

# PRIMARY SOURCE DOCUMENTS

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# WOMEN AND THE MAKING OF AMERICA

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## I-1 From Challenging Dichotomies: Perspectives on Women's History Gisela Bock

*Gisela Bock is a German feminist historian perhaps best known as the leader of a group calling for women to be paid for housework. Her best known work, Compulsory Sterilization in National Socialism is the study of hundreds of thousands of forced sterilizations in Nazi Germany during the 1930s and 1940s due to the antinatalist policies of the Third Reich that punished those women not fortunate enough to give birth to "racially pure" children. The following extract is the first section of her work "Challenging Dichotomies: Perspectives on Women's History."*

**Source:** Bock, Gisela. "Challenging Dichotomies in Women's History." *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives*. Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Renall, editors. Indiana University Press, 1991. pp 1-7.

Women's history has come a long way. Some twenty years ago, Gerda Lerner wrote that 'the striking fact about the historiography of women is the general neglect of the subject by historians'. Historical scholarship was far from 'objective' or 'universal', because it was based on male experience, placed men at the centre and as a measure of all things human, thereby leaving out half of humankind. In the past two decades, the situation has changed considerably. In an enormous (and enormously growing) body of scholarship women have been rendered visible. They have been placed at the centre, and what women do, have to do, and want to do has been re-evaluated in view of social, political and cultural change, of an improvement in women's situations and, more generally, in terms of a change towards more freedom and justice. More precisely, what has been rendered historically visible by making women a subject of research was, in the first place, their subjection. In the second place, however, it was their subjectivity - because women are not only vic-

tims, but also actively shape their own lives, society and history.

Much of this research was carried out in the context of three conceptual or theoretical frameworks that have been used by many feminist scholars, particularly historians, in the past two decades and which will be outlined in the first section of this paper. These frameworks point to three dichotomies in traditional thought on gender relations, and all of them have been not only used, but also profoundly challenged. The second section will illustrate three further dichotomies which, in the development of modern women's history, have emerged more recently and which presently seem to dominate and direct women's studies. All of these dichotomies have been discussed, to a greater or lesser degree, internationally, but there are some interesting national differences in the debates themselves as well as in their sequence over time. Particularly noteworthy are certain changes in language brought about in this context. These are, of course, nationally different, but they also indicate to what extent women's history and women's studies have succeeded in crossing national boundaries.

### **Women as subject, the subjection of women and women's subjectivity**

**1. Nature versus culture.** It was mainly in the United States in the early 1970s that the relation of the sexes was discussed in terms of the relation, or rather dichotomy, between 'nature and nurture' or 'nature and culture', Men and their activities had been seen as culture and of cultural value, whereas women and their activities had been seen as natural, outside of history and society, always the same and therefore not worthy of scholarly, political or theoretical interest and inquiry. Moreover, it was the relations between the sexes, and most particularly their relations of power and subjection, that had been attributed to nature. 'Nature', in this context, most often meant sexuality between men and women, women's bodies and their capacity for

pregnancy and motherhood. Fatherhood, however, was usually seen not as natural but as 'social'. Female scholars challenged this traditional dichotomy. They argued that what 'nature' really meant in this discourse was a devaluation of everything that women stood for, that "'nature" always has a social meaning', that both 'nature' and 'culture' meant different things at different times, in different places and to the different sexes, and that women's bodies and bodily capacities were not always and everywhere seen as disabilities, but also as a basis for certain kinds of informal power and public activities. The nature/culture dichotomy was recognised as a specific and perhaps specifically Western way of expressing the hierarchies between the sexes. The binary terms of this dichotomy only apparently refer to antagonistic and independent terms; but in fact, they refer to a hierarchy of social realities and cultural meanings, between strongly interdependent terms. In other words: no such nature without such culture, and no such culture without such nature. One of the linguistic results of such insights in women's history is that the term 'nature' is now almost always placed in quotation marks.

The study of women's identification with nature, of their embodiment and their body-related activities, such as motherhood, nursing and caring, has resulted in a number of important works which deal with these distinctively female domains. Early works on the history of motherhood were written by French scholars. More recently, research on the female body has shown to what degree it is historically conditioned and dependent on the cultural context. Feminist philosophers, particularly in France, are building theoretical frameworks precisely around the distinctive female experience, and this approach is currently arousing great and controversial interest in the United States. On the other hand, French and other historians argue that this focus on women's 'nature' may be politically counterproductive because it seems to confirm traditional stereotypes according to which women seem to be exclusively defined by their body, by motherhood and by their sex, and to overlook the more important political dimensions of women's history.

**2. Work versus family.** A second theoretical framework for rendering women visible, and for dismantling their identification with the merely natural, unchanging and therefore uninteresting, was the issue of their distinctive patterns of work. The discussion around it had its origins more in the European than in the American context, particularly in Italy, Britain, Germany and France. What had been seen as nature was now seen as work: bearing, rearing and caring for

children, looking after the breadwinner-husband and after other family members. To call this activity 'work' meant to challenge the dichotomy 'work and family' (because the family may mean work to women), but also 'work and leisure' (because men's leisure may be women's work), and 'working men and supported wives' (because wives support men through their work). It meant questioning the view that work is only that which is done for pay. Women have always worked, and unpaid work was and is women's work. Obviously, men's work is valued more highly than women's work. In theoretical and economic terms, it has been demonstrated that women's work was overlooked by male theoreticians of work and the economy and why this happened; accordingly the value or 'productivity' of domestic work came to be discussed. In historical terms, it has been shown how strongly this work changed over time and cross-culturally. For example, in Britain and Australia, housewives were counted among the 'occupied' categories in the census up to the end of the nineteenth century, when they were excluded from them; around the same time, radical feminists in Germany and elsewhere were demanding that their work be included in the measurement of the Gross National Product.

The sexual division of labour was found to be not just a division, but a hierarchy of labour; and not just one of labour but, primarily, a sexual division of value and rewards. The lower value of women's work continues - through economic and cultural mediation - in employment outside the home. Here, where women have always worked, they earned only 50 per cent to 80 per cent of men's earnings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in western countries, with variations over time and space. Women's employment in the caring and nursing professions, where they are the overwhelming majority, usually does not guarantee them a decent survival income, the 1989 nurses' strike in West Germany being just one example. The recent international increase in the number of single mothers has led to a 'feminisation of poverty', even beyond the traditionally high level of female poverty.

The apparent dichotomy between 'work and family', between men as workers and women as 'non-workers', turns out to be one between paid and unpaid work, between underpaid and decently paid work, between the superior and inferior value of men's and women's work respectively. The underlying assumption of mutually exclusive superiority and inferiority seems to be another common feature of such gender-linked dichotomies. The challenge posed by women's studies to this opposition is obviously linked to politi-

cal and economic challenges to pay women's as yet unpaid work, to raise their earnings in low-pay jobs, and to admit more women to well-paid professions. It has also led to some linguistic changes. Even though, in the English language, the terms 'working women' and 'working mothers' are still reserved for employed women only, and non-employed women are still often called 'non-working', the terms 'work and family' are now often replaced by 'paid and unpaid work'. In German, women's historians distinguish consistently between 'work' and 'employment', Arbeit [work] and Erwerbstilltigkeit [income-earning], and Arbeitslosigkeit [unemployment, literally 'worklessness'] has been replaced by Erwerbslosigkeit ['incomelessness'].

**3. Public versus private.** A third conceptual framework of women's history has been the relation between the public and the private, or the political and the personal, or the sphere of power and the domestic sphere. Traditional political theory has seen them, again, as a dichotomy of mutually exclusive terms, identified with women's 'sphere' and men's 'world'. Women's studies have profoundly challenged this view, pointing out its inadequacy for understanding politics and society. The slogan 'the personal is political' indicated that the issue of power is not confined to 'high politics', but also appears in sexual relations. Men inhabit, and rule within both spheres, whereas women's proper place was seen to be only in the domestic sphere and in her subjection to father or husband. This means, on the one hand, the dichotomy is not one between two autonomous, symmetrical and equivalent spheres, but rather a complex relation between domination and subordination, between power and powerlessness. On the other hand, women's studies have shown that the public 'world' was essentially based on the domestic 'sphere'. Male workers, male politicians and male scholars perform their tasks only because they are born, reared and cared for by women's labour. The boundaries between public and private shift significantly over time and cross-culturally, as in the historical transition between private charity and public assistance, in both of which women played important roles. State policy has not left women out, but has shaped their personal circumstances by public intervention in, for instance, legislation on rape and abortion, and by the absence of legislation. The modern welfare states have discriminated against women in old age pensions and unemployment benefits; they have introduced maternity leave for employed women without replacing their loss of income - in Europe, this was changed mainly through the struggles of the women's movements since around 1900 - and income tax reforms have supported hus-

bands and fathers, but not wives and mothers. The welfare state has not excluded women's sphere but included it as private, implying that it is under the rule of the husband. The Nazi regime went much beyond this, because its intervention tended to destroy the private sphere; not however, as is often said, by promoting motherhood, but by promoting precisely the opposite: a policy of mass compulsory sterilisation for women and men who were considered 'racially inferior'. This antinatalist policy was explicitly based on the doctrine that 'the private is political' and that the definition of the boundaries between the political and the private is a political act; according to the National Socialists, it was the sterilisation policy which established and asserted 'the primacy of the state in the field of life, marriage and the family'.

Women's history has also discovered that what is perceived as 'private' by some may be seen as 'public' by others. The domestic tasks of bearing and rearing children, for instance, were proclaimed as being of public importance by many women in the early women's movement. They requested that it be re-evaluated, and many of them based their demand for equal political citizenship precisely on this vision of the 'separate sphere', understood not as a dichotomy of mutually exclusive and hierarchical terms, but as a source of equal rights and responsibilities of the female sex in respect to civil society. On this basis, they did not so much challenge the sexual division of labour, as the sexual division of power. In this sense, the late anthropologist Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo argued that women could, and did, challenge male rule either by seeking to enter the distinctively male sphere, or by stressing the value of their own sphere; sometimes they attempted to combine both. Women's historians have also pointed out that the traditional nineteenth-century or Victorian version of the female separate sphere was not oppressive in a simple way, but left considerable space for female bonding and the development of a women's culture as an expression of women's subjectivity.

\* \* \* \* \*

These three dichotomies seem to have some important characteristics in common. They are eminently gender-linked, and as such they have distant roots in European and western traditions of gender perception. They have been taken up and used as crucial conceptual frameworks in the newly emerging women's history of the past decades, and simultaneously their long-standing apparent validity for the perception of gender relations has been thoroughly chal-

lenged. This challenge concerned the analysis, historicisation and deconstruction of the character and meaning of these three dual categories, as well as the links between them, and it questioned the traditional assumption that these dichotomies were expressions of natural and necessary expressions - of sexual difference.

The question has been raised as to whether these dichotomies are just a few examples among many similar binary oppositions and dualistic modes of western thought in general, or whether their gender-linked character makes them very special. (Of course, other classic dichotomies, such as 'subjective/objective', 'rational/emotional', have also assumed gender-linked meanings, even though not all of them have been equally central to historical analytical frameworks; on the other hand, the dichotomies discussed above have also been studied in contexts which were not primarily gender-linked.) But it seems that, whenever they are used for describing gender relations, they do not refer so much to separate, autonomous, independent, equivalent dual spheres, as to relations of hierarchy: hierarchies of spheres, meanings, values, of inferiority and superiority, of subordination and power; in other words, to relations where 'culture' subjects 'nature', the world of 'work' reigns over that of the 'family', the 'political' dominates the 'private'.

In terms of logical rules, these apparent dichotomies are not mutually exclusive contradictions, as in A is not B, B is not A (woman is not man and vice versa). Rather these apparent dichotomies are (really) contraries, for they may coexist freely, and/or coexist with C (as alternatives to the dichotomous attributions) and all of them may have a positive reality.

Patriarchal theorists have constituted these dualisms on the model of logically contradictory opposites, as in the impossible combination of A and Not-A, in which what defines Not-A is its privation with respect to A, that is, its lack of A. These contradictory opposites in their rigidity, allow for neither alternatives (*tertium non datur*) [no third value is given]; nor reversals, as in Not-A being attributed to men and A to women. When, for instance, gender is constructed on a model of mutually exclusive, binary opposites, if men are defined as rational, then women are defined by an absence of rationality. In this construction, for the woman to take on rationality is for her to begin to assimilate to the male norm and thus to begin to cease to be a woman. Contraries, in contrast, allow for a multiplicity of alternatives. Feminists have argued that 'mere contrary distinctions are not eternally tied to dichotomous structure, and as dichotomies they are limited in scope'. Therefore, it might be useful to distinguish more clearly between dichotomies of mutual exclusion and hierarchy on one side, and contraries, distinctions or differences, on the other, which are neither hierarchical nor mutually exclusive. Above all, sensitivity to the prevalence of binary oppositions of a dichotomous kind in discourses of gender has taught us to beware of their historical and political pitfalls.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Do you see any of the traditional dichotomies described above at work in today's society? Are they more or less prevalent?
2. Are women-only spheres always necessarily oppressive? Why or why not?

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## I-2 From Gender, Race, and Culture: Spanish-Mexican Women in the Historiography of Frontier California

*Antonia I. Castañeda teaches in the Department of History at St. Mary's University. Her writing focuses on gender, sexuality, and women of color in California and the Borderlands from the 16th century to the present. This portion of her essay is a critique of the contemporary travel writers and historians whose erroneous and often prejudiced work influenced future writers over the next century.*

**Source:** Castañeda Antonia I., *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Las Chicanas, (1990), pp. 8-10

Historians, whether writing for a popular or a scholarly audience, reflect contemporary ideology with respect to sex, race, and culture. Until the mid-1970s, when significant revisionist work in social, women's, and Chicano history began to appear, the writing of California history reflected an ideology that ascribed racial and cultural inferiority to Mexicans and sexual inferiority to women.' Not only do ideas about women form an integral part of the ideological universe of all societies, but the position of women in society is one measure by which civilizations have historically been judged. Accordingly, California historians applied Anglo, middle-class norms of women's proper behav-

ior to Mexican women's comportment and judged them according to their own perceptions of Mexican culture and of women's positions within that culture.

This essay pays a good deal of attention to the popular histories of frontier California because of the inordinate influence they have had on the more scholarly studies. In particular, the factual errors and stereotypes in the work of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Theodore H. Hittell, and Zoeth Skinner Eldredge have been propagated not only by other nineteenth- and twentieth-century popularizers but also by scholars-in the few instances where they include women at all. Although historians of the Teutonic, frontier hypothesis, and Spanish borderlands schools barely mention women, an implicit gender ideology influences their discussions of race, national character, and culture. The more recent literature in social, women's, and Chicano history breaks sharply with the earlier ideology and corollary interpretations with respect to race and culture or gender and culture, but it has yet to construct an integrative interpretation that incorporates sex-gender, race, and culture.

#### The Popular Histories of the Late Nineteenth Century

*Women were not treated with the greatest respect: in Latin and in savage countries they seldom are; hence, as these were half Latin and half savage, we are not surprised to learn that the men too often idled away their time, leaving the women to do all the work and rear the family.*

Written by lawyers, bankers, and other prominent men who came to California in the aftermath of the Mexican War and the gold rush, the multivolume popular histories of the late nineteenth century provide the first composite description and interpretation of Spanish-Mexican California. These histories fundamentally reflect the political and socioracial ideology that informed both the war with Mexico and the subsequent sociopolitical and economic marginalization of Mexicans in California. With respect to women, they reaffirm the contradictory but stereotypic images found in the travel journals and other documents written by entrepreneurs, merchants, adventurers, and other members of the advance guard of Euro-American expansion between the 1820s and 1840s.

In the tradition of the patrician historians whose romantic literary style set the standards and popular patterns from the end of the nineteenth century until well into the twentieth, Bancroft, Hittell, and other popularizers intersperse their voluminous histories of California with musings about race, religion, national character, savagery, and civilization. Riddled with the

nationalistic fervor of the post-Civil War decades and with an unquestioning belief in Nordic racial superiority, these historians predictably conclude that the Anglo-Saxon race and civilization are far superior to the Latin race and Spanish-Mexican civilization that had produced in California, according to Bancroft, "a race halfway between the proud Castillian and the lowly root digger," existing "halfway between savagery and civilization." Only Amerindians ranked lower than the minions of Spain.

In the works on early colonial development, the discussion of women is only incidental to the larger consideration of specific institutions-the mission, presidio, and pueblo-or of great men-the governors. Thus, for example, a brief discussion of the maltreatment of Amerindian women in the mission system has no importance beyond its illustration of institutional development and Spanish brutality, which, in the tradition of the "Black Legend," spared not even women. Similarly, Bancroft treats sexual and other violence against native women primarily in relation to the bitter conflict between the institutions of church and state, and attributes it to the moral degeneration of the racially mixed soldier-settler population.

Bancroft and his colleagues also introduce individual elite women to their readers. The portraits of two in particular set the tone for the consistent romanticization of "Spanish" as opposed to "Mexican" women. A prototype of the tempestuous Spanish woman, Eulalia Callis, high-born Catalan wife of the doughty Governor Fages, was dubbed the "infamous governor's wife" for refusing Fages her bed upon his refusal to relinquish the governorship and return the family to Mexico.

Even more important in the development of the "Spanish" stereotype was Concepción Arguello, the young daughter of Don Jose Arguello, Commandant at the Presidio of San Francisco. Prototype of the tragic maiden, Dona Concepcion became betrothed to the Russian ambassador and chamberlain, Nickolai Petrovich Resanov, in 1806. Resanov had sailed to California from Alaska aboard the brig Juno, seeking to trade the ship's entire cargo for foodstuffs desperately needed to stave off starvation and mass desertions in Sitka. But Governor Arrillaga, bound by Spain's policy of prohibiting trade with foreigners, refused to negotiate. Undaunted, Resanov wooed the young Concepcion and, upon her acceptance of his proposal of marriage persuaded her father to intercede with the governor, who finally agreed to the trade.

Resanov left for Alaska and thereafter for Russia,

promising to return as soon as he had the Czar's permission to marry, but he died while in Russia. Dofia Concepción continued to await his return, for she did not learn of his death until many years later. After a life spent in nursing and charitable work, she became, in 1851, the first novice in the newly established Dominican convent in Monterey. She took her vows as Sister Maria Dominica in 1852 and died five years later at age sixty-six.

Bancroft's commentary addresses not only the diplomatic and political strategy evident in Resanov's courtship and proposal of marriage but also the character of the Californians, both male and female: "What wonder that court life at St. Petersburg was fascinating, or that this child, weary of the sun-basking indolence of those about her, allowed her heart to follow her ambitions." This aura of exotic drama and romance informs all later descriptions of "Spanish" women, in popular and scholarly works alike.

Bancroft also briefly discusses women in the context of colonial settlement and the family. He records the arrival of the first group of Spanish-Mexican women and families in 1774 and the overland journeys of the Anza and Rivera soldier-settler families in 1775-1776 and 1781 respectively. He also comments on Governor Borica's efforts to attract single women to the distant frontier and on the arrival of the *ninas de cuna*, the ten orphan girls brought to Alta California in 1800 as future marriage partners for single presidial soldiers.

In general, the popular historical accounts of the Spanish period (1769-1821) are notable for their absence of pejorative gender-specific sexual stereotypes. Instead, pejorative stereotypes are generalized to the entire group and focus on race. In accounts of Mexican California (1822-1846), the popular historians divide women into two classes: "Spanish" and "Mexican." Although the vast majority of Californians, including the elite, were mestizo or mulatto and Mexican, not Spanish, in nationality, women from long-time Californian elite, land-owning families, some of whom married Europeans or Euro-Americans, were called "Spanish." Women from more recently arrived or non-elite families were called "Mexican." "Spanish" women were morally, sexually, and racially pure; "Mexican" women were immoral and sexually and racially impure. These sexual stereotypes not only reveal the convergence of contemporary political and social ideological currents but also underscore the centrality of the politics of sex to the ideological justification of expansion, war, and conquest. The dominant social Darwinism of the late nineteenth century, which

used scientific theory to rationalize Nordic racial superiority and male sexual supremacy, also held that a society's degree of civilization could be judged by the status and character of its women. The Victorian True Woman, like her predecessor the Republican Mother, represented the most advanced stage of civilized society. Physically and mentally inferior to men but possessed of the cardinal female virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity—she was confined to the home, where she could neither threaten nor challenge the existing order. She was the norm by which historians judged Mexican women, individually and collectively, and thus one of the norms by which they judged Mexican society. Like other reductionist representations of Mexicans in the literature that treats the Mexican period as a "backdrop to the coming of Old Glory," pejorative stereotypes of Mexicanas thus served a political purpose. The worst stereotypes of women appeared in the histories of the Mexican rather than the Spanish period not just because the primary sources were written largely by white men who visited and/or lived in Mexican, not Spanish, California, but because the war was fought with Mexico.

The most extensive treatment of Mexican women appears in Bancroft's interpretative social history, *California Pastoral*, in which he devotes an entire chapter to "Woman and Her Sphere." By virtue of publishing the earliest work of this genre, Bancroft became the main source for the stereotypes of women in Mexican California in subsequent histories.

In the work of Bancroft, Hittell, and their modern successors, the portrayals of Mexican men, the wartime foes, are uniformly stereotypic and pejorative, focusing both on their racial origins and on a national character formed by Spanish tyranny, absolutism, and fanaticism. Bancroft describes Mexicans as "droves of mongrels" deriving from a "turgid racial stream" and concludes that they were "not a strong community either physically, morally, or politically." He depicts life in Mexican California as a long, happy holiday in a lotus land where "to eat, to drink, to make love, to smoke, to dance, to ride, to sleep seemed the whole duty of man."

His stereotypes of women, however, are contradictory and reveal greater gradation. Women's position in Mexican society, especially, is treated contradictorily. "The Californians, violent exercise and lack of education makes them rough and almost brutal. They have little regard for their women, and are of a jealous disposition ... they are indifferent husbands, faithless and exacting and very hard taskmasters," Bancroft says at one point. Yet several pages later he comments, "there

was strong affection and never a happier family than when a rancho, dwelling in pastoral simplicity saw his sons and his sons' sons bringing to the paternal roof their wives and seating them at the ever-lengthening table."

Bancroft's Mexican women are dunces and drudges. They work laboriously and continuously; bear twelve, fifteen, and twenty children; and are subject to being prostituted by their husbands, who "wink at the familiarity of a wealthy neighbor who pays handsomely for his entertainment." Women have no recourse to laws, which men make and women obey. At the same time, however, Bancroft quotes earlier writers to the effect that "the women are pretty, but vain, frivolous, bad managers, and extravagant. They are passionately fond of fine, showy dresses and jewelry ... their morality is none of the purest; and the coarse and lascivious dances show the degraded tone of manners that exist." Nevertheless, infidelity is rare because Californians fear the swift and deadly revenge exacted by jealous husbands.

Bancroft based his negative images of Mexican women on the accounts of Richard Henry Dana and others who visited California in the 1840s, on the eve of the war with Mexico. But he also recorded a positive image derived from the writings of Alfred Robinson and other Euro-Americans who traveled to California in the 1820s and 1830s to ply the hide and tallow trade and who married elite Californians and settled there.

Robinson's accounts expressed similar negative stereotypes of men but presented positive portrayals of "Spanish" or "Californio" women. Robinson, who married Maria Teresa de la Guerra y Noriega, wrote that "the men are generally indolent and addicted to many vices ... yet... in few places of the world ... can be found more chastity, industrious habits and correct deportment than among the women." Similar images appeared in literary pieces written on the eve of the Mexican War by individuals who had no firsthand experience of California. In this literature, Spanish-speaking women invited the advances of Euro-American men whom they anxiously awaited as their saviors from Mexican men. For example, "They Wait for Us," published in Boston at the time that John C. Fremont's outlaw band was raising the Bear Flag at Sonoma in June 1846, treats Mexican women as the symbol for the country about to be conquered:

They Wait for Us  
 The Spanish maid, with eyes of fire  
 At balmy evening turns her lyre,  
 And, looking to the Eastern sky,  
 Awaits our Yankee Chivalry  
 Whose purer blood and valiant arms,  
 Are fit to clasp her budding charms.  
 The man, her mate, is sunk in sloth-  
 To love, his senseless heart is loth:  
 The pipe and glass and tinkling lute,  
 A sofa, and a dish of fruit;  
 A nap, some dozen times by day;  
 Sombre and sad, and never gay.

The meaning is clear-Mexicans cannot appreciate, love, direct, or control their women/country.

Forty years later, Bancroft and Hittell underscored this theme in the primary sources. "It was a happy day," writes Bancroft, "for the California bride whose husband was an American." According to Hittell, Californian *senoritas* eagerly sought American husbands, who "might not touch the guitar as lightly," but "made better husbands than those of Mexican blood." The chaste, industrious Spanish beauty who forsook her inferior man and nation in favor of the superior Euro-American became embedded in the literature. The negative image that Bancroft et al. picked up from the English-language primary sources was reserved for Mexican women: *fandango*-dancing, *monte*-dealing prostitutes, the consorts of Mexican bandits. These dual stereotypes became the prototypic images of Spanish-speaking women in California. They were the grist of popular fiction and contemporary newspapers through-out the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they resurfaced in the popular historical literature of the twentieth century, including the few works that focused specifically on women of Spanish California.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Highlight some of the differences in the portrayal of Spanish and Mexican women by contemporary historians and travel writers.
2. By what standards did writers base their judgment of Mexican women? How did this influence their attitude toward Mexican society as a whole?

### I-3 From Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American Women's History in the 1980s

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**Source:** Hewitt, Nancy A., *Social History*, Vol. 10, No. 3, North American Issue, (Oct., 1985), pp. 299-321

#### I

One of the principal projects of the contemporary feminist movement in the United States has been the development of a sense of community among women, rooted in their common oppression and expressed through a distinctive women's culture. This project is premised on the patriarchal assumptions accepted by the majority of North America's early feminist leaders: that gender is the primary source of oppression in society and is the model for all other forms of oppression. American women's historians of the 1960s and 1970s not only accepted the premises and projects of the women's movement but also helped to establish them. The bonds that encircled past generations of women were initially perceived as restrictive, arising from female victimization at the hands of patriarchs in such institutions as medicine, education, the church, the state, and the family. Historians soon concluded, however, that oppression was a double-edged sword; the counterpart of subordination in or exclusion from male-dominated domains was inclusion in an all-female enclave. The concept of womanhood, it soon appeared, bound women together even as it bound them down. The formative works in American women's history have focused on the formation of these separate sexual spheres, particularly among the emerging urban bourgeoisie in the first half of the nineteenth century. Reified in prescriptive literature, realized in daily life, and ritualized in female collectivities, this 'woman's sphere' came to be seen as the foundation of women's culture and community in antebellum America.

Though feminists, including scholars, have perceived community as a source of support and solidarity for women, both history and politics affirm that a strong sense of community can also be a source of exclusion, prejudices, and prohibitions. For the past

decade, the women's movement itself has been accused of forming its own exclusive community, characterized by elitism, ethnocentrism, and a disregard for diversity. At the same time, students of black and working-class women's lives have argued that the notion of a single women's community rooted in common oppression denies the social and material realities of caste and class in America. Yet as the concept of community has become increasingly problematic for women's historians, it has also become increasingly paradigmatic. This article will evaluate the current paradigm in American women's history - premised on patriarchy and constructed around community - by comparing the creation, conditions and practices of communal life among black and white working-class women with that among the white bourgeoisie in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The community that has become the cornerstone of North American women's history was discovered within the Victorian middle class. There a 'rich female subculture' flourished 'in which women, relegated to domesticity, constructed powerful emotional and practical bonds with each other. Three distinct but related investigations converged to illuminate this enclave of sisterhood. Barbara Welter first identified the construction of a new ideology of gender in the years 1820 to 1860 that defined the 'true woman' as pious, pure, domestic, and submissive. Nancy Cott correlated this ideology with a separation of women and men into distinct spheres of activity, at least among New England's middling classes. For this group, commercial and industrial developments in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries simultaneously consigned married women to domesticity and launched men on public careers. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg then discovered within the private domain a dynamic 'world of love and ritual' in which a distinct set of values was elaborated into a richly textured women's culture.

Though each of these authors regarded her work as speculative and carefully noted parameters of time, region, and class, the true woman/separate spheres/woman's culture triad became the most widely used framework for interpreting women's past in the United States. The articles and arguments presented by the architects of the paradigm are widely quoted, reprinted frequently, summarized in textbooks and popular histories, reproduced in curriculum packets, and elaborated upon in an array of scholarly studies. By gendering the Victorian landscape and evaluating historical patterns and processes in women's own terms, the historians of bourgeois womanhood have established concepts and categories that now shape the analysis of all groups of American women.



Historians soon traced the bonds of womanhood into public arenas and across race and class barriers. According to Cott, the 'doctrine of woman's sphere opened to women (reserved for them) the avenues of domestic influence, religious morality, and child nurture. It articulated a social power based on their special female qualities. That social power was first revealed in church and charitable societies and in educational missions, then was gradually expanded into campaigns for moral reform, temperance, the abolition of slavery, and even women's rights. By the late nineteenth century, domestic skills and social power would converge in 'social housekeeping', embracing and justifying women's participation in urban development, social welfare programs, social work, the settlement house movement, immigrant education, labor reform, and electoral politics.

At the same time that middle-class wives reached across the domestic threshold, they also apparently, though more haltingly, stepped across the moat dividing them from women of other classes and races. Some plantation mistresses, for instance, decried, at least in their private diaries, the sexual double standard reflected in white men's abuse of slave women. In at least one southern town, free black and white women seemed to adopt a common set of values grounded in personalism: both races were more attuned to the needs and interests of other women, more concerned with economic security, more supportive of organized charity, and more serious about the spiritual life than men." White working-class women were also soon caught in the web of womanhood. One historian noted that this web could be paralyzing for an individual working woman, but added that 'when a strong enough wind is blowing, the whole web and all the women in it can be seen to move and this is a new kind of movement, a new source of power and connectedness. Those connections, moreover, stretched across economic strata as industrialization created 'an oppressive leisure life' for affluent women and 'an oppressive work life' for their laboring sisters, forging a 'bond of sisterhood' across classes.

Elaborations on and extensions of female community multiplied rapidly. Women on wagon trains heading west, worshippers in evangelical revivals and in Quaker meeting houses, prostitutes on the Comstock Lode, mill workers in Lowell boarding houses, and immigrants on the streets of Lawrence and the stoops of Providence loved and nurtured one another, exchanged recipes, gossip, and herbal remedies, swapped food and clothing, shared childrearing and domestic chores, covered for each other at work, protected one another from abusive fathers, husbands,

lovers, and bosses, and supported each other in birth and death. For each group, these 'friendship and support networks' could also become 'crucibles in which collective acts of rebellion were formed. Middle-class 'rebels' formed single-sex public associations to ameliorate social ills and eradicate social evils. Quaker farm wives, in Seneca Falls, Waterloo, and Rochester, New York, attacked the 'repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman. Lowell mill operatives on strike for higher wages vowed that 'none will go back, unless they receive us all as one'." In Lawrence, New York's Lower East Side, Cripple Creek, Colorado, and Tampa, Florida, immigrant women - as wives and wage-earners - united shop-floor struggle with neighborhood discontent and employed the resources of their everyday life as weapons in the class struggle.

How could the bonds of womanhood, first forged in the domestic enclaves of the Victorian bourgeoisie, have filtered through the walls dividing private and public domains, affluent and poor, native-born and immigrant, black and white? The answer provided by the authors of the woman's community construct was a combination of patriarchy and modernization. Patriarchy explained what women held in common - sexual vulnerability, domestic isolation, economic and educational deprivation, and political exclusion. Modernization served as the causal mechanism by which the ideology of separate spheres and the values of 'true womanhood' were dispersed throughout the society. Employing modernization as the mechanism of change allowed North American scholars to recognize broad forces - industrialization, urbanization and class stratification - and collective psychological developments - the growth of individualism and the search for autonomy - while maintaining the primacy of gender. In addition, the 'trickle down' method by which societies supposedly become modern suggested that the analysis of elite women could provide an appropriate framework for understanding and predicting the experiences of all women. Finally, the teleological bent of modernization obscures conflict and thereby reinforced the notion that bonds among women based on gender are stronger than barriers between women based on class or race.

The adoption of modernization by leading social, including women's, historians has carried us a great distance from Jesse Lemisch's early plea for a history written 'from the bottom up'. As more feminist scholars pursued studies of black and white working-class life, however, they demanded renewed attention to the complexity of women's experience and recognition of the conflict that it engenders. At the same time, stu-

dents of bourgeois women began debating woman's specific role in modernization: was she the repository of traditional values, the happy humanizer of modernity, a victim of male-dominated forces, or an eager agent of Progress? Those who compared the experiences of privileged and poor women in the Victorian era concluded that, if modernization occurred, it led not to the inclusion of women in a universal sisterhood but rather to the dichotomization of women along class lines into the pious and pure 'modern' woman and the prurient and parasitical 'pre-modern' woman. Students of the Third World were even more adamant that women, rather than gaining by the development of a new domesticated ideal, lost 'traditional forms of power and authority on the road to "emancipation" from premodern lifeways.

In addition, some women's historians attacked the concept of modernization itself as vague, untested, 'nebulous', 'both one-dimensional and elastic', or as 'a piece of post-capitalist ideology'. This last criticism focused on the corner-stone of the current paradigm - the separation of spheres - suggesting that it may have been culturally prescribed by dominant sectors of society to divide classes against themselves. It is not clear, however, that either the working classes or the bourgeoisie itself actually patterned their lives according to

such prescriptions. Certainly bourgeois women were not so separated from same-class men as to disengage them from the prejudices and power inherent in their class position. Evidence of this appears in white suffragists' use of racist rhetoric, Protestant charitable ladies' denial of aid to Catholics, affluent women's refusal to support working women's strikes, moral reformers' abhorrence of working-class sexual mores, and settlement house educators' denigration of immigrant culture. Finally, students of black women's history reject the teleological design of modernization. Like contemporary black feminists, they argue that the concept of a woman's community derived from white women's experience distorts the reality of black lives and ignores the ways that white solidarity, including sisterhood, has served to deny rights to blacks, including women.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the drawbacks of a community created from the foundation of a "woman's sphere"?
2. In what ways did duties traditionally relegated to the "woman's sphere" evolve and expand into the public sphere?
3. What are some of the criticisms women's historians have of modernization?

## I-4 From African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race

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**Source:** Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks, *Signs*, Vol. 17, No. 2, (Winter, 1992), pp. 251, 262-266, 273-274

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION in African-American women's history begs for greater voice. I say this as a black woman who is cognizant of the strengths and limitations of current feminist theory. Feminist scholars have moved rapidly forward in addressing theories of subjectivity, questions of difference, the construction of social relations as relations of power, the conceptual implications of binary oppositions such as male versus female or equality versus difference—all issues defined with relevance to gender and with potential for intellectual and social transforma-

tions. Notwithstanding a few notable exceptions, this new wave of feminist theorists finds little to say about race. The general trend has been to mention black and Third World feminists who first called attention to the glaring fallacies in essentialist analysis and to claims of a homogeneous "womanhood," "woman's culture," and "patriarchal oppression of women." Beyond this recognition, however, white feminist scholars pay hardly more than lip service to race as they continue to analyze their own experience in ever more sophisticated forms.

This narrowness of vision is particularly ironic in that these very issues of equality and difference, the constructive strategies of power, and subjectivity and consciousness have stood at the core of black scholarship for some half-century or more. Historian W. E. B. Du Bois, sociologist Oliver Cox, and scientist Charles R. Drew are only some of the more significant pre-1950s contributors to the discussion of race as a social category and to the refutation of essentialist biological and genetic explanations. These issues continue to be salient in our own time, when racism in America grows with both verve and subtlety and when "enlightened" women's historians witness, as has been the case in recent years, recurrent racial tensions at our own pro-

fessional and scholarly gatherings.

Feminist scholars, especially those of African-American women's history, must accept the challenge to bring race more prominently into their analyses of power. The explication of race entails three interrelated strategies, separated here merely for the sake of analysis. First of all, we must define the construction and "technologies" of race as well as those of gender and sexuality. Second, we must expose the role of race as a metalanguage by calling attention to its powerful, all-encompassing effect on the construction and representation of other social and power relations, namely, gender, class, and sexuality. Third, we must recognize race as providing sites of dialogic exchange and contestation, since race has constituted a discursive tool for both oppression and liberation. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue, "the effort must be made to understand race as an unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle." Such a three-pronged approach to the history of African-American women will require borrowing and blending work by black intellectuals, white feminist scholars, and other theorists such as white male philosophers and linguists. Indeed, the very process of borrowing and blending speaks to the tradition of syncretism that has characterized the Afro-American experience.

### **Racial constructions of gender**

To understand race as a metalanguage, we must recognize its historical and material grounding—what Russian linguist and critic M. M. Bakhtin referred to as "the power of the word to mean." This power evolves from concrete situational and ideological contexts, that is, from a position of enunciation that reflects not only time and place but values as well. The concept of race, in its verbal and extraverbal dimension, and even more specifically, in its role in the representation as well as self-representation of individuals in American society (what psychoanalytic theorists call "subjectification"), is constituted in language in which (as Bakhtin points out) there have never been "neutral" words and forms—words and forms that can belong to 'no one'; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents."

The social context for the construction of race as a tool for black oppression is historically rooted in the context of slavery. Barbara Fields reminds us: "The idea one people has of another, even when the difference between them is embodied in the most striking physical characteristics, is always mediated by the social context within which the two come in contact." Race

came to life primarily as the signifier of the master/slave relation and thus emerged superimposed upon class and property relations. Defined by law as "animate chattel," slaves constituted property as well as a social class and were exploited under a system that sanctioned white ownership of black bodies and black labor. Studies of black women in slavery, however, make poignantly clear the role of race not only in shaping the class relations of the South's "peculiar institution," but also in constructing gender's "power to mean." Sojourner Truth's famous and haunting question, "Ar'n't I a Woman?" laid bare the racialized configuration of gender under a system of class rule that compelled and expropriated women's physical labor and denied them legal right to their own bodies and sexuality, much less to the bodies to which they gave birth. While law and public opinion idealized motherhood and enforced the protection of white women's bodies, the opposite held true for black women's. Sojourner Truth's personal testimony demonstrated gender's racial meaning. She had "ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns," and no male slave had outdone her. She had given birth to thirteen children, all of whom were sold away from her. When she cried out in grief from the depths of her motherhood, "none but Jesus heard."

Wasn't Sojourner Truth a woman? The courts answered this question for slavewomen by ruling them outside the statutory rubric "woman." In discussing the case of *State of Missouri v. Celia*, A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., elucidates the racial signification of gender. Celia was fourteen years old when purchased by a successful farmer, Robert Newsome. During the five years of his ownership, Newsome habitually forced her into sexual intercourse. At age nineteen she had borne a child by him and was expecting another. In June 1855, while pregnant and ill, Celia defended herself against attempted rape by her master. Her testimony reveals that she warned him she would hurt him if he continued to abuse her while sick. When her threats would not deter his advances, she hit him over the head with a stick, immediately killing him. In an act presaging Richard Wright's *Native Son*, she then burned his body in the fireplace and the next morning spread his ashes on the pathway. Celia was apprehended and tried for first-degree murder. Her counsel sought to lower the charge of first degree to murder in self-defense, that Celia had a right to resist her master's sexual advances, especially because of the imminent danger to her health. A slave master's economic and property rights, the defense contended, did not include rape. The defense rested its case on Missouri statutes that protected women from attempts to ravish,

rape, or defile. The language of these particular statutes explicitly used the term "any woman," while other unrelated Missouri statutes explicitly used terms such as "white female" and "slave" or "negro" in their criminal codes. The question centered on her womanhood. The court found Celia guilty: "If Newsome was in the habit of having intercourse with the defendant who was his slave, . . . it is murder in the first degree." Celia was sentenced to death, having been denied an appeal, and was hanged in December 1855 after the birth of her child.

Since racially based justifications of slavery stood at the core of Southern law, race relations, and social etiquette in general, then proof of "womanhood" did not rest on a common female essence, shared culture, or mere physical appearance. (Sojourner Truth, on one occasion, was forced to bare her breasts to a doubting audience in order to vindicate her womanhood.) This is not to deny gender's role within the social and power relations of race. Black women experienced the vicissitudes of slavery through gendered lives and thus differently from slave men. They bore and nursed children and performed domestic duties—all on top of doing fieldwork. Unlike slave men, slave women fell victim to rape precisely because of their gender. Yet gender itself was both constructed and fragmented by race. Gender, so colored by race, remained from birth until death inextricably linked to one's personal identity and social status. For black and white women, gendered identity was reconstructed and represented in very different, indeed antagonistic, racialized contexts.

### **Racial constructions of sexuality**

The exclusion of black women from the dominant society's definition of "lady" said as much about sexuality as it did about class. The metalanguage of race signifies, too, the imbrication of race within the representation of sexuality. Historians of women and of science, largely influenced by Michel Foucault, now attest to the variable quality of changing conceptions of sexuality over time—conceptions informed as much by race and class as by gender. Sexuality has come to be defined not in terms of biological essentials or as a universal truth detached and transcendent from other aspects of human life and society. Rather, it is an evolving conception applied to the body but given meaning and identity by economic, cultural, and historical context.

In the centuries between the Renaissance and the Victorian era, Western culture constructed and represented changing and conflicting images of woman's sexuality, which shifted diametrically from images of

lasciviousness to moral purity. Yet Western conceptions of black women's sexuality resisted change during this same time. Winthrop Jordan's now classic study of racial attitudes toward blacks between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries argues that black women's bodies epitomized centuries-long European perceptions of Africans as primitive, animal-like, and savage. In America, no less distinguished and learned a figure than Thomas Jefferson conjectured that black women mated with orangutans. While such thinking rationalized slavery and the sexual exploitation of slave women by white masters, it also perpetuated an enormous division between black people and white people on the "scale of humanity": carnality as opposed to intellect and/or spirit; savagery as opposed to civilization; deviance as opposed to normality; promiscuity as opposed to purity; passion as opposed to passionlessness. The black woman came to symbolize, according to Sander Gilman, an "icon for black sexuality in general." This discursive gap between the races was if anything greater between white and black women than between white and black men.

Violence figured preeminently in racialized constructions of sexuality. From the days of slavery, the social construction and representation of black sexuality reinforced violence, rhetorical and real, against black women and men. That the rape of black women could continue to go on with impunity long after slavery's demise underscores the pervasive belief in black female promiscuity. This belief found expression in the statement of one Southern white woman in 1904: "I cannot imagine such a creation as a virtuous black woman."

The lynching of black men, with its often attendant castration, reeked of sexualized representations of race. The work of black feminists of the late nineteenth century makes clear that lynching, while often rationalized by whites as a punishment for the rape of white women, more often was perpetrated to maintain racial etiquette and the socioeconomic and political hegemony of whites. Ida Wells-Barnett, Anna J. Cooper, Mary Church Terrell, and Pauline Hopkins exposed and contrasted the specter of the white woman's rape in the case of lynching and the sanctioned rape of black women by white men. Hazel Carby, in discussing these black feminist writers, established their understanding of the intersection of strategies of power with lynching and rape:

Their legacy to us is theories that expose the colonization of the black female body by white male power and the destruction of black males who attempted to exercise any oppositional patriarchal control. When

accused of threatening the white female body, the repository of heirs to property and power, the black male, and his economic, political, and social advancement, is lynched out of existence. Cooper, Wells, and Hopkins assert the necessity of seeing the relation between histories: the rape of black women in the nineties is directly linked to the rape of the female slave. Their analyses are dynamic and not limited to a parochial understanding of "women's issues"; they have firmly established the dialectical relation between economic/political power and economic/sexual power in the battle for control of women's bodies.

Through a variety of mediums-theater, art, the press, and literature-discourses of racism developed and reified stereotypes of sexuality. Such representations grew out of and facilitated the larger subjugation and control of the black population. The categorization of class and racial groups according to culturally constituted sexual identities facilitated blacks' subordination within a stratified society and rendered them powerless against the intrusion of the state into their innermost private lives.

This intrusion went hand in hand with the role of the state in legislating and enforcing racial segregation, disfranchisement, and economic discrimination.

James Jones's *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* provides us with a profoundly disturbing example of such intrusion into blacks' private lives. Jones recounts how a federal agency, the Public Health Service, embarked in 1932 upon decades of tests on black men with syphilis, denying them access to its cure in order to assess the disease's debilitating effects on the body. The federal agency felt at liberty to make the study because of its unquestioning acceptance of stereotypes that conflated race, gender, and class. By defining this health problem in racial terms, "objective scientific researchers" could be absolved of all responsibility. Some even posited that blacks had "earned their illness as just recompense for wicked life-styles."

The Public Health Service's willingness to prolong syphilis despite the discovery of penicillin discloses not only the federal government's lack of concern for the health of the men in its study, but its even lesser concern for black women in relationships with these men. Black women failed to receive so much as a pretense of protection, so widely accepted was the belief that the spread of the disease was inevitable because black women were promiscuous by nature. This emphasis on black immorality precluded any sensitivity to congenital syphilis; thus innocent black babies born with the disease went unnoticed and equally unprotected. Certainly the officials of the Public Health Service real-

ized that blacks lived amid staggering poverty, amid a socioeconomic environment conducive to disease. Yet these public servants encoded hegemonic articulations of race into the language of medicine and scientific theory. Their perceptions of sexually transmitted disease, like those of the larger society, were affected by race. Jones concludes:

The effect of these views was to isolate blacks even further within American society-to remove them from the world of health and to lock them within a prison of sickness. Whether by accident or design, physicians had come dangerously close to depicting the syphilitic black as the representative black. As sickness replaced health as the normal condition of the race, something was lost from the sense of horror and urgency with which physicians had defined disease. The result was a powerful rationale for inactivity in the face of disease, which by their own estimates, physicians believed to be epidemic.

In response to assaults upon black sexuality, according to Darlene Clark Hine, there arose among black women a politics of silence, a "culture of dissemblance." In order to "protect the sanctity of inner aspects of their lives," black women, especially those of the middle class, reconstructed and represented their sexuality through its absence- through silence, secrecy, and invisibility. In so doing, they sought to combat the pervasive negative images and stereotypes. Black clubwomen's adherence to Victorian ideology, as well as their self-representation as "super moral," according to Hine, was perceived as crucial not only to the protection and upward mobility of black women but also to the attainment of respect, justice, and opportunity for all black Americans.

### Conclusion

By analyzing white America's deployment of race in the construction of power relations, perhaps we can better understand why black women historians have largely refrained from an analysis of gender along the lines of the male/female dichotomy so prevalent among white feminists. Indeed, some black women scholars adopt the term womanist instead of feminist in rejection of gender-based dichotomies that lead to a false homogenizing of women. By so doing they follow in the spirit of black scholar and educator Anna J. Cooper, who in *A Voice from the South* (1892) inextricably linked her racial identity to the "quiet, undisputed dignity" of her womanhood. At the threshold of the twenty-first century, black women scholars continue to emphasize the inseparable unity of race and gender in their thought. They dismiss efforts to bifurcate the

identity of black women (and indeed of all women) into discrete categories—as if culture, consciousness, and lived experience could at times constitute "woman" isolated from the contexts of race, class, and sexuality that give form and content to the particular women we are.

On the other hand, we should challenge both the overdeterminacy of race vis-a-vis social relations among blacks themselves and conceptions of the black community as harmonious and monolithic. The historic reality of racial conflict in America has tended to devalue and discourage attention to gender conflict within black communities and to tensions of class or sexuality among black women. The totalizing tendency of race precludes recognition and acknowledgment of intragroup social relations as relations of power. With its implicit understandings, shared cultural codes, and inchoate sense of a common heritage and destiny, the metalanguage of race resounds over and above a plethora of conflicting voices. But it cannot silence them.

Black women of different economic and regional backgrounds, of different skin tones and sexual orientations, have found themselves in conflict over interpretation of symbols and norms, public behavior, coping strategies, and a variety of micropolitical acts of resistance to structures of domination. Although racialized cultural identity has clearly served blacks in

the struggle against discrimination, it has not sufficiently addressed the empirical reality of gender conflict within the black community or class differences among black women themselves. Historian E. Frances White makes this point brilliantly when she asserts that "the site of counter-discourse is itself contested terrain." By fully recognizing race as an unstable, shifting, and strategic reconstruction, feminist scholars must take up new challenges to inform and confound many of the assumptions currently underlying Afro-American history and women's history. We must problematize much more of what we take for granted.

We must bring to light and to coherence the one and the many that we always were in history and still actually are today.

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#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Higginbotham writes that current theorists "find little to say about race". Why is that omission ironic? How can feminist scholars address this omission?
2. How is the construction of race used as a tool for black oppression? Can this be applied to gender as well?
3. What effect did the unchallenged racialized construction of sexuality have on black women both during slavery and after its abolition?

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## I-5 From Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges

*Both a writer and historian, Gerda Lerner was instrumental in helping to establish fields of study in women's and African-American history. Born in Austria, she escaped Nazi persecution and immigrated to the United States where she was an active member of the Communist Party USA. She earned her Ph.D in her mid-40s and went on to develop the curriculum for women's studies programs at Long Island University and Sarah Lawrence College.*

**Source:** Lerner, Gerda, *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1/2, (Autumn, 1975), pp. 5-14

In the brief span of five years in which American historians have begun to develop women's history as an independent field, they have sought to find a conceptual frame-work and a methodology appropriate to the task.

The first level at which historians, trained in traditional history, approach women's history is by writing the history of "women worthies" or "compensatory history." Who are the women missing from history? Who are the women of achievement and what did they achieve? The resulting history of "notable women" does not tell us much about those activities in which most women engaged, nor does it tell us about the significance of women's activities to society as a whole. The history of notable women is the history of exceptional, even deviant women, and does not describe the experience and history of the mass of women. This insight is a refinement of an awareness of class differences in history: Women of different classes have different historical experiences. To comprehend the full complexity of society at a given stage of its development, it is essential to take account of such differences.

Women also have a different experience with respect to consciousness, depending on whether their work, their expression, their activity is male-defined or woman-oriented. Women, like men, are indoctrinated in a male-defined value system and conduct their lives

accordingly. Thus, colonial and early nineteenth-century female reformers directed their activities into channels which were merely an extension of their domestic concerns and traditional roles. They taught school, cared for the poor, the sick, the aged. As their consciousness developed, they turned their attention toward the needs of women. Becoming woman-oriented, they began to "uplift" prostitutes, organize women for abolition or temperance and sought to upgrade female education, but only in order to equip women better for their traditional roles. Only at a later stage, growing out of the recognition of the separate interests of women as a group, and of their subordinate place in society, did their consciousness become woman-defined. Feminist thought starts at this level and encompasses the active assertion of the rights and grievances of women. These various stages of female consciousness need to be considered in historical analysis.

The next level of conceptualizing women's history has been "contribution history": describing women's contribution to, their status in, and their oppression by male-defined society. Under this category we find a variety of questions being asked: What have women contributed to abolition, to reform, to the Progressive movement, to the labor movement, to the New Deal? The movement in question stands in the foreground. Placing Women in History of inquiry; women made a "contribution" to it; the contribution is judged first of all with respect to its effect on that movement and secondly by standards appropriate to men.

The ways in which women were aided and affected by the work of these "great women," the ways in which they themselves grew into feminist awareness, are ignored. Jane Addams' enormous contribution in creating a supporting female network and new structures for living are subordinated to her role as a Progressive, or to an interpretation which regards her as merely representative of a group of frustrated college-trained women with no place to go. In other words, a deviant from male-defined norms. Margaret Sanger is seen merely as the founder of the birth control movement, not as a woman raising a revolutionary challenge to the centuries-old practice by which the bodies and lives of women are dominated and ruled by man-made laws. In the labor movement, women are described as "also there" or as problems. Their essential role on behalf of themselves and of other women is seldom considered a central theme in writing their history. Women are the outgroup, Simone de Beauvoir's "other."

Another set of questions concern oppression and its opposite, the struggle for woman's rights. Who

oppressed women and how were they oppressed? How did they respond to such oppression?

Such questions have yielded detailed and very valuable accounts of economic or social oppression, and of the various organizational, political ways in which women as a group have fought such oppression. Judging from the results, it is clear that to ask the question-why and how were women victimized-has its usefulness. We learn what society or individuals or classes of people have done to women, and we learn how women themselves have reacted to conditions imposed upon them. While inferior status and oppressive restraints were no doubt aspects of women's historical experience, and should be so recorded, the limitation of this approach is that it makes it appear either that women were largely passive or that, at the most, they reacted to male pressures or to the restraints of patriarchal society. Such inquiry fails to elicit the positive and essential way in which women have functioned in history. Mary Beard was the first to point out that the ongoing and continuing contribution of women to the development of human culture cannot be found by treating them only as victims of oppression. I have in my own work learned that it is far more useful to deal with this question as one aspect of women's history, but never to regard it as the central aspect of women's history. Essentially, treating women as victims of oppression once again places them in a male-defined conceptual framework: oppressed, victimized by standards and values established by men. The true history of women is the history of their ongoing functioning in that male-defined world, on their own terms. The question of oppression does not elicit that story, and is therefore a tool of limited usefulness to the historian.

A major focus of women's history has been on women's-rights struggles, especially the winning of suffrage, on organizational and institutional history of the women's movements, and on its leaders. This, again, is an important aspect of women's history, but it cannot and should not be its central concern.

Some recent literature has dealt with marriage and divorce, with educational opportunities, and with the economic struggles of working women. Much of recent work has been concerned with the image of women and "woman's sphere," with the educational ideals of society, the values to which women are indoctrinated, and with gender role acculturation as seen in historical perspective. A separate field of study has examined the ideals, values, and prescriptions concerning sexuality, especially female sexuality. Ron Walters and Ben Barker-Benfield has tended to confirm

traditional stereotypes concerning Victorian sexuality, the double standard, and the subordinate position of women. Much of this material is based on the study of such readily available sources as sermons, educational tracts, women's magazines, and medical textbooks. The pitfall in such interpretation, as Carl Degler has pointed out in his recent perceptive article, is the tendency to confuse prescriptive literature with actual behavior. In fact, what we are learning from most of these monographs is not what women did, felt, or experienced, but what men in the past thought women should do. Charles Rosenberg, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, and Carl Degler have shown how to approach the same material and interpret it from the new perspective of women's history. They have sharply distinguished between prescription and behavior, between myth and reality.

Other attempts to deduce women's status from popular literature and ideology demonstrate similar difficulties. Barbara Welter is an early and highly influential article, found the emergence of "the cult of true womanhood" in sermons and periodicals of the Jacksonian era. Many historians, feminists among them, have deduced from this that Victorian ideals of woman's place pervaded the society and were representative of its realities. More detailed analysis reveals that this mass media concern with woman's domesticity was, in fact, a response to the opposite trend in society. Lower-class women were entering the factories, middle-class women were discontented with their accustomed roles, and the family, as an institution, was experiencing turmoil and crisis. Idealization is very frequently a defensive ideology and an expression of tension within society. To use ideology as a measure of the shifting status of women, it must be set against a careful analysis of social structure, economic conditions, institutional changes, and popular values. With this caution society's attitudes toward women and toward gender role indoctrination can be usefully analyzed as manifestations of a shifting value system and of tensions within patriarchal society.

"Contribution" history is an important stage in the creation of a true history of women. The monographic work which such inquiries produce is essential to the development of more complex and sophisticated questions, but it is well to keep the limitations of such inquiry in mind. When all is said and done, what we have mostly done in writing contribution history is to describe what men in the past told women to do and what men in the past thought women should be. This is just another way of saying that historians of women's history have so far used a traditional conceptual framework. Essentially, they have applied ques-

tions from traditional history to women, and tried to fit women's past into the empty spaces of historical scholarship. The limitation of such work is that it deals with women in male-defined society and tries to fit them into the categories and value systems which consider man the measure of significance. Perhaps it would be useful to refer to this level of work as "transitional women's history," seeing it as an inevitable step in the development of new criteria and concepts.

Another methodological question which arises frequently concerns the connection between women's history and other recently emerging fields. Why is women's history not simply an aspect of "good" social history? Are women not part of the anonymous in history? Are they not oppressed the same way as racial or class or ethnic groups have been oppressed? Are they not marginal and akin in most respects to minorities? The answers to these questions are not simple. It is obvious that there has already been rich cross-fertilization between the new social history and women's history, but it has not been nor should it be a case of subsuming women's history under the larger and already respectable field of social history.

Yes, women are part of the anonymous in history, but unlike them, they are also and always have been part of the ruling elite. They are oppressed, but not quite like either racial or ethnic groups, though some of them are. They are subordinate and exploited, but not quite like lower classes, though some of them are. We have not yet really solved the problems of definition, but it can be suggested that the key to understanding women's history is in accepting-painful though that may be-that it is the history of the majority of mankind. Women are essentially different from all the above categories, because they are the majority now and always have been at least half of mankind, and because their subjection to patriarchal institutions antedates all other oppression and has outlasted all economic and social changes in recorded history.

Social history methodology is very useful for women's history, but it must be placed within a different conceptual framework. For example, historians working in family history ask a great many questions pertaining to women, but family history is not in itself women's history. It is no longer sufficient to view women mainly as members of families. Family history has neglected by and large to deal with unmarried and widowed women. In its applications to specific monographic studies, such as the work of Philip Greven, family history has been used to describe the relationships of fathers and sons and the property arrangements between them. The relationships of fathers to



daughters and mothers to their children have been ignored. The complex family-support patterns, for example, whereby the work and wages of daughters are used to support the education of brothers and to maintain aged parents, while that of sons is not so used, have been ignored.

Another way in which family history has been interpreted within the context of patriarchal assumptions is by using a vaguely defined "domestic power" of women, power within the family, as a measure of the societal status of women. In a methodologically highly sophisticated article, Daniel Scott Smith discovers in the nineteenth century the rise of something called "domestic feminism." expressed in a lowered birth rate from which he deduces an increasing control of women over their reproductive lives. One might, from similar figures, as easily deduce a desire on the part of men to curb their offspring due to the demands of a developing industrial system for a more highly educated labor force, hence for fewer children per family. Demographic data can indeed tell us something about female as well as male status in society, but only in the context of an economic and sociological analysis. Further, the status of women within the family is something quite different and distinct from their status in the society in general.

I learned in studying the history of black women and the black family that relatively high status for women within the family does not signify "matriarchy" or "power for women," since black women are not only members of families, but persons functioning in a larger society. The status of persons is determined not in one area of their functioning, such as within the family, but in several. The decisive historical fact about women is that the areas of their functioning, not only their status within those areas, have been determined by men. The effect on the consciousness of women has been pervasive. It is one of the decisive aspects of their history, and any analysis which does not take this complexity into consideration must be inadequate.

Then there is the impact of demographic techniques, the study of large aggregates of anonymous people by computer technology based on census data, public documents, property records. Demographic techniques have led to insights which are very useful for women's history. They have yielded revealing data on fertility fluctuations, on changes in illegitimacy patterns and sex ratios, and aggregate studies of life cycles. The latter work has been done very successfully by Joseph Kett, Robert Wells, Peter Laslett and Kenneth Keniston. The field has in the United States been largely dominated by male historians, mostly

through self-imposed sex-role stereotyping by women historians who have shared a prejudice against the computer and statistics. However, a group of younger scholars, trained in demographic techniques, have begun to research and publish material concerning working-class women. Alice Harris, Virginia McLaughlin, Judith and Daniel Walkowitz, Susan Kleinberg and Tamara Hareven are among those who have elicited woman-oriented interpretations from aggregate data. They have demonstrated that social history can be enriched by combining cliometrics with sophisticated humanistic and feminist interpretations. They have added "gender" as a factor for analysis to such familiar concepts as class, race and ethnicity.

The compensatory questions raised by women's history specialists are proving interesting and valuable in a variety of fields. It is perfectly understandable that after centuries of neglect of the role of women in history, compensatory questions and those concerning woman's contribution will and must be asked. In the process of answering such questions it is important to keep in mind the inevitable limitation of the answers they yield. Not the least of these limitations is that this approach tends to separate the work and activities of women from those of men, even where they were essentially connected. As yet, synthesis is lacking. For example, the rich history of the abolition movement has been told as though women played a marginal, auxiliary, and at times mainly disruptive role in it. Yet female antislavery societies outnumbered male societies; women abolitionists largely financed the movement with their fundraising activities, did much of the work of propaganda-writing in and distribution of newspapers and magazines. The enormous political significance of women-organized petition campaigns remains unrecorded. Most importantly, no historical work has as yet taken the organizational work of female abolitionists seriously as an integral part of the antislavery movement.

Slowly, as the field has matured, historians of women's history have become dissatisfied with old questions and old methods, and have come up with new ways of approaching historical material. They have, for example, begun to ask about the actual experience of women in the past. This is obviously different from a description of the condition of women written from the perspective of male sources, and leads one to the use of women's letters, diaries, autobiographies, and oral history sources. This shift from male-oriented to female-oriented consciousness is most important and leads to challenging new interpretations.

Historians of women's history have studied

female sexuality and its regulation from the female point of view, making imaginative use of such sources as medical textbooks, diaries, and case histories of hospital patients. Questions concerning women's experience have led to studies of birth control, as it affects women and as an issue expressing cultural and symbolic values; of the physical conditions to which women are prone, such as menarche and pregnancy and women's ailments; of customs, attitudes, and fashions affecting women's health and women's life experience. Historians are now exploring the impact of female bonding, of female friendship and homosexual relations, and the experience of women in groups, such as women in utopian communities, in women's clubs and settlement houses. There has been an interest in the possibility that women's century-long preoccupation with birth and with the care of the sick and dying have led to some specific female rituals.

Women's history has already presented a challenge to some basic assumptions historians make. While most historians are aware of the fact that their findings are not value-free and are trained to check their biases by a variety of methods, they are as yet quite unaware of their own sexist bias and, more importantly, of the sexist bias which pervades the value system, the culture, and the very language within which they work.

Women's history presents a challenge to the periodization of traditional history. The periods in which basic changes occur in society and which historians have commonly regarded as turning points for all historical development, are not necessarily the same for men as for women. This is not surprising when we consider that the traditional time frame in history has been derived from political history. Women have been the one group in history longest excluded from political power as they have, by and large, been excluded from military decision making. Thus the irrelevance of periodization based on military and political developments to their historical experience should have been predictable.

Renate Bridenthal's and Joan Kelly-Gadol's articles in this volume confirm that the history of women demands different periodization than does political history. Neither the Renaissance, it appears, nor the period during which women's suffrage was won, were periods in which women experienced an advance in their status. Recent work of American historians of women's history, such as Linda Kerber's work on the American Revolution and my own work, confirms this conclusion. For example, neither during nor after the American Revolution nor in the age of Jackson did

women share the historical experience of men. On the contrary, they experienced in both periods status loss, a restriction of options as to occupations and role choices, and certainly in Jacksonian America, there were restrictions imposed upon their sexuality, at least in prescriptive behavior. If one applies to both of these cases the kind of sophisticated and detailed analysis Kelly-Gadol attempts—that is, differentiations between women of different classes and comparisons between the status of men of a given class and women of that class—one finds the picture further complicated. Status loss in one area—social production—may be offset by status gain in another—access to education.

What kind of periodization might be substituted for the periodization of traditional history, in order for it to be applicable to women? The answer depends largely on the conceptual framework in which the historian works. Many historians of women's history, in their search for a unifying framework, have tended to use the Marxist or neo-Marxist model supplied by Juliet Mitchell and recently elaborated by Sheila Rowbotham. The important fact, says Mitchell, which distinguished the past of women from that of men is precisely that until very recently sexuality and reproduction were inevitably linked for women, while they were not so linked for men. Similarly, child-bearing and child-rearing were inevitably linked for women and still are so linked. Women's freedom depends on breaking those links. Using Mitchell's categories we can and should ask of each historical period: What happened to the link between sexuality and reproduction? What happened to the link between child-bearing and child-rearing? Important changes in the status of women occur when it becomes possible through the availability of birth control information and technology to sever sexuality from inevitable motherhood. However, it may be the case that it is not the availability and distribution of birth control information and technology so much as the level of medical and health care which are the determinants of change. That is, when infant mortality decreases, so that raising every child to adulthood becomes the normal expectation of parents, family size declines.

The above case illustrates the difficulty that has vexed historians of women's history in trying to locate a periodization more appropriate to women. Working in different fields and specialties, many historians have observed that the transition from agricultural to industrializing society and then again the transition to fully developed industrial society entails important changes affecting women and the family. Changes in relations of production affect women's status as family members and as workers. Later, shifts in the mode of

production affect the kinds of occupations women can enter and their status within them. Major shifts in health care and technological development, related to industrialization, also affect the lives of women. It is not too difficult to discern such patterns and to conclude that there must be a causal relationship between changes in the mode of production and the status of women. Here, the Marxist model seems to offer an immediately satisfying solution, especially if, following Mitchell, "sexuality" as a factor is added to such factors as class. But in the case of women, just as in the case of racial castes, ideology and prescription internalized by both women and men, seem to be as much a causative factor as are material changes in production relations. Does the entry of lower-class women into industrial production really bring them closer to "liberation"? In the absence of institutional changes such as the right to abortion and safe contraception, altered child-rearing arrangements, and varied options for sexual expression, changes in economic relations may become oppressive. Unless such changes are accompanied by changes in consciousness, which in turn result in institutional changes, they do not favorably affect the lives of women.

Is smaller family size the result of "domestic freedom" of choice exercised by women, the freedom of choice exercised by men, the ideologically buttressed coercion of institutions in the service of an economic class? Is it liberating for women, for men, or for corporations? This raises another difficult question: What about the relationship of upper-class to lower-class women? To what extent is the relative advance in the status of upper-class women predicated on the status loss of lower-class women? Examples of this are: the liberation of the middle-class American housewife in the mid-nineteenth century through the availability of cheap black or immigrant domestic workers; the liberation of the twentieth-century housewife from incessant drudgery in the home through agricultural stoop labor and the food-processing industry, both employing low paid female workers.

Is periodization then dependent as much on class as on gender? This question is just one of several which challenge the universalist assumptions of all previous historical categories. I cannot provide an answer, but I think the questions themselves point us in the right direction.

It appears to me that all conceptual models of history hitherto developed have only limited usefulness for women's history, since all are based on the assumptions of a patriarchal ordering of values. The structural-functionalist framework leaves out class and sex fac-

tors, the traditional Marxist framework leaves out sex and race factors as essentials, admitting them only as marginal factors. Mitchell's neo-Marxist model includes these, but slights ideas, values, and psychological factors. Still, her four-structures model and the refinements of it proposed by Bridenthal, are an excellent addition to the conceptual working tools of the historian of women's history. They should be tried out, discussed, refined. But they are not, in my opinion, the whole answer.

Kelly-Gadol offers the useful suggestion that attitudes toward sexuality should be studied in each historical period. She considers the constraints upon women's sexuality imposed by society a useful measure of women's true status. This approach would necessitate comparisons between prescribed behavior for women and men as well as indications of their actual sexual behavior at any given time. This challenging method can be used with great effectiveness for certain periods of history and especially for upper- and middle-class women. I doubt that it can be usefully employed as a general criterion, because of the difficulty of finding substantiating evidence, especially as it pertains to lower classes.

I raised the question of a conceptual framework for dealing with women's history in 1969, reasoning from the assumption that women were a subgroup in history. Neither caste, class, nor race quite fit the model for describing us. I have now come to the conclusion that the idea that women are some kind of a subgroup or particular is wrong. It will not do—there are just too many of us. No single framework, no single factor, four-factor or eight-factor explanation can serve to contain all that the history of women is. Picture, if you can, an attempt to organize the history of men by using four factors. It will not work; neither will it work for women.

Women are and always have been at least half of mankind and most of the time have been the majority of mankind. Their culturally determined and psychologically internalized marginality seems to be what makes their historical experience essentially different from that of men. But men have defined their experience as history and have left women out. At this time, as during earlier periods of feminist activity, women are urged to fit into the empty spaces, assuming their traditional marginal, "sub-group" status. But the truth is that history, as written and perceived up to now, is the history of a minority, who may well turn out to be the "subgroup." In order to write a new history worthy of the name, we will have to recognize that no single methodology and conceptual framework can fit the

complexities of the historical experience of all women.

The first stage of "transitional history" may be to add some new categories to the general categories by which historians organize their material: sexuality, reproduction, the link between child-bearing and child-rearing; role indoctrination; sexual values and myths; female consciousness. Further, all of these need to be analysed, taking factors of race, class, ethnicity and, possibly, religion into consideration. What we have here is not a single framework for dealing with women in history, but new questions to all of universal history.

The next stage may be to explore the possibility that what we call women's history may actually be the study of a separate women's culture. Such a culture would include not only the separate occupations, status, experiences, and rituals of women but also their consciousness, which internalizes patriarchal assumptions. In some cases, it would include the tensions created in that culture between the prescribed patriarchal assumptions and women's efforts to attain autonomy and emancipation.

The questions asked about the past of women may demand interdisciplinary approaches. They also may demand broadly conceived group research projects that end up giving functional answers; answers that deal not with slices of a given time or society or period, but which instead deal with a functioning organism, a functioning whole, the society in which both men and women live.

A following stage may develop a synthesis: a history of the dialectic, the tensions between the two cultures, male and female. Such a synthesis could be based on close comparative study of given periods in

which the historical experience of men is compared to that of women, their tensions and interactions being as much the subject of study as their differences. Only after a series of such detailed studies can we hope to find the parameters by which to define the new universal history. My guess is that no one conceptual framework will fit so complex a subject.

Methods are tools for analysis—some of us will stick with one tool, some of us will reach for different tools as we need them. For women, the problem really is that we must acquire not only the confidence needed for using tools, but for making new ones to fit our needs. We should do so relying on our learned skills and our rational scepticism of handed-down doctrine. The recognition that we had been denied our history came to many of us as a staggering flash of insight, which altered our consciousness irretrievably. We have come a long way since then. The next step is to face, once and for all and with all its complex consequences, that women are the majority of mankind and have been essential to the making of history. Thus, all history as we now know it, is merely prehistory. Only a new history firmly based on this recognition and equally concerned with men, women, the establishment and the passing away of patriarchy, can lay claim to being a truly universal history.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What does Lerner seem to be saying about women as victims of oppression? What do women sacrifice by accepting this?
2. What is the greatest threat to the role women play in history "on their own terms"? What can be done to overcome this threat?

## I-6 From Subject to Change: Theories and Paradigms of U.S. Feminist History

*This essay discusses the development of theoretical debates within U.S. women's history arguing that a diversity of approaches and topics would be useful for the field.*

**Source:** Thurner, Manuela. "Subject to Change: Issues and Paradigms of U.S. Feminist History." *Journal of Women's History* 9 (Summer 1997): 122-146.

### A History of Their Own

Emerging out of the women's liberation move-

ment of the 1960s and 1970s, women's history has always been linked to an avowedly political agenda. This agenda, in short, was to denounce sexism and discrimination against women, to expose the origins, foundations, and workings of patriarchy, and subsequently to formulate and implement strategies for its eventual demolition. Due to the fact that the second-wave women's rights movement shared historical space and cultural momentum with, among others, the antiwar, civil rights, and gay liberation movements, attention was also paid to other forms of inequality and discrimination, variously seen to be independent of or related to the patriarchal oppression of women. History was considered to be an especially relevant and important helpmate in this enterprise, both because of its potential to create and sustain a community through a sense of a shared past, and through its

promise to provide a more precise map of the varieties, limitations of, as well as possible alternatives to patriarchal structures and power. Although or maybe because they were not yet bound by institutionalized structures, women's historians in the 1960s and early 1970s were a varied group, buoyed by a sense that by (re)writing history they were in fact making history.

Those working from within academic institutions, while freely borrowing from and communicating with other disciplines, found an especially helpful ally in the new social history which shared their ambition to rewrite history "from the bottom up." Documenting the variety and diversity of women's activities and lives in the past, historians set out to make visible those "hidden from history" and to rectify images of women as promulgated in "male-stream" studies of American history. In the words of Joan Kelly, one of the pioneers of the field, the goal was "to restore women to history, and to restore our history to women." To that end, it was seen as essential to keep in mind both Simone de Beauvoir's view of women at the mercy of economic, political, social, and ideological processes as well as Mary Ritter Beard's perspective on women as a "force in history." Women's historians also were confronted with the need to strike another balance: while they were particularly and sometimes painfully aware of the "fact" that all narratives of the human past were fundamentally subjective, incomplete, and mythologizing readings and writings, they also had to believe in the empirical promise of history, i.e., to be able to assert that one could make "true" statements about the female past. Reminding her colleagues that the impossibility of objective truths did not mean that there were no objective lies, the goal for women's historians was, in the words of Linda Gordon, "to maintain this tension between accuracy and mythic power."

Thus faced with a daunting array of tasks and challenges, both empirical and theoretical, early women's history comprised an immense and eclectic variety of approaches and concerns. Yet according to many contemporary and later accounts of the development and state of women's history up to the mid-1970s, the field's concentration was seen to be in three major areas: first, in the research into historical ideals of femininity, culled from all kinds and genres of writing; second, in biographies of extraordinary women, the so-called "great women" or "women worthies"; and, finally, in studies and analyses of feminist and collective women's movements, especially the women's suffrage movements. Extremely self-conscious and self-critical both vis-a.-vis their scholarly colleagues as well as their broader feminist constituency, women's historians soon recognized and criticized the fact that,

by and large, these approaches were imitating the parameters and categories of traditional "patriarchal history." Analyses of prescriptive writings, in addition to providing little insights into women's "real" lives, often served to underwrite further the canonical status of the texts under scrutiny, most of them authored by men. While histories of great women copied the elitist and exclusivist "great men of history paradigm," analyses of "organized womanhood," facilitated by the richness of sources, were seen to imply that analyses of female activities were worthy of historical attention only if set in the public arena of electoral politics. In addition, many studies of single or collective womanhood were seen to follow a teleological narrative pattern, bolstered by the "whiggish" belief in a steadily progressive democratization and modernization of U.S. society. Inquiries into the status of women, which could perhaps be called the fourth major topic of early women's history, also served to call into question traditional historical periodization. Realizing that it was not enough simply to add women to the historical record on terms not their own, women's historians increasingly became interested in devising new methodologies and conceptual models more specific to their questions and concerns.

Since it accomplished just that, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's 1975 essay, "The Female World of Love and Ritual," quickly became a model for women's historians. Analyzing nonelite white women's correspondence of 35 families between circa 1760 and 1880, Smith-Rosenberg drew a picture of a specifically middle-class female (sub)culture with its own rituals, values, and ways of communicating, thus lending credence to Barbara Welter's 1966 postulation of the existence of "separate spheres" for Victorian men and women. In contrast to Welter's interpretation, which was based on male-authored prescriptive writings, Smith-Rosenberg's reading of the female sphere did not make it out to be a highly restrictive and crippling realm; rather, she imagined it as a social space that offered women many opportunities for autonomy, agency, and a variety of activities. In subsequent years, this idea of a woman's sphere and a women's culture grounded in this sphere arguably became the major subject of U.S. women's history. Not the least of its attractions was the fact that it opened up a vast space for research, discovery, and interpretation, a space, moreover, in which women wielded power and enjoyed their lives. Wherever women lived and worked together, whether at home, work, or church, under ordinary or extraordinary circumstances, a specific women's culture was seen to form and function.

While the idea of separate spheres was, on the one

hand, clearly a subject of empirical investigation and analysis, its power to produce new perspectives and knowledge made it as much an analytical tool as a topic of women's history.<sup>14</sup> The paradigm's appeal was such that it was adapted and adopted by feminist historians specializing in a variety of areas. Since it portrayed a world where women's intense homosocial bonding may have included more explicitly homosexual activities, historians of lesbian women, eager to find foremothers and historical antecedents for their experiences and struggles, greeted Smith-Rosenberg's article as a groundbreaking piece. Labor historians' analyses of women's work throughout the centuries—from the midwives of colonial times to the factory girls of the early nineteenth century and the saleswomen of the turn of the century—furnished further evidence of a female culture outside the private sphere of the home. Historians of feminism came to see woman's sphere, which encompassed religious, social, and charitable work, as the birthplace of both feminist activists and ideology. Throughout the nineteenth century, Paula Baker saw an increasing "domestication of American politics," which found its logical and timely consequence in the granting of women's suffrage in 1920. The postulation of a "separate, public female sphere" thus opened a path for a variety of analyses into the relationship between the private and the public; the subsequent redefinitions of the political arguably are among the most far-reaching reformulations and revisions of u.s. history. Generating insights and debates that not only expanded the boundaries of women's history but changed the face of much received historical wisdom, the separate spheres paradigm thus achieved theoretical as well as topical prominence.

The concept of a women's culture found support from two very different theoretical schools, whose appeals within and outside of academic circles further contributed to its popularity. E. P. Thompson's 1966 neo-Marxist classic, *The Making of the English Working Class*, exerted much influence on women's historians' thinking about the role of cultural factors in the development of a group-based consciousness. Moreover, for Marxist historians, the separate spheres paradigm sat well with Friedrich Engels's observations regarding the division and interdependence of public (productive) and private (reproductive) spheres in capitalist societies, a division that was taken to be in the interest of the dominant class and thus central to capitalist ideology and social structure. While Joan Kelly called for a "doubled vision" that would bring the areas of production and reproduction into the same historical picture, other feminist scholars formulated the so-called dual systems theory, which analyzed patriarchy and capitalism as coexisting, separate but

equal mechanisms of oppression. As far as the inner life of these gender-divided spheres was concerned, psychological literature, most especially Carol Gilligan's influential *In a Different Voice* (1982), was sometimes referenced to bolster the concept of women's culture. Some feminists and historians-cultural feminists and historians of difference, as they came to be called—considered Gilligan's observation that women, in contrast to men, based their decisions and opinions on a "standard of relationship, an ethic of nurturance, responsibility, and care," to be further evidence for the historical and possibly cross-cultural existence of a separate women's culture. While Linda Kerber strongly condemned historians' employment of ahistorical psychoanalytic theories, others pointed out the historical failure or at least janus-faced nature of a feminism that grounded itself in those values that societies and cultures have termed to be traditionally and "naturally" female. As "a Marxism you can take home to mother," in the words of Joan Williams, the "ideology of domesticity" was, in the final analysis, seen to be not very effective when it came to analyzing and addressing patriarchal structures of inequality and oppression.

Historians from racial and ethnic minorities charged that the concept of women's separate sphere was basically restricted to white, middle-class Protestant women and thus held little promise to explain African-American or immigrant women's experiences. Historians of lesbian women soon saw the need for a more accurate definition of the female networks and relationships constituting this homosocial sphere, and historians of periods other than the nineteenth century asked for an increasing historicization of the paradigm, questioning its usefulness to explain women's lives beyond a specific moment in history and location in culture. Others disliked the too positive portrayal and romanticization of a female world and warned against forgetting that this female sphere existed in men's world that largely determined its contours. Over and against an increasing "culturalization" of women's history, they demanded that an analysis of patriarchy had to be the central concern of women's history, that the emphasis had to be on analyses of the inequalities and hierarchical interdependency of those two separate, but hardly equal spheres.

These historians' exhortation to keep in mind "the social relation of the sexes" was certainly not a new idea. With Smith-Rosenberg's article not yet off the press, Natalie Zeman Davis, at the second Berkshire Conference in 1975, pointed out the shortcomings of a history that focused exclusively on women:

It seems to me that we should be interested in the history of both women and men, that we should not be working only on the subjected sex any more than an historian of class can focus entirely on peasants. Our goal is to understand the significance of the sexes, of gender groups in the historical past.

The following year, three historians emphasized that it was "precisely the interactions between women's sphere(s) and the 'rest' of history that enable us to discover women's contributions to world history and the meaning of their subjection." And in 1977, Gerda Lerner voiced her opinion that women's history as herstory would necessarily be only the first step on the way to a truly "universal history" that would take into account the perspectives of both men and women.

### Deconstructing Discourses

In the mid-1980s, the linguistic turn in the social sciences and the reception of poststructuralist theories of French provenance coincided with growing uneasiness with a variety of herstory approaches, leading to a new model for historical scholarship—gender history. According to Joan Scott, who has in the meantime come to be designated the primary spokesperson for this paradigm, women's history, by adhering too closely to the methodology of social history, was either too integrationist or, by imagining a history of their own, too separatist fundamentally and lastingly to transform the discipline of history. Thus, in 1986, Scott introduced "gender" as a new and "useful category of historical analysis" and thus initiated a new phase in U.S. women's history, even, as Barbara Melosh put it, "a departure from women's history."

When the term "gender" began to be more frequently used in the 1980s, it was initially taken to be a substitute for "women." As a neutral, euphemistic term, it did not immediately conjure up visions of radical feminism and thus helped women's history to win a broader acceptance within academic structures. Gender also came to be a virtual synonym for the "social relations of the sexes" as understood by Natalie Zeman Davis and Joan Kelly or by anthropologist Gayle Rubin who, in 1975, had coined the term "sex/gender system" to denote the cross-cultural variability of men's and women's roles and functions based on their perceived biological differences. Finally, gender became a major term in psychoanalytic explanations of the constitution of the subject's identity. Finding fault with all these various definitions and usages, Scott proposed a definition of gender that drew heavily on the theories of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.

Gender, according to Scott, is the "knowledge about sexual difference," with knowledge, in a Foucauldian sense, defined not only as ideas and insights, but denoting all the institutions, structures, daily practices, and rituals by which and through which a society organizes and understands itself. Thus, gender is "the social organization of sexual difference," "the knowledge that assigns meaning to bodily difference." Meaning, according to Derrida, is necessarily grounded in difference: something/somebody is black, since he/she/it is not white; somebody is a foreigner / outsider, since he / she is not a native / insider; somebody is male, since he is not female. Although or because this meaning is always based on and dependent on the existence of an Other which it needs to repress in order to assert itself, the production of meaning is necessarily based on an unstable hierarchy. Gender and race, since seemingly rooted in immutable, "natural," biological facts, are metaphors of difference par excellence; as discursive constructs, however, meaning and power produced through reference to gender can be "deconstructed," demystified, and thus made open to change. Deconstructing gender, which is according to Scott, "a primary way of signifying relationships of power," thus constitutes a highly political enterprise.

Since meaning is produced through and in language, this approach to gender takes leave of a belief in "material" experiences of "real men and women," and instead takes discourse, rhetoric, and representation to be the subject that really matters. Not supposedly objective or natural realities are at the center of Scott's theory, but epistemological categories:

The story is no longer about the things that have happened to women and men and how they have reacted to them; instead it is about how the subjective and collective meanings of women and men as categories of identity have been constructed.<sup>36</sup>

As an exemplary discipline for the creation, construction, and perpetuation of discourses and knowledges of gender, history is not merely descriptive of the past, but operates to produce, support, and legitimize hierarchies of gender. History as a discipline thus no longer serves as an instrument of, but becomes a subject of feminist inquiry and criticism. By using gender as an analytical tool, one can uncover the "deeply gendered nature of history itself":

Feminist history then becomes not just an attempt to correct or supplement an incomplete record of the past but a way of critically understanding how history operates as a site of the production of gender knowledge.

In Scott's view, herstorians fail to address or, even worse, frustrate this agenda by simply accepting the category "women" as well as other historical terminology instead of questioning the very production and workings of these categories. As long as historians take their task to be writing the history of "women" and their "experiences," she sees them as contributing to the further consolidation of an epistemology which always constructs women as the Other and thus as deviant of and secondary to a male norm. The only strategy to break free of the vicious circle of tautological arguments of women's discrimination based on specifically female experiences, Scott argues, is to change the very subject of historical inquiry. Only "when historians take as their project not the reproduction and transmission of knowledge, but the analysis of the production of knowledge itself," can feminist history redeem its promise to change the way history is written and perceived by a larger public.

According to Scott, this perspective also manages to make visible the gendered nature of areas in which women do not make an appearance as historical agents as, for example, in such male-dominated domains as international diplomacy and the military, fields that traditionally have been the most privileged areas of historical scholarship:

High politics itself is a gendered concept, for it established its crucial importance and public power, the reasons for and the facts of its highest authority, precisely in its exclusion of women from its work. Gender is one of the recurrent references by which political power has been conceived, legitimated, and criticized.

Therefore, gender as a category for historical analysis has to be taken into account even by specialists in areas where women's historians, looking for women, search in vain. Gender thus becomes a truly ubiquitous and universal category; since it is integral to all areas of historical inquiry, there remains no "gender-free zone."

Probably partly because Scott herself has demonstrated the applicability of her theory through an analysis of primary and secondary literature in the field of labor history, and maybe also because the field's historical relation to Marxist theory has accustomed them to theoretical rigor, a number of labor historians have been particularly drawn to Scott's approach. Yet while women's historians generally agree on the significance as well as usefulness of gender as a category for historical analysis, Joan Scott's theoretical tour de force has started a lively debate among historians. Discomfort with what some take to be an elitist, near unintelligible

vocabulary of poststructuralist theorizing constitutes the least important critique. More frequently, critics contend that poststructuralist gender theory often claims to be the one and only theory by criticizing all other approaches as naive, inappropriate, or ineffective. Others argue that most insights that are now couched and reified in poststructuralist terms of Foucauldian or Derridean origins have already been articulated over the years by a variety of scholars. For scholars of gay and lesbian history, for example, the interrogation of historical categories was certainly not a new concept; they, after all, had claimed Foucault as one of their own long before others began to subsume his concern with sexuality under a broader discussion of deviancy and discourses. Moreover, the difficulty of establishing the proper subject for gay and lesbian history, i.e., to find "real" lesbians and gays throughout history, led lesbian historians early on to investigate the historical contingency and constructedness of such categories as homosexuality and heterosexuality and to question the ideology of gender dualism characteristic of most contemporary societies.

Other critics of Scott's poststructuralist approach worry that the abstract debates about discourse, language, and gender as a metaphor of difference are of little help when it comes to the description of and the attack on real, material inequalities within and without academic circles. Joan Hoff, who for many years has probably been the harshest critic of poststructuralist theory, perceives gender history to be a symbol and symptom of a dangerous indifference and apolitical relativism, even a "deliberate depoliticization of power through representations of the female self as totally diffuse and decentered." She deplores poststructuralism's abstract theorizing, its emphasis on intertextuality rather than on human interrelationships, and castigates it for being ethnocentric, sexist, and thus profoundly antifeminist. In her worst-case scenario, the price paid for a deconstructivist approach is not only the very subject women's historians and women's activists have been concerned with women-but even history itself. While Judith Newton has labeled poststructuralist gender theory a "scholarship you can bring home to dad," Joan Hoff even suggested that it was "the patriarchal ideology for the end of the twentieth century." Was Scott's theory of gender a sign of the fact that the old fathers Marx and Freud had been supplanted by new ones, including Foucault and Derrida? Somewhat more moderate in her criticism than Hoff, setting herself apart from both her story and poststructuralist approaches, Judith Bennett has also called for a repoliticization of women's history, i.e., a return to patriarchy as the central subject of their



inquiry. And even those historians who generally acknowledge the relevance and the significance of deconstructionist methods for women's history point out that the destabilization and demystification of certain categories could indeed be inimical or damaging to the feminist agenda.

Arguing over the issue of whether women's history or gender history is the better feminist history, Joan Scott and Linda Gordon, in the summer 1990 issue of *Signs*, have laid bare the essentials of the debate.<sup>51</sup> Is all history only text, discourse, and representation, or can historians get at the materiality of the past, a "reality behind language," in order to record the experiences and activities of men and women? Is individual or collective action based in concrete, material experiences or is it, according to Scott, purely a "discursive effect"? Does the emphasis on language and discourse deflect attention from issues of power, oppression, and discrimination or is discourse the central, maybe even the only, area through which struggles for power are articulated and consequently the arena in which those struggles need to be fought? Is it sufficient to define gender as a metaphor of sexual difference if it needs to be understood as a system or structure of oppression?

Stimulated by these sometimes quite acerbic debates about the uses and abuses of gender history, some have tried to make concrete proposals for the integration of poststructuralist approaches into their analyses of male and female identities and subjectivities. Lesbian and gay history has been a field that, for many years, has debated and successfully practiced a combination of essentialist and deconstructivist approaches, always aware of the interplay between the construction of social categories and the formation of subjective identities. In addition, gender as a category of analysis holds special promise for those interested in the construction of masculinities and the history of men qua men. Although, as Nancy Cott has argued, there is no dearth of information about men, it has now become possible and necessary to analyze their history from the perspective of gender: "Since we know so little about men as gendered beings, 'men's history' must be about the social construction of masculinity and manhood rather than simply about men as a group." The delineations between the public and private sphere, the relationship between individual and society, and other leitmotifs of U.S. history and Western civilization could then be identified as being grounded in a specifically male discourse.

Postulating "that real historical women do exist and share certain experiences and that deconstruction's demystification makes theoretical sense," both

Mary Poovey and Louise Newman have argued for the possibility of a synthesis of the approaches used by what Newman has called "historians of experience" and "historians of representation." While acknowledging the usefulness of gender history, Poovey cautions against "consolidating all women into a falsely unified 'woman/If if the concept of gender were to be reified as the "social organization of sexual difference.'" Moreover, Poovey points out that poststructuralist gender history, not least by its own logic, needs to subject itself to the same deconstructive criticism that it brings to all other discourses. Especially women's historians are, after all, hardly in a position to forget that their paradigms, premises, and interpretations are products of a specific historical moment, cultural location, and individual standpoint, and thus not only representative of a certain politics and polemics, but also constantly subject to change.<sup>56</sup>

### Difference and Dominance

Most critically, historians of minority groups often perceive themselves to be marginalized within these debates; once again, women's history's dominant paradigm seems to ignore their theoretical and empirical contributions to women's history as well as fail to explain their history to women of color. From the perspective of historians of race and ethnicity, it has been obvious that Marxist categories of analysis were not only "sex-blind," but also deficient to explain why certain racial and ethnic groups were the most discriminated against within a class-based hierarchy. The conceptual analogy between race and gender, introduced by Simone de Beauvoir and very popular in the 1960s and 1970s, when activists tried to intensify the collaboration between the civil rights and the women's liberation movements, was hardly acceptable for black women, since it ran the danger of disregarding black women altogether, as is illustrated by the title of a 1982 anthology, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*. The propagation of a woman's culture historically and ideologically rooted in middle-class domesticity, and frequently claimed to be morally superior to men's, was hardly convincing to African-American women, given their specific history of slavery, physical and psychological violence, urban poverty, and their oppression at the hands of white women as well as white men. Similarly, many perceived the poststructuralist concept of gender, with its emphasis on race, class, and gender as metalanguages of difference, to be equally inadequate to grasp their specific experiences of oppression and resistance.

In her 1987 essay, "The Race for Theory," literary theorist Barbara Christian criticized the hegemony of certain theoretical approaches and the fact that most of them have been authored by whites. Against this theoretical monism and a "grand feminist theory," claiming to be universally applicable and valid, she argued for a pluralism of voices and approaches and thus a broader definition of theory, which would also, for example, make room for narrative strategies and elements. Nancy Hewitt also warned her colleagues against denouncing the voices from the margins as theoretically naive or unimportant. Not only would it be a serious mistake to overlook the variety and diversity of positions within women's history, but such an attitude would only replicate the imperialist attitudes feminist historians had, after all, set out to dismantle. No longer concerned to present a united front against mom and/or dad, "sibling rivalry" was now seen to be as central to historical and theoretical debates and developments as a collective critique of authority.

Amidst recent debates about multiculturalism, this renewed emphasis on difference among women is especially pertinent to and propagated by historians of ethnic minorities. Analogous to women's history's original agenda to dethrone the "universal man of American history," it is now seen as necessary to topple the "uniracial universal woman" from the pedestal she has come to occupy in historical scholarship—thus the avowed motivation behind the first Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History. Also seconding the effort to move marginal subjects center-stage, lesbian theorists and historians are increasingly being heard again in their attempt "to bring the lesbian subject out of the closet of feminist history." Citing the lack of analyses of heterosexist oppression even within "difference-sensitive" frameworks, Cheshire Calhoun has recently suggested that feminist theory and history as currently conceived do not make room for the lesbian, that, in fact, "lesbian representation cannot be accomplished under the sign 'women.'" Last but certainly not least, Phyllis Palmer and Nancy Hewitt have reminded us that it needs to be shown that whites, capitalists, and men also "have a race, class, and gender" and that these factors are equally determinant of their lives as of the lives of those belonging to the so-called "marked groups."

While these critiques and perspectives promise a host of new insights and major revisions of traditional concepts and paradigms of U.S. historiography, the question of how to conceptualize such inquiries is again at the forefront of scholars' debates. How is one to do justice to the coexistence, collaboration, or confrontation of different groups within a certain histori-

cal and geographical context and to the complexity of individual lives? Historians wonder how the manifold stories of "race/ class/ sex/ sexual/ regional/generational/national/religious subgroup[s]"—thus the certainly incomplete list compiled by Nancy Hewitt—can be brought together into one narrative, how these parts can be put together to form a new whole. How is one to determine, especially in hindsight, whether a married Cuban-born tobacco fieldworker and mother of two in Florida or a single, bisexual, WASP female lawyer in Massachusetts have acted and reacted in certain contexts because of their skin color, ethnic identification, sexual orientation, economic positioning, religious convictions, marital or life-cycle status, or any mixture of the above? How is one to write history, if the subject of history—be it the nation-state or the individual—is, so to speak, falling into pieces? Or if he / she is reassembling himself/herself in hitherto unknown combinations, as is suggested by recent propositions of "cyborgs," "queer straights," or the "male lesbian" as legitimate subjects for feminist (historical) analysis?

Warning against too vague a definition of difference that potentially leaves the historian floundering in a sea with too many fish to catch, Linda Gordon argues that the difference paradigm needs to be translated "into a more relational, power-conscious, and subversive set of analytic premises and questions." In the formulation of Elsa Barkley Brown, the primary goal for feminist historians needs to be to analyze the interdependencies and inequalities between these differences, to investigate "the relational nature of these differences." Once again, these are not necessarily new insights. Bonnie Thornton Dill and Deborah King, in 1979 and 1983 respectively, have argued for a conceptualization showing racism, sexism, and capitalism to be integrally related mechanisms of oppression. A focus on patriarchy and gender differences alone cannot explain, for example, African-American women's specific oppression and thus no longer suffices to redeem women's and gender history's radical potential. Maintaining that an "unquestioning application of liberal doses of Eurocentricity can completely distort and transform herstory into history," Hazel Carby points out that no history has the right to call itself feminist or revolutionary if it were to "reproduc[e] the structural inequalities that exist between the 'metropolises' and the 'peripheries', and within the 'metropolises' between black and white women."

One possibility for accepting this challenge to interrogate critically the concept of difference and to pay attention to the various forms of oppression and discrimination is to take a broad view and to attempt a grand narrative. Setting out to write the world history

of patriarchy and feminism, Gerda Lerner defines "difference" as the crucial element of all structures of inequality:

When men discovered how to turn "difference" into dominance they laid the ideological foundation for all systems of hierarchy, inequality, and exploitation .... This "invention of hierarchy" can be traced and defined historically: it occurs everywhere in the world under similar circumstances, although not at the same time?

According to Lerner, sexism, racism, and classism are thus merely variations of the same structure of power of a hegemony Lerner calls "patriarchy," by which term she means all structures of inequality that define and legitimize themselves through difference.

However, many scholars argue against such encyclopedic synthesis, questioning not only its feasibility, but even more strongly its desirability. Thus, Jacqueline Dowd Hall announced at the "First Southern Conference on Women's History" in 1988:

Our purpose, in any case, should not be to replace one model or agreed-upon fiction with another. Rather than seeking some new "centered structure," I would call for an historical practice that turns on partiality, that is self-conscious about perspective, that releases multiple voices rather than competing orthodoxies, and that, above all, nurtures an "internally differing but united political community."

Diane Elam, from a deconstructionist perspective, has called for a history "written in the future anterior," by which she means a history that "doesn't claim to know in advance what it is women can do and be," a history "that is a rewriting, yet is itself always ready to be rewritten."

African-American historians, for many years, have suggested new techniques and methodologies to accommodate the voices and stories of a variety of historical actors and groups. According to Bettina Aptheker and Elsa Barkley Brown, a historian's goal and ambition should be neither to establish herself at the center nor to negotiate a standpoint outside of or marginal to the reigning orthodoxies. Historians should be able "to pivot the center," i.e., to assume different standpoints and to acknowledge them to be the center and starting points for their observations and interpretations. In contrast to linear, logical, well-ordered Western epistemology, Elsa Barkley Brown calls this method nonlinear and polyrhythmic. For her, history is not a clearly and orderly structured textile, a classical concert, or an isolated monologue that requires an awestruck, passive audience; rather, it is comparable to a quilt, jazz, or "gumbo ya ya," a Creole

expression for the simultaneous talking of various people. According to Brown, history deals with structures, rhythms, and voices, which only in their synchronous interplay make for a more complete and complex picture of the past. By using terms and metaphors from the field of cultural aesthetics in order to illustrate her philosophy of history, she also suggests that the cultural forms characteristic of certain groups offer us insights into their epistemologies.

## Conclusion

It seems to me that two caveats are in order at this point. First, one would do well to remember that the theoretical debates among feminist historians, prone to develop a dynamic of their own, can hardly do justice to the heterogeneity and diversity of approaches employed by historians when they embark upon their empirical studies. While the focus of this, as of any, article is necessarily exclusionary and limited, I would venture to justify my choice of themes by arguing that they, more than any other paradigms and positions, have constituted the pivots of extremely far-reaching and fundamental debates among women's historians; as such, their significance lies as much in the criticism and commentary they have sparked as in the insights they have produced. Second, if my attempt to summarize the debates within women's history has created the impression that I have argued for a progressive evolution within the discipline, which permits new formulations and explanations to discard their predecessors as outdated or obsolete, this impression would be very unfortunate. Not only has a critique of the notion of progressive evolution been one of the earliest and central insights of women's history; more important, the three paradigms I have chosen as organizing principles cannot be separated as neatly—both for their chronological sequence as well as their contents—as I have done here for analytical and presentational reasons. (This probably goes to show how difficult it is to adopt a presentational mode that does justice to the complexity and simultaneity of the dialogue among women's historians.)

On the other hand, it would be equally wrong to minimize the fact that certain viewpoints become and are more pronounced and prominent at one time rather than another. My suggestion is that this has as much or even more to do with who is doing the talking and in what context, than with what she is saying; the higher and more exposed the podium from which one is speaking, the more clearly and widely one is heard. It does make a difference, after all, whether one's ideas are published in the first issue of a journal that goes on to become a major player in the field,

whether one formulates one's ideas in Princeton's Institute of Advanced Studies, or whether one is somebody "daring" to comment upon historical research from outside the hallowed walls of academia. The fact that the voices of minority women's historians are only recently being given more attention does not mean that they had not been raised before. Yet their ideas and insights frequently lacked—and continue to lack—the authority that is, within the academy, conferred by a variety of factors such as the access of women of color to institutional resources, academic networks, and major journals, and their representation among student bodies and faculty at colleges and universities. The larger the representation of "alternative standpoints" at renowned universities, the academic "metropolises," the better the preconditions for a wider dissemination and acceptance of what may otherwise forever remain "peripheral" ideas. At a time when one wonders how to do justice to the multiple voices from the past, one equally has to interrogate today's politics of the profession to accommodate a variety of perspectives.

If one were to try to find a common theme among the debates presented here, it could be the issue of who and what constitutes the appropriate subject of (feminist) history. Initially, the agenda was to retrieve women, individually and collectively, as historical agents and subjects. Yet if women's historians were writing about women, which women were we going to talk about and what were we going to call them? While historians of feminism and lesbian historians debated definitions, historians of women of color argued that one, after all, was not simply woman and thus questioned the usefulness of a subject identified exclusively through her sex or gender.<sup>1</sup> The poststructuralist insight that the very "notion of what a woman is" changes historically and cross-culturally and that "woman" was thus a discursive construct led to a focus on the production of categories and discourse as a subject for historical analysis. And with feminist theory voluminously debating the issue of "difference," there is a feeling that "a debate about difference seems to have replaced the debate about women." Yet I would argue that there has been not so much a shift as a multiplication of subjects that allows feminist history not only to reach a broader constituency both within and outside the academy, but also makes for a more complex, colorful, and thus credible picture of the past.

As a key concept of postmodern thought, it is not surprising that "difference" is one of the main themes and concerns of late twentieth-century feminist theorists and historians. On the conceptual level, the necessity to be attentive to and adequately to represent

difference poses enormous difficulties and challenges for historians. Women's historians, it seems, are particularly aware of the predicament that legal theorist Martha Minow has called "the dilemma of difference," and that Elizabeth Spelman has defined as the paradox that "both the assertion of difference and the denial of difference can operate on behalf of domination." Yet instead of turning the debate on difference into the scapegoat for feminist disillusionment in the 1990s, it might be well to remember "the productive aspects" of boundary drawings, differentiations, and classifications. A perspective that recognizes and accommodates differences only creates the preconditions and the framework for new insights and new knowledge. Similarly, the heterogeneity and the variety of standpoints assumed in the debate over what constitutes feminist history should be no cause for alarm. Arguing that it is "not difference which immobilizes us, but silence," Audre Lorde suggests that difference "must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic."

Thus, it seems to me that a "grand theory" cannot be a realistic option nor should it be the ultimate goal of women's history, even if such holistic stringency and logic can, in theory, be achieved. Instead of every approach claiming to be more feminist and more effective than the one it criticizes yet builds upon, one should keep in mind that the more varied the theories and tactics, the better the chance eventually to bring about a lasting transformation of academic and social structures. Rather than signifying a dissipation or even paralysis of its radical potential or energies, the diversity of approaches and subjects of U.S. women's history bespeaks its vigor and strength. This becomes especially apparent when one looks to and out from countries where women's history has not yet achieved the degree of prominence and acceptance it now takes for granted in the United States. Thus, amidst their internal squabbles, U.S. women's historians might do well to look abroad, not in order to export their paradigms and insights wholesale to other countries and cultures, but in order for all sides to profit from a dialogue that will enrich U.S. theoretical debates as much as it might empower those struggling to write and institutionalize women's history elsewhere.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why was the concept of "separate spheres" appealing to feminist historians? What were its drawbacks?
2. According to Thurner, how did Joan Scott help to redefine the term "gender"? What was her proposal? How did critics of her approach feel?

## WORLDS APART, to 1700

### 1-1 Excerpts from the Florentine Codex

*The Florentine Codex is the primary record of Aztec life before the Spanish conquest. Over a period of approximately forty years, Bernadino DeSahagun had the original source material transcribed into a set of 12 books. The two selections below are taken from the tenth book and describe how newborn children are received and descriptions of various attributes (both positive and negative) of women in the society.*

**Source:** DeSahagun, Fr. Bernadino. *The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, vol. 10, Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, translators. Sante Fe: The School of American Research and the University of Utah Press, 1960. pp. 46-53, 171-172.

#### “Aztec Greetings to Newborn Babies” – Part IV

Thirty-fourth Chapter, in which are told and mentioned what they did when they visited women recently delivered, and other things which were done where a woman recently delivered dwelt.

And here it is told that when a child was born, and when [the mother's] relatives knew of it, and it was known and the news spread and was noised abroad, her family and blood relations were assembled and brought together. They set forth, and came and proceeded to visit the much revered child.

When they entered, at the very first, they took ashes; they anointed their knees with ashes; they rubbed themselves. And also they put ashes on the knees of their children yet in the cradles; or those still crawling, going on all fours; those who stood, who already took to their feet; the boys, girls, youths, young men, unmarried girls, and young women. Everywhere, on all parts of the body they placed ashes; on every joint and articulation: their ankles, their elbows, their buttocks, over the kidneys, the napes of their necks, their shoulders, but especially their knees . . .

And it was so said and averred that thereby they would not become lame. But if this were not so done, they would become lame, and all the joints, in every place, would creak.

And also for four days they carefully watched the fire. It never went out. It continued to flare up, to grow and increase, to flare red. They thus carefully started it; it was well set. And no one might take the fire. And if anyone wished to take the fire, or a light, they would not give it to him, lest he take renown from the child who had been born, until the four days had ended, or for still a few days, when they bathed him.

Thirty-fifth Chapter. Here is told what was done when they bathed their children, and how food was eaten when they gave them their names; and the discourse which the old people gave when they addressed the child and the mother.

And when he was bathed, quite early in the morning, in the morning light, when the sun appeared, they had the small children perform the naming ceremony. They went out shouting and panting on the roads; to the entrances they ran. Thus they went calling out what he had been given as a name, as hath already been mentioned, in a certain place. They took the naming ceremony gift, parched maize toasted with beans. They provided it with beans, many beans, offered in a vessel.

And it is said that so was the custom if someone were born on a day sign beginning in the first position (as hath been said in many places). If it were a good time, then at once they quickly bathed him. Or later, they set it aside and skipped a day, so that they could make good the feasting and drinking for the child.

But if they could not do so then, they bathed him later, on the third day sign. As here it appeareth in [the series of] One Eagle, the one perhaps then born they would bathe later, on Three Motion.

Those whose fathers and mothers were poor, the indigent, who were in misery, and had nothing to use,

with which to gather together and assemble people, only with affliction, sickness, and misery bathed their child. For they only aggravated and worsened it when they did not delay, defer, retard, procrastinate, or postpone [the day of bathing].

But if the fathers were rich and prosperous, if there was wherewith to eat, they selected for one a later date, on the seventh day sign; at that time they bathed the child and placed him in the cradle. This was because, as hath been said, they always considered the seventh day sign good. At that time they held an important banquet. There was drink and food. From all parts Rowers were taken; all the Rower bearers came. There was jostling and crowding. And the old men and old women greeted the small boy and his newly delivered mother. They said:

“O my beloved grandson, thou hast endured suffering and fatigue. For thou hast come here to earth; thou hast appeared on earth. Thou shalt behold, come to know, and feel pain, affliction, and suffering. It is a place of torment and affliction; of constant torment and affliction; a time of torment and a time of affliction to which thou hast come; a place of bitterness, a place of much work and affliction. Perhaps we shall receive as merits and as good deserts that for a short time thou shalt be lent to us. For thou art the living image, the likeness, the noble child, anet the offspring of thy ancestors, thy beloved grandsires, thy great-grandsires, thy great grandmothers, the grandfathers of thy nephews, who already have gone beyond, who a short time ago came to stand guard for a little while, here where thou liest and hast endured suffering and fatigue, o my beloved grandson. For our lord hath sent thee.”

Forthwith they petted him and stroked him with their hands, to show that they loved the child. Also at once they addressed. and greeted his newly delivered mother. They said:

“O my daughter, O my beloved daughter, my lady, my beloved lady, thou hast endured suffering and fatigue. For in some way thou hast separated thyself from and left the jeweled necklace, the precious feather which was within thee. Now that he is come forth on earth, you are not indivisible; you will not be joined together, for you are separated. What will our lord require? Perhaps for a little day we shall take him as lent to us. We shall love him like a precious necklace or a precious stone bracelet. Be calm and modest; take care. Do not relapse into sickness nor let accident befall thee. Do not try to be up and about. Be careful, in convalescing, when they place thee in the sweatbath. And

do not neglect the child. Take care of him. Even in thy sleep, be fearful for him. Do not pierce his palate, [in nursing him]; do not crush him in thy sleep; do not let him sleep unwatched, so that thou nowhere mayest bring mishap to him. Do not do so intentionally; for our lord hath given him.”

Thus only briefly they greeted her, lest they tire her by useless talk.

### “Aztec Women’s Careers and Character” Part XI

Thirteenth Chapter, which telleth of the noblewomen.

#### A NOBLEWOMAN

A noble person [is] wonderful, revered, esteemed, respected; a shelter.

The good noblewoman [is] a protector - one who loves, who guards people. She protects, loves, guards one.

The bad noblewoman [is] violent, furious, savage, revolting - a respecter of no one. She respects no one; she belittles, brags, becomes presumptuous; she takes things in jest and keeps them; she appropriates things; she deceives herself.

#### [ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN

The noblewoman [is] esteemed, lovely - an esteemed noble, respected, revered, dignified.

The good noblewoman [is] a protector. She shows love, she constantly shows love. She loves people. She lives as a noblewoman.

The bad noblewoman [is] savage, wrathful, spiteful, hateful, reserved; [she is] one who is enraged, unjust, disturbed, troubled. She becomes troubled, disturbed, enraged, over-demanding.

#### [ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN

The noblewoman [is] one who merits obedience; [she is] honorable, of high standing - to be heeded. A modest woman, a true woman, accomplished in the ways of women, she is also vigorous, famed, esteemed, fierce, stern.

The good noblewoman is venerable, respectable, illustrious, famed, esteemed, kind, contrite. [She is] one who belittles no one, who treats others with tenderness.

The bad noblewoman [is] wrathful, an evildoer. [She is] one who is overcome with hatred - pugna-

cious, revolting, hateful - who wishes to trouble, who wishes to cause worry; irresponsible, irritable, excitable - one who is disturbed. She becomes disturbed, troubled; she does evil; she becomes overwrought with hatred.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman [is] a protector, meritorious of obedience, revered, worthy of being obeyed; a taker of responsibilities, a bearer of burdens - famed, venerable, renowned.

The good noblewoman [is] patient, gentle, kind, benign, hard-working, resolute, firm of heart, willing as a worker, well disposed, careful of her estate. She governs, leads, provides for one, arranges well, administers peacefully.

The bad noblewoman [is] one who is rash, who is fitful. She incites riots; she arouses fear, implants fear, spreads fear; she terrorizes [as if] she ate people. She impels flight - causes havoc - among people. She squanders.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman [is] a woman ruler, governor, leader - a provider, an administrator.

The good woman ruler [is] a provider of good conditions, a corrector, a punisher, a chastiser, a reprimander. She is heeded, obeyed; she creates order; she establishes rules.

The bad noblewoman [is] unreliable, negligent, overbearing - one who mistreats others. She is overbearing; she mistreats one, is given to vice, drinking, drunkenness. She leads one into danger; she leads, she introduces one into error. She is troubled; she confounds one.

*THE MAIDEN*

The maiden is noble, a noble among nobles, a child of nobility. [She is one] from whom noble lineage issues, or she is of noble birth, worthy of being loved, worthy of preferred treatment.

The good maiden is yet a virgin, mature, clean, unblemished, pious, pure of heart, benign, chaste, candid, well disposed. She is benign; she loves; she shows reverence; she is peaceful; she bows in reverence; she is humble, reserved; she speaks well, calmly.

The bad maiden [is] a descendant of commoners - a belittler, a rude person, of lowly birth. She acts like a commoner; she is furious, hateful, dishonored, dis-

solute, given to carnal pleasure, impetuous.

*THE GIRL, THE LITTLE GIRL*

The little girl is a noble, an esteemed noble, a descendant of nobles.

A good little girl [is] of good, clean life - a guardian of her honor. [She is] self-respecting, energetic, deliberating, reflective, enterprising. She is self-respecting, energetic, patient when reprimanded, humble.

The bad little girl [is] an evil talker, a belittler, inconsiderate, perverse, impetuous, lewd. She shows disrespect; she detests, she shows irreverence, she belittles, she presumes.

*THE MAIDEN*

The maiden [is] of the nobility - courteous, loved, esteemed, beloved.

The good maiden [is] loving, pleasing, reverent, respectful, retiring. She is pleasing, appreciative, admiring of things.

The bad maiden [is] corrupt, incorrigible, rebellious - a proud woman, shameless, brazen, treacherous, stupid. She is inconsiderate, imbecile, stupid; she brings dishonor, disgrace.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman - the courteous, illustrious noble.

The good noblewoman [is] a child of lineage, of noble lineage. She brings fame to others, honors her birthright, causes one to be proud of her.

The bad noblewoman [is] a gluttonous noble, a noble completely dishonored, of little value - a fool, impudent - a consumer of her inner substance, a drunkard. She shows concern for none but herself; she lives completely for herself; she governs her own conduct, assumes her own burdens; she is disrespectful.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman [is] esteemed - an esteemed noble, a legitimate child.

The good noblewoman [is] one who is exemplary, who follows the ways of her parents, who gives a good, sound example. She is of the chosen; she is one of the chosen few.

The bad noblewoman [is] one who degrades herself, who lives in filth and corruption - detestable, slob-

bering, false. She degrades herself, brings herself to ruin, hurls - places - herself in filth and corruption.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman is a descendant of noble ancestors; [she is] of noble rearing.

The good noblewoman [is] tranquil, quiet, peaceful, modest, dignified. She honors, she respects all people. She shows respect, consideration, veneration.

The bad noblewoman [is] daring, overbearing toward others - a scatterer, a spreader of hatred. She scatters hatred, shows effrontery, is rude, becomes brazen, lifts her head in pride, exhibits vanity.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman is of noble rearing - a meritorious noble.

The good noblewoman is peaceful, kind, gentle.

The bad noblewoman [is] inflated; a consumer of her inner substance, decrepit. She is presumptuous; she acts in haste; she is impetuous.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman [is] the child of nobles, a true noble. She is worthy thereof. She realizes the estate of nobility; she participates in and is suited to it.

The bad noblewoman [is] common, dull - descended from commoners, irritating. She brags; she presumes; she understands things backwards; she does things backwards; she causes irritation.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman [is] completely good, just, pure, respectable.

The good noblewoman [is] one who humbles herself, who bows in reverence. Gracious, kind, she is benign, persuasive; she bows in reverence; she is humble, appreciative.

The bad noblewoman [is] untrained, deranged, disobedient, pompous. She goes about dissolute, brazen. She is gaudy; she goes about in gaudy raiment - rude, drunk.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman through her is nobility engendered. [She is] of the nobility.

The good noblewoman [is] retiring, submissive,

humble, desirous of no praise.

The bad noblewoman [is] boastful, vainglorious, desirous of being known. She is vainglorious, desirous of being known; she boasts, brags, boasts.

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman is famed, venerable, esteemed, honored.

The good noblewoman [is] one who weeps, who is compassionate, concerned; one who admires, who shows veneration, who reveres things, who reveres people. She shows understanding of the poor; she reveres things, she reveres people.

The bad noblewoman [is] proud, ... , inflated; she acts superior. ...

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman [is] of noble heart, of nobility. The good noblewoman [is] of elegant speech, softspoken - a gentle person, peaceful, refined. She speaks with elegance; she acts with refined modesty.

The bad noblewoman [is] like a field worker brutish, a great field worker, a great commoner; a glutton, a drinker, an eater - a glutton, incapable, useless, time-wasting ...

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman [is] of nobility, belongs to the order of rulers, comes from rulership whether she is legitimate or a bastard child.

The good noblewoman [is] one who is bashful, ashamed [of evil], who does things with timidity, who is embarrassed [by evil]. She is embarrassed [by evil]; she works willingly, voluntarily.

The bad noblewoman [is] infamous, very audacious, stern, proud, very stupid, brazen, besotted, drunk. She goes about besotted; she goes about demented; she goes about eating mushrooms ...

*[ANOTHER] NOBLEWOMAN*

The noblewoman is a noble, a noble ruler, an esteemed noble - esteemed, lovely, worthy of being loved, worthy of preferred treatment, worthy of veneration, deserving of honor, enjoying glory; good, modest, respected, self-respecting. [She is like something] white - refined; like a pillar; like a wooden beam, slender, of medium stature. [She is] valiant, having valor, bravery, courage. [She is] esteemed, famed, precious,



beautiful.

#### *THE GOOD NOBLEWOMAN*

The good noblewoman, the beloved noblewoman [is] highly esteemed, good, irreproachable, faultless, dignified, brave; [like] a quetzal feather, a bracelet, a green stone, a turquoise. Very much hers are goodness, humanity, humaneness, the human way of life, excellence, modesty, the fullness of love. Completely hers are the sources of goodness, of grace, of humaneness as to body and soul [She is] perfect, faultless.

The bad noblewoman [is] bad, wicked, evil, ill, incorrigible, disloyal, full of affliction, quite besmirched, quite dejected. [She is] haughty, presumptuous, arrogant, unchaste, lewd, debauched. She is given to drunkenness, to drinking; she goes about being rude; she goes about telling tales. [She is] vain, petty, given to bad conduct; a drunkard, savage, torpid, [like] a foreigner, an imbecile - stupid, feeble .... ; she is oblivious of what all know of her. [She is] a sleepy-head, a dried-out sleepy-head, an oversleeping woman; a pervert, a perverted woman, perverse.

Fourteenth Chapter, which telleth of the nature, the condition of the common women.

#### *THE ROBUST WOMAN*

The robust woman, the middle-aged woman [is] strong, rugged, energetic, wiry, very tough, exceedingly tough, animated, vigorous; a willing worker, long-suffering.

The good robust woman [is] pious, chaste, careful of her honor; not unclean; unblemished; one who is irreproachable - like a bracelet, like a green stone, like fine turquoise.

The evil robust woman [is] belittling and offensive to others - belittling to others; disgusting. She is ill bred, incompatible; she does not work in calm; she acts fitfully, without consideration; she is impetuous.

#### *THE MATURE WOMAN*

The mature woman [is] candid.

The good mature woman [is] resolute, firm of heart; constant - not to be dismayed; brave, like a man; vigorous, resolute; persevering - not one to falter; a steadfast, resolute worker. She is long-suffering; she accepts reprimands calmly - endures things like a man. She becomes firm - takes courage. She is intent. She gives of herself. She goes in humility. She exerts herself.

The bad mature woman [is] thin, tottering, weak - an inconstant companion, unfriendly. She annoys others, chagrins them, embarrasses, shames, oppresses one. Extremely feeble, impatient, chagrined, exhausted, fretful, she becomes impatient, loses hope, becomes embarrassed - chagrined. She goes about in shame; she persists in evil. Evil is her life. She lives in vice.

#### *THE WEAVER OF DESIGNS*

The weaver of designs is one who concerns herself with using thread, who works with thread.

The good weaver of designs is skilled - a maker of varicolored capes, an outliner of designs, a blender of colors, a joiner of pieces, a matcher of pieces, a person of good memory. She does things dexterously.

She weaves designs. She selects. She weaves tightly. She forms borders. She forms the neck. She uses an uncompressed weave. She makes capes with the ballcourt and tree design. She weaves loosely - a loose, thick thread. She provides a metal weft. She forms the design with the sun on it.

The bad weaver of designs is untrained - silly, foolish, unobservant, unskilled of hand, ignorant, stupid. She tangles [the thread] ; she harms [her work ] - she spoils it. She ruins things scandalously; she scandalously ruins the surface of things.

#### *THE SPINNER*

The spinner [is] one who combs, who shakes out [the cotton].

The good spinner [is] one who handles things delicately, who forms an even thread. [She is ] soft, skilled of hand - of craftsman's hands. She puts [the thread ] in her lap; she fills the spindle; she makes a ball [of thread] ; she takes it into her hand - winds it into a skein in her hands. She triples [the thread ]. She spins a loose, thick thread.

The bad spinner pulls [threads], leaves lumps, moistens what she grasps with her lips, twists incompletely. [She is ] useless - of useless hands, negligent, slothful, neglectful- a neglectful one, lazy.

#### *THE SEAMSTRESS*

The seamstress is one who uses the needle, a needle worker. She sews; she makes designs.

The good seamstress [is] a craftsman, of craftsman's hands, of skilled hands ~ a resourceful, meditative woman. She makes designs; she sews.

The bad seamstress [is] one who bastes, who tangles [thread]. She tangles [thread]; she bastes; she tangles the sewing. She deceives one; she ridicules one.

### THE COOK

The cook is one who makes sauces, who makes tortillas; who kneads [dough]; who makes things acid, who leavens. [She is] wiry, energetic. [She is ] a maker of tortillas - a tortilla-maker; she makes them disc-shaped, thin, long. . . . She makes them into balls; twisted tortillas - twisted about chili; she uses grains of maize. She makes tamales - meat tamales; she makes cylindrical tortillas; she makes thick, coarse ones. She dilutes sauces; she cooks; she fries; she makes juices.

The good cook is honest, discreet; [she is] one who likes good food - an epicure, a taster [of food. She is] clean, one who bathes herself; prudent; one who washes her hands, who washes herself; who has good drink, good food.

The bad cook [is] dishonest, detestable, nauseating, offensive to others - sweaty, crude, gluttonous, stuffed, distended with food — much distended, acquisitive. As one who puts dough into the oven, she puts it into the oven. She smokes the food; she makes it very salty, briny; she sours it. She is a field hand very much a field hand, very much a commoner.

### THE PHYSICIAN

The physician [is] a knower of herbs, of roots, or trees, of stones; she is experienced in these. [She is] one who has [the results of] examinations; she is a woman of experience, of trust, of professional skill: a counselor.

The good physician is a restorer, a provider of

health, a reviver, a relaxer - one who makes people feel well, who envelopes one in ashes. She cures people; she provides them health; she lances them, she bleeds them - bleeds them in various places, pierces them with an obsidian lancet. She gives them potions, purges them, gives them medicine. She cures disorders or the anus. She anoints them; she rubs, she massages them. She provides them splints; she sets their bones - she sets a number of bones. She makes incisions, treats one's festering, one's gout, one's eyes. She cuts [growths from] one's eyes.

The bad physician [pretends to be] a counselor, advised, a person of trust, of professional knowledge. She has a vulva, a crushed vulva, a friction-loving vulva. [She is] a doer of evil. She bewitches - a sorceress, a person of sorcery, a possessed one. She makes one drink potions, kills people with medications, causes them to worsen, endangers them, increases sickness, makes them sick, kills them. She deceives people, ridicules them, seduces them, perverts them, bewitches them, blows [evil] upon them, removes an object from them, sees their fate in water, reads their fate with cords, casts lots with grains of maize, draws worms from their teeth. She draws paper - flint - obsidian - worms from them; she removes these from them. She deceives them, perverts them, makes them believe.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How are aggressive women looked upon in Aztec society? Does it seem to be a favorable trait for women?
2. What types of occupations are available to Aztec women? Are there any opportunities beyond domestic ones?
3. What do these excerpts tell you about who DeSahagun was speaking to when compiling these codices?

## 1-2 The "Man-Woman" Role: An Overview

*Liminality is often described as the threshold between two planes of existence. The man-woman of Amerindian culture occupies such a space, usually a male able to occupy a traditionally female role, yet be crucial to the military success of some tribes. This excerpt provides a brief overview of this phenomenon as observed by anthropologists.*

**Source:** Fulton and Anderson, "The Amerindian 'Man-Woman': Gender, Liminality, and Cultural Continuity,"

*Current Anthropology*, vol 3 No 5 (Dec 1992), 606-607.

Writing in the *American Anthropologist* in 1955, Angelino and Shedd observed that, although Kroeber had called for "a synthetic work on the subject" of the "manwoman" 5 years earlier, the task had not yet been undertaken. They argued that "if progress is to be made in comparing various cultural groups so that general principles may be arrived at, and if the concept is to be generally usable, some order must be evoked" (p. 125). Answering their call a decade later, Jacobs (1968) made an initial attempt at reviewing the data, citing over 60 sources which made reference to the role and cataloging the tribes in which it was reported present or

absent. She further identified 21 tribes that reported a female “man-woman.” Moreover, she made a first effort to interpret the phenomenon objectively. Katz (1976) compiled nearly 50 documents which made reference to the “man-woman” role, commenting that the references “tell as much, and often more, about the commentator’s sentiments about Native homosexuality than they do about its actual historical forms” (p. 181). For instance, he quoted the Spanish explorer Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, who, exploring Florida between 1528 and 1533, wrote: “During the time that I was thus among these people I saw a devilish thing, and it is that I saw one man married to another, and these are impotent, effeminate men [amariconados] and they go about dressed as women, and do women’s tasks” (p. 285). It was not until 1983, however, with the publication of Callender and Kochems’s “The North American Berdache,” that a comprehensive synthesis of the available literature was realized.

Callender and Kochems find the evidence reasonably good that the “man-woman” status existed in 113 tribal communities, from “California to the Mississippi Valley and Upper Great Lakes, with scattered occurrences beyond,” and “seems to have been surprisingly absent, undeveloped, or very obscure throughout the East except for its southern fringe” (pp. 444-46). They argue that while the role has been described as “rare or uncommon,” earlier accounts suggest that it was more unexceptional—except that female “men-women” “tended to be much rarer than their male counterparts”—and that their numbers greatly decreased following contact with white culture (pp. 446-471).

The adoption of female accoutrements by the “manwoman” was “widespread and significant” although “neither universal nor invariable” (p. 447). Transvestism and occupation were closely linked: tasks identified as female were a prominent feature of the role, and “male berdaches [were] consistently described as exceptionally skilled in women’s work.” Two features of the role—the “supernatural powers often ascribed to it” and “the intermediate nature of [its] gender status”—reportedly allowed for this occupational skill and accounted for their economic success. The “man-woman” also provided services, including giving secret names to newborns, acting as go-between, and participating in burial and mourning rituals, that produced additional income (pp. 447-48).

The “man-woman” was frequently prohibited from participating in warfare, although in some societies the “man-woman” fought but was forbidden to use “male” weapons. In others the incumbent of the role was a noncombatant participant—treating the wounded, car-

rying supplies, and attending to the horses. The “man-woman” was also custodian of the scalps taken in battle and responsible for the dance that was held upon the successful warriors’ return. The incumbent of the role was perceived to be central to a successful military engagement in a number of societies and overall played a crucial role in the “war complex” (pp. 448-491).

With regard to the “homosexuality” of the role, Callender and Kochems consider it “possible that if some cultures considered homosexual activity a significant aspect of this status, others did not.” They observe, however, that most descriptions stressed its homosexual component and that “man-woman” sexual relationships ranged from “casual promiscuity to stable marriages.” It is apparently nowhere reported that the “man-woman” had sexual relations with another “manwoman” (pp. 449-51).

Recruitment into the “man-woman” role was accounted for by a childhood proclivity for the social functions of the other gender or by a vision or some other supernatural validation. Callender and Kochems note “that secular and supernatural views of the processes leading to berdachhood are inherently neither contradictory nor mutually exclusive.” Finally, they call attention to a neglected aspect of the selection process, namely, that “only members of certain social groups could become berdaches” (pp. 446-47). They report that attitudes toward the “man-woman” ranged from “awe and reverence through indifference to scorn and contempt” and that in some societies the community’s very existence was believed to depend upon the role (p. 453) ...

Why did aboriginal cultures give formal recognition to this status, and why did anyone assume the “manwoman” role? Callender and Kochems reject the hypotheses of “institutionalized homosexuality” and an alternative to the “traditional” aggressive “male” role and express some reservations about the idea that the role is primarily a religious one and part of a global pattern of shamanism. They agree with Whitehead that assumption of the role was motivated primarily by the opportunity it provided for prestige, though they question whether men were considered superior to women throughout aboriginal North America and how primary they were in determining cultural practices (pp. 453-56).

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Does a role for the man-woman exist in society today? Why or why not?

### 1-3 The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery

*Amerigo Vespucci is credited with determining that the land “discovered” by Columbus was not an extension of India but, in fact, a separate continent. Implicit in the grandeur of the European ideology of conquest was the latent fear of the savage—particularly the female savage, who, like the unexplored continent represented something to be both desired and feared.*

**Source:** Louis Montrose, *Representations*, No. 33, Special Issue: The New World. (Winter, 1991), pp. 3-7.

By the 1570s, allegorical personifications of America as a female nude with feathered headdress had begun to appear in engravings and paintings, on maps and title pages, throughout Western Europe. Perhaps the most resonant of such images is Jan van der Straet’s drawing of Vespucci’s discovery of America, widely disseminated in print in the late sixteenth century by means of Theodor Galle’s engraving (fig. Here a naked woman, crowned with feathers, upraises herself from her hammock to meet the gaze of the armored and robed man who has just come ashore; she extends her right arm toward him, apparently in a gesture of wonder-or, perhaps, of apprehension. Standing with his feet firmly planted upon the ground, Vespucci observes the personified and feminized space that will bear his name. This recumbent figure, now discovered and roused from her torpor, is about to be hailed, claimed, and possessed as America. As the motto included in Galle’s engraving puts it, “Americen Americus rexit, & Semel inde semper excitam” Americus rediscovers America; he called her once and thenceforth she was always awake.” This theme is discreetly amplified by the presence of a sloth, which regards the scene of awakening from its own shaded spot upon the tree behind America. Vespucci carries with him the variously empowering ideological and technological instruments of civilization, exploration, and conquest: a cruciform staff with a banner bearing the Southern Cross, a navigational astrolabe, and a sword—the mutually reinforcing emblems of belief, empirical knowledge, and violence. At the left, behind Vespucci, the prows of the ships that facilitate the expansion of European hegemony enter the pictorial space of the New World; on the right, behind America, representatives of the indigenous fauna are displayed as if emerging from an American interior at once natural and strange.

Close to the picture’s vanishing point—in the dis-

tance, yet at the center—a group of naked savages, potential subjects of the civilizing process, are preparing a cannibal feast. A severed human haunch is being cooked over the fire; another, already spitted, awaits its turn. America’s body pose is partially mirrored by both the apparently female figure who turns the spit and the clearly female figure who cradles an infant as she awaits the feast. Most strikingly, the form of the severed human leg and haunch turning upon the spit precisely inverts and miniaturizes America’s own. In terms of the pictorial space, this scene of cannibalism is perspectively distanced, pushed into the background; in terms of the pictorial surface, however, it is placed at the center of the visual field, between the mutual gazes of Americus and America, and directly above the latter’s outstretched arm.

I think it possible that the represented scene alludes to an incident reported to have taken place during the third of Vespucci’s alleged four voyages, and recounted in his famous letter of 1504. I quote from the mid-sixteenth-century English translation by Richard Eden:

At the length they broughte certayne women, which shewed them selves famlier towarde the Spaniardes: Whereupon they sent forth a young man, beyng very strong and quicke, at whom as the women wondered, and stode gasinge on him and feling his apparell: there came sodeynly a woman downe from a mountayne, bringing with her secretly a great stake, with which she gave him such a stroke behynde, that he fell dead on the earth. The other wommene foorthwith toke him by the legges, and drewe him to the mountayne, whyle in the mean tyme the men of the countreye came foorth with bowes and arrowes, and shot at oure men. ...The women also which had slayne the yong man, cut him in pieces even in the sight of the Spaniardes, shewing them the pieces, and rosting them at a greate.

The elements of savagery, deceit, and cannibalism central to the emergent European discourse on the inhabitants of the New World are already in place in this very early example. Of particular significance here is the blending of these basic ingredients of protocolonialist ideology with a crude and anxious misogynistic fantasy, a powerful conjunction of the savage and the feminine.’

This conjunction is reinforced in another, equally striking Vespuccian anecdote. Vespucci presents a different account of his third voyage in his other extant letter, this one dated 1503 and addressed to Lorenzo Piero Francesco de Medici. Like the previous letter, this one was in wide European circulation in printed translations within a few years of its date. Here Vespucci’s marvelous ethnography includes the following observation:

Another custom among them is sufficiently shameful, and beyond all human credibility. Their women, being very libidinous, make the penis of their husbands swell to such a size as to appear deformed; and this is accomplished by a certain artifice, being the bite of some poisonous animal, and by reason of this many lose their virile organ and remain eunuchs.

The oral fantasy of female insatiability and male dismemberment realized in the other letter as a cannibalistic confrontation of alien cultures is here translated into a precise genital and domestic form. Because the husband's sexual organ is under the control of his wife and is wholly subject to her ambiguous desires, the very enhancement of his virility becomes the means of his emasculation.

In the light of Vespucci's anecdotes, the compositional centrality of van der Straet's apparently incidental background scene takes on new significance: it is at the center of the composition in more ways than one, for it may be construed as generating or necessitating the compensatory foreground scene that symbolically contains or displaces it. In van der Straet's visualization of discovery as the advance of civilization, what is closer to the horizon is also closer to the point of origin: it is where we have come from—a prior episode in the history of contacts between Europeans and native Americans, and an earlier episode in the history of human society; and it is now what we must control—a cultural moment that is to be put firmly, decisively, behind us. In the formal relationship of proportion and inversion existing between America's leg and what I suppose to be that of the dismembered Spanish youth, I find a figure for the dynamic of gender and power in which the collective imagination of early modern Europe articulates its confrontation with alien cultures. The supposed sexual guile and deceit that enable the native women to murder, dismember, and eat a European man are in a relationship of opposition and inversion to the vaunted masculine knowledge and power with which the erect and armored Vespucci will master the prone and naked America. Thus, the interplay between the foreground and background scenes of the van der Straet-Galle composition gives iconic form to the oscillation characterizing Europe's ideological encounter with the New World: an oscillation between fascination and repulsion, likeness and strangeness, desires to destroy and to assimilate the Other; an oscillation between the confirmation and the subversion of familiar values, beliefs, and perceptual norms.

Michel de Certeau reproduces the engraving of Vespucci's discovery of America as the frontispiece of his book *The Writing of History*. As he explains in his

preface, to him this image is emblematic of the inception of a distinctively modern discursive practice of historical and cultural knowledge; this historiography subjects its ostensible subject to its own purportedly objective discipline; it ruptures the continuum "between a subject and an object of the operation, between a *will to write* and a *written body* (or a body to be written)." For de Certeau, the history of this modern writing of history begins in the sixteenth century with "the 'ethnographical' organization of writing in its relation with 'primitive,' 'savage,' 'traditional,' or 'popular' orality that it establishes as its other." Thus, for , the tableau of Vespucci and America is

an inaugural scene. . . . The conqueror will write the body of the other and trace there his own history. From her he will make a historied body—a blazon-of his labors and phantasms. . . . What is really initiated here is a colonization of the body by the discourse of power. This is writing that conquers. It will use the New World as if it were a blank, "savage" page which Western desire will be written.

"America" awakens to discover herself written into a story that is not of her own making, to find herself a figure in another's dream. When called by Vespucci, she is interpellated within a European history that identifies itself simply as History, single and inexorable; this history can only misrecognize America's history as sleep and mere oblivion. In 1974, when a speaker at the first Indian Congress of South America declared, "Today, at the hour of our awakening, we must be our own historians," he spoke as if in a long suppressed response to the ironic awakening of van der Straet's America, her awakening to the effacement of her own past and future.

Although applied here to a graphic representation that is iconic rather than verbal, de Certeau's reflections suggestively raise and conjoin issues that I wish to pursue in relation to Sir Walter Raleigh's *The Discoverie of the large, rich, and beautifull Empire of Guiana* (1596) and some other Elizabethan examples of "writing that conquer." These issues include consideration of the writing subject's textualization of the body of the Other, neither as mere description nor as genuine encounter but rather as an act of symbolic violence, mastery, and self-empowerment; and the tendency of such discursive representation to assume a narrative form, to manifest itself as "a historied body—in particular, as a mode of symbolic action whose agent is gendered masculine and whose object is gendered feminine. Rather than reduce such issues to the abstract, closed, and static terms of a binary opposition—whether between European and Indian, Culture and Nature, Self and Other, or, indeed, Male and

Female-I shall endeavor to discriminate among various sources, manifestations, and consequences of what de Certeau generalizes as the “Western desire” that is written upon the putatively “blank page” of the New World, and to do so by specifying the ideological configurations of gender and social estate, as well as national,

religious, and/or ethnic identities, that are brought into play during any particular process of.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think America is portrayed as female in the van der Straet's painting?

## 1-4 Ballad of a Tyrannical Husband

*Ballad of a Tyrannical Husband is a fifteenth century didactic verse portraying an argument between a husband and wife over household duties and how men should value their wives more. It also gives some insight to the workings of the peasant class.*

**Source:** Ed. John Harland, F.S.A., *Ballads and Songs of Lancashire: Ancient and Modern*, Second Edition, London: George Routledge and Sons and L.C. Gent, 1875. pp. 2-7.

O thou that art gentle, for joy of thy dame,  
As thou wrought this wide world, in heav'n is thy hame;  
Save all this company, and shield them from shame,  
That will listen to me, and 'tend to this game.

God keep all women that to this town 'long,  
Maidens, and widows, and eke wives among,  
For much they are blamed, and sometimes with wrong,  
I take witness of all folk that heareth this song.

Listen, good sirs, both young and old;  
Of a good husband this tale shall be told;  
He wedded a woman that was fair and bold,  
And had goods enow to wend as they wold."

She was a good housewife, courteous and kind,  
And he was an angry man, and soon would be tined  
Chiding and brawling, and fared like a fiend,  
As one that oft will be wroth with his best friend.

The goodman and his lad to the plough are gone,  
The goodwife had much to do, and servant had she none,  
Many small children to look after beside herself alone,  
She did more than she could inside her o'wn house.  
Home came the goodman early in the day

To see that everything was according to his wishes.  
'Dame,' he said, 'is our dinner ready?' 'Sir,' she said, 'no.  
How would you have me do more that I can?'

Then he began to chide and said, 'Damn you!  
I wish you would go all day to plough with me,  
To walk in the clods that are wet and boggy,  
Then you would know what it is to be a ploughman.

Then the goodwife swore, and thus she said,  
'I have more to do than I am able to do.  
If you were to follow me for a whole day,  
You would be weary of your part, I dare bet my head.'

'Blast! In the devil's name!' said the goodman,  
'What have you to do, but sit here at home?  
You go to your neighbour's house, one after the other,  
And sit there chattering with Jack and with Jane.'

Then said the goodwife, 'May you rot!  
I have more to do, if everything were known; When I lie  
in my bed, my sleep is but small,  
Yet early in the morning you will call me to get up.

'When I lie all night awake with our child,  
I rise up in the morning and find our house chaotic.  
Then I milk our cows and turn them out in the field,  
While you sleep quite soundly, Christ protect me!

'Then I make butter later on in the day.  
Afterwards I make cheese - these you consider a joke  
Then our children will weep and they must get up,  
Yet you will criticise me if any of our produce isn't there.

'When I have done this, yet there comes even more:  
I give Our chickens food or else they will be lean;

Our hens, our capons, and our ducks all together,  
Yet I tend to our gosling that go on the green.

'I bake, I brew, it will not otherwise be well,  
I beat and swingle flax, so help me God,  
I heckle the tow, I warm up and cool down [or I winnow  
and ruddle [sheep]],  
I tease wool and card it and spin it on the wheel.

'Dame,' said the goodman, 'the devil have your bones!  
You do not need to bake or brew more than once a fort-  
night.

I see no good that you do within this big house,  
But always you excuse yourself with grunts and groans.'

'Either I make a piece of linen and woollen cloth once a  
year,  
In order to clothe ourselves and our children in together,  
Or else we should go to the market and buy it very dear;  
I am as busy as I may every year.

'When I have done this, I look at the sun,  
I prepare food for our beasts before you come home,  
And food for ourselves before it is noon,  
Yet I don't get a fair word when I have done

So I look to our good without and within,  
'That there be none away, neither more nor min,  
'Glad to please you to pay, lest any bats"begin,"  
And for to chide thus with me, i' faith you be in sin."

Then said the goodman in a sorry time,  
'All this would a good housewife do long ere it were  
prime,  
' And sene [since] the good we have is half deal thine,  
'Thou shalt labour for thy part as I do for mine.

'Therefore, dame, make thee ready, I warn thee anon,  
'To-morrow with my lads to the plough thou shalt gone;  
'And I will be housewife, and keep our house at home,  
'And take mine ease as thou hast done, by God and St.  
John !"

Ay, grant," quoth the goodwife,"as I understand.  
'To-morrow in the morning I will be walkande,  
'Yet will I rise, while ye be sleepand,  
'And see that all things be ready laid to your hand.'

So it pass'd all to the morrow that it was daylight.  
The goodwife thought over her deeds and up she rose  
right.

"Dame!" said the goodman. "I swear by God's might,  
"I will fette home our beasts, and help that they were  
dight."

The goodman to the field hied him full yarne;  
The goodwife made butter,her deed were full derne;  
She took again the butter-milk and put it in the churn,  
And said,"Yet of one point our Sire shall be to learn."

Home came the goodman and took good keep  
How the wife had laid her flesh for to steep.  
She said,"Sir, all this day, ye need not to sleep,  
"Keep well our children, and let them not weep.

"If you go to the kiln, malt for to make,  
"Put small fire underneath, Sir, for God his sake.  
The kiln is low and dry, good tend" that ye take.  
"For an it fasten on a fire, it will be evil to slake.

"Here sit two geese abroad ; keep them well from woo,  
"And they may come to good, or you'll work sorrow  
enow."

"Dame," said the goodman, "hie thee to the plough,  
"Teach me no more housewifery, for I can" enow.

"Forth went the goodwife, courteous and hend,  
"She call'd to her lad, and to the plough they wend ?  
"They were busy all day.—A fytt here I find,  
An I had drunk once, ye shall hear the best behind.

*A FYTTE.*

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How is labor divided in this particular family?
2. Do the problems they encounter still exist today?

## 1-5 Two Views of Maria Theresa

*Maria Theresa (1717 – 1780) was the Archduchess regnant of Austria, Queen regnant of Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia, and a Holy Roman Empress by marriage. Frederick the Great became her rival when Prussia attacked Silesia, starting the War of Austrian Succession. Otto Christopher Podewils was Prussian envoy to Austria during this war.*

**Source:** Roider, Karl A., Jr. translator and editor. *Maria Theresa*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973. pp 34-35, 115-117.

### Frederick the Great

In 1755 the king [Frederick II sometimes refers to himself in the third person] augmented the regiments of the garrisons: those of Silesia were increased by eight, those of Prussia by three, those of Brandenburg by two; that made thirty battalions in all. In a poor country a sovereign does not find his resources in the bank accounts of his subjects, and his duty is to cover extraordinary but necessary expenses by his prudence and good economy. Supplies collected in the summer are consumed during the winter. It is just as necessary to use our funds economically in peace as it is in war. This point, unfortunately so important, was not forgotten, and Prussia was prepared to conduct a few campaigns with its own funds; in one word, we were ready to enter the arena at the first moment and to test our steel with the enemy's. In the following you will see how useful was this precaution, and why the king found it necessary, by the unusual situation of his provinces, to be armed and ready for all possibilities in order not to serve as a plaything for his country's neighbors and enemies. On the contrary, it was possible to win victories, if the resources of the state permitted it.

The king had in the person of the empress-queen an ambitious and vindictive enemy, even more dangerous because she was a woman, obstinate in her opinions and implacable. This was so true that, in the secrecy of her dressing room, the empress-queen prepared the grand projects that burst forth later on. This superb woman, devoured by ambition, wanted to travel all roads gloriously; she put her finances into an order unknown to her ancestors and not only utilized reforms to make up for the revenues lost when she ceded lands to the king of Prussia and king of Sardinia, but actually increased her overall income. Count Haugwitz became controller general of finances, and under his administration income rose to 36 million

gulden or 48 million ecus. Her father, Emperor Charles VI, who had even possessed the kingdom of Naples, Serbia, and Silesia, never received that much. Her husband, the emperor, who dared not interfere in affairs of state, threw himself into business ventures; each year he extracted enormous sums from his revenues in Tuscany and invested them in commerce. He established manufacturing companies, lent money, supervised the delivery of uniforms, arms, horses, and weapons for the entire imperial army. Associated with a Count Bolza and a merchant named Schimmelmann, he won the contract to farm the taxes of Saxony and in 1756 even provided the forage and flour to the army of the king of Prussia, who was engaged in war with his wife, the empress. During the war the emperor advanced considerable sums to this princess as good credit: in short, he was the banker of the court, and in character with his title of king of Jerusalem, he conformed to the immemorial profession of the Jewish nation.

In preceding wars the empress had sensed the need of improving discipline in her army. She chose generals who were both hard working and capable of introducing discipline among the troops. She also put old officers, little able to do their proper jobs, on pensions and replaced them with young men, who were full of enthusiasm and love for the business of war. The empress herself appeared frequently in the camps of Prague and Olomouc in order to inspire the troops by her presence and gifts. Better than any other prince, she knew how to use those distinctive flatteries which subjects love so much. She rewarded those officers who were recommended by their generals, and above all she excited their devotion, talents, and desire to please her. At the same time she formed a school of artillery under the direction of Prince Liechtenstein; he increased this corps to six battalions, and utilized cannon to a degree unprecedented in our day. Because of his ardor for the empress, he contributed 100,000 ecus to the school out of his own pocket. Finally, in order to neglect nothing that would improve the military, the empress founded near Vienna a college to instruct the young nobility in the arts of war; it includes able professors of geometry, fortification, geography, and history, which constitute the appropriate subjects. This school serves as a seedbed of officers for her army. Owing to all these efforts, the military in this country has achieved a degree of perfection it had never reached under the emperors of the house of Austria, and it was a woman who realized the plans worthy of a great man.

This princess, little satisfied with the manner in



which foreign and domestic affairs were treated and able to impress her opinions on all areas of administration, selected Count Kaunitz to serve her at the end of 1755. She awarded him the office of first minister so that his one head could encompass all the branches of government. We have had the opportunity to become especially acquainted with this man who plays such an important role. He possesses all the sentiments of his sovereign, and he knows how to flatter her passions and win her confidence. As soon as he entered the ministry, he worked to create that alliance system that would isolate the king of Prussia and prepare the way for the empress to achieve her dearest ambitions: the conquest of Silesia and the humiliation of the Prussian monarch. But that is the proper story of the following chapters, so we will not speak further of it here.

That is how these two powers used the peace to prepare for war -like two wrestlers flexing their muscles and burning with desire to grapple with each other.

*Upon hearing the news of Maria Theresa's death, Frederick the Great, himself sixty-eight years old at the time, wrote a brief letter to a friend in which, after philosophizing a bit on death in general, he paid the highest compliment he could to his worthy rival.*

For my part I am becoming increasingly apathetic, a condition to which age leads the senile chatterer. Without becoming disturbed, I see dying and being born as dependent on when the command comes for one to enter the world or leave it. In this way I accepted the death of the empress-queen. She did honor to her throne and to her sex: I fought wars with her, but never was I her enemy.

### **Count Otto Podewils**

As ordered by Your Majesty, Thereby provide the characteristics of the most important personages of the court, as I have observed them.

I am not so conceited as to believe that the impressions I send you will be completely correct. It requires greater insight than I, as I know, possess. Furthermore, the condition in which I find myself [a recent enemy of Austria] forms an almost insurmountable barrier to acquiring a complete knowledge of the personalities of those individuals whom I have undertaken to describe ....

I begin with a portrait of the empress-queen, as the principal subject of my painting.

She is somewhat over medium height. Before her

marriage, she was very beautiful, but the numerous births she has endured [at this time she had borne six daughters and two sons] have left her quite heavy. Nonetheless, she has a sprightly gait and a majestic bearing. Her appearance is pleasant, although she spoils it by the way she dresses, particularly by wearing the small English crinolines, which she likes.

She has a round, full face and a bold forehead. Her pronounced eyebrows are, like her hair, blond without any touch of red. Her eyes are large, bright, and at the same time full of gentleness, all accented by their light-blue color. Her nose is small, neither hooked nor turned up, the mouth a little large, but still pretty, the teeth white, the smile pleasant, the neck and throat well formed, and the arms and hands beautiful. She still retains her nice complexion, although she devotes little time to it. She has much color. Her expression is open and bright, her conversation friendly and charming. No one can deny that she is a lovely person.

When she became ruler, she knew the secret of winning everyone's love and admiration. Her sex, her beauty, and her misfortune helped in no small measure. The exaltations of praise issued in abundance by the officially subsidized journalists were believed by all. By showing only her good side-innocent, generous, charitable, popular, courageous, and noble-she quickly won the hearts of her subjects and convinced them that, as she had believed from the beginning, the late Emperor Charles VII was a criminal. She granted everyone an audience; personally read petitions; concerned herself with the administration of justice; accepted willingly the chores of government; rewarded one person with a kind word, another with a smile or courteous sign; made her negative replies bearable; gave splendid promises; and publicly displayed the greatest piety, remarking often that she would trust everything to God. She honored the clergy, displayed much reverence for religion, expressed her love for the poor, founded hospitals, divided money among the soldiers, sponsored ceremonies, allowed plays to run, and personally addressed the landed Estates, to whom she described in exalted and moving terms her situation and bewailed the misfortune into which her enemies had thrust her. She called herself disconsolate to be forced against her will to share her calamities with her loyal subjects and promised at the first opportunity to reward the ardor of each. She promised the Hungarians to reestablish and confirm their old privileges and told them she wanted to remedy their old grievances. She publicly displayed her spiritual strength, showed defiance to her misfortune, and tried to instill her own courage into her subjects.

I heard only words of praise for this empress. People extolled her to the clouds. Everyone considered himself fortunate. The landed Estates paid to her all that they could. The people bore their taxes without murmuring. The nobility offered her money, often without waiting to be asked. The Hungarians insisted they would fight for her; the officers served happily for half-pay because she had convinced them that it was not her fault she could not give them more. Full of enthusiasm, everyone stood by her and rushed to sacrifice himself for this best of all princesses. People deified her. Everybody wanted to have her picture. She never appeared in public without being greeted with applause.

A more pleasant personality was hard to imagine. Perhaps it would have been less difficult to acquire it than to display it in public. The queen could do so only a short time. Misfortune increases her delight in being loved and increases her desire to be loved. The reversals which she suffered at the beginning of her reign brought out this desire, but the success of her policies after the Treaty of Breslau [1742] reduced it somewhat. Slowly but surely, however, she has again assumed her natural character. The effort to hide her spirit under the veil of misfortune has now disappeared. I begin to notice that she, less motivated by the difficulties of her people than by the thought of increasing her power, prosecutes the war without aversion [Although at peace with Prussia, Austria was still at war with France]. The exaltations which everyone had showered upon her, and her own egotism have given her a high opinion of her talent and her ability, and have made her domineering. She listens to advice only grudgingly, allows no contradiction, tries to arouse fear rather than love, fancies herself as proud as her ancestors, treats many with arrogance, and shows herself vengeful and intransigent. She hears impatiently the petitions brought to her, tries to encroach upon the privileges of the Hungarians, oppresses the Protestants by relieving almost none of their grievances, and gives a bad impression of her piety, in which she displays so little respect for religion that one day she went to church on a horse, prompting the clergy to decry such an act as a great scandal and to voice their public disapproval.

So great a change in her character elicited considerable reaction among her subjects who began to protest the taxes they had to pay and expressed great discontent over them. They no longer wished to see her on the streets or to possess her picture. Almost everyone believed he had grounds for complaint.

Nevertheless, I must add: much else contributed

to the general unhappiness. It was impossible for the queen to satisfy everyone, to keep all the promises she had made, and to fulfill in every case the high opinion which she had given of her personality and talents. The more complete the good fortune that each one promised himself during her reign, the more he believed he had reason to complain that his expectations were not realized.

One can also not deny: if the queen does not possess all the qualities that she at first displayed to a degree that won for her the admiration of all, she still deserves great praise. She apparently recognized the damage she had done to herself and tried to correct it, although I doubt if she will again be as popular as she once was.

Her spirit is lively, masterful, and capable of dealing with affairs of state. She possesses an excellent memory and good judgment. She has such good control of herself that it 'is very difficult to judge from her appearance and behavior what she really thinks.

Her conversation is almost always friendly and gracious, and displays the coyest courage. Her behavior is easy and captivating, and appears even more so to her subjects, who are accustomed to regarding pride and arrogance as qualities inseparable from their monarchs. She speaks well, expresses herself gracefully, and appears to listen attentively. It is still easy to gain an audience with her, although somewhat less so than at the beginning of her reign, when anyone could speak with her. In order to win an audience now, we must go to the court lady who supervises the calendar. Seldom has the empress refused one, however; she listens with patience and good will to those who address her and personally replies to the petitions that reach her. On days at home she spends the greater part of the time, whenever she has the chance, in granting audiences. When she is in the city, the same thing happens while everyone attends court. In the garden she usually grants audiences while walking. She gives almost no audiences in circumstances where one is displeased. A short time ago she had told a Hungarian general who had requested an audience that she would see him the next day during a reception. He heatedly replied that he had no wish to be seen and scrutinized by everyone, and, if she was not willing to see him in private, as the dead emperor and she herself had done earlier, then he would rather not see her at all. At first she was quite enraged, but necessity demanded that she grant his wish.

She spends a great deal of time with affairs of state and seems to have an excellent knowledge of them.

She reads most of the reports from her ambassadors at foreign courts or has them read to her, examines the rough drafts of important documents before they are written in final form, converses often with her ministers, and attends the conferences which concern state business of some magnitude. Above all she wants to be thoroughly instructed about matters concerning the army. She tries with some success to penetrate the personalities and talents of the generals. She herself chose all of those who served in the last Italian campaign, and everyone agreed they were the best of her officers.

Her ambition cherishes the wish to rule personally. She enjoys more success at it than most of her ancestors, but the personal interests of her ministers and her court inspire them to prevent or hinder her from having an exact knowledge of her business, so that she will not remedy those abuses of which they and their families take so much advantage. This resistance makes her efforts, if not completely useless, for the most part unfruitful. She knows people deceive her, but she can do nothing about it. Often she expresses her impatience and has more than once said that she wishes God would open her eyes to the corruption in the government.

Nonetheless, she has ended many abuses and cut unnecessary expenses. She plans to undertake still more reforms in finances and the army, and concerning both, she suggests to her ministers Your Majesty's system as a model. She sometimes shows them the remarkable difference between the revenues which Your Majesty extracts from Silesia and those which she and her ancestors received, and refuses to accept their excuses that this province is being oppressed.

She also envisions one day reordering the condition of the army, especially establishing its wages on the same system as Your Majesty's. It is unlikely, however, that she will ever succeed. The generals and ministers have too many interests not to oppose these changes, and they do so by creating insurmountable obstacles and difficulties in her path. Only those officers who have no connections would gain advantages from a regularizing of wages. But those who have influence at court, either themselves or through their parents, would continue to receive far greater rewards in the disorder that now prevails.

In order to forestall these reforms, the ministers and generals have already posed a thousand difficulties regarding even the minimal changes the empress wants to introduce. I recall that, one day when she stopped a regiment during a parade, she commented that she found their overcoats too long and suggested

that they must be troublesome to soldiers during marches in great heat or rain. She added that they should change to the Prussian model. Instantly the officers argued that the troops needed these long coats to cover them at night, whereas the Prussians did not need them because every Prussian tent had blankets. She replied that each of her soldiers should have a blanket too. The next day she received an estimate of the cost. Someone had so exaggerated the expense for the blankets, the packhorses to carry them, and the people to care for them, that the total came to an enormous sum, which easily convinced the empress to abandon the idea.

She tries to praise the military, which now enjoys greater respect than under the late emperor. Repeatedly she has said that under her reign a man could make his fortune with his dagger only. She allows officers in her service to eat at her table regardless of their birth. Such a policy greatly displeases the high nobility, which is already quite offended that the empress has abolished many traditional court practices that in general she hates passionately.

She goes to some lengths to win the soldiers by her generosity, often permitting money to be divided among them and seldom passing by the life guards without giving them a few ducats. By doing so she has become beloved by the troops, whose admiration she has also won by the determination she has demonstrated during the most serious defeats. It is certain that she has intended for a long time to assume command of the army herself.

She especially tries to belie the weaknesses of her sex and to strive for virtues which are least suitable to her and which few women possess. She even seems angry to have been born a woman. She spends little time caring for her beauty; she exposes herself without consideration to the vagaries of the weather, strolls many hours in the sun and in the cold, which she tolerates much better than heat. She cares little about her attire and, aside from ceremonial days, dresses very simply, as does the whole court now after her example.

One could never accuse her of coquetry. In this respect, she has never given one hint of infidelity. She loves the emperor dearly, but also demands great devotion from him. People claim that her love for this prince is caused partly by her temperament and the good qualities with which he can satisfy it. Among other things they emphasize the little influence which he, despite her love for him, has on her spirit. I have it on good authority that one day during a conference in which the empress had heatedly defended a position

against the views of her ministers, she in very sharp words told the emperor, as he made known his opinion, that he should not mix in business he did not understand. The emperor grumbled about this treatment for a few days and complained about it to one of his favorites, a Lorraine colonel by the name of Rosieres. This man answered, "Sire, permit me to say that you have handled the empress the wrong way. Had I been in your position, I would have forced her to treat me better, and I would have received her as limp as a glove." "Why should I?" asked the emperor. "I wouldn't be able to sleep," answered the colonel. "Believe me, she loves you in this way, and by refusing her, you could achieve everything." This conversation was reported to the empress, who hounded this officer so unmercifully that he decided to leave the service, despite all the emperor's efforts to get him to stay.

Without doubt she is very jealous of the emperor and does everything possible to prevent him from establishing a liaison. To the few women whom the emperor had begun to notice, she has thrown very grim looks. She would like to forbid all gallantry at her court, and shows great contempt for women who have love affairs and just as much for the men who court them. I know that one day she had a vehement argument with Count Esterhazy-for whom, incidentally, she has much respect and who always attends her card parties -concerning a love affair that he has openly enjoyed with the wife of Count Althann. She tries to keep the emperor from everyone inclined to such adventures, and people say that Count [Rudolph Joseph] Colloredo, who makes no secret of his liaisons, will never win her good will. For some time he has been in a form of disgrace because he took the emperor on a few pleasure trips. The same thing has happened to a few others. She wants to live a middle-class marriage with the emperor.

She dearly loves her children, who are always around her on holidays. She used to love the oldest archduchess [Archduchess Elizabeth who died in June, 1740, at the age of three] the most, but she has died. Now she prefers Archduke Joseph. She lets him get into many things for which she must reprimand him. Sometimes she assumes an appearance of strictness toward him and vows not to spoil him. One day she wanted to have him whipped. Someone remonstrated with her that there was no precedent for anyone acting in such a way towards an archduke. "I believe it," she replied, "and look at how they turned out." She loves her mother very much but allows her no participation in affairs of government.

She enjoys entertainment, without depending on

it too much.

Earlier she had more love for dances and masked balls than now. She dances with enthusiasm and, for her figure, with agility. She loves gambling and plays cards quite boldly but appears sensitive about it. Once she lost more than one hundred thousand ducats. It was rumored that Sir [Thomas] Robinson [the British ambassador] received orders from his court to reproach her for it.

Although she plays the harpsichord, and that quite well, and apparently understands much about music, she makes very little of it.

One of her greatest pleasures is to go for walks and, above all, to ride horseback. She rides fearfully fast. The emperor and others have tried vainly to slow her down. She first learned to ride in preparation for the Hungarian coronation. She believed it politically sound because she had noticed that the Hungarians expressed much enthusiasm upon seeing her on horseback. She discovered such fervent pleasure in this recreation that it has become her fondest enjoyment. Sometimes she rides on \_ an estate, at other times to private houses to eat breakfast or drink coffee. She also goes on many walks, sometimes three to four hours at a time.

She seldom hunts and does so only to please the emperor.

She loves architecture, without understanding it very well, as her house in Schon brunn, built according to her taste, testifies.

By nature she is happy, but it appears that the disappointments she has had to bear have embittered her, and now she is somewhat harsh. Apparently she has taken her misfortunes extraordinarily to heart, and one day I heard her say that she would not begin her life over again for anything in the world.

People call her fickle, and it is certain that her favorites do not enjoy their positions long. Countess Fuchs and her daughters, Countesses Logier and Daun, have generally stood out, but all three, especially the mother, were more than once on the verge of seeing their favor disappear had not the emperor troubled to reconcile them with the empress. They have, after all, little influence and even then only indirectly and in roundabout ways. The only person most noticeably in favor is one of her chamber ladies called Fritz [Elisabeth von Fritz]; Maria Theresa just married her to a Hungarian nobleman named Petrach, to whom she has given a present of twelve thousand gulden and appointed to the bodyguards with the rank of lieu-

tenant colonel. People say that this woman, who still attends the empress, offers her advice even on affairs of state. I have doubts about this last rumor because it accords neither with the spirit of the empress to rule by her own will and to see and do everything personally, nor with her care to eliminate the slightest doubt that she herself rules.

The empress has never renounced her own generosity. She is by nature benevolent and likes to make everyone happy. She makes a little too much of her gratitude and displays it openly at frequent opportunities.

Her habits are well ordered. In the winter she rises at 6:00 A.M., in the summer at 4:00 or 5:00 and devotes the whole morning to affairs of state, reading reports, signing documents, and attending conferences. She eats lunch around 1:00 P.M., rarely spending more than a half an hour at the table. Often she eats alone. In summer and even sometimes in winter she goes for a walk after lunch, often alone, and spends most of the rest of the afternoon reading reports. From 7:00 to 8:30 P.M. she usually plays faro. In the evening she eats little, most often only a broth, sometimes goes for a walk after dinner, and usually goes to bed before 10:00 P.M.

She takes little medicine, relying instead upon her healthy constitution. When she feels hot, even in the middle of winter, she often sits at an open window in the room in which she eats, which annoys everyone but herself. Her doctors repeatedly tell her that she will regret this practice, but she only laughs at them.

Her method of judging affairs of state I have already had the honor of presenting to Your Majesty in my regular reports. She possesses extraordinary ambition and would like to make the house of Austria more glorious than it was under her ancestors.

She has had the joy of reaching one of her ambitious goals, the return of the imperial crown to her house.

She seems to have inherited from her ancestors the traditional hatred of France, with whom, I believe, she will never have good relations, although she has sufficiently mastered her passions, should her interests demand it.

She does not like Your Majesty, but she respects you. She will be unable to forget the loss of Silesia, which grieves her all the more, I hear from good sources, because at the same time her troops lost their honor. In general, she regards Your Majesty as a hindrance to the growth of her power and above all to her influence in the [Holy Roman] Empire, which she would like to expand as did her ancestors.

These are, Majesty, the main points which I have been able to collect regarding the personality of the queen-empress. I intend to send to Your Majesty the portraits of the other members of the court, as soon as my business permits me. I beg Your Majesty's pardon in advance if I do not reply to your orders as quickly as I would like. Because I personally cipher and decipher all messages in the interests of greater security, Your Majesty will realize that I have little leisure time left to me.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Frederick describes Maria Theresa as being more dangerous because she is a woman. What do you think he means by that?
2. What is the "weakness of her sex" that Podewils refers to?

## 1-6 Witches at Windsor (1579)

*In Windsor, England in January 1579, four women were condemned as witches and executed on February 26, 1579. Mother Dutton, Mother Devell, Mother Margaret, and Elizabeth Stile, alias Rockingham were accused of causing the deaths of a number of people through their "Sorceries and Inchauntementes."*

**Source:** A Rehearsall both straung and true, of hainous and horrible actes committed by Elizabeth Stile, Alias Rockingham, Mother Dutton, Mother Devell, Mother Margaret, Power notorious Witches, apprehended at winsore in the Countie of Barks. and at Abbington arraigned, con-

demned, and executed on the 26 daye of Februarie laste Anno. 1579. (London, 1579) modernized and reprinted in Barbara Rosen. *Witchcraft*. London, 1969, 83-91.

The Reader

Among the punishments which the Lord God hath laid upon us, for the manifest impiety and careless contempt of His word abounding in these our desperate days, the swarms of witches and enchanterers are not the last nor the least. For that old serpent Satan, suffered to be the scourge for our sins, hath of late years greatly multiplied the brood of them and much increased their malice. Which practice he hath the

more easily performed for that wholesome remedies, provided for the curing of such cankers, are either never a whit, or not rightly applied. For albeit the justices be severe in executing of the laws in that behalf, yet such is the foolish pity, or slackness, or both, of the multitude and under-officers that they most commonly are winked at, and so escape unpunished, to the dishonour of God and imminent danger on her Majesty's liege people. Nay, the fondness and ignorance of many is such that they succour those devilish imps, have recourse to them for the health of themselves or others, and for things lost, calling them by the honorable name of 'wise women'. Wherein they know not what honour they do to the devil.

For it is Satan that doeth all, that plagueth with sickness, that maimeth, murdereth, and robbeth, and at his lust restoreth. The witch beareth the name, but the devil dispatcheth the deeds-without him the witch can contrive no mischief. He without the witch can work treason too much, too oft, and too soon.

If then by the law of the Lord of life witches and enchanters are accounted unworthy to live; if by the law of this land they are to be done to death, as traitors to their prince, and felons in respect of her Highness' subjects-whosoever thou be, beware of aiding them! Go not with Saul the reprobate to ask council of them, neither, for Christianity sake, seem to be more slack in a good purpose than Cicero the Ethnic, who plainly adviseth that witches, poisoners etc. are to be rather shut up in prison and tied with fetters, than moved to amend with council and persuasions, only afterwards suffered to escape, whereby they may renew their malicious and treasonable drifts.

1579 January the 28 day

The true examination and confession of Elizabeth Stile, alias Rockingham, uttered at the Jail of Reading, in the county of Barks. immediately after her apprehension in the presence of the persons hereafter mentioned.

Elizabeth Stile alias Rockingham, late of Windsor, widow, of the age of 65 years or thereabout, being apprehended at Windsor aforesaid and brought personally before the right worshipful Sir Henry Neville, knight, being by him examined and found by manifest and undeniable proofs of her honest neighbours to be a lewd, malicious and hurtful woman to the people and inhabitants thereabouts, was thereupon committed to the common jail of Reading, there to remain until the next great assizes there to be holden, that her offence might be more straitly sifted, and she the offender to receive the guerdon due for her demerits.

Whither when she was come and moved by the jailor there named Thomas Rowe to turn herself to God, from whom she had notoriously fallen, and mildly to bear the punishment belonging to her deeds past; and therewithal urged in sign of her repentance to confess her former follies and facts, she seemed to have some remorse in conscience and desired to have some talk with the said Thomas Rowe. To whom with one John Knight the constable, John Griffith an innholder, and one William Printall, being all four present, she confessed as followeth.

And first concerning those persons that practise the damnable art of witchcraft, sorcery or enchantment, of her own certain knowledge and 'Voluntary motion she uttered to this effect ensuing.

Imprimis: that one Father Rosimond dwelling in Farnham parish, being a widower, and also a daughter of his, are both witches or enchanters, which Rosimond she saith hath and can transform himself by devilish means into the shape and likeness of any beast whatsoever he will.

2. Item: that one Mother Dutten dwelling within one Hoskins' in Clewer parish can tell everyone's message as soon as she seeth them approach near to the place of her abode and further, she keepeth a spirit or fiend in the likeness of a toad, and feedeth the same fiend (lying in a border of green herbs within her garden) with blood which she causeth to issue from her own flank.

3. Item: that one Mother Devell, dwelling nigh the pond in Windsor aforesaid, being a very poor woman, hath a spirit in the shape of a black cat and calleth it Jill, whereby she is aided in her witchcraft; and daily feedeth it with milk, mingled with her own blood.

4. Item: that one Mother Margaret dwelling in the almshouse at Windsor goeth with two crutches, doth feed a kitling or fiend by her named Jenny with crumbs of bread and her own blood.

5. Item: the said Elizabeth Stile, alias Rockingham, of herself confesseth that she the same Elizabeth until the time of her apprehension kept a rat (being in very deed a wicked spirit) natning it Philip; and that she fed the same rat with blood issuing from her right-hand wrist, the marks whereof evidently remain, and also that she gave her right side to the devil, and so did the residue of the witches before named.

*And thus far forth touching the persons aforementioned in general, now resteth her declaration of their detestable drifts and devices in particular.*

6. Furthermore, she confesseth that when she was apprehended Mother Margaret came to her and gave her money, charging her in any wise not to detect their secrets; which if she this prisoner did, the said Mother Margaret threatened that she should be hardly entreated.

7. And moreover, she saith that Father Rosimond with his daughter, Mother Dutten, Mother Devell, Mother Margaret, and herself the said Elizabeth Hockingham, did accustom to meet within the back-side of Master Dodge's, in the pits<sup>3</sup> there, and did in that place conclude upon heinous and villainous practices, such as by them or any of them, before had been devised or determined.

8. Also she saith and confesseth that they all purposed and agreed, by their sorceries and enchantments to despatch privily one Langford a farmer, dwelling in Windsor by the Thames side, and that they murdered him accordingly.

9. They also by their devilish art killed one Master Gallis who in times past had been Mayor of Windsor.

10. The like they practised against one of the said Langford's maids, whom by the mischievous means above expressed they bereft of life.

11. Likewise a butcher named Switcher escaped not their treachery but was by their witchcraft brought to his grave.

12. Another butcher named Mastlin was by them handled in such sort that he consumed away.

13. The manner of their enchantments, whereby four of the persons aforementioned were murdered, was thus: Mother Dutten made four pictures of red wax, about a span long, and three or four fingers broad, for Langford, for his maid, for Master Gallis, and for Switcher; and the said Mother Dutten, by their council and consent, did stick an hawthorn prick against the left sides of the breasts of the images, directly there where they thought the hearts of the persons to be set whom the same pictures did represent, and thereupon within short space, the said four persons, being suddenly taken, died.

14. As for Mastlin the fifth man, she confesseth that he was bewitched, but how or whether he died or no, she uttereth not.

15. Further, the same Elizabeth saith that herself did kill one Saddock with a clap on the shoulder, for not keeping his promise for an old cloak to make her a safeguard, who presently went home and died.

16. Further she saith, that she and every of them did overspeak one Humphrey Hosey and his wife, and one Richard Mills, and one John Mathiriglise, that they lay sick in a strange order a long time, but they were recovered again.

17. Further she saith, that Mother Devell did overspeak one William Foster, a fisher, and one Willis' wife, a baker.

18. Further she saith, that Mother Dutten did give one picture, but she knoweth not whether it was of a man or of a woman; and the man that had it of her she thinketh to be dead, but she knoweth not his name.

19. Further she saith, that one George Whitting, servant to Matthew Glover of Eton, had one picture of herself for one Foster, for that the said George and Foster fell out at variance; and the picture was made in Mother Dutten's house and that Mother Dutten, Mother Devell and herself were at the making; and that Mother Devell did say to her Bun or evil spirit 'Plague him and spare him not!' and she did thrust a hawthorn prick against the heart of him, and so he lay at the point of death a long time, but Mother Dutten recovered him again.

20. And in the end they killed a cow of his by their witchcraft.

21. And further she saith, that they and every of them, if any had angered them, they would go to their spirits and say 'Such-a-one hath angered me, go do them this mischief' and for their hire would give them a drop of their own blood; and presently the party was plagued by some lamentable casualty.

22. Elizabeth Stile also confesseth that she herself hath gone to Old Windsor, to the bedmakers there, to beg a mess of milk, which she could not have for that the maid was then milking, but her rat had provided for her both milk and cream against her coming home.

23. Elizabeth Stile, touched with more remorse, saith that Mother Dutten and Mother Devell were her first enticers to folly; and that she and every of them did meet sometimes in Master Dodge's pits, and sometime about eleven of the clock in the night at the pound, and that Mother Dutten and Mother Devell did persuade her to do as they had done in forsaking God and His works and giving herself to the devil.

24. Elizabeth Stile confesseth herself often times to have gone to Father Rosimond's house, where she found him sitting in a wood not far from thence, under the body of a tree, sometimes in the shape of an ape and otherwhiles like an horse. She also confesseth her-

self to have turned a child's hand in Windsor clean backwards, which was returned to the right place by Mother Dutten.

25. Further she saith, that she will stand unto her death to all and every article before rehearsed, and that Father Rosimond can transform himself into the likeness of an ape or a horse, and that he can help any man so bewitched to his health again, as well as to bewitch.

26. Further she saith, that Mother Seder dwelling in the almshouse was the mistress witch of all the rest, and she is now dead.

27. Further she saith, that if she had been so disposed, four or five or more of the best men in Windsor should not have brought her to the jail, but that she came of her own accord; and by the way as she came with John Brame, who brought her to the jail, her Bun or familiar came to her in the likeness of a black cat and would have had her away, but she banished him, hoping for favour.

Memorandum, that besides the examination and confession aforesaid, there was given in evidence viva voce at the arraignment of the said witches, one special matter by an ostler of Windsor, who affirmeth upon his oath that the said Mother Stile, using to come to his master's house, had oftentimes relief given her by him. And on a time not long since she coming to his master's house when there was little left to be given her, for that she came somewhat late, yet he giving her also somewhat at that time, she therewith not contented went her ways in some anger and, as it seemed, offended with the said ostler for that she had no better alms; and by the sequel, so it appeared.

For not long after, he had a great ache in his limbs that he was not able to take any rest nor to do any labour, and having sought many means for remedy thereof, could find none. At the last he went to a wiseman, named Father Rosimond, alias Osborne, who told him that he was bewitched and that there was many ill women in Windsor, and asked him whom he did mistrust, and the said ostler answered 'One Mother Stile,' one of the witches aforesaid. 'Well,' said the wiseman, 'if you can meet her, and all to-scratch her so that you draw blood of her, you shall presently mend.' And the said ostler upon his oath declared that he watching her on a time did all to-scratch her by the face, that he made the blood come after, and presently his pain went away so that he hath been no more

grieved since.

Moreover, on a time a man's son of Windsor coming to fetch water at a well which was by the door of the said Mother Stile, and by chance hurling a stone upon her house, she was therewithal much grieved, and said 'she would be even with him', and took his pitcher which he had brought from him. The boy, coming homewards, happened to meet with his father, and told him how that Mother Stile had taken away his pitcher from him.

'Well,' said his father 'you have done her some unhappiness; come on with me and I will go speak with her.' And so the boy going with his father towards her house did suddenly cry out 'Oh, my hand, my hand!' His father therewithal looking back and seeing his son's hand to turn and wend backwards, laid hold thereupon, but he was not able to stay the turning thereof. Besides, a neighbour of his being in his company at that time did also lay hold thereon, and notwithstanding both their strengths, the child's hand did turn backwards, and the palm thereof did stand where the back did, to the grievous torment of the said child and vexation of his father. The which hand was turned again to his right place either by the said Father Rosimond or the said Mother Devell.

Also this is not to be forgotten, that the said Mother Stile, being at the time of her apprehension so well in health of body and limbs that she was able, and did, go on foot from Windsor unto Reading unto the jail, which are twelve miles distant; shortly after that she had made the aforesaid confession, the other witches were apprehended and were brought to the said jail, [where] the said Mother Devell did so bewitch her and others (as she confessed unto the jailer) with her enchantments, that the use of all her limbs and senses were taken quite from her, and her toes did rot off her feet, and she was laid upon a barrow, as a most ugly creature to behold, and so brought before the judges at such time as she was arraigned.

*Finis.*

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Father Rosimond escaped punishment? What does that say about who was or wasn't punished in similar trials?



## CONTACT AND CONQUEST, 1500-1700

2-1 The Trial of Anne Hutchinson  
(1638)

*Anne Hutchinson, the articulate and resolute wife of a prominent New England merchant, was placed on trial before the General Court in 1637 for challenging the authority of the ministry and promoting individualism—provocative issues in Puritan society. During the first two days of examination she defended her position well, frustrating the best efforts of Governor Winthrop and others to convict her. Finally, her claim of direct divine inspiration brought her a conviction on the grounds of blasphemy. She was banished from the colony in 1638.*

**Source:** The American Colonist's Library, Primary Source Documents Pertaining to Early American History, <http://personal.pitnet.net/primarysources/hutchinson.html>

MR. [JOHN] WINTHROP, GOVERNOR: Mrs Hutchinson, you are called here as one of those that have troubled the peace of the commonwealth and the churches here; you are known to be a woman that hath had a great share in the promoting and divulging of those opinions that are the cause of this trouble, and to be nearly joined not only in affinity and affection with some of those the court had taken notice of and passed censure upon, but you have spoken diverse things, as we have been informed, very prejudicial to the honour of the churches and ministers thereof, and you have maintained a meeting and an assembly in your house that hath been condemned by the general assembly as a thing not tolerable nor comely in the sight of God nor fitting for your sex, and notwithstanding that was cried down you have continued the same. Therefore we have thought good to send for you to understand how things are, that if you be in an erroneous way we may reduce you that so you may become a profitable member here among us. Otherwise if you be obstinate in your course that then the court may take such course that you may trouble us no further. Therefore I would intreat you to express whether you do assent and hold in practice to those opinions and factions that have

been handled in court already, that is to say, whether you do not justify Mr. Wheelwright's sermon and the petition.

MRS. HUTCHINSON: I am called here to answer before you but I hear no things laid to my charge.

GOV.: I have told you some already and more I can tell you.

MRS. H.: Name one, Sir.

GOV.: Have I not named some already?

MRS. H.: What have I said or done?

GOV.: Why for your doings, this you did harbor and countenance those that are parties in this faction that you have heard of.

MRS. H.: That's matter of conscience, Sir.

GOV.: Your conscience you must keep, or it must be kept for you.

MRS. H.: Must not I then entertain the saints because I must keep my conscience.

GOV.: Say that one brother should commit felony or treason and come to his brother's house, if he knows him guilty and conceals him he is guilty of the same. It is his conscience to entertain him, but if his conscience comes into act in giving countenance and entertainment to him that hath broken the law he is guilty too. So if you do countenance those that are transgressors of the law you are in the same fact.

MRS. H.: What law do they transgress?

GOV.: The law of God and of the state.

MRS. H.: In what particular?

GOV.: Why in this among the rest, whereas the Lord doth say honour thy father and thy mother.

MRS. H.: Ey Sir in the Lord.

GOV.: This honour you have broke in giving countenance to them.

MRS. H.: In entertaining those did I entertain them against any act (for there is the thing) or what God has appointed?

GOV.: You knew that Mr. Wheelwright did preach this sermon and those that countenance him in this do break a law.

MRS. H.: What law have I broken?

GOV.: Why the fifth commandment.

MRS. H.: I deny that for he [Mr. Wheelwright] saith in the Lord.

GOV.: You have joined with them in the faction.

MRS. H.: In what faction have I joined with them?

GOV.: In presenting the petition.

MRS. H.: Suppose I had set my hand to the petition. What then?

GOV.: You saw that case tried before.

MRS. H.: But I had not my hand to [not signed] the petition.

GOV.: You have cancelled them.

MRS. H.: Wherein?

GOV.: Why in entertaining them.

MRS. H.: What breach of law is that, Sir?

GOV.: Why dishonouring the commonwealth.

MRS. H.: But put the case, Sir, that I do fear the Lord and my parents. May not I entertain them that fear the Lord because my parents will not give me leave?

GOV.: If they be the fathers of the commonwealth, and they of another religion, if you entertain them then you dishonour your parents and are justly punishable.

MRS. H.: If I entertain them, as they have dishonoured their parents I do.

GOV.: No but you by countenancing them above others put honor upon them.

MRS. H.: I may put honor upon them as the children of God and as they do honor the Lord.

GOV.: We do not mean to discourse with those of your sex but only this: you so adhere unto them and do endeavor to set forward this faction and so you do dishonour us.

MRS. H.: I do acknowledge no such thing. Neither do I think that I ever put any dishonour upon you.

GOV.: Why do you keep such a meeting at your house

as you do every week upon a set day?

MRS. H.: It is lawful for me to do so, as it is all your practices, and can you find a warrant for yourself and condemn me for the same thing? The ground of my taking it up was, when I first came to this land because I did not go to such meetings as those were, it was presently reported that I did not allow of such meetings but held them unlawful and therefore in that regard they said I was proud and did despise all ordinances. Upon that a friend came unto me and told me of it and I to prevent such aspersions took it up, but it was in practice before I came. Therefore I was not the first.

GOV.: . . . By what warrant do you continue such a course?

MRS. H.: I conceive there lies a clear rule in Titus that the elder women should instruct the younger and then I must have a time wherein I must do it.

GOV.: All this I grant you, I grant you a time for it, but what is this to the purpose that you Mrs. Hutchinson must call a company together from their callings to come to be taught of you? . . .

MRS. H.: If you look upon the rule in Titus it is a rule to me. If you convince me that it is no rule I shall yield.

GOV.: You know that there is no rule that crosses another, but this rule crosses that in the Corinthians. But you must take it in this sense that elder women must instruct the younger about their business and to love their husbands and not to make them to clash . . .

MRS. H.: Will it please you to answer me this and to give me a rule for then I will willingly submit to any truth. If any come to my house to be instructed in the ways of God what rule have I to put them away? . . . Do you think it not lawful for me to teach women and why do you call me to teach the court?

GOV.: We do not call you to teach the court but to lay open yourself. . . .

[They continue to argue over what rule she had broken]

GOV.: Your course is not to be suffered for. Besides that we find such a course as this to be greatly prejudicial to the state. Besides the occasion that it is to seduce many honest persons that are called to those meetings and your opinions and your opinions being known to be different from the word of God may seduce many simple souls that resort unto you. Besides that the occasion which hath come of late hath come from none but such as have frequented your meetings, so that now

they are flown off from magistrates and ministers and since they have come to you. And besides that it will not well stand with the commonwealth that families should be neglected for so many neighbors and dames and so much time spent. We see no rule of God for this. We see not that any should have authority to set up any other exercises besides what authority hath already set up and so what hurt comes of this you will be guilty of and we for suffering you.

MRS. H.: Sir, I do not believe that to be so.

GOV.: Well, we see how it is. We must therefore put it away from you or restrain you from maintaining this course.

MRS. H. If you have a rule for it from God's word you may.

GOV.: We are your judges, and not you ours and we must compel you to it.

MRS. H.: If it please you by authority to put it down I will freely let you for I am subject to your authority. . .

DEPUTY GOVERNOR, THOMAS DUDLEY: I would go a little higher with Mrs. Hutchinson. About three years ago we were all in peace. Mrs Hutchinson, from that time she came hath made a disturbance, and some that came over with her in the ship did inform me what she was as soon as she was landed. I being then in place dealt with the pastor and teacher of Boston and desired them to enquire of her, and then I was satisfied that she held nothing different from us. But within half a year after, she had vented divers of her strange opinions and had made parties in the country, and at length it comes that Mr. Cotton and Mr. Vane were of her judgment, but Mr. Cotton had cleared himself that he was not of that mind. But now it appears by this woman's meeting that Mrs. Hutchinson hath so forestalled the minds of many by their resort to her meeting that now she hath a potent party in the country. Now if all these things have endangered us as from that foundation and if she in particular hath disparaged all our ministers in the land that they have preached a covenant of works, and only Mr. Cotton a covenant of grace, why this is not to be suffered, and therefore being driven to the foundation and it being found that Mrs. Hutchinson is she that hath depraved all the ministers and hath been the cause of what is fallen out, why we must take away the foundation and the building will fall.

MRS. H.: I pray, Sir, prove it that I said they preached nothing but a covenant of works.

DEP. GOV.: Nothing but a covenant of works. Why a

Jesuit may preach truth sometimes.

MRS. H.: Did I ever say they preached a covenant of works then?

DEP. GOV.: If they do not preach a covenant of grace clearly, then they preach a covenant of works.

MRS. H.: No, Sir. One may preach a covenant of grace more clearly than another, so I said. . . .

DEP. GOV.: When they do preach a covenant of works do they preach truth?

MRS. H.: Yes, Sir. But when they preach a covenant of works for salvation, that is not truth.

DEP. GOV.: I do but ask you this: when the ministers do preach a covenant of works do they preach a way of salvation?

MRS. H.: I did not come hither to answer questions of that sort.

DEP. GOV.: Because you will deny the thing.

MRS. H.: Ey, but that is to be proved first.

DEP. GOV.: I will make it plain that you did say that the ministers did preach a covenant of works.

MRS. H.: I deny that.

DEP. GOV.: And that you said they were not able ministers of the New Testament, but Mr. Cotton only.

MRS. H.: If ever I spake that I proved it by God's word.

COURT: Very well, very well.

MRS. H.: If one shall come unto me in private, and desire me seriously to tell them what I thought of such an one, I must either speak false or true in my answer.

DEP. GOV.: Likewise I will prove this that you said the gospel in the letter and words holds forth nothing but a covenant of works and that all that do not hold as you do are in a covenant of works . . .

MRS. H.: I deny this for if I should so say I should speak against my own judgment. . . .

MR. HUGH PETERS: That which concerns us to speak unto, as yet we are sparing in, unless the court command us to speak, then we shall answer to Mrs. Hutchinson notwithstanding our brethren are very unwilling to answer. [The Governor says to do so. Six ministers then testify to the particular charges and that she was "not only difficult in her opinions, but also of an intemperate spirit"]

MR. HUGH PETERS: . . . [I asked her] What difference do you conceive to be between your teacher and us?...

Briefly, she told me there was a wide and broad difference. . . . He preaches the covenant of grace and you the covenant of works, and that you are not able ministers of the New Testament and know no more than the apostles did before the resurrection of Christ. I did then put it to her, What do you conceive of such a brother? She answered he had not the seal of the spirit.

MRS. H.: If our pastor would shew his writings you should see what I said, and that many things are not so as is reported.

MR. WILSON: . . . what is written [here now] I will avouch.

MR. WELD: [agrees that Peters related Hutchinson's words accurately]

MR. PHILLIPS: [agrees that Peters related Hutchinson's words accurately and added] Then I asked her of myself (being she spake rashly of them all) because she never heard me at all. She likewise said that we were not able ministers of the New Testament and her reason was because we were not sealed.

MR. SIMMES: Agrees that Peters related Hutchinson's words accurately

MR. SHEPHARD: Also to Same.

MR. ELIOT: [agrees that Peters related Hutchinson's words accurately]

DEP. GOV.: I called these witnesses and you deny them. You see they have proved this and you deny this, but it is clear. You say they preached a covenant of works and that they were not able ministers of the New Testament; now there are two other things that you did affirm which were that the scriptures in the letter of them held forth nothing but a covenant of works and likewise that those that were under a covenant of works cannot be saved.

MRS. H.: Prove that I said so.

GOV.: Did you say so?

MRS. H.: No, Sir, it is your conclusion.

DEP. GOV.: What do I do charging of you if you deny what is so fully proved?

GOV.: Here are six undeniable ministers who say it is true and yet you deny that you did say that they preach a covenant of works and that they were not able ministers of the gospel, and it appears plainly that you have spoken it, and whereas you say that it was drawn from you in a way of friendship, you did profess then that it was out of conscience that you spake . . .

MRS. H.: . . . They thought that I did conceive there was a difference between them and Mr. Cotton. . . . I might say they might preach a covenant of works as did the apostles, but to preach a covenant of works and to be under a covenant of works is another business.

DEP. GOV.: There have been six witnesses to prove this and yet you deny it. [and then he mentions a seventh, Mr. Nathaniel Ward]

MRS. H.: I acknowledge using the words of the apostle to the Corinthians unto him, [Mr. Ward] that they that were ministers of the letter and not the spirit did preach a covenant of works.

GOV.: Mrs. Hutchinson, the court you see hath laboured to bring you to acknowledge the error of your way that so you might be reduced, the time grows late, we shall therefore give you a little more time to consider of it and therefore desire that you attend the court again in the morning. [The next morning]

GOV.: We proceeded . . . as far as we could . . . There were divers things laid to her charge: her ordinary meetings about religious exercises, her speeches in derogation of the ministers among us, and the weakening of the hands and hearts of the people towards them. Here was sufficient proof made of that which she was accused of, in that point concerning the ministers and their ministry, as that they did preach a covenant of works when others did preach a covenant of grace, and that they were not able ministers of the New Testament, and that they had not the seal of the spirit, and this was spoken not as was pretended out of private conference, but out of conscience and warrant from scripture alleged the fear of man is a snare and seeing God had given her a calling to it she would freely speak. Some other speeches she used, as that the letter of the scripture held forth a covenant of works, and this is offered to be proved by probable grounds. . . . Controversy—should the witnesses should be recalled and made swear an oath, as Mrs. Hutchinson desired, is resolved against doing so.

GOV.: I see no necessity of an oath in this thing seeing it is true and the substance of the matter confirmed by divers, yet that all may be satisfied, if the elders will take an oath they shall have it given them . . .

MRS. H.: After that they have taken an oath I will make good what I say.

GOV.: Let us state the case, and then we may know what to do. That which is laid to Mrs. Hutchinson charge is that, that she hath traduced the magistrates and ministers of this jurisdiction, that she hath said the ministers preached a covenant of works and Mr.

Cotton a covenant of grace, and that they were not able ministers of the gospel, and she excuses it that she made it a private conference and with a promise of secrecy, &c. Now this is charged upon her, and they therefore sent for her seeing she made it her table talk, and then she said the fear of man was a snare and therefore she would not be affeared of them . . .

DEP. GOV.: Let her witnesses be called.

GOV.: Who be they?

MRS. H.: Mr. Leveret and our teacher and Mr. Coggeshall.

GOV.: Mr. Coggeshall was not present.

MR. COGGESHALL: Yes, but I was. Only I desired to be silent till I should be called.

GOV.: Will you, Mr. Coggeshall, say that she did not say so?

MR. COGGESHALL: Yes, I dare say that she did not say all that which they lay against her.

MR. PETERS: How dare you look into the court to say such a word?

MR. COGGESHALL: Mr. Peters takes upon him to forbid me. I shall be silent.

MR. STOUGHTON [ASSISTANT OF THE COURT]: Ey, but she intended this that they say.

GOV.: Well, Mr. Leveret, what were the words? I pray, speak.

MR. LEVERET: To my best remembrance when the elders did send for her, Mr. Peters did with much vehemency and intreaty urge her to tell what difference there was between Mr. Cotton and them, and upon his urging of her she said "The fear of man is a snare, but they that trust upon the Lord shall be safe." And being asked wherein the difference was, she answered that they did not preach a covenant of grace so clearly as Mr. Cotton did, and she gave this reason of it: because that as the apostles were for a time without the spirit so until they had received the witness of the spirit they could not preach a covenant of grace so clearly.

GOV.: Don't you remember that she said they were not able ministers of the New Testament?

MRS. H.: Mr. Weld and I had an hour's discourse at the window and then I spake that, if I spake it . . .

GOV.: Mr Cotton, the court desires that you declare what you do remember of the conference which was at the time and is now in question.

MR. COTTON: I did not think I should be called to

bear witness in this cause and therefore did not labor to call to remembrance what was done; but the greatest passage that took impression upon me was to this purpose. The elders spake that they had heard that she had spoken some condemning words of their ministry, and among other things they did first pray her to answer wherein she thought their ministry did differ from mine. How the comparison sprang I am ignorant, but sorry I was that any comparison should be between me and my brethren and uncomfortable it was. She told them to this purpose that they did not hold forth a covenant of grace as I did. But wherein did we differ? Why she said that they did not hold forth the seal of the spirit as he doth. Where is the difference there? Say they, why saith she, speaking to one or other of them, I know not to whom. You preach of the seal of the spirit upon a work and he upon free grace without a work or without respect to a work; he preaches the seal of the spirit upon free grace and you upon a work. I told her I was very sorry that she put comparisons between my ministry and theirs, for she had said more than I could myself, and rather I had that she had put us in fellowship with them and not have made that discrepancy. She said she found the difference . . .

This was the sum of the difference, nor did it seem to be so ill taken as it is and our brethren did say also that they would not so easily believe reports as they had done and withal mentioned that they would speak no more of it, some of them did; and afterwards some of them did say they were less satisfied than before. And I must say that I did not find her saying that they were under a covenant of works, nor that she said they did preach a covenant of works. [more back and forth between Rev. John Cotton, trying to defend Mrs. Hutchinson, and Mr. Peters, about exactly what Mrs. Hutchinson said]

MRS. H.: If you please to give me leave I shall give you the ground of what I know to be true. Being much troubled to see the falseness of the constitution of the Church of England, I had like to have turned Separatist. Whereupon I kept a day of solemn humiliation and pondering of the thing; this scripture was brought unto me—he that denies Jesus Christ to be come in the flesh is antichrist. This I considered of and in considering found that the papists did not deny him to be come in the flesh, nor we did not deny him—who then was antichrist? Was the Turk antichrist only? The Lord knows that I could not open scripture; he must by his prophetic office open it unto me. So after that being unsatisfied in the thing, the Lord was pleased to bring this scripture out of the Hebrews. he that denies the testament denies the testator, and in this did open

unto me and give me to see that those which did not teach the new covenant had the spirit of antichrist, and upon this he did discover the ministry unto me; and ever since, I bless the Lord, he hath let me see which was the clear ministry and which the wrong. Since that time I confess I have been more choice and he hath left me to distinguish between the voice of my beloved and the voice of Moses, the voice of John the Baptist and the voice of antichrist, for all those voices are spoken of in scripture. Now if you do condemn me for speaking what in my conscience I know to be truth I must commit myself unto the Lord.

MR. NOWEL [ASSISTANT TO THE COURT]: How do you know that was the spirit?

MRS. H.: How did Abraham know that it was God that bid him offer his son, being a breach of the sixth commandment?

DEP. GOV.: By an immediate voice.

MRS. H.: So to me by an immediate revelation.

DEP. GOV.: How! an immediate revelation.

MRS. H.: By the voice of his own spirit to my soul. I will give you another scripture, Jer[emiah] 46: 27–28—out of which the Lord showed me what he would do for me and the rest of his servants. But after he was pleased to reveal himself to me I did presently, like Abraham, run to Hagar. And after that he did let me see the atheism of my own heart, for which I begged of the Lord that it might not remain in my heart, and being thus, he did show me this (a twelvemonth after) which I told you of before. . . . Therefore, I desire you to look to it, for you see this scripture fulfilled this day and therefore I desire you as you tender the Lord and the church and commonwealth to consider and look what you do. You have power over my body but the Lord Jesus hath power over my body and soul; and assure yourselves thus much, you do as much as in you lies to put the Lord Jesus Christ from you, and if you go on in this course you begin, you will bring a curse upon you and your posterity, and the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

DEP. GOV.: What is the scripture she brings?

MR. STOUGHTON [ASSISTANT TO THE COURT]: Behold I turn away from you.

MRS. H.: But now having seen him which is invisible I fear not what man can do unto me.

GOV.: Daniel was delivered by miracle; do you think to be deliver'd so too?

MRS. H.: I do here speak it before the court. I look that the Lord should deliver me by his providence. . . . [because God had said to her] though I should meet with affliction, yet I am the same God that delivered Daniel out of the lion's den, I will also deliver thee.

MR. HARLAKENDEN [ASSISTANT TO THE COURT]: I may read scripture and the most glorious hypocrite may read them and yet go down to hell.

MRS. H.: It may be so. . . .

GOV.: I am persuaded that the revelation she brings forth is delusion.

[The trial text here reads:] All the court but some two or three ministers cry out, we all believe it—we all believe it. [Mrs. Hutchinson was found guilty]

GOV.: The court hath already declared themselves satisfied concerning the things you hear, and concerning the troublesomeness of her spirit and the danger of her course amongst us, which is not to be suffered. Therefore if it be the mind of the court that Mrs. Hutchinson for these things that appear before us is unfit for our society, and if it be the mind of the court that she shall be banished out of our liberties and imprisoned till she be sent away, let them hold up their hands. [All but three did so]

GOV.: Mrs. Hutchinson, the sentence of the court you hear is that you are banished from out of our jurisdiction as being a woman not fit for our society, and are to be imprisoned till the court shall send you away.

MRS. H.: I desire to know wherefore I am banished?

GOV.: Say no more. The court knows wherefore and is satisfied.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How was Anne Hutchinson able to frustrate the best efforts of the court to find her guilty during the early stages of the trial?
2. Aggravating the situation at the General Court was the fact that the authority of the ministry was being challenged by a woman. How do you think other women of similar status in New England society viewed Anne Hutchinson? Was she inspirational or foolish?
3. To what extent is this trial about gender? In your interpretation, what were Hutchinson's most serious offenses?

## 2-2 Juan Sanz De Lezaún, “An Account of Lamentable Happenings in New Mexico.”

*In this document, DeLezaún, a Franciscan missionary, recounts two events—the attack by a group of Comanches on a small town leading to the deaths of a girl and an old woman, and an uprising caused by the death of a Zuma Indian caught stealing corn.*

**Source:** *In Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Viscaya and Approaches Thereto.* Charles Wilson Hackett et al, editors. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1923, 476-477.

### **An account of lamentable happenings in New Mexico, and of losses experienced daily in affairs spiritual and temporal; written by Reverend Father Fray Juan Sanz de Lezaún, in the year 1760**

... The fathers receive no credit whatever for their service to God or to our king. Evidence of this is the invasion of the enemy into the town of Habiquiú in August 1747, when they carried off twenty-three women and children, besides killing a girl and an old woman for having defended themselves. Reverend Mirabel, who was custodian and lived in the mission of San Juan, immediately reported this to the governor, who at the time was Don Joaquín Codallos. The governor paid no attention until the reverend father, moved by the unrest of all his neighbors, again wrote, and, as the affair was now public knowledge in the entire kingdom, the governor gave orders after four days, and they went out in pursuit of the enemy, but accomplished nothing because the latter had had plenty of time to get ahead of them. A few settlers went out to follow their trail and found three women dead and a new-born child; the rest had all been carried off. One of them was brought back at the end of seven years by the Comanches, they having been the ones responsible for this misdeed, while the poor heathen Yutas paid for it. At the time when they brought this woman the governor was Don Tomás Vélez Cachupín. This being the situation, what can the poor religious do about it all, burdened as they are with sorrows, unable to defend any one, and seeing so many souls lost without being able to find a means of proving all these things?

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In El Paso del Rio del Norte, in the year 1752, the captain ordered a Zuma Indian killed on account of five ears of corn. The Indian had been his weekly servant, and on the day when he finished his week he was carrying the ears away tied up in his blanket. A servant of the captain seeing the bundle went to feel of it; the Indian, fearing that they would whip him, threw off his blanket and started to run. The sergeant, some soldiers, and some settlers followed him, and he took refuge on a little hill back of the mission of El Paso. They got him to come down by trickery, tied him, and the sergeant ordered the soldiers to beat him. The miserable Indian cried out saying he was a Christian, and they should allow him to confess, and that they should call the white missionary father from El Paso. This was denied him; but the soldiers were unwilling to obey the sergeant, so he commanded a settler to shoot the Indian, which the perverse fellow did. After the miserable Indian was dead, the sergeant ordered him hung up on a plain, where he stayed until the fathers came to take the body down and give it sepulture.

From this occurrence came the uprising of the Zumas, concerning which all the residents of El Paso can give full information. Very serious losses resulted from this uprising. The Zumas united with the Apaches, and they harried all the roads with armed bands which could not be exterminated. Let the people of New Mexico tell how, on their return to their houses, having stopped near the hacienda of Ojo Caliente, they were fallen upon by the Zumas so suddenly that they did not even have time to take up their arms; but, leaving all their loads and their mules, had to take refuge in the house. The Zumas carried off all the mule and horse droves, the bales of clothing, and many other things which they were taking for their houses. The Spaniards were all left afoot, though some received relief in the form of assistance from El Paso.

#### **FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. What does the first passage tell you about the Comanche attitude toward women and children? Why would they take some and kill others?
2. Compare the reaction of Codallos in the first passage to the reaction of the captain in the second passage. Is there an implicit statement about the value of women vs. the value of material goods?
3. What is the position of de Lezaún? How does he view these events?

## 2-3 Experience Mayhew Describes the Pious Wampanoag Women of Martha's Vineyard (1727)

*This description of Wampanoag women by a white colonist gives us insight into both cultures.*

**Source:** In *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 23-24.

The number of Women truly fearing God, has by some been thought to exceed that of Men so doing; but whether the Observation will generally hold true or not, I shall not now inquire. However, it seems to be a Truth with respect to our Indians, so far as my Knowledge of them extends, that there have been, and are a greater number of their Women appearing pious than of the Men among them ....

[Rebecca Sissetom] appeared sober, and well disposed from her very Childhood, was obedient to her Parents, and not so much given to Vanity as most Children are.

Having been taught to read while she was young, she appeared to delight in her Book. She seemed also to delight in going to Meetings; and, being about ten Years old when her Mother was admitted to full Communion in the Church of Christ, she her self manifested a Desire of being baptized before the same was proposed to her, and was accordingly admitted to the Privilege, being first examined, and found to understand the Nature of the baptismal Covenant, as well as willing to give her Consent to it.

After this she frequently discoursed of the things of God and another Life, and this in such a manner as shewed a becoming Seriousness, and manifested a Desire of obtaining that Knowledge which is necessary to Salvation, and also a great Concern that she might not fall short of eternal Life ....

[Hannah Nohnosoo] join'd early to the Church already mentioned, and was a Member of it in full Communion, I suppose, at least forty Years before she died; in all which time, I cannot learn that she was ever guilty of any scandalous Evil whatsoever, but constantly behav'd her self as became a good Christian, so as to adorn the Doctrine of God her Saviour in all things.

She was really, and not by Profession only, a praying Woman, praying always when there were proper Occasions for it; as in her own Family when she was a Widow and her Children lived with her; and after-

wards in the Houses wherein she lived with others, when there were none present for whom it might be more proper. And she always manifested a Love and Zeal for the House and Ordinances of God, not in her Discourses only, but in her constant and serious Attendance on them ....

Having very considerable Skill in some of the Distempers to which human Bodies are subject, and in the Nature of many of those Herbs and Plants which were proper Remedies against them, she often did good by her Medicines among her Neighbours, especially the poorer sort of them, whom she readily served without asking them any thing for what she did for them .... Several Women, some English and some Indians, being divers Years after Marriage without the Blessing of Children, having barren Wombs and dry Breasts, which Persons in a married State are scarce ever pleased with, some of these Women applying themselves to the good old Hannah of whom I am now speaking, for help in Case that thus afflicted them, have soon after become joyful Mothers of Children; for which Comfort, under God, they have been oblig'd to her. ...

[Jerusha Ompan] seemed to have the Fear of God in her Heart, while she was but a young Girl, was very dutiful to her Parents, and was not known to be given to any Vice. She never much affected going to Huskings and Weddings, and if at any time she went to them, she would be sure to come home seasonably, not tarrying too long, as the Generality of Persons did ....

She was about 29 Years old before she dy'd; and tho she had had some Offers of Marriage made to her, yet she would accept none of them, alledging to her Friends as the reason of her Refusal, that of the Apostle in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chap. vii. The unmarried Woman careth for the Things of the Lord, &c ....

[Hannah Tiler] was as bad by Nature as any others, so the former part of her Life was no better ordered than the Lives of Persons in a State of Nature generally be .... [Her husband] lived but viciously before he married her, and continued so to do for some Years afterward. He would frequently have his drunken Fits...

But the Woman being at length convinced of the great Evil there is in the Sin of Drunkenness, resolved that she would forsake it, and God helped her so to do; so that she overcame her Temptations to that Vice, and lived in that regard very temperately: but being her self in that Particular reformed, and Drunkenness now becoming exceeding offensive to her, she could not bear with it in others, and therefore could not forbear



talking too angrily to her Husband when she saw him guilty of that Crime; and this was an Occasion of sore Contentions betwixt them ....

Being thus reform'd in her Life, she made a publick Profession of Religion, and joined her self to the Church of Christ about nine or ten Years before that wherein she died; during all which time, she walked, as far as I can understand, very blamelessly, ordering her Conversation as did become the Gospel. ...

Accordingly she, after some time, did so far overcome his Evil by her Goodness, that he carried himself more kindly to her than formerly he had done; and appeared to become religious, took some care about the Instruction of his Children, and made a publick

Profession of Faith and Repentance, joining himself to the Church of Christ. ...

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What does Prudence Mayhew find most praiseworthy and most reprehensible about the women she describes?
2. Hannah Tiler is described as being in a "State of Nature". What does Mayhew mean by this?
3. What do you infer is Mayhew's main purpose in writing about these women? Is her purpose to teach, to condemn, or something else?

## 2-4 Native Women Resist the Jesuits (1640)

*This passage describes the conversion of Native American women to Christianity. This brief document provides a glimpse of a moment in time, and informs us of the gendered nature of this three-way interaction, between the Christian fathers, and the Native American men and women. Although the passage is short, much can be gleaned about the shifting relationships within Native American society.*

**Source:** In *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900*. by Carol Devens. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 22.

They [Native American men] resolved to call together the women, to urge them to be instructed and to receive holy Baptism. Accordingly, they were brought together, and the young people also. The best of it was that they preached to them so well that the following day some of these poor women, encountering Father de Quen, said to him, "Where is such a Father? we have come to beg him to baptize us. Yesterday the men summoned us to a Council, the first time that women have ever entered one; but they treated us so rudely that we were greatly astonished. 'It is you women,' they said to us, 'who are the cause of all our misfortunes, - it is you who keep the demons

among us. You do not urge to be baptized; you must not be satisfied to ask this favor only once from the Fathers, you must importune them. You are lazy about going to prayers; when you pass before the cross, you never salute it; you wish to be independent. Now know that you will obey your husbands; and you young people, you will obey your parents and our Captains; and, if any fail to do so, we have concluded to give them nothing to eat.'" This is a part of the sermon of these new Preachers, who, in my opinion, are so much the more wonderful as they are new and very far removed from the Savage methods of action. I believe, indeed, that they will not all at once enter into this great submissiveness that they promise themselves; but it will be in this point as in others, they will embrace it little by little. A young woman having fled, shortly after these elections, into the woods, not wishing to obey her husband, the Captains had her searched for, and came to ask us, if, having found her, it would not be well to chain her by one foot; and if it would be enough to make her pass four days and four nights without eating, as penance for her fault.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What was the role of the three parties in these events?
2. What kinds of changes are reflected in this excerpt?

## 2-5 Father Le Jeune on the Importance of Native American Women (1633)

*Like the previous source, this one also views Native American women through the eyes of a Christian missionary. Again, the main concern is conversion and baptism, so that our perspective of these events is necessarily narrow.*

**Source:** In *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 21.

I see that it is absolutely necessary to teach the girls as well as the boys, and that we shall do nothing or very little, unless some good household has the care of this sex; for the boys that we shall have reared in the knowledge of God, when they marry Savage girls or women accustomed' to wandering in the woods, will, as their husbands, be compelled to follow them and thus fall back into barbarism, or to leave them, another evil full of danger.

On the first day of April, the Captain of the Algonquains came to see us.

... I asked him if he had a son, and if he would not

give him to us to be educated. He asked me how many children I wanted, and [said] that I already had two. I told him that in time I should perhaps feed twenty. He was astonished. "Wilt thou clothe so many as well?" asked he. I answered him that we would not take them until we had the means to clothe them. He replied that he would be very glad to give us his son, but that his wife did not wish to do so. The women have great power here. A man may promise you something, and, if he does not keep his promise, he thinks he is sufficiently excused when he tells you that his wife did not wish to do it. I told him then that he was the master, and that in France women do not rule their husbands.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. In primary sources such as this one, our information is highly colored by the perspective of the writer. In such cases, sources may tell us much more about the author than the subject. What cultural assumptions affect the author's understanding of the culture he describes?
2. As in the previous source, a three-way struggle is involved here. Why do you think this conflict results in missionaries and American men allied against Native American women?

## 2-6 Benjamin Wadsworth, A Well-Ordered Family (1712)

*Benjamin Wadsworth was a Harvard-trained minister who published various sermons and essays throughout his lifetime. He is perhaps most famous for his tenure as Harvard's president from 1725 until his death in 1737. He was apparently considered a better minister than college president. The excerpt below gives us a glimpse, though probably idealized, of marital relations in New England in the early 18th century.*

Christians should endeavor to please and glorify God, in whatever capacity or relation they sustain.

Under this doctrine, my design is (by God's help) to say something about relative duties, particularly in families. I shall therefore endeavor to speak as briefly and plainly as I can about: (1) family prayer; (2) the duties of husbands and wives; (3) the duties of parents and children; (4) the duties of masters and servants. ...

### About the Duties of Husbands and Wives

Concerning the duties of this relation we may

assert a few things. It is their duty to dwell together with one another. Surely they should dwell together; if one house cannot hold them, surely they are not affected to each other as they should be. They should have a very great and tender love and affection to one another. This is plainly commanded by God. This duty of love is mutual; it should be performed by each, to each of them. When, therefore, they quarrel or disagree, then they do the Devil's work; he is pleased at it, glad of it. But such contention provokes God; it dishonors Him; it is a vile example before inferiors in the family; it tends to prevent family prayer.

As to outward things. If the one is sick, troubled, or distressed, the other should manifest care, tenderness, pity, and compassion, and afford all possible relief and succor. They should likewise unite their prudent counsels and endeavors, comfortably to maintain themselves and the family under their joint care.

Husband and wife should be patient one toward another. If both are truly pious, yet neither of them is perfectly holy, in such cases a patient, forgiving, forbearing spirit is very needful. ...

The husband's government ought to be gentle and

easy, and the wife's obedience ready and cheerful. The husband is called the head of the woman. It belongs to the head to rule and govern. Wives are part of the house and family, and ought to be under the husband's government. Yet his government should not be with rigor, haughtiness, harshness, severity, but with the greatest love, gentleness, kindness, tenderness that may be. Though he governs her, he must not treat her as a servant, but as his own flesh; he must love her as himself.

Those husbands are much to blame who do not carry it lovingly and kindly to their wives. O man, if your wife is not so young, beautiful, healthy, well-tempered, and qualified as you would wish; if she did not bring a large estate to you, or cannot do so much for you, as some other women have done for their husbands; yet she is your wife, and the great God commands you to love her, not be bitter, but kind to her. What can be more plain and expressive than that?

Those wives are much to blame who do not carry it lovingly and obediently to their own husbands. O woman, if your husband is not as young, beautiful, healthy, so well-tempered, and qualified as you could wish; if he has not such abilities, riches, honors, as some others have; yet he is your husband, and the great God commands you to love, honor, and obey

him. Yea, though possibly you have greater abilities of mind than he has, was of some high birth, and he of a more common birth, or did bring more estate, yet since he is your husband, God has made him your head, and set him above you, and made it your duty to love and revere him.

Parents should act wisely and prudently in the matching of their children. They should endeavor that they may marry someone who is most proper for them, most likely to bring blessings to them.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Although this excerpt focuses on the respective duties of husbands and wives, can you discern which behaviors Wadsworth believes most commonly plague marriages?
2. How does Wadsworth define the relationship between husband and wife? Who has power? How should that power be used?
3. What duties are described as belonging to one partner or the other? What duties are the responsibility of both?
4. How do Wadsworth's views concerning marriage reflect his religious beliefs?

## 2-7 Laws on Female Slaves— Seventeenth-Century Virginia

*The following two sections from colonial codes of law demonstrate the value of female slaves, both as a taxable commodity and as a litmus test of whether a biracial individual would be a slave or free.*

**Source:** Henning, William Waller. Editor. *The Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1969. Reprinted in DuBois and Dumenil, 64.

### Laws of Virginia (1643)

Be it further enacted and confirmed That there be tenn pounds of tob'ō. per poll and a bushell of corne per poll paid to the ministers within the servall parishes of the collony for all titheable persons, that is to say, as well for all youths of sixteen years of age upwards, as also for all negro women at the age of sixteen years.

### Laws of Virginia (1662)

WHEREAS some doubts have arisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a negro woman should be slave or free, Be it therefore enacted and declared by this present grand assembly, that all children borne in this country shalbe held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother. And that if any christian shall commit fornication with a negro man or woman, hee or shee soe offending shall pay double the fines imposed by the former act.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why would Virginia consider female slaves titheable (or taxable)? What value did they provide to their owners?
2. What reasons can you postulate for assigning a mother's status to her children, as in the 1662 law code?
3. Can you think of any other examples where a mother's identity dictates the upbringing of her children?

## 2-8 Anne Bradstreet on Queen Elizabeth

*Anne Bradstreet was one of the first American poets. She wrote this poem in honor of Elizabeth I, Queen of England. Written in a style unusual for Bradstreet, this poem is written in an elevated, archaic style, full of historical, mythological and Biblical allusions.*

**Source:** John Harvard Ellis, ed., *The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse*, Charlestown: Abraham E. Cutter, 1867. pp. 357-362.

In Honour of that High and Mighty Princess,  
Queen Elizabeth

### The Proem.

1 Although great Queen, thou now in silence lie,  
2 Yet thy loud Herald Fame, doth to the sky  
3 Thy wondrous worth proclaim, in every clime,  
4 And so has vow'd, whilst there is world or time.  
5 So great's thy glory, and thine excellence,  
6 The sound thereof raps every human sense  
7 That men account it no impiety  
8 To say thou wert a fleshly Deity.  
9 Thousands bring off'rings (though out of date)  
10 Thy world of honours to accumulate.  
11 'Mongst hundred Hecatombs of roaring Verse,  
12 'Mine bleating stands before thy royal Hearse.  
13 Thou never didst, nor canst thou now disdain,  
14 T' accept the tribute of a loyal Brain.  
15 Thy clemency did yerst esteem as much  
16 The acclamations of the poor, as rich,  
17 Which makes me deem, my rudeness is no wrong,  
18 Though I resound thy greatness 'mongst the throng.

### The Poem.

19 No Ph{oe}nix Pen, nor Spenser's Poetry,  
20 No Speed's, nor Camden's learned History;  
21 Eliza's works, wars, praise, can e're compact,  
22 The World's the Theater where she did act.  
23 No memories, nor volumes can contain,  
24 The nine Olymp'ades of her happy reign,  
25 Who was so good, so just, so learn'd, so wise,  
26 From all the Kings on earth she won the prize.  
27 Nor say I more than truly is her due.  
28 Millions will testify that this is true.

29 She hath wip'd off th' aspersion of her Sex,  
30 That women wisdom lack to play the Rex.  
31 Spain's Monarch sa's not so, not yet his Host:  
32 She taught them better manners to their cost.  
33 The Salic Law had not in force now been,  
34 If France had ever hop'd for such a Queen.  
35 But can you Doctors now this point dispute,  
36 She's argument enough to make you mute,  
37 Since first the Sun did run, his ne'er runn'd race,  
38 And earth had twice a year, a new old face;  
39 Since time was time, and man unmanly man,  
40 Come shew me such a Ph{oe}nix if you can.  
41 Was ever people better rul'd than hers?  
42 Was ever Land more happy, freed from stirs?  
43 Did ever wealth in England so abound?  
44 Her Victories in foreign Coasts resound?  
45 Ships more invincible than Spain's, her foe  
46 She rack't, she sack'd, she sunk his Armadoe.  
47 Her stately Troops advanc'd to Lisbon's wall,  
48 Don Anthony in's right for to install.  
49 She frankly help'd Franks' (brave) distressed King,  
50 The States united now her fame do sing.  
51 She their Protectrix was, they well do know,  
52 Unto our dread Virago, what they owe.  
53 Her Nobles sacrific'd their noble blood,  
54 Nor men, nor coin she shap'd, to do them good.  
55 The rude untamed Irish she did quell,  
56 And Tiron bound, before her picture fell.  
57 Had ever Prince such Counsellors as she?  
58 Her self Minerva caus'd them so to be.  
59 Such Soldiers, and such Captains never seen,  
60 As were the subjects of our (Pallas) Queen:  
61 Her Sea-men through all straits the world did round,  
62 Terra incognitæ might know her sound.  
63 Her Drake came laded home with Spanish gold,  
64 Her Essex took Cadiz, their Herculean hold.  
65 But time would fail me, so my wit would too,  
66 To tell of half she did, or she could do.  
67 Semiramis to her is but obscure;  
68 More infamy than fame she did procure.  
69 She plac'd her glory but on Babel's walls,  
70 World's wonder for a time, but yet it falls.  
71 Fierce Tomris (Cirus' Heads-man, Sythians' Queen)  
72 Had put her Harness off, had she but seen

73 Our Amazon i' th' Camp at Tilbury,  
 74 (Judging all valour, and all Majesty)  
 75 Within that Princess to have residence,  
 76 And prostrate yielded to her Excellence.  
 77 Dido first Foundress of proud Carthage walls  
 78 (Who living consummates her Funerals),  
 79 A great Eliza, but compar'd with ours,  
 80 How vanisheth her glory, wealth, and powers.  
 81 Proud profuse Cleopatra, whose wrong name,  
 82 Instead of glory, prov'd her Country's shame:  
 83 Of her what worth in Story's to be seen,  
 84 But that she was a rich Ægyptian Queen.  
 85 Zenobia, potent Empress of the East,  
 86 And of all these without compare the best  
 87 (Whom none but great Aurelius could quell)  
 88 Yet for our Queen is no fit parallel:  
 89 She was a Ph{o}enix Queen, so shall she be,  
 90 Her ashes not reviv'd more Ph{o}enix she.  
 91 Her personal perfections, who would tell,  
 92 Must dip his Pen i' th' Heliconian Well,  
 93 Which I may not, my pride doth but aspire  
 94 To read what others write and then admire.  
 95 Now say, have women worth, or have they none?  
 96 Or had they some, but with our Queen is't gone?  
 97 Nay Masculines, you have thus tax'd us long,  
 98 But she, though dead, will vindicate our wrong.  
 99 Let such as say our sex is void of reason  
 100 Know 'tis a slander now, but once was treason.  
 101 But happy England, which had such a Queen,  
 happy, happy, had those days still been,

102 But happiness lies in a higher sphere.  
 103 Then wonder not, Eliza moves not here.  
 104 Full fraught with honour, riches, and with days,  
 105 She set, she set, like Titan in his rays.  
 106 No more shall rise or set such glorious Sun,  
 107 Until the heaven's great revolution:  
 108 If then new things, their old form must retain,  
 109 Eliza shall rule Albion once again.

### Her Epitaph.

*Here sleeps T H E Queen, this is the royal bed  
 O' th' Damask Rose, sprung from the white and red,  
 Whose sweet perfume fills the all-filling air,  
 This Rose is withered, once so lovely fair:  
 On neither tree did grow such Rose before,  
 The greater was our gain, our loss the more.  
 Another.*

*Here lies the pride of Queens, pattern of Kings:  
 So blaze it fame, here's feathers for thy wings.  
 Here lies the env'y'd, yet unparallel'd Prince,  
 Whose living virtues speak (though dead long since).  
 If many worlds, as that fantastic framed,  
 In every one, be her great glory famed.*

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Which of Elizabeth's qualities does Hutchinson most admire?
2. What is Hutchinson arguing in lines 29 ff.?
3. What images of women does Hutchinson chose to apply to Elizabeth?

## 2-9 Women in the Courts— Seventeenth Century Maryland

*Colonial courts were frequently the setting where a woman's behavior was put on trial. Cases often included gossip, slander, witchcraft, and frowned-upon sexual acts. Additionally women were sometimes asked to serve as jurors (specifically in the case of witchcraft or where a body search was required).*

**Source:** Henning, William Waller. Editor. *The Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1969. Reprinted in DuBois and Dumenil, 58-60.

### Michael Baisey's Wife (1654)

Richard Manship Sworne saith that the wife of Peter Godson related . . . that Michael Baiseys wifes eldest Son was not the Son of Anthony Rawlins her former husband, but She knw one at Maryland that was the father of him, but Named not the man, and that the Said Michael Baisey's wife was a whore and a Strumpett up and Down the Countrey, and Said that Thomas Ward of Kent tould her Soe.

Elizabeth Manship Sworne Saith the Same.

Margaret Herring Sworne Saith that the wife of Peter Godson affirmed that Anthony Rawlins Son was not Son but the Son of another man at Maryland . . .

Whereas Peter Godsons wife hath Slandered the wife of Michael Baisey & Saying She was a whore & a Strumpet up and Down the Country, It is ordered that the Said Godson's wife Shall be Committed into the Sheriffs hand untill She Shall find Security for the behaviour which the plft [plaintiff] is Satisfied with as he hath declared in Court . . .

Whereas Mrs. Godson was bound in a bond of Good behaviour from the 21st of October till the 5th of December towards the wife of Michael Baisey, and none appearing to renew the Said Bond, It is ordered that she be remitted from Bond of Good behaviour.

#### **Richard Manship's Wife (1654)**

Bartho: Herringe aged forty yeares or thereabouts Sworne Saith, That Peter Godson and Richard Manship meeting in your Pettrs plantation, Richard Manship asked the Said Peter Godson whether he would prove his wife a Witch, Peter Godson replied take notice what I Say, I came to your house where your wife layd two Straws and the woman in a Jestng way Said they Say I am a witch, if I am a witch they Say I have not power to Skip over these two Strawes and bid the Said Peter Godson to Skip over them and about a day after the Said Godson Said he was Lame, there-upon would Maintaine his wife to be a witch

Bartho: Herringe . . .

John Killy aged twenty five yeares or there abouts Sworne Sayth. That at the house of Phillip Hide, Richard Manship Said to Peter Godson you Said you would prove my wife a Witch, Peter Godson answered Gentlemen take Notice what I Say I will prove her a witch beare Witness you that Stand by.

John Killy

Magaret Herringe aged twenty three or thereabouts Sworne Saith, That Rich: Manship asked Peter Godson if he would prove his wife a witch, and Peter desired them that were present to take Notice what he Said your wife tooke four Strawes and Said in the Name of Jesus Come over these Strawes, and upon this your wife is a witch and I will prove her one.

Whereas Peter Godson and his wife had defamed Richard Manship's wife in Saying She was a witch and Uttered other Slanderosus Speeches agst her, which was Composed and Determined by the plft and defendant before mr Richard Preston, Soe as Peter Godson Should pay Charges of Warrants and Subpeonas in

these Actions which Richard Manship desired may be Manifested in Court that the Said Peter Godson & his wife have acknowledged themselves Sorry for their Speeches and pay Charges.

#### **Judith Catchpole (1656)**

At a Generall Provinciall Court Held at

Putuxent Septemer 22th

Present Capt William ffuller, mr John Pott Present

mr Richard Preston: mr Michael Brooke

mr Edward Lloyd

Whereas Judith Catchpole being brought before the Court upon Suspicion of Murdering a Child which She is accused to have brought forth, and denying the fact or that She ever had Child the Court hath ordered that a jury of able women be Impannelled and to give in their Verdict to the best of their judgment whether She the Said Judith hath ever had a Child

Or not . . .

The Names of the Jury of women Impannelled to Search the body of Judith Catchpole . . .

Rose Smith	mrs Cannady
mrs Belcher	mrs Bussey
mrs Chaplin	mrs Brooke
mrs Brooke	Elizabeth Claxton
mrs Battin	Elizabeth Potter
	Dorothy Day

We the Jury of Women before named having according to our Charge and oath Searched the body of Judith Catchpole doe give in our Verdict according to our best judgment that the Said Judith Catchpole hath not had any Child within the time Charged.

Whereas Judith Catchpole Servant to William Dorrington of this Province of Maryland Was apprehended and brought before this Court upon Suspicion of Murthering a Chile in her Voyage at Sea bound for this Province in the Ship Mary and ffrancis who Set forth of England upon her intended Voyage in or about october Last 1655 and arrived in this Province in or about January following, and her accuser being deceased and no murther appearing upon her Examination denying the fact; was Ordered that her

body Should be Searcht by a Jury of able women, which being done the said Jury returning their Verdict to this Court that they found that the Said Judith had not any Child within the time Chargd And also it appearing to this Court by Severall Testimonies that the party accusing was not in Sound Mind, whereby it is Conceived the Said Judith Catchpole is not Iuitable, The Court doth therefore order that upon the reasons aforesaid, the She the Said Judith Catchpole be acquitted of that Charge unless further Evidence appeare.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What was Mrs. Godson's punishment for slandering Mrs. Baisey? How did this differ from the Peter Godson's punishment for slandering Mrs. Manship?
2. What evidence did Peter Godson have for accusing Mrs. Manship of being a witch? Did the witnesses corroborate his story?
3. What do these documents tell you about how privacy was perceived both in everyday life and in colonial courts?

## 2-10 "The Trappan'd Maiden: or, The Distressed Damsel."

*Many colonists came to America as indentured servants, working from three to seven years to pay for their passage. By 1625, forty percent of the population of Virginia (excluding Native Americans) was indentured servants. Prior to the Revolutionary War it is estimated nearly half of the white population of Philadelphia had at one time in their lives been bonded servants. After the Revolutionary War fewer people came as indentured servants and the practice died out by 1800.*

**Source:** John Ashton, *Eighteenth Century Waifs*, London: Hurst and Blackett, Publishers, 1887. pp 117-120.

Five years served I, under Master Guy,  
In the land of Virginny-o  
Which made me for to know sorrow, grief and woe,  
When that I was weary, weary, weary-o.

When my dame says go, then I must do so,  
In the land of Virginny-o,

When she sits at meat, then I have none to eat,  
When that I was weary, weary, weary-o.

As soon as it is day, to work I must away,  
In the land of Virginny-o  
Then my dame she knocks, with her tinder box,  
When that I was weary, weary, weary-o.

I have played my part, both at plow and cart,  
In the land of Virginny-o  
Billets from the wood upon my back they load,  
When that I was weary, weary, weary-o.

A thousand woes beside, that I do here abide,  
In the land of Virginny-o  
In misery I spend my time that hath no end,  
When that I was weary, weary, weary-o.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How does the singer view her life as an indentured servant?
2. Why would anyone voluntarily take up such a life?

## 2-11 The Confession of Margaret Jacobs (1692)

*The following confession of Margaret Jacobs, thought it has for its background the Salem Witch Trials, is not one admitting to witchcraft, but recanting an accusation made by Jacobs earlier that year against her grandfather and another man, for which the two latter were hung. Jacobs also wrote a letter from prison to her father, hoping for "joyful and happy meeting in heaven".*

**Source:** George Lincoln Burr, ed., *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648-1706*, New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1914. pp 364-365.

"The humble declaration of Margaret Jacobs unto the honoured court now sitting at Salem, sheweth

"That whereas your poor and humble declarant being closely confined here in Salem jail for the crime of witchcraft, which crime, thanks be to the Lord, I am altogether ignorant of, as will appear at the great day of judgment. May it please the honored court, I was cried

out upon by some of the possessed persons, as afflicting of them; whereupon I was brought to my examination, which persons at the sight of me fell down, which did very much startle and affright me. The Lord above knows I knew nothing, in the least measure, how or who afflicted them; they told me, without doubt I did, or else they would not fall down at me; they told me if I would not confess, I should be put down into the dungeon and would be hanged, but if I would confess I should have my life; the which did so affright me, with my own vile wicked heart, to save my life made me make the confession I did, which confession, may it please the honoured court, is altogether false and untrue. The very first night after I had made my confession, I was in such horror of conscience that I could not sleep, for fear the Devil should carry me away for telling such horrid lies. I was, may it please the honoured court, sworn to my confession, as I understand since, but then, at that time, was ignorant of it, not knowing what an oath did mean. The Lord, I hope, in whom I trust, out of the abundance of his mercy, will forgive me my false forswearing myself. What I said was altogether false, against my grandfather, and Mr. Burroughs, which I did to save my life and to have my liberty; but the Lord, charging it to my conscience, made me in so much horror, that I could not contain myself before I had denied my confession, which I did, though I saw nothing but death before me, choosing rather death with a quiet conscience, than to live in such horror, which I could not suffer. Whereupon my

denying my confession, I was committed to close prison, where I have enjoyed more felicity in spirit a thousand times than I did before in my enlargement.

“And now, may it please your honours, your poor and humble declarant having, in part, given your honours a description of my condition, do leave it to your honours pious and judicious discretion to take pity and compassion on my young and tender years; to act and do with me as the Lord above and your honours shall see good, having no friend but the Lord to plead my cause for me; not being guilty in the least measure of the crime of witchcraft, nor any other sin that deserves death from man; and your poor and humble declarant shall forever pray, as she is bound in duty, for your honours’ happiness in this life, and eternal felicity in the world to come. So prays your honours declarant.

“Margaret Jacobs”

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jacobs perjure herself and condemn her grandfather and Burroughs? Why does she now recant?
2. Why does Jacobs say she has “enjoyed more felicity in spirit” while in prison?
3. What can you learn from this confession of the nature of the period, and the fervor of the persecutions?



## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY REVOLUTIONS, 1700–1800

### 3-1 Slave Women Making Money at the Market

*Slaves' monetary value did not always come in the form of labor performed directly for the slave-owner. Sometimes slaves were hired out to work for employers who did not own them, but rather paid a pre-determined fee to the slave-owner; in other situations, slaves were hired out and the employer paid a wage directly to the slave, who in turn paid some portion of these earnings to the owner. Yet another variation (though one that skirted the law in many slave-holding jurisdictions) permitted slaves to sell goods or produce on the open market, on the condition that the slave-owner be paid a portion of the proceeds. This is what is described here, by one observer of commerce in Charleston, South Carolina.*

**Source:** Excerpted in Olwell, Robert. " 'Loose, Idle, and Disorderly:' Slave Women in the Eighteenth-Century Charleston Marketplace." In David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery*

*in the Americas*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. p. 101.

Almost every day ... in and near the Lower Market, ... poultry, fruit, eggs, c. are brought thither from the country for sale. Near that market, constantly resort a great number of loose, idle and disorderly negro women, who are seated there from morn till night, and buy and sell on their own accounts, what they please, in order to pay their wages, and get so much more for themselves as they can; for their owners care little, how their slaves get the money, so they are paid.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Does the author provide any support for the characterization of the market-women as "loose, idle and disorderly"?
2. Of whom is the author more critical, the slave women or the slave-owners?

### 3-2 Abigail and John Adams on the Rights of Women

*Abigail and John Adams had an extraordinary personal, political, and intellectual partnership. In these letters, exchanged during the months leading up to the Declaration of Independence, the two freely exchange views on women's rights, among other topics. In a subsequent letter to John Sullivan, another leading figure in the American Revolution, John puts forward a new line of reasoning.*

**Abigail Adams to John Adams, Braintree,  
31 March 1776**

I long to hear that you have declared an independancy-and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire

you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.

That your Sex are Naturally Tyrannical is a Truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute, but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearing one of Friend. Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity. Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex. Regard us then as Beings placed by

providence under your protection and in imitation of the Supreme Being make use of that power only for our happiness.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia,  
14 April 1776**

As to Declarations of Independency, be patient. Read our Privateering Laws, and our Commercial Laws. What signifies a Word.

As to your extraordinary Code of Laws, I cannot but laugh. We have been told that our Struggle has loosened the bands of Government every where. That Children and Apprentices were disobedient—that schools and Colleges were grown turbulent—that Indians slighted their Guardians and Negroes grew insolent to their Masters. But your Letter was the first Intimation that another Tribe more numerous and powerful than all the rest were grown discontented.—This is rather too coarse a Compliment but you are so saucy, I wont blot it out.

Depend upon it, We know better than to repeal our Masculine systems. Altho they are in full Force, you know they are little more than Theory. We dare not exert our Power in its full Latitude. We are obliged to go fair, and softly, and in Practice you know We are the subjects. We have only the Name of Masters, and rather than give up this, which would completely subject Us to the Despotism of the Peticcoat, I hope General Washington, and all our brave Heroes would fight. I am sure every good Politician would plot, as long as he would against Despotism, Empire, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Oligarchy, or Ochlocracy.—A fine Story indeed. I begin to think the Ministry as deep as they are wicked. After stirring up Tories, Landjobbers, Trimmers, Bigots, Canadians, Indians, Negrows, Hanoverians, Hessians, Russians, Irish Roman Catholicks, Scotch Renegadoes, at last they have stimulated the [illegible in original] to demand new Priviledges and threaten to rebell.

**John Adams to John Sullivan, Philadelphia,  
26 May 1776**

It is certain in Theory, that the only moral Foundation of Government is the Consent of the People. But to what an Extent Shall We carry this Principle? Shall We Say, that every Individual of the Community, old and young, male and female, as well as rich and poor, must consent, expressly to every Act of Legislation? No, you will Say. This is impossible. How then does the Right arise in the Majority to govern the Minority, against their Will? Whence arises the

Right of the Men to govern Women, without their Consent? Whence the Right of the old to bind the Young, without theirs.

But let us first Suppose, that the whole Community of every Age, Rank, Sex, and Condition, has a Right to vote. This Community, is assembled—a Motion is made and carried by a Majority of one Voice. The Minority will not agree to this. Whence arises the Right of the Majority to govern, and the Obligation of the Minority to obey? from Necessity, you will Say, because there can be no other Rule, But why exclude Women? You will Say, because their Delicacy renders them unfit for Practice and Experience, in the great Business of Life, and the hardy Enterprizes of War, as well as the arduous Cares of State. Besides, their attention is So much engaged with the necessary Nurture of their Children, that Nature has made them fittest for domestic Cares. And Children have not Judgment or Will of their own. True. But will not these Reasons apply to others? Is it not equally true, that Men in general in every Society, who are wholly destitute of Property, and also too little acquainted with public Affairs to form a Right Judgment, and too dependent upon other Men to have a Will of their own? If this is a Fact, if you give to every Man, who has no Property, a Vote, will you not make a fine encouraging Provision for Corruption by your fundamental Law? Such is the Frailty of the human Heart, that very few Men, who have no Property, have any Judgment of their own. They talk and vote as they are directed by Some Man of Property, who has attached their Minds to his Interest.

Upon my Word, sir, I have long thought an Army, a Piece of Clock Work and to be governed only by Principles and Maxims, as fixed as any in Mechanics, and by all that I have read in the History of Mankind, and in Authors, who have Speculated upon Society and Government, I am much inclined to think, a Government must manage a Society in the Same manner; and that this is Machinery too.

Harrington has Shewn that Power always follows property. This I believe to be as infallible a Maxim, in Politics, as, that Action and Reaction are equal, as in Mechanics. Nay I believe We may advance one Step farther and affirm that the Ballance of Power in a Society, accompanies the Ballance of Property in Land. The only possible Way then of preserving the Ballance of Power on the side of equal Liberty and public Virtue, is to make the Acquisition of Land easy to every Member of Society: to make a Division of the Land into Small Quantities, So that the Multitude may be possessed of landed Estates. If the Multitude is possessed of the Ballance of real Estate, the Multitude will have the Ballance of Power, and in that Case the

Multitude will take Care of the Liberty, Virtue, and Interest of the Multitude in all Acts of Government.

I believe these Principles have been felt, if not understood in the Massachusetts Bay, from the Beginning; And therefore I Should think that Wisdom and Policy would dictate in these Times, to be very cautious of making Alterations. Our people have never been very rigid in Scrutinizing into the Qualifications of Voters, and I presume they will not now begin to be so. But I would not advise them to make any alteration in the Laws, at present, respecting the Qualifications of Voters.

Your Idea, that those Laws, which affect the Lives and personal Liberty of all, or which inflict corporal Punishment, affect those, who are not qualified to vote, as well as those who are, is just. But, So they do Women, as well as Men, Children as well as Adults. What Reason Should there be, for excluding a Man of Twenty years, Eleven Months and twenty-seven days old, from a Vote when you admit one, who is twenty one? The Reason is, you must fix Some Period in Life, when the Understanding and Will of Men in general is fit to be trusted by the Public. Will not the Same Reason justify the State in fixing upon Some certain Quantity of Property, as a Qualification.

The Same Reasoning, which will induce you to admit all Men, who have no Property, to vote, with those who have, for those Laws, which affect the Person will prove that you ought to admit Women and Children: for generally Speaking, Women and Children, have as good Judgment, and as independent Minds as those Men who are wholly destitute of Property: these last being to all Intents and Purposes as much dependent upon others, who will please to feed, cloath, and employ them, as Women are upon their Husbands, or Children on their Parents.

As to your Idea, or proportioning the Votes of Men in Money Matters, to the Property they hold, it is utterly impracticable. There is no possible Way of Ascertaining, at any one Time, how much every Man in a Community, is worth; and if there was, So fluctuating is Trade and Property, that this State of it, would change in half an Hour. The Property of the whole Community, is Shifting every Hour, and no Record can be kept of the Changes.

Society can be governed only by general Rules. Government cannot accommodate itself to every particular Case, as it happens, nor to the Circumstances of particular Persons. It must establish general, comprehensive Regulations for Cases and Persons. The only Question is, which general Rule, will accommodate most Cases and most Persons.

Depend upon it, sir, it is dangerous to open So fruitfull a Source of Controversy and Altercation, as would be opened by attempting to alter the Qualifications of Voters. There will be no End of it. New Claims will arise. Women will demand a Vote. Lads from 12 to 21 will think their Rights not enough attended to, and every Man, who has not a Farthing, will demand an equal Voice with any other in all Acts of State. It tends to confound and destroy all Distinctions, and prostrate all Ranks, to one common Levell. I am &c.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why does John Adams want to exclude those without property – women and men – from voting?
2. What does Abigail mean when she enjoins John to “Remember the Ladies”?
3. What evidence is there that Abigail influenced John’s thinking or actions?

### 3-3 A Diary: A Woman Alone in Wartime Philadelphia

*Elizabeth Sandwith Drinker was a Quaker who lived with her family in Philadelphia. In August 1777, her husband was part of a group of men banished to Virginia because they were accused of assisting the British cause. Drinker stayed behind. The British Army, meanwhile, occupied the city, and sought “quartering” (lodging privileges) with local families; the Drinker home eventually housed British Major General John Crammond, whose initial entreaties are described here.*

**Source:** Drinker, Elizabeth Sandwith. Extracts from the Journal of Elizabeth Drinker, from 1759 to 1807, A.D., Henry Biddle, ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1889. pp. 73-75.

*Dec. 15.* Last night about 11 o'clock, as we were going to Bed, we saw 2 soldiers in ye alley, standing by ye Fence. We went down stairs again, and into ye yard. We asked Harry aloud if John and Tom were yet in Bed? Harry answered, Yes. Sister ordered him to untie ye Dog and then come in. While we were contriving in this manner down stairs, Jenny saw them from my room window, move off with a large Bundle which she

took to be a Bed. After we had been in Bed about an hour we heard a great noise in ye alley. Jenny, Sister and ye children ran to ye window, and saw ye Baker next door running up ye alley in his shirt, with only a little red Jacket on; ye rest of his Family were with him. We did not discover ye cause of ye uproar until this morning, when we found the Baker had been robbed of some of his wife's clothes—which we suppose was ye bundle ye Fellows went off with some time before.

Peggy York called this morning with a letter which she had received from her Husband from London, acknowledging ye kindness he had received from Pigou and Booth, in consequence of a letter from James & Drinker, for which he returns thanks. She had on the highest and most ridiculous Headdress that I have yet seen.

Polly Reynolds, formerly Ritche, with 2 other women called before dinner. She is here to solicit ye General on account of her Husband, who has been a prisoner in ye Jerseys ever since last Christmas.

Henry Drinker Jr. tells us this evening that W. D. Smith has been called before ye General to day.

Friends have had several meetings lately, and have agreed to send orders to sundry merchants in London for a cargo of provisions and coal, as from ye present prospect, ye inhabitants will stand in need of such a supply. Ye officers and soldiers are quartering themselves upon ye Families generally. One with his Family is to be fixt at J. Howells. I am in daily expectation of their calling upon us. They were much frightened last night at Isaac Catheralls by a soldier who came into ye House, drew his Bayonet on Isaac, and behaved very disorderly. Anthony Morris, son of Samuel is said to be dangerously wounded.

*Dec. 18.* Ezekiel Edwards is returned from Winchester. I have not seen him, but am told that he brings very disagreeable intelligence; that he has heard it hinted that there is a design of sending our dear Friends to Staunton, which would be sorrowful indeed should it so happen, but it may not.

An officer who calls himself Major Crammond, called this afternoon to look for Quarters for some officer of distinction. I plead off; he would have persuaded me that it was a necessary protection at these times, to have one in ye House. He said that I must consider of it, and that he would call in a day or two. I desired to be excused, and after some more talk we parted. He behaved with much politeness, which has not been ye case at many other places. They have been very rude

and impudent at some Houses.

I wish I may come off so; but at the same time fear we must have some one with us, as it appears likely to be a general thing. This has been a trying day to my spirit.

E. Edwards had a number of letters stolen from him, which were for us poor destitutes. I have just finished a letter to my dearest. 'Tis now past 12 o'clock, and Watch has put me in a flutter by his violent barking, as if some one was in ye alley, which I believe was ye case. Hail since night.

*Dec. 19.* Sister went out to inquire how Polly Pleasants had managed ye matter in respect to taking in officers, *as* they have had their doors marked. They had been to Jos. Galloway; but E. Story seems likely to settle ye matter with ye quarter master General—one Roberson. While sister was out, Major Crammond came to know if I had consulted any of my friends upon ye matter. I told him that my sister was out on that business; that I expected that we, who were at present lone women, would be excused. He said he feared not, for tho' I might put him off, (as it was for himself he applied); yet, as a great number of foreign Troops were to be quartered in this neighborhood, he believed they might be troublesome. We had a good deal of talk about the mal-behavior of British officers, which he, by no means, justified. I told him how I had been frightened by ye officer, that thief-like stole my servant Girl over ye Fence, and of many other particulars of their bad conduct that had come to my knowledge. He said, that yesterday I had told him what sort of a man would suit in my Family; if I was obliged to take any, he was conscious that some of those qualities were his, (which were early hours, and little company); that there were very few of ye officers he could recommend; that Mr Galloway knew him very well; and that he would call again to morrow to know my mind further. So he went off. I am straitened how to act, and yet determined. I may be troubled with others much worse, for this man appears to be much of a Gentleman—but while I can keep clear of them, I intend so to do. They have marked ye doors of Houses against their consent, and some of ye inhabitants have looked out for officers of reputation, (if any such there be), to come into their Families, by way of protection, and to keep off others.

E. Story called this evening; he says he thinks he shall be able to get us, whose Husbands are gone from us, clear of ye military gentlemen. He says they are much chagrined at the difficulty they find in getting

quarters, and ye cool reception they have met with, or something to that effect; that several young Noblemen are at this time obliged to sleep at Taverns, on board Ship, or in ye Redoubts, for which I think they may, in great measure, thank themselves; tho', at the same time, it appears to me there was, perhaps too much backwardness shown towards them in ye beginning. We are told this evening that Owen Jones's Family has been very ill-used indeed, by an officer who wanted to quarter himself, with many others, upon them. He drew his sword ; used very abusive language, and had ye Front door split in pieces. Mary Eddy has some with her, who, they say, will not suffer her to use her own Front door, but oblige her and her Family to go up and down the alley. Molly Foulke has been affronted, and

so have many others. We have come off, as yet, wonderfully well. My resolution and fortitude have failed me much of late; my dear Henry's absence, and ye renewed fears on his account, and thoughts of our dear children, and my health but very middling—all together—it seems, at times, hard to bear up against. . .

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Drinker loathe to house Crammond? What advantages might she expect from quartering him, or some other officer?
2. What seems to bother Drinker most about her situation? Does it seem these issues would have been mitigated if she had been a man instead?

### 3-4 New Jersey Grants Voting Rights to All Property Holders (1776)

*The American Revolutionary War was already underway, and the Declaration of Independence was about to be signed, when leaders in New Jersey quickly drafted and ratified a state constitution. The most notable feature of this document is the relative ease of establishing voting rights.*

**Source:** [http://www.njstatelib.org/Research\\_Guides/Historical\\_Documents/nj/NJDOC10A.html](http://www.njstatelib.org/Research_Guides/Historical_Documents/nj/NJDOC10A.html)

#### The State of New Jersey Constitution of 1776

**WHEREAS** all the constitutional authority ever possessed by the kings of Great Britain over these colonies, || or their other dominions, was, by compact, derived from the people, and held of them, for the common interest of the whole society; allegiance and protection are, in the nature of things, reciprocal ties, each equally depending upon the other, and liable to be dissolved by the others being refused or withdrawn. And whereas George the Third, king of Great Britain, has refused protection to the good people of these colonies; and, by assenting to sundry acts of the British parliament, attempted to subject them to the absolute dominion of that body; and has also made war upon them, in the most cruel and unnatural manner, for no other cause, than asserting their just rights — all civil authority under him is necessarily at an end, and a dissolution of government in each colony has consequently taken place.

*And whereas*, in the present deplorable situation of these colonies, exposed to the fury of a cruel and relentless enemy, some form of government is absolutely necessary, not only for the preservation of good order, but also the more effectually to unite the people, and enable them to exert their whole force in their own necessary defence: and as the honorable the continental congress, the supreme council of the American colonies, has advised such of the colonies as have not yet gone into measures, to adopt for themselves, respectively, such government as shall best conduce to their own happiness and safety, and the well-being of America in general: — We, the representatives of the colony of New Jersey, having been elected by all the counties, in the freest manner, and in congress assembled, have, after mature deliberations, agreed upon a set of charter rights and the form of a Constitution, in manner following, viz.

I. That the government of this Province shall be vested in a Governor, Legislative Council, and General Assembly.

II. That the Legislative Council, and General Assembly, shall be chosen, for the first time, on the second Tuesday in August next; the members whereof shall be the same in number and qualifications as are herein after mentioned; and shall be and remain vested with all the powers and authority to be held by any future Legislative Council and Assembly of this Colony, until the second Tuesday in October, which shall be in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven.

III. That on the second Tuesday in October yearly, and every year forever (with the privilege of adjourning from day to day as occasion may require) the counties

shall severally choose one person, to be a member of the Legislative Council of this Colony, who shall be, and have been, for one whole year next before the election, an inhabitant and freeholder in the county in which he is chosen, and worth at least one thousand pounds proclamation money, of real and personal estate, within the same county; that, at the same time, each county shall also choose three members of Assembly; provided that no person shall be entitled to a seat in the said Assembly unless he be, and have been, for one whole year next before the election, an inhabitant of the county he is to represent, and worth five hundred pounds proclamation money, in real and personal estate, in the same county: that on the second Tuesday next after the day of election, the Council and Assembly shall separately meet; and that the consent of both Houses shall be necessary to every law; provided, that seven shall be a quorum of the Council, for doing business, and that no law shall pass, unless there be a majority of all the Representatives of each body personally present, and agreeing thereto. Provided always, that if a majority of the representatives of this Province, in Council and General Assembly convened, shall, at any time or times hereafter, judge it equitable and proper, to add to or diminish the number or proportion of the members of Assembly for any county or counties in this Colony, then, and in such case, the same may, on the principles of more equal representation, be lawfully done; anything in this Charter to the contrary notwithstanding: so that the whole number of Representatives in Assembly shall not, at any time, be less than thirty-nine.

### 3-5 Sarah Osborn's Narrative (1837)

*While working as a servant to a blacksmith, Sarah met and married Revolutionary War veteran Aaron Osborn. When Aaron re-enlisted in the U.S. Army, Sarah accompanied him, as described here. This document is the record of a deposition filed by Sarah Osborne in 1837, when she was 81 years old, in support of her application for a pension as the widow of a Revolutionary War veteran.*

**Source:** Sarah Osborn, Narrative, 1837, in John Dann, ed., *The Revolution Remembered*, 1980, pp. 241-246, The University of Chicago Press.

That she was married to Aaron Osborn, who was a soldier during the Revolutionary War. That her first acquaintance with said Osborn commenced in Albany,

IV. That all inhabitants of this Colony, of full age, who are worth fifty pounds proclamation money, clear estate in the same, and have resided within the county in which they claim a vote for twelve months immediately preceding the election, shall be entitled to vote for Representatives in Council and Assembly; and also for all other public officers, that shall be elected by the people of the county at large.

...

XXII. That the common law of England, as well as so much of the statute law, as have been heretofore practised in this Colony, shall still remain in force, until they shall be altered by a future law of the Legislature; such parts only excepted, as are repugnant to the rights and privileges contained in this Charter; and that the inestimable right of trial by jury shall remain confirmed as a part of the law of this Colony, without repeal, forever.

...

In PROVINCIAL CONGRESS, New Jersey, Burlington, July 2, 1776.

By order of Congress.

**SAMUEL TUCKER**, Pres.

**William Paterson**, Secretary.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What qualifications does this constitution establish for voting in New Jersey?
2. What conditions might account for the relative liberalism of this constitution?

in the state of New York, during the hard winter of 1780. That deponent then resided at the house of one John Willis, a blacksmith in said city. That said Osborn came down there from Fort Stanwix and went to work at the business of blacksmithing for said Willis and continued working at intervals for a period of perhaps two months. Said Osborn then informed deponent that he had first enlisted at Goshen in Orange County, New York. That he had been in the service for three years, deponent thinks, about one year of that time at Fort Stanwix, and that his time was out. And, under an assurance that he would go to Goshen with her, she married him at the house of said Willis during the time he was there as above mentioned, to wit, in January 1780 ....

That after deponent had married said Osborn, he informed her that he was returned during the war, and that he desired deponent to go with him. Deponent declined until she was informed by Captain Gregg that

her husband should be put on the commissary guard, and that she should have the means of conveyance either in a wagon or on horseback. That deponent then in the same winter season in sleighs accompanied her husband and the forces under command of Captain Gregg on the east side of the Hudson river to Fishkill, then crossed the river and went down to West Point ....

Deponent further says that she and her husband remained at West Point till the departure of the army for the South, a term of perhaps one year and a half, but she cannot be positive as to the length of time. While at West Point, deponent lived at Lieutenant Foot's, who kept a boardinghouse. Deponent was employed in washing and sewing for the soldiers. Her said husband was employed about the camp ....

When the army were about to leave West Point and go south, they crossed over the river to Robinson's Farms and remained there for a length of time to induce the belief, as deponent understood, that they were going to take up quarters there, whereas they recrossed the river in the nighttime into the Jerseys and traveled all night in a direct course for Philadelphia. Deponent was part of the time on horseback and part of the time in a wagon. Deponent's said husband was still serving as one of the commissary's guard ....

They continued their march to Philadelphia, deponent on horseback through the streets, and arrived at a place towards the Schuylkill where the British had burnt some houses, where they encamped for the afternoon and night. Being out of bread, deponent was employed in baking the afternoon and evening. Deponent recollects no females but Sergeant Lamberson's and Lieutenant Forman's wives and a colored woman by the name of Letta. The Quaker ladies who came round urged deponent to stay, but her husband said, "No, he could not leave her behind." Accordingly, next day they continued their march from day to day till they arrived at Baltimore, where deponent and her said husband and the forces under command of General Clinton, Captain Gregg, and several other officers, all of whom she does not recollect, embarked on board a vessel and sailed down the Chesapeake. There were several vessels along, and deponent was in the foremost. ... They continued sail until they had got up the St. James River as far as the tide would carry them, about twelve miles from the mouth, and then landed, and the tide being spent, they had a fine time catching sea lobsters, which they ate.

They, however, marched immediately for a place called Williamsburg, as she thinks, deponent alternately on horseback and on foot. There arrived, they remained two days till the army all came in by land and

then marched for Yorktown, or Little Yark as it was then called. The York troops were posted at the right, the Connecticut troops next, and the French to the left. In about one day or less than a day, they reached the place of encampment about one mile from Yorktown. Deponent was on foot and the other females above named and her said husband still on the commissary's guard. Deponent's attention was arrested by the appearance of a large plain between them and Yorktown and an entrenchment thrown up. She also saw a number of dead Negroes lying round their encampment, whom she understood the British had driven out of the town and left to starve, or were first starved and then thrown out. Deponent took her stand just back of the American tents, say about a mile from the town, and busied herself washing, mending, and cooking for the soldiers, in which she was assisted by the other females; some men washed their own clothing. She heard the roar of the artillery for a number of days, and the last night the Americans threw up entrenchments, it was a misty, foggy night, rather wet but not rainy. Every soldier threw up for himself, as she understood, and she afterwards saw and went into the entrenchments. Deponent's said husband was there throwing up entrenchments, and deponent cooked and carried in beef, and bread, and coffee (in a gallon pot) to the soldiers in the entrenchment.

On one occasion when deponent was thus employed carrying in provisions, she met General Washington, who asked her if she "was not afraid of the cannonballs?"

She replied, "No, the bullets would not cheat the gallows," that "It would not do for the men to fight and starve too."

They dug entrenchments nearer and nearer to Yorktown every night or two till the last. While digging that, the enemy fired very heavy till about nine o' clock next morning, then stopped, and the drums from the enemy beat excessively ....

All at once the officers hurrahed and swung their hats, and deponent asked them, "What is the matter now?"

One of them replied, "Are not you soldier enough to know what it means?"

Deponent replied, "No."

They then replied, "The British have surrendered."

Deponent, having provisions ready, carried the same down to the entrenchments that morning, and four of the soldiers whom she was in the habit of cooking for ate their breakfasts.

Deponent stood on one side of the road and the American officers upon the other side when the British officers came out of the town and rode up to the American officers and delivered up [their swords, which the deponent] thinks were returned again, and the British officers rode right on before the army, who marched out beating and playing a melancholy tune, their drums covered with black handkerchiefs and their fifes with black ribbands tied around them, into an old field and there grounded their arms and then returned into town again to await their destiny ....

On going into town, she noticed two dead Negroes lying by the market house.

She had the curiosity to go into a large building that stood nearby, and there she noticed the cupboards smashed to pieces and china dishes and other ware

strewn around upon the floor, and among the rest a pewter cover to a hot basin that had a handle on it. She picked it up, supposing it to belong to the British, but the governor came in and claimed it as his, but said he would have the name of giving it away as it was the last one of twelve that he could see, and accordingly presented it to deponent, and she afterwards brought it home with her to Orange County and sold it for old pewter, which she has a hundred times regretted.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What tasks did Osborne perform, for her husband and for others?
2. Why does she include a description of her brief conversation with George Washington in this record?

### 3-6 Letters from Eliza Lucas Pinckney

*Eliza Lucas was born into a prominent family in Antigua in 1722. She was industrious and astute; while she was still a teenager, she took over the management of several plantations owned by her family near Charleston, South Carolina. Her greatest claim to fame lies in her contributions to the indigo industry: she experimented with techniques to cultivate and harvest the indigo plant (used in the creation of blue dyes for textiles) and developed indigo as a tremendously profitable cash crop for South Carolina. She married Charles Pinckney, and they had two sons who became leaders during the American Revolution.*

**Source:** Elizabeth Deering Hanscom, ed., *The Friendly Craft: A Collection of American Letters*, New York: Macmillan, 1910. pp. 3-6.

DEAR MADAM, — I flatter myself it will be a satisfaction to you to hear I like this part of the world as my lott has fallen here, which I really do. I prefer England to it 'tis true, but think Carolina greatly preferable to the West Indies, and was my Papa here I should be very happy. We have a very good acquaintance from whom we have received much friendship and Civility. Charles Town the principal one in this province is a polite agreeable place, the people live very Gentile and very much in the English taste. The Country is in general fertile and abounds with Venson and with fowl. The Venson is much higher flavoured than in England but 'tis seldom fatt.

My Papa and Mama's great indulgence to mee leaves it to mee to chuse our place of residence either in town or country, but I think it more prudent as well as most agreeable to my Mama and selfe to be in the Country during my father's absence. Wee are 17 mile by land, and 6 by water from Charles Town where wee have about 6 agreeable families around us with whom wee live in great harmony. I have a little library well furnished (for my Papa has left mee most of his books) in which I spend part of my time. My Musick and the Garden which I am very fond of take up the rest that is not imployed in business, of work my father has left mee a pretty good share, and indeed 'twas unavoidable, as my Mama's bad state of health prevents her going thro' any fatigue.

I have the business of 3 plantations to transact, which requires much writing and more business and fatigue of other sorts than you can imagine, but least you should imagine it too burthensome to a girl at my early time of life, give mee leave to assure you I think myself happy that I can be useful to so good a father. By rising very early I find I can go through with much business, but least you should think I Shall be quite moaped with this way of life, I am to inform you there is two worthy ladies in Charles Town, Mrs Pinckney and Mrs Cleland who are partial enough to mee to wish to have mee with them, and insist upon my making their houses my home when in Town, and press mee to relax a little much oftener than 'tis in my power to accept of their obliging intreaties, but I am sometimes with one or the other for three weeks or a month at a time, and then enjoy all the pleasures Charles Town affords. But nothing gives mee more than subscribing myself



Dear Madam Your.  
 most affectionet and  
 most obliged humble Servant  
 Pray remember me in the best manner to my ELIZA  
 LUCAS worthy friend Mr. Boddicott.  
 To my good friend Mrs. Boddicott  
 May ye 2ord [probably 1740]

\*\*\*\*

WHY my dear Miss Bartlett, will you so often repeat your desire to know how I trifle away my time in our retirement in my father's absence: could it afford you advantage or pleasure I would not have hesitated, but as you can expect neither from it I would have been excused; however, to show you my readiness in obeying your commands, here it is.

In general then I rise at five o' Clock in the morning, read till seven — then take a walk in the garden or fields, see that the Servants are at their respective business, then to breakfast. The first hour after breakfast is spent in musick, the next is constantly employed in recolecting something I have learned, least for want of practice it should be quite lost, such as french and short hand.

After that, I devote the rest of the time till I dress for dinner, to our little polly, and two black girls who I teach to read, and if I have my papa's approbation (my mama's I have got) I intend for school mistress's for the rest of the Negroe children. Another scheme you see, but to proceed, the first hour after dinner, as the first after breakfast, at musick, the rest of the afternoon in needle work till candle light, and from that time to bed time read or write; 'tis the fashion here to carry our work abroad with us so that having company, without they are great strangers, is no interruption to your affair, but I have particular matters for particular days which is an interruption to mine. Mondays my musick Master is here. Tuesday my friend Mrs. Chardon (about 3 miles distant) and I are constantly engaged to each

other, she at our house one Tuesday I at hers the next, and this is one of the happiest days I spend at Wappoo. Thursday the whole day except what the necessary affairs of the family take up, is spent in writing, either on the business of the plantations or on letters to my friends. Every other Friday, if no company, we go a vizeting, so that I go abroad once a week and no often-er.

Now you may form some judgment of what time I can have to work my lappets. I own I never go to them with a quite easy conscience as I know my father has an aversion to my employing my time in that poreing work, but they are begun, and must be finished. I hate to undertake anything and not go thro' with it, but by way of relaxation from the other, I have begun a piece of work of a quicker sort, which requires neither eyes nor genius, at least not very good ones, would you ever guess it to be a shrimp nett ? for so it is.

O ! I had like to forgot the last thing I have done a great while. I have planted a large fig orchard, with design to dry them, and export them. I have reckoned my expence and the prophets to arise from those figgs, but was I to tell you how great an Estate I am to make this way, and how 'tis to be laid out, you would think me far gone in romance. Your good Uncle I know has long thought I have a fertile brain at scheming, I only confirm him in his oppinion; but I own I love the vegetable world extreamely. I think it an innocent and useful amusement, and pray tell him if he laughs much at my projects, I never intend to have any hand in a silver mine, and he will understand as well as you, what I mean !

Our best respects wait on him, and M<sup>rs</sup> Pinckney . . .

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What activities occupy Pinckney? How does she present her activities to her correspondents?

### 3-7 Sentiments of An American Woman (1780)

*Esther DeBerdt was born in Britain, and moved to the colonies after marrying Philadelphia businessman Joseph Reed. She became an American patriot, and organized the Philadelphia Ladies Association in the summer of 1780. This organization raised money that was used to provide clothing and supplies to American soldiers in the Revolutionary War.*

Source: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe.14600300>

ON the commencement of actual war, the Women of America manifested a firm resolution to contribute as much as could depend on them, to the deliverance of their country. Animated by the purest patriotism, they are sensible of sorrow at this day, in not offering more than barren wishes for the success of so glorious a Revolution. They aspire to render themselves more really useful; and this sentiment is universal from the north to the south of the Thirteen United States. Our ambition is kindled by the same of those heroines of antiquity, who have rendered their sex illustrious, and have proved to the universe, that, if the weakness of

our Constitution, if opinion and manners did not forbid us to march to glory by the same paths as the Men, we should at least equal, and sometimes surpass them in our love for the public good. I glory in all that which my sex has done great and commendable. I call to mind with enthusiasm and with admiration, all those acts of courage, of constancy and patriotism, which history has transmitted to us: The people favoured by Heaven, preserved from destruction by the virtues, the zeal and the resolution of Deborah, of Judith, of Esther! The fortitude of the mother of the Massachabees, in giving up her sons to die before her eyes: Rome saved from the fury of a victorious enemy by the efforts of Volumnia, and other Roman Ladies: So many famous sieges where the Women have been seen forgetting the weakness of their sex, building new walls, digging trenches with their feeble hands, furnishing arms to their defenders, they themselves darting the missile weapons on the enemy, resigning the ornaments of their apparel, and their fortune, to fill the public treasury, and to hasten the deliverance of their country; burying themselves under its ruins, throwing themselves into the flames rather than submit to the disgrace of humiliation before a proud enemy.

Born for liberty, disdaining to bear the irons of a tyrannic Government, we associate ourselves to the grandeur of those Sovereigns, cherished and revered, who have held with so much splendour the scepter of the greatest States, The Batildas, the Elizabeths, the Maries, the Catharines, who have extended the empire of liberty, and contented to reign by sweetness and justice, have broken the chains of slavery, forged by tyrants in the times of ignorance and barbarity. The Spanish Women, do they not make, at this moment, the most patriotic sacrifices, to encrease the means of victory in the hands of their Sovereign. He is a friend to the French Nation. They are our allies. We call to mind, doubly interested, that it was a French Maid who kindled up amongst her fellow-citizens, the flame of patriotism buried under long misfortunes: It was the Maid of Orleans who drove from the kingdom of France the ancestors of those same British, whose odious yoke we have just shaken off; and whom it is necessary that we drive from this Continent.

But I must limit myself to the recollection of this small number of achievements. Who knows if persons disposed to censure, and sometimes too severely with regard to us, may not disapprove our appearing acquainted even with the actions of which our sex boasts? We are at least certain, that he cannot be a good citizen who will not applaud our efforts for the relief of the armies which defend our lives, our possessions, our liberty? The situation of our soldiery has

been represented to me; the evils inseparable from war, and the firm and generous spirit which has enabled them to support these. But it has been said, that they may apprehend, that, in the course of a long war, the view of their distresses may be lost, and their services be forgotten. Forgotten! never; I can answer in the name of all my sex. Brave Americans, your disinterestedness, your courage, and your constancy will always be dear to America, as long as she shall preserve her virtue.

We know that at a distance from the theatre of war, if we enjoy any tranquility, it is the fruit of your watchings, your labours, your dangers. If I live happy in the midst of my family; if my husband cultivates his field, and reaps his harvest in peace; if, surrounded with my children, I myself nourish the youngest, and press it to my bosom, without being affraid of feeling myself separated from it, by a ferocious enemy; if the house in which we dwell; if our barns, our orchards are safe at the present time from the hands of those incendiaries, it is to you that we owe it. And shall we hesitate to evidence to you our gratitude? Shall we hesitate to wear a cloathing more simple; hair dressed less elegant, while at the price of this small privation, we shall deserve your benedictions. Who, amongst us, will not renounce with the highest pleasure, those vain ornaments, when she shall consider that the valiant defenders of America will be able to draw some advantage from the money which she may have laid out in these; that they will be better defended from the rigours of the seasons, that after their painful toils, they will receive some extraordinary and unexpected relief; that these presents will perhaps be valued by them at a greater price, when they will have it in their power to say: *This is the offering of the Ladies*. The time is arrived to display the same sentiments which animated us at the beginning of the Revolution, when we renounced the use of teas, however agreeable to our taste, rather than receive them from our persecutors; when we made it appear to them that we placed former necessities in the rank of superfluties, when our liberty was interested; when our republican and laborious hands spun the flax, prepared the linen intended for the use of our soldiers; when exiles and fugitives we supported with courage all the evils which are the concomitants of war. Let us not lose a moment; let us be engaged to offer the homage of our gratitude at the altar of military valour, and you, our brave deliverers, while mercenary slaves combat to cause you to share with them, the irons with which they are loaded, receive with a free hand our offering, the purest which can be presented to your virtue,

**By An AMERICAN WOMAN.**

**FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does Reed dwell on the achievements of "heroines of antiquity"? What types of women does she mention?
2. What does Reed see as the best role for women in

the American Revolution?

3. Do you see any evidence that Reed would prefer for women to take an even more active role in the American Revolution than that which she explicitly advocates here?

### 3-8 Revolutionary Broadside (1770)

*Economic factors played an important role in the American Revolution. Boycotts of British goods were an important early step in what became the movement for independence.*

Source: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbpe.0370020a>

WILLIAM JACKSON,  
An IMPORTER; at the  
BRAZEN HEAD,  
North Side of the TOWN-HOUSE,  
and Opposite the Town-Pump, in

Corn-hill, BOSTON

It is desired that the SONS and DAUGHTERS of LIBERTY, would not buy any one thing of him, for in so doing they will bring Disgrace upon *themselves*, and their *Posterity*, for *ever* and *ever*, AMEN.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. What does the wording of this broadside suggest about the importance of American women as consumers?
2. What assumptions does the author appear to make about women's political knowledge and convictions?

### 3-9 Elizabeth Sprigs, An Indentured Servant, Writes Her Father

*Indentured servitude, in which a poor English or European person pledged to work for a certain period for an American colonist in exchange for passage across the Atlantic, often resulted in exploitation of the servant. Such was apparently the case for Elizabeth Sprigs of Maryland.*

Source: Elizabeth Sprigs, "Letter to Mr. John Sprigs in White Cross Street near Cripple Gate, London, September 22, 1756," in Isabel Calder, ed., *Colonial Captivities, Marches, and Journeys* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1935), 151-52. Reprinted by permission of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Society of Colonial Dames of America.

Maryland, Sept'r 22'd 1756

Honored Father

My being for ever banished from your sight, will I hope pardon the Boldness I now take of troubling you with these, my long silence has been purely owing to my undutifullness to you, and well knowing I had offended in the highest Degree, put a tie to my tongue and pen, for fear I should be extinct from your good Graces and add a further Trouble to you, but too well knowing your care and tenderness for me so long as I retain'd my Duty to you, induced me once again to endeavor if possible, to kindle up that flame again. O Dear Father, believe what I am going to relate the words of truth and sincerity, and Balance my former

bad Conduct my sufferings here, and then I am sure you'll pity your Destress Daughter, What we unfortunate English People suffer here is beyond the probability of you in England to Conceive, let it suffice that I one of the unhappy Number, am toiling almost Day and Night, and very often in the Horses drudgery, with only this comfort that you Bitch you do not halfe enough, and then tied up and whipp'd to that Degree that you'd not serve an Animal, scarce any thing but Indian Corn and Salt to eat and that even begrudged nay many Negroes are better used, almost naked no shoes nor stockings to wear, and the comfort after slaving during Masters pleasure, what rest we can get is to rap ourselves up in a Blanket and ly upon the Ground, this is the deplorable Condition your poor Betty endures, and now I beg if you have any Bowels of Compassion left show it by sending me some Relief, Clothing is the principal thing wanting, which if you should condescend to, may easily send them to me by any of the ships bound to Baltimore Town Patapsco River Maryland, and give me leave to conclude in Duty to you and Uncles and Aunts, and Respect to all Friends

Honored Father  
Your undutifull and Disobedient Child  
Elizabeth Sprigs

**FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. Why does Sprigs describe herself as "undutifull and Disobedient"?
2. What forms of abuse does Sprig describe here? What is Sprig's reaction to her treatment?

### 3-10 Thomas Jefferson's Slaves Join the British (1781)

*Like most slave-holders, Thomas Jefferson kept good records of the whereabouts and health status of his slaves.*

**Source:** In *Major Problems in American Women's History*. 2nd edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 82-83.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. What does the record of many slaves joining the British suggest? What is suggested by the fact that some of them returned?
2. Among those who "joined the enemy," what approximately seems to be the proportion of men, women, and children?

DEATHS ETC.	
1781.	Hannibal. } Patty. } Sam. } Sally. } Nanny } Fanny } Prince } Nancy } } fled to the enemy & died.
Elkhill	{ Flora. (Black Sall's) } { Quomina (Black Sall's) } { Black Sall } { Jame. (Bl. Sall's) } Joe. (Sue's.) } } joined enemy & died.
Cumbl <sup>d</sup> .	Lucy } [erasure] } [erasure] } Sam. } } joined enemy.
Elk-hill	Jenny } } joined enemy.
Shadwell.	[erasure] } Harry }
Monticello.	Barnaby. run away. returned & died.
Elkhill.	York. } Isabel. } Jack. } Hana's child. } Phoebe's child } } caught small pox } from enemy & died.
[note Judy & Nat of Elkhill, Will & Robin of Shadwell joined the enemy, but came back again & lived. so did Isabel, Hannibal's daughter. aftwds given to A.S. Jefferson.]	
Elk-hill.	Branford } Sue. Sue's daur. } } caught the camp } fever from the } negroes who } returned: & died
Monticello	Old Jenny
Elk-hill	Phoebe (Sue's) } Nanny (Tom's) } } 1782

### 3-11 The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America

*This 1998 article in a scholarly journal was written by Rosemarie Zagarri, a history professor at George Mason University. Zagarri analyzes a variety of sources to trace emerging languages and understandings of “women’s rights” in the United States between 1792 and 1825.*

**Source:** The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America Author(s): Rosemarie Zagarri Source: The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, Vol. 55, No. 2, (Apr., 1998), pp. 203- 230 Published by: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2674382> Accessed: 12/08/2008 16:08

On July 4, 1804, a group of young men in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, offered a series of toasts to commemorate the nation’s Independence. Among their testimonials, they offered one to a cherished ideal: “[To] the rights of men, and the rights of women—. May the former never be infringed, nor the latter curtailed.”<sup>1</sup> This apparently simple statement provides a tantalizing clue to the complex relationship between politics and gender in the early national era. In one sense, it points to an important change in women’s status. The men acknowledged, even celebrated, an innovative and controversial idea: women along with men should be regarded as the bearers of rights. In the wake of the American Revolution and especially after the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), women gained a dignity and an esteem that had hitherto been denied them—though the exact nature of their rights was, as we shall see, a matter still to be determined.

The revelers, however, did something more. They made a pointed distinction between the rights of males and females, a distinction based on sex. The danger to men’s rights came from an infringement on their liberties, especially their political liberties, whereas the threat to women’s rights came from a curtailment of their privileges, which were nonpolitical in nature. Put

simply, men’s rights involved liberties that allowed choices, while women’s rights consisted of benefits that imposed duties. Rather than an abstract, universal proposition, rights became a gendered variable.

The differentiation of rights on the basis of sex reveals a crucial, but previously overlooked, bifurcation in the evolution of natural rights ideology in the early years of the republic. At the same time Americans were debating the “rights of man,” they conducted a parallel discussion about the “rights of woman.” The latter debate, however, did not occur within official political institutions, nor was it principally concerned with political rights. To reconstruct this debate, we must broaden our understanding of politics and employ sources not usually considered in the writing of traditional political history. Ladies’ magazines, literary periodicals, and prescriptive literature for women provide a glimpse into a world of ideas that had not yet surfaced in the formal political realm.<sup>2</sup>

. . . In the post-Revolutionary era, Americans attempted to reconcile two conflicting principles: the equality of the sexes and the subordination of women to men. In the process, they came to define the rights of women in contrast to the rights of men. Yet they did not attribute different rights to each sex arbitrarily, merely on the basis of whim or prejudice. Instead, they drew on two separate preexisting traditions of natural rights, one inherited from Locke and the other from Scottish Enlightenment. To men, writers applied a Lockean conception of rights that emphasized equality, individual autonomy, and the expansion of personal freedoms. By accentuating the importance of individual liberty, Lockean discourse endowed unfranchised white males with the moral authority to challenge their exclusion from the political process. To women, authors applied a Scottish theory that treated rights as benefits, conferred by God and expressed in the performance of duties to society. The stress on duty and obligation, rather than on liberty and choice, gave women’s rights a fundamentally different character from those of men. Women’s rights were to be nonpolitical in nature, confined to the traditional feminine role of wife and mother.

1 “July 4th Toasts,” *Carlisle [Pa.] Gazette*, July 20, 1804. Toasts to the “Rights of Women” were not uncommon in this period. See David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill, 1997), 166-71, 232-41.

2 For other works that have pioneered the broader exploration of the role of women in politics see Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women and the American Political Society, 1780-1920,” *American Historical Review*, 89 (1984), 620-47; Jan Lewis, “The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., 64 (1987), 689-721; Ruth H. Bloch, “The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 13 (1987), 37-58; and Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore, 1990).

While these developments may appear to confirm the feminist interpretation, a close reading of the sources suggests otherwise. Efforts to constrict the meaning of women's rights did not succeed. What the feminist critique ignores is the ability of rights language, evident as early as the 1790s, to undermine the gendered limitations of political theory. Once women had attained the status of rights bearers, no formal theory, whether of Scottish or Lockean origins, could contain the radical power of rights talk. Soon after the Revolution, and long before the emergence of the first women's rights movement, rights discourse itself

expanded the range of rights that women could and would claim.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Summarize the distinction between men's (Lockean) rights and women's (Scottish traditional) rights.
2. Does this distinction seem to apply to other documents you have read in this chapter? If you believe it does, provide examples; if not, explain why this might be the case, and whether it invalidates Zagari's argument.

### 3-12 Molly Wallace, Valedictory Oration (1792)

*In this fascinating document, Molly Wallace, valedictory speaker at the Young Ladies Academy of Philadelphia, discusses whether women should be allowed to speak in public while, of course, speaking in public. In a time that tended to agree with Samuel Johnson that a woman speaking in public was similar to a trained animal act, Wallace's speech is all the more interesting.*

The silent and solemn attention of a respectable audience, has often, at the beginning of discourses intimidated, even veterans, in the art of public elocution. What then must my situation be, when my sex, my youth and inexperience all conspire to make me tremble at the talk which I have undertaken? . . . With some, however, it has been made a question, whether we ought ever to appear in so public a manner. Our natural timidity, the domestic situation to which by nature and custom we seem destined, are, urged as arguments against what I have now undertaken:—Many sarcastical observations have been handed out against female oratory: But to what do they amount? Do they not plainly inform us, that, because we are females, we ought therefore to be deprived of what is perhaps the most effectual means of acquiring a just, natural and graceful delivery? No one will pretend to deny, that we should be taught to read in the best manner. And if to read, why not to speak? . . . But yet it might be asked, what, has a female character to do with declamation? That she should harangue at the head of an Army, in the Senate, or before a popular Assembly, is not pretended, neither is it requested that she ought to be an adept in the stormy and contentious eloquence of the bar, or in the abstract and subtle reasoning of the Senate; —we look not for a

female Pitt, Cicero, or Demosthenes. There are more humble and milder scenes than those which I have mentioned, in which a woman may display her elocution. There are numerous topics, on which she may discourse without impropriety, in the discussion of which, she may instruct and please others, and in which she may exercise and improve her own understanding. After all, we do not expect women should become perfect orators. Why then should they be taught to speak in public? This question may possibly be answered by asking several others. Why is a boy diligently and carefully taught the Latin, the Greek, or the Hebrew language, in which he will seldom have occasion, either to write or to converse? Why is he taught to demonstrate the propositions of Euclid, when during his whole life, he will not perhaps make use of one of them? Are we taught to dance merely for the sake of becoming dancers? No, certainly. These things are commonly studied, more on account of the habits, which the learning of them establishes, than on account of any important advantages which the mere knowledge of them can afford. So a young lady, from the exercise of speaking before a properly selected audience, may acquire some valuable habits, which, otherwise she can obtain from no examples, and that no precept can give. But, this exercise can with propriety be performed only before a select audience: a promiscuous and indiscriminate one, for obvious reasons, would be absolutely unsuitable, and should always be carefully avoided. . . .

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Summarize Molly Wallace's defense of her right, and a woman's right, to speak publicly. What caution does she also offer to her audience regarding the propriety of women speaking in public?

## FRONTIERS OF TRADE AND EMPIRE, 1750-1860

## 4-1 Captivity Among the Sioux

*“Captivity narratives” – first-person accounts written by women of European descent who were held hostage by Native Americans – formed a popular genre in American literature from the time of the Puritans in 17th-century New England, through the westward expansion of the 19th century. In this example, Fanny Wiggins Kelly describes her experiences. Fanny, her husband, and their adopted daughter Mary were part of a small group of settlers traveling to Idaho in the summer of 1864. Their wagon train was attacked by a band of Sioux; Fanny’s husband escaped, and Fanny and Mary were taken hostage. Fanny and her captors spent several weeks in intermittent skirmishes with the U.S. Army before joining a large Sioux encampment. Early in the winter of 1864-65, Fanny was ransomed to a U.S. army fort in the Dakotas, where she was reunited with her husband.*

**Source:** Kelly, Fanny. *Narrative of My Captivity Among the Sioux Indians: With a Brief Account of General Sully’s Indian Expedition in 1864, Bearing Upon Events Occurring in My Captivity*. (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1891) 43-59, 79-86.

Soon [after the attack] they had another horse saddled for me, and assisted me to mount him. I looked around for my little Mary. There she stood, a poor helpless lamb, in the midst of blood-thirsty savages. I stretched out my arms for her imploringly. For a moment they hesitated; then, to my unspeakable joy, they yielded, and gave me my child.

They then started on, leading my horse; they also gave me a rope that was fastened around the horse’s under jaw. The air was cool, and the sky was bright with the glitter of starlight.

In the darkness of our ride, I conceived a plan for the escape of little Mary. I whispered in her childish ear, “Mary, we are only a few miles from our camp, and the stream we have crossed you can easily wade through. I have dropped letters on the way, you know, to guide our friends in the direction we have taken;

they will guide you back again, and it may be your only chance of escape from destruction. Drop gently down, and lie on the ground for a little while, to avoid being seen; then retrace your steps, and may God in mercy go with you. If I can, I will follow you.” The child, whose judgment was remarkable for her age, readily acceded to this plan; her eye brightened and her young heart throbbed as she thought of its success. Watching the opportunity, I dropped her gently, carefully, and unobserved, to the ground, and she lay there, while the Indians pursued their way, unconscious of their loss. To portray my feelings upon this separation would be impossible. The agony I suffered was indescribable. I was firmly convinced that my course was wise – that I had given her the only chance of escape within my power; yet the terrible uncertainty of what her fate might be in the way before her, was almost unbearable. I continued to think of it so deeply that at last I grew desperate, and resolved to follow her at every risk. Accordingly, watching an opportunity, I, too, slipped to the ground under the friendly cover of night, and the horse went on without its rider. My plan was not successful. My flight was soon discovered, and the Indian wheeled around- and rode back in my pursuit. Crouching in the undergrowth I might have escaped in the darkness, were it not for their cunning. Forming in a line of forty or fifty abreast, they actually covered the ground as they rode past me. The horses themselves were thus led to betray me, for, being frightened at my crouching form, they stopped and reared, thus informing them of my hiding place. With great presence of mind I arose the moment I found myself discovered, and relating my story, the invention of an instant, I succeeded partially in allaying their anger. I told them the child had fallen asleep and dropped from the horse; that I had endeavored to call their attention to it, but in vain; and, fearing I would be unable to find her if we rode further, I had jumped down and attempted the search alone. The Indians used great violence toward me, assuring me that if any further attempts were made to escape, my punishment would be accordingly. They then promised to send a party out in search of

the child when it became light. Poor little Mary! alone in the wilderness, a little, helpless child; who can portray her terror! With faith to trust, and courage to dare, that little, trembling form through the long hours of the night kept watch.

...I made superhuman efforts to appear cheerful, for my only refuge was in being submissive and practicing conciliation. My fear of them was too powerful to allow me to give way to emotion for one moment. There were sentinels stationed at different places to give the alarm, in case of any one approaching to rescue, and I afterward learned that in such a case I would have been instantly murdered. Next morning I learned, by signs, that Indians had gone out in search of little Mary, scattering themselves over the hills, in squads.

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[In the following days] Another burden had been added to my almost worn-out frame, the leading of an unruly horse; and my arms were so full of the implements I was forced to carry, that I threw away the pipe of the old chief – a tube nearly three feet long, and given me to take care of. ...The chief declared that I should die for having caused the loss of his pipe. An untamed horse was brought, and they told me I would be placed on it as a target for their deadliest arrows, and the animal might then run at will, carrying my body where it would. Helpless, and almost dying with terror at my situation, I sank on a rocky seat in their midst. They were all armed, and anxiously awaited the signal. They had pistols, bows, and spears; and I noticed some stoop, and raise blazing fire-brands to frighten the pawing beast that was to bear me to death. In speechless agony I raised my soul to God! Soon it would stand before his throne, and with all the pleading passion of my sinking soul I prayed for pardon and ... for my own salvation, and the forgiveness of my enemies; and remembering a purse of money which was in my pocket, knowing that it would decay with my body in the wilderness, I drew it out, and, with suffused eyes, divided it among them, though my hands were growing powerless and my sight failing. One hundred and twenty dollars in notes I gave them, telling them its value as I did so, when, to my astonishment, a change came over their faces. They laid their weapons on the ground, seemingly pleased, and anxious to understand, requesting me to explain the worth of each note clearly, by holding up my fingers. Eagerly I tried to obey, perceiving the hope their milder manner held out; but my cold hands fell powerless by my side, my tongue refused to utter a sound, and, unconsciously, I sank to the ground [where I] lay silent till

day-break, when the camp was again put in motion, and, at their bidding, I mounted one horse and led another, as I had done on the day previous. ...

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[After a few weeks] The Indians gave me to understand that when we crossed this stream, and a short distance beyond, we would be at their home. Here they paused to dress, so as to make a gay appearance and imposing entrance into the village. Except when in full dress, an Indian's wearing apparel consists only of a buffalo robe, which is also part of a fine toilet. It is very inconveniently disposed about the person, without fastening, and must be held in position with the hands. Here the clothing taken from our train was brought into great demand, and each warrior that had been fortunate enough to possess himself of any article of our dress, now arrayed himself to the best advantage the garments and their limited ideas of civilization permitted; -and, in some instances, when the toilet was considered complete, changes for less attractive articles of display were made with companions who had not been so fortunate as others in the division of the goods, that they might also share in the sport afforded by this derisive display. Their peculiar ideas of tasteful dress rendered them grotesque in appearance. One brawny face appeared under the shade of my hat, smiling with evident satisfaction at the superiority of his decorations over those of his less fortunate companions; another was shaded from the scorching rays of the sun by a tiny parasol, and the brown hand that held it aloft was thinly covered by a silk glove, which was about the only article of clothing, except the invariable breech-cloth, that the warrior wore. ... Ottawa, or Silver Horn, the war chief, was arrayed in full costume. He was very old, over seventy-five, partially blind, and a little below the medium height. He was very ferocious and savage looking, and now, when in costume, looked frightful. His face was red, with stripes of black, and around each eye a circlet of bright yellow. His long, black hair was divided into two braids, with a scalp-lock on top of the head. His ears held great brass wire rings, full six inches in diameter, and chains and bead necklaces were suspended from his neck; armlets and bracelets of brass, together with a string of bears' claws, completed his jewelry. He wore also leggings of deer skin, and a shirt of the same material, beautifully ornamented with beads, and fringed with scalp-locks, that he claimed to have taken from his enemies, both red and white. Over his shoulders hung a great, bright-colored quilt, that had been taken from our stores. He wore a crown of eagle feathers on his head.... His



horse, a noble-looking animal, was no less gorgeously arrayed. His ears were pierced, like his master's, and his neck was encircled by a wreath of bears' claws, taken from animals that the chief had slain. Some bells and a human scalp hung from his mane, forming together, thus arrayed, a museum of the trophies of the old chief's prowess on the war path, and of skill in the chase.

.... Great crowds of curious Indians came flocking in to stare at me. The women brought their children. Some of them, whose fair complexion astonished me, I afterward learned were the offspring of fort marriages. One fair little boy, who, with his mother, had just returned from Fort Laramie, came close to me. Finding the squaw could speak a few words in English, I addressed her, and was told, in reply to my questions, that she had been the wife of a captain there, but that 'his white wife' arriving from the East, his Indian wife was told to return to her people; she did so, taking her child with her. ...

...The women of the chief's family... seemed kindly disposed toward me, and one of them brought me a dish of meat; many others followed her example, even from the neighboring lodges, and really seemed to pity me, and showed great evidences of compassion, and tried to express their sympathy in signs, because I had been torn from my own people, and compelled to come such a long fatiguing journey, and examined me all over and over again, and all about my dress, hands, and feet particularly. Then, to their great surprise, they discovered my bruised and almost broken limbs that occurred when first taken, also from the fall of the horse the first night of my captivity, and proceeded at once to dress my wounds.

I was just beginning to rejoice in the dawning kindness that seemed to soften their swarthy faces,

when a messenger from the war chief arrived, accompanied by a small party of young warriors sent to conduct me to the chief's presence. I did not at first comprehend the summons, and, as every fresh announcement only awakened new fears, I dreaded to comply, yet dared not refuse. Seeing my hesitation, the senior wife allowed a little daughter of the chiefs, whose name was Yellow Bird, to accompany me, and I was then conducted to several feasts, at each of which I was received with kindness, and promised good will and protection. It was here that the chief himself first condescended to speak kindly to me, and this and the companionship of the child Yellow Bird, who seemed to approach me with a trusting grace and freedom unlike the scared shyness of Indian children generally, inspired hope. The chief here told me that henceforth I could call Yellow Bird my own, to take the place of my little girl that had been killed. I did not at once comprehend all of his meaning, still it gave me some hope of security. ...At nightfall we returned to the lodge, which, they told me, I must henceforth regard as home....

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. At what points do Kelly's attitudes towards her captors seem to change? What evidence is there of Kelly feeling fear of the Sioux? Does she ever seem to feel admiration, sympathy, gratitude, or curiosity?
2. Kelly requested compensation from the U.S. government for the material losses she experienced in the course of her capture and captivity. What parts of this document might be designed to justify her claims?
3. Why did Kelly encourage Mary to escape? What were the results? What other courses of action were available to Kelly and Mary?

## 4-2 A Citizen Protests the Rape of Indian Women in California (1862)

*This newspaper editorial publicizes the generally under-reported problem of rape. In this case, the writer objects to the rape of Native American women in rural California by soldiers; the writer is particularly disturbed by the apparent participation of an officer in the events described.*

**Source:** *In Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 190-191.

Editor Beacon: —It is well known that there is, or has been, a body of soldiers this county for several weeks past, for the avowed object of defending and protecting the citizens of the county against Indian depredations .... On Friday night a party of these soldiers visited the ranch of Col. Washington, and made themselves annoying to the Indians in the rancharia. This party was small, only three, as reported. Saturday night, the 4th of October, 1862, was made memorable by the visit of a portion of this command, headed, aided and abetted by the commanding officer, Lieut. —, (or some one assuming his title,) to the farm of Col. Washington, and to the rancharia of peaceful and

domesticated Indians resident thereon. Not one of the soldiers, private or Lieutenant, (or pretended Lieutenant, if such he was,) called at the farm house, but rode by and entered the Indian rancheria, with demands for Indian women, for the purpose of prostitution! They were requested leave and ordered off the place. They answered they would do as they pleased, as they had the power. They were then told that it was true they were the strongest, and no force at hand was sufficient to contend with them, and they were left in the Indian rancheria. Most of the young squaws in the rancheria had by this time ran off and concealed themselves, and were beyond the reach and brutal grasp of the ravishers. They, however, were to be satiated, and like brutes dragged the old, decrepit "tar-heads" forth, and as many as three of the soldiers, in rapid succession, had forced intercourse with old squaws. Such was the conduct of the portion of the command of Co. E, on the night of the 4th of October, 1862, who visited the Indian rancheria at the Old Mill Place, about 3 miles from N. L. headquarters. It is but proper, after consulting with those who are acquainted with the outrage, to say that the Lieut. (or pretended Lieut., if such he was,) did not arrive at the scene of action until after the larg-

er portion of his men were on the ground - But it is absolutely certain that he was there - that he put his horse in the stable to hay, and then prowled around and through the Indian rancherias in quest of some squaw. Whether he found a fit subject upon which to practice his virtuous and civilizing purposes, the writer is not informed. He, however, saddled up and left the scene of moral exploit about daylight. In justice to decency, humanity and civilization, these brutes should be punished. It is due to the honor, the reputation, the chivalry of the army of the United States, that the insignia of rank and position should be tom from the person of the Lieutenant (if it was he who was there,) as an officer unworthy its trust and confidence.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What can you infer from this passage about the organization of Colonel Washington's farm? How do the Native Americans on the farm respond to the soldiers?
2. What aspects of the rapes particularly offend the author of the editorial?

### 4-3 Occurrences in Hispanic California

*María de las Angustias de las Guerra de Ord (1815-1880) was a member of a prominent family of ranchers in early California. Her father commanded the presidio at Santa Barbara. Shortly before her death, she was interviewed for a major oral-history project. Her testimony below details a revolt that took place simultaneously at several southern California missions, when Angustias de las Guerra de Ord was about nine years old.*

**Source:** From testimonial by María de las Angustias de las Guerra de Ord recorded for Hubert Howe Bancroft's 1884-1890 *History of California*, excerpted in *Herencia: The Anthology of Hispanic Literature of the United States*, Nicolas Kanellos, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 95-100.

In 1824, when I was about 9 years old, while Capt. Dn Luis Anto Arguello was acting governor of California, then under the flag of Mexico, there occurred an uprising of the Indians of the Missions of La Purisima, Santa Ines, and Santa Barbara. A soldier came flying from one of those Missions to notify my father, at the time Comandante at Santa Barbara, that

the Indians were in revolt and threatening the white families. This was Oil a Saturday between noon and 2:00 p.m. Immediately my father ordered my uncle, Dn Antonio Anastasio Carrillo, with 15 men to aid the Missions and the families. That night my uncle Dn Carlos Antonio Carrillo prepared to leave by the next day with a somewhat larger force. As it was Sunday, Padre Antonio Ripoll, one of the fathers of the Mission, came here to say Mass for us. My father directed that he should say his Mass, without loss of time because when the troop was ready it should march. The padre was very sad and my father asked him what was the matter. He said the Indians did not want to go to Mass. Then my father asked if this was something new. The padre, answered that the Indians were alarmed because troops had been sent to Santa Ines and La Purisima. Then my father begged that he speak the truth-had the Indians risen? Padre Ripoll replied that it was so. My father then arranged that the missionary could not give warning, and that the troops should remain in the presidio and for him to go with them to Santa Barbara [Mission] and attack the Indians. Padre Ripoll got to his feet crying like a woman, and said, "My God! Don't kill my children. I will go to see them first. The' troops need not go." My father did not want him to go, fearing they would attack him. But h~ went. As soon as the Indians saw him they said they were going

to kill him. But some of the Indians were opposed and they advised him to return to the presidio, because the others had no intention of sparing him, but were bent on killing as many white people as they could, and then retire to the mountains. This about killing the white people, Padre Ripoll did not tell us but the Indian who accompanied him did.

The associate of Padre Ripoll at the Mission was Padre Anto Jayme, a man of advanced age who walked with difficulty. When the Indians forced Padre Ripoll to return to the presidio, he begged his associate to go with him, but the Indians refused to allow it and gave assurance that they would do no harm to Padre Jayme. When Padre Ripoll arrived at the house my father asked him what result he had had with the Indians, and the answer was, crying, that they would do nothing to Padre Jayme. My father went at once to the Mission with the troops and there saw no Indians except those who were in the corridor who had put Padre Jayme on the parapet and were firing their arrows from behind him. There was at the Mission a Russian called Jose who was a servant there. He was among the Indians shooting a firearm. The troops from here killed some Indians who exposed themselves darting from behind the rocks to shoot their arrows. A few attracted the attention of the troops while the bulk of the Indians went from the Mission toward the mountains. . . By 1 o'clock the Mission was almost abandoned by the Indians, but the troops did not know it then. At that hour they retired to the presidio to get

food, carrying 2 wounded companions. All this while Padre Ripoll was in a room which had a window toward the Mission. He had nothing to drink. My mother sent him a little broth. I went in with the servant and told him "they have killed some Indians." The padre began to cry and would not take even one drop of broth. I ran out overwhelmed for having given to him news that had saddened him so. . . A little later the Indian sacristan of the Mission arrived with the keys of the church and he told the padre that the Indian alcaldes were saying they would take away everything in the Mission because it was thdrs, but of that which was in the church they would take nothing because it was God's; that the revolting Indians had now gone to the Tular. Padre Ripoll loved his neophytes as a devoted mother. His emotions were so great that he became ill, though not seriously so. That same afternoon 2 Indians came bringing Padre Jayme to my father's house. During the whole day in the Mission the Indians did not forget to give him his food. The priests stayed on at our house. This outbreak was on February 27, 1824.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Does Angustias de las Guerra de Ord seem to admire anyone's conduct here?
2. How might Angustias de las Guerra de Ord's perspective as a young girl influence her observations and memories?

## 4-4 Sacagawea Interprets for Lewis and Clark (1804)

*In November 1804, Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and the Corps of Discovery arrived at the Hidatsa-Mandan villages near present day Bismarck, North Dakota. There they met and hired Toussaint Charbonneau, a French-Canadian fur trader and Sacagawea ("Canoe Launcher"), one of his two Shoshone "wives." Lewis and Clark believed Sacagawea could be important in trading for horses when the Corps reached the Bitterroot mountains and the Shoshones. While Sacagawea did not speak English, she spoke Shoshone and Hidatsa. Charbonneau spoke Hidatsa and French. It was hoped that when the expedition met the Shoshones, Sacagawea would talk with them, then translate to Hidatsa for Charbonneau, who would translate into French. The Corps' Francois Labiche spoke French and English, and would make the final translation so that Lewis and Clark could understand.*

**Source:** Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, *History of the Expedition of Captains Lewis and Clark*, 2 Vols. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1924), 1: 406-411.

SATURDAY, August 17. Captain Lewis rose very early and despatched Drewyer and the Indian down the river in quest of the boats. Shields was sent out at the same time to hunt, while M'Neal prepared a breakfast out of the remainder of the meat. Drewyer had been gone about two hours, and the Indians were all anxiously waiting for some news, when an Indian who had straggled a short distance down the river returned with a report that he had seen the white men, who were only a short distance below, and were coming on. The Indians were all transported with joy, and the chief in the warmth of his satisfaction renewed his embrace to Captain Lewis, who was quite as much delighted as the Indians themselves. The report proved most agreeably true. On setting out at seven o'clock, Captain Clark, with Charbonneau and his wife, walked on shore; but they had not gone more than a mile before

Captain Clark saw Sacagawea, who was with her husband one hundred yards ahead, begin to dance and show every mark of the most extravagant joy, turning round him and pointing to several Indians, whom he now saw advancing on horseback, sucking her fingers at the same time to indicate that they were of her native tribe. As they advanced Captain Clark discovered among them Drewyer dressed like an Indian, from whom he learnt the situation of the party. While the boats were performing the circuit he went towards the forks with the Indians, who, as they went along, sang aloud with the greatest appearance of delight. We soon drew near to the camp, and just as we approached it a woman made her way through the crowd towards Sacagawea, and recognising each other, they embraced with the most tender affection. The meeting of these two young women had in it something peculiarly touching, not only in the ardent manner in which their feelings were expressed, but from the real interest of their situation. They had been companions in childhood; in the war with the Minnetarees they had both been taken prisoners in the same battle, they had shared and softened the rigours of their captivity, till one of them had escaped from the Minnetarees, with scarce a hope of ever seeing her friend relieved from the hands of her enemies. While Sacagawea was renewing among the women the friendships of former days, Captain Clark went on, and was received by Captain Lewis and the chief, who, after the first embraces and salutations were over, conducted him to a sort of circular tent or shade of willows. Here he was seated on a white robe, and the chief immediately tied in his hair six small shells resembling pearls, an ornament highly valued by these people, who procured them in the course of trade from the seacoast. The moccasins of the whole party were then taken off, and after much ceremony the smoking began. After this the conference was to be opened, and glad of an opportunity of being able to converse more intelligibly, Sacagawea was sent for; she came into the tent, sat down, and was beginning to interpret, when in the person of Cameahwait she recognised her brother; she instantly jumped up and ran and embraced him, throwing over him her blanket and weeping profusely; the chief was himself moved, though not in the same degree. After some conversation between them she resumed her seat, and attempted to interpret for us, but her new situation seemed to overpower her, and she was frequently interrupted by her tears. After the council was finished, the unfortunate woman learnt that all her family were dead except two brothers, one of whom was absent, and a son of her eldest sister, a small boy, who was immediately

adopted by her. The canoes arriving soon after, we formed a camp in a meadow on the left side, a little below the forks, took out our baggage, and by means of our sails and willow poles formed a canopy for our Indian visitors. About four o'clock the chiefs and warriors were collected, and after the customary ceremony of taking off the moccasins and smoking a pipe, we explained to them in a long harangue the purposes of our visit, making themselves one conspicuous object of the good wishes of our government, on whose strength as well as its friendly disposition we expatiated. We told them of their dependence on the will of our government for all future supplies of whatever was necessary either for their comfort or defence; that as we were sent to discover the best route by which merchandise could be conveyed to them, and no trade would be begun before our return, it was mutually advantageous that we should proceed with as little delay as possible; that we were under the necessity of requesting them to furnish us with horses to transport our baggage across the mountains, and a guide to show us the route, but that they should be amply remunerated for their horses, as well as for every other service they should render us. In the meantime our first wish was, that they should immediately collect as many horses as were necessary to transport our baggage to their village, where, at our leisure, we would trade with them for as many horses as they could spare.

The speech made a favourable impression; the chief in reply thanked us for our expressions of friendship towards himself and his nation, and declared their willingness to render us every service. He lamented that it would be so long before they should be supplied with firearms, but that till then they could subsist as they had heretofore done. He concluded by saying that there were not horses here sufficient to transport our goods, but that he would return to the village tomorrow, and bring all his own horses, and encourage his people to come over with theirs. The conference being ended to our satisfaction, we now inquired of Cameahwait what chiefs were among the party, and he pointed out two of them. We then distributed our presents: to Cameahwait we gave a medal of the small size, with the likeness of President Jefferson, and on the reverse a figure of hands clasped with a pipe and tomahawk; to this was added a uniform coat, a shirt, a pair of scarlet leggings, a carrot of tobacco, and some small articles. Each of the other chiefs received a small medal struck during the presidency of General Washington, a shirt, handkerchief, leggings, a knife, and some tobacco. Medals of the same sort were also presented to two young warriors, who though not chiefs were promising

youths and very much respected in the tribe. These honorary gifts were followed by presents of paint, moccasins, awls, knives, beads, and looking-glasses. We also gave them all a plentiful meal of Indian corn, of which the hull is taken off by being boiled in lye; and as this was the first they had ever tasted, they were very much pleased with it. They had indeed abundant sources of surprise in all they saw: the appearance of the men, their arms, their clothing, the canoes, the strange looks of the negro, and the sagacity of our dog, all in turn shared their admiration, which was raised to astonishment by a shot from the airgun; this operation was instantly considered as a great medicine, by which they as well as the other Indians mean something emanating directly from the Great Spirit, or produced by his invisible and incomprehensible agency. The display of all these riches had been intermixed with inquiries into the geographical situation of their country, for we had learnt by experience that to keep the savages in good temper their attention should not be wearied with too much business, but that the serious affairs should be enlivened by a mixture of what is new and entertaining. Our hunters brought in very seasonably four deer and an antelope, the last of which we gave to the Indians, who in a very short time devoured it. After the council was over, we consulted as to our future operations. The game does not promise to last here for a number of days, and this circumstance combined with many others to induce our going on as soon as possible. Our Indian information as to the state of the Columbia is of a very alarming kind, and our first object is of course to ascertain the practicability of descending it, of which the Indians discourage our expectations. It was therefore agreed that Captain

Clark should set off in the morning with eleven men, furnished, besides their arms, with tools for making canoes; that he should take Charbonneau and his wife to the camp of the Shoshonees, where he was to leave them, in order to hasten the collection of horses; that he was then to lead his men down to the Columbia, and if he found it navigable, and the timber in sufficient quantity, begin to build canoes. As soon as he had decided as to the propriety of proceeding down the Columbia or across the mountains, he was to send back one of the men with information of it to Captain Lewis, who by that time would have brought up the whole party and the rest of the baggage as far as the Shoshonee village.

Preparations were accordingly made this evening for such an arrangement. The sun is excessively hot in the day time, but the nights very cold, and rendered still more unpleasant from the want of any fuel except willow brush. The appearances, too, of game for many days' subsistence are not very favourable.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. The Shoshone were known to have horses that the Corps of Discovery would need to cross the western mountains. What do you think the expedition would have done had they not found a Shoshone band or been able to trade for horses?
2. What was the relationship between Sacagawea and the Shoshone band encountered by the Corps? Do you think this relationship aided in the trading process and the success of the expedition? Why or why not?

## 4-5 Across the Plains With Catherine Sager Pringle (1844)

*As a child, Catherine Sager Pringle emigrated with her family from Ohio to Missouri and soon participated in the long overland journey to Oregon. She preserved her experiences in her diary in 1860. In this excerpt from her first chapter, Pringle relates incidents on the trail and the emotional story of the death of her parents.*

**Source:** The Oregon Trail Web Site <http://www.isu.edu/~trinmich/OO.ar.sager1.html>

### On the Plains in 1844

My father was one of the restless ones who are not content to remain in one place long at a time. Late in

the fall of 1838 we emigrated from Ohio to Missouri. Our first halting place was on Green River, but the next year we took a farm in Platte County. He engaged in farming and blacksmithing, and had a wide reputation for ingenuity. Anything they needed, made or mended, sought his shop. In 1843, Dr. Whitman came to Missouri. The healthful climate induced my mother to favor moving to Oregon. Immigration was the theme all winter, and we decided to start for Oregon. Late in 1843 father sold his property and moved near St. Joseph, and in April, 1844, we started across the plains. The first encampments were a great pleasure to us children. We were five girls and two boys, ranging from the girl baby to be born on the way to the oldest boy, hardly old enough to be any help.

### Starting on the Plains

We waited several days at the Missouri River. Many friends came that far to see the emigrants start on their long journey, and there was much sadness at the parting, and a sorrowful company crossed the Missouri that bright spring morning. The motion of the wagon made us all sick, and it was weeks before we got used to the seasick motion. Rain came down and required us to tie down the wagon covers, and so increased our sickness by confining the air we breathed.

Our cattle recrossed in the night and went back to their winter quarters. This caused delay in recovering them and a weary, forced march to rejoin the train. This was divided into companies, and we were in that commanded by William Shaw. Soon after starting Indians raided our camp one night and drove off a number of cattle. They were pursued, but never recovered.

Soon everything went smooth and our train made steady headway. The weather was fine and we enjoyed the journey pleasantly. There were several musical instruments among the emigrants, and these sounded clearly on the evening air when camp was made and merry talk and laughter resounded from almost every camp-fire.

### Incidents of Travel

We had one wagon, two steady yoke of old cattle, and several of young and not well-broken ones. Father was no ox driver, and had trouble with these until one day he called on Captain Shaw for assistance. It was furnished by the good captain pelting the refractory steers with stones until they were glad to come to terms.

Reaching the buffalo country, our father would get some one to drive his team and start on the hunt, for he was enthusiastic in his love of such sport. He not only killed the great bison, but often brought home on his shoulder the timid antelope that had fallen at his unerring aim, and that are not often shot by ordinary marksmen. Soon after crossing South Platte the unwieldy oxen ran on a bank and overturned the wagon, greatly injuring our mother. She lay long insensible in the tent put up for the occasion.

August 1st we nooned in a beautiful grove on the north side of the Platte. We had by this time got used to climbing in and out of the wagon when in motion. When performing this feat that afternoon my dress caught on an axle helve and I was thrown under the wagon wheel, which passed over and badly crushed my limb before father could stop the team. He picked

me up and saw the extent of the injury when the injured limb hung dangling in the air.

### The Father Dying on the Plains

In a broken voice he exclaimed: "My dear child, your leg is broken all to pieces!" The news soon spread along the train and a halt was called. A surgeon was found and the limb set; then we pushed on the same night to Laramie, where we arrived soon after dark. This accident confined me to the wagon the remainder of the long journey.

After Laramie we entered the great American desert, which was hard on the teams. Sickness became common.

Father and the boys were all sick, and we were dependent for a driver on the Dutch doctor who set my leg. He offered his services and was employed, but though an excellent surgeon, he knew little about driving oxen. Some of them often had to rise from their sick beds to wade streams and get the oxen safely across. One day four buffalo ran between our wagon and the one behind. Though feeble, father seized his gun and gave chase to them. This imprudent act prostrated him again, and it soon became apparent that his days were numbered. He was fully conscious of the fact, but could not be reconciled to the thought of leaving his large and helpless family in such precarious circumstances. The evening before his death we crossed Green River and camped on the bank. Looking where I lay helpless, he said: "Poor child! What will become of you?" Captain Shaw found him weeping bitterly. He said his last hour had come, and his heart was tilled with anguish for his family. His wife was ill, the children small, and one likely to be a cripple. They had no relatives near, and a long journey lay before them. In piteous tones he begged the Captain to take charge of them and see them through. This he stoutly promised. Father was buried the next day on the banks of Green River. His coffin was made of two troughs dug out of the body of a tree, but next year emigrants found his bleaching bones, as the Indians had disinterred the remains.

We hired a young man to drive, as mother was afraid to trust the doctor, but the kindhearted German would not leave her, and declared his intention to see her safe in the Willamette. At Fort Bridger the stream was full of fish, and we made nets of wagon sheets to catch them. That evening the new driver told mother he would hunt for game if she would let him use the gun. He took it, and we never saw him again. He made for the train in advance, where he had a sweetheart. We found the gun waiting our arrival at Whitman's. Then we got along as best we could with the doctor's help.

Mother planned to get to Whitman's and winter there, but she was rapidly failing under her sorrows. The nights and mornings were very cold, and she took cold from the exposure unavoidably. With camp fever and a sore mouth, she fought bravely against fate for the sake of her children, but she was taken delirious soon after reaching Fort Bridger, and was bed-fast. Travelling in this condition over a road clouded with dust, she suffered intensely. She talked of her husband, addressing him as though present, beseeching him in piteous tones to relieve her sufferings, until at last she became unconscious. Her babe was cared for by the women of the train. Those kind-hearted women would also come in at night and wash the dust from the mother's face and otherwise make her comfortable. We travelled a rough road the day she died, and she moaned fearfully all the time. At night one of the women came in as usual, but she made no reply to questions, so she thought her asleep, and washed her face, then took her hand and discovered the pulse was nearly gone. She lived but a few moments, and her last words were, "Oh, Henry! If you only knew how we have suffered." The tent was set up, the corpse laid out, and next morning we took the last look at our mother's face. The grave was near the road; willow brush was laid in the bottom and covered the body, the earth filled in—then the train moved on.

Her name was cut on a headboard, and that was all that could be done. So in twenty-six days we became orphans. Seven children of us, the oldest fourteen and the youngest a babe. A few days before her death, finding herself in possession of her faculties and fully aware of the coming end, she had taken an affectionate farewell of her children and charged the doctor to take care of us. She made the same request of Captain Shaw. The baby was taken by a woman in the train, and all were literally adopted by the company. No one there but was ready to do us any possible favor. This was especially true of Captain Shaw and his wife. Their kindness will ever be cherished in grateful remembrance by us all. Our parents could not have been more solicitous or careful. When our flour gave out they gave us bread as long as they had any, actually dividing their last loaf. To this day Uncle Billy and Aunt Sally, &c; we call them, regard us with the affection of parents. Blessings on his hoary head!

At Snake River they lay by to make our wagon into a cart, as our team was wearing out. Into this was loaded what was necessary. Some things were sold and some left on the plains. The last of September we arrived at Grande Ronde, where one of my sister's clothes caught fire, and she would have burned to death only that the Gennan doctor, at the cost of burning his hands, saved her. One night the captain heard a child crying, and found my little sister had got out of

the wagon and was perishing in the freezing air, for the nights were very cold. We had been out of flour and living on meat alone, so a few were sent in advance to get supplies from Dr. Whitman and return to us. Having so light a load we could travel faster than the other teams, and went on with Captain Shaw and the advance. Through the Blue Mountains cattle were giving out and left lying in the road. We made but a few miles a day. We were in the country of "Dr. Whitman's Indians," as they called themselves. They were returning from buffalo hunting and frequented our camps. They were loud in praise of the missionaries and anxious to assist us. Often they would drive up some beast that had been left behind as given out and return it to its owner.

One day when we were making a fire of wet wood Francis thought to help the matter by holding his powder-horn over a small blaze. Of course the powder-horn exploded, and the wonder was he was left alive. He ran to a creek near by and bathed his hands and face, and came back destitute of wipers and eyebrows, and his face was blackened beyond recognition. Such were the incidents and dangerous and humorous features of the journey.

We reached Umatilla October 15th, and lay by while Captain Shaw went on to Whitman's station to see if the doctor would take care of us, if only until he could become located in the Willamette. We purchased of the Indians the first potatoes we had eaten since we started on our long and sad journey. October 17th we started for our destination, leaving the baby very sick, with doubts of its recovery. Mrs. Shaw took an affectionate leave of us all, and stood looking after us as long as we were in sight. Speaking of it in later years, she said she never saw a more pitiful sight than that cartful of orphans going to find a home among strangers.

We reached the station in the forenoon. For weeks this place had been a subject for our talk by day and formed our dreams at night. We expected to see log houses, occupied by Indians and such people as we had seen about the forts. Instead we saw a large white house surrounded with palisades. A short distance from the doctor's dwelling was another large adobe house, built by Mr. Gray, but now used by immigrants in the winter, and for a granary in the summer. It was situated near the mill pond, and the grist mill was not far from it.

Between the two houses were the blacksmith shop and the corral, enclosed with slabs set up endways. The garden lay between the mill and the house, and a large field was on the opposite side. A good-sized ditch passed in front of the house, connecting with the mill pond, intersecting other ditches all

around the farm, for the purpose of irrigating the land.

We drove up and halted near this ditch. Captain Shaw was in the house conversing with Mrs. Whitman. Glancing through the window, he saw us, and turning to her said: "Your children have come; will you go out and see them?" He then came out and told the boys to "Help the girls out and get their bonnets." Alas! it was easy to talk of bonnets, but not to find them! But one or two were finally discovered by the time Mrs. Whitman had come out. Here was a scene for an artist to describe! Foremost stood the little cart, with the tired oxen that had been unyoked lying near it. Sitting in the front end of the cart was John, weeping bitterly; on the opposite side stood Francis, his arms on the wheel and his head resting on his arms, sobbing aloud; on the near side the little girls were huddled together, bareheaded and barefooted, looking at the boys and then at the house, dreading we knew not what. By the oxen stood the good German doctor, with his whip in his hand, regarding the scene with suppressed emotion.

Thus Mrs. Whitman found us. She was a large, well-formed woman, fair complexioned, with beautiful auburn hair, nose rather large, and large gray eyes. She had on a dark calico dress and gingham sunbonnet. We thought as we shyly looked at her that she was the prettiest woman we had ever seen. She spoke kindly to us as she came up, but like frightened things we ran behind the cart, peeping shyly around at her. She then addressed the boys, asking why they wept, adding: "Poor boys, no wonder you weep!" She then began to arrange things as we threw them out, at the same time conversing with an Indian woman sitting on the ground near by.

A little girl about seven years old soon came and stood regarding us with a timid look. This was little Helen Mar Meed, and though a half-breed, she looked very pretty to us in her green dress and white apron and neat sunbonnet.

Having arranged everything in compact form Mrs. Whitman directed the doctor and the boys where to carry them, and told Helen to show the little girls the way to the house. Seeing my lameness, she kindly took me by the hand and my little sister by the other hand, and thus led us in. As we reached the steps, Captain Shaw asked if she had children of her own. Pointing to a grave at the foot of the hill not far off, she said: "All the child I ever had sleeps yonder." She added that it was a great pleasure to her that she could see the grave from the door. The doctor and boys having deposited the things as directed, went over to the mansion. As we entered the house we saw a girl about nine years old washing dishes. Mrs. Whitman spoke cheerfully to her and said: "Well, Mary Ann, how do you think you will

like all these sisters?" Seated in her arm-chair, she placed the youngest on her lap, and calling us round her, asked our names, about our parents, and the baby, often exclaiming as we told our artless story, "Poor children!"

Dr. Whitman came in from the mill and stood in the door, looking as though surprised at the large addition so suddenly made to the family. We were a sight calculated to excite surprise, dirty and sunburned until we looked more like Indians than white children. Added to this, John had cropped our hair so that it hung in uneven locks and added to our uncouth appearance. Seeing her husband standing there, Mrs. Whitman said, with a laugh: "Come in, doctor, and see your children." He sat down and tried to take little Louisa in his arms, but she ran screaming to me, much to the discomfiture of the doctor and amusement of his wife. She then related to him what we had told her in reference to the baby, and expressed her fears lest it should die, saying it was the baby she wanted most of all.

Our mother had asked that we might not be separated, so Captain Shaw now urged the doctor to take charge of us all.

He feared the Board might object, as he was sent as a missionary to the Indians. The captain argued that a missionary's duty was to do good, and we certainly were objects worthy of missionary charity. He was finally persuaded to keep us all until spring. His wife did not readily consent, but he told her he wanted boys as well as the girls. Finding the boys willing to stay, he made a written agreement with Captain Shaw that he would take charge of them. Before Captain Shaw reached the valley, Dr. Whitman overtook him and told him he was pleased with the children and he need give himself no further care concerning them. The baby was brought over in few days. It was very sick, but under Mrs. Whitman's judicious care was soon restored to health.

Our faithful friend, the German doctor, left us at last, safe in the motherly care of Mrs. Whitman. Well had he kept his promise to our dying mother.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What were some of the more unfortunate accidents witnessed or experienced by Catherine Sager Pringle along the trail? How many of these mishaps might have been anticipated by the immigrants?
2. What do you think Catherine Sager Pringle learned about herself during her trip across the plains in 1844?



## DOMESTIC ECONOMIES AND NORTHERN LIVES, 1800–1860

## 5-1 Beecher Sisters on Housekeeping

*Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe were leading thinkers, activists, and writers of the women's rights and abolitionist movements. (See other documents by one or the other of these sisters in this chapter, chapter 6, and chapter 8.) Their guides to housekeeping and home-making were wildly popular in the nineteenth century; they mixed moralizing with practical instruction in a variety of subjects, from hygiene to how to select a stove.*

**Source:** Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home*. New York: J.B. Ford, 1869.

## INTRODUCTION

The authors of this volume, while they sympathize with every honest effort to relieve the disabilities and sufferings of their sex, are confident that the chief cause of these evils is the fact that the honor and duties of the family state are not duly appreciated, that women are not trained for these duties as men are trained for their trades and professions, and that, as the consequence, family labor is poorly done, poorly paid, and regarded as menial and disgraceful.

To be the nurse of young children, a cook, or a housemaid, is regarded as the lowest and last resort of poverty, and one which no woman of culture and position can assume without loss of caste and respectability. . .

## I

## THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

It is the aim of this volume to elevate both the honor and the remuneration of all the employments that sustain the many difficult and sacred duties of the

family state, and thus to render each department of a woman's true profession as much desired and respected as are the most honored professions of men.

What, then, is the end designed by the family state which Jesus Christ came into this world to secure?

It is to provide for the training of our race to the highest possible intelligence, virtue, and happiness, by means of the self sacrificing labors of the wise and good, and this with chief reference to a future immortal existence.

The distinctive feature of the family is self-sacrificing labor of the stronger and wiser members to raise the weaker and more ignorant to equal advantages. The father undergoes toil and self-denial to provide a home, and then the mother becomes a self-sacrificing laborer to train its inmates. The useless, troublesome infant is served in the humblest offices; while both parents unite in training it to an equality with themselves in every advantage. Soon the older children become helpers to raise the younger to a level with their own. When any are sick, those who are well become self-sacrificing ministers. When the parents are old and useless, the children become their self-sacrificing servants.

Thus the discipline of the family state is one of daily self-devotion of the stronger and wiser to elevate and support the weaker members. Nothing could be more contrary to the first principles than for the older and more capable children to combine to secure to themselves the highest advantages, enforcing the drudgeries on the younger, at the sacrifice of their equal culture.

Jesus Christ came to teach the fatherhood of God and consequent brotherhood of man. He came as the "first-born Son" of God and the Elder Brother of man, to teach by example the self-sacrifice by which the great family of man is to be raised to equality of advantages as children of God. For this end, he "humbled himself" from the highest to the lowest place. He

chose for his birthplace the most despised village; for his parents, the lowest in rank; for his trade, to labor with his hands as a carpenter, being “subject to his parents” thirty years. And, what is very significant, his trade was that which prepares the family home, as if he would teach that the great duty of man is labor—to provide and train weak and ignorant creatures. Jesus Christ worked with his hands nearly thirty years, and preached less than three. And he taught that his kingdom is exactly opposite to that of the world, where all are striving for the highest positions. “Whoso will be great shall be your minister, and whoso will be chiefest shall be servant of all.”

The family state then, is the aptest earthly illustration of the heavenly kingdom, and in it woman is its chief minister. Her great mission is self-denial, in

training its members to self-sacrificing labors for the ignorant and weak: if not her own children, then the neglected children of her Father in heaven. She is to rear all under her care to lay up treasures, not on earth, but in heaven. All the pleasures of life end here; but those who train immortal minds are to reap the fruit of their labor through eternal ages. . .

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why do Beecher and Stowe devote so much effort to drawing parallels between family structure and Christianity? Do you think they convinced their readers of their point?
2. What benefits do Beecher and Stowe claim a woman will gain through her work in the home?

## 5-2 Catharine Beecher on Women’s Interests

*Catharine Beecher thought about, wrote about, and worked for women’s rights and female education throughout much of the nineteenth century – she was born in 1800, and died in 1878. (See other documents by her in this chapter, and in chapter 8.)*

**Source:** Catharine Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*. Boston: Thomas H. Webb & Co., 1842. pp. 33-34.

It appears, then, that it is in America, alone, that women are raised to an equality with the other sex; and that, both in theory and practice, their interests are regarded as of equal value. They are made subordinate in station, only where a regard to their best interests demands it, while, as if in compensation for this, by custom and courtesies, they are always treated as superiors. Universally, in this Country, through every class of society, precedence is given to woman, in all the comforts, conveniences, and courtesies, of life.

In civil and political affairs, American women take no interest or concern, except so far as they sympathize with their family and personal friends; but in all cases, in which they do feel a concern, their opinions and feelings have a consideration, equal, or even superior, to that of the other sex.

In matters pertaining to the education of their children, in the selection and support of a clergyman, in all benevolent enterprises, and in all questions relating to morals or manners, they have a superior influ-

ence. In such concerns, it would be impossible to carry a point, contrary to their judgement and feelings; while an enterprise, sustained by them, will seldom fail of success.

If those who are bewailing themselves over the fancied wrongs and injuries of women in this Nation, could only see things as they are, they would know, that, whatever remnants of a barbarous or aristocratic age may remain in our civil institutions, in reference to the interests of women, it is only because they are ignorant of them, or do not use their influence to have them rectified; for it is very certain that there is nothing reasonable, which American women would unite in asking, that would not readily be bestowed.

The preceding remarks, then, illustrate the position that the democratic institutions of this Country are in reality no other than the principles of Christianity carried into operation, and that they tend to place woman in her true position in society, as having equal rights with the other sex; and that, in fact, they have secured to American women a lofty and fortunate position, which, as yet, has been attained by women of no other nation.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How does Beecher link women’s status in the United States with democracy, and with Christianity?
2. Does Beecher ‘blame the victim’ for not seeking greater attention to women’s “interests”?
3. What does Beecher propose here that women should do to improve their status?

## 5-3 Reasons for Entering Prostitution (1859)

*William Sanger surveyed 2000 prostitutes to ascertain why they turned to that line of work, and published his results in 1859.*

**Source:** In *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 219-220

### Question. WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF YOUR BECOMING A PROSTITUTE?

CAUSES	NUMBERS
Inclination.....	513
Destitution .....	525
Seduced and abandoned.....	258
Drink, and the desire to drink.....	181
Ill-treatment of parents, relatives, or husbands .....	164
As an easy life.....	124
Bad company.....	84
Persuaded by prostitutes .....	71
Too idle to work .....	29
Violated .....	27
Seduced on board emigrant ships .....	16
in emigrant boarding houses.....	8
Total.....	2000

This question is probably the most important of the series, as the replies lay open to a considerable extent those hidden springs of evil which have hitherto been known only from their results. First in order stands the reply "Inclination," which can only be understood as meaning a voluntary resort to prostitution in order to gratify the sexual passions. Five hundred and thirteen women, more than one fourth of the gross number, give this as their reason. If their repre-

sentations were borne out by facts, it would make the task of grappling with the vice a most arduous one, and afford very slight grounds to hope for any amelioration; but it is imagined that the circumstances which induced the ruin of most of those who gave the answer will prove that, if a positive inclination to vice was the proximate cause of the fall, it was but the result of other and controlling influences. In itself such an answer would imply an innate depravity, a want of true womanly feeling, which is actually incredible. The force of desire can neither be denied nor disputed, but still in the bosoms of most females that force exists in a slumbering state until aroused by some outside influences. No woman can understand its power until some positive cause of excitement exists. What is sufficient to awaken the dormant passion is a question that admits innumerable answers. Acquaintance with the opposite sex, particularly if extended so far as to become a reciprocal affection, will tend to this; so will the companionship of females who have yielded to its power; and so will the excitement of intoxication. But it must be repeated, and most decidedly, that without these or some other equally stimulating cause, the full force of sexual desire is seldom known to a virtuous woman. In the male sex nature has provided a more susceptible organization than in females, apparently with the beneficent design of repressing those evils which must result from mutual appetite equally felt by both. In other words, man is the *aggressive* animal, so far as sexual desire is involved. Were it otherwise, and the passions in both sexes equal, illegitimacy and prostitution would be far more rife in our midst than at present. . . .

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What assumptions are embedded in the survey questions?
2. What assumptions does Sanger make in his writing?
3. Does Sanger consider any attributes of identity other than gender in analyzing sexual desire?

## 5-4 A Lowell Mill Girl Settles In (1845-1848)

*Young single women were able to earn their livelihood and experience independence working in New England's textile mills. The facilities at Lowell, Massachusetts, were the first, largest, and best-known; the workforce was roughly three-quarters female, and young women were recruited from throughout the region. Lowell was also the site of early attempts at labor organization, as recounted in "A Factory Girl's Lament" (chapter 7). The letters of Mary S. Paul to her father reflect the mix of pride, exhaustion, homesickness, and concern with getting ahead that were typical among "Lowell Mill Girls."*

Source: <http://library.uml.edu/clh/All/Pau.htm>

Saturday Sept. 13th 1845

Dear Father

I received your letter this afternoon by Wm Griffith. You wished me to write if I had seen Mr. Angell. I have neither written to him nor seen him nor has he written to me. I began to write but I could not write what I wanted to. I think if I could see him I could convince him of his error if he would let me talk. I am very glad you sent my shoes. They fit very well indeed they large enough.

I want you to consent to let me go to Lowell if you can. I think it would be much better for me than to stay about here. I could earn more to begin with than I can any where about here. I am in need of clothes which I cannot get if I stay about here and for that reason I want to go to Lowell or some other place. We all think if I could go with some steady girl that I might do well. I want you to think of it and make up your mind. Mercy Jane Griffith is going to start in four or five weeks. Aunt Miller and Aunt Sarah think it would be a good chance for me to go if you would consent-which I want you to do if possible. I want to see you and talk with you about it.

Aunt Sarah gains slowly.

Mary

Woodstock Nov 8 1845

Dear Father

As you wanted me to let you know when I am going to start for Lowell, I improve this opportunity to

write you. Next Thursday the 13th of this month is the day set or the Thursday afternoon. I should like to have you come down. If you come bring Henry if you can for I should like to see him before I go. Julius has got the money for me.

Yours Mary

Lowell Nov 20th 1845

Dear Father

An opportunity now presents itself which I improve in writing to you. I started for this place at the time I talked of which was Thursday. I left Whitneys at nine o'clock stopped at Windsor at 12 and staid till 3 and started again. Did not stop again for any length of time till we arrived at Lowell. Went to a boarding house and staid until Monday night. On Saturday after I got here Luthera Griffith went round with me to find a place but we were unsuccessful. On Monday we started again and were more successful, We found a place in a spinning room and the next morning I went to work. I like very well have 50 cts first payment increasing every payment as I get along in work have a first rate overseer and a very good boarding place. I work on the Lawrence Corporation. Mill is No 2 spinning room. I was very sorry that you did not come to see me start. I wanted to see you and Henry but I suppose that you were otherways engaged. I hoped to see Julius but did not much expect to for I sposed he was engaged in other matters. He got six dollars for me which I was very glad of. It cost me \$3.25 to come. Stage fare was \$3.00 and lodging at Windsor, 25 cts. Had to pay only 25 cts for board for 9 days after I got here before I went into the mill. Had 2.50 left with which I got a bonnet and some other small articles. Tell Harriet Burbank to send me paper. Tell her I shall send her one as soon as possible. You must write as soon as you receive this. Tell Henry I should like to hear from him. If you hear anything from William write for I want to know what he is doing. I shall write to Uncle Millers folks the first opportunity. Aunt Nancy presented me with a new alpacca dress before I came away from there which I was very glad of. I think of staying here a year certain, if not more. I wish that you and Henry would come down here. I think that you might do well. I guess that Henry could get into the mill and I think that Julius might get in too. Tell all friends that I should like to hear from them.

excuse bad writing and mistakes

This from your own daughter

Mary

P.S. Be sure and direct to No. 15 Lawrence Corporation.

Lowell Dec 21st 1845

Dear Father

I received your letter on Thursday the 14th with much pleasure. I am well which is one comfort. My life and health are spared while others are cut off. Last Thursday one girl fell down and broke her neck which caused instant death. She was going in or coming out of the mill and slipped down it being very icy. The same day a man was killed by the [railroad] cars. Another had nearly all of his ribs broken. Another was nearly killed by falling down and having a bale of cotton fall on him. Last Tuesday we were paid. In all I had six dollars and sixty cents paid \$4.68 for board. With the rest I got me a pair of rubbers and a pair of .50 cts shoes. Next payment I am to have a dollar a week beside my board. We have not had much snow the deepest being not more than 4 inches. It has been very warm for winter. Perhaps you would like something about our regulations about going in and coming out of the mill. At 5 o'clock in the morning the bell rings for the folks to get up and get breakfast. At half past six it rings for the girls to get up and at seven they are called into the mill. At half past 12 we have dinner are called back again at one and stay till half past seven. I get along very well with my work. I can doff as fast as any girl in our room. I think I shall have frames before long. The usual time allowed for learning is six months but I think I shall have frames before I have been in three as I get along so fast. I think that the factory is the best place for me and if any girl wants employment I advise them to come to Lowell. Tell Harriet that though she does not hear from me she is not forgotten. I have little time to devote to writing that I cannot write all I want to. There are half a dozen letters which I ought to write to day but I have not time. Tell Harriet I send my love to her and all of the girls. Give my love to Mrs. Clement. Tell Henry this will answer for him and you too for this time.

This from

Mary S Paul

Lowell April 12th 1846

Dear Father

I received your letter with much pleasure but was

sorry to hear that you had been lame. I had waited for a long time to hear from you but no letter came so last Sunday I thought I would write again which I did and was going to send it to the [post] office Monday but at noon I received a letter from William and so I did not send it at all. Last Friday I received a letter from you. You wanted to know what I am doing. I am at work in a spinning room and tending four sides of warp which is one girls work. The overseer tells me that he never had a girl get along better than I do and that he will do the best he can by me. I stand it well, though they tell me that I am growing very poor. I was paid nine shillings a week last payment and am to have more this one though we have been out considerable for backwater which will take off a good deal. The Agent promises to pay us nearly as much as we should have made but I do not think that he will. The payment was up last night and we are to be paid this week. I have a very good boarding place have enough to eat and that which is good enough. The girls are all kind and obliging. The girls that I room with are all from Vermont and good girls too. Now I will tell you about our rules at the boarding house. We have none in particular except that we have to go to bed about 10. o'clock. At half past 4 in the morning the bell rings for us to get up and at five for us to go into the mill. At seven we are called out to breakfast are allowed half an hour between bells and the same at noon till the first of May when we have three quarters [of an hour] till the first of September. We have dinner at half past 12 and supper at seven. If Julius should go to Boston tell him to come this way and see me. He must come to the Lawrence Counting room and call for me. He can ask some one to show him where the Lawrence is. I hope he will not fail to go. I forgot to tell you that I have not seen a particle of snow for six weeks and it is settled going we have had a very mild winter and but little snow. I saw Ann Hersey last Sunday. I did not know her till she told me who she was. I see the Griffith girls often. I received a letter from a girl in Bridgewater in which she told me that Mrs Angell had heard some way that I could not get work and that she was much pleased and said that I was so bad that no one would have me. I believe I have written all so I will close for I have a letter to write to William this afternoon.

Yours affectionately

Mary S Paul

P.S. Give my love to all that enquire for me and tell them to write me a long long letter. Tell Harriet I shall send her a paper.

Lowell Nov 5th 1848

Dear Father

Doubtless you have been looking for a letter from me all the week past. I would have written but wished to find whether I should be able to stand it-to do the work that I am now doing. I was unable to get my old place in the cloth room on the Suffolk or on any other corporation. I next tried the dressrooms on the Lawrence Cor, but did not succeed in getting a place. I almost concluded to give up and go back to Claremont, but thought I would try once more. So I went to my old overseer on the Tremont Cor. I had no idea that he would want one, but he did, and I went to work last Tuesday warping—the same work I used to do.

It is very hard indeed and sometimes I think I shall not be able to endure it. I never worked so hard in my life but perhaps I shall get used to it. I shall try hard to do so for there is no other work that I can do unless I spin and that I shall not undertake on any account. I presume you have heard before this that the wages are to be reduced on the 20th of this month. It is true and there seems to be a good deal of excitement on the subject but I can not tell what will be the consequence. The companies pretend they are losing immense sums every *day* and therefore they are obliged to lessen the wages, but this seems perfectly absurd to me for they are constantly making *repairs* and it seems to me that this would not be if there were really any danger of their being obliged to *stop* the mills.

It is very difficult for any one to get into the mill on any corporation. All seem to be very full of help. I expect to be paid about two dollars a week but it will be dearly earned .24 I cannot tell how it is but never since I have worked in the mill have I been so very tired as I have for the last week but it may be owing to the long rest I have had for the last six months. I have not told you that I do not board on the Lawrence. The reason of this is because I wish to be nearer the mill and I do not wish to pay the extra \$.12 per week

(I should not be obliged to do it if I boarded at 15) and I know that they are not able to give it me. Beside this I am so near I can go and see them as often as I wish. So considering all things I think I have done the best I could. I do not like here very well and am very sure I never shall as well as at Mother Guilds. I can now realize how very kind the whole family have ever been to me. It seems like going home when I go there which is every day. But now I see I have not told you yet where I do board. It is at No. 5 Tremont Corporation. Please enlighten all who wish for information. There is one thing which I forgot to bring with

me and which I want very much. That is my rubbers. They hang in the back room at uncle Jerrys.<sup>26</sup> If Olive comes down here I presume you can send them by her, but if you should not have the opportunity to send them do not trouble yourself about them. There is another thing I wish to mention—about my fare down here. If you paid it all the way as I understand you did there is something wrong about it. When we stopped at Concord to take the cars, I went to the ticket office to get a ticket which I knew I should be obliged to have. When I called for it I told the man that my fare to Lowell was paid all the way and I wanted a ticket to Lowell. He told me if this was the case the Stagedriver would get the ticket for me and I supposed of course he would. But he did *not*, and when the ticket master called for my ticket in the *cars*, I was obliged to give him a dollar. Sometimes I have thought that the fare might not have been paid beside farther than Concord. If this is the case all is right. But if it is not, then I have paid a dollar too much and gained the character of trying to cheat the company out of my fare, for the man thought I was lying to him. I suppose I want to know how it is and wish it could be settled for I do not like that any one should think me capable of such a thing, even though that person be an utter stranger. But enough of this. The Whigs of Lowell had a great time on the night of the 3rd. They had an immense procession of men on foot bearing *torches* and *banners* got up for the occasion. The houses were illuminated (Whigs houses) and by the way I should think the whole of *Lowell* were Whigs. I went out to see the illuminations and they did truly look splendid. The Merrimack house was illuminated from attic to cellar. Every pane of glass in the house had a half candle to it and there were many others lighted in the same way. One entire block on the Merrimack Cor[poration] with the exception of one tenement which doubtless was occupied by a free soiler who would not illuminate on any account whatever.

(Monday Eve) I have been to work today and think I shall manage to get along with the work. I am not so tired as I was last week. I have not yet found out what wages I shall get but presume they will be about \$2.00 per week exclusive of board. I think of nothing further to write excepting I wish you to prevail on Henry to write to me, also tell *Olive* to write and *Eveline* when she comes.

Give my love to uncle Jerry and aunt Betsey and tell little Lois that "Cousin Carra" thanks her very much for the *apple* she sent her. Her health is about the same that it was when she was at Claremont. No one has much hope of her ever being any better.

Write soon. Yours affectionately

Mary S Paul

P.S. Do not forget to direct to No. 5 Tremont Cor and tell all others to do the same.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What does Paul seem to like best about her situation? What disturbs her most?
2. Based on the evidence here, does Paul seem to be exploited?
3. What steps does Paul take to try to preserve or improve her reputation? What about her social standing, and her position in her family?

## 5-5 Women's Bonds

*Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley was a New England intellectual and educator. She and her husband, Samuel Ripley, were part of a circle that included Transcendentalist writer Ralph Waldo Emerson. They lived in the suburbs of Boston, where they raised seven children and ran a boarding school for boys.*

**Source:** Mrs. Samuel Ripley, from *Women of Our First Century*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott & Co., 1877. pp. 85-86.

"DEAR SOPHIA,—

"Can there be a possible chance that I may never look upon your dear face again? Am I to stand on the declivity of life, while one after another drops from my side of those who have been so long parts of myself? You are the vision of my nights; you appear to me for the first time in the little parlor of the house in South Street, a graceful and bright being of sixteen or seventeen, with a becoming straw hat and a most agreeable smile. I still see the corner of the room where you sat, though I see nothing else connected with the visit. Then the scene changes to your uncle Blake's, where I found you one morning practicing on the guitar before the family had arisen from their beds. After your clos-

er connection with us as a family, our interviews so crowd together in the background of the past that I am kept awake as if solving a mathematical problem to arrange them in their proper time and place as they press in confusion upon the scene. How much we enjoyed those evening rides to Cambridge, to the house you had planned and built, where we forgot, for an hour or two, the school bondage of home! How much you did to soften the pillow of decline and death for the father I loved and respected so much! How can I recall or arrange the happy meeting we have had together as a family in Waltham or Lowell! How much Martha has always enjoyed, and still enjoys, your society! Do you wonder that I should desire to see you now? Still, I should not be willing to see you at the risk of exciting and doing you harm. So I will try to content myself with thinking of you with hope when I can. But sorrow, not hope, is the color of old age.

"Your Sister"

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What traits does Ripley value in Bradford? What is the basis of their bond?
2. What does the history of their relationship as recounted here tell us about women's roles in the mid-nineteenth century?

## 5-6 Drunks of Many Colors, All Men

*There was a significant overlap between women who were involved in the women's rights movement, abolitionism and temperance – activists who sought to reduce or eliminate the consumption of alcohol. Men's drunkenness, and especially lower-class men's drunkenness, was often cited by those in the temperance movement as the cause of financial ruin, destruction of families, and general moral decay.*

**Source:** Shadd, Mary Ann. "Editorials." *The Provincial Freeman* 1854-1859. Excerpted in Dorothy Sterling, *We are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997. pp. 169-170.

INTEMPERANCE—A colored man passed under the windows of this office on Saturday, "full of strange oaths," and very indiscreet expressions, the promptings of the god to whom he had been pouring in his libations. There is a law against furnishing drink to

Indians, and we cannot but think that a similar restriction applied to the "sons of Ham" would be a wholesome protection both to themselves and others - Planet.

The Planet gets worse, and worse! Whenever it can put a word in edge-wise which will bear unjustly upon colored men it does so. The colored people are not wild Indians, neither do they drink more whiskey than their white friends hereabouts. Every colored man must be prohibited from drinking because one drank freely. Who patronize the saloons, taverns &c in this place? Indians and colored men only? No! We believe in passing a strict prohibitory law that will not only prevent Indians and colored men from getting drunk, but will stop white men as well and not only the "inferior" classes but a drunken Editor occasionally.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What is the first writer's point?
2. Why does the second writer take a humorous approach to the subject?

## 5-7 The Indestructible Skirt

*Technology and industry were not infrequently deployed in the service of fashion – a growth market, in the period when the groundwork for modern consumer culture was laid in the United States.*

**Source:** "W.S. & C.H. Thomson's Skirt Manufactory." *Harper's Weekly*. February 19, 1859.

### EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

#### Article IV

#### THOMSON'S CROWN-SKIRT FACTORY.

The accompanying illustrations will introduce our readers to another of the great manufacturing establishments of New York—Thomson's Skirt Factory; an establishment which provides healthy and lucrative employment for one thousand girls, and furnishes an indispensable article of dress to from three thousand to four thousand ladies daily.

The manufacture of hoop skirts has been heretofore described in this journal. We need only add here

that the peculiarities of Messrs. Thomson's manufactures appear to be an "eyelet fastening," by which the tapes and hoops of skirts are fastened, and which is said to be indestructible; a watch-spring contrivance, by whose aid a "graceful backward fall" is said to be given to the dress; a "slide" which will not slip; and a "skirt-supporter," which obviates the pressure on the lower part of the trunk, and throws the weight of all the skirts upon the shoulders.

The number of girls employed by the Messrs. Thomson will average, as we said, one thousand. The wages of these girls vary, of course, according to their experience, industry, and skill. Smart girls, we are told, can easily make \$4 a week, and a salary as high as \$16 is paid at least in one instance. Four dollars a week, it need hardly be remarked, is very fair remuneration for labor which is neither excessive nor unhealthy. Most of the girls who work in this factory have been taken from the ranks of plain sewers, and education to the hoop skirt manufacture. The whole establishment is under the superintendence of a woman, who from the first has exercised control over the employment of hands, the arrangement of work, and the remuneration paid. Even the accountants of the factory are women.

The quantities of raw material consumed in these large establishments are enormous. Of steel-spring



wire over 800,000 yards, and of tape 150,000 yards, are used per week, making together a line long enough to reach from New York to Boston. Five hundred labor-saving machines of various kinds are in constant use; many of which produce effects almost magical. One clasp cutting machine, for instance, produces the incredible number of 200 clasps a minute. Nor is this enormous supply excessive; for over 250,000 clasps, slides, and eyelets are swallowed up in hoop skirts daily.

The revilers of the hoop will thus perceive that it is, after all, an institution not wholly useless, inasmuch as in this establishment alone it feeds, clothes, and warms over one thousand females, many of whom have children or aged persons depending on them. We are glad to hear that the profits of the manufacture are

going to produce yet another benefit. The Messrs. Thomson, we understand, contemplate the establishment of a library for their employees, and likewise propose to have a competent lecturer give, in one of the great halls of their establishment, a course of free lectures to the girls and their friends. This is not such a heartless age after all.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What impresses the author most about the skirt factory?
2. What impresses you the most about the description of the skirt factory? What about the skirts?
3. What limitations would a garment like this place on its wearer?

## 5-8 Mothers and the Early Habits of Industry (1834)

*Mothers were held accountable for the moral and practical development of children. As the United States industrialized and new forms of labor were connected with material success, mothers were expected to adjust their child-rearing techniques.*

If, as a distinguished writer has observed, "Man is a bundle of habits," there is perhaps scarcely a subject to which maternal influence should be more unceasingly directed, than the early formation of right habits. And probably there is no one habit more important in a character formed for usefulness, than that of industry and regular application to business. This habit should be commenced at a very early period; long before the little ones can be very profitable from the fruits of their industry. I know it is often alleged that the labour and care of teaching young children various useful employments, is greater than all the benefits which may be expected to result. But this, I believe, is a fact only in regard to a few of their first lessons. I have a friend, who is both a gentleman and a scholar. For the sake of employment, his father required his little son, from the early age of eight years, to copy all his letters. I have often heard this friend ascribe his business talent, which, in regard to despatch, punctuality, and order, is seldom equalled, to his father's unremitting efforts, to keep him, at stated intervals, regularly employed. In the formation of character, I had almost said, habits are every thing. Could the whole amount of knowledge, which a young man has acquired, just entering profes-

sional life, after nine years laborious preparatory study, have been at once imparted to his mind, without any effort on his part, the value to him would be immeasurably less than the slow process by which it was acquired. The mental discipline, the intellectual habits, are worth even more to him than the knowledge gained. But the importance of a habit may perhaps be best ascertained by its practical result. We refer mothers to the annals of great and good men, in all ages of the world, who have been the benefactors of mankind. By attention to their early history, it will be found, that their learning and talents are not merely the effects of genius, as many suppose, but are the precious fruits of which industry and persevering application were the early bud. The Bible furnishes impressive examples on this subject. Adam in a state of innocence, was required to "dress the garden, and to keep it." The glorified beings in heaven rest not day nor night. It is said of the great exemplar of the Christian, that "he went about doing good." We are both instructed and warned by such scripture passages as the following: Ex. xx. 9. Eccl. ix. 10: v. 12. Prov. xxiv. 30-34: xx. 4. Ezekiel x. 49. Rom. xii. 11. 2 Thess. v. 10-12. Rev. vii. 15. When habits of industry and personal effort have been faithfully cherished, it will not be difficult to cultivate those of benevolence and self-denial. Children should be early encouraged and induced to contribute to the various institutions of benevolence in our country; but let it never be done without an effort, and a sacrifice, on their part. They should be made to feel, with David, that "they will not offer to the Lord a sacrifice which costs them nothing." It is a principle which they may easily apprehend, and one that will be of great value in forming their future characters. At a very early age they

can be made to understand something of the wants and woes of the heathen world; and when their sympathies are excited, instruct them in what manner they may begin to aid in sending abroad the blessings of salvation. Mothers may encourage their little ones to resolve how much they will endeavour to earn in this way, and for such purposes in a year. Let a little book of accounts be prepared for them, in which all their little earnings shall regularly be entered, and as soon as they are able, let them keep these accounts themselves. In this way, several useful habits may be associated, children may be thus early taught that money is valuable, rather as enabling them to do good, than as a means of selfish or sensual gratification. The want of suitable regular employment for children, particularly for boys, is an evil extensively felt and deplored, especially by men in professional life, and the inhabitants of large cities and populous villages. Perhaps there is no one class of persons in our country, so highly favored in this particular as farmers; and it is one of the peculiar blessings of their condition, of which I fear they are not sufficiently aware, to be suitably grateful. But in respect to others, a remedy must be supplied, or their children will be ruined. If all other resources fail, it is better to consider a regular portion of each day as "a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together," to be again dispersed for the same object, rather than indulge or connive at habits of idleness. At one of the most respectable colleges in New-England, the President and Professors have had the wisdom and precaution for a number of years, regularly to send their sons, during a considerable portion of each year, among their friends in the country, to labor on farms. The boys themselves are delighted with the plan, and all the judicious commend it, as affording the most healthful, improving, and pleasant employment. And

probably even greater attainments are made in their studies, than if constantly confined in school the whole year. And perhaps not the least advantage which will result, will be found in giving to them an athletic frame, and a sound and vigorous constitution. But in respect to daughters, the evil cannot be so great. The domestic duties of every family furnish sufficient employment to give a habit of industry to our daughters. And with these duties, it is disgraceful for any young lady to be wholly unacquainted; not less disgraceful, certainly, than to be ignorant of her alphabet; if the value of knowledge is to be estimated by its practical utility. Whenever a young lady becomes herself the mistress of a family, no matter how elevated her station may be, "looking well to the ways of her household" is her profession. What would be thought of the physician, or the pastor, who should enter upon his profession, ignorant of the duties it involved, because he was rich enough to employ a substitute? A knowledge of domestic duties in its various branches and operations, are indispensable for females, and mothers are held responsible, that their daughters acquire it, by a systematic and thorough course of training.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What habits are said to be most useful? How is the encouragement of this habit beneficial to the growth of urban America and the rise of industry and commerce?
2. Why does the author view idleness as a more significant problem for boys than for girls?
3. What professional skills should be learned by boys? How do these skills compare or contrast with the professional skills recommended for girls?

### 5-9 Female Industry Association, from the New York Herald (1845)

*The wide variety of industrial trades in which women worked is demonstrated in this document along with the appalling conditions under which they worked and the terrible wage they received. This early meeting was an effort to band together to improve wages and conditions. The condescending tone of the newspaper demonstrates that difficulty of their efforts.*

Seldom or never did the Superior Court of the City Hall contain such an array of beauty under suffering, together with common sense and good order, as it did yesterday, on the occasion of the meeting of the female industrial classes, in their endeavors to remedy the

wrongs and oppressions under which they labor, and, for some time past, have labored. At the hour appointed for the adjourned meeting, four o'clock, about 700 females, generally of the most interesting age and appearance, were assembled; and, after a trifling delay, a young lady stepped forward, and in rather a low, diffident tone, moved that Miss Gray take the Chair, which, having been put and carried in the usual business-like way- Miss Gray (a young woman, neatly dressed, of some 22 or 24 years of age, fair complexion, interesting, thoughtful and intelligent cast of countenance) came forward from the back part of the room. She proceeded to make a few observations on the nature and objects of their movements and intentions, and stated that, finding the class she belonged to were unable to support themselves, honestly and

respectably, by their industry, under the present prices they received for their work, had, therefore, come to the determination of endeavoring to obtain something better, by appealing to the public at large, and showing the amount of sufferings under which they at present labored. She then went on to give instances of what wages they were in the habit of receiving in different branches of the business in which she was engaged, and mentioned several employers by name who only paid them from \$.10 to \$.18 per day; others, who were proficient in the business, after 12 or 14 hours hard labor, could only get about \$.25 per day; one employer offered them \$.20 per day, and said that if they did not take it, he would obtain girls from Connecticut who would work for less even than what he offered. The only employer who had done them justice was Mr. Beck, of Fourteenth street, who only allowed his girls to be out about two hours, when he complied with their reasonable demands. He was a man who was worthy of the thanks of every girl present, and they wished him health, wealth, and happiness. How was it possible that on such an income they could support themselves decently and honestly, let alone supporting widowed mothers, and some two, three, or four helpless brothers and sisters, which many of them had. Pieces of work for which they last year got seven shillings, this year they could only get three shillings. A female stepped forward . . . and enquired if the association was confined to any one branch of business, or was it open to all who were suffering under like privations and injustice? The Chairwoman observed that it was opened to all who were alike oppressed, and it was only by a firm cooperation they could accomplish what they were laboring for. Another female of equally interesting appearance (Mrs. Storms) then came forward and said that it was necessary the nature and objects of the party should be distinctly understood, particularly by those who were immediately interested; their own position should be fully known. If the supply of labor in the market was greater than the demand, it followed as a matter of course that they could not control the prices; and, therefore, it would be well for those present to look around them and see into what other channels they could turn their industry with advantage. There were many branches of business in which men were employed that they could as well fill. Let them memorialize the merchants in the dry goods department, for instance, and show them this also. That there were hundreds of females in this city who were able to keep the books as well as any man in it. There were various other branches of business in which men were employed for which females alone were suitable and intended. Let these men go to the

fields and seek their livelihood as men ought to do, and leave the females their legitimate employment. There were the drapers also, and a number of other branches of trade in which females could be as well if not better and more properly employed. By these means, some thousands would be afforded employment in branches much more valuable to themselves and the community generally. She then proceeded to recommend those present to be moderate in their demands, and not to ask for more than the circumstances of trade would warrant, for if they acted otherwise, it would tend to their more ultimate ruin. Under present circumstances, a very few years broke down their constitutions, and they had no other resource but the alms-house, and what could bring this about sooner than the bread and water diet and rough shelter, which many of them at present were obliged to put up with.

The proceedings of the previous meeting were then read and approved of. A number of delegates from the following trades entered their names to act as a Committee to regulate future proceedings: tailoresses, plain and coarse sewing, shirt makers, book-folders and stitchers, cap makers, straw workers, dress makers, crimpers, fringe and lace makers, &c.

The following preamble and resolutions were agreed to: Whereas, the young women attached to the different trades in the city of New York, having toiled a long time for a remuneration totally inadequate for the maintenance of life, and feeling the truth of the Gospel assertion, that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," have determined to take upon themselves the task of asserting their rights against unjust and mercenary employers. It must be remembered by those to whom we address ourselves, that our object is not extortion; our desire, not to reap advantages which will be denied to our employers. The boon we ask is founded upon right, alone! The high prices demanded by tradesmen for their goods renders them amply able to advance wages to a standard, which, while it obviates the present cause of complaint, will render laborers only the more cheerful at their work, and still more earnest and willing to serve their employers. The scarcity of employment, and the low rates of pay which have so long prevailed, have, undoubtedly driven many virtuous females to courses which might, otherwise, have been avoided. Many of the female operatives of this city have families dependent upon their exertions; aged fathers and mothers-young brothers-helpless sisters, who, but for their exertions, must inevitably starve, or betake themselves to that scarcely less horrible alternative-the poor house! Such a picture is enough to

bestir the most inert to active exertion; the love of life is a passion inherent in us all, and we feel persuaded that we need no better excuse for the movement to which the glaring injustice of our employers has driven us! . . .

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What gender inequalities and difficulties are noted in these minutes? What solutions are proposed and discussed?
2. Summarize the resolutions that are finally made.

## 5-10 The Harbinger, Female Workers of Lowell (1836)

*The famous Lowell system of factory management attracted young farm girls to work in the fully mechanized factories of Lowell. The system was paternalistic and included, at first, good wages, clean places to live and close supervision. The response was great but as economic times declined, so did wages and working conditions. This document explores the life of Lowell factory workers during this time.*

We have lately visited the cities of Lowell [Mass.] and Manchester [N.H.] and have had an opportunity of examining the factory system more closely than before. We had distrusted the accounts which we had heard from persons engaged in the labor reform now beginning to agitate New England. We could scarcely credit the statements made in relation to the exhausting nature of the labor in the mills, and to the manner in which the young women—the operatives—lived in their boardinghouses, six sleeping in a room, poorly ventilated. We went through many of the mills, talked particularly to a large number of the operatives, and ate at their boardinghouses, on purpose to ascertain by personal inspection the facts of the case. We assure our readers that very little information is possessed, and no correct judgments formed, by the public at large, of our factory system, which is the first germ of the industrial or commercial feudalism that is to spread over our land. . . . In Lowell live between seven and eight thousand young women, who are generally daughters of farmers of the different states of New England. Some of them are members of families that were rich in the generation before. . . . The operatives work thirteen hours a day in the summer time, and from daylight to dark in the winter. At half past four in the morning the factory bell rings, and at five the girls must be in the mills. A clerk, placed as a watch, observes those who are a few minutes behind the time, and effectual means are taken to stimulate to punctuality. This is the morning commencement of the industrial discipline (should we not rather say industrial tyranny?) which is established in these associations of this moral and Christian community. At seven the girls are allowed

thirty minutes for breakfast, and at noon thirty minutes more for dinner, except during the first quarter of the year, when the time is extended to forty-five minutes. But within this time they must hurry to their boardinghouses and return to the factory, and that through the hot sun or the rain or the cold. A meal eaten under such circumstances must be quite unfavorable to digestion and health, as any medical man will inform us. After seven o'clock in the evening the factory bell sounds the close of the day's work. Thus thirteen hours per day of close attention and monotonous labor are extracted from the young women in these manufactories. . . . So fatigued—we should say, exhausted and worn out, but we wish to speak of the system in the simplest language—are numbers of girls that they go to bed soon after their evening meal, and endeavor by a comparatively long sleep to resuscitate their weakened frames for the toil of the coming day. When capital has got thirteen hours of labor daily out of a being, it can get nothing more. It would be a poor speculation in an industrial point of view to own the operative; for the trouble and expense of providing for times of sickness and old age would more than counterbalance the difference between the price of wages and the expenses of board and clothing. The far greater number of fortunes accumulated by the North in comparison with the South shows that hiring labor is more profitable for capital than slave labor. Now let us examine the nature of the labor itself, and the conditions under which it is performed. Enter with us into the large rooms, when the looms are at work. The largest that we saw is in the Amoskeag Mills at Manchester. . . . The din and clatter of these five hundred looms, under full operation, struck us on first entering as something frightful and infernal, for it seemed such an atrocious violation of one of the faculties of the human soul, the sense of hearing. After a while we became somewhat used to it, and by speaking quite close to the ear of an operative and quite loud, we could hold a conversation and make the inquiries we wished. The girls attended upon an average three looms; many attended four, but this requires a very active person, and the most unremitting care. However, a great many do it. Attention to two is as much as should be demanded of an operative. This gives us some idea of the application

required during the thirteen hours of daily labor. The atmosphere of such a room cannot of course be pure; on the contrary, it is charged with cotton filaments and dust, which, we are told, are very injurious to the lungs. On entering the room, although the day was warm, we remarked that the windows were down. We asked the reason, and a young woman answered very naively, and without seeming to be in the least aware that this privation of fresh air was anything else than perfectly natural, that "when the wind blew, the threads did not work well." After we had been in the room for fifteen or twenty minutes, we found ourselves, as did the persons who accompanied us, in quite a perspiration, produced by a certain moisture which we observed in the air, as well as by the heat. . . . The young women sleep upon an average six in a room, three beds to a room. There is no privacy, no retirement, here. It is almost

impossible to read or write alone, as the parlor is full and so many sleep in the same chamber. A young woman remarked to us that if she had a letter to write, she did it on the head of a bandbox, sitting on a trunk, as there was no space for a table. So live and toil the young women of our country in the boardinghouses and manufactories which the rich and influential of our land have built for them.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Summarize this accounts description of living conditions in Lowell. What is the daily life of a Lowell worker like?
2. Describe the working conditions presented in this account? What hazards and unhealthful conditions are observed?

### 5-11 A Lowell Mill Girl Tells her Story (1836)

*Harriet Hanson Robinson worked in the textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts from the age of ten in 1834 until 1848. Later, as the wife of a newspaper editor, Robinson wrote an account of her earlier life as female factory worker and a description of the strike of 1836. Deeply involved in the political culture of her time, Robinson explained some of the family dynamics involved, and portrayed women as active participants in their own lives.*

**Source:** Internet Modern History; <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/robinson-lowell.html>

In what follows, I shall confine myself to a description of factory life in Lowell, Massachusetts, from 1832 to 1848, since, with that phase of Early Factory Labor in New England, I am the most familiar—because I was a part of it. In 1832, Lowell was little more than a factory village. Five "corporations" were started, and the cotton mills belonging to them were building. Help was in great demand and stories were told all over the country of the new factory place, and the high wages that were offered to all classes of workpeople; stories that reached the ears of mechanics' and farmers' sons and gave new life to lonely and dependent women in distant towns and farmhouses. . . . Troops of young girls came from different parts of New England, and from Canada, and men were employed to collect them at so much a head, and deliver them at the factories. \* \* \* At the time the Lowell cotton mills were started the caste of the factory girl was the lowest among the employ-

ments of women. In England and in France, particularly, great injustice had been done to her real character. She was represented as subjected to influences that must destroy her purity and self-respect. In the eyes of her overseer she was but a brute, a slave, to be beaten, pinched and pushed about. It was to overcome this prejudice that such high wages had been offered to women that they might be induced to become mill girls, in spite of the opprobrium that still clung to this degrading occupation. . . . The early mill girls were of different ages. Some were not over ten years old; a few were in middle life, but the majority were between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. The very young girls were called "doffers." They "doffed," or took off, the full bobbins from the spinning frames, and replaced them with empty ones. These mites worked about fifteen minutes every hour and the rest of the time was their own. When the overseer was kind they were allowed to read, knit, or go outside the mill yard to play. They were paid two dollars a week. The working hours of all the girls extended from five o'clock in the morning until seven in the evening, with one half hour each, for breakfast and dinner. Even the doffers were forced to be on duty nearly fourteen hours a day. This was the greatest hardship in the lives of these children. Several years later a ten hour law was passed, but not until long after some of these little doffers were old enough to appear before the legislative committee on the subject, and plead, by their presence, for a reduction of the hours of labor. Those of the mill girls who had homes generally worked from eight to ten months in the year; the rest of the time was spent with parents or friends. A few taught school during the summer months. Their life in the factory was made pleasant to them. In those

days there was no need of advocating the doctrine of the proper relation between employer and employed. Help was too valuable to be ill-treated... \* \* \* The most prevailing incentive to labor was to secure the means of education for some male member of the family. To make a gentleman of a brother or a son, to give him a college education, was the dominant thought in the minds of a great many of the better class of mill girls. I have known more than one to give every cent of her wages, month after month, to her brother, that he might get the education necessary to enter some profession. I have known a mother to work years in this way for her boy. I have known women to educate young men by their earnings, who were not sons or relatives. There are many men now living who were helped to an education by the wages of the early mill girls. It is well to digress here a little, and speak of the influence the possession of money had on the characters of some of these women. We can hardly realize what a change the cotton factory made in the status of the working women. Hitherto woman had always been a money saving rather than a money earning, member of the community. Her labor could command but small return. If she worked out as servant, or "help," her wages were from 50 cents to \$1.00 a week; or, if she went from house to house by the day to spin and weave, or do tailoress work, she could get but 75 cents a week and her meals. As teacher, her services were not in demand, and the arts, the professions, and even the trades and industries, were nearly all closed to her. As late as 1840 there were only seven vocations outside the home into which the women of New England had entered. At this time woman had no property rights. A widow could be left without her share of her husband's (or the family) property, an "encumbrance" to his estate. A father could make his will without reference to his daughter's share of the inheritance. He usually left her a home on the farm as long as she remained single. A woman was not supposed to be capable of spending her own, or of using

other people's money. In Massachusetts, before 1840, a woman could not, legally, be treasurer of her own sewing society, unless some man were responsible for her. The law took no cognizance of woman as a money spender. She was a ward, an appendage, a relict. Thus it happened that if a woman did not choose to marry, or, when left a widow, to remarry, she had no choice but to enter one of the few employments open to her, or to become a burden on the charity of some relative. \* \* \* One of the first strikes that ever took place in this country was in Lowell in 1836. When it was announced that the wages were to be cut down, great indignation was felt, and it was decided to strike or "turn out" en masse. This was done. The mills were shut down, and the girls went from their several corporations in procession to the grove on Chapel Hill, and listened to incendiary speeches from some early labor reformers. One of the girls stood on a pump and gave vent to the feelings of her companions in a neat speech, declaring that it was their duty to resist all attempts at cutting down the wages. This was the first time a woman had spoken in public in Lowell, and the event caused surprise and consternation among her audience. It is hardly necessary to say that, so far as practical results are concerned, this strike did no good. The corporation would not come to terms. The girls were soon tired of holding out, and they went back to their work at the reduced rate of wages. The ill-success of this early attempt at resistance on the part of the wage element seems to have made a precedent for the issue of many succeeding strikes.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. According to Harriet Hanson Robinson, what was one of the primary reasons why women worked in the mills?
2. Describe the life of a mill girl as depicted by Robinson. What is her assessment of the efficacy of the strike in 1836?

## FAMILY BUSINESS: SLAVERY AND PATRIARCHY, 1800–1860

### 6-1 An Enslaved Wife's Letter to Her Husband (1840)

*One of the most appalling aspects of slavery was the separation of families. The law did not recognize any legal status for slave marriages or, in general, family rights. Thus, slave-owners were free to exercise their property rights to buy and sell slaves individually. Many slave families were separated, with members sold to different owners. Slaves used a variety of means, including letters and informal communication networks, to attempt to stay in contact with loved ones. As this letter suggests, they were only sometimes successful.*

**Source:** In *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 144-145

Richmond Va. October 27 1840

Dear Husband —

this is the third letter that I have written to you,

and have not received any from you; and dont no the reason that I have not received any from you. I think very hard of it. the trader has been here three times to Look at me. I wish that you would try to see if you can get any one to buy me up there. if you dont come down here this Sunday, perhaps you wont see me anymore. give my love to them all, and tell them all that perhaps I shan't see you any more. give my love to your mother in particular, and to many wines, and to aunt betsy, and all the children; tell Jane and Mother they must come down a fortnight before christmas. I wish to see you all, but I expect I nevershall see you all — never no more.

I remain your Dear and affectionate Wife,  
Sargry Brown.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What steps has Sargry Brown taken, and what does she suggest her husband should do, to try to reunite?
2. What are Brown's biggest concerns?

### 6-2 Escape from Slavery

*Fugitive-slave narratives were widely read in the years leading up to the U.S. Civil War. Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom, or The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery, published in 1860, was particularly popular. William Craft describes his and his wife's escape from slavery in Georgia to free lives, first in Boston and eventually in England, where they were active in abolitionist circles.*

*Laws, social standards, and everyday practice are rarely perfectly aligned in any society. They were often in direct conflict with each other in the slave-holding South. In the first of these excerpts, Craft alludes to the particular dangers slavery holds for women. In the second passage, he*

*outlines plans for escape, and in the third he details some of the humiliations he and his wife faced even after winning their freedom.*

**Source:** Craft, William. *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom, or The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery*. London: W. Tweedie, 1860. pp 7-18, 29-31, 104-107

My wife's new mistress was decidedly more humane than the majority of her class. My wife has always given her credit for not exposing her to many of the worst features of slavery. For instance, it is a common practice in the slave States for ladies, when angry with their maids, to send them to the calybuce sugar-house, or to some other place established for the pur-

pose of punishing slaves, and have them severely flogged; and I am sorry it is a fact, that the villains to whom those defenceless creatures are sent, not only flog them as they are ordered, but frequently compel them to submit to the greatest indignity. Oh! if there is any one thing under the wide canopy of heaven, horrible enough to stir a man's soul, and to make his very blood boil, it is the thought of his dear wife, his unprotected sister, or his young and virtuous daughters, struggling to save themselves from falling a prey to such demons!

It always appears strange to me that any one who was not born a slaveholder, and steeped to the very core in the demoralizing atmosphere of the Southern States, can in any way palliate slavery. It is still more surprising to see virtuous ladies looking with patience upon, and remaining indifferent to, the existence of a system that exposes nearly two millions of their own sex in the manner I have mentioned, and that too in a professedly free and Christian country. There is, however, great consolation in knowing that God is just, and will not let the oppressor of the weak, and the spoiler of the virtuous, escape unpunished here and hereafter.

I believe a similar retribution to that which destroyed Sodom is hanging over the slaveholders. My sincere prayer is that they may not provoke God, by persisting in a reckless course of wickedness, to pour out his consuming wrath upon them.

I must now return to our history.

My old master had the reputation of being a very humane and Christian man, but he thought nothing of selling my poor old father, and dear aged mother, at separate times, to different persons, to be dragged off never to behold each other again, till summoned to appear before the great tribunal of heaven. But, oh! what a happy meeting it will be on that great day for those faithful souls. I say a happy meeting, because I never saw persons more devoted to the service of God than they. But how will the case stand with those reckless traffickers in human flesh and blood, who plunged the poisonous dagger of separation into those loving hearts which God had for so many years closely joined together—nay, sealed as it were with his own hands for the eternal courts of heaven? It is not for me to say what will become of those heartless tyrants. I must leave them in the hands of an all-wise and just God, who will, in his own good time, and in his own way, avenge the wrongs of his oppressed people.

My old master also sold a dear brother and a sister, in the same manner as he did my father and mother. The reason he assigned for disposing of my parents, as well as of several other aged slaves, was, that "they were getting old, and would soon become valueless in the market, and therefore he intended to sell off all the

old stock, and buy in a young lot." A most disgraceful conclusion for a man to come to, who made such great professions of religion!

This shameful conduct gave me a thorough hatred, not for true Christianity, but for slave-holding piety.

My old master, then, wishing to make the most of the rest of his slaves, apprenticed a brother and myself out to learn trades: he to a blacksmith, and myself to a cabinet-maker. If a slave has a good trade, he will let or sell for more than a person without one, and many slaveholders have their slaves taught trades on this account. But before our time expired, my old master wanted money; so he sold my brother, and then mortgaged my sister, a dear girl about fourteen years of age, and myself, then about sixteen, to one of the banks, to get money to speculate in cotton. This we knew nothing of at the moment; but time rolled on, the money became due, my master was unable to meet his payments; so the bank had us placed upon the auction stand and sold to the highest bidder.

My poor sister was sold first: she was knocked down to a planter who resided at some distance in the country. Then I was called upon the stand. While the auctioneer was crying the bids, I saw the man that had purchased my sister getting her into a cart, to take her to his home. I at once asked a slave friend who was standing near the platform, to run and ask the gentleman if he would please to wait till I was sold, in order that I might have an opportunity of bidding her good-bye. He sent me word back that he had some distance to go and could not wait.

I then turned to the auctioneer, fell upon my knees, and humbly prayed him to let me just step down and bid my last sister farewell. But, instead of granting me this request, he grasped me by the neck, and in a commanding tone of voice, and with a violent oath, exclaimed, "Get up! You can do the wench no good; therefore there is no use in your seeing her."

On rising, I saw the cart in which she sat moving slowly off; and, as she clasped her hands with a grasp that indicated despair, and looked pitifully round towards me, I also saw the large silent tears trickling down her cheeks. She made a farewell bow, and buried her face in her lap. This seemed more than I could bear. It appeared to swell my aching heart to its utmost. But before I could fairly recover, the poor girl was gone;—gone, and I have never had the good fortune to see her from that day to this! Perhaps I should have never heard of her again, had it not been for the untiring efforts of my good old mother, who became free a few years ago by purchase, and, after a great deal of difficulty, found my sister residing with a family in Mississippi. My mother at once wrote to me, informing



me of the fact, and requesting me to do something to get her free; and I am happy to say that, partly by lecturing occasionally, and through the sale of an engraving of my wife in the disguise in which she escaped, together with the extreme kindness and generosity of Miss Burdett Coutts, Mr. George Richardson of Plymouth, and a few other friends, I have nearly accomplished this. It would be to me a great and ever-glorious achievement to restore my sister to our dear mother, from whom she was forcibly driven in early life.

I was knocked down to the cashier of the bank to which we were mortgaged, and ordered to return to the cabinet shop where I previously worked.

But the thought of the harsh auctioneer not allowing me to bid my dear sister farewell, sent red-hot indignation darting like lightning through every vein. It quenched my tears, and appeared to set my brain on fire, and made me crave for power to avenge our wrongs! But, alas! we were only slaves, and had no legal rights; consequently we were compelled to smother our wounded feelings, and crouch beneath the iron heel of despotism.

I must now give the account of our escape; but, before doing so, it may be well to quote a few passages from the fundamental laws of slavery; in order to give some idea of the legal as well as the social tyranny from which we fled.

According to the law of Louisiana, "A slave is one who is in the power of a master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, and his labour; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything but what must belong to his master." — *Civil Code, art. 35.*

In South Carolina it is expressed in the following language:—"Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed and judged in law to be *chattels personal* in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators, and assigns, *to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever.*"—2 *Brevard's Digest, 229.*

The Constitution of Georgia has the following (Art. 4, sec. 12):—"Any person who shall maliciously dismember or deprive a slave of life, shall suffer such punishment as would be inflicted in case the like offence had been committed on a free white person, and on the like proof, except in case of insurrection of such slave, and unless SUCH DEATH SHOULD HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT IN GIVING SUCH SLAVE MODERATE CORRECTION."—*Prince's Digest, 559.*

I have known slaves to be beaten to death, but as they died under "moderate correction," it was quite lawful; and of course the murderers were not inter-

fered with.

"If any slave, who shall be out of the house or plantation where such slave shall live, or shall be usually employed, or without some white person in company with such slave, shall *refuse to submit* to undergo the examination of *any white* person, (let him be ever so drunk or crazy), it shall be lawful for such white person to pursue, apprehend, and moderately correct such slave; and if such slave shall assault and strike such white person, such slave may be *lawfully killed.*"—2 *Brevard's Digest, 231.*

"Provided always," says the law, "that such striking be not done by the command and in the defence of the person or property of the owner, or other person having the government of such slave; in which case the slave shall be wholly excused."

According to this law, if a slave, by the direction of overseer, strike a white person who is beating said overseer's pig, "the slave shall be wholly excused." But, should the bondman, of his own accord, fight to defend his wife, or should his terrified daughter instinctively raise her hand and strike the wretch who attempts to violate her chastity, he or she shall, saith the model republican law, suffer death.

From having been myself a slave for nearly twenty-three years, I am quite prepared to say, that the practical working of slavery is worse than the odious laws by which it is governed.

At an early age we were taken by the persons who held us as property to Macon, the largest town in the interior of the State of Georgia, at which place we became acquainted with each other for several years before our marriage; in fact, our marriage was postponed for some time simply because one of the unjust and worse than Pagan laws under which we lived compelled all children of slave mothers to follow their condition. That is to say, the father of the slave may be the President of the Republic; but if the mother should be a slave at the infant's birth, the poor child is ever legally doomed to the same cruel fate.

It is a common practice for gentlemen (if I may call them such), moving in the highest circles of society, to be the fathers of children by their slaves, whom they can and do sell with the greatest impunity; and the more pious, beautiful, and virtuous the girls are, the greater the price they bring, and that too for the most infamous purposes.

Any man with money (let him be ever such a rough brute), can buy a beautiful and virtuous girl, and force her to live with him in a criminal connexion; and as the law says a slave shall have no higher appeal than the mere will of the master, she cannot escape, unless it be by flight or death.

In endeavouring to reconcile a girl to her fate, the master sometimes says that he would marry her if it was not unlawful. However, he will always consider her to be his wife, and will treat her as such; and she, on the other hand, may regard him as her lawful husband; and if they have any children, they will be free and well educated.

I am in duty bound to add, that while a great majority of such men care nothing for the happiness of the women with whom they live, nor for the children of whom they are the fathers, there are those to be found, even in that heterogeneous mass of licentious monsters, who are true to their pledges. But as the woman and her children are legally the property of the man, who stands in the anomalous relation to them of husband and father, as well as master, they are liable to be seized and sold for his debts, should he become involved.

There are several cases on record where such persons have been sold and separated for life. I know of some myself, but I have only space to glance at one.

I knew a very humane and wealthy gentleman, that bought a woman, with whom he lived as his wife. They brought up a family of children, among whom were three nearly white, well educated, and beautiful girls.

On the father being suddenly killed it was found that he had not left a will; but, as the family had always heard him say that he had no surviving relatives, they felt that their liberty and property were quite secured to them, and, knowing the insults to which they were exposed, now their protector was no more, they were making preparations to leave for a free State.

But, poor creatures, they were soon sadly undeceived. A villain residing at a distance, hearing of the circumstance, came forward and swore that he was a relative of the deceased; and as this man bore, or assumed, Mr. Slator's name, the case was brought before one of those horrible tribunals, presided over by a second Judge Jeffreys, and calling itself a court of justice, but before whom no coloured person, nor an abolitionist, was ever known to get his full rights.

A verdict was given in favour of the plaintiff, whom the better portion of the community thought had wilfully conspired to cheat the family.

Knowing that slaveholders have the privilege of taking their slaves to any part of the country they think proper, it occurred to me that, as my wife was nearly white, I might get her to disguise herself as an invalid gentleman, and assume to be my master, while I could attend as his slave, and that in this manner we might effect our escape. After I thought of the plan, I suggested it to my wife, but at first she shrank from the idea.

She thought it was almost impossible for her to assume that disguise, and travel a distance of 1,000 miles across the slave States. However, on the other hand, she also thought of her condition. She saw that the laws under which we lived did not recognize her to be a woman, but a mere chattel, to be bought and sold, or otherwise dealt with as her owner might see fit. Therefore the more she contemplated her helpless condition, the more anxious she was to escape from it. So she said, "I think it is almost too much for us to undertake; however, I feel that God is on our side, and with his assistance, notwithstanding all the difficulties, we shall be able to succeed. Therefore, if you will purchase the disguise, I will try to carry out the plan."

But after I concluded to purchase the disguise, I was afraid to go to any one to ask him to sell me the articles. It is unlawful in Georgia for a white man to trade with slaves without the master's consent. But, notwithstanding this, many persons will sell a slave any article that he can get the money to buy. Not that they sympathize with the slave, but merely because his testimony is not admitted in court against a free white person.

Therefore, with little difficulty I went to different parts of the town, at odd times, and purchased things piece by piece, (except the trowsers which she found necessary to make,) and took them home to the house where my wife resided. She being a ladies' maid, and a favourite slave in the family, was allowed a little room to herself; and amongst other pieces of furniture which I had made in my overtime, was a chest of drawers; so when I took the articles home, she locked them up carefully in these drawers. No one about the premises knew that she had anything of the kind. So when we fancied we had everything ready the time was fixed for the flight. But we knew it would not do to start off without first getting our master's consent to be away for a few days. Had we left without this, they would soon have had us back into slavery, and probably we should never have got another fair opportunity of even attempting to escape.

On leaving Boston, it was our intention to reach Halifax at least two or three days before the steamer from Boston touched there, *en route* for Liverpool; but, having been detained so long at Portland and St. John's, we had the misfortune to arrive at Halifax at dark, just two hours after the steamer had gone; consequently we had to wait there a fortnight, for the *Cambria*.

The coach was patched up, and reached Halifax with the luggage, soon after the passengers arrived. The only respectable hotel that was then in the town had suspended business, and was closed; so we went to the inn, opposite the market, where the coach

stopped: a most miserable, dirty hole it was.

Knowing that we were still under the influence of the low Yankee prejudice, I sent my wife in with the other passengers, to engage a bed for herself and husband. I stopped outside in the rain till the coach came up. If I had gone in and asked for a bed they would have been quite full. But as they thought my wife was white, she had no difficulty in securing apartments, into which the luggage was afterwards carried. The landlady, observing that I took an interest in the baggage, became somewhat uneasy, and went into my wife's room, and said to her, "Do you know the dark man downstairs?" "Yes, he is my husband." "Oh! I mean the black man—the *nigger*?" "I quite understand you; he is my husband." "My God!" exclaimed the woman as she flounced out and banged to the door. On going upstairs, I heard what had taken place: but, as we were there, and did not mean to leave that night, we did not disturb ourselves. On our ordering tea, the landlady sent word back to say that we must take it in the kitchen, or in our bed-room, as she had no other room for "niggers." We replied that we were not particular, and that they could send it up to our room,—which they did.

After the pro-slavery persons who were staying there heard that we were in, the whole house became agitated, and all sorts of oaths and fearful threats were heaped upon the "d—d niggers, for coming among white folks." Some of them said they would not stop there a minute if there was another house to go to.

The mistress came up the next morning to know how long we wished to stop. We said a fortnight. "Oh! dear me, it is impossible for us to accommodate you, and I think you had better go: you must understand, I

have no prejudice myself; I think a good deal of the coloured people, and have always been their friend; but if you stop here we shall lose all our customers, which we can't do no-how." We said we were glad to hear that she had "no prejudice," and was such a staunch friend to the coloured people. We also informed her that we would be sorry for her "customers" to leave on our account; and as it was not our intention to interfere with anyone, it was foolish for them to be frightened away. However, if she would get us a comfortable place, we would be glad to leave. The landlady said she would go out and try. After spending the whole morning in canvassing the town, she came to our room and said, "I have been from one end of the place to the other, but everybody is full." Having a little foretaste of the vulgar prejudice of the town, we did not wonder at this result. However, the landlady gave me the address of some respectable coloured families, whom she thought, "under the circumstances," might be induced to take us. And, as we were not at all comfortable—being compelled to sit, eat and sleep, in the same small room—we were quite willing to change our quarters.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What is the overall tone of this writing? What is the author trying to accomplish?
2. In the first excerpt, who are the victims? What are the social, moral, and practical consequences of the actions of the "very humane and wealthy gentleman"?
3. In the second passage, what is Ellen Craft's role?
4. Is the landlady presented as a sympathetic character? Why or why not?

## 6-3 Mourning a Friend

*Mourning was taken seriously in the nineteenth century. Both women and men were expected to express grief in a variety of ways at the death of family members and friends. This brief note was published in an African-American newspaper, Freedom's Journal, in 1827. It mixes general reflections on mortality with reminiscences of a deceased friend.*

**Source:** *Freedom's Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 30, December 7, 1827, p. 154.

For The Freedom's Journal, Thoughts on the Death of a Female Friend.

Melancholy and alone I sat, my thoughts deeply occupied on retired greatness, were interrupted only at

intervals, with a rattling noise of the windows, which evinced, that the winds, though invisible, are nor void of power.

To think at all, is either to converse with the transactions of folly, or with the days of idle childhood; either to array in our imagination, the many favours of a good and gracious God, or to remind our memories of the happy friendship, which were wont to exist between us and friends, who, long since, have retired to the calm valley of the dead.

To contemplate, is to converse with our passed lives, and to scan our passed transactions; to behold our crimes with sorrow—to shrink from them, and learn that man is fallible, and we unworthy of our being as rational creatures, or, to simile and say to our consciences, Thou reasonest well! innocence deprives

your being my accuser, and all within is peace.

My mind being literally involved in contemplation, hurried from the passed, viewed the present, and in vain would direct its thoughts on ward to the future.

It mused on departed worth, and on the everlasting retirement of good and virtuous friends. In its summoning to its memory all with whom it once was familiar, that now sleep in *death*, one, more nearly related, whose amiable soul having bequeathed the dross and baubles of a transient world, to the enjoyment of unquicken spirits, stood fore most in the eye of its imagination, and all her amiable qualities gradually recurred to its memory, only, that her loss might he felt the more severely, and her eternal sleep be known to be more happy. She was not one whose disposition pleased, but by intervals—when she spoke, her language was wont to please; to instruct, and engage all who moved in her domestic, and justly coveted society. She spoke, not as she was to have lived for ages, but as one whose probationary was short and uncertain. She was as a crown of jewels set upon her

husband's head. Her feet were ever within the precincts of her own dwelling; unlike most of her sex, she never uttered but what were the ornaments of a virtuous mind, that edified and was opposed to slander. Once my friend, she has gone the way of mortals. The debt is paid, Mortality has put on immortality, and Eliza, forgetful of mortals, enjoys happiness in heaven.

G.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Approximately what fraction of the text reads as formulaic expressions of grief and reflection, and what portion seems specific to the particular deceased friend?
2. What biographical details can you discern in this passage about the deceased? What have you learned about the author?
3. What might be the purpose of publishing reflections such as this?

## 6-4 'Yaller Gals'

*"Yellow" was a slang term for people of mixed African and European ancestry. Because of the so-called "one-drop rule" – the pervasive belief that anyone with even "one drop" of "Negro blood" (usually, in slightly more practical terms, a person with one great-great-grand-parent of African ancestry) is essentially "black" – slaves included people of many hues. The term "yellow" was not complimentary, but the people to whom it was applied often enjoyed privileges that were far out of reach for darker-skinned slaves. In this passage, a slave describes the not-uncommon phenomenon of sexual liaisons – including long-term relationships – between slave-owners and 'yellow girls.'*

**Source:** Sterling, Dorothy. "Two Ex-Slaves Recall Their Masters' Yaller Girls." *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984. 28.

Mr. Mordicia had his yaller gals in one quarter to dere selves and dese gals belongs to de Mordicia men, dere friends an' de overseers. When a baby was born in dat quarter dey'd sen' it over to de black quarter at birth. Some of dese gal babies got grown an' after goin' back to de yaller quarter had chilluns for her own dad or brother. De yaller women was highfalutin'. Dey

thought they was better dan black ones.

Once Massa goes to Baton Rouge and brung back a yaller girl dressed in fine style. She was a seamster nigger. He builds her a house 'way from the quarters, and she done fine sewing for the whites. This yaller girl breeds fast and gits a mess of white young-uns. She larnt them fine manners and combs out they hair.

Oncet two of them goes down the hill to the doll-house, where the Missy's children am playing. They wants to go in the dollhouse and one the Missy's boys say, "That's for white children." They say, "We ain't no niggers, 'cause we got the same daddy you has, and he comes to see us near every day." They is fussing, and Missy is listening out her chamber window. She heard them white niggers say, "We call him daddy when he comes to our house to see our mama."

When Massa come home that evening, his wife hardly say nothing to him, and he asks her what the matter and she tells him, "I'm studying in my mind 'bout them white young-uns of that yaller nigger wench from Baton Rouge." He say, "Now, honey, I fotches that gal just for you, 'cause she a fine seamster." She say, "It look kind of funny they got the same kind of hair and eyes as my children, and they got a nose like yours." She say, "Over in Mississippi I got a home and plenty with my daddy."

Well, she didn't never leave, and Massa bought

her a fine, new span of surrey hosses. But she don't never have no more children. That yaller gal has more white young-uns, but they don't never go down the hill no more to the big house.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Summarize what is being described here.
2. Does the speaker pass any judgments? If so, who or what is judged?
3. With whom do the master's loyalties seem to lie?

## 6-5 Slaves Gather in the Great Market of St. John

*This excerpt was written by Methodist missionaries in a letter to their Missionary Society in London. In it, they describe events surrounding a gathering of slaves in the Great Market of St. John, protesting the 1831 banning of Sunday markets—a privilege they had earned in the early eighteenth century.*

**Source:** Excerpted in Gaspar, David Barry. "From 'The Sense of Their Slavery: Slave Women and Resistance in Antigua, 1632-1763.'" In *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*. Gaspar, David Barry and Darlene Clark Hine. Editors. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1996, 218-219.

It is said, more than two thirds of these people brought nothing for Sale, but were generally armed with strong bludgeons secured by twine to the wrists. The Sellers were almost to an individual females, the rest men. They asserted that Sunday was their own day, and declared their determination not to resign the

right of selling on that day. Their language was frequently violent and menacing, and accompanied by furious gesticulations and brandished cudgels. Matters appeared to assume a very threatening aspect. The appearance of a detachment of the 86th Regiment which was marched to the entrance of the Great Market, and then wheeled off up the New-Street, seemed for a few Minutes to have struck the fatal spark. The Multitude was instantly in Commotion, and very alarming indications of rage and resistance were witnessed throughout. Happily, however, this ebullition did not continue long: two or three parties being persuaded to depart, others slowly followed their example, and about half past six the last company (7 or 8) of obstinate Women retired to the Country.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think most of the Sellers in this passage are women? What does this say about gender roles in slave society?
2. What roles do violence, or the threat of violence, play in these events?

## 6-6 The Trials of a Slave Girl

*Harriet Jacobs was born into slavery in Edenton, North Carolina, in 1813. After suffering years of physical and sexual abuse from her owner, Dr. James Norcom ("Dr. Flint"), Jacobs became involved with a white neighbor, Samuel Sawyer, simply so she could stay away from Norcom. Sawyer and Jacobs had two children together, Joseph and Louisa. In 1842, Jacobs escaped to the North where she became active in the antislavery movement. At the urging of several female abolitionists, she wrote *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, which was published in Boston in 1861 under the pseudonym, Linda Brent. The book is significant for its description of the sexual abuse of female slaves, avoided by most nineteenth-century critics of the institution.*

**Source:** Jacobs, Harriet Ann, 1813–1897, *Incidents in the Life*

of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself, Electronic Edition. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/jacobs/jacobs.html#jac44>

DURING the first years of my service in Dr. Flint's family, I was accustomed to share some indulgences with the children of my mistress. Though this seemed to me no more than right, I was grateful for it, and tried to merit the kindness by the faithful discharge of my duties. But I now entered on my fifteenth year—a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My master began to whisper foul words in my ear. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import. I tried to treat them with indifference or contempt. The master's age, my extreme youth, and the fear that his conduct would be reported to my grandmother, made him bear this treatment for many months. He was a crafty man, and resorted to many means to accomplish his purposes.

Sometimes he had stormy, terrific ways, that made his victims tremble; sometimes he assumed a gentleness that he thought must surely subdue. Of the two, I preferred his stormy moods, although they left me trembling. He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of. I turned from him with disgust and hatred. But he was my master. I was compelled to live under the same roof with him—where I saw a man forty years my senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature. He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the mean tyranny. But where could I turn for protection? No matter whether the slave girl be as black as ebony or as fair as her mistress. In either case, there is no shadow of law to protect her from insult, from violence, or even from death; all these are inflicted by fiends who bear the shape of men. The mistress, who ought to protect the helpless victim, has no other feelings towards her but those of jealousy and rage. The degradation, the wrongs, the vices, that grow out of slavery, are more than I can describe. They are greater than you would willingly believe. Surely, if you credited one half the truths that are told you concerning the helpless millions suffering in this cruel bondage, you at the north would not help to tighten the yoke. You surely would refuse to do for the master, on your own soil, the mean and cruel work which trained bloodhounds and the lowest class of whites do for him at the south.

Every where the years bring to all enough of sin and sorrow; but in slavery the very dawn of life is darkened by these shadows. Even the little child, who is accustomed to wait on her mistress and her children, will learn, before she is twelve years old, why it is that her mistress hates such and such a one among the slaves. Perhaps the child's own mother is among those hated ones. She listens to violent outbreaks of jealous passion, and cannot help understanding what is the cause. She will become prematurely knowing in evil things. Soon she will learn to tremble when she hears her master's footfall. She will be compelled to realize that she is no longer a child. If God has bestowed beauty upon her, it will prove her greatest curse. That which commands admiration in the white woman only hastens the degradation of the female slave. I know that some are too much brutalized by slavery to feel the humiliation of their position; but many slaves feel it most acutely, and shrink from the memory of it. I cannot tell how much I suffered in the presence of these wrongs, nor how I am still pained by the retrospect. My master met me at every turn, reminding me that I

belonged to him, and swearing by heaven and earth that he would compel me to submit to him. If I went out for a breath of fresh air, after a day of unwearied toil, his footsteps dogged me. If I knelt by my mother's grave, his dark shadow fell on me even there. The light heart which nature had given me became heavy with sad forebodings. The other slaves in my master's house noticed the change. Many of them pitied me; but none dared to ask the cause. They had no need to inquire. They knew too well the guilty practices under that roof; and they were aware that to speak of them was an offence that never went unpunished.

I longed for some one to confide in. I would have given the world to have laid my head on my grandmother's faithful bosom, and told her all my troubles. But Dr. Flint swore he would kill me, if I was not as silent as the grave. Then, although my grandmother was all in all to me, I feared her as well as loved her. I had been accustomed to look up to her with a respect bordering upon awe. I was very young, and felt shamefaced about telling her such impure things, especially as I knew her to be very strict on such subjects. Moreover, she was a woman of a high spirit. She was usually very quiet in her demeanor; but if her indignation was once roused, it was not very easily quelled. I had been told that she once chased a white gentleman with a loaded pistol, because he insulted one of her daughters. I dreaded the consequences of a violent outbreak; and both pride and fear kept me silent. But though I did not confide in my grandmother, and even evaded her vigilant watchfulness and inquiry, her presence in the neighborhood was some protection to me. Though she had been a slave, Dr. Flint was afraid of her. He dreaded her scorching rebukes. Moreover, she was known and patronized by many people; and he did not wish to have his villany made public. It was lucky for me that I did not live on a distant plantation, but in a town not so large that the inhabitants were ignorant of each other's affairs. Bad as are the laws and customs in a slaveholding community, the doctor, as a professional man, deemed it prudent to keep up some outward show of decency.

O, what days and nights of fear and sorrow that man caused me! Reader, it is not to awaken sympathy for myself that I am telling you truthfully what I suffered in slavery. I do it to kindle a flame of compassion in your hearts for my sisters who are still in bondage, suffering as I once suffered.

I once saw two beautiful children playing together. One was a fair white child; the other was her slave, and also her sister. When I saw them embracing each other, and heard their joyous laughter, I turned sadly

away from the lovely sight. I foresaw the inevitable blight that would fall on the little slave's heart. I knew how soon her laughter would be changed to sighs. The fair child grew up to be a still fairer woman. From childhood to womanhood her pathway was blooming with flowers, and overarched by a sunny sky. Scarcely one day of her life had been clouded when the sun rose on her happy bridal morning.

How had those years dealt with her slave sister, the little playmate of her childhood? She, also, was very beautiful; but the flowers and sunshine of love were not for her. She drank the cup of sin, and shame, and misery, whereof her persecuted race are compelled to drink.

In view of these things, why are ye silent, ye free men and women of the north? Why do your tongues falter in maintenance of the right? Would that I had more ability! But my heart is so full, and my pen is so weak! There are noble men and women who plead for us, striving to help those who cannot help themselves. God bless them! God give them strength and courage to go on! God bless those, every where, who are laboring to advance the cause of humanity! . . .

Dr. Flint contrived a new plan. He seemed to have an idea that my fear of my mistress was his greatest obstacle. In the blandest tones, he told me that he was going to build a small house for me, in a secluded place, four miles away from the town. I shuddered; but I was constrained to listen, while he talked of his intention to give me a home of my own, and to make a lady of me. Hitherto, I had escaped my dreaded fate, by being in the midst of people. My grandmother had already had high words with my master about me. She had told him pretty plainly what she thought of his character, and there was considerable gossip in the neighborhood about our affairs, to which the open-mouthed jealousy of Mrs. Flint contributed not a little. When my master said he was going to build a house for me, and that he could do it with little trouble and expense, I was in hopes something would happen to frustrate his scheme; but I soon heard that the house was actually begun. I vowed before my Maker that I would never enter it. I had rather toil on the plantation from dawn till dark; I had rather live and die in jail, than drag on, from day to day, through such a living death. I was determined that the master, whom I so hated and loathed, who had blighted the prospects of my youth, and made my life a desert, should not, after my long struggle with him, succeed at last in trampling his victim under his feet. I would do any thing, every thing, for the sake of defeating him. What could I do? I thought and thought, till I became desperate, and

made a plunge into the abyss.

And now, reader, I come to a period in my unhappy life, which I would gladly forget if I could. The remembrance fills me with sorrow and shame. It pains me to tell you of it; but I have promised to tell you the truth, and I will do it honestly, let it cost me what it may. I will not try to screen myself behind the plea of compulsion from a master; for it was not so. Neither can I plead ignorance or thoughtlessness. For years, my master had done his utmost to pollute my mind with foul images, and to destroy the pure principles inculcated by my grandmother, and the good mistress of my childhood. The influences of slavery had had the same effect on me that they had on other young girls; they had made me prematurely knowing, concerning the evil ways of the world. I know what I did, and I did it with deliberate calculation.

But, O, ye happy women, whose purity has been sheltered from childhood, who have been free to choose the objects of your affection, whose homes are protected by law, do not judge the poor desolate slave girl too severely! If slavery had been abolished, I, also, could have married the man of my choice; I could have had a home shielded by the laws; and I should have been spared the painful task of confessing what I am now about to relate; but all my prospects had been blighted by slavery. I wanted to keep myself pure; and, under the most adverse circumstances, I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon Slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me. I felt as if I was forsaken by God and man; as if all my efforts must be frustrated; and I became reckless in my despair.

I have told you that Dr. Flint's persecutions and his wife's jealousy had given rise to some gossip in the neighborhood. Among others, it chanced that a white unmarried gentleman had obtained some knowledge of the circumstances in which I was placed. He knew my grandmother, and often spoke to me in the street. He became interested for me, and asked questions about my master, which I answered in part. He expressed a great deal of sympathy, and a wish to aid me. He constantly sought opportunities to see me, and wrote to me frequently. I was a poor slave girl, only fifteen years old.

So much attention from a superior person was, of course, flattering; for human nature is the same in all. I also felt grateful for his sympathy, and encouraged by his kind words. It seemed to me a great thing to have such a friend. By degrees, a more tender feeling crept into my heart. He was an educated and eloquent gen-

tleman; too eloquent, alas, for the poor slave girl who trusted in him. Of course I saw whither all this was tending. I knew the impassable gulf between us; but to be an object of interest to a man who is not married, and who is not her master, is agreeable to the pride and feelings of a slave, if her miserable situation has left her any pride or sentiment. It seems less degrading to give one's self, than to submit to compulsion. There is something akin to freedom in having a lover who has no control over you, except that which he gains by kindness and attachment. A master may treat you as rudely as he pleases, and you dare not speak; moreover, the wrong does not seem so great with an unmarried man, as with one who has a wife to be made unhappy. There may be sophistry in all this; but the condition of a slave confuses all principles of morality, and, in fact, renders the practice of them impossible.

When I found that my master had actually begun to build the lonely cottage, other feelings mixed with those I have described. Revenge, and calculations of interest, were added to flattered vanity and sincere gratitude for kindness. I knew nothing would enrage Dr. Flint so much as to know that I favored another; and it was something to triumph over my tyrant even in that small way. I thought he would revenge himself by selling me, and I was sure my friend, Mr. Sands, would buy me. He was a man of more generosity and feeling than my master, and I thought my freedom could be easily obtained from him. The crisis of my fate now came so near that I was desperate. I shuttered to think of being the mother of children that should be owned by my old tyrant. I knew that as soon as a new fancy took him, his victims were sold far off to get rid of them; especially if they had children. I had seen several women sold, with his babies at the breast. He never allowed his offspring by slaves to remain long in sight of himself and his wife. Of a man who was not my master I could ask to have my children well supported; and in this case, I felt confident I should obtain the boon. I also felt quite sure that they would be made free. With all these thoughts revolving in my mind, and seeing no other way of escaping the doom I so much dreaded, I made a headlong plunge. Pity me, and pardon me, O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of a chattel, entirely subject to the will of another. You never exhausted your ingenuity in avoiding the snares, and eluding the power of a hated tyrant; you never shuddered at the sound of his footsteps, and trembled within hearing of his voice. I know I did wrong. No one can feel it more sensibly than I do. The painful and humil-

iating memory will haunt me to my dying day. Still, in looking back, calmly, on the events of my life, I feel that the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others.

The months passed on. I had many unhappy hours. I secretly mourned over the sorrow I was bringing on my grandmother, who had so tried to shield me from harm. I knew that I was the greatest comfort of her old age, and that it was a source of pride to her that I had not degraded myself, like most of the slaves. I wanted to confess to her that I was no longer worthy of her love; but I could not utter the dreaded words.

As for Dr. Flint, I had a feeling of satisfaction and triumph in the thought of telling him. From time to time he told me of his intended arrangements, and I was silent. At last, he came and told me the cottage was completed, and ordered me to go to it. I told him I would never enter it. He said, "I have heard enough of such talk as that. You shall go, if you are carried by force; and you shall remain there." I replied, "I will never go there. In a few months I shall be a mother."

He stood and looked at me in dumb amazement, and left the house without a word. I thought I should be happy in my triumph over him. But now that the truth was out, and my relatives would hear of it, I felt wretched. Humble as were their circumstances, they had pride in my good character. Now, how could I look them in the face? My self-respect was gone! I had resolved that I would be virtuous, though I was a slave. I had said, "Let the storm beat! I will brave it till I die." And now, how humiliated I felt!

I went to my grandmother. My lips moved to make confession, but the words stuck in my throat. I sat down in the shade of a tree at her door and began to sew. I think she saw something unusual was the matter with me. The mother of slaves is very watchful. She knows there is no security for her children. After they have entered their teens she lives in daily expectation of trouble. This leads to many questions. If the girl is of a sensitive nature, timidity keeps her from answering truthfully, and this well-meant course has a tendency to drive her from maternal counsels. Presently, in came my mistress, like a mad woman, and accused me concerning her husband. My grandmother, whose suspicions had been previously awakened, believed what she said. She exclaimed, "O Linda! has it come to this? I had rather see you dead than to see you as you now are. You are a disgrace to your dead mother." She tore from my fingers my mother's wedding ring and her silver thimble. "Go away!" she exclaimed, "and never come to my house, again." Her reproaches



fell so hot and heavy, that they left me no chance to answer. Bitter tears, such as the eyes never shed but once, were my only answer. I rose from my seat, but fell back again, sobbing. She did not speak to me; but the tears were running down her furrowed cheeks, and they scorched me like fire. She had always been so kind to me! So kind! How I longed to throw myself at her feet, and tell her all the truth! But she had ordered me to go, and never to come there again. After a few minutes, I mustered strength, and started to obey her. With what feelings did I now close that little gate, which I used to open with such an eager hand in my childhood! It closed upon me with a sound I never heard before.

Where could I go? I was afraid to return to my master's. I walked on recklessly, not caring where I went, or what would become of me. When I had gone four or five miles, fatigue compelled me to stop. I sat down on the stump of an old tree. The stars were shining through the boughs above me. How they mocked me, with their bright, calm light! The hours passed by, and as I sat there alone a chilliness and deadly sickness came over me. I sank on the ground. My mind was full of horrid thoughts. I prayed to die; but the prayer was not answered. At last, with great effort I roused myself, and walked some distance further, to the house of a woman who had been a friend of my mother. When I told her why I was there, she spoke soothingly to me; but I could not be comforted. I thought I could bear my

shame if I could only be reconciled to my grandmother. I longed to open my heart to her. I thought if she could know the real state of the case, and all I had been bearing for years, she would perhaps judge me less harshly. My friend advised me to send for her. I did so; but days of agonizing suspense passed before she came. Had she utterly forsaken me? No. She came at last. I knelt before her, and told her the things that had poisoned my life; how long I had been persecuted; that I saw no way of escape; and in an hour of extremity I had become desperate. She listened in silence. I told her I would bear any thing and do any thing, if in time I had hopes of obtaining her forgiveness. I begged of her to pity me, for my dead mother's sake. And she did pity me. She did not say, "I forgive you;" but she looked at me lovingly, with her eyes full of tears. She laid her old hand gently on my head, and murmured, "Poor child! Poor child!"

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Based upon your reading of this excerpt from Harriet Jacobs's narrative, what power and influence did the matriarchs of the slave family have in both the slave community and among white owners? Why do you think this was so?
2. Why do you think the wives and mothers of slave owners did not do more to stop the physical and sexual abuse of female slaves?

## 6-7 Matilda's Letter to the Editor

*Formal education was a scarce, and highly valued, resource for African Americans in the nineteenth century. In many jurisdictions it was illegal to teach slaves how to read or write; free blacks also faced difficulties in gaining literacy. In this letter to the editor, "Matilda" makes a special plea for the desirability of educating African American women.*

**Source:** *Freedom's Journal*, Vol. I, No. 22, August 10, 1827, p. 86.

Messrs, Editors

Will you allow a female the offer a few remarks upon a subject that you must allow to the all-important. I don't know that in any of your papers, you have said sufficient upon the education of females. I hope you are not to be classed with those, who think that

our mathematical knowledge should be limited to "fathoming the dish-kettle," and that we have acquired enough of history, if we know that our grandfather's father lived and died. "This true the time has been, when to darn a stocking and cook a pudding well," was considered the end and aim of a woman's being. But those were days when ignorance blinded men's eyes. The diffusion of knowledge has destroyed those degrading opinions, and men of the present age allow, that we have minds that are capable and deserving of culture. There are difficulties, and great difficulties in the way of our advancement; but that should only stir us to greater efforts. We possess not the advantage with those of our sex, whose skin are not colored like our own; but we can improve what little we have, and make our one talent produce two-fold. The influence that we have over the male sex demands, that our minds should be instructed and improved with the principle of education and religion in order that this influence should be properly directed. Ignorant ourselves, how can we up expected to form the minds of

our youth and conduct them in the paths of knowledge? how can we “teach the young idea, how to shoot,” if we have none ourselves? There is a great responsibility resting somewhere and it is time for us to be up and doing. I would address myself to all mothers, and say to them that while it is necessary to possess a knowledge of cookery, and the various mysteries of pudding-making, something more is requisite. It is their bounden duty to store their daughters’ minds with useful learning. They should be made to devote their leisure time to reading books, whence they would derive valuable information, which could never be

taken from them. I will not longer trespass on your time and patience. I merely throw out these hints, in order that some more able pen will take up the subject.

MATILDA.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What reasoning does Matilda use in arguing that women should be educated?
2. Why does the author use humor in her argument? Is it effective?

## 6-8 New England Writer Portrays Slavery (1852)

*Although she authored several books on New England, Harriet Beecher Stowe was best known for her portrayal of slavery in Uncle Tom’s Cabin. The daughter of the most important Puritan preacher of her day, Stowe had a long concern with humanitarian causes. The death of one of Stowe’s children prompted her to become involved with the abolitionist movement. Uncle Tom’s Cabin outraged the south and solidified the anti-slavery movement in the north. Some even feel the book was one of the factors that brought on the Civil War. The following section finds Uncle Tom, recently purchased by the cruel Simon Legree, on his way to Legree’s plantation.*

**Source:** Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life among the Lowly* (Boston: J.P. Jewett, 1851).

Trailing wearily behind a rude wagon, and over a ruder road, Tom and his associates faced onward.

In the wagon was seated Simon Legree; and the two women, still fettered together, were stowed away with some baggage in the back part of it, and the whole company were seeking Legree’s plantation, which lay a good distance off.

It was a wild, forsaken road, now winding through dreary pine barrens, where the wind whispered mournfully, and now over log causeways, through long cypress swamps, the doleful trees rising out of the slimy, spongy ground, hung with long wreaths of funeral black moss, while ever and anon the loathsome form of the moccasin snake might be seen sliding among broken stumps and shattered branches that lay here and there, rotting in the water.

It is disconsolate enough, this riding, to the stranger, who, with well-filled pocket and well-

appointed horse, threads the lonely way on some errand of business; but wilder, drearier, to the man enthralled, whom every weary step bears further from all that man loves and prays for.

So one should have thought, that witnessed the sunken and dejected expression on those dark faces; the wistful, patient weariness with which those sad eyes rested on object after object that passed them in their sad journey.

Simon rode on, however, apparently well pleased, occasionally pulling away at a flask of spirit, which he kept in his pocket.

“I say, *you!*” he said, as he turned back and caught a glance at the dispirited faces behind him! “Strike up a song, boys,—come!”

The men looked at each other, and the “*come*” was repeated, with a smart crack of the whip which the driver carried in his hands. Tom began a Methodist hymn,

“Jerusalem, my happy home,  
Name ever dear to me!  
When shall my sorrow have an end,  
Thy joys when shall—”

“Shut up, you black cuss!” roared Legree; “did ye think I wanted any o’ yer infernal old Methodism? I say, tune up, now, something real rowdy,—quick!”

One of the other men struck up one of those unmeaning songs, common among the slaves.

“Mas’r see’d me catch a coon,  
High boys, high!

He laughed to split,—d'ye see the moon,  
Ho! ho! ho! boys, ho!  
Ho! yo! hi—e! oh!”

The singer appeared to make up the song to his own pleasure, generally hitting on rhyme, without much attempt at reason; and all the party took up the chorus, at intervals,

“Ho! ho! ho! boys, ho!  
High—e—oh! high—e—oh!”

It was sung very boisterously, and with a forced attempt at merriment; but no wail of despair, no words of impassioned prayer, could have had such a depth of woe in them as the wild notes of the chorus. As if the poor, dumb heart, threatened,—prisoned,—took refuge in that inarticulate sanctuary of music, and found there a language in which to breathe its prayer to God! There was a prayer in it, which Simon could not hear. He only heard the boys singing noisily, and was well pleased; he was making them “keep up their spirits.”

“Well, my little dear,” said he, turning, to Emmeline, and laying his hand on her shoulder, “we’re almost home!”

When Legree scolded and stormed, Emmeline was terrified; but when he laid his hand on her, and spoke as he now did, she felt as if she had rather he would strike her. The expression of his eyes made her soul sick, and her flesh creep. Involuntarily she clung closer to the mulatto woman by her side, as if she were her mother.

“You didn’t ever wear ear-rings,” he said, taking hold of her small ear with his coarse fingers.

“No, Mas’r!” said Emmeline, trembling and looking down.

“Well, I’ll give you a pair, when we get home, if you’re a good girl. You needn’t be so frightened; I don’t mean to make you work very hard. You’ll have fine times with me, and live like a lady,—only be a good girl.”

Legree had been drinking to that degree that he was inclining to be very gracious; and it was about this time that the enclosures of the plantation rose to view. The estate had formerly belonged to a gentleman of opulence and taste, who had bestowed some considerable attention to the adornment of his grounds. Having died insolvent, it had been purchased, at a bar-

gain, by Legree, who used it, as he did everything else, merely as an implement for money-making. The place had the ragged, forlorn appearance, which is always produced by the evidence that the care of the former owner has been left to go to utter decay.

What was once a smooth-shaven lawn before the house, dotted here and there with ornamental shrubs, was now covered with frowsy tangled grass, with horse-posts set up, here and there, in it, where the turf was stamped away, and the ground littered with broken pails, cobs of corn, and other slovenly remains. Here and there, a mildewed jessamine or honeysuckle hung raggedly from some ornamental support, which had been pushed to one side by being used as a horse-post. What once was a large garden was now all grown over with weeds, through which, here and there, some solitary exotic reared its forsaken head. What had been a conservatory had now no window-sashes, and on the mouldering shelves stood some dry, forsaken flower-pots, with sticks in them, whose dried leaves showed they had once been plants.

The wagon rolled up a weedy gravel walk, under a noble avenue of China trees, whose graceful forms and ever-springing foliage seemed to be the only things there that neglect could not daunt or alter,—like noble spirits, so deeply rooted in goodness, as to flourish and grow stronger amid discouragement and decay.

The house had been large and handsome. It was built in a manner common at the South; a wide verandah of two stories running round every part of the house, into which every outer door opened, the lower tier being supported by brick pillars.

But the place looked desolate and uncomfortable; some windows stopped up with boards, some with shattered panes, and shutters hanging by a single hinge,—all telling of coarse neglect and discomfort.

Bits, of board, straw, old decayed barrels and boxes, garnished the ground in all directions; and three or four ferocious-looking dogs, roused by the sound of the wagon-wheels, came tearing out, and were with difficulty restrained from laying hold of Tom and his companions, by the effort of the ragged servants who came after them.

“Ye see what ye’d get!” said Legree, caressing the dogs with grim satisfaction, and turning to Tom and his companions. “Ye see what ye’d get, if ye try to run off. These yer dogs has been raised to track niggers; and they’d jest as soon chaw one on ye up as eat their supper. So, mind yerself! How now, Sambo!” he said, to a ragged fellow, without any brim to his hat, who was

official in his attentions. "How have things been going?"

"Fust rate, Mas'r."

"Quimbo," said Legree to another, who was making demonstrations to attract his attention, "ye minded what I telled ye?"

"Guess I did, didn't I?"

These two colored men were the two principal hands on the plantation. Legree had trained them in savageness and brutality as systematically as he had his bulldogs; and, by long practice in hardness and cruelty, brought their whole nature to about the same range of capacities. It is a common remark, and one that is thought to militate strongly against the character of the race, that the Negro overseer is always more tyrannical and cruel than the white one. This is simply saying that the Negro mind has been more crushed and debased than the white. It is no more true of this race than of every oppressed race, the world over. The slave is always a tyrant, if he can get a chance to be one.

Legree, like some potentates we read of in history, governed his plantation by a sort of resolution of forces. Sambo and Quimbo cordially hated each other; the plantation hands, one and all, cordially hated them; and, by playing off one against another, he was pretty sure, through one or the other of the three parties, to get informed of whatever was on foot in the place.

Nobody can live entirely without social intercourse; and Legree encouraged his two black satellites to a kind of coarse familiarity with him,—a familiarity, however, at any moment liable to get one or the other of them into trouble; for, on the slightest provocation, one of them always stood ready, at a nod, to be a minister of his vengeance on the other.

As they stood there now by Legree, they seemed an apt illustration of the fact that brutal men are lower even than animals. Their coarse, dark, heavy features; their great eyes, rolling enviously on each other; their barbarous, guttural, half-brute intonation; their dilapidated garments fluttering in the wind,—were all in admirable keeping with the vile and unwholesome character of everything about the place.

"Here, you Sambo," said Legree, "take these yer boys down to the quarters; and here's a gal I've got for *you*," said he, as he separated the mulatto woman from Emmeline, and pushed her towards him;—"I promised

to bring you one, you know."

The woman gave a sudden start, and, drawing back, said, suddenly,

"O, Mas'r! I left my old man in New Orleans."

"What of that, you——;won't you want one here? None o' your words,—go long!" said Legree, raising his whip.

"Come, mistress," he said to Emmeline, "you go in here with me."

A dark, wild face was seen, for a moment, to glance at the window of the house; and, as Legree opened the door, a female voice said something, in a quick, imperative tone. Tom, who was looking, with anxious interest, after Emmeline, as she went in, noticed this, and heard Legree answer angrily, "You may hold your tongue! I'll do as I please, for all you!"

Tom heard no more; for he was soon following Sambo to the quarters. The quarters was a little sort of street of rude shanties, in a row, in a part of the plantation, far off from the house. They had a forlorn, brutal, forsaken air. Tom's heart sank when he saw them. He had been comforting himself with the thought of a cottage, rude, indeed, but one which he might make neat and quiet, and where he might have a shelf for his Bible, and a place to be alone out of his laboring hours. He looked into several; they were mere rude shells, destitute of any species of furniture, except a heap of straw, foul with dirt, spread confusedly over the floor, which was merely the bare ground, trodden hard by the tramping of innumerable feet.

"Which of these will be mine?" said he, to Sambo, submissively.

"Dunno; ken turn in here, I spose," said Sambo; "spects thar's room for another thar; thar's a pretty smart heap o' niggers to each on 'em, now; sure, I dunno what I's to do with more."

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. If Uncle Tom's Cabin was indeed one of the factors in starting the Civil War, what does this say about the role of fiction in history? Is it worthy of consideration by historians? Why would this book have inflamed the south? Why would it have been so widely read in the north?
2. How does Stowe's portrayal of slave life compare with actual accounts you have read elsewhere?

## 6-9 An Enslaved Wife's Letter to Her Husband (1852)

*As we saw in the earlier "Enslaved Wife's Letter to Her Husband, 1840," the breakup of families was a cruel but common consequence of slavery. In this case, it seems that Marie has already been separated not only from her husband, but also from a child, Albert.*

**Source:** In *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 144.

Charlottesville [Virginia], Oct. 8, 1852

Dear Husband

I write you a letter to let you know of my distress. My master has sold Albert to a trader on Monday court day and myself and other child is for sale also and I want you to let [me] hear from you very soon before next cort if you can. I don't know when I don't want you to wait till Christmas.

I want you to tell Dr. Hamilton your master if

either will buy me they can attend to it know and then I can go afterwards.

I don't want a trader to get me. They asked me if I had got any person to buy me and I told them no. They told me to the court house too they never put me up. A man buy the name of brady bought albert and is gone I don't know where. They say he lives in Scottsville. My things is in several places some is in stanton and if I would be sold I don't know what will become of them. I don't expect to meet with the luck to get that way till I am quite heartsick.

nothing more I am and ever will be your kind wife

Marie Perkins

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What steps has Marie Perkins taken, and what does she suggest her husband should do, to try to reunite her family?
2. What is the significance of Christmas?

## 6-10 Rose Williams's Forced Marriage in Texas

*Part of a female slave's economic value lay in her reproductive potential, since the owner of a mother automatically gained ownership of the mother's baby. It was not unusual for slaveowners to attempt to "breed" slaves in ways that would maximize their economic gain – though the moral and practical risks of such attempts are obvious.*

*This passage is excerpted from an oral history provided by Rose Williams, who begins her account: "What I say am the facts. If I's one day old, I's way over ninety, and I's born in Bell County, right here in Texas, ..."*

**Source:** In *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 142-143.

I has the correct memorandum of when the war start. Massa Black sold we-uns right then. Mammy and Pappy powerful glad to git sold, and they and I is put on the block with 'bout ten other niggers. When we-uns gits to the trading block, there lots of white folks there what come to look us over. One man shows the

interest in Pappy. Him named Hawkins. He talk to Pappy, and Pappy talk to him and say, "Them my woman and child. Please buy all of us and have mercy on we-uns." Massa Hawkins say, "That gal am a likely-looking nigger; she am portly and strong. But three am more than I wants, I guesses."

The sale start, and 'fore long Pappy am put on the block. Massa Hawkins wins the bid for Pappy, and when Mammy am put on the block, he wins the bid for her. Then there am three or four other niggers sold before my time comes. Then Massa Black calls me to the block, and the auction man say, "What am I offer for this portly, strong young wench. She's never been 'bused and will make the good breeder."

I wants to hear Massa Hawkins bid, but him say nothing. Two other men am bidding 'gainst each other, and I sure has the worriment. There am tears coming down my cheeks' cause I's being sold to some man that would make separation from my mammy. One man bids \$500, and the auction man ask, "Do I hear more? She am gwine at \$500." Then someone say, "\$525," and the auction man say, "She am sold for \$525 to Massa Hawkins." Am I glad and 'cited! Why, I's quivering all over.

Massa. Hawkins takes we-uns to his place, and it

am a nice plantation. Lots better than Massa Black's. There is 'bout fifty niggers what is growed and lots of children. The first thing Massa do when we-uns gits home am give we-uns rations and a cabin. You must believe this nigger when I says them rations a feast for us. There plenty meat and tea and coffee and white flour. I's never tasted white flour and coffee, and Mammy fix some biscuits and coffee. Well, the biscuits was yum, yum, yum to me, but the coffee I doesn't like.

The quarters am pretty good. There am twelve cabins all made from logs and a table and some benches and bunks for sleeping and a fireplace for cooking and the heat. There am no floor, just the ground.

Massa Hawkins am good to he niggers and not force 'em work too hard. There am as much difference 'tween him and Old Massa Black in the way of treatment as 'twixt the Lord and the devil. Massa Hawkins 'lows he niggers have reasonable par-ties and go fishing, but we-uns am never tooken to church and has no books forlaming. There am no education for the niggers.

There am one thing Massa Hawkins does to me what I can't shunt from my mind. I knows he don't do it for meanness, but I always holds it 'gainst him. What he done am force me to live with that nigger, Rufus, 'gainst my wants.

After I been at he place 'bout a year, the massa come to me and say, "You gwine live with Rufus in that cabin over yonder. Go fix it for living." I's 'bout sixteen year old and has no laming, and I's just ignomus child. I's thought that him mean for me to tend the cabin for Rufus and some other niggers. Well, that am start the pestigation for me.

I's took charge of the cabin after work am done and fixes supper. Now, I don't like that Rufus, 'cause he a bully. He am big and 'cause he so, he think everybody do what him say. We-uns has supper, then I goes here and there talking, till I's ready for sleep, and then I gits in the bunk. After I's in, that nigger come crawl in the bunk with me 'fore I knows it. I says, "What you means, you fool nigger?" He say for me to hush the mouth. "This am my bunk, too," he say.

"You's teched in the head. Git out," I's told him, and I puts the feet 'gainst him and give him a shove, and out he go on the floor 'fore he know what I's doing. That nigger jump up and he mad. He look like the wild bear. He starts for the bunk, and I jumps quick for the poker. It am 'bout three feet long, and when he comes at me I lets him have it over the head. Did that nigger stop in he tracks? I's say he did. He looks at me

steady for a minute, and you could tell he thinking hard. Then he go and set on the bench and say, "Just wait. You thinks it am smart, but you am foolish in the head. They's gwine larn you something."

"Hush your big mouth and stay 'way from this nigger, that all I wants," Isay, and just sets and hold that poker in the hand. He just sets, looking like the bull. There we-uns sets and sets for 'bout an hour, and then he go out, and I bars the door.

The next day I goes to the missy and tells her what Rufus wants, and Missy say that am the massa's wishes. She say, "You am the portly gal, and Rufus am the portly man. The massa wants you-uns for to bring forth portly children."

I's thinking 'bout what the missy say, but say to myself, "I's not gwine live with that Rufus." That night when him come in the cabin, I grabs the poker and sits on the bench and says, "Git 'way from me, nigger, 'fore I bust your brains out and stomp on them." He say nothing and git out.

The next day the massa call me and tell me, "Woman, I's pay big money for you, and I's done that for the cause I wants you to raise me childrens. I's put you to live with Rufus for that purpose. Now, if you doesn't want whipping at the stake, u do what I wants."

I thinks 'bout Massa buying me offen the block and saving me from being separated from my folks and 'bout being whipped at the stake. There it am. What am I s to do? So I 'cides to do as the massa wish, and so I yields. . . .

I never marries, 'cause one 'sperience am 'nough for this nigger. After what Ides for the massa, I's never wants no truck with any man. The Lord forgive this bred woman, but he have to 'scuse me and look for some others for to 'plenish the earth.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How would you characterize Williams' feelings about the events she narrates?
2. What impression do you get of Massa Hawkins?
3. Why does Williams "yield"? What are the results?

## RELIGION AND REFORM, 1800–1860

## 7-1 Resolutions of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women

*Angelina Grimke and her sister Sarah were prominent abolitionists. Angelina was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1805. Her father was a judge, and a slaveholder. The sisters rejected slavery and moved north, where they wrote and spoke publicly against slavery. (See also the document in this chapter, "Southern Belle Denounces Slavery.") Angelina and Sarah laid much of the groundwork for later leaders of the women's rights movement. The sisters operated a boarding school, where students included children of women's rights pioneer Elizabeth Cady Stanton (see Stanton's 1860 speech to the American Anti-Slavery Society in this chapter).*

**Source:** *An Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States Issued by an Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women*, Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838: 3-8, 11, 13-14, 20-21, 23-24.

**BELOVED SISTERS:**

The wrongs of outraged millions, and the fore-shadows of coming judgments, constrain us, under a solemn sense of responsibility to press upon your consideration the subject of American Slavery. The women of the North have high and holy duties to perform in the work of emancipation — duties to themselves, to the suffering slave, to the slaveholder, to the church, to their country, and to the world at large, and, above all to their God. Duties, which if not performed now, may never be performed at all.

Multitudes will doubtless deem such an address ill-timed and ill directed. Many regard the excitement produced by the agitation of this subject as an evidence of the impolicy of free discussion, and a sufficient excuse for their own inactivity. Others 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 . . .

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? Have *women* no country-no interest stakes in public weal-no liabilities in common peril-no partnership in a nation's guilt and shame? Has *woman* no home nor household altars, nor endearing ties of kindred, nor sway with man, nor power at a mercy seat, nor voice to cheer, nor hand to raise the drooping, and to bind the broken?

But before we can appreciate the bearings of this subject, and our duties with regard to it, we must first know what slavery is; and then trace out its manifold and monstrous relations. We can thus discover whether women have any duties to discharge its abolition. We will then attempt to show WHY Northern women should labor for its overthrow, and lastly HOW they can aid in this work of faith, and labor of love.

What then is Slavery? It is that crime, which casts man down from that exaltation where God has placed him, "a little lower than the angels," and sinks him to a level with the beasts of the field. This intelligent and immortal being is confounded with the brutes that perish; he whose spirit was formed to rise in aspirations of gratitude and praise whilst here, and to spend an eternity with God in heaven, is herded with the beasts, whose spirits go downward with their bodies of clay, to the dust of which they were made. Slavery is that crime by which man is robbed of his inalienable right to liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the diadem of glory, and honor, with which he was crowned, and that sceptre of dominion which was placed in his hand when he was ushered upon the theatre of creation, and was divinely commissioned to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

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This is a very imperfect outline of the political bearings of this great question; and it is gravely urged that as it is a *political subject*, women have no concernment with it, this doctrine of the North is a sycophantic response to the declaration of a Southern representative, that women have no right to send up petitions to Congress. We know, dear sisters, that the open and the secret enemies of freedom in our country have dreaded our influence, and therefore have reprobated our interference, and in order to blind us to our responsibilities, have thrown dust into our eyes, well knowing that if the organ of vision is only clear, the whole body, the moving and acting faculties will become full of light, and will soon be thrown into powerful action. Some, who pretend to be very jealous for the honor of our sex, and are very anxious that *we* should scrupulously maintain the dignity and delicacy of female propriety, continually urge this objection to female effort. We grant that it is a political, as well as a moral subject: does this exonerate women from their duties as subjects of the government, as members of the great human family? Have women never wisely and laudably exercised political responsibilities?

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. . . And, dear sisters, in a country where women are degraded and brutalized, and where their exposed persons bleed under the lash—where they are sold in the shambles of "negro brokers"—robbed of their hard earnings—torn from their husbands, and forcibly plundered of their virtue and their offspring; surely, in such a country, it is very natural that *women* should wish to know "the reason *why*"—especially when these outrages of blood and nameless horror are practised in violation of the principles of our national Bill of Rights and the Preamble of our Constitution. We do not, then, and cannot concede the position, that because this is a *political subject* women ought to fold their hands in idleness, and close their eyes and ears to the "horrible things" that are practised in our land. The denial of our duty to act, is a bold denial of our right to act, and if we have no right to act, then may *we* well be termed "the white slaves of the North"—for, like our brethren in bonds, we must seal our lips in silence and despair.

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Out of the millions of slaves who have been stolen from Africa, a very great number must have been

women, who were torn from the arms of their fathers and husbands, brothers, and children, and subjected to all the horrors of the middle passage and the still greater sufferings of slavery in a foreign land.' ... The great mass of female slaves in the southern states are the descendants of these hapless strangers: 1,000,000 of them now wear the iron yoke of slavery in this land of boasted liberty and law. They are our countrywomen—they *are our sisters*, and to us, as women, they have a right to look for sympathy with their sorrows, and effort and prayer for their rescue. Upon those of us especially, who have named the name of Christ, they have peculiar claims, and claims which *we must answer or we shall incur a heavy load of guilt*.

Multitudes of the Southern women hold men, women and children as *property*. They are pampered in luxury, and nursed in the school of tyranny. . . Such facts ought to be known, that the women of the North may understand *their* duties, and be incited to perform them . . .

And now, dear sisters, let us not forget that *Northern* women are participators in the crime of Slavery—too many of us have surrendered our hearts and hands to the wealthy planters of the South, and gone down with them to live on the unrequited toil of the Slave. Too many of us have ourselves become slaveholders, our hearts have been hardened under the searing influence of the system, and we too, have learned to be tyrants in the school of despots . . .

. . . But let it be so no longer. Let us henceforward resolve, that the women of the free states never again will barter their principles for the blood bought luxuries of the South—never again will regard with complacency, much less with the tender sentiments of love, any man "who buildeth his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by wrong, that useth his neighbor's service *without* wages, and giveth him not for his work." . . .

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Angelina and Sarah Grimke's participation in public life and politics was highly controversial. Does anything in this text serve to either challenge or ameliorate the concerns of those who disapprove of women's roles in the public sphere?
2. How does Grimke link women's roles and status with opposition to slavery?



## 7-2 Cherokee Women, Beware

*This brief notice appeared in an issue of the Cherokee Phoenix, a newspaper published by the Cherokee Nation between 1828 and 1834.*

**Source:** *Cherokee Phoenix*, July 16, 1831.

### CHEROKEE WOMEN BEWARE

It is said the Georgia Guard have received orders, from the Governor we suppose, to inflict corporeal punishment on such females as shall hereafter be guilty of insulting them. We presume they are to be the judges of what constitutes *insult*. We will simply give

our opinion upon this subject. According to our understanding of insult, we think, first it is very undignified for a female to exercise it under any circumstances; and second, it is equally indignified for any gentleman to inflict a corporeal punishment on a female who may be guilty of such a crime.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What is the tone of this notice? Why did the authors choose this tone?
2. What does this notice suggest about the quality of gender relations among the Cherokee in this period?

## 7-3 Constitution of the Colored Female Religious and Moral Society of Salem

*The Colored Female Religious and Moral Society of Salem, Massachusetts, founded in 1818, was one of the many women's self-help groups established in this period.*

**Source:** Skinner, Ellen *Women and the National Experience: Primary Sources in American History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Longman, 2003

Article I.—At the weekly meeting of the Society, when the appointed hour arrives, and a number are convened, the exercises shall begin by reading in some profitable book, till all have come in who are expected.

Art. II.—A prayer shall then be made by one of the members, and after that, a chapter in the Bible shall be read, and religious conversation be attended to, as time will allow.

Art. III.—Four quarterly days in the year, in January, in April, July and October, beginning on the first day of every January, to be observed as day of solemn fasting and prayer.

Art. IV.—We promise not to ridicule or divulge the supposed or apparent infirmities of any fellow member; but to keep secret all things relating to the Society, the discovery of which might tend to do hurt to the Society or any individual.

Art. V.—We resolve to be charitably watchful over each other; to advise, caution and admonish where we may judge there is occasion, and that it may be useful; and we promise not to resent, but kindly and thankfully receive such friendly advice or reproof from any one

of our members.

Art. VI.—Any female can become a member of this Society by conforming to the Constitution, and paying in fifty two cents per year.

Art. VII.—This Society is formed for the benefit of the sick and destitute of those members belonging to the Society.

Art. VIII.—If any member commit any scandalous sin, or walk unruly, and after proper reproof continue manifestly impenitent, she shall be excluded from us, until she give evidence of her repentance.

Art. IX.—When any person shall manifest to any one of us a desire to join the Society, it shall be mentioned in one of our meetings that all may have opportunity, who desire it, to satisfy themselves respecting the character and conversation of the person offering to join; and if at the meeting on the next week, there be no objection to her being admitted, she may apply to the head of the Society, who will read our Articles to her, and if she is willing and does sign them, she shall be considered as a member of the Society, regularly admitted.

Art. X.—As to any other matters which we shall hereafter find conducive to the benefit and good regulation of our Society, we engage to leave to the discretion and decision of a major part of us, to whose determination we promise quietly to agree and submit.

*President*—Mrs. Clarissa C. Lawrence

*Vice-President*—Mrs. Eleanor Jones

*Treasurer*—Miss Betsey Blanchard

*Secretary*—Mrs. Sally Coleman

*Visiting Committee*—Mrs. Mercy Norris

Mrs. Nancy Randolph

**FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the purpose of this society?

2. What mechanisms do the members propose to allow new members to enter, and to ensure that the members are working towards common goals?

## 7-4 The Factory Girl's Lament

*The Lowell "factory girls" – female workers in the textile mills of Lowell, Massachusetts – went on strike repeatedly in the 1830s. Strikes were staged to protest reduced wages, or to protect established workplace conditions. Wage-earning women sought independence and autonomy though their labor. Strikers' public demonstrations and marches featured songs such as this one.*

**Source:** In Alice Kessler-Harris. *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, 41.

Oh isn't it a pity that such a pretty girl as I  
Should be sent to the factory to pine away and die.

Oh! I cannot be a slave  
I will not be a slave  
For I'm so fond of liberty  
That I can not be a slave.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. Abolitionists were prominent in Massachusetts during this period; a female antislavery society was founded in Lowell in 1833. What overlap is there between the language and imagery of this song, and that used by abolitionists?
2. What actions are proposed or implied by this song?

## 7-5 An Address to the Daughters of New England

*This article appeared in the "Ladies Department" of The Liberator, a prominent weekly newspaper founded by abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison in Boston in 1831. The editors of The Liberator introduced this piece: "The writer of the following Appeal is a young lady only 13 years old, residing in North Providence. In intelligence and philanthropy, she is in advance of a large number of her sex."*

**Source:** *The Liberator*, March 3, 1832

### AN ADDRESS TO THE DAUGHTERS OF NEW-ENGLAND.

Awake, ye multitude, that have slumbered so long! Awake! in behalf of the injured children of Africa. And think not because ye are women, that ye can take no part in the glorious cause of emancipation. You have influence—exert it. Arm your fathers and brothers with the patriotic feelings of liberty and equal rights. Although the inhabitants of New-England are an exception in the vast multitude denominated slaveholders, shut not your hearts against the cries of the oppressed, which go up from the sister states. Woman's voice, though weak, may be heard; for it is hers, in a

peculiar manner, to plead the cause of suffering innocence. And let not posterity have cause to say that you remained inactive, while two millions of your fellow mortals were oppressed with the yoke of bondage. Your land is the boasted land of liberty! But how much like vain mockery must this name appear to other nations! and what a discord does it make with those tones of oppressed, which rise in condemnation from the centre of the nation! Had that Congress which declared the independence and freedom of these United States, allowed it to have its influence over all, as it should have done, it would have presented a brighter era in the chronicles of liberty than has been presented to the world, or probably ever will be. Your land is the one that makes the greatest pretensions to freedom, and yet holds slaves in as much degradation as any spot on earth. In many cases, it is not only the body is enslaved, but the mind is also held in chains; to be riven only by death when it shall leave its frail tenement of suffering, and soar to those regions where it is destined to rove in freedom. Let not the ignorance of the blacks plead as an excuse for continuing them in servitude; for is not their being so, entirely the fault of the whites? Was not Egypt the birth-place of the arts and sciences? and did she not long remain the proud mistress of knowledge, and long wield the scepter of literature? And now that Egypt has fallen, and nought remains of her glory but what is recorded in the pages of history, or what meets the eye of the traveler, in his wanderings amid the

wreck of grandeur which he finds everywhere in this once flourishing country; let us not forget that it is a country in Africa, that degraded Africa, whose sons and daughters are bought and sold and enslaved! And the soil of Africa covers the remains of many a noble patriarch, whose heart may have glowed with the generous feelings of freedom, and the archives of whose nation hold up as possessing intellects equal, if not superior to many who now flourish in our own country, as the supporters of slavery. Daughters of Columbia! ye that live in the far-famed land of Liberty! ye that have so often heard it extolled as the seat of independence and freedom! arise, throw off the veil which now obscures

your reasons, and let your names be enrolled as the defenders of liberty. A.F. M

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What special roles or responsibilities does the author propose for women in opposing slavery?
2. What does the author do to put American slavery into an international context? Does this seem to be an effective form of argument?
3. Does the claim that this was written by a 13-year-old girl influence the way you read the article?

## 7-6 The Shakers

*Shakers were members of a Protestant denomination that was established in England by Jane and James Wardley in the mid-eighteenth century. Anne Lee was the leader of the Shaker community in the American colonies, and led the settlement of Niskayuna, New York. All Shakers were expected to practice celibacy; the community grew through conversion and the adoption of orphans. American Shakers were also expected to follow the doctrine that Anne Lee was a female embodiment of the divine.*

**Source:** *North American Review* 16 (January 1823): 81, 93-95.

Anne Lee was born in 1736 at Manchester, in England. Her father was a blacksmith by trade, and Anne was brought up in his house, in that eligible part of the city, called *Toad lane*. She was herself educated to the trade of cutter of hatters' fur; and had five brothers and two sisters. She was married in early life to Abraham Standley, a blacksmith, and had four children, all of whom died in infancy. At the age of twenty-two, she became a member of Wardley's society, then in its infancy, and having been, as far as we can collect out of the technical jargon of the work before us, remarkably docile, as a disciple of the leaders; and being, it would seem, of a susceptible nature, adapted to violent religious excitement; and perceiving perhaps the advantage to be attained on the principles of the sect, which conceded to the one sex an equality in all the prerogatives usually arrogated to themselves by the other, Anne became at last the acknowledge leader of this vulgar fanaticism, and in 1770 bore her first testimony. This testimony appears to have been the injunction of celibacy, as the perfection of human nature, and

the holding forth of herself as a divine person. She was from the time received as the spiritual parent of the faithful, honored with the title of Anne the Mother, and styled by herself *Anne the Word!*

The most interesting aspect, under which this institution presents itself, is that of a new form of *monachism*. To enjoin celibacy on about two hundred and fifty men, and as many women, gathered into four or five families, each consisting equally of either sex, and without any aid from the laws of the land or the public sentiment toward enforcing the rules of the institution, is, to say the least, a bold experiment in anthropology. If public scandal say true, it has not proved altogether a successful one. Several persons have, from time to time, seceded from the various communities of Shakers, and some of these have published accounts, unfavorable to the purity of these establishments. \* We must own, however, that such accounts are not entitled to implicit faith, and the common principles of human nature, as well as charity, would lead us to think that it would be impossible to hold these societies together, were any of their leaders as insincere and corrupt, as some are represented to be. Considering that they have no legal power in their hands, and that society does not second their discipline, nothing short of extreme purity in those, who administer it, would prevent its rapid degeneracy and extinction.

When we look into the history of monastic institutions, we find them originating in as voluntary and self devoted a spirit, as that which enlisted the first converts to Shakerism; but we also find that these institutions were *kept up*, by means very different from those, by which their first establishment was effected; means which our Shakers can never command. Separate houses were erected for monks and nuns: the genius of Shakerism requires that the brethren and sis-

ters in the faith be gathered together in the same families. Large bequests in lands and goods were made by the state and individuals on the most inalienable tenures to the religious houses; our governments will certainly give the Shakers nothing, nor incorporate them with powers to receive more than very frugal legacies. The whole power of government, ecclesiastical and civil, was exerted to enforce on those once devoted, the observance of the monastic vow; and to be built up alive into a stone wall was the mildest punishment for violating it. We presume that if any suspicion should get abroad, among the neighbors of a Shaker settlement, that any such means were put in practice against an apostate Shaker or Shakeress, two hours would not elapse without subjecting their abodes to a more violent shaking, on the part of the mob, than any thing ever witnessed at Neskayuna or in Toad lane. Or if this were not done, it is more than probable the grand jury would begin to stir in the business: and it would take more than the ingenuity of our authors to spiritualize the letter of the old common law. In fact, since the mode of settling things by judge and jury has gotten into vogue, monastic institutions have declined in the world; and certainly of all countries, ours is the last where they could be expected to revive.

It may be asked then what holds these families together, in defiance of the law of nature, unaided by the law of the land. To this a partial answer is obvious. Religious enthusiasm was certainly the first principle of the growth of the Shakers. It was accident probably, which gave their establishments an agricultural form in this country. Some substantial farmer became a Shaker, and threw his acres into the common stock. Indigent brethren came and settled with him, and thus the nucleus of a community was formed. If well administered, it is plain that the increase of such an establishment will be rapid. The surplus gains invested in new lands will increase the temptation to converts to share the abundance, and in short the thing grows because it is: as a snow ball, ready in itself to melt,

gathers as it is moved. Moreover, we do not set it all down to mere direct interest. Their community doubtless finds recruits from the wide spread *caste* of the friendless and deserted. Many poor isolated beings exist scattered about, even in this happy land; – surrounded by prosperous families but amalgamated with none, and lonely in the crowd. Single females without friends and protectors, orphan children without relations, pilgrims in the world struck with melancholy by the way, widows, and fathers who have lost children, all those who in one way or the other seem left out of the game or the battle of life, furnish recruits to the Shakers. The families of their neighbors cannot take them all in, and after human pity has been strained to the last degree of cousinship, there will still remain many forlorn individuals in the world. Can it be wondered that such persons are desirous of entering a community, which not only elevates them at once to competence, but divides with them share of the corporate identity; and gives them a little consequence in the eyes of their fellows; and puts their rights, happiness and feelings, under the protection of a numerous society? We have been told that in the late war, the widows and children of some of those, who had enlisted in our army, and were slain on the frontiers, repaired to these asylums. One could forgive some absurdity in religious rites to a people, who stood ready to open their gates to the families thus left desolate. Some blacks may also be seen on their benches, specimens of a branch of that race rapidly disappearing among us.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How does the author explain the success of Shaker communities?
2. What does the author present as the principal difficulties of Shaker life?
3. What does Anne Lee's leadership of a religious community suggest about women's roles in eighteenth-century America?

## 7-7 Elizabeth Cady Stanton Speaks to the American Anti-Slavery Society (1860)

*Elizabeth Cady Stanton was a leader of the nineteenth-century women's rights movement. Together with Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and others, she was a lead organizer of the Women's Rights Convention held at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. (See "Declaration of Rights and Sentiments," chapter 8.) Stanton was also active in abolitionist causes.*

*NOTE: Although some of her wording is offensive to us now, it was widespread at the time. It is important to remember that her ideas were considered radically enlightened in her time.*

**Source:** Reprinted from Ellen DuBois, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Correspondence, Writings, Speeches*. New York, Schocken Books, Inc. 1981: 78 – 85.

This is generally known as the platform of one idea – that is negro slavery. In a certain sense this may be true, but the most casual observation of this whole anti-slavery movement, of your lives, conventions, public speeches and journals, show this one idea to be a great humanitarian one. The motto of your leading organ, "The world is my country and all mankind my countrymen," proclaims the magnitude and universality of this one idea, which takes in the whole human family, irrespective of nation, color, caste, or sex, with all their interests, temporal and spiritual – a question of religion, philanthropy, political economy, commerce, education and social life on which depends the very existence of this republic, of the state, of the family, the sacredness of the lives and property of Northern freemen, the holiness of the marriage relation, and perpetuity of the Christian religion. Such are the various phases of the question you are wont to debate in your conventions. They all grow out of and legitimately belong to that so-called petty, insignificant, annoying subject, which thrusts upon its head everywhere in Church and State – "the eternal nigger." But in settling the question of the negro's rights, we find out the exact limits of our own, for rights never clash or interfere; and where no individual in a community is denied his rights, the mass are the more perfectly protected in theirs; for whenever any class is subject to fraud or injustice, it shows that the spirit of tyranny is at work, and no one can tell where or how or when the infection will spread. . . .

It was thought a small matter to kidnap a black man in Africa, and set him to work in the rice swamps of Georgia; but when we look at the panorama of hor-

rors that followed that event, at all the statute laws that were enacted to make that act legal, at the perversion of man's moral sense and innate love of justice in being compelled to defend such laws; when we consider the long, hard tussle we have witnessed here for near a century between the spirit of Liberty and Slavery, we may, in some measure, appreciate the magnitude of the wrong done to that one, lone, friendless negro, who, under the cover of darkness and the star-spangled banner, was stolen from his African hut and lodged in the hold of the American slaver. That one act has, in its consequences, convulsed this Union. It has corrupted our churches, our politics, our press; laid violent hands on Northern freemen at their own firesides; it has gagged our statesmen, and stricken our Northern Senators dumb in their seats; yes, beneath the flag of freedom, Liberty has crouched in fear.

That grand declaration of rights made by WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON, while yet a printer's boy, was on a higher plane than that of '76. His was uttered with the Christian's view of the dignity of man, the value of the immortal being; the other but from the self-respect of one proud race. But, in spite of noble words, deeds of thirty years of protest, prayers, and preaching, slavery still lives, the negro toils on in his weary bondage, his chains have not yet melted in the intense heat of the sun of righteousness; but in the discussion of this question, in grappling with its foes, how many of us have worked out our salvation; what mountains of superstition have been rolled off the human soul! I have always regarded Garrison as the great missionary of the gospel of Jesus to this guilty nation, for he has waged an uncompromising warfare with the deadly sins of both Church and State. . . .

... The mission of this Radical Anti-Slavery Movement is not to the African slave alone, but to the slaves of custom, creed and sex, as well. . . .

Eloquently and earnestly as noble men have denounced slavery on this platform, they have been able to take only an objective view. They can describe the general features of that infernal system – the horrors of the African slave trade, the agonizing sufferings of the middle-passage, and auction-block, the slave-pen and coffer, the diabolism of the internal traffic, the cruel severing of family ties, the hopeless degradation of woman; all that is outward they can see; but a privileged class can never conceive the feelings of those who are born to contempt, to inferiority, to degradation. Herein is woman more fully identified with the slave than man can possibly be, for she can take the subjective view. She early learns the misfortune of being born an heir to the crown of thorns, to martyr-

dom, to womanhood. For a while the man is born to do whatever he can, for the woman and the negro there is no such privilege. There is a Procrustean bedstead ever ready for them, body and soul, and all mankind stand on the alert to restrain their impulses, check their aspirations, fetter their limbs, lest, in their freedom and strength, in their full development, they should take an even platform with proud man himself. To you, white man, the world throws wide her gates; the way is clear to wealth, to fame, to glory, to renown; the high place of independence and honor and trust are yours; all your efforts are praised and encouraged; all your successes are welcomed with loud hurrahs and cheers; but the black man and the woman are born to shame. The badge of degradation is the skin and sex – the “scarlet letter” so sadly worn upon the breast. Children, even, can define the sphere of the black man, and the most ignorant Irishman hiss him into it, while striplings, mere swaddlings of law and divinity, can talk quite glibly of woman’s sphere, and pedant priests at the altar discourse most lovingly of her holy mission to cook his meat, and bear him children, and minister to his sickly lust.

In conversation with a reverend gentleman, not long ago, I chanced to speak of the injustice done to woman. Ah! said he, so far from complaining, your heart should go out in thankfulness that you are an American woman, for in no country in the world does woman hold so high a position as here. Why, sir, said I, you must be very ignorant, or very false. Is my political position as high as that of Victoria, Queen of the mightiest nation on the globe? Are not nearly two millions of native-born American woman, at this very hour, doomed to the foulest slavery that angels ever wept to witness? Are they not doubly damned as immortal beasts of burden in the field, and sad mothers of a most accursed race? Are not they raised for the express purpose of lust? Are they not chained and driven in the slave-coffle at the crack of the whip of an unfeeling driver? Are they not sold on the auction-block? Are they not exposed naked to the course jests and voluptuous eyes of brutal men? Are they not trained up in ignorance of all laws, both human and divine, and denied the right to read the Bible? For them there is no Sabbath, no Jesus, no Heaven, no hope, no holy mission of wife and mother, no privacy of home, nothing sacred to look for, but an eternal sleep in dust and the grave. And these are the daughters and sisters of the first men in the Southern states: think of fathers and brothers selling their own flesh on the auction block, exposing beautiful women of refinement and education in a New Orleans market, and selling them, body and soul, to the highest bidder! And this is the condition of woman in republican, Christian

America, and you dare not look me in the face, and tell me that, for blessings such as these, my heart should go out in thankfulness! No, proud priest, you may cover your soul in holy robes, and hide your manhood in a pulpit, and, like the Pharisee of old, turn your face away from the sufferings of your race; but I am a Christian – a follower of Jesus – and “whatever is done unto one of the least of these my sisters is done also unto me.” Though, in person of the poor trembling slave mother, you have bound me with heavy burdens most grievous to bear, though you have done all you could to quench the spark of immortality, which, from the throne of God, brought me into being . . . yet can I still speak to him. . . . I have asked the ever lasting hills, that in their upward yearnings seem to touch the heavens if I, an immortal being, though clothed in womanhood, was made for the vile purposes to which proud Southern man has doomed me, and in solemn chorus they all chanted, NO! I have turned my eyes within, I have asked this bleeding heart, so full of love to God and man, so generous and self-sacrificing, ever longing for the pure, the holy, the divine, if this graceful form, this soft and tender flesh was made to crawl and shiver in the cold, foul embrace of Southern tyrants; and in stifled sobs, it answered, NO! Think you, oh Christian priests, meekly I will take your insults, taunts and sneers? To you my gratitude is due for all the peculiar blessings of slavery, for you have had the morals of this nation in your keeping. Behold the depths into which you have plunged me – the bottomless pit of human misery! But perchance your head grows dizzy to look down so far, and your heart faint to see what torture I can bear! It is enough.

But . . . I rejoice that it has been given to woman to drink the very dregs of human wretchedness and woe. For now, by an eternal law of matter and of mind, when the reaction comes, upward and upward, and still upward, she shall rise. Behold how far above your priestly robes, your bloody alters, your foul incense, your steepled synagogues she shall stand secure on holy mounts, mid clouds of dazzling radiance, to which, in your gross vision, you shall not dare even to lift your eyes! (Applause.)

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How does Stanton link women’s oppression and slavery? Do you think her argument is effective?
2. In what way does Stanton claim slavery harms non-slave women?
3. What groups might be considered “slaves of custom, creed, and sex”?

## 7-8 A Warning to Mothers from the Female Moral Reform Society

*The Female Moral Reform Society was a national organization that provided many nineteenth-century women with access to the public sphere. The Society's opposition to masturbation was hardly unique; physicians, clergy, and many others blamed a variety of physical and social ills on sexual self-stimulation, and many contraptions that reportedly prevented masturbation were patented in the nineteenth century.*

**Source:** In *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, editors. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996, 218-219

### BELOVED SISTERS.

Will you permit an associated band, most of whom share responsibilities similar to your own, and know with yourselves the deep yearnings of maternal love, to call your attention, for a few moments, to a forbidding, but most important subject. Be assured that nothing but the fixed conviction that it is a subject affecting the temporal and eternal well-being of the young immortals committed to your care, would induce us to commend it to your consideration through the Press. We refer to a species of licentiousness from which neither age nor sex is exempt; a vice that has done its work of ruin, physical, mental, and moral, when no eye but that of Omniscience could behold it, a vice that has been practised in ten thousand instances, without a correct knowledge of its consequences, or its guilt, until it has paved the way for the most revolting excesses in 'crime. .

Recently it has pleased, our Heavenly Father to bring before our minds a flood of light, by which we have been solemnly convinced, that in nine cases out of ten, "solitary vice" [masturbation] is the first cause of social licentiousness, and the foundation and hidden source of the present corrupt state of society. . . .

The dangers to which all classes of the rising generation are exposed, are great beyond expression, they are dangers, too, that may stain the soul with guilt, and yet elude the vigilance of the most watchful parent,

unless obviated *from the cradle*, by proper training and correct instruction. . . .

"A pupil in a select school, a child but ten years of age, confessed to her teacher, that she had been guilty of the sin alluded to for years, although she had never been taught it, and knew not that any one living practised it but herself. Her mind was fast sinking, she was wholly unable to reckon even small sums. This child had been religiously educated, but she was reared where the table was made a snare. Rich and high seasoned food, and abundance of dainties were given her, bathing was neglected, and a precocious development of the passions, and their consequent indulgence, was, in this case, the result." "A child, under 12 years of age, whose morals in every respect had been care-fully guarded, and who had never, except in one instance, been exposed, to the influence of an evil associate; on being questioned by her mother, confessed with tears that the sin had been taught her by the suspected individual." "A son of a highly respectable physician, under three years of age, with no teacher but depraved instinct, had become so addicted to this pernicious habit, that the mother was obliged to provide a close night dress, and watch his waking hours with unceasing care." . . . "A theological student, of superior mind and high attainments, deservedly beloved by numerous friends, and eminently fitted to be the centre of attraction in the highest circles of refinement, became a subject of this debasing vice. Presently his health failed, and abused reason deserted his throne. He was carried from the seminary to his friends, a maniac, and after lingering a few days, was ushered into the presence of his Judge." A physician, who has long had an extensive practice in this city, confidently affirms that most of the young men in feeble health, who go south, to escape or re-cover from consumption, are the victims of this body and soule destroying sin. . . .

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Putting aside the absurd claims in this text, is there any way that masturbation could pose a threat to the social order or to individual morality?
2. Why would mothers be charged with responsibility for preventing masturbation?

## 7-9 A Call for Women to Become Abolitionists

*Women helped organize the American Anti-Slavery Society, held fundraising antislavery bazaars, circulated antislavery petitions, and otherwise promoted the abolitionist cause. This essay is one of the earliest appeals to women. It also shows that women's participation in the movement was sometimes opposed even by women themselves. This excerpt is a response to a woman who objected to other women publicly advocating emancipation.*

**Source:** Elizabeth Margaret Chandler, *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Margaret Chandler* (Philadelphia, 1836), 21-23.

We have been so long accustomed to consider the duty of the female sex, with regard to slavery, as entirely plain, that we had almost imagined it must be equally so to any unprejudiced thinker upon the subject. Not that we expected to find no difference of feeling, or contrariety of sentiment; apathy and prejudices we were prepared for; but we certainly had not thought that the interference of woman in behalf of suffering humanity, could be seriously objected to, as improper, and at variance with right principles. Yet this we are sorry to find is the light in which it is regarded by one of our own sex—a lady, whose talents and character we respect very highly, and whose approbation of the course we are pursuing, we should be proud to have obtained. But as this is withheld, and it is probable she may not be singular in her opinions, we have taken the liberty of quoting some of her sentiments, and appending to them a statement of our own ideas on the same subject

“Should you inquire why I do not devote myself more sedulously to promote the cause of emancipation?—I would tell you, that I think it is a work which requires the energies of men.”

And so it does; but it requires also the influence of woman. She was given to man ‘to be a helpmeet [help-mate] for him;’ and it is therefore her duty, whenever she can do so, to lend him her aid in every great work of philanthropy. In this her cooperation may be of

essential service, without leading her one step beyond her own proper sphere....

“It is a subject so connected with those of government, of law and politics, that I should fear the direct or even apparent interference of my own sex, would be a departure from that propriety of character which nature, as well as society, imposes on woman.”

It is true that it is a question of government and politics, but it also rests upon the broader basis of humanity and justice; and it is on this ground only, that we advocate the interference of women. We have not the least desire to see our own sex transformed into a race of politicians; but we do not think that in this case such consequences are in the least to be apprehended. To plead for the miserable, to endeavor to alleviate the bitterness of their destiny, and to soften the stern bosoms of their oppressors into gentleness and mercy, can never be unfeminine or unbefitting the delicacy of woman! She does not advocate Emancipation because slavery is at variance with the political interests of the state, but because it is an outrage against humanity and morality and religion; because it is criminal, and because her own supineness makes her a sharer in the crime; and because a great number of her own sex are among its victims. It is therefore, that she should steadily and conscientiously rank among the number of its opponents, and refuse to be benefited by its advantages. She does not by this become a partisan of any system of policy—she seeks only to shield from outrage all that is most holy in her religion! She does not seek to direct, or share with men, the government of the state; but she entreats them to lift the iron foot of despotism from the neck of her sisterhood; and this we consider not only quite within the sphere of her privileges, but also of her positive duties.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Does the author call on women to take greater responsibility in government?
2. What are the practical results for women's rights in her call for women's involvement in the abolitionist movement?



## 7-10 Southern Belle Denounces Slavery

*Angelina Grimke was the daughter of a southern aristocrat and herself a staunch abolitionist. Angelina and her sister, Sarah, moved to Philadelphia, converted to the Quaker religion and became active in the abolition movement. Angelina became dissatisfied with the pacifism of the Quakers and wrote "An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South," which was banned in the South and prompted a call for her arrest in South Carolina. Grimke's position was extremely radical for a southern woman in her day. Grimke's speech, "Bearing Witness Against Slavery," reprinted here, was delivered at the 1838 National Anti-Slavery Convention in Philadelphia. The convention was greeted by an angry mob who waited outside, jeering and throwing rocks for three days, the mob finally storming the building and setting fire to it on the third day.*

**Source:** Carolina Herron, ed., *Selected Works of Angelina Weld Grimke* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Do you ask, "What has the North to do with slavery?" Hear it, hear it! Those voices without tell us that the spirit of slavery is *here*, and has been roused to wrath by our Conventions; for surely liberty would not foam and tear herself with rage, because her friends are multiplied daily, and meetings are held in quick succession to set forth her virtues and extend her peaceful kingdom. This opposition shows that slavery has done its deadliest work in the hearts of our citizens. Do you ask, then, "What has the North to do?" I answer, cast out first the spirit of slavery from your own hearts, and then lend your aid to convert the South. Each one present has a work to do, be his or her situation what it may, however limited their means or insignificant their supposed influence. The great men of this country will not do this work; the Church will never do it. A desire to please the world, to keep the favor of all parties and of all conditions, makes them dumb on this and every other unpopular subject.

As a Southerner, I feel that it is my duty to stand up here to-night and bear testimony against slavery. I have seen it! I have seen it! I know it has horrors that can never be described. I was brought up under its wing. I witnessed for many years its demoralizing influences and its destructiveness to human happiness. I have never seen a happy slave. I have seen him dance in his chains, it is true, but he was not happy. There is a wide difference between happiness and

mirth. Man can not enjoy happiness while his manhood is destroyed. Slaves, however, may be, and sometimes are mirthful. When hope is extinguished, they say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." [Here stones were thrown at the windows—a great noise without and commotion within.]

What is a mob? What would the breaking of every window be? What would the leveling of this hall be? Any evidence that we are wrong, or that slavery is a good and wholesome institution? What if the mob should now burst in upon us, break up our meeting, and commit violence upon our persons, would that be anything compared with what the slaves endure? No, no; and we do not remember them, "as bound with them," if we shrink in the time of peril, or feel unwilling to sacrifice ourselves, if need be, for their sake. [Great noise.] I thank the Lord that there is yet life enough left to feel the truth, even though it rages at it; that conscience is not so completely seared as to be unmoved by the truth of the living God. [Another outbreak of the mob and confusion in the house.]

How wonderfully constituted is the human mind! How it resists, as long as it can, all efforts to reclaim it from error! I feel that all this disturbance is but an evidence that our efforts are the best that could have been adopted, or else the friends of slavery would not care for what we say and do. The South know what we do. I am thankful that they are reached by our efforts. Many times have I wept in the land of my birth over the system of slavery. I knew of none who sympathized in my feelings; I was unaware that any efforts were made to deliver the oppressed; no voice in the wilderness was heard calling on the people to repent and do works meet for repentance, and my heart sickened within me. Oh, how should I have rejoiced to know that such efforts as these were being made. I only wonder that I had such feelings. But in the midst of temptation I was preserved, and my sympathy grew warmer, and my hatred of slavery more inveterate, until at last I have exiled myself from my native land, because I could no longer endure to hear the wailing of the slave.

I fled to the land of Penn; for here, thought I, sympathy for the slave will surely be found. But I found it not. The people were kind and hospitable, but the slave had no place in their thoughts. I therefore shut up my grief in my own heart. I remembered that I was a Carolinian, from a State which framed this iniquity by law. Every Southern breeze wafted to me the discordant tones of weeping and wailing, shrieks and groans, mingled with prayers and blasphemous curses. My heart sank within me at the abominations in the midst of which I had been born and educated. What will it

avail, cried I, in bitterness of spirit, to expose to the gaze of strangers the horrors and pollutions of slavery, when there is no ear to hear nor heart to feel and pray for the slave? But how different do I feel now! Animated with hope, nay, with an assurance of the triumph of liberty and good-will to man, I will lift up my voice like a trumpet, and show this people what they can do to influence the Southern mind and overthrow slavery. [Shouting, and stones against the windows.]

We often hear the question asked, "What shall we do?" Here is an opportunity. Every man and every woman present may do something, by showing that we fear not a mob, and in the midst of revilings and threatenings, pleading the cause of those who are ready to perish. Let me urge every one to buy the books written on this subject; read them, and lend them to your neighbors. Give your money no longer for things which pander to pride and lust, but aid in scattering "the living coals of truth upon the naked heart of the nation"; in circulating appeals to the sympathies of Christians in behalf of the outraged slave.

But it is said by some, our "books and papers do not speak the truth"; why, then, do they not contradict what we say? They can not. Moreover, the South has entreated, nay, commanded us, to be silent; and what greater evidence of the truth of our publications could be desired?

Women of Philadelphia! allow me as a Southern woman, with much attachment to the land of my birth, to entreat you to come up to this work. Especially, let me urge you to petition. Men may settle this and other questions at the ballot-box, but you have no such right. It is only through petitions that you can reach the Legislature. It is, therefore, peculiarly your duty to petition. Do you say, "It does no good!" The South already turns pale at the number sent. They have read the reports of the proceedings of Congress, and there have been seen that among other petitions were very many from

the women of the North on the subject of slavery. Men who hold the rod over slaves rule in the councils of the nation; and they deny our right to petition and remonstrate against abuses of our sex and our kind. We have these rights, however, from our God. Only let us exercise them, and, though often turned away unanswered, let us remember the influence of importunity upon the unjust judge, and act accordingly. The fact that the South looks jealously upon our measures shows that they are effectual. There is, therefore, no cause for doubting or despair.

It was remarked in England that women did much to abolish slavery in her colonies. Nor are they now idle. Numerous petitions from them have recently been presented to the Queen to abolish apprenticeship, with its cruelties, nearly equal to those of the system whose place it supplies. One petition, two miles and a quarter long, has been presented. And do you think these labors will be in vain? Let the history of the past answer. When the women of these States send up to Congress such a petition our legislators will arise, as did those of England, and say: "When all the maids and matrons of the land are knocking at our doors we must legislate." Let the zeal and love, the faith and works of our English sisters quicken ours; that while the slaves continue to suffer, and when they shout for deliverance, we may feel the satisfaction of "having done what we could."

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What can you discern about the role of women within the abolitionist movement from Grimke's speech? What specific things are the women doing?
2. What do you think about Grimke's courage? How is it demonstrated within this speech? Why do you think more Southern women did not join her?

## POLITICS AND POWER: THE MOVEMENT FOR WOMAN'S RIGHTS, 1800–1860

### 8-1 New York Married Women's Property Act

*Gaining the legal right to hold property independently of a father or husband was a significant victory for women. New York was the first state to grant women property rights, as spelled out in this 1848 law.*

**Source:** [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awlaw3/property\\_law.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awlaw3/property_law.html)

#### **AN ACT for the effectual protection of the property of married women.**

Passed April 7, 1848.

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:

Sec. 1. The real and personal property of any female who may hereafter marry, and which she shall own at the time of marriage, and the rents issues and profits thereof shall not be subject to the disposal of her husband, nor be liable for his debts, and shall continue her sole and separate property, as if she were a single female.

Sec. 2 The real and personal property, and the rents issues and profits thereof of any female now married shall not be subject to the disposal of her husband; but shall be her sole and separate property as if she were a single female except so far as the same may be liable for the debts of her husband heretofore contracted.

Sec. 3. It shall be lawful for any married female to receive, by gift, grant devise or bequest, from any person other than her husband and hold to her sole and separate use, as if she were a single female, real and personal property, and the rents, issues and profits thereof, and the same shall not be subject to the disposal of her husband, nor be liable for his debts.

Sec. 4. All contracts made between persons in contemplation of marriage shall remain in full force after such marriage takes place.

#### **FOCUS QUESTIONS**

1. What are some of the practical effects for a married woman of being able to hold property "as if she were a single female"?
2. Why does the law specifically refer to women's potential liability for her husband's debts?

### 8-2 From A History of Women in Trade Unions

*Trade unions were dominated by men. From the 1830s throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and beyond, the trade union leadership and press put forward the argument that, because women were generally paid less than men, their presence in the workforce depressed wages for men. This U.S. government report from the early twentieth century encapsulates the view.*

**Source:** John Andrews and W.D.P. Bliss, *A History of Women*

*in Trade Unions. Volume 10 of Report on the Conditions of Woman and Child Earners in the United States, U.S. Department of Labor, 1911.*

One thing . . . must be apparent to every reflecting female, that all her exertions are scarce sufficient to keep her alive; that the price of her labor each year is reduced, and that she in a measure stands in the way of the male when attempting to raise his prices or equalize his labor, and that her efforts to sustain herself and family are actually the same as tying a stone around the neck of her natural protector, Man, and

destroying him with the weight she has brought to his assistance. This is the true and natural consequence of female labor when carried beyond the family.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. If we accept as legitimate men's concerns about

their wage levels in a mixed-gender work environment, what alternative response to women's lower wages might have preserved men's earnings?

2. What assumptions do the writers make about women's roles in the workplace and in the family? What assumptions do they make about women's reasons for working?

### 8-3 Catharine Beecher's Essay on the Education of Female Teachers

*Catharine Beecher was an influential advocate of early education for girls. Catharine, born in 1800, was the eldest of thirteen children; her siblings included the famous abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, published in 1852) and the renowned clergyman Henry Ward Beecher.*

**Source:** Catharine Beecher, *An Essay on the Education of Female Teachers*, J.B. Ford and Company, 1874: 27-33.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### HARTFORD SEMINARY

The preceding particulars of personal and family history will indicate that much which is often ascribed to remarkable native talents, is result of appropriate culture. And in the following narrative of what has been accomplished by my co-laborers and myself the last fifty years, it will be seen that it was achieved chiefly by good, common sense, persevering energy and high religious principle, and not by remarkable genius, or by the aid of that literary and scientific training sought in our colleges and regarded as a marked privilege of which women have been unjustly deprived.

When nearly twenty I began preparation to teach, by taking lessons on the piano and in this, as in my domestic training, I was favored by a very thorough and accurate teacher had no special taste or talent in that direction as was manifest from the fact that when I was eleven years old, a lady parishioner gave me lessons for two years, and having no piano, I did not feel interest enough to accept her invitation or that of another friend to use their instruments.

My success in this case was chiefly owing to the quickening of my faculties by *interest* in gaining a *practical* result, that of making myself independent, and aiding to support my family. For though I had forgot-

ten both notes and keys, under the training of a friend warmly interested in my success, in a year and a half I was recommended to teach in a school, in New London and play the organ in an Episcopal church. I also taught drawing and painting—having been further qualified by a lady who had taken lessons of the best masters in New York. But at that period very humble performances in these accomplishments gave satisfaction.

When, at twenty-two, I commenced preparation to teach "the higher branches" in which I had had no knowledge also was favored by most thorough instruction from a friend in the family where I spent the winter. Then it was that I first took in hand the mystical performances in Daboll's Arithmetic, and as my domestic training had formed a habit of enquiring why any practical operation was to be performed, I began to annoy my teacher with demanding *why* the figures were to be put thus, and so, and *why* a given, answer was gained. And so when I had pupils in this branch taught as no book then in use did, and finally made an arithmetic first issued in manuscript by my teachers, and then published. Of this book Prof. Olmstead, of Vale College, wrote to me thus:

"Your Arithmetic I have put into the hands of my children, giving it a decided preference over those in common use. Reflecting how I might best serve you, it has occurred to me that when your revised edition is out, I may write a notice of it, more or less extended, for the *Christian Spectator*, which could be used by your publisher."

This fact is the more striking, because of all studies I ever attempted this was both 'the most difficult and most uninteresting; so that my success was wholly owing to the interest excited by its practical usefulness in my profession. That same winter, beside completing Daboll, I went through Day's Algebra, a few exercises in Geometry, a work on Logic, and two small works prepared for schools, on Chemistry and Natural Philosophy.

Then, associated with my next sister, I commenced

a school for young ladies in Hartford, Conn. We began in the upper chamber of a store with seven young ladies, receiving none under twelve; and my younger sister (now Mrs. H. B. Stowe) joined us as a pupil when she had attained that age.

Soon the increase of pupils removed us to a larger chamber, and thence to the basement of a church, where nearly one hundred young ladies had only one room, no globe or large maps, and, most of the time, no black-board, and only two teachers. At this time I had heard that Mrs. Willard and one or two others were teaching the higher branches, but I knew nothing of their methods. All the improvements I made were the result of the practical training of domestic life, in which the constant aim had been to find the *best* way of doing anything and everything; together with the very thorough manner in which, at mature age, I was taught.

At the end of four laborious years, I drew the plan of the present seminary, except the part containing the Calisthenic hall,—Mr. Daniel Wadsworth aiding in preparing the front elevation. This I submitted to some of the leading gentlemen of Hartford, and asked to

have such a building erected by subscription. Many of them were surprised and almost dismayed at the “visionary and impracticable suggestion, and when it became current that I wanted a study hall to hold one hundred and fifty pupils, a lecture room, and six recitation rooms, the absurdity of it was apparent to most of the city fathers, and, with some, excited ridicule. But the more intelligent and influential women came to my aid, and soon all I ought was granted. This was my first experience of the moral power and good judgment of American women, which has been my chief reliance ever since.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. How did Beecher determine which subjects to teach to girls? What teaching methods did she emphasize in training teachers?
2. To what does Beecher ascribe her success? What is the importance of family and social networks?
3. Is she optimistic about the future for women's education?

## 8-4 Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Seneca Falls

*Organized by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention in New York was the first national women's rights convention in the United States. This document, obviously modeled on the Declaration of Independence, listed the ways in which women had been denied the basic rights inherent in the American idea. It was drafted by Stanton, and approved with minor alterations by the convention. Though 40 men attended (including Fredrick Douglass) the convention blamed men for the unjust treatment of women and stated that women must earn independence for themselves. The meeting became the first of many and provided impetus for the burgeoning women' movement.*

**Source:** E. C. Stanton, S. B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1 (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann, 1881), pp. 70–72.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights govern-

ments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . . But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world. He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise. He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice. He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners. Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides. He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead. He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns. He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with

impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement. He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it. He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known. He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her. He allows her in Church, as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church. He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man. He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God. He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life. Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States. In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and National legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit

and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions embracing every part of the country. The following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, That such laws as conflict, in any way, with the true and substantial happiness of woman, are contrary to the great precept of nature and of no validity, for this is “superior in obligation to any other.”

Resolved, That all laws which prevent woman from occupying such a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore of no force or authority.

Resolved, That woman is man’s equal—was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.

Resolved, 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.

Resolved, That inasmuch as man, while claiming for himself intellectual superiority, does accord to woman moral superiority, it is pre-eminently his duty to encourage her to speak and teach, as she has an opportunity, in all religious assemblies.

Resolved, That the same amount of virtue, delicacy, and refinement of behavior that is required of woman in the social state, should also be required of man, and the same transgressions should be visited with equal severity on both man and woman.

Resolved, That the objection of indelicacy and impropriety, which is so often brought against woman when she addresses a public audience, comes with a very ill-grace from those who encourage, by their attendance, her appearance on the stage, in the concert, or in feats of the circus.

Resolved, That woman has too long rested satisfied in the circumscribed limits which corrupt customs and a perverted application of the Scriptures have marked out for her, and that it is time she should move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her.

Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.

Resolved, That the equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities.

Resolved, therefore, That, being invested by the Creator with the same capabilities, and the same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of woman, equally with man, to promote every righteous cause by every righteous means; and especially in regard to the great subjects of morals and religion, it is self evidently her right to participate with her brother in teaching them, both in private and in public, by writing and by speaking, by any instrumentalities proper to be used, and in any assemblies proper to be held; and this being a self-evident truth growing out of the divinely implanted principles of human nature, any custom or authority adverse to it, whether modern or wearing the hoary sanction of antiquity, is to be regarded as a self-evident

falsehood, and at war with mankind.

Resolved, That the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions, and commerce.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. In the "Resolutions" at the end of the document, how does Stanton attempt to persuade men to agree to equal rights for women?
2. Even though the women's rights movement followed closely on the heels of abolitionism, slaves gained emancipation more than fifty years before women won the right to vote in national elections. Why do you think this was the case?

## 8-5 Letters on the Equality of the Sexes

*Sarah Grimke and her sister Angelina were abolitionist activists and early leaders of the women's rights movement. (See documents by Angelina Grimke in chapter seven, "Resolutions of the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women" and "Southern Belle Denounces Slavery.") This text is excerpted from a volume of letters that Sarah Grimke addressed to the president of the Boston Anti-Slavery Society, Mary S. Parker.*

**Source:** Sarah Grimke, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Woman* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838), p. 16.

The Lord Jesus defines the duties of his followers in his Sermon on the Mount. He lays down grand principles by which they should be governed, without any reference to sex or condition : — 'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither

do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.' I follow him through all his precepts, and find him giving the same directions to women as to men, never even referring to the distinction now so strenuously insisted upon between masculine and feminine virtues : this is one of the anti-christian 'traditions of men' which are taught instead of the 'commandments of God.' 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.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why were religious arguments such as this one important to nineteenth-century activists?
2. Can you think of any logical refutation to Grimke's line of reasoning?

## 8-6 Course of Instruction, Mount Holyoke Female Seminary

*Mount Holyoke Female Seminary – the precursor to today’s Mount Holyoke College, in South Hadley, Massachusetts – was the first American institution of higher education for women. It was founded by Mary Lyon, and opened in 1837. Lyon’s goal was to offer an education equal to what was offered at men’s colleges at the time, and to keep expenses low so that a high-quality education would be available to a relatively diverse pool of women.*

**Source:** Mary Lyon, *Third Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Members of the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary* (South Hadley, MA: 1839-1840), “Appendix: Course of Instruction,” pp. 8-12.

### APPENDIX.

#### COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

There is a regular English course of study, occupying three years. Some devote a part of their time to Latin, and continue more than one year in the same class. This is very desirable for all who expect to complete the regular course. It is contemplated that the course of study will embrace four years to give a regular time to Latin. It is hoped that the improvement of the pupils, and the expectation of friends will soon justify such an addition.

#### STUDIES OF THE JUNIOR CLASS.

Ancient Geography. Ancient and Modern History:—Text books, Worcester’s Elements Goldsmith’s Greece, Rome, and England, and Grim Shaw’s France. Day’s Algebra begun. Sullivan’s Political Class Book. Lee’s Physiology. Outline of Botany. Outline of Natural Philosophy. Smellie’s Philosophy of Natural History. English Grammar:—Murray’s Grammar and Exercises, Pope’s Essay on Man.

#### STUDIES OF THE MIDDLE CLASS.

Day’s Algebra finished. Playfair’s Euclid (old edition) begun. Abercrombie on the Intellectual Powers. Marsh’s Ecclesiastical history. Beck’s Botany begun. Beck’s Chemistry. Wilkins’s Astronomy. Newman’s Rhetoric. Geology. Alexander’s Evidences of Christianity. English Grammar continued: —Young’s Night Thoughts

#### STUDIES OF THE SENIOR CLASS.

Playfair’s Euclid finished. Olmsted’s Natural Philosophy. Beek’s Botany continued. Paley’s Natural Theology. Whately’s Logic. Wharclay’s Rhetoric. Intellectual Philosophy. Wayland’s Moral Philosophy. Wayland’s Moral Philosophy. Wayland’s Political Economy. Buther’s Analogy. Million’s Paradise Lost.

Particular attention is given to composition, reading, and calisthenics through the whole course. The Bible lesson is recited on the Sabbath and reviewed during the week. Regular instruction is given in vocal music, and in linear and prospective drawing. Those who have attended to instrumental music, can have the use of a piano a few hours in a week.

As books and stationery can be had at the Seminary on very low terms, young ladies need not purchase them elsewhere. They are requested, however, to bring with them any of the preceding list of text books, which they may own—also a Bible, an English Dictionary, and if they own them, a Concordance, a Commentary on the Bible, Village Hymns, Watts’ Psalms and Hymns, Parker’s Progressive Exercises in Reading, books containing selections in poetry and prose for improvement in Reading, a Modern Atlas, an Ancient Atlas, Burritt’s Celestial Atlas, and standard poetical works.

#### TERMS FOR ADMISSION.

The studies requisite for admission use an acquaintance with the general principles of English Grammar, a good knowledge of Modern Geography, Goodrich’s History of the United States, Walls on the Mind, Colburn’s First Lessons, and the whole of Adams’s New Arithmetic.

None are received under sixteen years of age. Except in extraordinary cases no candidate will be accepted expecting to enter after the year commences, or to leave till its close.

#### EXAMINATIONS AND CLASSIFICATION.

Examinations for admission to the regular classes take place at the beginning of the year. Every candidate for admission to the Junior class is examined on the preparatory studies. Every candidate for an advanced standing is examined on the regular studies with which she is acquainted. Those who continue members of the Seminary are regularly examined at the commencement of each year, before they are admitted to the next higher class. None can be admitted to the



Junior class without passing a good examination on all the preparatory studies, whatever may be their attainments in other branches. But individuals may be admitted to the Middle and Senior classes by passing a good examination on all the preparatory studies, and in as many branches of the regular course as shall be equivalent to a full preparation. It is however very desirable that all candidates for admission to the Middle class should be acquainted with all the Junior studies, and it is much more important, that candidates for admission to the Senior class should have a good knowledge of both the Junior and Middle studies. For the present, the members of the Junior and Middle classes will to some extent recite promiscuously together, as their preparation and necessities may require. But the Senior class, in recitations, are to be kept distinct from the other members of the Seminary, and to pursue a regular course a class.

#### VACATIONS.

There are three vacations in a year—the first of one week in February—the second of two weeks in May—the third of nine weeks at the close of the year. The plan of including most of the time for vacations in one, is an accommodation to many who are too far from home to return during the year. It gives the pupils the time for relaxation, which is most needed for that object, and which is least valuable for study, and at a pleasant season of the year for journeying.

It is important that all the young ladies come expecting to continue through the year without being absent at all, except during vacations, and during a recess of two days connected with thanksgiving. No one can leave at the commencement of a vacation till her last recitation is finished, and every one should return in season to prepare as well as recite her first lesson.

#### STUDY HOURS AND RECREATION.

Both parts of every day are devoted to study except Saturday. The regular study hours commence at half past seven in the morning, at half past one in the afternoon, and at seven or eight in the evening according to the season of the year. The regular hours for daily recreation embrace the time from half past eleven to half past one, and from four to seven in winter, and from five to eight in summer.

Young ladies do not study during the regular hours for recreation. Their health and improvement are more promoted by giving up these hours cheerfully, to relaxation exercise and social intercourse. It is also

important that their study hours be uninterrupted. All the calls and visits they make during term time should be confined to Saturday and the regular recreation hours. Without a very high standard of punctuality, it is impossible to maintain a high standard for study and correct scholarship. The loss of a single lesson, or of the study hours of one evening, may be felt for many weeks. One imperfect lesson often discourages a pupil, and produces a succession of similar lessons; one absence prepares the way for another, and a deficiency of promptness in one, will have its influence on others. Perfect punctuality without interruption through the whole year is, therefore, the standard presented to every pupil on entering the Seminary.

#### EXPENSES.

Board and tuition, exclusive of fuel and lights, will be \$60 a year—\$30 to be paid on entrance, and \$30 the First of February. No deduction will be made for a short absence. In case of a protracted absence, the charge will be made by the week, and not by the year, but it will be higher in proportion, at the rate of \$80 a year.

#### FAMILY ACCOMMODATIONS.

All the teachers and pupils board in the establishment. None are received to board elsewhere. The family and school are so organized, that they form constituent parts of the same whole; each advancing the interests of the ether, and both uniting to promote the improvement, comfort, and happiness of the household. Every thing relative to the improvement and division of time, to giving and receiving instruction, and to social intercourse, partakes, more of the simplicity of the family circle than of the common restrictive rules of the school system.

#### MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE.

This Institution has been given to the public as the result of benevolent efforts. That it would be decidedly religious in its influence has been the expectation of its friends. The location of the Seminary, and all the surrounding circumstances are favorable to such an influence. A very large proportion of the pupils are professors of religion.

#### DOMESTIC DEPARTMENTS.

All the members of the school aid to some extent in the domestic labor of the family. The portion of time thus occupied, is so small that it does not retard their progress in study, but rather facilitates it by its invigor-

ating influence. The division of labor is very systematic; giving to each young lady not much change or variety in a year, and enabling her to perform her part in a proper manner without solicitude. In ordinary cases, to each one is assigned that in which she has been well trained at home. No one will expect to receive instruction in any thing, with which she is entirely unacquainted. It is in 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. Some may inquire, "What then can be the design of this arrangement?" It may be replied, that the family work must be performed—that it is difficult to find hired domestics, and to retain them any considerable time when they are found—and that young ladies engaged in study suffer much in their vigor and intellectual energy, and in their future health for the want of exercise. The construction of the building and the

family arrangements are such, as render it convenient and suitable for the members of the school to take exercise in the domestic department, thus receiving a benefit themselves, and conferring a benefit on others.

This feature of the Institution will not relieve mothers from the responsibility of giving their daughters a thorough domestic education; but it will rather throw before those who are seeking for them the privileges of this Seminary, additional motives to be faithful in this important duty.

#### FOCUS QUESTION:

1. What subjects are emphasized? What would an education along these lines seem to qualify a graduate to do?
2. What evidence do you see of efforts to keep costs down? What advantages and disadvantages are there to the way student activities and housing are structured?

## 8-7 From "Discourse on Woman," by Lucretia Mott

*Lucretia Coffin Mott was an activist for women's rights, abolition, and other causes. Her political views were influenced by her upbringing as a Quaker. Mott helped Elizabeth Cady Stanton organize the Seneca Falls Convention on Women's Rights, though she disagreed with Stanton and others who sought to reform divorce laws to treat women more favorably; Mott opposed divorce on principle.*

**Source:** Hallowell, Anna Davis. *James and Lucretia Mott: Life and Letters*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884. pp. 500-506.

Walker, of Cincinnati, in his Introduction to American Law, says: "With regard to political rights, females form a positive exception to the general doctrine of equality. They have no part or lot in the formation or administration of government. They cannot vote or hold office. We require them to contribute their share in the way of taxes, to the support of government, but allow them no voice in its direction. We hold them amenable to the laws when made, but allow them no share in making them. This language, applied to males, would be the exact definition of political slavery; applied to females, custom does not teach us so to regard it." Woman, however, is beginning so to regard it.

"The law of husband and wife, as you gather it from the books, is a disgrace to any civilized nation. The theory of the law degrades the wife almost to the level of slaves. When a woman marries, we call her condition coverture, and speak of her as a femme covert. The old writers call the husband baron, and sometimes, in plain English, lord... The merging of her name in that of her husband is emblematic of the fate of all her legal rights. The torch of Hymen serves but to light the pile, on which these rights are offered up. The legal theory is, that marriage makes the husband and wife one person, and that person is the husband. On this subject, reform is loudly called for. There is no foundation in reason or expediency, for the absolute and slavish subjection of the wife to the husband, which forms the foundation of the present legal relations. Were woman, in point of fact, the abject thing which the law, in theory, considers her to be when married, she would not be worthy the companionship of man."

I would ask if such a code of laws does not require change? If such a condition of the wife in society does not claim redress? On no good ground can reform be delayed. Blackstone says, "The very being and legal existence of woman is suspended during marriage,—incorporated or consolidated into that of her husband, under whose protection and cover she performs every thing." Hurlbut, in his *Essays upon Human Rights*, says: "The laws touching the rights of woman are at variance with the laws of the Creator. Rights are

human rights, and pertain to human beings, without distinction of sex. Laws should not be made for man or for woman, but for mankind. Man was not born to command, nor woman to obey...The law of France, Spain, and Holland, and one of our own States, Louisiana, recognizes the wife's right to property, more than the common law of England...The laws depriving woman of the right of property is handed down to us from dark and feudal times, and not consistent with the wiser, better, purer spirit of the age. The wife is a mere pensioner on the bounty of her husband. Her lost rights are appropriated to himself. But justice and benevolence are abroad in our land, awakening the spirit of inquiry and innovation; and the Gothic fabric of the British law will fall before it, save where it is based upon the foundation of truth and justice."

May these statements lead you to reflect upon this subject, that you may know what woman's condition is in society—what her restrictions are, and seek to remove them. In how many cases in our country, the husband and wife begin life together, and by equal industry and united effort accumulate to themselves a comfortable home. In the event of the death of the wife, the household remains undisturbed, his farm or his workshop is not broken up, or in any way molested. But when the husband dies, he either gives his wife a portion of their joint accumulation, or the law apportions to her a share; the homestead is broken up, and she is dispossessed of that which she earned equally with him; for what she lacked in physical strength, she made up in constancy of labor and toil, day and evening. The sons then coming into possession of the property, as has been the custom until of latter time, speak of having to keep their mother, when she in reality is aiding to keep them. Where is the justice of this state of things? The change in the law of this State and of New York, in relation to the property of the wife, go to a limited extent, toward the redress of these wrongs; but they are far more extensive, and involve much more, than I have time this evening to point out.

On no good ground can the legal existence of the wife be suspended during marriage, and her property surrendered to her husband. In the intelligent ranks of society, the wife may not in point of fact, be so degraded as the law would degrade her; because public sentiment is above the law. Still, while the law stands, she is liable to the disabilities which it imposes. Among the ignorant classes of society, woman is made to bear heavy burdens, and is degraded almost to the level of the slave.

There are many instances now in our city, where the wife suffers much from the power of the husband

to claim all that she can earn with her own hands. In my intercourse with the poorer class of people, I have known cases of extreme cruelty, from the hard earnings of the wife being thus robbed by the husband, and no redress at law.

An article in one of the daily papers lately, presented the condition of needle women in England. There might be a presentation of this class in our own country, which would make the heart bleed. Public attention should be turned to this subject, in order that avenues of more profitable employment may be opened to women. There are many kinds of business which women, equally with men, may follow with respectability and success. Their talents and energies should be called forth, and their powers brought into the highest exercise. The efforts of women in France are sometimes pointed to in ridicule and sarcasm, but depend upon it, the opening of profitable employment to women in that country, is doing much for the enfranchisement of the sex. In England also, it is not an uncommon thing for a wife to take up the business of her deceased husband and carry it on with success.

Our respected British Consul stated to me a circumstance which occurred some years ago, of an editor of a political paper having died in England; it was proposed to his wife, an able writer, to take the editorial chair. She accepted. The patronage of the paper was greatly increased, and she a short time since retired from her labors with a handsome fortune. In that country however, the opportunities are by no means general for Woman's elevation.

In visiting the public school in London, a few years since, I noticed that the boys were employed in linear drawing, and instructed upon the black board, in the higher branches of arithmetic and mathematics; while the girls, after a short exercise in the mere elements of arithmetic, were seated, during the bright hours of the morning, stitching wristbands. I asked, Why there should be this difference made; why they too should not have the black board? The answer was, that they would not probably fill any station in society requiring such knowledge.

But the demand for a more extended education will not cease, until girls and boys have equal instruction, in all the departments of useful knowledge. We have as yet no high school for girls in this state. The normal school may be a preparation for such an establishment. In the late convention for general education, it was cheering to hear the testimony borne to woman's capabilities for head teachers of the public schools. A resolution there offered for equal salaries to

male and female teachers, when equally qualified, as practised in Louisiana, I regret to say was checked in its passage, by Bishop Potter; by him who has done so much for the encouragement of education, and who gave his countenance and influence to that convention. Still the fact of such a resolution being offered, augurs a time coming for woman, which she may well hail. At the last examination of the public schools in this city, one of the alumni delivered an address on Woman, not as is too common, in eulogistic strains, but directing the attention to the injustice done to woman in her position in society, in a variety of ways. The unequal wages she receives for her constant toil, c., presenting facts calculated to arouse attention to the subject.

Women's property has been taxed, equally with that of men's, to sustain colleges endowed by the states; but they have not been permitted to enter those high seminaries of learning. Within a few years, however, some colleges have been instituted, where young women are admitted, nearly upon equal terms with young men; and numbers are availing themselves of their long denied rights. This is among the signs of the times, indicative of an advance for women. The book of knowledge is not opened to her in vain. Already is she aiming to occupy important posts of honor and profit in our country. We have three female editors in our state—some in other states of the Union. Numbers are entering the medical profession—one received a diploma last year; others are preparing for a like result.

Let woman then go on—not asking as favor, but claiming as right, the removal of all the hindrances to her elevation in the scale of being—let her receive encouragement for the proper cultivation of all her powers, so that she may enter profitably into the active business of life; employing her own hands, in minister-

ing to her necessities, strengthening her physical being by proper exercise, and observance of the laws of health. Let her not be ambitious to display a fair hand, and to promenade the fashionable streets of our city, but rather, coveting earnestly the best gifts, let her strive to occupy such walks in society, as will befit her true dignity in all the relations of life. No fear that she will then transcend the proper limits of female delicacy. True modesty will be as fully preserved, in acting out those important vocations to which she may be called, as in the nursery or at the fireside, ministering to man's self-indulgence.

Then in the marriage union, the independence of the husband and wife will be equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal.

In conclusion, let me say, "Credit not the old fashioned absurdity, that woman's is a secondary lot, ministering to the necessities of her lord and master! It is a higher destiny I would award you. If your immortality is as complete, and your gift of mind as capable as ours, of increase and elevation, I would put no wisdom of mine against God's evident allotment. I would charge you to water the undying bud, and give it healthy culture, and open its beauty to the sun—and then you may hope, that when your life is bound up with another, you will go on equally, and in a fellowship that shall pervade every earthly interest."

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How does Mott link women's rights within marriage to general political and economic rights?
2. Is Mott's comparison of women to slaves convincing?

## 8-8 Emma Willard Proposes a Female Seminary in Greece

*Emma Willard established a number of schools for girls in the early 1800s in the various places she lived, including Middlebury, Vermont, and Troy, New York. In the mid-nineteenth century she traveled extensively in Europe, where she continued her advocacy on behalf of women's education.*

**Source:** Willard, Emma. "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: 1833. pp. 9-10, 12.

In further considering the subject of benefiting the Greeks, all will acknowledge that if we would impart to them the blessings of education, we must begin with those in the nation who are now young. The half of these are females. There are many reasons for considering their education at least of equal importance with that of the other sex. But I wish not to exhaust the subject of female education, for I know that there are those among us of the other sex, more capable than myself to do it justice, who are convinced of its importance; and I see in this circumstance the most consoling hopes of the future accomplishment of what has long been the leading motive of my life. 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; for men of the highest and most cultivated intellect, of the purest and most pious hearts, now perceive its necessity to the well being of the world, where it is their glory to be workers together with God, to produce a moral revolution.

When these take up our cause in earnest, they will with ease effect what we desire; and they will find their reward even while performing the noble work. It is theirs in the order of nature to protect our public rights; ours, to show our gratitude by gladdening with smiles and heart-felt kindness, their domestic and social existence.

But what if men neglect our rights? The history of the present time answers the question, and some of our greatest evils may be traced to this source. What but the neglect of our moral and intellectual education, is the cause that the tender being whom God made capable of being morally the best, becomes in so many horrid instances morally the worst of our race.

In speaking of the faults of my own sex, I would not by any means exculpate them, or lay all the blame upon the other. But when men in their legislative capacity, forget our rights—when in expending millions for the education of male youth, they bestow not a thought on us—when in some cases, as might be shown, they make laws oppressive to us, 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, in obedience to her nature, and the express commands of God, acknowledges man as her head. Men of disordered minds, or ambitious views, have encouraged the phrenzy. Hence the ravings of Mary Wolstoncraft, of Frances Wright and Robert Owen; and hence the frantic sect which are now denouncing marriage, and disturbing Paris, under the name of St. Simoniens. But there are women who can feel for their sex, as patriots feel for their country. If such an one steps forward in defence of their rights, she must indeed have the spirit of a martyr. While she resists the impulse of her own sensitive and shrinking nature, she must encounter from the men, the imputation of having cast off that feminine sensitiveness which is what most recommends her to them. Thus situated, most women of the finest minds, muse in pensive silence on the injustice they cannot but feel; and often, when such women are found moody, and are thought capricious, it is this which is the cause of their ill humour and dejection; and hence the delight they feel when men step forward to advocate their cause.

Again I say, it is because our men perceive this, that I have hopes for the future. When I assert that it is hard for a woman to step forward in public vindication of the rights of her sex, my assertion will have some weight, because in this case it is *testimony*. Men see this, and their generous minds will be moved, themselves, to undertake the work of kindness and of justice, graceful in them and grateful to us.

Societies of women, too, will doubtless hereafter be formed to aid in its accomplishment; and what is the society now proposed but a society for this noble purpose?

That the system of female education commenced among us, is incomparably better than the systems of public education for our sex in the old states of Europe, I could say much to prove. I could bring forward the testimony of some of the most distinguished women of France, expressed in letters which I have had the honor to receive from them. I could adduce conversations with some of those of Great Britain; but time would fail, and the subject will be treated in the book which I have given to aid the project now before us. Besides, I doubt not you are already convinced of the fact. We would that we could impart to those nations, sounder views on this subject, and better systems. But they would not receive them from us. Grown old in their ways, and regarding us as young, they would turn with supercilious contempt from any efforts of ours to improve them. Not so with Greece; she looks to us and solicits us to teach her. Should we impart to her the elements of moral vigor, she will increase in strength as in years, and when at length their vices shall have sunk them to the grave of nations,—when society shall with them, as now with the Greeks, be dissolved to its original elements, then Greece may impart to them what she now receives from us. But, if we are to undertake this work, the present is the time. A little money, as Mr. Richard can inform us, will now do much; and small means may now effect what could not be done at all, should we wait till female schools on the old European plan are established. The schools which first take root, will grow with the growth of the nation; and as we confidently hope, they will ere long be supported by the Greeks, if we defray their first expenses.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why would there be symbolic value for an American women's rights activist in establishing a school for women in Greece?
2. How does Willard differentiate the rights and responsibilities of women, and of men?

## 8-9 The Oberlin Experiment

*The Oberlin Collegiate Institute (today's Oberlin College) was founded in 1833, and has had liberal admissions policies throughout its history: it admitted African-American students starting in 1835, and educated women and men in the same classes starting in 1837. The author of this article served as a legislator and governor in Ohio and Michigan in the early to mid-1800s.*

**Source:** William Woodbridge, *Annals of American Education*, 1838.

### OBERLIN COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE.

We have received a Catalogue of the Trustees, Officers, and Students of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, for 1838, of which an account has been given, from time to time, in this journal. We perceive that the whole number of names on the Catalogue, is 391. Of these, 265 are males, and 126 are females. Of the males, 97 belong to the preparatory department, 44 to the logical school, 9 are attending a shorter course of study, 2 are irregular students, and 113 are attending the collegiate course. Of the females, 21 belong to the preparatory department, and 105 to the collegiate school.

There are many things in regard to this Institution to render it interesting to every friend of education. Its

moral tone and standing—its broad temperance principles—its banner of freedom—the large benevolence it inculcates and encourages, and the habits of industry, in both sexes, which it enjoins and secures, give it a prominence in the view of the Christian philanthropist, which few literary or religious institutions can claim.

But its most interesting feature—to us,—is the uniting of the sexes in a course of liberal study, and the unexpected results which have followed. Many good men among us, when they heard that males and females were to recite together, sit at the table together, &c., constituting one large family, and living together in some measure on the principles of a well-ordered Christian household,—did not fail to predict a failure. Yet the Institution has flourished, and the experiment is unequivocally successful. We consider it now fully established, that the sexes may be educated together.

This discovery is one of the most important ever made. The benefits which are likely to flow from it are immense. Woman is to be free. The hour of her emancipation is at hand. Daughters of America, rejoice!

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why does the author assume that these developments are cause for women to rejoice? Does the author see any impact on men?
2. Beyond coeducation, what attributes of Oberlin does Woodbridge praise? What does this suggest about his values?

## 8-10 Elizabeth McClintock and Elizabeth Cady Stanton Challenge Mr. Sulley's Comments on the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention (1848)

*In this 1848 letter to the editors of The National Reformer, Elizabeth McClintock and Elizabeth Cady Stanton refuted a recently published commentary by "Mr. Sulley" on the 1848 Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention. McClintock had been a speaker at the convention, and Stanton was the main organizer of the event (see her other documents in this volume, including the "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Seneca Falls" in this chapter).*

**Source:** McClintock, E.W. and Stanton, E.W. "Letter to the Editor." *National Reformer*. September 21, 1848. Reprinted in *Major Problems in American Women's History*, Norton and Alexander, 3rd Edition, 104-105.

### For the National Reformer.

#### Woman's Rights.

Messrs. Editors:—As you announce Mr. Sulley, (the author of the article headed "Woman's Rights Convention," published in your paper of last week) as a man who seeks to know the truth, and one who will do justice to any subject he examines, and as he declares himself to be a great lover of his race, and one who has thought deeply on the subject of human improvement, I humbly ask *him* what are these other means to which he refers, by which the present social, civil and religious condition of woman can be improved. It is evident, aside from his own assertion, that Mr. Sulley has thought much on this subject, for he says, "I am not one of those who think that no improvement can be made in the condition of woman, even in this favored land." He is interested, too, in our movement, and has been kind enough to tell us what means will not effect what we desire. He says those

recommended and presented by the convention will not do. He thinks legislative action cannot alter the laws of nature. Does Mr. Sulley assume that our present degradation is in accordance with the laws of God? Mr. Sulley having been announced as a lover of truth, we rejoiced in the belief that at length we had found one opponent who would meet us in fair argument, one who though not agreeing with us fully in our measures, was yet sufficiently interested in this subject to give us some plan by which the elevation of woman might be effected. But alas! we have the same old story over again—ridicule, ridicule, ridicule. We have hints of great arguments that could be produced—profound philosophy, fully convincing and satisfactory to all thinking minds, but he gives us nothing tangible, not even the end of the tail of any of these truths, by which could we get a fair hold, we might draw out all the rest. Mr. Sulley thinks our convention was a mere pompous outward show; because, forsooth, we could not give on the spot, a panacea for all the ills of life—because we could not answer Mr. Sulley's silly questions in a manner to satisfy him, though the audience thought him fully answered. We did not assemble to discuss the details of social life—we did not propose to petition the legislature to make our husbands just, generous and courteous; no, we assembled to protest against an unjust form of government, existing without the consent of the governed; to declare our right to be free as man is free: to claim our right to the elective franchise, our right to be repre-

mented in a government which we are taxed to support; to have such laws as give to man the right to chastise and imprison his wife, to take the wages which she earns—the property which she inherits, and in case of separation the children of her love; laws which make her the more dependant on his bounty: it was to protect against such disgraceful laws, and to have them, if possible, forever erased from our statute books, as a shame and reproach to a republican, christian people in the enlightened nineteenth century. We did not meet to decide home questions—to say who should be the ruling spirit, the presiding genius of every household—who should be the umpire to settle the many differences in domestic life. . . .Mr. S. expressed a wish to quote the Bible on this subject, but found it would have no authority with us. We affirm that we believe in the Bible. We consider that Book to be the great charter of human rights, and we are willing, yes, desirous to go into the Bible argument on this subject, for its spirit is wholly with the side of Freedom. . . .

E. W. MCCLINTOCK, E. C. STANTON.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How do McClintock and Stanton summarize the goals of the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention?
2. Why do the authors refer to the Bible near the end of their letter?

## 8-11 Sojourner Truth's Address, as Recalled by Frances D. Gage

*Frances D. Gage, a pioneer in the Women's Rights Movement during the early nineteenth century, recorded her impressions of Sojourner Truth's speech at the Woman's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851. Gage wrote this reminiscence some twelve years after the fact, and tried to capture Truth's speech as she remembered it, complete with what Gage perceived to be Truth's manner of speech and actions before the audience.*

**Source:** E. C. Stanton, S. B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1 (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann, 1881), pp. 115–117.

### Reminiscences by Frances D. Gage

The leaders of the movement trembled upon seeing a tall, gaunt black woman in a gray dress and white

turban, surmounted with an uncouth sun-bonnet, march deliberately into the church, walk with the air of a queen up the aisle, and take her seat upon the pulpit steps. A buzz of disapprobation was heard all over the house and there fell on the listening ear, "An abolition affair!" "Woman's rights and niggers!" "I told you so!" "Go it, darkey!" . . . When, slowly from her seat in the corner rose Sojourner Truth, who, till now, had scarcely lifted her head. "Don't let her speak!" gasped half a dozen in my ear. She moved slowly and solemnly to the front, laid her old bonnet at her feet, and turned her great speaking eyes to me.

There was a hissing sound of disapprobation above and below. I rose and announced "Sojourner Truth," and begged the audience to keep silence for a few moments. . . .

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

But what's all dis here talkin' 'bout?

"Dat man ober dar say dat womin needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted ober ditches, and to hab de best place everywhar. Nobody eber helps me into carriages, or ober mud-puddles, or gibs me any best place!" . . . "And a'n't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! (and she bared her right arm to the shoulder, showing her tremendous muscular power). "I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And a'n't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man!—when I could get it!—and bear de lash as well! And a'n't I a woman? I have borne thirteen chilern, and seen 'em mos' all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And a'n't I a woman?"

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

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

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

Amid roars of applause, she returned to her corner, leaving more than one of us with streaming eyes, and hearts beating with gratitude. She had taken us up in her arms and carried us safely over the slough of difficulty turning the whole tide in our favor. I have never in my life seen anything like the magical influence that subdued the mobbish spirit of the day, and turned the sneers and jeers of an excited crowd into notes of respect and admiration. Hundreds rushed up to shake hands with her, and congratulate the glorious old mother, and bid her God-speed on her mission of "testifyin' agin concerning the wickedness of this 'ere people."

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Describe Gage's impression of the audience's different responses to Sojourner Truth's manner and message. What does Gage's impression seem to be?
2. Summarize Sojourner Truth's message to the Woman's Rights Convention. How is this message similar to and different from the message the reader and the crowd might expect from her?



## THE CIVIL WAR, 1861–1865

## 9-1 Mary Boykin Chesnut, A Confederate Lady's Diary (1861)

*Born into the political and social elite of southern society, Chesnut was the daughter of a Senator and Governor of South Carolina. She married James Chesnut, one of the largest land owners in the state and soon to be Senator. After secession, he became a confederate congressman and later aide to Jefferson Davis. Mary Chesnut's house became a salon for leading members of Confederate society. During the war, Chesnut kept a diary that became famous for its portrayal of the Confederacy. This selection reveals the ambivalence that many in the South had towards slavery.*

I wonder if it be a sin to think slavery a curse to any land. Sumner said not one word of this hated institution which is not true. Men & women are punished when their masters & mistresses are brutes & not when they do wrong-& then we live surrounded by prostitutes. An abandoned woman is sent out of any decent house elsewhere. Who thinks any worse of a Negro or Mulatto woman for being a thing we can't name. God forgive *us*, but ours is a *monstrous* system & wrong & iniquity. Perhaps the rest of the world is as bad. This is *only* what I see: like the patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives & their concubines, & the Mulattos one sees in every family exactly resemble the white children-& every lady tells you who is the father of all the Mulatto children in everybody's household, but those in her own, she seems to think drop from the clouds or pretends so to think-. Good women we have, *but* they talk of *nastiness* *tho* they never do wrong; they talk day & night of

- . My disgust sometimes is boiling over-but they are, I believe, in conduct the purest women God ever made. Thank God for my countrywomen-alas for the men! No worse than men everywhere, but the lower their mistresses, the more degraded they must be.

My mother-in-law told me when I was first married not to send my female servants in the street on errands. They were there tempted, led astray-& then she said placidly, "So they told *me* when I came here-& I was very particular, *but you see with what* result." Mr. Harris said it was so patriarchal. So it is-flocks & herds & slaves-& wife Leah does not suffice. Rachel must be *added*, if not *married* & all the time they seem to think themselves patterns-models of husbands & fathers.

Mrs. Davis told me "everybody described my husband's father as an odd character, a Millionaire who did nothing for his son whatever, left him to struggle with poverty," &c. I replied, "Mr. Chesnut Senior thinks himself the best of fathers-& his son thinks likewise. I have nothing to say-but it is true, he has no money but what he makes as a lawyer," &c. Again I say, my countrywomen are as pure as angels-tho surrounded by another race who are-the social evil!

## FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What are Chesnut's sentiments and chief concerns in this account? In what ways does this diary entry reveal a "pre-war" sense of awareness? In other words, identify the events and thoughts that make up this entry? How might these concerns change in the coming months?

## 9-2 A Union Spy Makes Her Way Behind Confederate Lines

*About 400 women are known to have disguised themselves as men in order to enlist in either the Union or Confederate Armies in the course of the U.S. Civil War; there were almost certainly more women whose identities were never revealed. Sarah Emma Edmonds, under the alias "Frank Thompson," enlisted as a male nurse in the Union Army in 1861. She later served as a spy, adopting various disguises to infiltrate Confederate camps. In this passage, "Frank Thompson" transforms into a black manservant/spy.*

*NOTE: Phrenology was a nineteenth-century pseudo-science, based on the idea that measurements of different parts of a person's skull could reveal personality traits and abilities. "Contraband" was slang used early in the Civil War to describe escaped slaves who had achieved functional, if not technical, freedom.*

*Source: Nurse and spy in the Union army: comprising the adventures and experiences of a woman in hospitals, camps and battle-fields. Edmonds, S. Emma E. Hartford, Philadelphia: W. S. Williams & co., Jones bros. & co, 1865. pp. 104-109.*

I was becoming dissatisfied with my situation as nurse, and was determined to leave the hospital.... Chaplain B. told me that he knew of a situation he could get for me if I had sufficient moral courage to undertake its duties; and, said he, "it is a situation of great danger and of vast responsibility." That morning a detachment of the Thirty-seventh New York had been sent out as scouts, and had returned bringing in several prisoners, who stated that one of the Federal spies had been captured at Richmond and was to be executed. This information proved to be correct, and we lost a valuable soldier from the secret service of the United States. Now it was necessary for that vacancy to be supplied, and, as the Chaplain had said with reference to it, it was a situation of great danger and vast responsibility, and this was the one which Mr. B. could procure for me. But was I capable of filling it with honor to myself and advantage to the Federal Government? This was an important question for me to consider ere I proceeded further. I did consider it thoroughly, and made up my mind to accept it with all its fearful responsibilities. The subject of life and death was not weighed in the balance; I left that in the hands of my Creator, feeling assured that I was just as safe in passing the picket lines of the enemy, if it was God's will that I should go there, as I would be in the Federal

camp. And if not, then His will be done: Then welcome death, the end of fears. My name was sent in to headquarters, and I was soon summoned to appear there myself. Mr. and Mrs. B. accompanied me. We were ushered into the presence of Generals Mc., M. and H., where I was questioned and cross-questioned with regard to my views of the rebellion and my motive in wishing to engage in so perilous an undertaking. My views were freely given, my object briefly stated, and I had passed trial number one. Next I was examined with regard to my knowledge of the use of firearms, and in that department I sustained my character in a manner worthy of a veteran. Then I was again cross-questioned, but this time by a new committee of military stars. Next came a phrenological examination, and finding that my organs of secretiveness, combativeness, etc., were largely developed, the oath of allegiance was administered, and I was dismissed with a few complimentary remarks which made the good Mr. B. feel quite proud of his protegee. This was the third time that I had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States, and I began to think, as many of our soldiers do, that profanity had become a military necessity. I had three days in which to prepare for my debut into rebeldom, and I commenced at once to remodel, transform and metamorphose for the occasion. Early next morning I started for Fortress Monroe, where I procured a number of articles indispensably necessary to a complete disguise. In the first place I purchased a suit of contraband clothing, real plantation style, and then I went to a barber and had my hair sheared close to my head. Next came the coloring process — head, face, neck, hands and arms were colored black as any African, and then, to complete my contraband costume, I required a wig of real negro wool. But how or where was it to be found? There was no such thing at the Fortress, and none short of Washington. Happily I found the mail-boat was about to start, and hastened on board, and finding a Postmaster with whom I was acquainted, I stepped forward to speak to him, forgetting my contraband appearance, and was saluted with "Well, Massa Cuff — what will you have?" Said I: "Massa send me to you wid dis yere money for you to fotch him a darkie wig from Washington." "What the does he want of a darkie wig?" asked the Postmaster. "No matter, dat's my orders; guess it's for some'noiterin' business." "Oh, for reconnoitering you mean; all right old fellow, I will bring it, tell him." I remained at Fortress Monroe until the Postmaster returned with the article which was to complete my disguise, and then returned to camp near Yorktown. On my return, I found myself without friends — a striking illustration of the frailty of human friendship — I had been forgot-

ten in those three short days. I went to Mrs. B.'s tent and inquired if she wanted to hire a boy to take care of her horse. She was very civil to me, asked if I came from Fortress Monroe, and whether I could cook. She did not want to hire me, but she thought she could find some one who did require a boy. Off she went to Dr. E. and told him that there was a smart little contraband there who was in search of work. Dr. E. came along, looking as important as two year old doctors generally do. "Well, my boy, how much work can you do in a day?" "Oh, I reckon I kin work right smart; kin do heaps o' work. Will you hire me, Massa?" "Don't know but I may; can you cook?" "Yes, Massa, kin cook anything I ebber seen." "How much do you think you can earn a month?" "Guess I kin earn ten dollars easy nuff." Turning to Mrs. B. he said in an undertone: "That darkie understands his business." "Yes indeed, I would hire him by all means, Doctor," said Mrs. B. "Well, if you wish, you can stay with me a month, and by that time I will be a better judge how much you can earn." So saying Dr. E. proceeded to give a synopsis of a contraband's duty toward a master of whom he expected ten dollars per month, especially emphasising the last clause. Then I was introduced to the culinary department, which comprised flour, pork, beans, a small portable stove, a spider, and a medicine chest. It was now supper time, and I was supposed to understand my business sufficiently to prepare supper without asking any questions whatever, and also to display some of my boasted talents by making warm biscuit for

supper. But how was I to make biscuit with my colored hands? and how dare I wash them for fear the color would wash off? All this trouble was soon put to an end, however, by Jack's making his appearance while I was stirring up the biscuit with a stick, and in his bustling, officious, negro style, he said; "See here nig — you don't know nuffin bout makin bisket. Jis let me show you once, and dat ar will save you heaps o' trouble wid Massa doct'r for time to come." I very willingly accepted of this proffered assistance, for I had all the necessary ingredients in the dish, with pork fat for shortening, and soda and cream-tartar, which I found in the medicine chest, ready for kneading and rolling out. After washing his hands and rolling up his sleeves, Jack went to work with a flourish and a grin of satisfaction at being "boss" over the new cook. Tea made, biscuit baked, and the medicine chest set off with tin cups, plates, etc., supper was announced. Dr. E. was much pleased with the general appearance of things, and was evidently beginning to think that he had found rather an intelligent contraband for a cook. ...

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What impression do you get of Edmonds as a person? What does Edmonds present as her motivations for her service?
2. Why would hundreds of women disguise themselves as men to join armies on either side of the Civil War?

## 9-3 The Journal of a Confederate Nurse

*Women served as nurses on both the Confederate and Union sides of the Civil War. Kate Cumming was unusual in that she kept a detailed journal of her experiences, which she published in 1866.*

**Source:** Harwell, Richard Barksdale, ed. *Kate: the Journal of a Confederate Nurse: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse by Kate Cumming*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959. pp. 65-66, 307.

There is a good deal of trouble about the ladies in some of the hospitals of this department. Our friends here have advised us to go home, as they say it is not considered respectable to go into one. I must confess, from all I had heard and seen, for awhile I wavered about- the propriety of it; but when I remembered the suffering I had witnessed, and the relief I had given,

my mind was made up to go into one if allowed to do so. Mrs. Williamson and Mrs. May have come to the same conclusion on the subject as myself. God has said," Who can harm you if you be followers of that which is good? " I thought of this, and believed it, and gained strength from it. Christians should not mind what the world says, so that they are conscious of striving to do their duty to their God.

It seems strange that the aristocratic women of Great Britain have done with honor what is a disgrace for their sisters on this side of the Atlantic to do. This is not the first time I have heard these remarks. Not respectable! And who has made it so? If the Christian, high-toned, and educated women of our land shirk their duty, why others have to do it for them. It is useless to say the surgeons will not allow us; we have our rights, and if asserted properly will get them. This is our right, and ours alone.

In a book called the "Sunny South," written by the lamented Rev. J. H. Ingraham, are the following words

"Soldiers fight the battles of our country, and the least we can do is to cherish them in their helplessness, and bind up their wounds, and all *true* women will do it, who love their country." Who among us does not echo his sentiments? Women of the South, let us remember that our fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons are giving up all that mortals can for us; that they are exposed hourly to the deadly missiles of the enemy; the fatigues of hard marching, through burning suns, frost, and sleet; pressed by hunger and thirst; subject to diseases of all kinds from exposure; and last, though by no means least, the evil influences that are common in a large army. Are we aware of all this, and unwilling to nurse these brave heroes who are sacrificing so much for us? What, in the name of common sense, are we to do? Sit calmly down, knowing that there is many a parched lip which would bless us for a drop of water, and many a wound to be bound up? These things are not to be done, because it is not considered respectable! Heaven help the future of our country, for nothing but God's special aid can save any country where such doctrines are inculcated.

Women of the South, let us remember we have a foe as relentless as Tamerlane or Atilla, who, if we are to believe his own threats, has resolved to lay our towns in ashes, lay waste our fields, and make our fair land a blackened mass of ruins if we will not submit to his domination; and, unless every man and woman in the South do their duty, he will succeed, even though we had a president gifted with the wisdom of Solomon, and generals endowed with the genius of Frederick or Napoleon. I know there are hundreds of our women who look on this subject in the proper light, having household duties to attend to, which they can not leave; but have we not thousands who, at this moment, do not know what to do to pass the time that is hanging heavily on their hands? I mean the young; the old are not able for the work. If it will hurt a young girl to do what, in all ages, has been the special duty of woman—to relieve the suffering—it is high time the youth of our land were kept from the camp and field. If one is a disgrace, so is the other.

The negroes are free: and the poor creatures are acting like children out on a frolic. The main portion of the women do little else than walk the streets, dressed in all kinds of gaudy attire. All are doing their own work, as a negro can not be hired at any price. But they have behaved much better than we had any right to expect, as they have been put up to all kinds of mischief by the enemy. Many of them seem to despise the Federals, and it is not much wonder, as they treat them so badly.

A lady told me that they robbed a poor old woman, that she had left in her house in the country of every thing that she had. They have treated all who fell into their hands in the same way.

As a rule the Federal soldiers have behaved very well to the citizens; they are any thing but exultant—and they need not be, when they consider that they succeeded by overwhelming numbers alone. They found that they could gain nothing by fighting themselves, so they hired foreigners, and at last had to take the *darky*; and Sambo boasts that the *rebels* could not be conquered until he took the field. Many think if we had put negroes into the army at the start, that we should have had another tale to tell to-day; and I am confident that if we had freed the negro, we would have had the aid of foreign powers. I believe now that Great Britain was consistent in her hatred to slavery. And she dreaded bringing war upon her people, as she knew more about its horrors than we did. In this I can not blame her. We all know that the majority of her people sympathized with us, and did much to render us aid. To be sure the northerners got men and ammunition from her, but then they had money, which is a lever even with Britons. But all is gone now, and we must try and "let the dead past bury its dead!"

This year has developed the fate of the South. Time has revealed the utter loss of all our hopes. A change must pass over every political and social idea, custom, and relation. The consummation makes the year just passed ever memorable in our annals. In it gathers all the interest of the bloody tragedy; from it begins a new era, midst poverty, tears, and sad memories of the past. O, may we learn the lesson that all of this is designed to teach; that all things sublunary are transient and fleeting, and lift our souls to that which is alone ever-during and immutable—God and eternity! And forgetting the past, save in the lessons which it teaches, let us . . . redeem the time, live humbly, and trust God for future good. . . .

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What is suggested by the phrase "*true* women"?
2. Why does Cumming refer repeatedly to Great Britain?
3. What seems to be her attitude regarding slavery and former slaves? What about free blacks?
4. What does Cumming see as the fundamental rights and responsibilities of Southern women? Of women more generally?

## 9-4 Clara Barton, Medical Life at the Battlefield (1862)

*Born in Massachusetts, Clara Barton was a teacher and clerk in the U.S. Patent Office. Upon the arrival of the Civil War, she organized a network, separate from the government, to get food, supplies and nursing aid to the soldiers. She served as a nurse on several battlefields including Fredricksburg and Antietam. After the war, Barton went to Europe for a time where she became involved in the International Red Cross. Upon her return she worked for the establishment of the American Red Cross. Though she had much government opposition to her efforts, in 1882 the Senate ratified the Geneva Convention and the American Red Cross was born. At the age of 77 Barton again served conflict during the Spanish-American war. These letters reveal the horrific nature of the Civil War battlefield.*

I was strong and thought I might go to the rescue of the men who fell. . . . What could I do but go with them, or work for them and my country? The patriot blood of my father was warm in my veins. The country which he had fought for, I might at least work for. . . .

But I struggled long and hard with my sense of propriety-with the appalling fact that I was only a woman whispering in one ear, and thundering in the other the groans of suffering men dying like dogs-unfed and unsheltered, for the life of every institution which had protected and educated me!

I said that I struggled with my sense of propriety and I say it with humiliation and shame. I am ashamed that I thought of such a thing.

When our armies fought on Cedar Mountain, I broke the shackles and went to the field. . . .

Five days and nights with three hours sleep-a narrow escape from capture-and some days of getting the wounded into hospitals at Washington, brought Saturday, August 30. And if you chance to feel, that the positions I occupied were rough and unseemly for a woman-I can only reply that they were rough and unseemly for men. But under all, lay the life of the nation. I had inherited the rich blessing of health and strength of constitution-such as are seldom given to woman-and I felt that some return was due from me and that I ought to be there. . . .

. . . . Our coaches were not elegant or commodious; they had no seats, no platforms, no steps, a slide door on the side the only entrance, and this higher

than my head. For my man attaining my elevated position, I must beg of you to draw on your imaginations and spare me the labor of reproducing the boxes, boards, and rails, which in those days, seemed to help me up and down the world. We did not criticize the unsightly helpers and were thankful that the stiff springs did not quite jostle us out. This need not be limited to this particular trip or train, but will for all that I have known in Army life. This is the kind of conveyance which your tons of generous gifts have reached the field with the freights. These trains through day and night, sunshine and heat and cold, have thundered over heights, across plains, the ravines, and over hastily built army bridges 90 feet across the stream beneath.

At 10 o'clock Sunday (August 31) our train drew up at Fairfax Station. The ground, for acres, was a thinly wooded slope-and among the trees on the leaves and grass, were laid the wounded who pouring in by scores of wagonloads, as picked up on the field the flag of truce. All day they came and the whole hillside was red. Bales of hay were broken open and scattered over the ground littering of cattle, and the sore, famishing men were laid upon it.

And when the night shut in, in the mist and darkness about us, we knew that standing apart from the world of anxious hearts, throbbing over the whole country, we were a little band of almost empty handed workers literally by our selves in the wild woods of Virginia, with 3,000 suffering men crowded upon the few acres within our reach.

After gathering up every available implement or convenience for our work, our domestic inventory stood 2 water buckets, 5 tin cups, 1 camp kettle, 1 stew pan, 2 lanterns, 4 bread knives, 3 plates, and a 2-quart tin dish, and 3,000 guest to serve.

You will perceive by this, that I had not yet learned to equip myself, for I was no Pallas, ready armed, but grew into my work by hard thinking and sad experience. It may serve to relieve your apprehension for the future of my labors if I assure you that I was never caught so again.

But the most fearful scene was reserved for the night. I have said that the ground was littered with dry hay and that we had only two lanterns, but there were plenty of candles. The wounded were laid so close that it was impossible to move about in the dark. The slightest misstep brought a torrent of groans from some poor mangled fellow in your path.

Consequently here were seen persons of all grades

from the careful man of God who walked with a prayer upon his lips to the careless driver hunting for his lost whip,—each wandering about among this hay with an open flaming candle in his hands.

The slightest accident, the mere dropping of a light could have enveloped in flames this whole mass of helpless men.

How we watched and pleaded and cautioned as we worked and wept that night! How we put socks and slippers upon their cold feet, wrapped your blankets and quilts about them, and when we no longer these to give, how we covered them in the hay and left them to their rest! . . .

The slight, naked chest of a fair-haired lad caught my eye, dropping down beside him, I bent low to draw the remnant of his blouse about him, when with a quick cry he threw his left arm across my neck and, burying his face in the folds of my dress, wept like a child at his mother's knee. I took his head in my hands and held it until great burst of grief passed away. "And do you know me?" he asked at length, "I am Charley Hamilton, we used to carry your satchel home from school!" My faithful pupil, poor Charley. That mangled

right hand would never carry a satchel again.

About three o'clock in the morning I observed a surgeon with a little flickering candle in hand approaching me with cautious step up in the wood. "Lady," he said as he drew near, "will you go with me? Out on the hills is a poor distressed lad, mortally wounded, and dying. His piteous cries for his sister have touched all our hearts none of us can relieve him but rather seem to distress him by presence."

By this time I was following him back over the bloody track, with great beseeching eyes of anguish on every side looking up into our faces, saying so plainly, "Don't step on us."

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What does Barton's account reveal about the difficulties and obstacles facing army nurses and medical personnel during the war?
2. Given the description presented by Barton, what conclusions can be made regarding the conditions of battle for the soldiers. How effective was the care given to the injured?

## 9-5 A Nurse Suppresses Emotion

*Both sides suffered thousands of casualties in the Battle of Seven Pines on May 31 and June 1, 1862, part of the Virginia Peninsula campaign. Amy Morris Bradley tended to the wounded on board the ship Knickerbocker.*

**Source:** Bradley, Amy Morris. "Experiences Nursing Wounded Soldiers After the Battle of Seven Pines." In Giesberg, Judith Ann. *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000, p. 127.

I shall never forget my feelings as one by one those mutilated forms were brought in on stretchers

and carefully placed on those comfortable cots! What, said I, must I see human beings thus mangled? O, My God why is it? Why is it? For nearly an hour I could not get control of my feelings! But when the surgeon said, Miss Bradley, you must not do so, but prepare to assist these poor fellows. I realized that tears must be choked back and the heart only know its own suffering! Action is the watchword of the hour!

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. In addition to the direct hindrance of her work, how might Bradley's expression of emotions be perceived as harmful?
2. Do you think the surgeon would have treated a male nurse the same way he treated Bradley?

## 9-6 A Plantation Mistress Observes the Eve of the Civil War

*Kezia Brevard was a childless widow. She administered her own plantation in rural South Carolina, and kept a journal of her thoughts in the period leading up the outbreak of the Civil War.*

**Source:** John H. Moore, ed. *A Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War: The Diary of Keziah Goodwyn Hopkins Brevard, 1860-1861*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996. pp. 54, 64-65, 110-111.

**November 1860**

28 Wednesday

Still quite wet & cloudy—all hands in the new ground. I have done very little this day—last night I suffered very much with my arm—tried to spare it to day from too much use of the leaders or mussels. Why is it at times I feel safe as if no dangers were in the distance?—I wish I could feel as free from fear at all times as I do tonight—it is dreadful to dwell on insurrections—many an hour have I laid awake in my life thinking of our danger— Oh God be pleased to prepare me for death & let me die the death of a true christian—seeing & believing as they do. Help us all through this dark vale— O remember my Dear Sister— Oh my God pity such a sufferer—sheds in thy hands, O be merciful—unworthy *as we all are*— help us all from these low grounds & give us bright hopes of Heavenly blessings—draw all reluctant hearts—pass not by my dear brother who has so many excellent traits of character, yet has not found an interest in Christ, our blessed intercessor— Oh Lord—remember all my dear relatives & friends & my servants—comfort them— May the latter know that the same God rules all & will be with all who try to obey his commands.

### December 1860

*Saturday 29 of Dec./60*

This morning very cold & cloudy—a few drops of sleet before 10 A.M.; now it is 5 mi[nutes] of 11A.M. & the sun has shewn a dim light, gone again. Oh God save our dear City Charleston—let not a head be bruised by the Northern people—thou canst save us, Oh save us!!! This Old year truly goes out full of trouble. Let better signs soon gleam on us & Oh that 61 could bring peace & love to thy people. It is now bed time & raining briskly— I gave out COFFEE & Bread to be made for my evening meal—when I made a cup & tasted it, it was such stuff I sent word to Rosanna she certainly had spilt the coffee before it got to the pot— what she had sent me was not coffee—'twas such dreadful tasted stuff I sent the cup of coffee to R— to taste of—she came to me & said something was the matter with it, she did not know what. R— went again to the kitchen & returned saying some one had ground *salt in the mill*—they threw the coffee away, not one of them could drink it—some of them said it tasted like Alum—some of them said it tasted like terrible stuff— I felt sick a few seconds since—it seems to be all over now—this is the second time—can it be possi-

ble it was an attempt to poison—somehow I can't think so. So friends if I should be suddenly taken off after a meal—remember the coffee— I would not have any one injured innocently on mere suspicion— I rather suppose some of my lazy negroes ground salt in it for bread. Now Lord let my last & constant prayer be for my Country— Oh save Charleston & all her dear people. What a night this would be for all in trouble.

### April 1861

*Thursday 4th*

This morning damp, cold, cloudy, the sun tries to shine. I feel very sad to day. The news in the papers from Charlotte, No. Ca—, bears me down—down— Col. Myers had out houses burned— Mr. Elms & some other persons—we know not what moment we may be hacked to death in the most cruel manner by our slaves— Oh God devise a way for us to get rid of them quietly & let us all be better christians— Oh God save us—save us—poor worms of the dust we are— I don't know how I feel—feel as if there was nothing on earth to cheer me— Oh my God help me up—help all thy desponding children. I think a desperate state of things exist at the South—our negroes are far more knowing than many will acknowledge— I had a little negro girl about the house to say to me the other day—'twas a sin for big ones like them to say sir to Mass Thomas & Mass Whitfield & little ones like them (T. & W.—a babe & a little boy)—now if black children have this talk what are we to expect from grown negroes—this same little girl has told me I did not know how my negroes hated white folks & how they talked about *me*. Perhaps I trust too much in man—no, I have *no faith* in *man* who will not fall on his knees & plead for aid from above—we can do nothing of ourselves. I have just closed a letter to my Sister Mrs. P. J. Brevard of North Carolina. Vir., K., T., & N. C. still cling to the Old U. S. of America.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How would you characterize Brevard's relationship with her slaves?
2. In what ways might Brevard's attitude toward her slaves, or theirs toward her, differ if she were a man?

## 9-7 Charlotte Forten, Life on the Sea Islands (1864)

*In 1862, after Union troops captured Port Royal off the coast of South Carolina, the surrounding Sea Islands became the site of the first major attempts to aid freed people. Charlotte Forten was part of a wealthy free black family in Philadelphia. She was one of many northern teachers who volunteered to help educate ex-slaves and demonstrate that African Americans were capable of self-improvement. The following selection, published in 1864, was compiled from letters she wrote to her friend, the poet John Greenleaf Whittier.*

*Source: Atlantic Monthly (1864).*

The Sunday after our arrival we attended service at the Baptist Church. The people came in slowly; for they have no way of knowing the hour, except by the sun. By eleven they had all assembled, and the church was well filled. They were neatly dressed in their Sunday attire, the women mostly wearing clean, dark frocks, with white aprons and bright-colored head-handkerchiefs. Some had attained to the dignity of straw hats with gay feathers, but these were not nearly as becoming nor as picturesque as the handkerchiefs. The day was warm, and the windows were thrown open as if it were summer, although it was the second day of November. It was very pleasant to listen to the beautiful hymns, and look from the crowd of dark, earnest faces within, upon the grove of noble oaks without. The people sang, "Roll, Jordan, roll," the grandest of all their hymns. There is a great, rolling wave of sound through it all....

Harry, the foreman on the plantation, a man of a good deal of natural intelligence, was most desirous of learning to read. He came in at night to be taught, and learned very rapidly. I never saw any one more determined to learn. We enjoyed hearing him talk about the "gun-shoot,"—so the people call the capture of Bay Point and Hilton Head. They never weary of telling you "how Massa run when he hear de fust gun."

"Why did n't you go with him, Harry?" I asked. "Oh, Miss, 't was n't 'cause Massa did n't try to 'suade me. He tell we dat de Yankees would shoot we, or would sell we to Cuba, an' do all de wust tings to we, when dey come, 'Berry well, Sar,' says I. 'If I go wid you, I be good as dead. If I stay here, I can't be no wust; so if I got to dead, I might's well dead here as anywhere. So I'll stay here an' wait for de "dam Yankees." "Lor',

Miss, I knowed he was n't tellin' de truth all de time."

"But why did n't you believe him, Harry?"

"Dunno, Miss; somehow we hear de Yankees was our friends, an' dat we'd be free when dey come, an' 'pears like we believe *dat*."

I found this to be true of nearly all the people I talked with, and thought it strange they should have had so much faith in the Northerners. Truly, for years past, they had but little cause to think them very friendly. Cupid told us that his master was so daring as to come back, after he had fled from the island, at the risk of being taken prisoner by our soldiers; and that he ordered the people to get all the furniture together and take it to a plantation on the opposite side of the creek, and to stay on that side themselves. "So," said Cupid, "dey could jus' sweep us all up in a heap, an' put us in de boat. An' he telled me to take Patience—dat's my wife—an' de chil'en down to a certain pint, an' den I could come back, if I choose. Jus' as if I was gwine to be sich a goat!" added he, with a look and gesture of ineffable contempt. He and the rest of the people, instead of obeying their master, left the place and hid themselves in the woods; and when he came to look for them, not one of all his "faithful servants" was to be found. A few, principally house-servants, had previously been carried away.

In the evenings, the children frequently came in to sing and shout for us. These "shouts" are very strange,—in truth, almost indescribable. It is necessary to hear and see in order to have any clear idea of them. The children form a ring, and move around in a kind of shuffling dance, singing all the time. Four or five stand apart, and sing very energetically clapping their hands, stamping their feet, and rocking their bodies to and fro. These are the musicians, to whose performance the shouters keep perfect time. The grown people on this plantation did not shout, but they do on some of the other plantations. It is very comical to see little children, not more than three or four years old, entering into the performance with all their might. But the shouting of the grown people is rather solemn and impressive otherwise. We cannot determine whether it has a religious character or not. Some of the people tell us that it has, others that it has not. But as the shouts of the grown people are always in connection with their religious meetings, it is probable that they are the barbarous expression of religion, handed down to them from their African ancestors, and destined to pass away under the influence of Christian teachings. The people on this island have no songs. They sing only hymns, and most of these are sad. Prince, a large



black boy from a neighboring plantation, was the principal shouter among the children. It seemed impossible for him to keep still for a moment. His performances were most amusing specimens of Ethiopian gymnastics. Amaretta the younger, a cunning, kittenish little creature of only six years old, had a remarkably sweet voice. Her favorite hymn, which we used to hear her singing to herself as she walked through the yard, is one of the oddest we have heard:—

“What makes ole Satan follow me so?  
Satan got nuttin’ t all fur to do wid me.

CHORUS

“Tiddy Rosa, hold your light!  
Bradder Tony, hold your light!  
All de member, hold bright light  
On Canaan’s shore!”

This is one of the most spirited shouting-tunes. “Tiddy” is their word for sister.

A very queer-looking old man came into the store one day. He was dressed in a complete suit of brilliant Brussels carpeting. Probably it had been taken from his master’s house after the “gun-shoot”; but he looked so very dignified that we did not like to question him about it. The people called him Doctor Crofts,—which was, I believe, his master’s name, his own being Scipio. He was very jubilant over the new state of things, and said to Mr. H.,—“Don’t hab me feelins hurt now. Used to hab me feelins hurt all de time. But don’t hab ‘em hurt now no more.” Poor old soul! We rejoiced with him that he and his brethren no longer have their “feelins” hurt, as in the old time.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How would you describe Forten’s attitudes toward the freed people of the Sea Islands? What differences seem apparent between their world and the one she comes from?
2. How does Forten compare the Sea Island religious practices to those that she is used to? Why were they so different?
3. What feelings do the Sea Islanders express toward education and freedom?

## 9-8 Harriet Jacobs Describes “Contraband” Conditions to Readers of the *Liberator*.

*Former slave Harriet Jacobs gained renown for her 1861 autobiography, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. She wrote under the pseudonym Linda Brent; her book was controversial for its vivid description of the sexual abuse of slave women. She spent much of 1862 in Washington, D.C., using her contacts in abolitionist circles to spread information about, and raise funds for, the thousands of “contraband” – thousands of ex-slaves who fled the Confederacy early in the Civil War – who poured into the Union-held capital.*

**Source:** Sterling, Dorothy. *We are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997. pp. 245-247.

Dear Mr. Garrison:

[Washington, D.C., August 1862]

I went to Duff Green's Row, Government headquarters for the contrabands here. I found men,

women and children all huddled together without any distinction or regard to age or sex. Some of them were in the most pitiable condition. Many were sick with measles, diphtheria, scarlet and typhoid fever. Some had a few filthy rags to lie on, others had nothing but the bare floor for a couch. They were coming in at all times, often through the night and the Superintendent had enough to occupy his time in taking the names of those who came in and those who were sent out. His office was thronged through the day by persons who came to hire the poor creatures. Single women hire at four dollars a month, a woman with one child two and a half or three dollars a month. Men's wages are ten dollars per month. Many of them, accustomed as they have been to field labor, and to living almost entirely out of doors, suffer much from the confinement in this crowded building. The little children pine like prison birds for their native element. It is almost impossible to keep the building in a healthy condition. Each day brings the fresh additions of the hungry, naked and sick.

Hoping to help a little in the good work I wrote to a lady in New York, a true and tried friend of the slave, to ask for such articles as would make comfortable the sick and dying in the hospital. On the Saturday follow-

ing an immense box was received from New York. Before the sun went down, I had the satisfaction of seeing every man, woman and child with clean garments, lying in a clean bed. What a contrast! They seemed different beings.

Alexandria is strongly Secesh; the inhabitants are kept quiet only at the point of Northern bayonets. In this place, the contrabands are distributed more over the city. The old schoolhouse is the Government headquarters for the women. This I thought the most wretched of all. In this house are scores of women and children with nothing to do, and nothing to do with. Their husbands are at work for the Government. Here they have food and shelter, but they cannot get work.

Let me tell you of another place—Arlington Heights, General Lee's beautiful residence, which has been so faithfully guarded by our Northern army. The men are employed and most of the women. Here they have plenty of exercise in the open air and seem very happy. Many of the regiments are stationed here. It is a delightful place for both the soldiers and the contraband.

My first visit for Alexandria was on a Saturday. To the very old people I gave some clothing. Begging me to come back, they promised to do all they could to help themselves. One old woman said, "Honey, tink

when all get still I can go and fine de old place. Tink de Union 'stroy it? You can't get nothing on dis place. Down on de ole place you can raise ebery ting. I ain't seen bacca since I bin here. Neber git aliv in here, where de peoples eben buy pasley." This poor old woman thought it was nice to live where tobacco grew, but it was dreadful to be compelled to buy a bunch of parsley. Some of them have been so degraded by slavery that they do not know the usages of civilized life; they know little else than the handle of the hoe, the plough, the cotton-pod and the overseer's lash. Have patience with them. You have helped to make them what they are; teach them civilization. You owe it to them and you will find them as apt to learn as any other people that come to you stupid from oppression.

Linda\*

\*Because Jacobs had used the pseudonym, Linda Brent, when her book was published, abolitionists referred to her as Linda or Linda Jacobs.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What does Jacobs describe as the contrabands' most pressing needs?
2. How do you think this description would differ if it had been written by a man? By someone who had never been a slave?

## 9-9 Harriet Jacobs Assists a Freedmen's School in Alexandria, Virginia.

*Harriet Jacobs and her daughter, Louisa, assisted in the establishment of a school for former slaves in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1864. Here, Jacobs reports on the school's founding in a letter to Hannah Stevenson, leader of the teacher's committee of the New England Freedmen's Aid Society.*

*NOTE: In this context, "missionaries" refers to teachers who hoped to bring enlightenment to ex-slaves.*

**Source:** Sterling, Dorothy. *We are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997. pp. 247-248.

Dear Miss Stevenson:

Alexandria, [Virginia,] March 1 [1864]

I found the school house not finished for the want

of funds. I also found many missionary applicants waiting to take charge of the school. I thought it best to wait and see what was the disposition of the Freedmen to whom the Building belonged. The week before the school room was finished I called on one of the colored Trustees, stated the object of bringing the young ladies to Alexandria. He said he would be proud to have the ladies teach in their school, but the white people had made all the arrangements without consulting them. The next morning I was invited to meet with the Trustees at their evening meeting. I extended the invitation to the parties that were contending for the school. I wanted the colored men to learn the time had come when it was their privilege to have something to say. A very few words decided the matter. Miss Jacobs was to have charge of the school with, Miss Lawton her assistant. One gentleman arose to lay his prior claim before the people. A black man arose and said—the gentleman is out of order. This meeting was called in honor of Miss Jacobs and the ladies. After this discussion the poor people were tormented. First one then another would offer to take the school telling them they could not claim the Building unless a white

man controlled the school. I went with the trustees to the proper authorities, had their lease for the ground on which the building was erected secured to them for five years. I do not object to white teachers but I think it has a good effect upon these people to convince them their own race can do something for their elevation. It inspires them with confidence to help each other.

After the school room was finished there was a debt of one hundred and eighty dollars to be paid. I wrote to some of my friends in Mass. to beg for some of the articles that might be left over at their fairs. Louisa wrote to a friend in New York. Through their kindness we opened a fair with a handsome fancy table, cleared one hundred and fifty dollars, paid on the school house one hundred and thirty dollars, leav-

ing a surplus in my hands. All day we have three classes at the same time reciting in this room. It makes such confusion. I am anxious to add a small room for recitations. It will cost two hundred dollars. If [you are] willing for the money [you sent] to be used for this purpose, I can raise one hundred and we shall be at work in a few days.

Believe me Grateful

H. Jacobs

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Jacobs emphasize the need for the freedmen to control the school?
2. Why is Jacobs such a successful fundraiser?

## 9-10 Lincoln's Assassination, As Witnessed by Elizabeth Keckley

*Elizabeth Keckley, a seamstress and former slave who had purchased her freedom, designed and made clothes for Mary Todd Lincoln. She became the first lady's friend and confidante, particularly after Lincolns' beloved son Willie died in the White House in 1862, at age eleven. Keckley's own son, George, had been killed while fighting in the Union Army.*

**Source:** Keckley, Elizabeth. *Behind the Scenes, or, Thirty years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House.* New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., Publishers, 1868.

During my residence in the Capital I made my home with Mr. and Mrs. Walker Lewis, people of my own race, and friends in the truest sense of the word.

The days passed without any incident of particular note disturbing the current of life. On Friday morning, April 14th [1856] —alas! what American does not remember the day—I saw Mrs. Lincoln but for a moment. She told me that she was to attend the theatre that night with the President, but I was not summoned to assist her in making her toilette....

At 11 o'clock at night I was awakened by an old friend and neighbor, Miss M. Brown, with the startling intelligence that the entire Cabinet had been assassinated, and Mr. Lincoln shot, but not mortally wounded. When I heard the words I felt as if the blood had been frozen in my veins, and that my lungs must collapse for the want of air. Mr. Lincoln shot! the Cabinet

assassinated! What could it mean? The streets were alive with wondering, awe-stricken people. Rumors flew thick and fast, and the wildest reports came with every new arrival. The words were repeated with blanched cheeks and quivering lips. I waked Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, and told them that the President was shot, and that I must go to the White House. I could not remain in a state of uncertainty. I felt that the house would not hold me. They tried to quiet me, but gentle words could not calm the wild tempest. They quickly dressed themselves, and we sallied out into the street to drift with the excited throng. We walked rapidly towards the White House, and on our way passed the residence of Secretary Seward, which was surrounded by armed soldiers, keeping back all intruders with the point of the bayonet. We hurried on, and as we approached the White House, saw that it too was surrounded with soldiers. Every entrance was strongly guarded, and no one was permitted to pass. The guard at the gate told us that Mr. Lincoln had not been brought home, but refused to give any other information. More excited than ever, we wandered down the street. Grief and anxiety were making me weak, and as we joined the outskirts of a large crowd, I began to feel as meek and humble as a penitent child. A gray-haired old man was passing. I caught a glimpse of his face, and it seemed so full of kindness and sorrow that I gently touched his arm, and imploringly asked:

"Will you please, sir, to tell me whether Mr. Lincoln is dead or not?"

"Not dead," he replied, "but dying. God help us!" and with a heavy step he passed on.

"Not dead, but dying! then indeed God help us!"

We learned that the President was mortally wounded—that he had been shot down in his box at the theatre, and that he was not expected to live till morning; when we returned home with heavy hearts. I could not sleep. I wanted to go to Mrs. Lincoln, as I pictured her wild with grief; but then I did not know where to find her, and I must wait till morning. Never did the hours drag so slowly. Every moment seemed an age, and I could do nothing but walk about and hold my arms in mental agony.

Morning came at last, and a sad morning was it. The flags that floated so gayly yesterday now were draped in black, and hung in silent folds at half-mast. The President was dead, and a nation was mourning for him. Every house was draped in black, and every face wore a solemn look. People spoke in subdued tones, and glided whisperingly, wonderingly, silently about the streets.

About eleven o'clock on Saturday morning a carriage drove up to the door, and a messenger asked for "Elizabeth Keckley."

"Who wants her?" I asked.

"I come from Mrs. Lincoln. If you are Mrs. Keckley, come with me immediately to the White House."

I hastily put on my shawl and bonnet, and was driven at a rapid rate to the White House. Everything about the building was sad and solemn. I was quickly shown to Mrs. Lincoln's room, and on entering, saw Mrs. L. tossing uneasily about upon a bed. The room was darkened, and the only person in it besides the widow of the President was Mrs. Secretary Welles, who had spent the night with her. Bowing to Mrs. Welles, I went to the bedside.

"Why did you not come to me last night, Elizabeth—I sent for you?" Mrs. Lincoln asked in a low whisper.

"I did try to come to you, but I could not find you," I answered, as I laid my hand upon her hot brow.

I afterwards learned, that when she had partially recovered from the first shock of the terrible tragedy in the theatre, Mrs. Welles asked:

"Is there no one, Mrs. Lincoln that you desire to have with you in this terrible affliction?"

"Yes, send for Elizabeth Keckley. I want her just as soon as she can be brought here."

Three messengers, it appears, were successively despatched for me, but all of them mistook the num-

ber and failed to find me.

Shortly after entering the room on Saturday morning, Mrs. Welles excused herself, as she said she must go to her own family, and I was left alone with Mrs. Lincoln.

She was nearly exhausted with grief, and when she became a little quiet, I asked and received permission to go into the Guests' Room, where the body of the President lay in state. When I crossed the threshold of the room, I could not help recalling the day on which I had seen little Willie lying in his coffin where the body of his father now lay. I remembered how the President had wept over the pale beautiful face of his gifted boy, and now the President himself was dead. The last time I saw him he spoke kindly to me, but alas! the lips would never move again. The light had faded from his eyes, and when the light went out the soul went with it. What a noble soul was his—noble in all the noble attributes of God! Never did I enter the solemn chamber of death with such palpitating heart and trembling footsteps as I entered it that day. No common mortal had died. The Moses of my people had fallen in the hour of his triumph. Fame had woven her choicest chaplet for his brow. Though the brow was cold and pale in death, the chaplet should not fade, for God had studded it with the glory of the eternal stars.

When I entered the room, the members of the Cabinet and many distinguished officers of the army were grouped around the body of their fallen chief. They made room for me, and, approaching the body, I lifted the white cloth from the white face of the man that I had worshipped as an idol—looked upon as a demi-god. Notwithstanding the violence of the death of the President, there was something beautiful as well as grandly solemn in the expression of the placid face. There lurked the sweetness and gentleness of childhood, and the stately grandeur of godlike intellect. I gazed long at the face, and turned away with tears in my eyes and a choking sensation in my throat. Ah! never was man so widely mourned before. The whole world bowed their heads in grief when Abraham Lincoln died.

Returning to Mrs. Lincoln's room, I found her in a new paroxysm of grief. Robert was bending over his mother with tender affection, and little Tad was crouched at the foot of the bed with a world of agony in his young face. I shall never forget the scene—the wails of a broken heart, the unearthly shrieks, the terrible convulsions, the wild, tempestuous outbursts of grief from the soul. I bathed Mrs. Lincoln's head with cold water, and soothed the terrible tornado as best I

could. Tad's grief at his father's death was as great as the grief of his mother, but her terrible outbursts awed the boy into silence. Sometimes he would throw his arms around her neck, and exclaim, between his broken sobs, "Don't cry so, Mamma! don't cry, or you will make me cry, too! You will break my heart."

Mrs. Lincoln could not bear to hear Tad cry, and when he would plead to her not to break his heart, she

would calm herself with a great effort, and clasp her child in her arms.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What is the basis for the bond between Keckley and Lincoln?
2. How might this story have played out differently if Keckley had been white?

## 9-11 Women Workers After the War

*The Civil War created many opportunities for women's work, particularly in the federal government. This excerpt from a study of women's roles during and after the war shows the variety of fields women entered.*

**Source:** Massey, Mary Elizabeth. *Bonnet Brigades*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1866, pp. 340-343.

Much of woman's postwar progress may be ascribed to her increased employment opportunities, and to continued business and industrial expansion. How much more acute would have been the suffering of war widows, orphans, and impoverished Southerners if only the jobs available in 1861 had been open to them or if they had encountered as widespread opposition as their predecessors! Many conservatives still did not approve of women working outside the home; but while most women worked because of financial need, the ambitious had greater incentive to excel for their chances for advancement and recognition were more numerous. They no longer had to spend a lifetime dependent on others. They could strike out on their own and go to new communities with less risk of criticism than before, and those who did so were generally more realistic, broad-minded, and receptive to new ideas than their sheltered sisters. The economic emancipation of women was the most important single factor in her social, intellectual, and political advancement, and the war did more in four years to change her economic status than had been accomplished in any preceding generation.

When hundreds of jobs in government offices were opened to women during the war, no one could have predicted how significant this would be. By 1875 the number in Washington had doubled. Federal, state, and local agencies, business firms and institutions were employing women clerks, bookkeepers, stenographers, and receptionists. Foreign travelers were

intrigued by the "government girls," and none more than the English feminist, Emily Faithfull, who made three visits to the United States during the seventies and early eighties. She marveled that the Civil War "alone procured women admission to the Civil Service," avocation which she found among the most interesting in the nation. She was delighted to hear President Grant, Secretary of the Treasury George Boutwell, Francis Spinner, and other officials praise their work, and she thought American women extremely fortunate to have these opportunities. Competition for jobs was keen because wages were higher and workdays shorter than in most lines of work, and it was exciting to live in the nation's capital. A Kentuckian employed in the Post Office Department loved her work but hit upon the greatest drawback of these positions when she wrote, "the trouble is . . . you never know how long you can count on them." There was a certain insecurity in that the employee usually depended upon her benefactor's re-election, but she was usually in no greater jeopardy than a man unless the entire female office force was dismissed to make room for men. Rumors that this might happen were constantly circulated but usually proved false, and with the passage of the first effective Civil Service Acts in the eighties the danger was minimized.

The regular overturn of Federal employees made astute politicians of women long before they had the ballot. After every election, officials were deluged with applications from the "female side of the party," as Thomas Donaldson referred to those who "wanted a slice of the loaf." The personal papers of politicians reveal the increasing pressure put on them by women wanting jobs, many of whom were careful to stress their war services or mention that they were the widows or orphans of soldiers. None was more persistent than Dr. Mary Walker, who pestered scores of Republican Congressmen for an appointment, never letting them forget that she had done her bit in the war. Nor did their demise necessarily silence her, for several years after Senator Logan's death she remind-

ed his widow of promises he had made and pleaded with Mrs. Logan "to listen to a recital of the same."

On April 15, 1883, the New York *Tribune* reported that "a book could be filled with the pathetic histories of the women in the Civil Service," yet their stories would have been even more "pathetic" had it not been for these jobs which enabled war widows and others from all parts of the nation to be self-supporting. Josephine Griffing, Julia Wheelock, and others active in the war had positions in Washington, and Annie Etheridge held one in Detroit until she married. Many once ardent Confederates were working in Washington offices not long after the war, including Mrs. George Pickett, who was left penniless when the general died in 1875 and was only too happy to be added to the Federal payroll. Dozens of Southern Unionists were rewarded with appointments during reconstruction, some retaining them into the twentieth century.

If the *Tribune* reporter had searched every office he could not have found a more pathetic story than that of Mrs. Emma Richardson Moses in the Treasury Department. Described as a person "of education, refinement and . . . all that goes to make a true lady," Mrs. Moses was the daughter of an eminent South Carolina jurist who died in the sixties after having been financially ruined by the war. When she married Franklin Moses shortly before the conflict he gave promise of a brilliant future, but after serving as a Confederate officer he cast his lot with the radicals in 1867, was elected carpetbag governor in 1872, became involved in a number of fraudulent schemes and personal scandals, sank deeper and deeper in debt, turned on his friends, and was later arrested several times in the North for petty crimes. Mrs. Moses obtained a divorce in the late seventies, and needing work, accepted a position in Washington. She was lonely and hesitated to force her company on others who she feared held her "responsible for some of the Governor's misdoings." There were hundreds of women who found in government work a chance to

"lose" themselves in Washington and earn a living away from tragic memories.

As the government workers proved efficient, their supporters increased. Robert Porter's report on the 1,100 women employed in the Census Bureau in 1890 is typical of that of many other supervisors. More than half, he said, had scored higher than 85 per cent on the mathematics examination, a field considered by some beyond woman's comprehension, and they computed and "worked the tabulating machines" faster and more accurately than did the men. The women had a "more exact touch, were more expeditious in handling schedules, were more at home in adjusting delicate mechanisms and more anxious to make good records" than their male colleagues. In both business and industry they were often more adept at handling machines, including typewriters and looms, and by the nineties were surpassing men in many lines of work. Women employees increased in offices elsewhere in the nation, and many Southern postmistresses received their appointments because of conditions arising from the war. President Grant made more than 200 such appointments, including Elizabeth Van Lew and Mrs. Armistead Long, wife of a one-armed former Confederate colonel, whom he appointed postmistress in Charlottesville, Virginia. Many women were given similar positions because, as a journalist noted, they could subscribe to the oath that they had not borne arms against the United States Government, which relatively few men in the South could do. That there were no more postmistresses in the United States in 1870 than ten years earlier may be explained by the fact that not half the prewar Southern post offices had been reopened and Union veterans were often appointed postmaster in other areas.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What are the main types of work described?
2. Does the text make it seem likely that these gains in women's employment will be permanent?

IN THE AGE OF SLAVE EMANCIPATION, 1865–1877

**10-1 A Woman’s Life-Work**

*Laura Smith Haviland (1808-1898), wrote her memoirs after a long and eventful life. She joined the Logan Female Anti-Slavery Society, Michigan’s first anti-slavery association. Haviland and her husband had a very active stop on the Underground Railroad. She worked through the Civil War, and the following excerpt describes reunions of families of freed slaves and the remarriage” of former slaves during the war.*

**Source:** Laura S. Haviland, *A Woman’s Life-Work: labors and experiences of Laura S. Haviland*, Cincinnati: Walden and Stowe, 1882.

I hastened back to Camp Bethel. to witness the marriage of twenty couples that Colonel Eaton, who was a chaplain among them, was to marry with one ceremony. Many of the men were of the newly-enlist-

ed soldiers, and the officers thought they had better be legally married, although many of them had been married a number of years, but only according to slave law, which recognized no legal marriage among slaves. At the appointed hour the twenty couples stood in a row, each couple with right hands clasped; and among them one young couple, that being their first marriage. All gave affirmative answers at the same time; first the men, then the women. After the ceremony Chaplain Eaton offered an earnest prayer, all kneeling. Then he shook hands with them to signify his congratulations, and I followed him in like manner. It was a novel scene, and yet solemn.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. Why were these freedmen and freedwomen married, though the author says that they were already married?

**10-2 Contracts Undertaken by Freedwomen (1866, 1867)**

*The following contract for work was one of many made under the supervision of the Freedmen’s Bureau. Such annual contracts set the relationship of employer and servant on a contractual footing. This second contract was also made through the Freedmen’s Bureau, but the employment in question was field work.*

**Source:** Contracts undertaken by freedwomen, *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century*, Dorothy Sterling, ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1984, 326-328.

Georgia Brooks County

Contract Between James Alvis and Dianna Freedwoman.

Said Dianna agrees to work for said Alvis for the year 1866 till the day of December at any kind of labor Said Alvis direct and to serve him faithfully and constantly.

Should such labors be faithfully performed Said Alvis on his part agrees to furnish quarters and food for said Dianna and her two youngest children, he further agrees to furnish her with Cards Spinning wheel and Cotton to Spin for herself as much as she shall Spin at night after having performed her said Service for said Alvis, and further said Alvis agrees to pay Said Dianna twenty five Dollars in cash at the expiration of said Service.

Said Dianna is to be respectful to said Alvis & family always submissive to their orders and Should she be impudent or idle or neglectful of her duties she is subject to be discharged and forfeit, as shall be just and right between parties Signed in presence of William Alvis James Alvis A. Buckner

Dianna

X

her mark

State of South Carolina

Anderson District

This agreement entered into between I. A. Gray of the one part and Emmie (a freedwoman) of the other part.

Witnesseth that the said Emmie does hereby agree to work for the said Gray for the time of twelve months from the first day of January 1867. She agrees to do the cooking washing and all other necessary work about the house. She is to obey all lawful & reasonable commands issued to her by said Gray or his agent, and to be kind & respectful to the same. She is not to leave the premises of said Gray without permission. She is to receive no company or visits of any kind without the permission of said Gray or his agent. For all time lost by her from sickness or otherwise twenty-five cents per day shall be deducted from her wages. For every day lost without permission she is to forfeit one dollar and if more than two days be lost without permission she can be dismissed from the plantation by said Gray with a forfeit of her entire interest in the crop.

In consideration of the foregoing service duly performed I. A. Gray agrees to turn over to the said Emmie one half of the corn & cotton cultivated by herself during the term above mentioned. Said Gray agrees to furnish & feed the necessary horses and farming implements for cultivating said crop. The above mentioned Emmie agrees to board & clothe herself. If she is sick during the year she is to procure if necessary a physician & medicine at her own expense. It is further

agreed by & between the party above mentioned that for all supplies of provision clothing or monies advanced & supplied by said Gray to said Emmie he the said Gray shall have and hold a lien upon her entire portion of the crop until they have been paid for. It is further agreed that should the said Gray fail to perform his part of this agreement the said Emmie shall have & hold [a] lien upon the entire crop cultivated by herself during the term above mentioned to the full value of what may be due her and until the same is paid over to her.

Witness our hands the 22nd day of February 1867

Signed in presence of

I.A. Gray

W. J. Simpson

D. Sadler

Emmie Gray

X

her mark

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. In the contract undertaken by Dianna Freedwoman, what benefits does she get from the arrangements? Does Emmie Gray's contract provide similar benefits?
2. Compare the duties and responsibilities of each party in both contracts. Are they comparable? How can you account for any differences?
3. Considering the heavy responsibilities of the two women in these contracts, can their position be said to have improved when they were freed?

### 10-3 Dialogue on Woman's Rights

*Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911) was an African American activist, working for both emancipation and for women's rights. She published novels and poetry. The following was published in the New York Freeman in 1885. It addresses the issue of freedom in terms both of slavery and of women's right to vote.*

**Source:** Harper, Frances Ellen. "Dialogue on Woman's Rights." *New York Freeman* November 28, 1885. *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19th Century*, Dorothy Sterling, ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1984, 416-417

JACOB

I don't believe a single bit

In those new-fangled ways

Of women running to the polls

And voting nowadays.

Now there's my Betsy, just as good

As any wife need be

Who sits and tells me day by day

That women are not free;

And then I smile and say to her,

"You surely make me laff;

This talk about your rights and wrongs

Is nothing else but chaff."



JOHN

Now, Jacob, I don't think like you;  
I think that Betsy Ann  
Has just as good a right to vote  
As you or any man

JACOB

Now, John, do you believe for true  
In women running round,  
And when you come to look for them  
They are not to be found?  
Pray, who would stay at home to nurse,  
To cook, to wash and sew,  
While women marched unto the polls?  
That's what I want to know.

JOHN

Who stays at home when Betsy Ann  
Goes out day after day  
To wash and iron, cook and sew,  
Because she gets her pay?  
I'm sure she wouldn't take quite so long  
To vote and go her way,  
As when she leaves her little ones  
And works out day by day

JACOB

Well, I declare, that is the truth!  
To vote, it don't take long;  
But, then, I kind of think somehow  
That women's voting's wrong

JOHN

The masters thought before the war  
That slavery was right;  
But we who felt the heavy yoke  
Didn't see it in that light.  
Some thought that it would never do  
For us in Southern lands,  
To change the fetters on our wrists  
For the ballot in our hands.  
Now if you don't believe 'twas right  
To crowd us from the track  
How can you push your wife aside  
And try to hold her back?

JACOB

Well, wrong is wrong and right is right,  
For woman as for man  
I almost think that I will go  
And vote with Betsy Ann.

JOHN

I hope you will and show the world  
You can be brave and strong  
A noble man, who scorns to do  
The feeblest woman wrong.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS:**

1. What arguments are given by the two men in the dialogue for and against women's suffrage?
2. Harper chose to put her words in the mouths of two men. Suggest some reasons for her choice.

## 10-4 From Della Irving Hayden, *Autobiography* (1917)

*Della Irving Hayden (1854-1924) wrote her Autobiography in 1917. In the excerpt below, she writes of her experiences at Hampton Institute, where she went to become a teacher in 1872. Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute began its formal life in 1870. Booker T. Washington became a student there at about the same time as Hayden.*

**Source:** Hayden, Della Irving. *Autobiography*. 1917, from *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Dorothy Sterling, ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1984, 378-380.

When we went in to supper, they had a big yellow bowl with sassafras tea, what we called 'greasy bread', and a little molasses. There were three or four new students and one old student. When we were seated he began to eat. We were waiting, and he said, "Why don't you eat?" We said we were waiting for them to put supper on the table. He told us this was all we would get. We had sassafras tea and cornbread and syrup for supper all those two years. That first night I slept on the floor with seven other girls. We were all new and there was such a rush of girls they had no other place to put us. We didn't know anything about bells, and the next morning when we woke up, every-body had had breakfast and gone over to Academic. We got up and

dressed. I had a little piece of cheese and some crackers in my trunk and I ate them.

Then they gave me a room in the barracks with three other girls. They gave us ticks and we carried them to the barn and filled them with straw. We took two pillows and filled them too. We had regular wooden bedsteads. When it rained, it always leaked. I had an old waterproof of my mother's and many a time I put that waterproof on my bed, with a tin basin, too, to catch the water. I could not turn over for fear of upsetting the basin full of water. The boys all slept outdoors in tents. They had a little stove in each tent. There was no heat in the room except what my lamp gave. Miss Mackie [the Lady Principal] made me bathe every morning in cold water, and I have often broken the ice in my pitcher.

[Before completing her education at Hampton, which she did complete in 1877, she worked as a teacher to make money]

I rented a little room 15 by 20 feet, bought two dozen chairs, got a blackboard, stove, table and broom.

I had twenty-one students the first month. We had five acres of land donated to us by Mrs. Marriage Allen of London, England. I taught school in the week and went on Sundays and begged money at the churches, so we were finally able to put up a building with four classrooms that cost about \$1,000. The first year I was alone, but now I have three teachers besides myself. In addition to this building we have a dormitory for the girls, with 22 rooms, costing \$6,000. We borrowed the money for ten years, and we still owe \$3,800 of it. Eight hundred fifty students have attended this school and 40 have graduated. Some are teaching, others are in business, and several have gone to other schools.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What aspects of life at Hampton were most novel for Harper?
2. What was the role of the community in providing the necessities of schooling?

### 10-5 France Rollins, Diary (1868)

*Frances Anne Rollin (1847-1902) was noted both as one of five African American sisters prominent in late nineteenth-century Charleston, and as an activist for women's suffrage. The following excerpts are from her diary.*

**Source:** Rollins, Frances. "Diary." August 2-October 19, 1868. Reprinted in Sterling, 366-369

Aug. 2 [1868] Reached Columbia about six o'clock. Mr. Whipper met me at the depot with his buggy and took me to my boarding place where an elegant and spacious room awaited me. Charlotte came to see me in the morning but Kate did not. Went to Church in the morning. The Gov. and all the members [of the legislature] were there. Quite an excitement created on account of the disappearance of Joe Howard after the riot of the Ku Klux last night.

Aug. 3 Went to the Committee Room this morning, copied a few bills and left early. Joe Howard heard from at Kingsville. The young man Dallas Smith who was shot and Joe's disappearance made capital of by the rebels. This afternoon on his arrival he was arrested but Mr. Whipper got out a writ of Habeas Corpus and got him out. Joe seemed terribly frightened about it. Kate came to see me this morning.

Aug. 4 At the Committee Room. Joe Howard came

in and spoke. Appeared much frightened. I advised him to get Mr. Whipper to go with him to the examination before the coroner. In the afternoon went back, wrote several letters for Mr. Whipper. He accompanied me home.

Aug. 5 At the Committee Room. Mr. William Johnson called thereto see me on business, walked home with me. When there he raved about Mr. Whipper sending for me to clerk for him. He told me he felt like cutting his throat when he learned I was to come home under Mr. Whipper's auspices.

Aug. 8 Went to Committee Room in afternoon. Went out to dine with Mr. Whipper, to the races but did not go in for the reason no ladies were there.

Aug. 13 This morning at the Committee Room. Quite a time about the Civil Rights Bill.

Aug. 14 I wrote an answer to Mr. Whipper's letter asking a delay of the *decision* (matrimonial). Mr. W. was at the office when I got there also one of the Committee. I waited my chances and placed it between the leaves of a book which he was reading. I saw him take it out.

Aug. 18 To be, or not to be. Wrote all day and the Justice of the Peace Bill in the afternoon. In evening W. came and spoke over the affair. I felt he did not want a *No*. I said *yes*. He kissed me good night.

Aug. 19 Feeling the most curious this morning. Wondering how W. felt. Received a letter from him. I wonder how he will meet me this evening. Went shopping. W. came while at supper, He froze me up completely. Spent a most curious time which baffles all of my philosophy. What was it? Was the [ghost] of his departed wife present, unseen, unwilling to give up her claim or what? Both of us were unlike our real selves.

Aug. 20 Woke early wondering whether to throw up the sponge or accept a loveless life. Felt as though W. could not love anyone. A letter came from him today which restored and invigorated me. A real love letter.

Aug. 29 Left this morning for Charleston. Things home disheartened me. Ma looked much the same. Carried my book home for Pa. Told Loady [Louisa] about my intended marriage.

Aug. 31 Sent letter to W. today. Went shopping for myself and the children. Loady took the nightgown, chemises and promises to make the dress. Miss Sophia will make the drawers and the reception dress.

Sept. 2 Started for Columbia for my darling.

Sept. 14 Left Columbia for Charleston. Met Pa on returning home. From dusk till nearly midnight the contest lasted between Pa and I. Pa consented at last not to interfere and allow the marriage to come off on Thursday morning. He thought it was too soon, etc.

Sept. 16 Busy as a bee. Could not stop to think how I felt. I was at Miss Sophia Morris to try on the dress. I have not felt yet as though I am to be married tomorrow. W. came in the afternoon to bring the ring to try.

Sept. 17 Up by times this morning getting ready.

Married by Mr. Adams. *Very nervous*. Left for Columbia. Elliott and Lee at the depot. A.O. Jones, Lottie & Katie Ella Tolland at the house. Quite an ovation. In the evening a grand reception. All the State officers nearly ditto for the members of both Houses, a few outsiders.

Sept. 18 Today I am beginning to realize the affairs of the past few days but am happy to have them behind me. W. seems very happy too. May God enable us to continue it. Visitors. In the afternoon Mrs. Cardozo and Mrs. Henry Cardozo, Mr. and Mrs. Ransier, Bob De-large. Bob and W. not speaking. W. E. Johnson come up and congratulated Willie.

Sept. 20 Did not go to Church. Read Enoch Arden for W. and Smalls. In afternoon lots of company. Also John Langston, Purvis and Randolph took tea with us. Mr. Cardozo came to invite W. and I to dinner with him on Monday.

Sept. 21 Clear and bright. Felt put out just a little because W. did not come home in time to dress to go to the dinner. Had a pleasant time at Mr. Cardozo's—Randolph, Haynes, Mr. and Mrs. Adams. John Langston spoke that evening and paid quite a tribute to Willie. Took the girls home.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. This entry was written shortly after the Civil War ended. What opportunities were available to Rollin? What limitations might you infer by reading between the lines?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of diaries as primary sources? Consider what other records might be available from the period, particularly for minorities and women.

## 10-6 Letter from Lucy Skipworth to John Hartwell Cooke (1865)

*An extensive correspondence exists between Lucy Skipworth and her master, John Cooke, in the latter's absence from the plantation where she was a slave. This is the last known letter in the correspondence.*

**Source:** Letter from Lucy Skipworth to John Hartwell Cooke. Hopewell, Alabama, December 7, 1865. *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Dorothy Sterling, ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1984, 310-311

My dear Master:

Hopewell, [Alabama,] December 7, 1865

I Received your letter a few days ago. I was truly glad to see that you were still alive & not yet gone the way of all the Earth. I was sorry that I had to part from Armistead but I have lived a life of trouble with him, & a white man has ever had to Judge between us, & now to be turned loose from under a master, I know that I could not live with him in no peace, therefore I left him. If you have any hard feelings against me on the subject, I hope that you will forgive me for Jesus sake.

I Have a great desire to come to Va to see you & my relations there & I hope that I maybe able some day to do so. I have looked over my mind in regard to going to Liberia but I cannot get my consent to go there, but I thank you for your advice. None of our people are willing to go. I am still carrying on my School on the plantation & the Children are learning very fast. I have been thinking of putting up a large School next year as I can do more at that than I can at any thing elce, & I can get more children than I can teach.

I am glad that one of your Grandsons is coming out this winter. We are looking for him every day. Our Turnip patch failed this year. Our Crop of Potatoes were very small also. Some of every bodys blackpeople in this Neighbourhood have left their homes but us. We are all here so far but I cannot tell how it will be

another year.

I will now bring my letter to a Close hoping soon to hear from you again. I am as ever your Servant

Lucy Skipwith

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How would you characterize the relationship between Skipworth and Cocke?
2. Written just months after the conclusion of the Civil War, does this letter reflect what one would expect of such a momentous period?
3. What are Skipworth's duties on the plantation, and can be inferred about her status?

## 10-7 Fanny Smart to Adam Smart (1866)

*The following letter was written by Fanny Smart to her husband Adam Smart. In it she alludes to an annual contract she has made, presumably under the auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau.*

**Source:** Smart, Fanny to Adam Smart. Woodville, Mississippi, February 13, 1866. Reprinted in Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Dorothy Sterling, ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1984, 316-317

To Adam Smart

Dear Husband:

Woodville, Mississippi, February 13, 1866

I received your letter yesterday. I heard that you was dead. I was glad to hear from you. I now think very strange, that you never wrote to me before. You could not think much of your children, as for me, I dont expect you to think much of as I have been confined,

just got up, have a fine daughter four weeks old, and a little brighter, than you would like to see. You wish to know what arrangements I have made .I expect to stay here this year. I have made a contract to that effect. I am doing very well. My children I have all with me, they are all well, and well taken care off, the same as ever, if one get sick, they are well nursed. I now have eight children, all dependent on me for a support, ondy one, large enough to work for herself, the rest I could not hire for their victuals & cloths. I think you might have sent the children something, or some money. foe can walk and talk. Mat is a great big boy, bad as ever. My baby I call her Cassinda. The children all send howda to you they all want to see you.

From your wife Fanny Smart

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What is Fanny Smart's situation in the year following the end of the Civil War?
2. What might Fanny Smart's options be? What factors might influence her choice?

## 10-8 Lucy Stone, Speech in Favor of the Fifteenth Amendment (1869)

*Lucy Stone was one of many women activists who worked for both abolition and women's rights. Following the Civil War, when the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were proposed, granting full citizen rights to black men, a rift in the women's movement developed. Lucy Stone split with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton over this issue, with the latter two opposing the amendments as prejudicial to women's rights; Stone supported the amendments.*

**Source:** Stone, Lucy. "Speech in Favor of the Fifteenth Amendment." *History of Women Suffrage, edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joselyn Gage, New York: Fowler and Wells, Volume 2, 383-384*

MRS. LUCY STONE :—Mrs. Stanton will, of course, advocate the precedence for her sex, and Mr. Douglass will strive for the first position for his, and both are perhaps right. If it be true that the government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, we are safe in trusting that principle to the uttermost. If one has a right to say that you can not read and therefore cannot vote, then it may be said that you are a woman and therefore can not vote. We are lost if we turn away from the middle principle and argue for one class. I was once a teacher among fugitive slaves. There was one old man, and every tooth was gone, his hair was white, and his face was full of wrinkles, yet, day after day and hour after hour, he came up to the school-house and tried with patience to learn to read, and by-and-by, when he had spelled out the first few verses of the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John, he said to me, " Now, I want to learn to write." I tried to make him satisfied with what he had acquired, but the old man said, " Mrs. Stone, somewhere in the wide world I have a son ; I have not heard from him in twenty years ; if I should hear from him, I want to write to him, so take hold of my hand and teach me." I did, but before he had proceeded in many lessons, the angels came and gathered him up and bore him to his Father. Let no man speak of an educated suffrage. The gentleman who addressed you claimed that the negroes had the first right to the suf-

frage, and drew a picture which only his great word-power can do. He again in Massachusetts, when it had cast a majority in favor of Grant and negro suffrage, stood upon the platform and said that woman had better wait for the negro; that is, that both could not be carried, and that the negro had better be the one. But I freely forgave him because he felt as he spoke. But woman suffrage is more imperative than his own ; and I want to remind the audience that when he says what the Ku-Kluxes did all over the South, the Ku-Kluxes here in the North in the shape of men, take away the children from the mother, and separate them as completely as if done on the block of the auctioneer. Over in New Jersey they have a law which says that *any* father—he might be the most brutal man that ever existed—any father, it says, whether he be under age or not, may by his last will and testament dispose of the custody of his child, born or to be born, and that such disposition shall be good against all persons, and that the mother may not recover her child; and that law modified in form exists over every State in the Union except in Kansas. Woman has an ocean of wrongs too deep for any plummet, and the negro, too, has an ocean of wrongs that can not be fathomed. There are two great oceans; in the one is the black man, and in the other is the woman. But I thank God for that XV. Amendment, and hope that it will be adopted in every State. I will be thankful in my soul if *any* body can get out of the terrible pit. But I believe that the safety of the government would be more promoted by the admission of woman as an element of restoration and harmony than the negro. I believe that the influence of woman will save the country before every other power. (Applause.) I see the signs of the times pointing to this consummation, and I believe that in some parts of the country women will vote for the President of these United States in 1872. (Applause.)

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What does Stone mean by her image of "two great oceans"?
2. How does Stone compare the sufferings of women and blacks? Does she set them on an equal footing?

## 10-9 Washerwomen of Jackson to Mayor Barrows (1866)

*The following appeared in a Jackson Mississippi newspaper, as a sort of legal notice.*

**Source:** "Washerwomen of Jackson to Mayor Barrows." *The Daily Clarion* [Jackson, Mississippi]. June 20, 1866, from *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Dorothy Sterling, ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1984.

Mayor Barrows

Dear Sir:

Jackson, Mississippi, June 20, 1866

At a meeting of the colored Washerwomen of this city, on the evening of the 18th of June, the subject of raising the wages was considered, and the following preamble and resolution were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, under the influence of the present high prices of all the necessaries of life, and the attendant high rates of rent, we, the washer-women of the city of Jackson, State of Mississippi, thinking it impossible to live uprightly and honestly in laboring for the present daily and monthly recompense, and hoping to meet with the support of all good citizens, join in adopting unanimously the following resolution:

Be it resolved by the washerwomen of this city and county, That on and after the foregoing date, we join in charging a uniform rate for our labor, and any one belonging to the class of washerwomen, violating this, shall be liable to a fine regulated by the class. We do not wish in the least to charge exorbitant prices, but desire to be able to live comfortably if possible from the fruits of our labor. We present the matter to your Honor, and hope you will not reject it. The prices charged are:

\$1.50 per day for washing

\$15.00 per month for family washing

\$10.00 per month for single individuals

We ask you to consider the matter in our behalf, and should you deem it just and right, your sanction of the movement will be gratefully received.

Yours, very truly,

THE WASHERWOMEN OF JACKSON

### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Like many other trades groups, the washerwomen of Jackson sought to regulate their industry. What power did they have to do so?
2. What arguments do these women use to persuade the mayor that they should be paid more?

## 10-10 The Memorial of Victoria C. Woodhull (1870)

*Victoria Woodhull's career is hard to encapsulate in a few words, given her work as newspaper editor and activist, and considering her bid for the presidency. The broadside reproduced below announces her claim that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments applied to women. Although her challenge was unsuccessful, and its influence on the suffrage movement is debatable, but the Memorial marks an era during which women tested the extent of their rights*

### The Memorial Of Victoria C. Woodhull

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled, respectfully showeth:

That she was born in the State of Ohio, and is above the age of twenty-one years; that she has resided in the State of New York during the past three

years; that she is still a resident thereof, and that she is a citizen of the United States, as declared by the XIV Article of Amendments to the Constitution of the United States:

That since the adoption of the XV Article of Amendment to the Constitutions, neither the State of New York nor any other State, nor any Territory, has passed any law to abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote, as established by said article, neither on account of sex or otherwise:

That, nevertheless, the right to vote is denied to women citizen of the United States by the operation of Election Laws in the several States and Territories, which laws were enacted prior to the adoption of the said XV Article, and which are inconsistent with the Constitution as amended, and, therefore, are void and of no effect; but which being still enforced by the said States and Territories, render the Constitution inoperative as regards the right of women citizens to vote:

And whereas, Article VI, Section 2, declares "That this Constitution, and the laws of the United States

which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made or which shall be made under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and all judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution and Laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.

And whereas, no distinction between citizens is made in the Constitution of the United States on account of sex, but the XIV Article of Amendments to it provides that “no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States.” “nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws:”

And whereas, Congress has power to make laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution all powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States; and to make or alter all regulations in relation to holding election for Senators and Representatives, and especially to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of the said XIV Article:

And whereas, the continuance of the enforcement

of said local election laws, denying and abridging the Right of Citizens to Vote on account of sex, is a grievance to your memorialist and to various other persons, citizens of the United States, being women,—

Therefore your memorialist would respectfully petition your Honorable Bodies to make such laws as in the wisdom of Congress shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the right vested by the Constitution in the citizens of the United States to vote, without regard to sex.

And your memorialist will ever pray.

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL.

Dated New York City, December 19, 1870.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. On what does Woodhull base her claim that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments extended the suffrage to women?
2. Why does Woodhull invoke the “necessary and proper clause” concerning Congress?

## 10-11 Victoria Woodhull, Nomination for President of the U.S. (1872)

*Victoria Woodhull ran for U.S. president, just two years after her challenge that pushed the limits of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. She was selected as the Equal Rights Party's candidate. In the following she accepts her nomination, and lays out the platform of her party.*

**Source:** *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*, June 29, 1871, in *Other Powers: The Age of Suffrage, Spiritualism and the Scandalous Victoria Woodhull*, Barbara Goldsmith, 212-213

### VICTORIA WOODHULL

#### Letter Accepting the Presidential Nomination of the Equal Rights Party, 1872

NEWYORK, JUNE 5, 1872 .

*Hon. J. D. Reymert, President of the Nominating Convention of the Equal Rights Party, and Associates:*

GENTLEMEN AND Ladies: Your communication

received this day, conveying the formal statement to me of the simple fact that the Equal Rights Party, recently represented in convention in this city, has nominated me as the chief standard-bearer of the party in the coming conflict, recalls the vivid sensations of gratitude, renewed responsibility and profound humility with which I was overwhelmed on that memorable evening when the spontaneous acclaim of a great, enthusiastic and admirable assembly of male and female citizens, gave me the same information without waiting for the formalities of announcement. You speak almost as if this simple fact were one of the ordinary events of politics. But to my apprehension it is far more than that. It is not even a common-place historical event. The joint assemblage of all the reformers, of all schools, for the first time in the history of the great transition which human society is undergoing, blended and fused into the same spirit, coming to agree to stand upon the same platform of ideas and measures, and nominating by an outburst of inspiration a woman known to be representative of the most advanced and unmitigated radicalism, and because she was so known; and a negro, one of the boldest of the champions and defenders of human rights, a representative man and a representative woman of the two oppressed and repressed classes, for the two highest offices in the gift of a great people—such an occur-

rence rises in my mind into the sublimity and pregnant significance of the grander class of the events of history. . . .

In a word, it is the appropriate inauguration of the EQUAL RIGHTS PARTY; which, in its larger aspect, contemplates not American politics merely, or alone; but the establishment of justice throughout the world. It is also the subordination of party strife, among reformers themselves, to the unity of a common cause. . . .

\*\*\*\*

The Equal Rights party also recognizes the destiny of nations, and affirms its purpose to be, to work in consonance therewith. It accepts the prophecy of all ages, that the time shall come when, instead of a multitude of constantly opposing nations, the whole world shall be united under a single paternal government, whose citizens shall become a common brotherhood owning a common origin and inheriting a common destiny. I return, in conclusion, to what I have said of the transitional nature of the impending political revolution. When this conflict shall be concluded, either with or without actual bloodshed; when the spirit of

conceding justice shall have been secured, either by conviction or force; the call will be made on all sides for constructive science and wisdom. Sociology is the rising science of the day. The writings and living thoughts of the great students of social phenomena of all ages, in the strictly scientific point of view, will become the common property of the whole people. In the mean time let us do well the preliminary work. Let there be, first, a *whole people*; let there be freedom; let there be the universal desire for the reign of justice; then there will be a fitting preparation for the final grand organization of all human affairs. Finally, I gratefully accept the nomination made of me, and pledge myself to every honorable means to secure, at the earliest possible day, the triumph of the principles enunciated in the platform, which being those of justice, and for the welfare of humanity; I know they must shortly succeed. Your obedient servant,

VICTORIA C. WOODHULL.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Why does Woodhull feel the time is ripe for her election?

## 10-12 Susan B. Anthony, Speech after Being Convicted of Voting in the 1873 Presidential Election

*In 1872, Susan B. Anthony was one of over 150 women who attempted to vote in the 1872 presidential election. The following speech comes in response to her indictment for her action.*

**Source:** <http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/index.html>

Friends and Fellow-citizens: I stand before you tonight, under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last Presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that in thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's right, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny.

Our democratic-republican government is based on the idea of the natural right of every individual

member thereof to a voice and a vote in making and executing the laws. We assert the province of government to be to secure the people in the enjoyment of their unalienable rights. We throw to the winds the old dogma that governments can give rights. Before governments were organized, no one denies that each individual possessed the right to protect his own life, liberty and property. And when 100 or 1,000,000 people enter into a free government, they do not barter away their natural rights; they simply pledge themselves to protect each other in the enjoyment of them, through prescribed judicial and legislative tribunals. They agree to abandon the methods of brute force in the adjustment of their differences, and adopt those of civilization.

Nor can you find a word in any of the grand documents left us by the fathers that assumes for government the power to create or to confer rights. The Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the constitutions of the several states and the organic laws of the territories, all alike propose to protect the people in the exercise of their God-given rights. Not one of them pretends to bestow rights.

"All men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. Among these



are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

Here is no shadow of government authority over rights, nor exclusion of any from their full and equal enjoyment. Here is pronounced the right of all men, and "consequently," as the Quaker preacher said, "of all women," to a voice in the government. And here, in this very first paragraph of the declaration, is the assertion of the natural right of all to the ballot; for, how can "the consent of the governed" be given, if the right to vote be denied. Again:

"That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, ad to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such forms as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Surely, the right of the whole people to vote is here clearly implied. For however destructive in their happiness this government might become, a disfranchised class could neither alter nor abolish it, nor institute a new one, except by the old brute force method of insurrection and rebellion. One-half of the people of this nation to-day are utterly powerless to blot from the statute books an unjust law, or to write there a new and a just one. The women, dissatisfied as they are with this form of government, that enforces taxation without representation,-that compels them to obey laws to which they have never given their consent,-that imprisons and hangs them without a trial by a jury of their peers, that robs them, in marriage, of the custody of their own persons, wages and children,-are this half of the people left wholly at the mercy of the other half, in direct violation of the spirit and letter of the declarations of the framers of this government, every one of which was based on the immutable principle of equal rights to all. By those declarations, kings, priests, popes, aristocrats, were all alike dethroned, and placed on a common level politically, with the lowliest born subject or serf. By them, too, me, as such, were deprived of their divine right to rule, and placed on a political level with women. By the practice of those declarations all class and caste distinction will be abolished; and slave, serf, plebeian, wife, woman, all alike, bound from their subject position to the proud platform of equality.

The preamble of the federal constitution says:

"We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure

domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and established this constitution for the United States of America."

It was we, the people, not we, the white male citizens, nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed this Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings or liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people-women as well as men. And it is downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government-the ballot.

The early journals of Congress show that when the committee reported to that body the original articles of confederation, the very first article which became the subject of discussion was that respecting equality of suffrage. Article 4th said:

"The better to secure and perpetuate mutual friendship and intercourse between the people of the different States of this Union, the free inhabitants of each of the States, (paupers, vagabonds and fugitives from justice excepted,) shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the free citizens of the several States."

Thus, at the very beginning, did the fathers see the necessity of the universal application of the great principle of equal rights to all-in order to produce the desired result-a harmonious union and a homogeneous people.

Luther Martin, attorney-general of Maryland, in his report to the Legislature of that State of the convention that framed the United States Constitution, said:

"Those who advocated the equality of suffrage took the matter up on the original principles of government: that the reason why each individual man in forming a State government should have an equal vote, is because each individual, before he enters into government, is equally free and equally independent."

James Madison said;

"Under every view of the subject, it seems indispensable that the mass of the citizens should not be without a voice in making the laws which they are to obey, and in choosing the magistrate who are to administer them." Also, "Let it be remembered, finally, that it has ever been the pride and the boast of America that the rights for which she contended were

the rights of human nature."

And these assertions of the framers of the United States Constitution of the equal and natural rights of all the people to a voice in the government, have been affirmed and reaffirmed by the leading statesmen of the nation, throughout the entire history of our government.

Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania, said in 1866:

"I have made up my mind that elective franchise is one of the inalienable rights meant to be secured by the declaration of independence."

B. Gratz Brown, of Missouri, in the three day's discussion in the United States Senate in 1866, on Senator Cowan's motion to strike "male" from the District of Columbia suffrage bill, said:

"Mr. President, I say here on the floor of the American Senate, I stand for universal suffrage; and as a matter of fundamental principle, do not recognize the right of society to limit on any ground of race or sex. I will go farther and say, that I recognize the right of franchise as being intrinsically a natural right. I do not believe that society is authorized to impose any limitation upon it that do not spring out of the necessities of the social state itself. Sir, I have been shocked, in the course of this debate, to hear Senators declare this right only a conventional and political arrangement, a privilege yielded to you and me and others; not a right in any sense, only a concession! Mr. President, I do not hold my liberties by any such tenure. On the contrary, I believe that whenever you establish that doctrine, whenever you crystalize that idea in the public mind of this country, you ring the death-knell of American liberties."

Charles Summer, in his brave protests against the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, insisted that, so soon as by the thirteenth amendment the slaves became free men, the original powers of the United States Constitution guaranteed to them equal rights—the right to vote and to be voted for. In closing one of his great speeches he said;

"I do not hesitate to say that when the slaves of our country became citizens they took their place in the body politic as a component part of the people, entitled to equal rights, and under the protection of these two guardian principles: First—That all just government stand on the consent of the governed; and second, that taxation without representation is tyranny; and these rights it is the duty of Congress to guarantee as essential to the ideal of a Republic."

The preamble of the Constitution of the State of

New York declares the same purpose. It says:

"We, the people of the State of New York, grateful to Almighty God for our freedom, in order to secure its blessings, do establish this Constitution."

Here is not the slightest intimation either of receiving freedom from the United States Constitution, or of the State conferring the blessings of liberty upon the people; and the same is true of every one of the thirty-six State Constitutions. Each and all, alike declare rights God-given, and that to secure the people in the enjoyment of their inalienable rights, is their one and only object in ordaining and establishing government. And all of the State Constitutions are equally emphatic in their recognition of the ballot as the means of securing the people in the enjoyment of these rights.

Article 1 of the New York State Constitution says:

"No member of this State shall be disfranchised or deprived of the rights or privileges secured to any citizen thereof, unless by the law of the land, or the judgment of his peers."

And so carefully guarded is the citizen's right to vote, that the Constitution makes special mention of all who may be excluded. It says:

"Laws may be passed excluding from the right of suffrage all persons who have been or may be convicted of bribery, larceny or any infamous crime."

In naming the various employments that shall not affect the residence of voters—the 3d section of article 2d says "that being kept at any alms house, or other asylum, at public expense, nor being confined at any public prison, shall deprive a person of his residence," and hence his vote. Thus is the right of voting most sacredly hedged about. The only seeming permission in the New York State Constitution for the disfranchisement of women is in section 1st of article 2d, which says:

"Every male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, c., shall be entitled to vote."

But I submit that in view of the explicit assertions of the equal right of the whole people, both in the preamble and previous article of the constitution, this omission of the adjective "female" in the second, should not be construed into a denial; but, instead, counted as of no effect. Mark the direct prohibition: "No member of this State shall be disfranchised, unless by the law of the land, or the judgment of his peers." "The law of the land," is the United States Constitution: and there is no provision in that docu-

ment that can be fairly construed into a permission to the States to deprive any class of their citizens of their right to vote. Hence New York can get no power from that source to disfranchise one entire half of her members. Nor has "the judgment of their peers" been pronounced against women exercising their right to vote; no disfranchised person is allowed to be judge or juror-and none but disfranchised persons can be women's peers; nor has the legislature passed laws excluding them on account of idiocy of lunacy; nor yet the courts convicted them of bribery, larceny, or any infamous crime. Clearly, then, there is no constitutional ground for the exclusion of women from the ballot-box in the State of New York, No barriers whatever stand to-day between women and the exercise of their right to vote save those of precedent and prejudice.

The clauses of the United States Constitution, cited by our opponents as giving power to the States to disfranchise any classes of citizens they shall please, are contained in sections 2d and 4th of article 1st. The second says:

"The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several States; and the electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State Legislature."

This cannot be construed into a concession to the States of the power to destroy the right to become an elector, but simply to prescribe what shall be the qualification, such as competency of intellect, maturity of age, length of residence, that shall be deemed necessary to enable them to make an intelligent choice of candidates. If, as our opponents assert, the last clause of this section makes it the duty of the United States to protect citizens in the several States against higher or different qualifications for electors for representatives in Congress, than for members of Assembly, them must the first clause make it equally imperative for the national government to interfere with the States, and forbid them from arbitrarily cutting off the right of one-half of the people to become electors altogether. Section 4th says:

"The time, places and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislative thereof; but Congress may at any time, by law, make or alter such regulations, except as to the places by choosing Senators."

Here is conceded the power only to prescribed times, places and manner of holding the elections; and even with these Congress may interfere, with all excepting the mere place of choosing Senators. Thus

you see, there is not the slightest permission in either section for the States to discriminate against the right of any class of citizens to vote. Surely, to regulate cannot be to annihilate! nor to qualify to wholly deprive. And to this principle every true Democrat and Republican said amen, when applied to black men by Senator Sumner in his great speeches for EQUAL RIGHTS TO ALL from 1865 to 1869; and when, in 1871, I asked that Senator to declare the power of the United States Constitution to protect women in their right to vote-as he had done for black men-he handed me a copy of all his speeches during that reconstruction period, and said:

"Miss Anthony, put sex where I have race or color, and you have here the best and strongest argument I can make for woman. There is not a doubt but women have the constitutional right to vote, and I will never vote for a sixteenth amendment to guarantee it to them. I voted for both the fourteenth and fifteenth under protest; would never have done it but for the pressing emergency of that hour; would have insisted that the power of the original Constitution to protect all citizens in the equal enjoyment of their rights should have been vindicated through the courts. But the newly made freedmen had neither the intelligence, wealth nor time to wait that slow process. Women possess all these in an eminent degree, and I insist that they shall appeal to the courts, and through them establish the power of our American magna charta, to protect every citizen of the Republic. But, friends, when in accordance with Senator Sumner's counsel, I went to the ballot-box, last November, and exercised my citizen's right to vote, the courts did not wait for me to appeal to them-they appealed to me, and indicted me on the charge of having voted illegally.

Senator Sumner, putting sex where he did color, said:

"Qualifications cannot be in their nature permanent or insurmountable. Sex cannot be a qualification any more than size, race, color, or previous condition of servitude. A permanent or insurmountable qualification is equivalent to a de-privation of the suffrage. In other words, it is the tyranny of taxation without representation, against which our revolutionary mothers, as well as fathers, rebelled."

For any State to make sex a qualification that must ever result in the disfranchisement of one entire half of the people, is to pass a bill of attainder, or an ex post facto law, and is therefore a violation of the supreme law of the land. By it, the blessings of liberty are forever withheld from women and their female posterity. To them, this government has no just powers derived

from the consent of the governed. To them this government is not a democracy. It is not a republic. It is an odious aristocracy; a hateful obligarchy of sex. The most hateful aristocracy ever established on the face of the globe. An obligarchy of wealth, where the rich govern the poor; an obligarchy of learning, where the educated govern the ignorant; or even an obligarchy of race, where the Saxon rules the African, might be endured; but this obligarchy of sex, which makes father, brothers, husband, sons, the obligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters of every household; which ordains all men sovereigns, all women subjects, carries dissension, discord and rebellion into every home of the nation. And this most odious aristocracy exists, too, in the face of Section 4, of Article 4, which says:

"The United States shall guarantee to every State in the Union a republican form of government."

What, I ask you, is the distinctive difference between the inhabitants of a monarchical and those of a republican form of government, save that in the monarchical the people are subjects, helpless, powerless, bound to obey laws made by superiors-while in the republican, the people are citizens, individual sovereigns, all clothed with equal power, to make and unmake both their laws and law makers, and the moment you deprive a person of his right to a voice in the government, you degrade him from the status of a citizen of the republic, to that of a subject, and it matters very little to him whether his monarch be an individual tyrant, as is the Czar of Russia, or a 15,000,000 headed monster, as here in the United States; he is a powerless subject, serf or slave; not a free and independent citizen in any sense.

But is urged, the use of the masculine pronouns he, his and him, in all the constitutions and laws, is proof that only men were meant to be included in their provisions. If you insist on this version of the letter of the law, we shall insist that you be consistent, and accept the other horn of the dilemma, which would compel you to exempt women from taxation for the support of the government, and from penalties for the violation of laws.

A year and a half ago I was at Walla, Walla, Washington Territory. I saw there a theatrical company, called the "Pixley Sisters," playing before crowded houses, every night of the whole week of the territorial fair. The eldest of those three fatherless girls was scarce eighteen. Yet every night a United States officer stretched out his long fingers, and clutched six dollars of the proceeds of the exhibition of those orphan girls, who, but a few years before, were half starvelings in the

streets of Olympia, the capital of the far-off northwest territory. So the poor widow, who keeps a boarding house, manufacturers shirts, or sells apples and peanuts on the street corners of our cities, is compelled to pay taxes from her scanty pittance. I would that the women of this republic, at once, resolve, never again to submit of taxation, until their right to vote be recognized. {Begin handwritten} amen {End handwritten}

Miss Sarah E. Wall, of Worcester, Mass., twenty years ago, took this position. For several years, the officers of the law distrained her property, and sold it to meet the necessary amount; still she persisted, and would not yield an iota, though every foot of her lands should be struck off under the hammer. And now, for several years, the assessor has left her name off the tax list, and the collector passed her by without a call.

Mrs. J. S. Weeden, of Viroqua, Wis., for the past six years, has refused to pay her taxes, though the annual assessment is \$75.

Mrs. Ellen Van Valkenburg, of Santa Cruz, Cal., who sued the County Clerk for refusing to register her name, declares she will never pay another dollar of tax until allowed to vote; and all over the country, women property holders are waking up to the injustice of taxation without representation, and ere long will refuse, en masse, to submit to the imposition.

There is no she, or her, or hers, in the tax laws.

The statute of New York reads:

"Every person shall be assessed in the town or ward where he resides when the assessment is made, or the lands owned by him c." "Every collector shall call at least once on the person taxed, or at his usual place of residence, and shall demand payment of the taxes charged on him. If any one shall refuse to pay the tax imposed on him, the collector shall levy the same by distress and sale of his property"

The same is true of all the criminal laws:

"No person shall be compelled to be a witness against himself, c."

The same with the law of May 31st, 1870, the 19th section of which I am charged with having violated; not only are all the pronouns in it masculine, but everybody knows that that particular section was intended expressly to hinder the rebels from voting. It reads "If any person shall knowingly vote without his having a lawful right," c. Precisely so with all the papers served on me-the U.S. Marshal's warrant, the bail-bond, the petition for habeas corpus, the bill of indictment-not one of them had a feminine pronoun

printed in it; but, to make them applicable to me, the Clerk of the Court made a little carat at the left of "he" and placed an "s" over it, thus making she out of he. Then the letters "is" were scratched out, the little carat under and "er" over, to make her out of his, and I insist if government officials may thus manipulate the pronouns to tax, fine, imprison and hang women, women may take the same liberty with them to secure to themselves their right to a voice in the government.

So long as any classes of men were denied their right to vote, the government made a show of consistency, by exempting them from taxation. When a property qualification of \$250 was required of black men in New York, they were not compelled to pay taxes, so long as they were content to report themselves worth less than that sum; but the moment the black man died, and his property fell to his widow or daughter, the black woman's name would be put on the assessor's list, and she be compelled to pay taxes on the same property exempted to her husband. The same is true of ministers in New York. So long as the minister lives, he is exempted from taxation on \$1,500 of property, but the moment the breath goes out of his body, his widow's name will go down on the assessor's list, and she will have to pay taxes on the \$1,500. So much for the special legislation in favor of women.

In all the penalties and burdens of the government, (except the military,) women are reckoned as citizens, equally with men. Also, in all privileges and immunities, save those of the jury box and ballot box, the two fundamental privileges on which rest all the others. The United States government not only taxes, fines, imprisons and hangs women, but it allows them to pre-empt lands, register ships, and take out passport and naturalization papers. Not only does the law permit single women and widows to the right of naturalization, but Section 2 says: "A married woman may be naturalized without the concurrence of her husband." (I wonder the fathers were not afraid of creating discord in the families of foreigners); and again: "When an alien, having complied with the law, and declared his intention to become a citizen, dies before he is actually naturalized, his widow and children shall be considered citizens, entitled to all rights and privileges as such, on taking the required oath." If a foreign born woman by becoming a naturalized citizen, is entitled to all the rights and privileges of citizenship, is not a native born woman, by her national citizenship, possessed of equal rights and privileges?

The question of the masculine pronouns, yes and nouns, too, has been settled by the United States Supreme Court, in the Case of Silver versus Ladd,

December, 1868, in a decision as to whether a woman was entitled to lands, under the Oregon donation law of 1850. Elizabeth Cruthers, a widow, settled upon a claim, received patents. She died, and her son was heir. He died. Then Messrs. Ladd Nott took possession, under the general pre-emption law, December, 1861. The administrator, E. P. Silver, applied for a writ of ejectment at the land office in Oregon City. Both the Register and Receiver decided that an unmarried woman could not hold land under that law. The Commissioner of the General Land Office, at Washington, and the Secretary of the Interior, also gave adverse opinions. Here patents were issued to Ladd Nott, and duly recorded. Then a suit was brought to set aside Ladd's patent, and it was carried through all the State Courts and the Supreme Court of Oregon, each, in turn, giving adverse decisions. At last, in the United States Supreme Court, Associate Justice Miller reversed the decisions of all the lower tribunals, and ordered the land back to the heirs of Mrs. Cruthers. The Court said:

"In construing a benevolent statute of the government, made for the benefit of its own citizens, inviting and encouraging them to settle on its distant public lands, the words a single man, and unmarried man may, especially if aided by the context and other parts of the statute, be taken in a generic sense. Held, accordingly, that the Fourth Section of the Act of Congress, of September 27th, 1850, granting by way of donation, lands in Oregon Territory, to every white settler or occupant, American half-breed Indians included, embraced within the term single man an unmarried woman."

And the attorney, who carried this question to its final success, is now the United States senator elect from Oregon, Hon. J. H. Mitchell, in whom the cause of equal rights to women has an added power on the floor of the United States Senate.

Though the words persons, people, inhabitants, electors, citizens, are all used indiscriminately in the national and state constitutions, there was always a conflict of opinion, prior to the war, as to whether they were synonymous terms, as for instance:

"No person shall be a representative who shall not have been seven years a citizen, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state in which he is chosen. No person shall be a senator who shall not have been a citizen of the United States, and an inhabitant of that state in which he is chosen."

But, whatever there was for a doubt, under the old regime, the adoption of the fourteenth amendment settled that question forever, in its first sentence: "All

persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside."

And the second settles the equal status of all persons—all citizens:

"No states shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

The only question left to be settled, now, is: Are women persons? And I hardly believe any of our opponents will have the hardihood to say they are not. Being persons, then, women are citizens, and no state has a right to make any new law, or to enforce any old law, that shall abridge their privileges or immunities. Hence, every discrimination against women in the constitutions and laws of the several states, is to-day null and void, precisely as is every one against negroes.

Is the right to vote one of the privileges or immunities of citizens? I think the disfranchised ex-rebels, and the ex-state prisoners will agree with me, that it is not only one of the them, but the one without which all the others are nothing. Seek the first kingdom of the ballot, and all things else shall be given thee, is the political injunction.

Webster, Worcester and Bouvier all define citizen to be a person, in the United States, entitled to vote and hold office.

Prior to the adoption of the thirteenth amendment, by which slavery was forever abolished, and black men transformed from property to persons, the judicial opinions of the country had always been in harmony with these definitions. To be a person was to be a citizen, and to be a citizen was to be a voter.

Associate Justice Washington, in defining the privileges and immunities of the citizen, more than fifty years ago, said: "they included all such privileges as were fundamental in their nature. And among them is the right to exercise the elective franchise, and to hold office."

Even the "Dred Scott" decision, pronounced by the abolitionists and republicans infamous, because it virtually declared "black men had no rights white men were bound to respect," gave this true and logical conclusion, that to be one of the people was to be a citizen and a voter.

Chief Judge Daniels said:

"There is not, it is believed, to be found in the theories of writers on government, or in any actual experiment heretofore tried, an exposition of the term citizen, which has not been considered as conferring the actual possession and enjoyment of the perfect right of acquisition and enjoyment of an entire equality of privileges, civil and political."

Associate Justice Taney said:

"The words people of the United States, and citizens, are synonymous terms, and mean the same thing. They both describe the political body, who, according to our republican institutions, form the sovereignty, and who hold the power and conduct the government, through their representatives. They are what we familiarly call the sovereign people, and every citizen is one of this people, and a constituent member of this sovereignty."

Thus does Judge Taney's decision, which was such a terrible ban to the black man, while he was a slave, now, that he is a person, no longer property, pronounce him a citizen possessed of an entire equality of privileges, civil and political. And not only the black man, but the black woman, and all women as well.

And it was not until after the abolition of slavery, by which the negroes became free men, hence citizens, that the United States Attorney, General Bates, rendered a contrary opinion. He said:

"The constitution uses the word citizen only to express the political quality, (not equality mark,) of the individual in his relation to the nation; to declare that he is a member of the body politic, and bound to it by the reciprocal obligations of allegiance on the one side, and protection on the other. The phrase, a citizen of the United States, without addition or qualification, means neither more nor less than a member of the nation."

Then, to be a citizen of this republic, is no more than to be a subject of an empire. You and I, and all true and patriotic citizens must repudiate this base conclusion. We all know that American citizenship, without addition or qualification, means the possession of equal rights, civil and political. We all know that the crowing glory of every citizen of the United States is, that he can either give or withhold his vote from every law and every legislator under the government.

Did "I am Roman citizen," mean nothing more than that I am a "member" of the body politic of the republic of Rome, bound to it by the reciprocal obligations of allegiance on the one side, and protection on the other? Ridiculously absurd question, you say. When you, young man, shall travel abroad, among the

monarchies of the old world, and there proudly boast yourself an "American citizen," will you thereby declare yourself neither more nor less than a "member" of the American nation?

And this opinion of Attorney General Bates, that a black citizen was not a voter, made merely to suit the political exigency of the republican party, in that transition hour between emancipation and enfranchisement, was no less in-famous, in spirit or purpose, than was the decision of Judge Taney, that a black man was not one of the people, rendered in the interest and the behest of the old democratic party, in its darkest hour of subjection to the slave power. Nevertheless, all of the adverse arguments, adverse congressional reports and judicial opinions, thus far, have been based on this purely partisan, time-serving opinion of General Bates, that the normal condition of the citizen of the United States is that of disfranchisement. That only such classes of citizens as have had special legislative guarantee have a legal right to vote.

And if this decision of Attorney General Bates was infamous, as against black men, but yesterday plantation slaves, what shall we pronounce upon Judge Bingham, in the house of Representatives, and Carpenter, in the Senate of the United States, for citing it against the women of the entire nation, vast numbers of whom are the peers of those honorable gentlemen, themselves, in moral!! intellect, culture, wealth, family-paying taxes on large estates, and contributing equally with them and their sex, in every direction, to the growth, prosperity and well-being of the republic? And what shall be said of the judicial opinions of Judges Carter, Jameson, McKay and Sharswood, all based upon this aristocratic, monarchial idea, of the right of one class to govern another?

I am proud to mention the names of the two United States Judges who have given opinions honorable to our republican idea, and honorable to themselves—Judge Howe, of Wyoming Territory, and Judge Underwood, of Virginia.

The former gave it as his opinion a year ago, when the Legislature seemed likely to revoke the law enfranchising the women of that territory, that, in case they succeeded, the women would still possess the right to vote under the fourteenth amendment.

Judge Underwood, of Virginia, in nothing the recent decision of Judge Carter, of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia to women the right to vote, under the fourteenth and fifteenth amendment, says;

"If the people of the United States, by amendment of their constitution, could expunge, without any

explanatory or assisting legislation, an adjective of five letters from all state and local constitutions, and thereby raise millions of our most ignorant fellow-citizens to all of the rights and privileges of electors, why should not the same people, by the same amendment, expunge an adjective of four letters from the same state and local constitutions, and thereby raise other millions of more educated and better informed citizens to equal rights and privileges, without explanatory or assisting legislation?"

If the fourteenth amendment does not secure to all citizens the right to vote, for what purpose was the grand old charter of the fathers lumbered with its unwieldy proportions? The republican party, and Judges Howard and Bingham, who drafted the document, pretended it was to do something for black men; and if that something was not to secure them in their right to vote and hold office, what could it have been? For, by the thirteenth amendment, black men had become people, and hence were entitled to all the privileges and immunities of the government, precisely as were the women of the country, and foreign men not naturalized. According to Associate Justice Washington, they already had the

"Protection of the government, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the right to acquire and possess property of every kind, and to pursue and obtain happiness and safety, subject to such restraints as the government may justly prescribe for the general welfare of the whole; the right of a citizen of one state to pass through or to reside in any other state for the purpose of trade, agriculture, professional pursuit, or otherwise; to claim the benefit of the writ of habeas corpus, to institute and maintain actions of any kind in the courts of the state; to take, hold, and dispose of property, either real or personal, and an exemption from higher taxes or impositions than are paid by the other citizens of the state."

Thus, you see, those newly freed men were in possession of every possible right, privilege and immunity of the government, except that of suffrage, and hence, needed no constitutional amendment for any other purpose. What right, I ask you, has the Irishman the day after he receives his naturalization papers that he did not possess the day before, save the right to vote and hold office? And the Chinamen, now crowding our Pacific coast, are in precisely the same position. What privilege or immunity has California or Oregon the constitutional right to deny them, save that of the ballot? Clearly, then if the fourteenth amendment was not to secure to black men their right to vote, it did nothing for them, since they possessed everything else

before. But, if it was meant to be a prohibition of the states, to deny or abridge their right to vote—which I fully believe—then it did the same for all persons, white women included, born or naturalized in the United States; for the amendment does not say all male persons of African descent, but all persons are citizens.

The second section is simply a threat to punish the states, by reducing their representation on the floor of Congress, should they disfranchise any of their male citizens, on account of color, and does not allow of the inference that the states may disfranchise from any, or all other causes, nor in any wise weaken or invalidate the universal guarantee of the first section. What rule of law or logic would allow the conclusion, that the prohibition of a crime to one person, on severe pains and penalties, was a sanction of that crime to any and all other persons save that one?

But, however much the doctors of the law may disagree, as to whether people and citizens, in the original constitution, were once and the same, or whether the privileges and immunities in the fourteenth amendment include the right of suffrage, the question of the citizen's right to vote is settled forever by the fifteenth amendment. "The citizen's right to vote shall not be denied by the United States, nor any state thereof; on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." How can the state deny or abridge the right of the citizen, if the citizen does not possess it? There is no escape from the conclusion, that to vote is the citizen's right, and the specifications of race, color, or previous condition of servitude can, in no way, impair the force of the emphatic assertion, that the citizen's right to vote shall not be denied or abridged.

The political strategy of the second section of the fourteenth amendment, failing to coerce the rebel states into enfranchising their negroes, and the necessities of the republican party demanding their votes throughout the South, to ensure the re-election of Grant in 1872, that party was compelled to place this positive prohibition of the fifteenth amendment upon the United States and all the states thereof.

If we once establish the false principle, that United States citizenship does not carry with it the right to vote in every state in this Union, there is no end to the petty freaks and cunning devices, that will be resorted to, to exclude one and another class of citizens from the right of suffrage.

It will not always be men combining to disfranchise all women; native born men combining to abridge the rights of all naturalized citizens, as in Rhode Island. It will not always be the rich and educat-

ed who may combine to cut off the poor and ignorant; but we may live to see the poor, hardworking, uncultivated day laborers, foreign and native born, learning the power of the ballot and their vast majority of numbers, combine and amend state constitutions so as to disfranchise the Vanderbilts and A. T. Stewarts, the Conklings and Fentons. It is poor rule that won't work more ways than one. Establish this precedent, admit the right to deny suffrage to the states, and there is no power to foresee the confusion, discord and disruption that may await us. There is, and can be, but one safe principle of government—equal rights to all. And any and every discrimination against any class, whether on account of color, race, nativity, sex, property, culture, can but embitter and disaffect that class, and thereby endanger the safety of the whole people.

Clearly, then, the national government must not only define the rights of citizens, but it must stretch out its powerful hand and protect them in every state in this Union.

But if you will insist that the fifteenth amendment's emphatic interdiction against robbing United States citizens of their right to vote, "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude," is a recognition of the right, either of the United States, or any state, to rob citizens of that right, for any or all other reason, I will prove to you that the class of citizens for which I now plead, and to which I belong, may be, and sure, by all the principles of our government, and many of the laws of the states, included under the term "previous condition of servitude."

First.—The married women and their legal status. What is servitude? "The condition of a slave." What is a slave? "A person who is robbed of the proceeds of his labor; a person who is subject to the will of another."

By the law of Georgia, South Carolina, and all the states of the South, the negro had no right to the custody and control of his person. He belonged to his master. If he was disobedient, the master had the right to use correction. If the negro didn't like the correction, and attempted to run away, the master had a right to use coercion to bring him back.

By the law of every state in this Union to-day, North as well as South, the married woman has no right to the custody and control of her person. The wife belongs to her husband; and if she refuses obedience to his will, he may use moderate correction, and if she doesn't like his moderate correction, and attempts to leave his "bed and board," the husband may use moderate coercion to bring her back. The little word "moderate," you see, is the saving clause for the wife, and



would doubtless be overstepped should offended husband administer his correction with the "cat-o'-nine-tails," or accomplish his coercion with blood-hounds.

Again, the slave had no right to the earnings of his hands, they belonged to his master; no right to the custody of his children, they belonged to his master; no right to sue or be sued, or testify in the courts. If he committed a crime, it was the master who must sue or be sued.

In many of the states there has been special legislation, giving to married women the right to property inherited, or received by bequest, or earned by the pursuit of any avocation outside of the home; also, giving her the right to sue and be sued in matters pertaining to such separate property; but not a single state of this Union has ever secured the wife in the enjoyment of her right to the joint ownership of the joint earnings of the marriage copartnership. And since, in the nature of things, the vast majority of married women never earn a dollar, by work outside of their families, nor inherit a dollar from their fathers, it follows that from the day of their marriage to the day of the death of their husbands, not one of them ever has a dollar, except it shall please her husband to let her have it.

In some of the states, also, there have been laws passed giving to the mother a joint right with the father in the guardianship of the children. But twenty years ago, when our woman's rights movement commenced, by the laws of the State of New York, and all the states, the father had the sole custody and control of the children. No matter if he were a brutal, drunken libertine, he had the legal right, without the mother's consent, to apprentice her sons to rumsellers, or her daughters to brothel keepers. He could even will away an unborn child, to some other person than the mother. And in many of the states the law still prevails, and the mothers are still utterly powerless under the common law.

I doubt if there is, to-day, a State in this Union where a married woman can sue or be sued for slander of character, and until quite recently there was not one in which she could sue or be sued for injury of person. However damaging to the wife's reputation any slander may be, she is wholly powerless to institute legal proceedings against her accuser, unless her husband shall join with her; and how often have we heard of the husband conspiring with some outside barbarian to blast the good name of his wife? A married woman cannot testify in courts in cases of joint interest with her husband. A good farmer's wife near Earlville, Ill., who had all the rights she wanted, went to a dentist of the village and had a full set of false teeth, both upper

and under. The dentist pronounced them an admirable fit, and the wife declared they gave her fits to wear them; that she could neither chew nor talk with them in her mouth. The dentist sued the husband; his counsel brought the wife as witness; the judge ruled her off the stand; saying "a married woman cannot be a witness in matters of joint interest between herself and her husband." Think of it, ye good wives, the false teeth in your mouths are joint interest with your husbands, about which you are legally incompetent to speak!! If in our frequent and shocking railroad accidents a married woman is injured in her person, in nearly all of the States, it is her husband who must sue the company, and it is to her husband that the damages, if there are any, will be awarded. In Ashfield, Mass., supposed to be the most advanced of any State in the Union in all things, humanitarian as well as intellectual, a married woman was severely injured by a defective sidewalk. Her husband sued the corporation and recovered \$13,000 damages. And those \$13,000 belong to him bona fide; and whenever that unfortunate wife wishes a dollar of it to supply her needs she must ask her husband for it; and if the man be of a narrow, selfish, nighardly nature, she will have to hear him say, every time, "What have you done, my dear, with the twenty-five cents I gave you yesterday?" Isn't such a position, ask you, humiliating enough to be called "servitude?" That husband, as would any other husband, in nearly every State of this Union, sued and obtained damages for the loss of the services of his wife, precisely as the master, under the old slave regime, would have done, had his slave been thus injured, and precisely as he himself would have done had it been his ox, cow or horse instead of his wife.

There is an old saying that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet," and I submit it the deprivation by law of the ownership of one's own person, wages, property, children, the denial of the right as an individual, to sue and be sued, and to testify in the courts, is not a condition of servitude most bitter and absolute, though under the sacred name of marriage?

Does any lawyer doubt my statement of the legal status of married women? I will remind him of the fact that the old common law of England prevails in every State in this Union, except where the Legislature has enacted special laws annulling it. And I am ashamed that not one State has yet blotted from its statute books the old common law of marriage, by which blackstone, summed up in the fewest words possible, is made to say, "husband and wife are one, and that one is the husband."

Thus may all married women, wives and widows,

by the laws of the several States, be technically included in the fifteenth amendment's specification of "condition of servitude," present or previous. And not only married women, but I will also prove to you that by all the great fundamental principles of our free government, the entire womanhood of the nation is in a "condition of servitude" as surely as were our revolutionary fathers, when they rebelled against old King George. Women are taxed without representation, governed without their consent, tried, convicted and punished without a jury of their peers. And is all this tyranny any less humiliating and degrading to women under our democratic-republican government to-day than it was to men under their aristocratic, monarchical government one hundred years ago? There is not an utterance of old John Adams, John Hancock or Patrick Henry, but finds a living response in the soul of every intelligent, patriotic woman of the nation. Bring to me a common-sense woman property holder, and I will show you one whose soul is fired with all the indignation of 1776 every time the tax-gatherer presents himself at her door. You will not find one such but feels her condition of servitude as galling as did James Otis when he said:

"The very act of taxing exercised over those who are not represented appears to me to be depriving them of one of their most essential rights, and if continued, seems to be in effect an entire disfranchisement of every civil right. For, what one civil right is worth a rush after a man's property is subject to be taken from him at pleasure without his consent? If a man is not his own assessor in person, or by deputy, his liberty is gone, or he is wholly at the mercy of others."

What was the three-penny tax on tea, or the paltry tax on paper and sugar to which our revolutionary fathers were subjected, when compared with the taxation of the women of this Republic? The orphaned Pixley sisters, six dollars a day, and even the women, who are proclaiming the tyranny of our taxation without representation, from city to city throughout the country, are often compelled to pay a tax for the poor privilege of defending our rights. And again, to show that disfranchisement was precisely the slavery of which the fathers complained, allow me to cite to you old Ben. Franklin, who in those olden times was admitted to be good authority, not merely in domestic economy, but in political as well; he said:

"Every man of the commonalty, except infants, insane persons and criminals, is, of common right and the law of God, a freeman and entitled to the free enjoyment of liberty.

That liberty or freedom consists in having an actu-

al share in the appointment of those who are to frame the laws, and who are to be the guardians of every man's life, property and peace. For the all of one man is as dear to him as the all of another; and the poor man has an equal right, but more need to have representatives in the Legislature than the rich one. That they who have no voice or vote in the electing of representatives, do not enjoy liberty, but are absolutely enslaved to those who have votes and their representatives; for to be enslaved is to have governors whom other men have set over us, and to be subject to laws made by the representatives of others, without having had representatives of our own to give consent in our behalf."

Suppose I read it with the feminine gender:

"That women who have no voice nor vote in the electing of representatives, do not enjoy liberty, but are absolutely enslaved to men who have votes and their representatives; for to be enslaved is to have governors whom men have set over us, and to be subject to the laws made by the representatives of men, without having representatives of our own to give consent in our behalf."

And yet one more authority; that of Thomas Paine, than whom not one of the Revolutionary patriots more ably vindicated the principles upon which our government is founded:

"The right of voting for representatives is the primary right by which other rights are protected. To take away this right is to reduce man to a state of slavery; for slavery consists in being subject to the will of another; and he that has not a vote in the election of representatives is in this case. The proposal, therefore, to disfranchise any class of men is as criminal as the proposal to take away property."

Is anything further needed to prove woman's condition of servitude sufficiently orthodox to entitle her to the guaranties of the fifteenth amendment?

Is there a man who will not agree with me, that to talk of freedom without the ballot, is mockery-is slavery-to the women of this Republic, precisely as New England's orator Wendell Phillips, at the close of the late war, declared it to be to the newly emancipated black men?

I admit that prior to the rebellion, by common consent, the right to enslave, as well as to disfranchise both native and foreign born citizens, was conceded to the States. But the one grand principle, settled by the war and the reconstruction legislation, is the supremacy of national power to protect the citizens of the

United States in their right to freedom and the elective franchise, against any and every interference on the part of the several States. And again and again, have the American people asserted the triumph of this principle, by their overwhelming majorities for Lincoln and Grant.

The one issue of the last two Presidential elections was, whether the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments should be considered the irrevocable will of the people; and the decision was, they shall be—and that it is only the right, but the duty of the National Government to protect all United States citizens in the full enjoyment and free exercise of all their privileges and immunities against any attempt of any State to deny or abridge.

And in this conclusion Republican and Democrats alike agree.

Senator Frelinghuysen said:

"The heresy of State rights has been completely buried in these amendments, that as amended, the Constitution confers not only national but State citizenship upon all persons born or naturalized within our limits."

The Call for the national Republican convention said:

"Equal suffrage has been engrafted on the national Constitution; the privileges and immunities of American citizenship have become a part of the organic law."

The national Republican platform said:

"Complete liberty and exact equality in the enjoyment of all civil, political and public rights, should be established and maintained throughout the Union by efficient and appropriate State and federal legislation."

If that means anything, it is that Congress should pass a law to require the States to protect women in their equal political rights, and that the States should enact laws making it the duty of inspectors of elections to receive women's votes on precisely the same conditions they do those of men.

Judge Stanley Mathews—a substantial Ohio democrat—in his preliminary speech at the Cincinnati convention, said most emphatically:

"The constitutional amendments have established the political equality of all citizens before the law."

President Grant, in his message to Congress March 30th, 1870, on the adoption of the fifteenth amendment, said:

"A measure which makes at once four millions of people voters, is indeed a measure of greater importance than any act of the kind from the foundation of the Government to the present time."

How could four millions negroes be made voter if two millions were not included?

The California State Republican convention said:

"Among the many practical and substantial triumphs of the principles achieved by the Republican party during the past twelve years, it enumerated with pride and pleasure, the prohibiting of any State from abridging the privileges of any citizen of the Republic, the declaring the civil and political equality of every citizen, and the establishing all these principles in the federal constitution by amendments thereto, as the permanent law."

Benjamin F. Butler, in a recent letter to me, said:

"I do not believe anybody in Congress doubts that the Constitution authorizes the right of women to vote, precisely as if authorizes trial by jury and many other like rights guaranteed to citizens."

And again, General Butler said:

"It is not laws we want; there are plenty of laws—good enough, too. Administrative ability to enforce law is the great want of the age, in this country especially. Everybody talks of law, law. If everybody would insist on the enforcement of law, the government would stand on a firmer basis, and question would settle themselves."

And it is upon this just interpretation of the United States Constitution that our National Woman Suffrage Association which celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the woman's rights movement in New York on the 6th of May next, has based all its arguments and action the past five years.

We no longer petition Legislature or Congress to give us the right to vote. We appeal to the women everywhere to exercise their too long neglected "citizen's right to vote." We appeal to the inspectors of election everywhere to receive the votes of all United States citizens as it is their duty to do. We appeal to United States commissioners and marshals to arrest the inspectors who reject the names and votes of United States citizens, as it is their duty to do, and leave those alone who, like our eighth ward inspectors, perform their duties faithfully and well.

We ask the juries to fail to return verdicts of "guilty" against honest, law-abiding, tax-paying United States citizens for offering their votes at our

elections. Or against intelligent, worthy young men, inspectors of elections, for receiving and counting such citizens votes.

We ask the judges to render true and unprejudiced opinions of the law, and wherever there is room for a doubt to give its benefit on the side of liberty and equal rights to women, remembering that "the true rule of interpretation under our national constitution, especially since its amendments, is that anything for human rights is constitutional, everything against human right unconstitutional."

And it is on this line that we propose to fight our battle for the ballot-all peaceably, but nevertheless persistently through to complete triumph, when all United States citizens shall be recognized as equals before the law.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Upon what legal grounds does Anthony base her right to vote?
2. Why does Anthony state that she has resorted to extra-legal means to achieve her ends?

## 10-13 Complaints to the Freedmen's Bureau

*The Freedmen's Bureau operated for a short time, from 1865 to 1872. The following complaints were brought to the Bureau. The Bureau's agents struggled to enforce the contracts they had helped to write, and to give some justice to freedmen and freedwomen, but clearly they had obstacles to overcome*

**Source:** Complaints to the Freedmen's Bureau, *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Dorothy Sterling, ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1984, 332-333

Monks Corner, South Carolina, September 8, 1867

Elizabeth Bash, Cold complains that she worked last year on the plantation of Brantley Pettigrew, white, about 10 miles from Florence, that she left there last January, and did not get anything but her Share of Potatoes. She says she is entitled to a Share of Cotton, Corn, Peas, Rye and Blades. Laborers were to get one-third of the crop.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, March 25, 1868

Rachel Caruth, freedwoman Presents an agreement between Mrs. E.J. Penny and herself that Rachel agrees to wash, iron, and milk for Mrs. Penny for one year, and Mrs. Penny agrees to give Rachel (\$600/100) Six dollars a month payable at the end of the year. In the month of December about one week before Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Penny turned her off without any kind of settlement, and also ordered her (Rachel) to move from the place immediately. Rachel asked for the wages due her and both Mr. and Mrs. Penny told her (Rachel) to go off that they have not got any money. Rachel states that while in the employ of Mrs. Penny, she received one dress and two under-skirts.

Athens, Georgia, April 15, 1868

Manervia Anderson States that Harvey Wood (White) of Athens Ga. owes her \$1 for washing done by her for him and that he (Wood) Say she dont intend to pay me. I asked him this morning for it and he said I acted damned smart. I said Well I want my money. My child is sick. I asked him why he would not pay me. He said I was too damned saucy for him.

Murray County, Georgia, February 8, 1868

The Freedwoman had made a verbal contract to work for Thomas by the day in the absence of her husband who was at work on the R.R. On the last of January 1868 Thomas ordered her to the field very early in the morning before she had had time to properly take care of her child. She refused to go at that time and he cursed and abused her when she told him she was as free as he. On this he kicked her in the head and knocked her down seriously injuring her.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, June 26, 1866

Rhody Ann Hope Col; Samuel Davison, Beat her with fist and with the trase of an artillery harness. Alledged cause: Daughter of freedwoman was not there at dinner time to keep the flies off the table.

Aberdeen, Mississippi, August 30, 1867

Angiline Hollins Col'd gst James Lea. Complaints are made that you abused her very severely because she would not let her child go to the field to work before breakfast

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Reading these documents, what or who do you find has most changed from the days of slavery? What or who has changed the least?
2. What can you infer protected these women? How well did these protections work?