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EDU 6710 C07- The Enduring Legacy of the American Revolution- Freedom

**Title:** The Continuing Quest for Freedom and Equality: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Woman Rebels

**Date:** January 25, 2009

**Grade Level:** 11-12

**Milestones:**

7/27/08: As of this date, I have attended the summer seminar and have read the required readings. I have formulated this proposal which contains a general outline of activities, assessments, standards addressed, and essential questions. I have acquired basic background knowledge of the era, but I would like to learn more. I still need to identify more primary documents, write up material for students, and identify websites and materials for student use. I have done preliminary library research at Castleton. I have searched the Castleton library for background reading and primary documents. There are some relevant documents in Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women. For Background information and visual material, I found Women and the American Experience and 1846: Portrait of the Nation. I have also done a preliminary search of promising web based databases, such as the New York Times. I will look more closely at materials and websites from the National Park at Seneca Falls and the Women's Hall of Fame.

1/25/09: Since the seminar, I have continued to do research on this topic. I have read Gail Collins' America's Women: 400 Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates, and Heroines which I found very provocative. In addition, I have found the documents in The Antebellum Women's Movement 1820-1860 very useful. The latter is a publication by the Organization of American Historians.

4/11/09: In early February, I was able to implement this unit with my 11<sup>th</sup> grade honors U.S. history students. I used a PowerPoint to provide instruction to students. All of the activities are described in the PowerPoint, so please look at the PowerPoint to get a better idea of the flow of this unit. Unfortunately, my school had computer access restrictions which made it impossible to have students do the main project using a wiki site. Instead, I had students make posters with which I was able to use to decorate the classroom.

### **First Proposal**

#### **Seminar Impact:**

This seminar has played a major impact on this proposal. In the past, I have either taught this period as part of a "mini review" for 20<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. History classes or as a unit integrated into World History classes. As a result my focus has always been the Civil War, the experience of slavery itself, or the Suffrage Movement. The Abolition and Women's Movements were just minor portions of those other subjects. As a result of this seminar, I will change my approach and focus. This unit will highlight the role of women activists during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and obstacles they challenged in their quest to expand concepts of liberty, freedom, and equality from the American Revolution.

When I entered the seminar, I had few ideas about the content of this project. I was particularly inspired to explore the lives of women activists and the resistance they encountered as a result of Professor Beth Salerno's lecture and her book entitled Sister Societies. I was also greatly moved by the National Park at Seneca Falls. As a result of the seminar, I have greater appreciation of the courageousness required of women to fight for notions of social justice which we rarely give a second thought to today. In addition to the inspiration for the project, the seminar provided a good general background of the subject, leads for further research, and methods for presenting this material to my students.

#### **Central Questions:**

- What was the accepted role of women in antebellum United States?

- Did the role of women differ dependent on race, class, or region?
- Who were the main women social activists who challenged society in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century? What were their concerns and methods of activism?
- How are the issues raised by 19<sup>th</sup> Century women similar to and different than the concerns of women today?
- Why is the Seneca Falls Convention considered to be the birth of the American women's rights movement?

### **Challenge Questions:**

- What is a hero? Can a person who advocates unpopular ideas be considered a hero?
- What are the appropriate boundaries, if any, regarding methods for seeking social change?
- Are there any groups today comparable to the Women's Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century?
- How did race, class, and geography impact the role of women in antebellum America?
- Were women reformers effective?
- Why weren't the goals of the Women's Movement more universally accepted by women?
- Is there a modern Women's Movement today? What are its major concerns and obstacles to progress? Is there genuine equality today?

**Lesson Length:** 3-5 80 minute classes

### **Key Ideas:**

- Revolutionary values such as Liberty, Freedom and Equality, along with religious ideals, were the inspiration for 19<sup>th</sup> Century women activists seeking social change.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century women activists faced enormous opposition from the dominant society.
- Despite opposition, a small percentage of women were able to at least partially change the dominant society.
- There is continuity and change in the status of women since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **Intended Learning Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to interpret primary documents and write conclusions about the role of women in 19<sup>th</sup> Century society
- Students will be able to create a web site or poster depicting 19<sup>th</sup> Century American women who sought social change despite enormous social pressure to remain silent
- Students will be able to explain the meaning of each clause of the Declaration of Sentiments and their relation to Revolutionary ideals contained in the Declaration of Independence.

### **National History Standards:**

Era 4 (Expansion and Reform-1801-1861)

Standard 3: The extension, restriction, and reorganization of political democracy after 1800

Standard 4: The sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period

### **Vermont Standards:**

- 6.1 Causes and Effects in Human Society
- 6.2 Uses of Evidence and Data
- 6.3 Analyzing Knowledge
- 6.4 Historical Connections

### Expansion (1791-1890)

- investigate and analyze the conditions that led to territorial expansion, effects on various groups, and concepts of nationalism and sectionalism

### Civil War/Reconstruction(1850-1877)

-investigate the social, political, and economic causes and effects of the Civil War

### The Emergence of Modern America (1877-1930)

-analyze the impact of major forces that shaped America in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century (e.g., industrialization, urbanization, immigration, imperialism, nationalism, unionism, and the struggle for equal rights)

## 6.5 Traditional and Social History

### 6.6 Being a Historian

### 6.9 Meaning of Citizenship

### 6.11 Institutional Access

### 6.12 Human Rights

### 6.14 Forces of Unity and Disunity

## **Preparation for Teaching:**

- Teacher will need to sign out computers labs and library for research.
- Teacher will need to copy a supplemental reading packet

## **Activities:**

- Writing prompt: A hero should always pursue what he/she thinks is right, even if other people disagree. Share ideas in small groups.
- Teacher provides background PowerPoint lecture on major trends in Antebellum society
- Provide students with primary sources that discuss women's role in antebellum society. Have students in small groups make conclusions about women's role in antebellum society.
- Assign students a 19<sup>th</sup> Century woman activists to study: After researching the obstacles she faced and her accomplishments, students will create a virtual museum/poster for the historical figure. Teachers could make a website using wikispace. Each student would be required to embed a 1 minute sound file of them reading a portion of a primary document which exemplifies the thinking of their character. Possible historical figures include Lucretia Mott, Catharine Beecher, Sojourner Truth, Marci W. Stewart, Dorothea Dix, Angelina Grimke, Sara Grimke, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Lyon, Emma Willard, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Blackwell, Lucy Stone, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Elizabeth Packard, Susan B. Anthony, Victoria Woodhull, Anna Howard Shaw, Frances Willard, Frances Wright, Clara Barton, Jane Addams, Belva Lockwood, Harriet Tubman, Carrie A. Nation, Zitkala Sa, Amelia Bloomer, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.
- (Optional): Present students with the Declaration of Sentiments and ask them to write down similarities between it and the Declaration of Independence. Assign each student a section of the document to translate into modern English, to research the context for the language, and to note how it relates to modern concerns of women. Students will write up their responses and either the teacher or a student creates a hyperlinked version or the Declaration of Sentiments. The Teacher could then make a "treasure hunt" type worksheet which requires students to navigate the Declaration of Sentiments. As a class, discuss why the Seneca Falls Convention was a major milestone for women seeking to gain equality in the US.

- Writing prompt: “Have women achieved equality with men?” After personal free write and sharing in small groups, have each group compile at least 10 categories for proving or disproving that women are equal. During class discussion, share the lists, and then have students find statistics or evidence to back up each category. Present findings to the class. Based on the evidence, students should reflect again on the subject.
- (optional) For a world history class or for a comparative perspective, have students read “Growing Up Saudi” by Katherine Zoepf from Upfront Magazine (1/22/08) ([http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/upfront/features/index.asp?article=f092208\\_saudi\\_girls](http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/upfront/features/index.asp?article=f092208_saudi_girls)). Discuss the parallels, if any, between modern Saudi society and 19<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. society.

### **Assessment:**

- Student created virtual museum and podcast
- Participation in group discussion and individual writing prompts
- Written or oral summary of women’s role in society as analyzed from primary documents
- Formulation of research question and research of women’s status in society
- Free writes, reflections, and summary
- (Opt) Declaration of Sentiments worksheet

### **Annotated Bibliography**

#### **Primary Sources and Primary Source Readers:**

Cott, Nancy F., Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1972.

Relevant selections on the cult of domesticity include T.S. Arthur’s story “Sweethearts and Wives” originally printed in *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. Also, there are excerpts from The Married Lady’s Companion, or Poor Man’s Friend by Samuel Jennings and Women in America by Mr. A.J. Graves. All of these selections illustrate the cult of domesticity and expectations of women during the antebellum period.

When I used these selections in a jigsaw activity, I edited the selections further in order to shorten them. This is an excellent resource for primary documents on key issues relating to women in American History from the nation’s beginnings to the present. This is a valuable resource for any high school or college classroom.

Leighow, Susan and Rita Sterner-Hine, The Antebellum Women’s Movement: 1820-1860. Organization of American Historians and the Regents, University of California, 1998.

This is a 5 day curriculum unit relating the antebellum women’s movement. All of the activities are very appropriate for a high school classroom. Perhaps some of the activities could even be adapted to be suitable for middle school. The editors have selected engaging documents from this period. They are edited concisely and include a range of materials, including visuals like book covers and illustrations. For my unit, I used several documents from the first lesson which focused on the cult of domesticity. If a teacher wanted to explore the activities of reformers, many of whom are not typically included in textbooks, the other lesson plans and readings would be excellent. I highly recommend this resource if a class were to study this historical subject.

Ripley, Peter C, ed, Witness Freedom: African American Voices on Race, Slavery, and Emancipation. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

This is an excellent documentary history of slavery, the abolitionist movement, and the Civil War. All of the documents are written by African Americans during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The

documents are mostly suited for upper level high school and college students. They are concisely edited so that a document rarely exceeds 2 pages. The book is extremely well organized allowing a reader to quickly locate documents-based relevant subjects such as the black colonies in Africa, attitudes toward Lincoln, and the Emancipation Proclamation. Providing a context for understanding the documents, the editor provides informative introductions for each section. This can be used as a general reference book for a teacher or student.

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, "The Declaration of Sentiments." Reprinted from A History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 1 Rochester, N.Y.: Fowler and Wells, 1889, pp 70-71.

This source should be one of the starting points for studying the antebellum women's movement. Not only is the background of the women's convention in 1848 important for students to understand, but this document that came out of the convention is remarkable. The document is short and contains language that most middle and high school students can understand. It is especially relevant for U.S. history classes which read the Declaration of Independence, since the Declaration of Sentiments is based upon the Declaration of Independence. Students can clearly see how Stanton and the other participants extended the meaning of freedom contained in our founding document. It clearly states the goal that women should have the right to vote. Suffrage activities from that point on become a main focus of women for the next 70 years. Any discussion of suffrage should include a discussion of the Declaration of Sentiments.

#### **Secondary Sources:**

Christman, Margaret C.S., 1846: Portrait of the Nation. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996.

This book is an excellent resource for providing a background to the antebellum period. Providing a snapshot of America in 1846, it was published by the National Portrait Gallery and the Smithsonian Institution to celebrate the museum's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is rich in artifacts and art works from the period. It includes illustrations from Godey's Lady's Book and many pictures revealing the role of women during the period. One chapter includes reform movements and discusses reformers like Margaret Fuller, Catherine Beecher and Maria Chapman. Moreover, a wide range of subjects are addressed including western expansion, politics, culture, and life in Washington D.C. I highly recommend this book which will help students and the teacher gain a deeper appreciation of the variety of life within America at the time.

Collins, Gail. America's Women: 400 years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates, and Heroines. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2003.

This is an excellent and very readable account of the history of women in the U.S. It contains very colorful accounts of the lives of women and provides biographies of exceptional women during all periods of U.S. history. Even though Collins is a journalist, she provides extensive notes so the curious researcher can check her sources and pursue topics in greater depth if he/she wishes.

Ginzberg, Lori D. Untidy Origins: A Story of Woman's Rights in Antebellum New York. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Untidy Origins by Professor Lori Ginzberg is a very compelling book exploring the circumstances of a petition presented at the 1846 New York Constitutional Convention for women suffrage and other civil and political rights for women. This remarkable petition, which predates the Seneca Falls Convention by 2 years, was written by 6 female residents of Jefferson County, New

York and presented by Alpheus Greene, a 60 year old doctor. While the existence of such a petition is particularly important because it causes historians to perhaps rethink the events at Seneca Falls, this book ultimately fails. It is full of conjecture. There is a paucity of facts from which to analyze this tantalizing document. This book however may be appropriate for a graduate level women's history class or methodology class. Readers will no doubt have a wide range of reactions on the academic validity of such a book.

Salerno, Beth A. Sister Societies: Women's Antislavery Organizations in Antebellum America. Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008.

Salerno provides a very detailed and interesting examination of women's antislavery societies in Antebellum America. She notes the diverse nature of these groups and how depending on race, class, religion, and region, women organized to combat social injustice. She provides particularly rich descriptions of the social context within which women's activism operated as well as the precise nature of their activities. As a writer and scholar, Salerno is careful to provide numerous examples to back up all of her conclusions. I highly recommend this book for teachers and academics who are interested in this area of study.

Stauffer, John. The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Jon Stauffer's book, The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race, is a well-researched, in-depth study of four radical abolitionists, John Brown, Frederick Douglass, James McCune Smith and Gerrit Smith. It explores the relationship formed among these four men over a span of decades and the shifts in their thinking toward the issue of slavery and race. In a society segregated by race, these four men, two of whom were black and two of whom were white, forged a close friendship and a political alliance against slavery. What makes this group particularly unique are the facts that they formed close interracial relationships, developed an ideology that embraced a "black heart," and at one point supported the use of violence to create a world of justice on this Earth without sin. I highly recommend this provocative and well-researched book for teachers and college students. The book does an excellent job at bringing the life of these four men to life and raising ethical issues relating to opposition to a morally wrong social condition like slavery. This book is best read in a group as it lends itself to animated discussion on a variety of social and political issues in the antebellum period. There is even one chapter on the relation of these 4 men to women's issues.

Woloch, Nancy, Women and the American Experience. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

This is highly readable, yet scholarly book on the history of women in America. The book is divided into periods corresponding to the role of women in society. It is an excellent background resource for high school teachers and a valuable resource for high school and college aged students doing a research paper. It is not essential to read the entire book. A reader could just pick the relevant sections to fit her purpose. The format of the book is unique in that it focuses on important events and people as well as wider political and social contexts. It is certainly worth consulting in order to learn about women in any era of U.S. history.

### **Accommodations:**

Numerous accommodations can be made to this unit. Instead of creating a virtual museum for the historical figure, students could create poster, do book reports, make monuments, conduct interviews, role play a character at a women's convention, make a graphic novel, make a podcast,

compose a song, write a eulogy, make a facebook entry, or write an application or nomination speech for activist of the century.

For more advanced students, you might require them to find primary sources, such as newspaper articles or songs, which shed light on women's role in society during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.