had a right to an equal education. However,

if the mother and the home of a young lady were such as they should be, and such as many are, I should not desire for her a four, and I should have great doubts in regard even to a three years course at any public Seminary.¹⁵²

Finally, in 1844, Reverend Edward Kirk stated that "education should educate both sexes, but chiefly woman for home. That is her empire."¹⁵³ All of these references to woman's sphere denote that female equality had become an issue in society. Moreover, the fact that these references appear in connection with the graduation ceremonies at a female seminary indicate that some men felt that education should fit a person for only those tasks which he/she would fulfil throughout his/her lifetime. Educating women in the sciences, maths, and other subjects presented a dilemma for men; with a proper education, women might attempt to usurp male power, and enter male dominated professions. Thus, as Mark Hopkins noted, if mothers raised their children better, America would have no use for female institutions as young girls should be educated for the domestic sphere.

Mary Lyon never resigned her position as head of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. She remained at the helm, until her death in March, 1849.¹⁵⁴ While Mary dedicated her life to her gender, "she never attempted directly to untangle the feminine snarl."¹⁵⁵ Lyon believed that female equality would result from the improvements in female education. In a lecture to her students on the subject of teaching, Mary Lyon remarked that "it is the mark of a weak mind to be continually comparing the sexes and disputing and making out the female of the sex as something great and superior."¹⁵⁶ While statements such as this are rare, an examination of both Miss Lyon's writings and actions reveals her position on gender equality. Mary did not consider one gender more or less superior than the other, she did not distinguish between the two genders either academically or socially; she simply accomplished those tasks which needed to be completed, and she encouraged this attitude in her students.

During the years of construction spent on Mount Holyoke, Mary encountered a great deal of opposition. William Seymour Taylor described the type of accusations which Lyon encountered:

It would be the entering wedge to woman's preaching, practicing, lecturing, voting, ruling, buying and selling, doing everything that men do and perhaps doing it better than men do, and so overstocking all the trades and professions,...At the same time it was insisted that such occupations as mathematics and philosophy were not suited to the tastes or the capacities of women, they didn't want them and wouldn't undertake them; and if they did, they would ruin their health, impair their gentleness, delicacy, modesty, and refinement, unsex them, and unfit them for their proper sphere.¹⁵⁷

Despite these objections, Mary Lyon continued with her quest to found the first permanently endowed female school. In attempting to convince the public of the necessity of founding a female seminary, Mary Lyon asked why the public had readily consented to funding male academies and had ignored the education of girls. "Is this the result of mature deliberation; of sound wisdom and discretion? or is it not rather the result of the remaining principles and customs of heathenism, still lingering upon our shores?"¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, Mary's actions and ideas caused a great deal of excitement and controversy. The fact that she addressed groups of people to solicit funds, and rode around the countryside, sometimes unaccompanied, made her a very unconventional woman. Moreover, she taught her students a wide variety of the "higher" subjects, which included political theory. Perhaps her most controversial statements include those on the domestic sphere. While Emma Willard and Catharine Beecher both strove to teach their students the finer arts of domesticity, Mary Lyon flatly refused to offer any such courses.

It is no part of the design of this seminary...to teach young ladies domestic work. This branch of education is exceedingly important but a literary institution is not the place to gain it. Home is the proper place for the daughters of our country to be taught on this subject; and the mother is the appropriate teacher.¹⁵⁹

In addition to this, Mount Holyoke required students to pass oral entrance examinations, and the school conferred degrees upon its graduates. All of these factors combine to demonstrate that Mount

Holyoke Female Seminary, despite its title, held many of the same properties as male colleges. By developing such a highly academic environment, Mary Lyon broke many societal conventions in relation to female education, and woman's sphere.

CONCLUSION

After examining Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, and Mary Lyon individually, one must note the common themes which connect them. All of these educators had similar goals, such as founding permanent institutions, and educating women as teachers. However, one must also note the idea which pervades all of their lives- that idea is to prepare woman for her greatest possible usefulness.^o While this goal may seem quite common, one must note what this statement implies. Woman's "greatest possible usefulness" implies that whatever woman can do for herself and others should be accomplished. While part of this idea lies in preparing women to be teachers, what possible benefits could a woman derive from the study of chemistry or mathematics? Furthermore, the study of politics, composition, and logic would only train women to argue their position both in an oral and in a written fashion. Having studied at any of these institutions, a woman would be aware of the plethora of occupations closed to her by virtue of her gender. In fact, Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman admitted to medical school, encountered so much opposition to her medical studies that she solicited the advice of Emma Willard.¹⁶⁰

^o For examples of this theme, see Beth Bradford Gilchrist, The Life of Mary Lyon, p. 84; Emma Willard, A Plan for Improving Female Education, p. 13; and Catharine Beecher, Suggestions respecting improvements in education, presented to the trustees of the Hartford Female Seminary, and published at their request, p. 55.

The claims of the opposition eventually became a reality. With the improvements in female education, women were no longer content to remain permanently in the domestic sphere. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who studied at Willard's Troy Female Seminary, used her education to speak and to write against the injustices done to women.¹⁶¹ In her reminiscences, Stanton wrote about her gratitude to Willard, stating “we have not her difficulties to overcome, her trials to endure, but the imperative duty is laid on each of us to finish the work she so successfully began.”¹⁶² The women of Stanton’s generation argued their position with an intellectual zeal which society had never witnessed. The ladies dissected the arguments of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and discussed the theories of popular jurists like Blackstone, Story, and Kent. They began to apply their newfound knowledge to the debate over woman’s proper sphere. Thus, the eloquence and logic inherent in the speeches and documents presented at conventions such as Seneca Falls suggest that improvements in education played a key role in founding the Woman's Rights movement.

CHAPTER TWO

Woman is now rising in her womanhood, to throw from her, with one hand, the paltry privileges with which man has invested her, of conquering by fashionable charms and winning by personal attractions, whilst with the other, she grasps the right of woman, to unite in holy copartnership with man, in the renovation of a fallen world.

An Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, 1837

Beginning in the 1830's, abolition ceased to be simply an individual's moral conviction in favour of becoming part of a collective movement. In January of 1832, William Lloyd Garrison, David Child, and several others met in Boston to discuss the constitution for the proposed New England Anti-Slavery Society.¹ Shortly thereafter, Maria Weston Chapman and her sisters formed the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) to act as an auxiliary to Garrison's organization.² Before the end of 1833, forty-seven anti-slavery societies existed in ten states. The rapid growth of abolitionism prompted reformers to gather in Philadelphia to form a national body to coordinate the assault on slavery.³ While women were not invited to become equal members of the American Anti-Slavery Society, they were encouraged to attend the Convention and to contribute to the proceedings. Samuel May, a lifelong abolitionist, recalled the participation of Lucretia Mott, a fervent abolitionist and one of the founders of the Woman's Rights movement. "No man who was there will dissent from me when I add that she made a more impressive and effective speech than any other that was made in the Convention."⁴ Mrs. Mott's participation encouraged other women to break with tradition and to make their opinions known publicly. Accordingly, the Convention issued the following resolution which addressed the contribution of the women in attendance. "*Resolved*, that the thanks of the Convention be presented to our female friends for the deep interest they have manifest in the cause of anti-slavery, during the long and fatiguing session of the Convention."⁵

This amalgamation of interests brought forth not only strength and vigour to abolitionism, but it also brought forth conflict. Anti-slavery societies reflected both the regional and class interests of its members, thus prohibiting any national uniformity. Antagonism also arose over the gender issue. It is clear that Garrison intended for both sexes to take part equally in the fight against slavery, however, this idea would not be warmly received by all male abolitionists.⁶ In fact, this idea was not

received warmly by all *female* abolitionists. As Debra Gold Hansen points out in her examination of the BFASS, many of the members of this group were hostile to the introduction of the ‘woman question.’ This hostility, which Hansen explored in her study, prompted her to conclude that “‘historians’ preoccupation with the feminist implications of female abolitionism have made the exception the rule.”⁷ However, Hansen’s negation of the connection between abolitionism and woman’s rights ignores the development of female independence and defiance.

In contrast to Debra Hansen, historian Ellen Dubois has examined the implications of female experience within the Garrisonian hierarchy. Dubois begins her discussion by stating that “it is undeniably true that antislavery women provided the political leadership for the prewar women’s rights movement.”⁸ Dubois developed this idea by pointing out that the abolitionist movement fostered a series of relationships with both individual politicians and with political parties that would support the growth of the Woman’s Rights movement until the Civil War.⁹ In addition to its beneficial political alliances, abolitionism encouraged women to criticize the clergy and to step beyond woman’s sphere as defined by religious bodies.¹⁰ Furthermore, the ideology of human equality, which infused the Garrisonian movement, broke down both racial and gender barriers.¹¹ Finally, Dubois asserts that anti-slavery activity forced women beyond the pale of respectability, thus encouraging women to engage in woman’s rights activities as they had nothing left to lose.¹²

While one must note that acceptance of and participation in the Woman’s Rights movement was not universal, one must also note the symbiotic relationship between anti-slavery and nineteenth-century notions of gender equality. Clearly, the evidence supports Ellen Dubois’ theory that Garrisonian abolitionism was one of the numerous pillars supporting the Woman’s Rights platform. The experiences of female authors, such as Lydia Maria Child, illustrate the loss of dignity which

women suffered for publishing anti-slavery tracts. In addition to this, the material itself affords one the opportunity to examine the female perspective of slavery and its broader implications. Moreover, women such as the Grimké sisters challenged the authority of the church, and incited other women to follow in their rebellious footsteps. Finally, any unity which the movement had maintained was fragmented by the emergence of the ‘woman question’ and its dominance of the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London, 1840. Taking into account all of these factors, one can conclude that the rise and fall of abolitionism during the 1830's made a significant contribution to the development of the Woman’s Rights movement.

LYDIA MARIA CHILD- CONSERVATIVE REBEL

Lydia Maria Francis was born on February 11, 1802 in Medford, Massachusetts.¹³ Born the youngest of seven children, Lydia’s childhood was far from idyllic. At the age of 12, Child lost her mother, and this was a loss from which she never recovered.¹⁴ Lydia described her childhood as “cold, uncouth, and uncongenial.” In order to compensate for the lack of love and affection for which she desperately yearned, Lydia developed her imagination as an escape from reality. It was through her use of her imagination as an author that she would make her greatest contribution to society.¹⁵

In 1828, Lydia married David Child, the editor of the *Massachusetts Journal*, and a fervent abolitionist. Although Lydia had already become a published author with her novel Hobomok, A Tale of Early Times, in 1824, she soon abandoned popular writing in favour of disseminating the abolitionist message.¹⁶ The Childs’ foray into the world of abolitionism truly began in 1832. In January of that year, David Child played a significant role in the founding of the New England Anti-

Slavery Society. In addition to this, Lydia Maria Child made her first literary contribution to the anti-slavery movement. Two sketches with anti-slavery messages appeared in the *Liberator*. The first sketch was anonymously reprinted from the *Massachusetts Journal*. Entitled “The Moral of an Alarm Watch,” this image depicted a person sleeping through the ringing of an alarm clock. The lesson, applied to slavery suggests that those who do not react to the immorality of slavery would soon cease to find it an immoral practice.¹⁷

In contrast to the first image, which was printed anonymously, the second sketch was a direct contribution from Lydia Maria Child. This image depicted a slave ship haunted by the ghost of slavery, and the message warned the crew to “Stand From Under!”¹⁸ The sketch was boldly signed “By Mrs. Child,” leaving no doubt that Lydia Maria Child had formally and irrevocably attached herself to the anti-slavery movement. While this first step may appear rather conservative, one must consider the fact that Mrs. Child had no other female role models to follow; female anti-slavery societies had not yet organized themselves, and independent female abolitionists, such as the Grimké sisters, had not yet come forth. Lydia risked complete and utter social censure for stepping beyond woman’s allotted sphere and for aligning herself publicly with Garrison and the abolitionists.

Although Lydia did not enjoy the loss of respect which she had incurred by becoming one of the first female abolitionists, she did not stop spreading the word against slavery. On the contrary, in 1833 Mrs. Child published one of the greatest anti-slavery tracts of all time: *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans*. This essay served to advance the abolitionist cause, and it would also contribute greatly to the financial ruin of the Childs.

Public reaction to the essay varied, according to the reader. Samuel May, a member of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, recalled his personal reaction to her tract.

We had seen her often at our meetings. We knew that she sympathized with her brave husband in his abhorrence of our American system of slavery; but we did not know that she had so carefully studied and thoroughly mastered the subject. Nor did we suspect that she possessed the power, if she had the courage, to strike so heavy a blow.¹⁹

While Child did receive praise and support from her fellow abolitionists, the general public had a decidedly negative opinion of her text. For instance, May recounts that her readers of both genders found ““some very indelicate things in her book.””²⁰ Moreover, politicians accused her of criticizing the Constitution and the government, stating that ““women had better let politics alone.””²¹ Finally, the clergy turned against Mrs. Child, prophesying ““evil and ruin to our country, if the women generally should follow Mrs. Child’s bad example, and neglect their domestic duties to attend to the affairs of state.””²² As one can see, much of the criticism of this text had to do with the author’s gender; critics found the material to be indelicate, and others felt that the author had overstepped her boundaries. Lydia’s ostracization resulted equally from the material contained in her text and from her challenge to the traditional limits placed on woman’s role in society.

Unlike most other female reformers, Lydia invited social censure. She realized that the subject matter, combined with her gender, would cause a great deal of controversy, and she decided to capitalize upon this in order to increase her readership. In the preface to her *Appeal*, Mrs. Child wrote “I am fully aware of the unpopularity of the task I have undertaken; but though I *expect* ridicule and censure, I cannot *fear* them.”²³ Furthermore, she encouraged her audience to “read it, from sheer curiosity to see what a woman (who had much better attend to her household concerns) will say upon such a subject.”²⁴ One can see that it was Mrs. Child who directed the readers’ attention to her gender. By reminding the readers that the author was a woman, Child was gambling that the controversy which this text (with a female author) would create would dramatically increase the

readership. Lydia had other options than to sign her name to the tract –she could have used a pen name, or she could have published the text anonymously. Instead, Mrs. Child chose to publish the text under her own name, and this ultimately led to her financial ruin. By risking the fiscal security of her family, Lydia demonstrated the depth of her beliefs in both abolition and woman's rights.

Child's *Appeal*, which effectively eliminated her good standing in Boston literary circles, aptly summarized both the intentions and the beliefs of the abolitionists. Like other texts, the *Appeal* discussed the history of the slave trade, and the current situation of slavery in the world. Mrs. Child, however, did not limit herself to these traditional anti-slavery rubrics. Lydia also explored politics, economics and sexual harassment. In regard to politics and economics, Child espoused theories which opposed slavery as an inefficient system compared to free labour. Furthermore, Child criticized politicians for allowing the economic benefits of slavery to influence the politics of the nation. By allowing slavery to continue, Child blamed the legislators for the increasing frequency of discussions concerning secession. "The threats of separation have *uniformly* come from the slave-holding States; and on many important measures the free States have been awed into acquiescence by their respect for their Union."²⁵ In order to preserve the United States as a single entity, Child implored politicians to embrace anti-slavery and to cast out the "evil" of slavery.

Perhaps the most shocking subject addressed by Child in this essay was the plight of the negro woman. Child herself realized the scandalous nature of the topic, yet she refused to omit the discussion, stating that "there is another view of this system, which I cannot unveil so completely as it ought to be. I shall be called bold for saying so much; but the facts are so important, that it is a matter of conscience not to be fastidious."²⁶ Child's warning was not in vain –in fact, readers felt that Child's foray into the sexual abuse inherent to the slavery system was in extremely poor taste,

especially for a female author. According to Lydia, negro women suffered more than their male counterparts because slave women had to carry the burdens not only of slavery, but also those of her gender. In addition to this, negro women were unprotected by either law or society. "They are allowed to have no conscientious scruples, no sense of shame, no regard for the feelings of husband or parent," and this ultimately contributed to the corruption of slaves' sexual mores.²⁷ As masters could sell family members at any time, Child asserted that familial bonds did not have as great an impact on slaves as they did on the rest of society. Moreover, Lydia correctly observed that slaves owed total obedience to their master at all times. She brought this vein of thought to its climax by stating that "those who know human nature would be able to conjecture the unavoidable result, even if it were not betrayed by the amount of mixed population."²⁸ Hence, Mrs. Child confronted society with the undeniable fact that female slaves were sexually abused by their owners, and that the system of slavery managed to desensitize them to the ideas of morality.

Although Child's discussion of sexual morality created a great deal of controversy, she had not yet finished with the plight of the female slave. Lydia compared the situation of American slaves to that of slave women in ancient Athens. In cases of abuse, Child wrote that "in Athens, the female slave could demand protection from the magistrates; and if her complaints of insulting treatment were well founded, she could be sold to another master, who, in his turn, forfeited his claim by improper conduct."²⁹ Child's historical comparison points to the fact that in the U. S., female slaves had to forfeit their femininity as a result of their slavery. These women could not form strong familial attachments as they did not know when or to whom family members would be sold. Furthermore, the law supported the owner, and oppressed the slave, thus forcing female slaves to submit to their owner's sexual advances. Hence, by demonstrating the ways in which slavery oppressed women,

Child succeeded in attacking the ideology of “true womanhood,” as slave women could not disobey their masters, they had to abnegate their rights to feminine protection. Moreover, as her biographer notes, Child’s assault on slavery and ideology “reveals the limitations of her own freedom as a woman that link her to her sisters in bonds.”³⁰ Thus, Child’s *Appeal* struck a blow, not only for anti-slavery, but also for woman’s rights.

The publication of the *Appeal* held grave consequences for Lydia Maria Child. Her yearly income decreased by approximately six to eight hundred dollars.³¹ Moreover, Boston society evicted Lydia from its midst, leaving her with very few allies for her publishing projects. Child’s unconventional essay so outraged Boston society that they succeeded in ostracizing her. Deborah Weston wrote to her sister Anne, in May of 1835, that “Mrs. Child is writing a book & she can’t go on with it, because the directors of the Athanaeum library have revoked the permission which they gave her some years ago to take out what books she chose.”³² However, these heavy consequences did not prevent Lydia from continuing her career as an author; on the contrary, it provided her with the opportunity to engage in more controversial projects as she had nothing left to lose.

In 1835, Lydia published her two-volume *History of the Condition of Women*. While she did avoid speaking directly to issues of woman’s rights, the underlying message implies that a society which respects women, and which offers them the freedom to develop their own talents, would prosper greatly. Throughout the treatise, she demonstrated how women have continually added to the economic, cultural, and moral life of society. Moreover, at one point, Child asserted (incorrectly) that Greek women had once had the vote, and that when men took back the elective franchise, “the outward forms of decency were less scrupulously observed.”³³ Hence, it appears as though Mrs. Child attempted to justify woman suffrage by allying the idea of the elective franchise with the moral

convictions of society. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, in their *History of Woman Suffrage*, agreed that Child furthered the cause of woman's rights with her historical account, stating that it "was the first American storehouse of information upon the whole question, and undoubtedly increased the agitation."³⁴

Lydia Maria Child continued with both her abolitionist and literary activities for the remainder of her life. While she wrote many more books on anti-slavery, none of them succeeded in capturing the attention of society in the same manner as her *Appeal*. During these early years of the anti-slavery campaign, Child attempted to follow those social conventions which applied to women. Yet, at the same time, she risked her reputation, as well as her livelihood, to present her unpopular, and definitely unfeminine, opinions on the subject of slavery. Child was one of the first women to speak of slavery as a political issue, and to challenge the government to change its ways. Moreover, Lydia's advocacy of female suffrage in her historical treatise demonstrates her uncertainty as to her place in society; she had moved beyond the proper sphere of woman, yet she did not feel comfortable entering the world of man.³⁵ In fact, unlike future female abolitionists, Lydia often refused opportunities to speak in public. One can, perhaps, see her dilemma which she sums up by stating, "'Oh, if I was a man, how I *would* lecture! But I am a *woman*, and so I sit in the corner and knit socks.'"³⁶

THE GRIMKÉ SISTERS –RADICAL REFORMERS

Sarah and Angelina Grimké were among those chiefly responsible for the collision of woman's rights and anti-slavery. Sarah was born in Charleston, South Carolina on November 26, 1792,

thirteen years before Angelina.³⁷ They spent their childhood at their family's plantation, which would later afford them the most unusual distinction of being Southern belles turned abolitionists. It was Sarah who first left South Carolina, accompanying her father to Pennsylvania for medical care during his last years.³⁸ Following his death, Sarah would remain in Philadelphia and join the Quakers. Several years later, Angelina would also leave the south in favour of joining both Sarah and the Quakers.

Sarah and Angelina maintained a peaceful lifestyle among the Quakers until the autumn of 1835. At this point in time, Angelina had finished reading Garrison's *Appeal to the Citizens of Boston*, and felt compelled to respond. Her letter appeared in the September edition of *The Liberator*. Unfortunately, the Quaker society in which Sarah and Angelina lived did not approve of her actions. In a diary entry marked September 25, 1835, Sarah noted the suffering which her sister had "brought upon herself, by her connection with the anti-slavery society."³⁹

Over the course of the subsequent months, Sarah and Angelina rededicated themselves to the Society of Friends. However, Angelina could not abandon her abolitionist tendencies, even though it cost her the respect and acceptance of her religious community. She addressed this issue in a letter to her lifelong friend, Jane Smith in September, 1836. "I hav borne them [Quakers] as long as I possibly could with peace of mind, & now that my Master has burst my fetters & set me free, I never expect to suffer myself to be manacled again."⁴⁰ She continued to say that it was "sinful" to allow others, including religious groups, to hold so great an influence that people forget their individuality. What is significant about this letter is its language. The use of the words "fetters" and "manacled" demonstrate not only Angelina's adherence to the anti-slavery cause, but also her application of these terms to women. The Society of Friends disapproved of her connection with the abolitionists, and

attempted to shame her into obedience to their doctrines. The idea of “true womanhood” forced women to submit themselves to the authority of the church, which only served to enslave them to the religious dogmas of a select group of men. One can see, in the case of Angelina, that those men who controlled the Quaker agenda also controlled the activities of the church’s members. This left no room for disagreement, and made conflict an inevitability.

Choosing to abandon the Society of Friends rather than give up her career as an abolitionist, Angelina left Philadelphia and began to compose her first anti-slavery treatise. Her *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South* appeared in *The Anti-Slavery Examiner* in September of 1836. In this first essay, Angelina attempted to show other Southern women not only *why* they should join the abolitionists, but also *how* they could aid in the fight against slavery. Unlike the majority of women who upheld the view that women should use their feminine charms with the men in their lives in order to achieve reform, Angelina believed that women could play active roles in the anti-slavery movement. While other anti-slavery authors aimed their material at mixed audiences, Angelina had targeted a female audience in order to demonstrate that women could make a difference. She pointed out that women did not make the laws, nor did they hold legislative power. However, these disabilities did not prevent women from reading, praying, speaking or acting.⁴¹ Angelina urged her readers to “speak on this subject. It is through the tongue, the pen, and the press, that truth is principally propagated.”⁴² Furthermore, she encouraged women to emancipate the slaves which they owned themselves.⁴³ By using religious texts, Angelina argued that God did not support slavery, and she implored women to ignore men and to follow the dictates of God. “I know that this doctrine of obeying *God*, rather than man, will be considered as dangerous, and heretical by many, but I am not afraid openly to avow it.”⁴⁴ Finally, Angelina reminded her readers that the purpose of her *Appeal*

was to “arouse *you*, as the wives and mothers, the daughters and sisters, of the South, to a sense of your duty as *women*, and as Christian women.”⁴⁵ Thus, in her first published anti-slavery essay, Angelina advocated the idea of women speaking on a political issue, publishing their opinions, and ignoring the authority of the clergy. Furthermore, she considered it to be a woman’s duty to work toward emancipation. Consequently, Angelina earned a reputation as a radical reformer, who not only challenged slavery, but who also challenged the ideology of “true womanhood.”

Convinced by her sister’s strong arguments, Sarah abandoned the Society of Friends in favour of joining Angelina in her anti-slavery activities. At the same time that Angelina began her work on her first *Appeal*, Elizur Wright (head of the American Anti-Slavery Society) wrote to Angelina requesting that she give talks to small groups of women in New York.⁴⁶ Accompanied by Sarah, Angelina began speaking in December of 1836.⁴⁷ It soon became apparent that no parlour was large enough to hold the audiences of the Grimké’s. A Baptist minister offered Sarah and Angelina the use of his Session room, and he subsequently publicized the meetings.⁴⁸ In a letter to Jane Smith, Angelina expressed her concerns about speaking to the crowd. She stated that some people would view the Grimké’s speech as Quaker preaching, and that “the prejudice here against women speaking in public life was so great that if such a view was taken, our precious cause would be injured.”⁴⁹

In addition to her own personal fears, Angelina had to deal with the conflicting opinions of other abolitionists. Gerrit Smith expressed his concern that people would term the Grimké’s anti-slavery meetings “Fanny Wright” meetings. Unlike Smith, Theodore Weld wholeheartedly supported Angelina and Sarah’s efforts. In fact, Angelina noted that Weld grieved over the societal constraints which prevented woman from using her fullest potential for the good of the slave.⁵⁰ While Angelina agreed that woman possessed the capabilities of working toward moral reform, she had never

intended that she would be a driving force in any movement. As she wrote to Jane Smith, “how *very little* I supposed when I used to say, ‘I wish I was a *man*, that I might go out and lecture, that *I* would ever do such a thing. The idea never crossed my mind that as a woman such work could possible be assigned me.”⁵¹ Angelina’s letter reveals that, while she may have supported gender equality, she did not set out to move beyond woman’s sphere of interest. Furthermore, Angelina broke with tradition by speaking in public for one reason only- to achieve the emancipation of the slaves.

Even though Angelina Grimké did not intend to expand woman’s role in society, she had no difficulties in defending her right as a woman to participate in reform activities. By 1837, people had started to think of anti-slavery as more of a political issue than a moral reform. As anti-slavery became identified as a political topic, the position of women within its ranks grew more and more tenuous; opponents of female participation used this excuse to try to push women out of the movement. Angelina Grimké agreed that anti-slavery was a political issue; however, she “endeavored to show that women were citizens & had dutys to perform to their country as well as men.”⁵² Given the nature of this sentiment, the Grimkés and other reformers, felt it appropriate to agitate for the political reform of slavery, and, as equal citizens, they agreed on the proper forum for action- a convention.

The Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women was held at New York’s Third Free Church in May of 1837, and has the distinction of being “the first public political meeting of U. S. women.”⁵³ Sarah Grimké, Lucretia Mott, and Lydia Maria Child appeared among the list of Vice-Presidents, while Angelina occupied the position of Secretary.⁵⁴ For their first foray into the political arena, these female abolitionists succeeded in passing a number of strong resolutions which clearly conveyed their position on both anti-slavery and woman’s rights. Three resolutions, in particular,

bear closer examination. The first resolution, put forth on the motion of Angelina Grimké, concerned the right of petition. Angelina stated that the Constitution protected this natural and inalienable right. She further argued that any attempts to abrogate this right, regardless of the petitioner's gender, would be considered as a "usurpation of power." In conclusion, Angelina asserted that it remained the duty of every woman to petition Congress annually until slavery was abolished.⁵⁵ The significance of this resolution lies in Angelina's claim that women possessed political rights, such as the right of petition. Furthermore, the fact that she declared women to have Constitutional protection demonstrates Angelina's support of woman's rights; the Constitution guaranteed the rights of **man**, and used linguistics in order to control both women and slaves, as neither group possessed any human rights in the eyes of the government.

Similarly, the second resolution, which originated with Sarah Grimké, claimed religious authority for female reform efforts. Sarah stated that God commanded people to maintain that which was good. In this case, she argued, one could not relinquish the right or exercise of free speech as this would conflict with God's edicts. Thus, Sarah concluded that as women remained moral and responsible beings, they had an obligation to discuss slavery, in order to prepare themselves for action.⁵⁶ Like Angelina's motion, Sarah asserted woman's rights to a political freedom- the right of free speech. By using religion as a justification for her statement, Sarah not only demanded political recognition for her gender, but she also attacked the dogma of the Church; religious bodies supported the idea of "true womanhood" which advocated deference to clerical authority. By encouraging women to interpret the Scriptures for themselves, Sarah succeeded in attacking the clergy's stronghold on society, while simultaneously expanding woman's sphere of action.

Finally, Angelina Grimké and Lucretia Mott put forth a resolution which can only be described as a radical idea. This particular resolution concerns itself more with the province of woman than with anti-slavery, thus demonstrating the growing importance of gender issues.

RESOLVED, That as certain rights and duties are common to all moral beings, the time has come for woman to move in that sphere which Providence has assigned her, and no longer remain satisfied in the circumscribed limits with which corrupt custom and a perverted application of Scripture have encircled her; therefore that it is the duty of woman, and the province of woman, to plead the cause of the oppressed in our land, and to do all that she can by her voice, and her pen, and her purse, and the influence of her example, to overthrow the horrible system of American slavery.⁵⁷

Due to its controversial nature, this resolution did not receive universal approval from the women present. However, the passing of the resolution indicates that a majority of the women agreed with the issues which it raised. First, one notes the idea that women, as well as men, possess certain rights. Second, the resolution blamed both custom and the clergy for woman's narrow sphere of influence. In order to remedy this, Angelina and Lucretia suggested that woman speak, and write, as well as using her money and influence to achieve emancipation. Thus, the women of the Convention resolved to move far beyond those barriers which separated male and female spheres.

In addition to the resolutions, the officers of the Convention formed committees for the purpose of composing anti-slavery tracts. One of the surviving documents, an *Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States* was written, in part, by Angelina Grimké and Lydia Maria Child. This essay attempted to persuade northern women to participate in the anti-slavery movement. Furthermore, it argued in favour of female participation in abolition regardless of the issue of politics. The *Appeal* commenced by addressing the issue of the female sphere, stating that some people "so undervalue the rights and responsibilities of woman, as to scoff and gainsay whenever she goes forth to duties beyond the parlor and the nursery."⁵⁸ The essay also gave voice to its opponents, stating

that those who opposed female reform believed that the participation of women had set back the cause of emancipation by as much as 200 years. They further believed that anti-slavery was a political issue with which women had no right to interfere. In response to this negativity, the *Appeal* put forth the idea that women also shared in the political concerns of the nation.

Every citizen should feel an intense interest in the political concerns of the country, because the honor, happiness, and well being of every class, are bound up in its politics, government and laws. Are we aliens because we are women? Are we bereft of citizenship because we are the *mothers, wives* and *daughters* of a mighty people?⁵⁹

The *Appeal* then went on to use Scriptures and rhetoric to convince women of the horrors of slavery, and of their duty to participate in the anti-slavery movement. However, the authors made a startling comparison between women and slaves, stating that “women ought to feel a peculiar sympathy in the colored man’s wrongs, for like him, *she* has been accused of mental inferiority, and denied the privileges of a liberal education.”⁶⁰ This particular statement served a dual purpose. Not only would women feel greater sympathy for the slaves, but they would also view societal constraints as shackles on their freedom. The authors capitalized on this feeling of dissatisfaction by listing six ways in which women could help the anti-slavery cause and assert their own rights. They could form anti-slavery societies, read on the subject, petition Congress, refrain from purchasing slave products, sympathize with their coloured sisters and treat them as equals, and they could teach coloured people and open schools for them.⁶¹ Thus, this essay encouraged women to ignore their critics and to participate in a political reform effort. Moreover, the *Appeal* succeeded in forging a relationship between women and slaves which further strengthened the bond of anti-slavery and woman’s rights. Finally, by urging women to act, the authors attempted to persuade women to move beyond their prescribed sphere of influence and to use their own judgement regarding their social behaviour.

Within a few months of the Convention, Sarah Grimké began publishing her *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* in the press. While Sarah had always supported the anti-slavery cause, her primary concern would remain woman's rights. These letters ranged in topic from the history of women in Europe to the legal disabilities of American females. The controversy generated by Sarah's letters, the Grimké's speaking tour, and the Convention, prompted the General Association of Massachusetts to issue a Pastoral Letter in response to the increased female activism. The Pastoral Letter appeared during the time when Sarah was composing her own letters. Thus, one can examine both sides of the argument by analysing the Pastoral Letter, and Sarah Grimké's third letter, which she issued as a response to the clergy's attacks upon herself and her sister.

To begin, the General Association issued the Pastoral Letter to the Churches under their care for the purpose of drawing attention to "the dangers which at present seem to threaten the female character with wide-spread and permanent injury."⁶² The author, Rev. Dr. Nehemiah Adams, argued that woman exerted her influence through her dependence on man, which tended to soften man's harsh opinions. Moreover, Adams asserted that when woman became a public reformer, man placed himself in a position of self-defence against her, as she no longer appeared to need his protection or care. In addition to this, "she yields the power which God has given her for her protection, and her character becomes unnatural."⁶³ Adams further admonished those women who spoke in public (the Grimké sisters) and who encouraged other women to follow their examples by playing active roles in reform measures. Finally, he concluded that while modesty and delicacy constituted the true influence of woman in society, the shame and dishonour which ultimately accompanied a public life would lead the way to degeneracy and ruin.⁶⁴

Sarah Grimké responded to these accusations by thanking the clergy for bringing the subject to public attention. Sarah stated that her gender was in danger, but from a totally different source than that mentioned by the General Association. The danger emanated from those who “held the reins of *usurped* authority” and who desired to continue to subjugate one half of the human race. However, by bringing the issue to the attention of woman, Sarah argued that woman’s rights could now be secured.

I rejoice, because I am persuaded that the rights of woman, like the rights of slaves, need only be examined to be understood and asserted, even by some of those, who are now endeavoring to smother the irrepressible desire for mental and spiritual freedom which glows in the breast of many, who hardly dare to speak their sentiments.⁶⁵

Moreover, Sarah continued to develop her argument by stating that “men and women were CREATED EQUAL; they are both moral and accountable beings, and whatever is *right* for man to do, is *right* for woman.”⁶⁶ Finally, Sarah argued that under patriarchal domination, woman had surrendered her rights in favour of a show of power whilst man retained all of the real power for himself.⁶⁷ Sarah’s argument in favour of woman’s rights reveals two important factors. First, women had begun to espouse the theory of *human equality*- man and woman were equal. Thus, in matters of morality, gender should not determine the behaviour of an individual. Secondly, woman had rights, which she possessed by virtue of her birthright. Man had usurped these rights in order to further his own aims, and would not encourage woman in her attempts to regain her rights. Thus, Sarah had explained why the General Association had issued its Pastoral Letter, and why women should ignore its contents. Anti-slavery had placed woman in the public sphere, and once in that position, she had to defend her position on gender more often than her position on emancipation.

At approximately the same time, Angelina Grimké entered into a public debate with Catharine Beecher. Beecher had published *An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism, with reference to the duty of American females*, and had directed her comments on women to Angelina. For her part, Angelina systematically deconstructed Beecher's arguments and displayed their flaws, thus strengthening both woman's rights and woman's position in anti-slavery.

First, Beecher asserted that woman's province remained that of the domestic circle. In this arena, woman should use her charms, and moral influence to effect such reforms as she deemed necessary. She continued by stating that fathers, sons and husbands would willingly bend to her entreaties. However, "the moment woman begins to feel the promptings of ambition, or the thirst for power, her aegis of defence is gone."⁶⁸ Beecher claimed that the religious protection, chivalry, and romantic gallantry owed to woman depended upon her dependence, defencelessness, and her "maintaining no rights but what are the gifts of honour, rectitude and love."⁶⁹

In contrast to Beecher's conservatism, Angelina espoused her theories of equality. First, if woman would lose her "aegis of defence" from indulging her ambition, then Angelina concluded that man would suffer the same fate. Moreover, Angelina reviled Beecher for stating that woman should cherish her dependence and her defencelessness. "No woman who lives up to the true glory of her womanhood, will ever be treated with such *practical contempt*."⁷⁰ In addition to this, Angelina launched into a Scriptural argument which illustrated that both man and woman entered the world completely dependent on God, neither gender possessing defences specific to their sex. Next, Grimké attacked Beecher's statement concerning the rights of woman. Angelina observed that Catharine's account made rights appear as a gift of either man or God. Angelina rejected both of these ideas in favour of a third- that rights "are an integral part of her moral being."⁷¹ Hence, following her logic,

Although the debates over abolition and woman's rights would continue for decades, Sarah and Angelina Grimké retired to private life in 1838. Ill health prevented the sisters from ever regaining an active role in either movement. As their final act, Angelina spoke on her sister's behalf before the Massachusetts State Legislature in February of 1838. Lydia Maria Child sat in the audience on those days when Angelina made her appearances. She described Miss Grimké's performance as "a spectacle of the greatest moral sublimity I ever witnessed."⁷⁷

While the speeches delivered before the Massachusetts Legislature would mark the end of the Grimkés' public career, they had managed to achieve more in the short time which they spent in the public eye, than did many women who devoted their entire lives to the same cause. The Grimkés' were among the first women to speak in public. Furthermore, Angelina's essays encouraged women to ignore clerical authority, and to act upon their own moral convictions. In addition to this, Sarah's letters provided Scriptural examples to prove that man and woman were created on equal terms, with neither gender holding a superior position over the other. Finally, the assertions of both sisters, that woman possessed Constitutional rights, served to enlighten the female population as well as to encourage women to act on their own behalf. The Grimké sisters, through their years of agitation, had brought together the elements which would clash over the issue of political anti-slavery and the 'woman question.'

neither man nor God can confer rights upon woman, her rights are inalienable and permanent, as are the rights of man.

In addition to this first issue, Beecher attacked the idea of female petitions. Catharine stated her opinion that the propriety of participating in petition campaigns would depend on several factors.

If they will be the opening wedge, that will tend eventually to bring females as petitioners and partisans into every political measure that may tend to injure and oppress their sex, in various parts of the nation, and under the various public measures that may hereafter be enforced, then it is neither appropriate nor wise, nor right, for a woman to petition for the relief of oppressed females.⁷²

Moreover, Beecher stated that in all cases, petitions fell beyond the proper sphere of woman, and that propriety deemed that men should approach their legislators with their appeals.⁷³

Again, Grimké countered Beecher's arguments in a logical fashion. First, Angelina stated that woman should be governed by duty, and not the projected effect which her actions would have. By petitioning Congress only in cases where the legislators appear receptive, woman has forsaken her duty to God in favour of seeking the praise of man.⁷⁴ Next, Grimké addressed Beecher's concerns that petitions will mark the beginning of a political career for woman. Angelina began her argument by pointing out that "the right of petition is the only political right that women have; why not let them exercise it whenever they are aggrieved?"⁷⁵ Moreover, Angelina compared women to the founding fathers as women, like the colonists, were governed by laws enacted by others. As woman possessed no other political rights, Angelina believed it to be only fair that women petitioned Congress whenever they had a grievance which needed addressing. Finally, Angelina argued that as the government used the female population in order to inflate the number of representatives in both the State and National Legislatures, the very least which politicians owed to women was the right to petition without any restrictions.⁷⁶

ANTI-SLAVERY AND THE 'WOMAN QUESTION'

The confrontation between the two sides reached its apogee in 1840 at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London, England. However, several events occurred between 1837 and 1840 which prepared both female supporters and their opponents for the imminent battle.

Lucretia Mott, a Quaker preacher and avid abolitionist, was one of the pioneer anti-slavery activists. Born in 1793 in Nantucket, Lucretia had the luxury of a liberal education, attending both public school in Boston, and a private Quaker institution governed in part by Elias Hicks.⁷⁸ It was at the Nine Partners Boarding School that Lucretia met her husband, James Mott, a teacher and future abolitionist. In 1809 the two moved to Philadelphia where they subsequently married two years later.⁷⁹

While Lucretia had always deplored slavery, she did not engage in anti-slavery movements until after Garrison had officially launched the movement in 1832. Lucretia accompanied her husband, James, to the meetings which resulted in the formation of the American Anti-Slavery Society. As women were not invited to join the national body, Lucretia immediately formed a female auxiliary- the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society.⁸⁰ Mott later recorded her impressions of organizing this early female society.

At the time I had no idea of the meaning of preambles, and resolutions, and votings. Women had never been in any assemblies of the kind. I had attended only one convention—a convention of colored people—before that; and that was the first time in my life I had ever heard a vote taken, . . . When, a short time after, we came together to form the Female Anti-Slavery Society, there was not a woman capable of taking the chair and organizing that meeting in due order; and we had to call on James McCrummel, a colored man, to give us aid in the work.⁸¹

Lucretia and her fellow abolitionists did not initially possess the experience necessary to form lasting organizations, yet over the course of the next few years, they gained enough experience to hold the first female anti-slavery convention in New York, to publish and distribute their opinions, and to voice their ideas in public.

It was exactly this type of dissemination of female ideas that threatened the more conservative members of the abolitionist movement. 1837 appeared to be the year of the woman –they held a convention, the Grimké’s had participated in a speaking tour, Sarah had published her letters criticizing the clergy’s concept of acceptable female behaviour, and Angelina had asserted that women should utilize those constitutional rights which they possessed under the law. Clearly, the Pastoral Letter was not strong enough to subdue these radical feminists. Either women had to be given a place in the anti-slavery hierarchy, or they had to be driven from the movement.

Accordingly, the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society responded to this situation by voting in 1838 “that all persons present, or who may be present at subsequent meetings, whether men or women, who agree with us in sentiment on the subject of slavery, be invited to become members, and participate in the proceedings of the Convention.”⁸² This resolution initially received unanimous support, but this was unfortunately short-lived. Soon after its adoption, the members engaged in a lengthy debate on the subject due to a motion to rescind the resolution.

The dilemma carried over into 1839, creating a great deal of divisive tension amongst abolitionists. The “woman question,” as it came to be known, was hotly debated by the two sides, and many activists feared that it would divide the movement in half.⁸³ The schism resulted from two polar ideologies. First, Garrison adhered to the beliefs upon which the movement was founded –human equality regardless of race or gender. In contrast to this position, the opposition felt that the

movement had evolved to a point where it needed to explore new directions, such as politics. This second group included men such as Theodore Weld, and Henry B. Stanton (Elizabeth Cady Stanton's husband). While both sides firmly upheld immediate emancipation as their goal, these men vehemently opposed each other's methodology.

The Garrisonians first called attention to the schism in 1839, when Garrison noted that some prominent abolitionists intended to form a new and hostile society which would oppose women and would propose that every man had a duty to vote on the issue of slavery.⁸⁴ Outraged by the behaviour of his fellow abolitionists, Garrison published an address to the abolitionists of Massachusetts, in July, 1839. In this article, Garrison argued that the abolitionists were seceding only because women held the same rights as men in anti-slavery meetings. Moreover, Garrison stated that most of the dissidents regarded the expanded role of woman as a "moral wrong," as a thing which was unnatural in the eyes of God and conservative society. He concluded his argument by asserting that the only crime which the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society has committed was that of refusing to declare that women were not 'persons' in the fullest sense of the word.⁸⁵

Garrison's opponents also used the media, publishing their ideology in the *Liberator*, in May of 1839. The author of this article listed a number of reasons why women should be excluded from the movement. First, according to the separatists, the Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society did not support female involvement.⁸⁶ Furthermore, abolitionists opposed female participation as they did not morally agree that woman belonged outside of the domestic sphere. In addition to this, the author asserted that woman's rights was a "regional sentiment" which did not

reflect the broad sentiments of the Society's founders.^a Moreover, women should be excluded as the Society originally intended for women to organize their own groups to act as auxiliaries to the major organizations. Finally, the author worried that as women lacked the elective franchise, their activism would serve only to distract men from the cause and would bring ridicule to their efforts to emancipate the slaves.⁸⁷

Although the Garrisonians and the dissidents both abhorred slavery, the differences in their ideologies were too vast, and they parted ways in 1840. This year also marked the World's Anti-Slavery Convention, held in London, England. While the topic of discussion was supposed to be slavery and emancipation, the Convention was actually dominated by the debate over the 'woman question.' As Wendell Phillips explained to the body of the Convention, when the American organizations received their invitations to send delegates to the Convention, they interpreted "'friends of the slave' to include women as well as men."⁸⁸ Upon arriving in England, delegates such as Lucretia Mott learned that women would not be received as delegates.⁸⁹ The refusal on the part of English abolitionists to receive the American women captured the attention of the delegates, and served to overshadow all other issues.

When asked why the female delegates could not participate, the Americans were told that "it would lower the dignity of the Convention and bring ridicule on the whole thing if ladies were admitted."⁹⁰ Moreover, the British representatives were not prepared to challenge English custom, nor were they willing to meet the derision of the newspapers.⁹¹ American abolitionist George

^a While the author of this document did not elaborate on his meaning of the term "regional sentiment," the context of the article suggests that Garrison's opponents objected to woman's rights on the basis that it was not a universally accepted ideology. The American Anti-Slavery Society was a national organization, and according to the author, should reflect the sentiments of the nation rather than a select group of individuals.

Bradburn countered British arguments by pointing out that in the United States, many people objected to allowing persons of colour to attend anti-slavery meetings. He continued his argument, stating that women have demonstrated that they have both the talent and the credentials to serve as delegates. They have provided essential aid to the movement, and they have gone so far as to risk their lives for their ideals. Bradburn pointed out that when George Thompson was chased by an angry mob in Boston, it was the abolitionist women who protected him. He concluded his passionate speech by voicing that opinion which many abolitionists shared. "What a misnomer to call this a World's Convention of Abolitionists, when some of the oldest and most thorough-going Abolitionists in the world are denied the right to be represented in it by delegates of their own choice."⁹²

Despite the valiant efforts of the Americans, women remained barred from participation. As a demonstration of solidarity, Garrison refused to join the body of the Convention, and instead, opted to sit with the female delegates in the gallery. He explained his decision in a letter to Oliver Johnson, stating that he could not associate himself with a body of people who chose to distinguish its members along artificial lines such as gender. If the Americans were to continue to uphold the ideals of justice and equality, then they could not, in good faith, join the Convention, as sexism was as equally erroneous as racism.⁹³

While the organizers of the Convention had originally intended to advance the cause of anti-slavery, they succeeded in entrenching the issue of woman's rights instead. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who had accompanied her husband to the Convention, met Lucretia Mott in London. The two women, outraged by the insulting attitude toward the female delegates, decided to hold a convention and to form a society for the advocacy of woman's rights, upon their return to the United States.⁹⁴ While these women kept their promise, and held the first Woman's Rights Convention in 1848,

Elizabeth Cady Stanton attributed a great deal of importance to the events of 1840. In her reminiscences, she wrote that the “action of this convention was the topic of discussion, in public and private, for a long time, and stung many women into new thought and action and gave rise to the movement for women’s political equality both in England and the United States.”⁹⁵ Thus the road to Seneca Falls has its roots in the heart of the anti-slavery movement and the Convention of 1840.

CONCLUSION

After examining the anti-slavery activities of female reformers the bond between abolition and Woman’s Rights becomes evident. To return to Ellen Dubois, women engaged in anti-slavery activities lost any semblance of respectability which they had previously possessed. Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of Lydia Maria Child, who sacrificed her source of income (her publications) for the cause of emancipation. After publishing her *Appeal*, Lydia encountered difficulties in finding patrons to finance her writing career. The woman who had once been revered for her *Mother’s Book*, now found herself a social pariah, an outcast in Boston society. Having lost her good reputation, nothing prevented Child from exploring other forbidden topics, such as woman’s rights. With the appearance of her *History of the Condition of Women*, one notes the transition from conservatism to a more liberal perspective, one which Mrs. Child might not have taken without the influence of abolitionism.

Again, when applying Dubois’ thesis to actual events, one notes the experiences of the Grimké sisters. Both Sarah and Angelina Grimké shattered the traditional image of woman by speaking in public and by publishing their views on anti-slavery and on women. Sarah, in particular, created a

great deal of controversy by challenging the church's authority to construct a sphere of influence for women, and encouraged her 'sisters' to think for themselves, rather than to allow religious dogma to dominate their lives. In addition to Sarah's almost heretical views, Angelina worked very hard to develop the concept of human equality. She urged women to participate in the anti-slavery movement, arguing that women, as well as men, had a *duty* to eliminate slavery. Thus the Grimkés' are partially responsible for the spreading of the human equality ideal, and for the weakening of clerical authority over society. Combined, these two ideas resulted in women reconsidering their position in society and the roles which had been designated to them.

Finally, ~~Dubois pointed out that abolition provided the experience which women needed to~~
~~form long-lasting organizations and networks of influence.~~ Women like Lucretia Mott entered abolitionism without any concept of how to hold a meeting or how to coordinate the assault on slavery. Through years of working in female societies, women proved that they had both the strength, determination, and the skills to be considered the equals of their male counterparts. The fact that many societies chose female delegates for the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London demonstrates that these women had amassed some impressive credentials. Moreover, those men who supported the women's right to join the body of the Convention serve as an example of the early political networks which women used to advance their own cause. With their newfound organizational skills, and an awakened sense of injustice, these female reformers appealed to those influential figures who shared their views in human equality. Conventions, tracts, and petitions, the very media which female abolitionists had used to advance the cause of anti-slavery now became the weapons of the advocates of Woman's Rights.

CHAPTER THREE

We are moral, virtuous, and intelligent, and in all respects quite equal to the proud white man himself and yet by your laws we are classed with idiots, lunatics, and negroes; and though we do not feel honored by the place assigned us, yet, in fact, our legal position is lower than that of either.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Address to the Legislature, February 14, 1854*

Although the United States fought a war to break its ties with England, it had no other tradition on which to base its legal system than that of its former oppressor. As contemporary critics noted, “the common law of England, much as it has been extolled, is, at best, a rude, uncertain, inconsistent, and dangerous jumble of precedents and customs, . . . it abounds in the absurdest fictions, in the most disgusting technicalities, in wild and extravagant doctrines, and the most pernicious errors.”¹ Among those victims of the common law tradition, women were the most prevalent. According to William Blackstone, one of the most influential jurists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century, a woman’s legal identity became absorbed by her husband at marriage. Her husband was considered her *baron* or her protector. By this standard, the wife was described as a *feme-covert* -a woman under the guidance and protection of her husband during the entirety of the marriage.² In essence, this meant that a woman was no longer considered intelligent or competent enough to manage her own affairs; lawmakers considered wives to be under the influence of their husbands to such an extent that the wife virtually held no opinions of her own, nor did she disagree with those of her husband. Thus, a woman theoretically had no need of a legal identity during marriage as her husband could ably represent her in any matters which arose.

In addition to this, the law restricted the rights of woman during marriage. According to James Kent, an influential American jurist of the nineteenth-century, “the general rule is, that the husband becomes entitled, upon the marriage, to all the goods and chattels of the wife, and to the rents and profits of her lands, and he becomes liable to pay her debts, and perform her contracts.”³ Beyond the loss of her property, both real and personal, woman was also denied the right to sue, or to be sued, and to draw up a will with or without the consent of her husband.⁴ Joseph Story ably summarized woman’s legal condition when he wrote that “those who come under equity’s jurisdiction

. . .included infants, lunatics, and married women, the same group of legal incompetents prohibited at common law from making a will.”⁵ By depriving married women of the right to their property, and the right to legal representation, the lawmakers equated them with idiots, lunatics and children, even though there was no evidence to support these claims of mental incompetence. As a result of their legal oppression, married women suffered from poverty and degradation as they had no means of financial support in cases where they had wasteful and negligent spouses.

One such case which captured the attention of jurists was *Kenny v. Kenny and Udall*, in 1821. This case involved the husband’s usurpation of his wife’s stocks, which had been left in trust for her by her father. After the death of her father, her mother served as her guardian until shortly before her death in 1819, when her mother arranged for the courts to assume the trusteeship. In 1818, Eliza Hewitt married Edward Kenny, without her mother’s consent. Within a few weeks of the marriage, Kenny petitioned the court to have the dividends from the stocks directed to him, rather than to his wife. In order to alleviate his monetary problems, Kenny agreed to sell his wife’s stocks to Richard Udall for the sum of \$5,000, even though the stocks carried a value of \$8,000. Udall initially paid Kenny \$450, but he then decided to forego the deal, leaving Kenny indebted and desperate. Imprisoned for his financial debts, Kenny offered to accept even less money if Udall would buy the stocks.⁶

In November of 1820, E. Elmendorf, a friend of Eliza’s, launched a lawsuit on her behalf. The plaintiff asked the court to overturn its previous decision granting Kenny the dividends, and to return both the dividends and the control of the stock to Eliza. The defendant argued that it was his right under the law to assume control of his wife’s assets upon marriage. The Chancellor decided in favor of Eliza Kenny, the plaintiff. He explained that the law demanded that a husband provide for

his wife's needs, and that Edward Kenny had no right to seize the stocks, which were her only financial security. Kenny had no other means of supporting his wife, and thus, without her consent, he could not seize her stocks for his own personal gain.⁷ The case of *Kenny v. Kenny & Udall* was extremely significant in that it was one of the precedent setting instances where a court decided that the right of the wife to be properly maintained was more important than the right of the husband to control his wife's assets.

The first third of the nineteenth-century saw many precedent setting cases as the United States adjusted its legal system to meet the needs of the newly created republic. As legal historians such as Norma Basch are quick to point out, reforms in marital property were directly connected to three other problems plaguing society: "the instability of the antebellum economy, the inequities of the legal system, and what contemporaries consistently called the woman question."⁸ While this explains the emergence of reformatory legislation, it does not explain why some legislators seriously opposed any changes to the patriarchal structure of the legal system, and why reformers spent eleven years demanding that legislators address their complaints. No matter what motives supporters of married women's property rights had, they could not have launched their campaign without the groundbreaking work of Thomas Herttell, the man who introduced the first bill which attempted to ameliorate the legal position of married women. His bill, and his speech in support of his legislation, would provide advocates of woman's rights with the fundamental doctrines of their argument in favor of married women's property amendments.

THE FIRST MARRIED WOMEN'S PROPERTY BILL, 1836

In 1836, Thomas Herttell presented his revolutionary legislation to the New York House of Assembly. So popular was his argument that within two years it was printed and made readily available to the public. In his own words, Herttell stated that the primary principle of the bill was “to preserve to *married women* the title, possession, and control of their estate, both real and personal *after as before* marriage.”⁹ His argument would attack the opposition on three fronts: the inconsistency between single and married women, the unconstitutionality of the existing law, and the irreparable harm that the common law inflicted upon society.¹⁰ Although Herttell would not succeed in persuading his fellow politicians to support the 1837 amendment, he did manage to ignite the flames of reform; his arguments encouraged feminists to such an extent that they agitated for reform for eleven years, until the state of New York finally amended the property laws in 1848.

To begin, Herttell attacked the existing legal tradition on the grounds that it was irrational. According to the law, *single* women could buy, manage and sell both real and personal property at their leisure. In contrast to this, *married* women did not have the right to own any property (real or personal). In fact, so bleak was a married woman's legal condition that Herttell likened her position to that of a slave, sold to a master, instead of her husband's equal partner.¹¹ Thus, the property laws placed both men and single women on an even keel, demanding that both pay taxes to the government in exchange for the right of private property. Following this line of thought, Herttell reasoned that “if . . . a law violating the rights of private property possessed by *men* or *unmarried* women, would be *wrong*, a law violating the rights of private property possessed by married women cannot be *right*.”¹² As the state government recognized that both men and unmarried women had the right to

own and to sell property, it could not deny married women the right to own property on the grounds that their gender disbarred them from enjoying this natural right. On the contrary, legislators denied married women the right of property on the grounds that their minds were too weak to withstand the burdens which would necessarily be placed upon them through ownership of property. To this assertion, Herttell demanded to know if marriage somehow deprived women of the common sense and intelligence which they possessed prior to their nuptials.¹³ He continued along this vein by pointing out that the existing laws found unmarried women to be sane and intelligent enough to meet the demands placed upon them as property owners. Therefore, he argued that the legislators had already recognized the competence of woman to manage her own property as a single female, and could not deny her this right as a married woman.¹⁴

The Judge did consider property to be not just a matter of law, but a right guaranteed by the Constitution. He considered the common law tradition to be “a servile adhesion to the customs, manners, habits and institutions of ignorance and despotism; -a miserable exemplification of the spirit and principles of our free republican government.”¹⁵ In the age of Jacksonian democracy and universal manhood suffrage, Judge Herttell clung to his beliefs in natural rights and the inviolability of both the Constitution and of democracy itself. Due to his strong opinions regarding the natural rights and freedoms of the individual, Herttell opposed the common law on the grounds that it infringed upon the constitutional rights of married women.

By dissecting the state constitution, Herttell attempted to persuade his fellow legislators that the property laws regarding married women were unconstitutional, and therefore null and void. The first section of the seventh article of the constitution of the state of New York stated that “*no member of this state shall be disfranchised or deprived of any of the rights and privileges secured to any*

citizen thereof, unless by the law of the land, or the judgement of his peers.”¹⁶ Herttell began his analysis of this section by pointing out that women and men shared equal membership in the state of New York. Both men, and unmarried women paid taxes to the government, making them equal citizens. In addition to this, the law did not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their marital status. Thus, if unmarried women, unmarried men, and married men were recognized as members of the state, or as citizens, the legislature had no reason to deny married women the protection which the state constitution offered.

Moreover, the state constitution stated that only the “law of the land” could deprive a citizen of his rights. To counter this claim, Herttell pointed out that the Constitution was the highest law of the country, and no law could be enacted which would infringe upon the rights of individuals. These sacred rights, according to the Constitution, included life, liberty, and property.¹⁷ Property was considered so important that it warranted protection equal to that of the other natural rights included in the Constitution. This being the case, the common law tradition, which ceded all of a woman’s property to her husband upon marriage, violated her natural rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

In addition to his analysis of constitutional law, Herttell recalled the sentiments of the Revolution when he asserted that the government, by curtailing a married woman’s rights, was becoming despotic. “Such [powers] as are not so given, *they have not*, and the exercise by the government, of powers not delegated by the people, are acts of political usurpation.”¹⁸ Furthermore, he applied political theory to the situation of married women, and reasoned that “inequality of power tends to aggression by the strong on the rights of the weak, and that equality of power is the surest means to preserve rights as well as peace and harmony.”¹⁹ Herttell argued that as the government recognized single women, and as it accepted taxes from unmarried women who had no political

representation, it did not have the power to usurp the natural rights of married women without the permission of the people. Also, by legally incapacitating married women, the lawmakers had created an undemocratic society in a country which prided itself on its adherence to the tenets of equality. The fact that men possessed the superior legal position, and that wives had no stable recourse, made the violation of woman's rights an inevitability.

Thomas Herttell blamed the law for creating an unfair situation by seizing her property and placing it "in the hands of her antagonist."²⁰ According to Herttell, this legal imbalance had a disruptive effect on society. Lawmakers argued that husbands would necessarily be more discrete and prudent with the family finances, thus providing for the future needs of the married couple.²¹ Herttell countered this argument by asserting that women were more conservative with their money than men, and that they tended to avoid those ventures which pose a risk to their fiscal security.²² In order to further convince his fellow legislators of the pressing need for action, Herttell asked them if it was "to please their wives, that husbands, as in too many instances, spend their own and their wives' property on lewd women, and at the bacchanalian orgies of dissipated company?"²³ The result of these indiscretions was "to disturb domestic peace and harmony, -to reduce whole families to poverty, and want; and frequently wretchedness, demoralization and crime have followed in the train of evils consequent on the existing laws."²⁴ Herttell argued that men were not invulnerable; they were humans, and as such, were subject to temptation. Oftentimes, this led families into a state of financial ruin, from which they might have been exempt if the wife had had control of her own personal finances. He contrasted the image of woman as a pious and virtuous creature with the image of man as a drunken womanizer, in order to convince legislators that women needed their property rights to prevent their families from falling into ruinous habits which would destroy the moral fabric of

American society. If wives did not relinquish their property to their husbands upon marriage, then men would have less money to spend in brothels, and saloons. Men would be forced to spend their money on the maintenance of their family instead of wasting it in immoral practices. By investing women with the right of property, the legislators would be promoting not only equality, but also social stability and domestic harmony; Herttell believed that the number of impoverished families would decrease, and that the number of crimes related to poverty would also decrease.

Not only did Herttell predict that the bill would bring social stability, but he also predicted that women would not cease agitating until they had achieved legal equality. The Judge felt that the lawmakers “will be called on to protect married women in their right of property as secured to them by constitutional provisions, ...[which] will happen as soon as married women shall obtain a knowledge of their rights.”²⁵ While Herttell’s assessment was accurate, he could not have predicted the level of involvement which this movement witnessed. Liberal politicians and feminists alike engaged in petitions and impassioned address on behalf of married women. Even the conservative ladies’ journal, Godey’s Lady’s Book, lent its support to the cause of legal reform. In May of 1837, an article entitled “*Rights of Married Women*” appeared in Godey’s. Sara J. Hale described the common law tradition as a “barbarous custom” and as “a monstrous perversion of *justice by law*.” Godey’s final observation concerning the bill was that it “shows that there are sensible and just men in the Legislature of New York.”²⁶ As Sara Josepha Hale did not engage herself, or her journal, in many controversial debates, one observes how strongly she must have felt to have aligned herself with the radicals.

Although Herttell had the support of conservative figures such as Hale, it took 12 years of campaigning before the legislators passed the first amendment to the property law in 1848. Among

those demanding reform were Ernestine Rose and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Both of these women had gained reputations as reformers, and were actively engaged in pursuits other than the legal issue. The challenge presented by the lawmakers forced Rose and Stanton to shatter the socially acceptable image of woman's role in society. In order to achieve some measure of reform, Rose and Stanton organized door-to-door petition drives, and spoke in public. Both of these women ventured so far as to speak before the state Assembly in the hopes of advancing their cause. Regardless of the zeal of Rose, Stanton, and other reformers, their achievements would not have been possible without the solid foundation provided by Judge Thomas Herttell and his bill in 1836.

1837-1848 AGITATION

Ernestine Rose first encountered problems with the law in relation to property long before she came to the United States. Born to Rabbi Potowski, in Piotrkow, Poland, Ernestine defied traditional gender roles from an early age. As a child, she would disagree with her father on matters of religion, and when his answers did not satisfy her, she abandoned Judaism in favor of atheism.²⁷ Faced with a daughter whom he could not control, the Rabbi decided to arrange a marriage for her, arguing that this would keep her too busy to engage in any more heretical activities.²⁸ When Ernestine learned of her father's plans, she refused to follow his wishes. Unfortunately, the Rabbi had offered to pay the prospective groom Ernestine's inheritance as a dowry, which she had received at her mother's death. Under Polish law, if Ernestine broke the engagement, she would forfeit her dowry to her fiancé. Naturally, the groom was not willing to relinquish his hold on the property, thus leaving Ernestine with only one option: she had to take the case to court and to sue her own father.²⁹

Armed with little money, but with a great deal of determination, Ernestine argued her own case before the judges. According to her biographer, Yuri Suhl, Ernestine presented such a rational argument to the court that the judges decided in her favor. Ernestine was now in possession of a legal document which entitled her to her inheritance, but this was not the reason that she had initiated the lawsuit- Ernestine fought for the right to ownership, rather than for the property itself.³⁰

Realizing that she could hardly return to her father's house, Ernestine abandoned her property and set out to see the world. For the next several years, Ernestine lived in Berlin and then in London, where she met and married her husband. In 1836, Ernestine and William Rose left England in favor of the United States. The Roses settled in New York City, and it was here that Ernestine was first alerted to the deplorable legal conditions of woman in America.

On May 20, 1836, Judge Herttell presented the first bill which intended to reform married women's property rights in the state of New York. The arguments of Herttell inspired Mrs. Rose to draw up a petition in support of the bill. After months of door-to-door campaigning, Ernestine had managed to obtain only five signatures. In a letter to Susan B. Anthony, Rose described those early days, stating that "some of the ladies said the gentlemen would laugh at them; others, that they had rights enough; and the men said the women had too many rights already."³¹

Although Ernestine encountered a great deal of opposition from the public, she did not allow this to deter her from her mission. On the occasion of the centenary anniversary of American Independence, Mrs. Rose remarked "all we ask is to have the laws based on the same foundation upon which that declaration rests, viz.: upon equal justice, and not upon sex. Whenever the rights of man are claimed, moral consistence points to the equal rights of woman."³² This simple idea of equality pervaded both her writings and her speeches. Between 1837 and 1848, Rose appeared five

times before the state legislature, beseeching politicians to address the grievous wrongs inflicted on woman by the law. Many of Ernestine's arguments mirror those of Judge Thomas Herttell, and they demonstrate the importance which female reformers placed on equality before the law.^a

To begin, Rose felt that the government acted in a tyrannical fashion regarding women. First, Rose pointed out that women had no civil rights. In addition to this, women had no representation in the legislatures. Furthermore, Rose recalled the sentiments of the American Revolution, stating that by taxing women and withholding fair representation, the government was condoning tyranny.³³ Woman's humiliation was then further compounded by the fact that while the law commanded a husband to keep his wife, it did not delineate exactly what those obligations entailed. Thus, Rose pointed out that "he keeps her; so he does his horse. By law, both are considered his property."³⁴ Ernestine believed that the law's blatant maltreatment of married women encouraged men to treat their wives as mere property, to be used, abused, neglected, bought, and sold. The law did not regard women as human beings, and this lay at the heart of the problem.

According to Rose, the law was founded on the presumption that husbands would treat their wives with kindness and affection. The law further assumed that men would gladly provide for women's necessities. Ernestine argued that this demonstrated a lack of judgement on the part of the early lawmakers. "What right has the law to presume at all on the subject?"³⁵ The law allowed the husband to spend both his own and his wife's money in brothels, saloons, and in gambling dens, while she was left with no means by which to support both herself and her children. This, in Rose's opinion, was the problem with forging a single identity from two individuals.

^a While this speech was delivered in 1851, the themes and ideas would be consistent with those presented to the legislature between 1837 and 1848.

Finally, Ernestine reasoned that the laws were unfair because they were not balanced. Like judge Herttell, Ernestine believed that the simple imbalance in power was too much of a temptation for many men to resist. Rose pointed out that it did not matter if the married couple succeeded or failed in their marriage, despair could haunt the wife in either scenario. "If they are unsuccessful in married life, who suffers more the bitter consequences of poverty than the wife? But if successful, she cannot call a dollar her own."³⁶ Following Herttell's doctrines, Rose argued that as the United States considered it wrong for one nation to impose its own rules and regulations on a smaller and weaker nation, so too should it be considered wrong to virtually enslave one half of the population because of its gender. Moreover, as woman's inferiority had yet to be conclusively proven, Rose demanded that someone tell her what man has done "that woman, under the same advantages, could not be made to do?"³⁷ Thus, Rose reasoned that man had no reason to consider himself to be the superior sex. However, even if lawmakers managed to prove that men were superior, the tenets which governed international relations should apply to those domestic laws which governed marriage, thus preventing husbands from taking advantage of their wives on the basis of gender.

Ernestine Rose was not alone in her assessment of the defamatory nature of property laws regarding women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, co-founder of the Woman's Rights movement, lent her voice to the campaign for legal reform. Like Rose, Stanton had first encountered legal injustice during her youth. As her father practiced law from the family home, Elizabeth often met the women who came to her father for help. Due to the inequity of the property laws, women were dependent on the bounty of their families for survival. Women who had brought property and money to a marriage suddenly found themselves penniless, and without recourse. "The tears and complaints of the women who came to my father for legal advice touched my heart and early drew my attention to

the injustice and cruelty of the laws.”³⁸ As a child, Elizabeth believed that she could remedy this problem by ripping the laws out of her father’s texts. Patiently, he explained to her that the legislators were responsible for the laws, and that she would have to speak before them as an adult if she wanted to achieve some measure of justice for her sex. Thus, Elizabeth credits her father with directing her toward her life’s work.³⁹

As an adult, Elizabeth Cady Stanton appeared before political bodies numerous times. As early as 1843, there is evidence that Stanton was formally involved in the legal reform movement. In a letter to Elizabeth Smith, Stanton noted that the delay of her trip would provide her with an opportunity to further persuade some legislators of the correctness of her opinions.⁴⁰ Elizabeth did more than just speaking to politicians privately; she addressed the state assembly whenever she had the chance. In one particular speech from 1854, there is a good opportunity to examine the types of argument which Stanton would have presented to the legislators prior to the first amendment to the law in 1848.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton believed the existing property laws to be an aberration of the enlightened ideals on which the republic was based. Stanton argued that if the marriage contract was a civil contract, then it should be governed by those conditions which apply to all other civil contracts.⁴¹ For instance, Stanton pointed out that other contracts could be dissolved in cases of deception. In addition to this, the parties in other contracts retain their separate identities under the law. Moreover, one had to have attained the age of 21 in order to sign a legally binding contract. Finally, the two parties had the right to dissolve the contract at any time, and for any reason.⁴² In the case of married women’s property law, one observed glaring inconsistencies. The law did not consider the two parties of a marriage contract to be equal- the husband always held a superior

position to that of his wife. Additionally, women lost their individuality upon signing the marriage contract. In regard to the age requirement, Stanton asked the legislators, “upon what principle of civil jurisprudence do you permit the boy of fourteen and the girl of twelve, in violation of every natural law, to make a contract more momentous in importance than any other, and then hold them to it, come what may, the whole of their natural lives in spite of disappointment, deception, and misery?”⁴³

With the ideologies of both Stanton and Rose combined, the two women set out to persuade the legislators to reform the existing property laws. Each year, Rose coordinated a petition campaign, and each year the legislature attempted to ignore the demands of these radical women. The number of signatures on the petitions increased at such a rapid rate that in 1842 the state legislature was forced to organize a committee to respond to the accusations of the reformers. The report of the committee stated that its members were in favor of extending the property rights of married women. However, it was not certain how far it would be “proper” to extend them. The author stated that the extension of property rights to married women would “be a subject of much diversity of individual opinion.”⁴⁴ In addition to this, the committee agreed that the law needed to be reformed, yet they asked to be discharged from the task of drafting the new legislation.⁴⁵ Although these politicians agreed that the law needed to change, none of these men was willing to challenge the patriarchal structure of the legal system.

Rose and Stanton, encouraged by the increased attention which their agitation was receiving, continued to send their petitions to Albany. By 1845, support for reform was so widespread that it had moved from urban centers to the county level. As well, in 1846 and 1847, four different bills were introduced, that concerned legal reform for married women.⁴⁶ The final petitions arrived in

Albany in 1848. The women from Genesee and Wyoming counties submitted their petition with a revolutionary fervor, writing that “your Declaration of Independence declares, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .And as women have never consented to, been represented in, or recognized by this government, . . .it is evident that in justice no allegiance can be claimed for them.”⁴⁷ Those women who spoke out on this issue made it known that they did not feel that the Declaration of Independence, nor any other government documents, protected their rights. While these political treatises spoke of equality, they paved the way for patriarchy. All of the political power rested in male hands, leaving women in a similar position with slaves, idiots, and children. The political agitation evident in the movement for reform demonstrates that women were no longer willing to be legally defamed: women wanted to be seen as equals in the eyes of the law.

1848: LEGAL REFORM AND SENECA FALLS

On April 8, 1848, New York signed into law the first married women’s property act. Although this law did not grant women everything which they had demanded, it was a step in the right direction. Encouraged by public support, legislators would continue to amend the laws until 1862. Even though the later bills provided women with more concrete rights, the Act of 1848 was revolutionary in that it was the first legislative challenge to patriarchal authority. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton noted, “The right to property will, of necessity, compel us in due time to the exercise of our right to the elective franchise, and then naturally follows the right to hold office.”⁴⁸ While it would be a long journey to the ballot box, the new property laws managed to provide some immediate relief for married women.

Contrary to the common law tradition, the 1848 amendment provided that every woman who possessed real or personal property before her marriage was entitled to retain that property. Her husband did not have the right to collect the rents, he could not sell her property, nor could his debtors seize her property to pay his debts. In matters of property, women were to be regarded as *feme sole*, or as single women. While the law could not repair the damage which had already been done, the law went into effect for those women who were already married at the time of its passage. Furthermore, women now had the right to inherit property, or to receive gifts or trusts without surrendering them to their husbands. The law prohibited husbands from interfering with trusts, bequests, and other financial arrangements between their wives and her family.

Although the amendments of 1848 did alleviate some of the burdens which women were suffering, they did not cease their efforts at reform. Several months after the passage of the new law, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the first Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y. One of the issues which was addressed was the inequity of women in the eyes of the law. The body of the convention then passed several resolutions concerning women and the law. First, the resolutions based themselves on Blackstone's idea that the pursuit of happiness is a natural right which should not be arbitrarily abrogated. Therefore, the women felt justified in demanding that this tenet be applied to their gender, as well. As a result of this exercise, those in attendance resolved that any laws which arbitrarily interfered with a woman's happiness were unnatural and invalid. Furthermore, they resolved that those laws which prohibited women from entering professions, speaking in public, or entering the political realm were also unnatural and invalid. Finally, the opposition which the reformers had encountered from *women*, prompted them to adopt the resolution stating "that the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which

they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation, by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance, by asserting that they have all the rights they want.”⁴⁹

In addition to the resolutions which the convention passed, the Declaration of Sentiments, which addressed the grievances of the women in the same fashion as the Declaration of Independence, spoke to the issue of woman and the law. First, man had deprived woman of the elective franchise. As a result of this, woman had no representation in the halls of legislation, thus leaving her to suffer the oppression of a patriarchal regime. Moreover, married women, due to the reliance on English Common Law, suffer the humiliation of losing their identity for the duration of their marriage. This insult was compounded by the fact that women lost the right to their *own* property upon signing the marriage contract.⁵⁰ The final insult lay in the fact that “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.”⁵¹ Hence, while the 1848 amendment provided some relief, the situation was far from resolved.

CONCLUSION

As the matter of legal reform was under the jurisdiction of the state, one cannot find uniformity in the movement to improve married women’s property laws. States such as Louisiana, which followed the French traditions, had much more liberal views of women, marriage, and property. However, even though each state differed in the terms and conditions of its laws, one can see the common desire that women receive equal treatment by the law. The examination of New York State serves to demonstrate how women organized themselves, and it ably characterizes the political nature

of this campaign. One could say that the legal reform movement proved to women that they had the ability and the right to enter the political realm on their own behalf.

Beginning with Thomas Herttell in 1836, women were assured that those natural rights which the Constitution protected were extended equally to both men and to women. Reformers such as Ernestine Rose and Elizabeth Cady Stanton spent years informing women of their deplorable condition, and begging lawmakers to reconsider the common law tradition which oppressed one half of the population on the basis of gender. Perhaps, for the first time, women spoke before legislative bodies on their *own* behalf; women had spoken on the subject of slavery, but they had not appeared before the government demanding the exercise of their own personal rights. In fact, this movement exerted such pressure on the government that it was forced to respond to the women's petitions. While legal reform may have been inevitable, its acceptance in 1848 was due in no small part to the efforts of women like Ernestine Rose and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

The legal condition of woman had a great bearing on the Woman's Rights movement. The subject of property rights was addressed in the Declaration of Sentiments, in the resolutions of the Seneca Falls Convention, and in subsequent speeches and presentations. Although New York amended its laws in 1848, women would continue to speak against the injustice which their legal system perpetuated. Moreover, as more women began to accept the idea that they had a *right* to own property, they began to ponder those other rights which they had been prevented from exercising. Once the law extended the right of property to married women, feminists believed they were one step closer to the ballot-box. "We are persons; native, free-born citizens; property-holders, tax-payers; yet are we denied the exercise of our right to the elective franchise."⁵² Women had assured

themselves that they had the right to political, social, and legal equality. Seneca Falls would mark only the beginning of this journey to the ballot-box, and beyond.

CONCLUSION

[Woman] asks nothing as favor, but as right; she wants to be acknowledged a moral, responsible being. She is seeking not to be governed by laws, in the making of which she has no voice. She is deprived of almost every right in civil society, and is a cipher in the nation, except in the right of presenting a petition.

Lucretia Mott, *Discourse on Woman Delivered at the Assembly Buildings*
December 17, 1849

The Seneca Falls Convention was not a spontaneous occurrence. Although the organizers did not spend a long time planning the event, many factors made a Woman's Rights convention an inevitability. Education, abolition, and legal reform provided women with an abundance of experiences which would help them to govern the movement for their own emancipation. As a result of their involvement with anti-slavery and legal reform organizations, women were no longer strangers to the workings of the State Legislature. Women had spoken in public, they had engaged in political activities such as petitioning and lobbying, and they had enjoyed some success.

In the first half of the nineteenth-century, the first permanently endowed school for girls was founded by Mary Lyon, providing young women with more educational opportunities than they had ever imagined. Girls now studied many of the same subjects as boys, and they continued to excel. Due to the efforts of educational reformers like Willard, Beecher, and Lyon, those men in positions of authority began to realize that women had the same capacity for learning as men. Moreover, as the number, and quality, of female teachers increased, the female sphere expanded to include teaching as an acceptable occupation. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, speaking at a dedication ceremony at the Emma Willard School in 1892, spoke of the effects of educational reform:

As we look around at all the educated women assembled here today and try to estimate what each has done in her own sphere of action, the schools founded, the teachers sent forth, the inspiration given to girls in general, through the long chain of influences started by our alma mater, we can form some light estimate of the momentous and far-reaching consequences of Emma Willard's life.¹

Likewise, woman's experience in the ranks of the anti-slavery organizations was an overwhelmingly positive experience. For the first time, women organized themselves into societies, formed committees, wrote petitions and articles, and even spoke before audiences on the subject of slavery. The opposition which women encountered came from those men and women who found

woman's new public role to be distasteful and vulgar. Challenged by the clergy and other conservative citizens, abolitionist women argued that if denying a man his rights due to the colour of his skin was an abomination, then it was no less wrong to deny woman her rights due to her gender. However, this argument did not silence those opponents of Woman's Rights. As the History of Woman Suffrage notes, those female abolitionists "advocating liberty for the black race were early compelled to defend the right of free speech for themselves. They had the double battle to fight against the tyranny of sex and color at the same time."² Through their persistence and dedication to the ideals of equality, anti-slavery women succeeded in bringing the question of woman's rights to the fore.

As with education and abolition, participating in the movement for legal reform was an empowering experience. With the publication and circulation of tracts such as Thomas Herttell's arguments in favour of legal equality, women became educated about their legal position. In response to woman's more informed position, petitions circulated with greater frequency, and the number of signatures increased each year. In 1848, the year of the Convention, New York State amended its laws relating to married women's property. However, this did not satisfy the advocates of Woman's Rights; documents such as the Declaration of Sentiments devoted the majority of their text to discussing woman's legal incapacitation, and how this matter should be corrected. By amending property laws in 1848, the New York State Legislature did not appease women. Instead, it encouraged them to continue with their reform efforts as they had achieved some measure of success.

In the days and weeks following the Convention, newspapers issued a number of articles ridiculing the feminists' efforts. In her response to the media frenzy, Elizabeth Cady Stanton remarked that "there is no danger of this question dying for want of notice."³ This statement was

unequivocally true: the opposition, as had been the case with education, abolition, and legal reform, provided the activists with the opportunity to develop a solid argument defending their position. Moreover, the suffragists' ideology reflected their roots in education, abolition and legal reform, as they often demanded the opening of colleges and universities to women, and they continued to demand equality under the law. The development of the Woman's Rights movement, and its ensuing ideology, has its foundations firmly in the preceding female reform movements. The Declaration of Sentiments, speeches and other documents from Seneca Falls and other conventions is a result of the collective experiences of those pioneering reformers. Through their work in education, abolition, and legal reform, women *gradually* developed a consciousness of themselves, as women, and not as the daughters, wives, and mothers of the United States. These early reform societies awakened in women a recognition of their potential, and a discontent with the societal constraints placed upon them, thus prompting them to begin the journey toward equal rights.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. *Seneca County Courier*, July 14, 1848, quoted in History of Woman Suffrage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joselyn Gage, ed., (New York: Fowler & Wells, Publishers, 1881; reprint, New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 1:67.
2. Proceedings of the Woman's Rights Conventions held at Seneca Falls & Rochester, N. Y., July & August, 1848, (New York: Robert J. Johnston, Printer, 1870; reprint, New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 6-7.
3. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et. al., HWS, 1:51-52.
4. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Address Delivered at Seneca Falls," July 19, 1848, in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Correspondence, Writings, Speeches, Ellen Carol Dubois, ed., (New York: Schocken Books, 1981), 29.
5. Ibid., 31.
6. Ibid., 35.
7. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et. al., HWS, 1:52.
8. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Address," 31.
9. Keith Melder, Beginnings of Sisterhood, (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), 23.
10. Ibid., 68.
11. Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher, a Study in American Domesticity, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), xv.
12. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Address," 35.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. Lawrence Cremin, American Education: The National Experience 1783-1876 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1980), 119-20.
2. Sol Cohen, "The Forming of the Common School." in Foundations of Education, George F. Kneller, ed. (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), 13.
3. Ibid., 12.
4. Lawrence Cremin, American Education: The National Experience 1783-1876, 120.
5. Sol Cohen, "The Forming of the Common School", 13.
6. Ibid., 14.
7. Ibid., 20.
8. Clifton Johnson, Old Time Schools and School-books (New York: MacMillan, 1904; reprint, Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1963), 140.
9. Ibid., 138.
10. Proceedings of the Woman's Rights Convention held at Seneca Falls, NY, July 19 and 20, 1848, Woman's Rights Conventions Seneca Falls & Rochester 1848 (New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 8.
11. Jeffrey Steele, ed., The Essential Margaret Fuller (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 297.
12. Emma Willard, "A Plan for Improving Female Education." in Woman and the Higher Education, Anna C. Brackett, ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893), 12.
13. Ibid., 6.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 5.
17. Ibid., 8.
18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 12.
21. Ibid., 15.
22. Ibid., 18.
23. Ibid., 7.
24. Ibid., 8.
25. Ibid., 14.
26. Alma Lutz, Emma Willard Pioneer Educator of American Women (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983), 7.
27. Ibid., 4.
28. Ibid., 4.
29. Ibid., 11.
30. Ibid., 8-13.
31. Ibid., 21.
32. Ibid., 18.
33. Ibid., 22.
34. Ibid., 24.
35. Ibid.
36. Matilda Joslyn Gage, "Preceding Causes." in The Concise History of Woman Suffrage, Mari Jo Buhle and Paul Buhle, ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 62.
37. Alma Lutz, Emma Willard Pioneer Educator of American Women, 27.
38. Ibid., 28.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., 29.
41. Emma Willard, "A Plan for Improving Female Education," 19.

42. Ibid., 20.
43. Ibid., 18.
44. Ibid., 35.
45. Ibid., 36.
46. Ibid., 29-30.
47. Ibid., 31.
48. Ibid., 30.
49. Ibid., 42.
50. Alma Lutz, Emma Willard Pioneer Educator of American Women, 35.
51. Ibid., 36.
52. Ibid., 37.
53. Ibid., 39.
54. Ibid., 40.
55. Ibid., 94.
56. Ibid., 55.
57. Quoted in Ibid., 62.
58. Quoted in Ibid., 25.
59. Quoted in Ibid.
60. Emma Willard, The Fulfilment of a Promise by which Poems by Emma Willard are Published, and Affectionately Inscribed to her Past and Present Pupils (New York: White, Gallaher & White, 1831), 15.
61. Ibid., 19.
62. Emma Willard, Advancement of Female Education: or a Series of Addresses in Favor of Establishing at Athens, in Greece, a Female Seminary, Especially designed to Instruct Female Teachers (Troy: Norman Tuttle, 1833), 9.
63. Ibid., 10.

64. Ibid., 44.
65. Ibid., 20.
66. Ibid., 10.
67. Quoted in Alma Lutz, Emma Willard Pioneer Educator of American Women, 117.
68. Ibid.
69. Catharine Beecher, Educational Reminiscences and Suggestions, by Catharine E. Beecher (New York: J.B. Ford, 1874), 21.
70. Mae Elizabeth Harveson, Catharine Esther Beecher Pioneer Educator (Philadelphia, 1932), 3.
71. Catharine Beecher, Educational Reminiscences and Suggestions, by Catharine E. Beecher, 10.
72. Ibid., 14.
73. Mae Elizabeth Harveson, Catharine Esther Beecher Pioneer Educator, 20.
74. Ibid., 29.
75. Charles Beecher, ed., Autobiography, Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864), 1:474. (Letter of Dr. Beecher to George Foote, January 24, 1822.)
76. Letter of Dr. Beecher to Catharine Beecher, May 30, 1822 in Ibid., 1:478.
77. Letter of Catharine Beecher to Dr. Beecher, February 15, 1823 in Ibid., 1:507.
78. Letter of Catharine Beecher to Dr. Beecher, February 15, 1823 in Ibid., 1:508.
79. Letter of Catharine Beecher to Dr. Beecher, February 15, 1823 in Ibid.
80. Letter of Dr. Beecher to Catharine Beecher, March 21, 1823 in Ibid., 1:516.
81. Mae Elizabeth Harveson, Catharine Esther Beecher Pioneer Educator, 35.
82. Catharine Beecher, Educational Reminiscences and Suggestions by Catharine E. Beecher, 30.
83. Ibid., 31.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., 33.

86. Mae Elizabeth Harveson, Catharine Esther Beecher Pioneer Educator, 44.
87. Catharine Beecher, Educational Reminiscences and Suggestions by Catharine E. Beecher, 33.
88. Mae Elizabeth Harveson, Catharine Esther Beecher Pioneer Educator, 59.
89. Catharine Beecher, Suggestions Respecting Improvements in Education, Presented to the Trustees of the Hartford Female Seminary, and Published at their Request (Hartford: Packard & Butler, 1829), 4.
90. Ibid., 5.
91. Ibid., 16.
92. Ibid., 17.
93. Ibid., 16.
94. Ibid., 51.
95. Ibid., 53.
96. Ibid., 19.
97. Ibid., 20.
98. Ibid., 24.
99. Ibid., 25.
100. Mae Elizabeth Harveson, Catharine Esther Beecher Pioneer Educator, 61.
101. Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catharine Beecher, a Study in American Domesticity, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), xviii.
102. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 264.
103. Ibid.
104. Catharine Beecher, Educational Reminiscences and Suggestions by Catharine E. Beecher, 65-6.
105. Quoted in Mae Elizabeth Harveson, Catharine Esther Beecher Pioneer Educator, 203.
106. Ibid., 204.
107. Catharine Beecher, Suggestions Respecting Improvements in Education, 54.

108. Ibid., 58.
109. Beth Bradford Gilchrist, The Life of Mary Lyon (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1910), 32.
110. Ibid., 24.
111. Ibid., 48.
112. Ibid., 49.
113. Quoted in Ibid., 51.
114. Ibid., 54.
115. Ibid., 55.
116. Ibid., 61.
117. Ibid., 60.
118. Ibid., 62.
119. Joseph Emerson, Female Education (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong and Cocker & Brewster, 1822), 9.
120. Ibid., 22.
121. Ibid., 27.
122. Beth Bradford Gilchrist, The Life of Mary Lyon, 86.
123. Ibid., 88.
124. Ibid., 98.
125. Ibid., 99.
126. Ibid., 97.
127. Ibid., 174.
128. Edward Hitchcock, The Power of Christian Benevolence Illustrated in the Life and Labors of Mary Lyon, (Philadelphia: Thomas Cowperthwait and co., 1851), 2nd ed., 187.
129. Ibid.

130. Ibid., 188.
131. Ibid.
132. Ibid., 121.
133. Beth Bradford Gilchrist, The Life of Mary Lyon, 187-8.
134. Ibid., 186.
135. Edward Hitchcock, The Power of Christian Benevolence, 212.
136. Ibid., 213.
137. Ibid.
138. Quoted in Beth Bradford Gilchrist, The Life of Mary Lyon, 231.
139. Quoted in Ibid.
140. Ibid., 221.
141. Quoted in Arthur Cole, A Hundred Years of Mount Holyoke College: The Evolution of an Educational Ideal (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 29.
142. Edward Hitchcock, The Power of Christian Benevolence, 236.
143. Arthur Cole, A Hundred Years of Mount Holyoke College, 33.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid., 38.
146. Olivia Nutting, Historical Sketch of Mount Holyoke Seminary founded at South Hadley, Mass., in 1837; prepared in compliance with an invitation from the Commissioner of Education, representing the Department of the Interior in matters relating to the National Centennial of 1876 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), 13.
147. Ibid., 12.
148. Elizabeth Alden Green, Mary Lyon and Mount Holyoke Opening the Gates (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1979), 182.
149. Ibid., 219.
150. Quoted in Arthur Cole, A Hundred Years of Mount Holyoke College, 47.

151. Quoted in Beth Bradford Gilchrist, The Life of Mary Lyon, 306.
152. Quoted in Arthur Cole, A Hundred Years of Mount Holyoke College, 47-8.
153. Quoted in Ibid., 48.
154. Beth Bradford Gilchrist, The Life of Mary Lyon, 350.
155. Ibid., 267.
156. Quoted in Ibid., 155.
157. Quoted in Ibid., 229-30.
158. Quoted in Elizabeth Alden Green, Mary Lyon and Mount Holyoke Opening the Gates, 117.
159. Quoted in Arthur Cole, A Hundred Years of Mount Holyoke College, 39.
160. Alma Lutz, Emma Willard Pioneer Educator of American Women, 119.
161. Mrs. A. W. Fairbanks, ed., Emma Willard and her pupils: or Fifty years of Troy Female Seminary, 1822-72 (New York: Margaret Sage, 1898), 148.
162. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 445.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. Deborah Pickman Clifford, Crusader for Freedom: A Life of Lydia Maria Child (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 26.
2. Blanche Glassman Hersh, The Slavery of Sex (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 11.
3. Deborah Clifford, Crusader, 108.
4. Samuel May, Some Recollections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1869; reprint, New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968), 92.
5. Ibid.
6. Deborah Clifford, Crusader, 98.
7. Debra Gold Hansen, Strained Sisterhood (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 7.
8. Ellen Dubois, "Women's Rights and Abolition: The Nature of the Connection," in Antislavery Reconsidered, Lewis Perry & Michael Fellman, ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 238.
9. Ibid., 242.
10. Ibid., 243.
11. Ibid., 245.
12. Ibid., 250.
13. Deborah Clifford, Crusader, 6.
14. Ibid., 7.
15. Ibid., 18-21.
16. Ibid., 40.
17. Carolyn L. Karcher, The First Woman in the Republic (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 180.
18. Ibid., 181.

19. Samuel May, Recollections, 98.
20. Ibid., 99.
21. Ibid., 100
22. Ibid.
23. Mrs. Child, An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans (Boston: Allen and Ticknor, 1833), Preface.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 125.
26. Ibid., 19.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., 53.
30. Carolyn L. Karcher, Republic, 185.
31. Samuel May, Recollections, 100.
32. Milton Meltzer and Patricia G. Holland, Lydia Maria Child Selected Letters, 1817-1880 (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 29.
33. Lydia Maria Child, History of the Condition of Women, quoted in Deborah Clifford, Crusader, 132.
34. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, ed., History of Woman Suffrage (New York: Fowler & Wells, Publishers, 1881; reprint, Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 1:38.
35. Carolyn L. Karcher, Republic, 215.
36. Quoted in Ibid., 216.
37. Catherine Birney, The Grimké Sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimké; The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights (reprint; Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1969), 5.
38. Ibid., 22.

39. Larry Ceplair, ed., The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimké: Selected Writings 1835-39 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 27.
40. Ibid., 82.
41. Angelina Grimké, "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South" in The Anti-Slavery Examiner, No. 1-6 1836-1838, vol. 1. (1836), no. 2: 16 (reprint; Westport Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970).
42. Ibid., 17.
43. Ibid., 18.
44. Ibid., 19.
45. Ibid., 24.
46. Catherine Birney, American Women, 138.
47. Larry Ceplair, Public Years., 85.
48. Catherine Birney, American Women, 162.
49. Angelina Grimké to Jane Smith, December 17, 1836, in Larry Ceplair, Public Years, 88.
50. Ibid., 89.
51. Angelina Grimké to Jane Smith, July 25, 1837, in Ibid., 116.
52. Ibid., 117.
53. Turning the World Upside Down: The Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1987), 3.
54. Ibid., 5.
55. Ibid., 12.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., 13.
58. Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States, Issued by an Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women (New York: William S. Dorr, Printer, 1837), 3.
59. Ibid., 5.

60. Ibid., 36.
61. Ibid., 57-9.
62. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et. al. HWS, 1:81.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., 82.
65. Sarah Grimké, Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman (New York: Lenox Hill Pub. & Dist. Co., 1838), 15.
66. Ibid., 16.
67. Ibid., 17.
68. Catharine Beecher, An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism with reference to the duty of American females (Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1837), 101.
69. Ibid., 102.
70. Angelina E. Grimké, Letters to Catharine E. Beecher, in reply to An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism Addressed to A. E. Grimké in The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimké: Selected Writings, 1835-1839, 190.
71. Ibid., 191.
72. Catharine Beecher, An Essay on Slavery, 103-4.
73. Ibid., 105.
74. Larry Ceplair, ed., Public Years, 192.
75. Ibid., 193.
76. Ibid., 194.
77. Letters of Lydia Maria Child with a Biographical Introduction by John G. Whittier and an Appendix by Wendell Phillips (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company), 26.
78. Otelia Cromwell, Lucretia Mott (New York: Russell & Russell, 1971), 3, 13, 15.
79. Ibid., 22, 24.
80. Ibid., 49.

81. Anna Davis Hallowell, ed. James and Lucretia Mott, Life and Letters (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884), 121.
82. "Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society" in Annual Report. Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (Presented January 24, 1839; reprint, Westport Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 32.
83. "Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society" in Annual Report. Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (Presented January 22, 1840; reprint, Westport Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970), 28.
84. Louis Ruchames, ed., The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 1:461.
85. Ibid., 505.
86. "An Abolitionist Protests Against the Participation of Women in the American Anti-Slavery Society" in The Abolitionists A Collection of Their Writings, Louis Ruchames, ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1963), 160.
87. Ibid., 161.
88. "Speeches at the World Anti-Slavery Convention" in Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776-1990, Michael S. Kimmel and Thomas E. Mosmiller, ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 80.
89. Anna Davis Hallowell, ed. James and Lucretia Mott, 150.
90. Frederick Tolles, ed., Lucretia Mott, Slavery and "the Woman Question" Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 (London: Friends; Historical Society, 1952), 29.
91. Michael Kimmel and Thomas Mosmiller, ed., Against the Tide, 81.
92. Ibid.
93. Louis Ruchames, ed., William Lloyd Garrison, 1:665.
94. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 83.
95. Ibid., 82.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. "Edward Livingston and his Code," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, July 1841, 11.
2. St. George Tucker, ed. Blackstone's Commentaries: with Notes of Reference to the Constitution and Laws of the Federal Government of the United States; and of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Philadelphia: William Birch Young & Abraham Small, 1803), 2:442.
3. James Kent, Commentaries on American Law (New York: O. Halstead, 1827; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 2:109.
4. Norma Basch, In the Eyes of the Law: Women, Marriage, and Property in Nineteenth-Century New York (London: Cornell University Press, 1982), 17.
5. Ibid., 65
6. Elizabeth Frost Knappman & Kathryn Cullen-DuPont, Women's Rights on Trial: 101 Historic Trials from Anne Hutchinson to the Virginia Military Institute Cadets (Detroit: Gale Research, 1997), 274.
7. Ibid., 275.
8. Norma Basch, 114.
9. Thomas Herttell, "Remarks Comprising in Substance Judge Herttell's Argument in the House of Assembly of the State of New York in the Session of 1837, in support of the bill to Restore to Married Women 'the Right of Property,' as Guaranteed by the Constitution of this State" (New York: Henry Durell, 1839), 6.
10. Ibid., 7-8.
11. Ibid., 8-9.
12. Ibid., 16.
13. Ibid., 57.
14. Ibid., 56.
15. Ibid., 79.

16. Ibid., 23.
17. Ibid., 37.
18. Ibid., 19.
19. Ibid., 65.
20. Ibid., 10.
21. Ibid., 49.
22. Ibid., 59.
23. Ibid., 61.
24. Ibid., 70.
25. Ibid., 81.
26. "Rights of Married Women," Godey's Lady's Book, May 1837, 212.
27. Yuri Suhl, Ernestine L. Rose and the Battle for Human Rights (New York: Reynal & Company, 1959), 9.
28. Ibid., 11.
29. Ibid., 13.
30. Ibid., 15.
31. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, & Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., Ernestine Rose to Susan B. Anthony, January 9, 1877 in History of Woman Suffrage (New York: Fowler & Wells, Publishers, 1881; reprint, New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969), 1:99.
32. Ernestine Rose to Susan B. Anthony, July 4, 1876 in Ibid., 3:51.
33. Mrs. E. L. Rose, A Lecture on Woman's Rights Delivered Before the People's Sunday Meeting in Cochituate Hall Boston, on Sunday, October 19th, 1851 (Boston: J.P. Mendum, Investigator Office, 1886), 5.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 6.
36. Ibid., 9.

37. Ibid., 12.
38. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 31.
39. Ibid., 32.
40. Theodore Stanton & Harriot Stanton Blatch, ed. Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith, February 15, 1843, in Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters Diary and Reminiscences (New York & London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1922; reprint, New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969), 2:8.
41. Elizabeth Cady Stanton et al., HWS, 1:598.
42. Ibid., 1:599.
43. Ibid.
44. Report of the Committee on the Judiciary, on the Petitions to Extend and Protect the Rights of Property of Married Women, Assembly, No. 189, April 12, 1842, quoted in Yuri Suhl, Ernestine Rose, 61.
45. Ibid., 62.
46. Ibid., 63.
47. "Petition of Forty-four Ladies of Genesee and Wyoming, Praying for the Repeal of Certain Laws to the Legislature of the State of New York," NYAD, March 15, 1848, vol. 5, no. 129, quoted in Norma Basch, Eyes of the Law, 156.
48. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et al., HWS, 1:601.
49. Ibid., 1:72.
50. Ibid., 1:70.
51. Ibid., 1:71.
52. Ibid., 1:595.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

1. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 445.
2. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, ed., History of Woman Suffrage (New York: Fowler & Wells Publishers, 1881; reprint, New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969), 1:53.
3. “Mrs. Stanton’s Reply”, *National Reformer*, Rochester, N. Y., September 14, 1848, quoted in Ibid., 1:806.

WORKS CITED

GENERAL TEXTS

- Melder, Keith. Beginnings of Sisterhood. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.
- Sklar, Kathryn Kish. Catharine Beecher, a Study in American Domesticity. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. "Address Delivered at Seneca Falls." in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Correspondence, Writings, Speeches. Ellen Carol Dubois, ed. New York: Schocken Books, 1981.
- _____. Eighty Years and More. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898.
- _____. Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, ed. History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 1, 3.
- Woman's Rights Conventions Seneca Falls & Rochester 1848. New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969.

EDUCATION

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Beecher, Catharine. Educational Reminiscences and Suggestions, by Catharine E. Beecher. New York: J. B. Ford, 1874.
- _____. Suggestions Respecting Improvements in Education Presented to the Trustees of the Hartford Female Seminary, and Published at their Request. Hartford: Packard & Butler, 1829.
- Beecher, Charles, ed. Autobiography, Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864, vol. 1.
- Emerson, Joseph. Female Education. Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong and Cocker & Brewster, 1822.
- Fairbanks, Mrs. A. W. ed. Emma Willard and her pupils or Fifty years of Troy Female Seminary, 1822-1872. New York: Margaret Sage, 1898.
- Gage, Matilda Joslyn. "Preceding Causes" in The Concise History of Woman Suffrage. Mari Jo Buhle and Paul Buhle, ed. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1978, 51-68.

Hitchcock, Edward. The Power of Christian Benevolence Illustrated in the Life and Labors of Mary Lyon. Philadelphia: Thomas Cowperthwait and co., 1851.

Nutting, Olivia. Historical Sketch of Mount Holyoke Seminary founded at South Hadley Mass., in 1837; prepared in compliance with an invitation from the Commissioner of Education, representing the Department of the Interior in matters relating to the National Centennial of 1876. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876.

Steele, Jeffrey, ed. The Essential Margaret Fuller. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992.

Willard, Emma. Advancement of Female Education: or a Series of Addresses in Favor of Establishing at Athens, in Greece, a Female Seminary, Especially designed to Instruct Female Teachers. Troy: Norman Tuttle, 1833.

_____. The Fulfilment of a Promise by which Poems by Emma Willard are Published, and Affectionately Inscribed to her Past and Present Pupils. New York: Gallaher & White, 1831.

_____. "A Plan for Improving Female Education" in Woman and the Higher Education. Anna C. Brackett, ed. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893, 3-45.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Cohen, Sol. "The Forming of the Common School" in Foundations of Education. George F. Kneller, ed. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1971, 3-24.

Cole, Arthur, A Hundred Years of Mount Holyoke College: The Evolution of an Educational Ideal. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.

Cremin, Lawrence. American Education: The National Experience 1783-1876. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1980.

Gilchrist, Beth Bradford. The Life of Mary Lyon. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1910.

Green, Elizabeth Alden. Mary Lyon and Mount Holyoke Opening the Gates. Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1979.

Harveson, Mae Elizabeth. Catharine Esther Beecher Pioneer Educator. Philadelphia, 1932.

Johnson, Clifton. Old Time Schools and School-books. New York: MacMilan 1904; reprint, Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1963.

Lutz, Alma. Emma Willard Pioneer Educator of American Women. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983.

ABOLITION

PRIMARY SOURCES

“An Abolitionist Protests Against the Participation of Women in the American Anti-Slavery Society” in The Abolitionists A Collection of Their Writings. Louis Ruchames, ed. New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1963, 160-164.

Annual Report. Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Westport, Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970.

Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States. Issued by an Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women. New York: William S. Dorr, Printer, 1837.

Beecher, Catharine. An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism with reference to the duty of American females. Boston: Perkins & Marvin, 1837.

Ceplair, Larry, ed. The Public Years of Sarah and Angelina Grimké: Selected Writings 1835-39. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

Child, Mrs. An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans. Boston: Allen and Ticknor, 1833.

Grimké, Angelina. “Appeal to the Christian Women of the South” in The Anti-Slavery Examiner, No. 1-6 1836-38, vol 1. (1836), no. 2. reprint; Westport Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970.

Grimké, Sarah. Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman. New York: Lenox Hill Pub. & Dist. Co., 1838.

Hallowell, Anna Davis, ed. James and Lucretia Mott, Life and Letters. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884.

Letters of Lydia Maria Child with a Biographical Introduction by John G. Whittier and an Appendix by Wendell Phillips. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company.

May, Samuel. Some Recollections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict. Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1869; reprint, New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1968.

Meltzer, Milton and Patricia G. Holland, ed. Lydia Maria Child Selected Letters, 1817-1880. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1982.

Ruchames, Louis. The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971, vol. 1.

"Speeches at the World Anti-Slavery Convention" in Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776-1990. Michael S. Kimmel and Thomas E. Mosmiller, ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992, 80-82.

Tolles, Frederick, ed. Lucretia Mott, Slavery and "the Woman Question" Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840. London: Friends' Historical Society, 1952.

Turning the World Upside Down: The Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1987.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Birney, Catherine. The Grimké Sisters Sarah and Angelina Grimké: The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights. reprint; Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1969.

Clifford, Deborah Pickman. Crusader for Freedom: A Life of Lydia Maria Child. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

Cromwell, Otelia. Lucretia Mott. New York: Russell & Russell, 1971.

Dubois, Ellen. "Women's Rights and Abolition: The Nature of the Connection" in Antislavery Reconsidered. Lewis Perry & Michael Fellman, ed. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979, 238-251.

Hansen, Debra Gold. Strained Sisterhood. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1993.

Hersh, Blanche Glassman. The Slavery of Sex. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1978.

Karcher, Carolyn L. The First Woman in the Republic. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994.

LEGAL REFORM

PRIMARY SOURCES

“Edward Livingston and his Code.” The United States Magazine and Democratic Review. July 14, 1841.

Herttell, Thomas. Remarks Comprising in Substance Judge Herttell’s Argument in the House of Assembly of the State of New York in the Session of 1837, in support of the bill to Rrestore to Married Women “the Right of Property,” as Guarantied by the Constitution of this State. New York: Henry Durell, 1839.

Kent, James. Commentaries on American Law. New York: O. Halstead, 1827; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1971, vol. 2.

“Rights of Married Women.” Godey’s Lady’s Book, May, 1837.

Rose, Mrs. E. L. A Lecture on Woman’s Rights Delivered Before the People’s Sunday Meeting in Cochituate Hall Boston, on Sunday, October 19th, 1851. Boston: J. P. Mendum, Investigator Office, 1886.

Stanton, Theodore & Harriot Stanton Blatch, ed. Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters Diary and Reminiscences. New York & London: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1922; reprint, New York: Arno & the New York Times, 1969, vol. 2.

Tucker, St. George, ed. Blackstone’s Commentaries with Notes of Reference to the Constitution and Laws of the Federal Government of the United States; and of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Philadelphia: William Birch Young & Abraham Small, 1803, vol. 2.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Basch, Norma. In the Eyes of the Law: Women, Marriage and Property in Nineteenth-Century New York. London: Cornell University Press, 1982.

Knappman, Elizabeth Frost & Kathryn Cullen-DuPont. Women’s Rights on Trial: 101 Historic Trials from Anne Hutchinson to the Virginia Military Institute Cadets. Detroit: Gale Research, 1997.

Suhl, Yuri. Ernestine L. Rose and the Battle for Human Rights. New York: Reynal & Company, 1959.