

History
UNFOLDING

“A COMPLETE EMANCIPATION”

THE BIRTH OF THE WOMEN’S RIGHTS MOVEMENT



MindSparks
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY

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Introduction

The Long Struggle For Women’s Rights

In 1892, looking back on decades of struggle, Elizabeth Cady Stanton described the dream of the women’s movement as giving women “the most enlarged freedom of thought and action; a complete emancipation from all forms of bondage, of custom, dependence, superstition.”

This spirit of complete emancipation included, of course, all of those basic rights granted legally to men under the U.S. Constitution. But it also went beyond strictly legal rights. It encompassed a vision of women freed from many self-imposed fears and other limitations as well, freed to accept all of the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of full citizenship in a more fully democratic nation.

The 19th century is often pictured as a time of Victorian constraint and traditionalism. Yet it was a version of that same Victorian spirit that animated women’s rights leaders like Stanton, along with Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Sojourner Truth and many others. Their ideals were part of their age. And yet those ideals enabled these women to transcend their times and launch a movement that would fundamentally alter the culture and society in which they lived.

The 12 visual displays in this booklet focus on some of the major factors behind the rise of the women’s rights movement of the 1800s. The visuals are presented in four lessons. Each lesson uses three displays to explore one broad topic in the overall story. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

A Woman’s Place in the Young Republic

The illustrations here call attention to the traditional roles women played in the young republic and to some of the forces already at work changing those roles.

An Age of Moral Uplift

The Second Great Awakening and the spirit of social reform to which it led were major factors helping to bring the women’s rights movement into being. The illustrations here call attention to the various religious and secular reform movements of the day, all animated by an optimistic sense of the perfectability of the individual and society.

The Early Struggle for Equality

The reform movement that most influenced women’s rights leaders was abolitionism. The relationship between anti-slavery and women’s rights, and the birth of the women’s rights movement itself are the focus here.

Emancipation and Its Critics

The concept of “a complete emancipation” inspired many women who saw themselves as opening a whole new chapter in human history. Their expansive vision also had its critics, who often ridiculed the women’s rights movement. This tension continued for many more decades and in some respects is still with us.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Many textbooks are full of colorful visuals. However, all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. Only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

DIGITAL IMAGES The booklet's PDF allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while using the projected images. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments. Others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand the way traditional roles for women were changing in the early industrial era in America.
 2. Students will discuss how these changing roles helped bring a women’s movement into being.
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A Woman’s Place in the Young Republic

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Most women in the early 1800s expected to carry on as their mothers and grandmothers had before them. Their lives were taken up mainly with the tasks of child rearing and household labor. Fathers and husbands had a great deal of control over them. They lacked many rights that men had in economic and political realms outside the household. But life in America often altered the older customs and beliefs of newly arriving immigrants. Carving out a new civilization in a wilderness helped foster a spirit of independence in everyone involved. This photo offers at least some idea of why that might have been so.

Illustration 2

The growth of towns and cities in the 1800s meant that more workers took jobs in shops and factories away from home. Women did have jobs in the factories, but it was mainly men who worked outside the home. This left many women at home by themselves. Scores of pamphlets and books in the 1800s offered a glowing view of this condition, a view that pictured women as far better suited than men to care for children and make the home a refuge in a harsh and competitive world. Historians often refer to this outlook as a “cult of domesticity.” In different ways, both illustrations here present this ideal of women as providers of domestic comfort and moral perfection. This ideal and the reality were often far apart. The purely domestic realm could limit women’s lives in many ways. On the other hand, it also gave many of them leisure to read and educate themselves. The middle class homes of many early crusaders for women’s rights may well have provided the space they needed to begin the long struggle for equality.

Illustration 3

The cult of domesticity painted a rosy picture of a woman’s life at home, but the cult had a harsh side as well. A woman on her own was seen as taking big risks. Widowed, divorced or single women lacked all sorts of protections they now have. A woman alone and in need might be pitied. But she was also often feared as an upsetting reminder of how uncertain life could be. Widows or elderly single women could often trigger such feelings of pity and fear. As this drawing of a schoolmistress suggests, they also often suffered ridicule or worse.

Lesson 1—A Woman's Place in the Young Republic

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. This photo shows a scene that was common in America from colonial times all the way up to the first years of the twentieth century. It shows a wagon train heading west to the frontier. What do historians mean when they talk about the American frontier?
2. What kinds of difficulties do you think the people in this wagon train would have faced along the way to their new homes? How would the trip differ from the way you might travel west across the U.S. today?
3. What special problems do you think women would have had moving west and settling on the frontier? In this photo, you can see a woman holding a bullwhip. What does this tell you about the role women played on trips west like this one?
4. In the past, women generally had fewer rights than men. But some historians say the frontier experience in America helped women win greater freedom than they would otherwise have had. Why might the frontier experience have had that effect?

Follow-up Activity

1. **Small-group activity:** Learn more about the experiences of women on the frontier in the 1800s. One source is Julie Roy Jeffrey's *Frontier Women: the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840–1880*, Hill and Wang, 1979. As a group, read and discuss this book or others recommended by your teacher or librarian. Based on what you learn, pretend you are either the woman in the wagon shown here or a relative of this woman back east. The wagon train is on its way west sometime just after the American Civil War. As a group, make up your own route for the wagon train, and draw a map of this route. Now those who are pretending to be the woman should write several long letters back home describing experiences on the trail and thoughts about the life you have left behind and the life you expect to start once you reach your destination. Those who are the relatives should write letters back with news and advice. Post the best of these letters along with your map in a bulletin board display titled "Women and the Western Frontier."

Lesson 1—A Woman’s Place in the Young Republic

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. In very different ways, these two illustrations present images typical of the way women were seen or thought of in the 1800s. On the left, for example, is a picture of a woman as homemaker. The title of this photoprint is "Contentment." What aspects of the image help to make this a scene of contentment?
2. On the right is a Civil War lithograph titled "Liberty." The woman in the center is "Liberty." On her right is "Justice." And holding a spindle and a child is "Industry." Some would say that both illustrations here present an idealized view of woman as morally pure and noble. What do you think they mean? Do you agree with this view? Why or why not?
3. As cities and industry grew in the early 1800s, a greater split occurred between home and work, with women generally in charge of the home. Historians say a so-called "cult of domesticity" glorified this condition. What do you suppose they mean? In what ways, if any, might either or both of these illustrations be examples of this cult of domesticity?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** In illustrated history textbooks and other sources, look for ads, paintings, posters, cartoons or other visual images of men, women, and children in the 1800s. As a group, decide which of the following headings is most descriptive of each image:

Bold and Adventurous	Meek and Mild
Intelligent and Far-Seeing	Purity of Soul
Dangerous and Risky	Warm and Comforting
Self-disciplined	Morally Uplifting

Using these categories, present your images to the class and discuss how they shed light on how men, women and children were seen in the 19th century.
2. Read Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, Mass Market Paperback, 1994. Write a book report on this novel in which you answer this question: Does *Little Woman* portray the traditional female domestic roles of the 1800s in a favorable way, in a critical way or both?

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. The idea of a “cult of domesticity” suggested that a woman would be best off raising a family at home while her husband worked. Yet many women in the early 1800s did work outside the home—for example as school teachers. What view of teacher’s work life does this illustration suggest?
2. In addition to teaching school, many women worked in the new textile factories springing up or at other industrial jobs. What else do you know about the jobs women took in the 1800s?
3. In the 1800s, many women could expect to live alone all their lives or for long periods of their lives. Why would that have been so? Would the cult of domesticity have helped or hurt such women in making decisions about their lives? How might it have affected women working outside the home?
4. One writer sees this drawing as combining a sense of pity and ridicule in its view of women at work outside the home. Do you see it that way?

Follow-up Activities

1. In the 1800s, the early death of a spouse was common. For many women especially, this meant they lived alone as widows for a good part of their lives. What problems do you think such women faced? Which of those problems is still true of women who survive their husbands today? What other problems did such women face then that are not common today. Learn more about the place of elderly widows in America in the early 1800s. Based on what you learn, make two lists: one of problems common for elderly women then and now; the other of problems common only in the 1800s. Share your views in a class discussion.
2. Collect drawings or cartoons of elderly women from several periods in American history. Also look for cartoons, photos or other images of the elderly today. Choose five or six that you believe to be inaccurate or unkind stereotypes and five or six you see as more honest and accurate. Present these in a talk in class about visual stereotyping of the elderly.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand how the widespread religious revival of the early 1800s helped to promote a more general spirit of social reform.
2. Students will discuss the way this spirit of reform gave rise to a women’s rights movement.

An Age of Moral Uplift

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Several social trends in the early 1800s helped bring the women’s rights movement into existence. One of the most important was a great revival of religious feeling called the Second Great Awakening (the first one took place in the 1730s). Charles G. Finney, shown here, was the best known of the preachers who led this revival movement. It featured large, open-air meetings where emotional sermons instilled in listeners a strong sense of sin and a longing for redemption. These revivals stressed the individual’s own ability to bring about his or her salvation. In a way, the movement reflected America’s growing democratic spirit, a spirit in which personal and social perfection were now both seen as possible.

Illustration 2

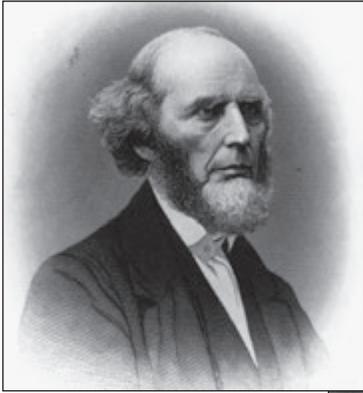
This spirit of perfection took a number of forms. One of the most dramatic was the so-called “utopian community.” A large number of these sprang up in America in the early 1800s. They were small communities based on some plan that their founders claimed would perfect human social relationships and human nature itself. Some communities were based on a religious vision. This was the case with the Shakers, shown here doing one of the step dances for which they were known. Other utopian communities were based on social or spiritual views not tied to any specific religion. Brook Farm, based in part on the philosophy of Transcendentalism, attracted people like Margaret Fuller, on the right here. Fuller was a major literary figure and lecturer who strongly favored women’s rights and women’s longing “to live freely and unimpeded.”

Illustration 3

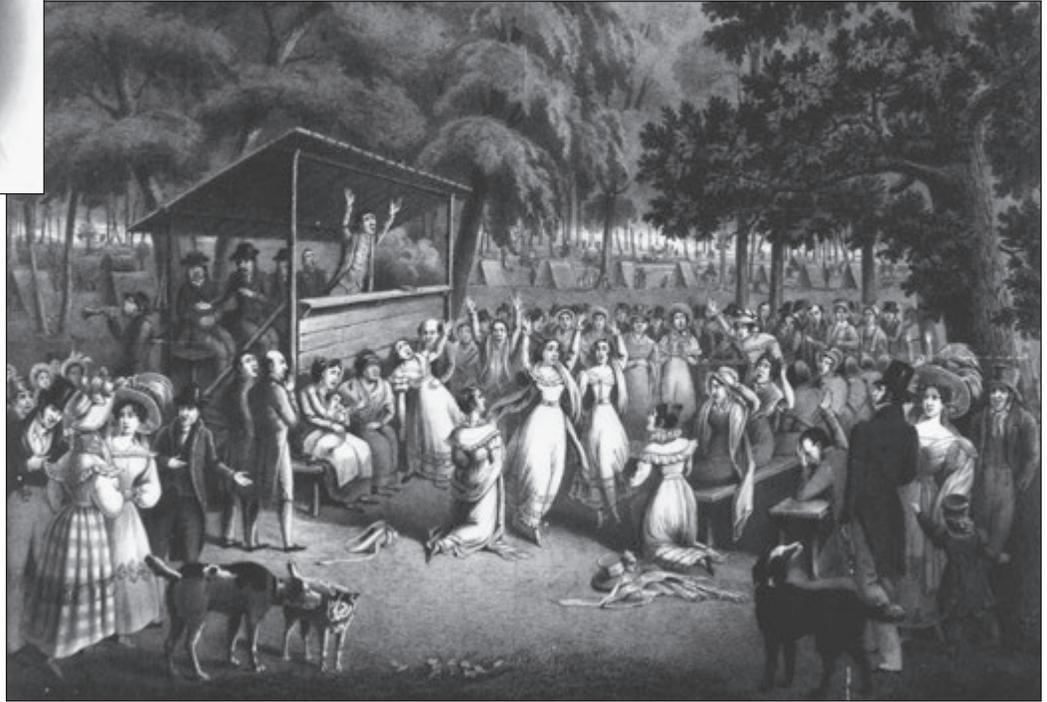
The spirit of perfectionism made itself felt in all kinds of social reform efforts. One with a very big effect on the women’s rights movement was the temperance crusade. Historians agree that alcoholism was a huge problem in the early 1800s. And it was a problem especially likely to harm women or children with alcoholic husbands or fathers. The illustration here calls direct attention to this. The drawing is actually a portion of a pledge for alcoholics to sign agreeing to give up drinking. Fears about women and the family often led those doing temperance work to fight hard for the rights of women in such abusive situations and for women’s rights issues generally.

Lesson 2—An Age of Moral Uplift

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. The man in the upper left is Charles G. Finney. In the early 1800s, Finney was the most famous preacher in a great revival movement that affected American life in many ways. What is a revival movement?
2. The revival movement Finney led is often called the Second Great Awakening. Can you explain why it gets this title?
3. These revival meetings differed in a number of ways from the normal church services people attended at their local churches. From the illustration of a revival meeting shown here, and from what you know of the Second Great Awakening, can you explain what some of the key differences were?
4. Most historians say the revivals of the early 1800s had a big influence on the growth of all sorts of social reform movements—such as temperance, prison reform, anti-slavery and women’s rights. Why do you suppose this religious revival movement had that kind of effect?

Follow-up Activity

1. In the early 1800s, revivals led by Charles G. Finney and others helped foster a spirit of reform that inspired many women to speak out on all kinds of public issues. In one essay, Finney says:

When the churches are thus awakened and reformed, the reformation and salvation of sinners will follow, going through the same stages of conviction, repentance, and reformation. Their hearts will be broken down and changed. Very often the most abandoned profligates are among the subjects. Harlots, and drunkards, infidels, and all sorts of abandoned characters, are awakened and converted. The worst part of human society are softened, and reclaimed, and made to appear as lovely specimens of the beauty of holiness.

Write an essay explaining how these words, along with the illustration shown here, help explain why the revivals of the early 1800s led many to call for all kinds of social reform in the early 1800s.

Lesson 2—An Age of Moral Uplift

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the
Library of Congress

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. This illustration shows a special dance at a Shaker community in New Lebanon, New York. The Shakers were one of many so-called “utopian communities” set up in the early 1800s. What is meant by the phrase “utopian community”?
2. What do you know about the Shakers and the communities they established?
3. Like the Shakers, some utopian communities were based on religious ideas. Others were not based on religion. Writer Margaret Fuller, on the right, was one of a group of “Transcendentalists” who took part in one community called Brook Farm. What do you know about Transcendentalism and Brook Farm?
4. The Second Great Awakening led many to believe that a state of perfection or sinlessness could be achieved in this life. Some of them set up utopian communities to bring this about. And many in these communities also supported total equality between women and men. Why do you think that was so?

Follow-up Activity

1. **Small-group activity:** Many utopian communities were founded in America in the early 1800s. Have each group member learn more about one of the following communities:

Brook Farm	The Oneida Community
New Harmony	The Rappites
The Shakers	

Prepare a group presentation on these communities in which you describe the following for each of them:

- Size and location of the community
- Dates of its existence
- Religious views, if any
- Basic economic activities
- The role of women
- Family life and child-rearing practices

Explain what problems the community faced and what happened to it. Also, as a group, discuss what, if anything, these experimental communities show about the role of women in 19th century America.

Lesson 2—An Age of Moral Uplift

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. The Second Great Awakening also helped bring into existence many movements for social reform. One of the most important of these was the temperance movement. What was this movement's goal?
2. The illustration here was part of a pledge alcoholics could sign to agree to give up drinking. Historians say alcoholism was a huge problem in America in the early 1800s. For example, one study says that by 1835, 1.5 million Americans had signed pledges like this. That's out of a total population of 13 million. Does this surprise you? Why do you think alcoholism was such a serious problem in the early 1800s?
3. In these years, alcoholism was seen as a problem especially likely to harm women or children. The illustration calls direct attention to this. Can you explain why this problem would worry women in particular? How does the illustration call attention to this aspect of the problem? Why were those involved in the temperance movement also often drawn to support the women's rights movement?

Follow-up Activity

1. **Small-group activity:** The temperance movement and women's rights movement were closely connected from the start of both movements in the 1800s. To better see why, find out more about the following key figures in the early women's rights movement:

Susan B. Anthony
Elizabeth Cady Stanton
Amelia Bloomer

Find out what each of these women felt about alcohol consumption and about the temperance movement. Also learn how the three women influenced one another, and in what ways, if any, they differed from one another in their views about temperance and its relationship to the women's rights movement. Based on what you learn, create a very brief one-act play in which the three meet to discuss the illustration shown here. Perform your play in class, or give a simple reading of your imaginary dialogue.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will better understand the close relationship between anti-slavery and women’s rights.
2. Students will identify some of the key figures and events in the birth of an organized women’s rights movement.

The Early Struggle for Equality

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Even more than temperance, anti-slavery was closely linked to the birth of an organized women’s rights movement. These two women are both examples of this. Prudence Crandall, on the left, was jailed when she opened a school for “young ladies and little misses of color” in Canterbury, Connecticut. Boycotts, meetings, insults, prison and violence forced her to flee in 1834. She moved west, where she continued to back the rights of African Americans and the movement for women’s rights. Sojourner Truth, on the right, was born a slave. Religious visions commanded her to “travel up and down the land” preaching God’s word. Soon, she was speaking out against slavery as well. And by the 1850s, she had become one of the nation’s most powerful voices in the battle for women’s rights.

Illustration 2

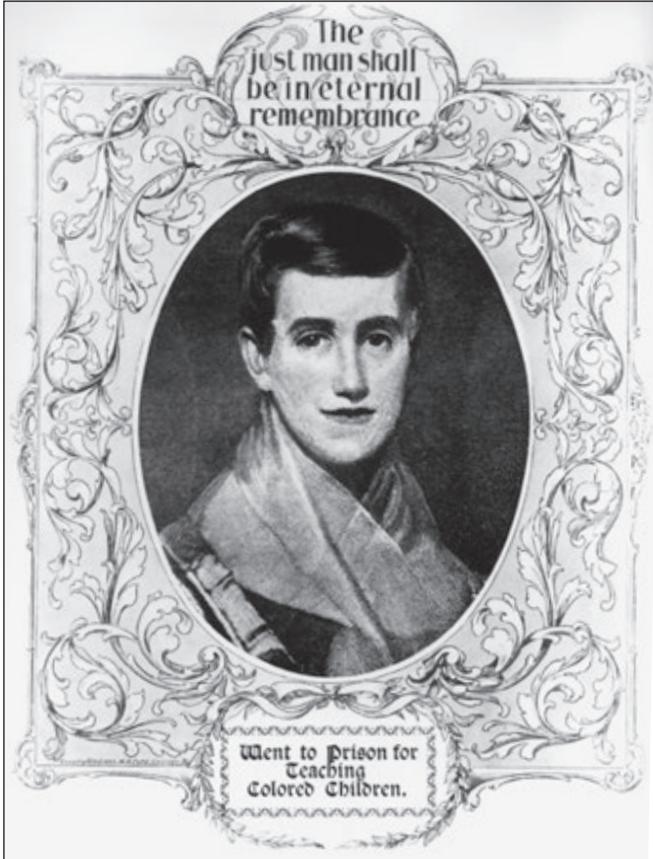
No one illustrates better than Lucretia Mott the link between anti-slavery and women’s rights—or the problems that this link could sometimes cause. In 1833, the American Anti-Slavery Society met in Philadelphia. The broadside declaration of that society’s meeting is shown here. When the meeting refused to admit women members, Mott and several others formed the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. Later, in 1840, yet another setback with male abolitionists in London finally pushed Mott to take on a key role in the struggle for women’s rights.

Illustration 3

At the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, women could only attend as spectators in the balcony. Mott was not pleased. Neither was Elizabeth Cady Stanton, there with her husband. The two women became friends and soon joined together to work specifically for women’s rights. In 1848, they were the key organizers of the historic women’s rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York, where Stanton lived. That meeting issued its famous “Declaration of Sentiments,” and it called for women’s suffrage. Susan B. Anthony was not there, but within a few years, she also took a leading role in the struggle to win for women the right to vote. These three woman are memorialized in this statue, now placed in the Rotunda of the nation’s capital.

Lesson 3—The Early Struggle for Equality

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. These two women are examples of the connection between another big reform movement and the movement for women's rights. The woman on the right was one of the most famous leaders of both movements. Can you identify her and explain what other important reform movement besides women's rights she helped lead? Why do you think she is seen as such a key leader in both of these movements?
2. The rights of African Americans and the educational needs of women were also joined in the efforts of the woman on the left. Her name was Prudence Crandall. In the early 1830s, she set up a school in the state of Connecticut to educate young black girls. From what you see here, can you guess what happened to her for trying to do this?
3. Mobs and legal restrictions forced Crandall to close her school. Soon she left Connecticut and moved west. Why do you think people in that northern state were so angry about a school to educate young black girls?

Follow-up Activities

1. **Small-group activity:** Read Sandra Fenichel Asher's *A Woman Called Truth: One Act Play*, Dramatic Publishing Co., 1999. As a group, read and discuss this play and perform it, first within your own group and then in front of the class. Prepare your own one-page fact sheet on Sojourner Truth to hand out to classmates ahead of time so they can more fully appreciate your group's efforts.
2. Learn more about Prudence Crandall's efforts to educate black girls in Canterbury, Connecticut, in the early 1830s. One book that may help is Elizabeth Yates' *Prudence Crandall: Woman of Courage*, Boyds Mills Press, 1996. Learn about key events in Crandall's life from 1831 through 1834. Based on what you learn, pretend you are someone living in Canterbury in those years. As this imaginary person, write five or six long diary entries for key dates in the Crandall saga from 1831–34. Include these entries and the above illustration of Prudence in a bulletin board display called "Crandall vs. Canterbury."

Lesson 3—The Early Struggle for Equality

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

...his STEALTHY GONG, LETS him, or if he is in his hand, he will be put to death. —*Ex. xxi. 16.*

...thou shalt not deliver up thy servant, who is escaped from his master into thee: He shall abide with thee, even among that place which he chose, in one of thy towns in which thou shalt not oppress a slave. —*Levit. xxi. 16, 17.*

...if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his sake. And if he smite his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his sake. —*Ex. xxi. 26.*

If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right; hath not oppressed any; hath spoiled none by violence; hath preserved true judgment between man and man; shall he not live? —*Isaiah lviii. 1-4.*

...and say, he shall surely live. —*Isaiah lviii. 5-8.*

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burden, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke. —*Isaiah lviii. 6.*

Ye like mist, and smoke, and dew, and all manner of herbs, and pass over the mountains of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not leave the other undone. —*Matthew xxiii. 23.*

Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shall thou trample under feet.

DECLARATION OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.
ASSEMBLED IN PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER 4, 1833.

THE Convention assembled in the city of Philadelphia to organize a National Anti-Slavery Society, promptly seize the opportunity to promulgate the following DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS, as cherished by them in relation to the enslavement of one-sixth portion of the American people.

More than fifty-seven years have elapsed since a band of patriots convened in this place, to devise measures for the deliverance of this country from a foreign yoke. The course-stone upon which they founded the TEMPLE OF FREEDOM was broadly this:—“that all men 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.”

At the sound of their trumpet-call, three millions of people rose up as from the sleep of death, and rushed to the strife of blood; deeming it more glorious to die instantly as freemen, than desirable to live one hour as slaves. They were few in number—

foundations of the social compact, a complete extinction of all the relations, endowments, and obligations of mankind, and a presumptuous transgression of all the holy commandments—and that therefore they ought to be instantly abolished.

We further believe and affirm—that all persons of colour who possess the qualifications which are demanded of others, ought to be admitted forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges, and the exercise of the same prerogatives, as others.—That the paths of preferment, of wealth, and of intelligence, should be opened as widely to them as to persons of a white complexion.

We maintain that no compensation should be given to the planters emancipating their slaves.—Because it would be a surrender of the great fundamental principle, that man cannot hold property in man.—BECAUSE SLAVERY IS A CRIME, AND THEREFORE IT IS NOT AN ARTICLE TO BE SOLD.—BECAUSE the holders of slaves are not the just proprietors

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. The woman on the left is still known as one of the great leaders of the women’s movement. Yet like Sojourner Truth, she came to that movement only after involvement in the movement to abolish slavery. Can you identify her? What do you know about her?
2. The front page of a broadside is shown here. It is part of the declaration of an anti-slavery convention that met in Philadelphia in 1833. The declaration calls for a national anti-slavery society. The image in it shows the Greek god Hercules strangling a lion. All around this image are words from the Bible condemning slavery. Why do think the anti-slavery society added these features to the broadside?
3. Lucretia Mott and other anti-slavery women were not admitted as members at this convention, so they formed a female anti-slavery society of their own. Later, in 1840, at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, the same thing happened to Mott and the other female delegates there. Why do you think male abolitionists took this position?

Follow-up Activities

1. Lucretia Mott found a lifetime friend and political ally in Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London in 1840. What was it about the events at that convention that brought the two women together and helped motivate them in their political struggle? Learn more about each woman and their first meeting. Prepare a brief talk to the class on this meeting and its impact on history.
2. **Small-group activity:** Many other key figures in the women’s rights movement in America were also active in the anti-slavery movement. Have each group member learn more about one of the following:

Maria Chapman
Lydia Child
Sarah Grimke
Angelina Grimke

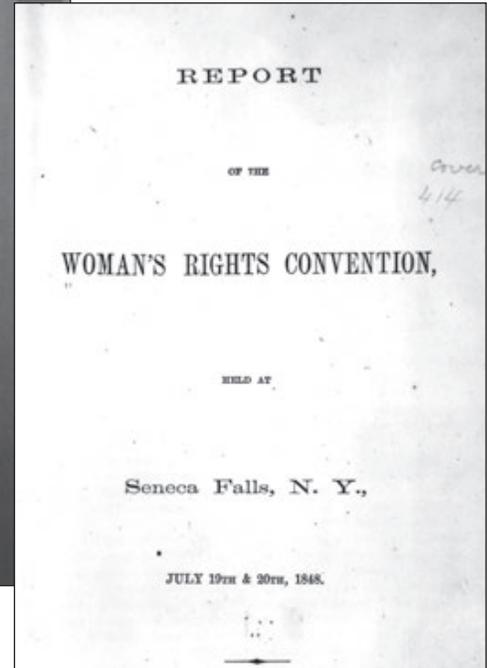
Based on what you learn, conduct a panel discussion in front of the class on the relationship between the anti-slavery and women’s rights movements.

Lesson 3—The Early Struggle for Equality

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. This statue is in the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. It is a statue of the three most important women's rights leaders of the 19th century. On the right is Lucretia Mott. Can you name the other two?
2. At the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton met Lucretia Mott. Soon, they began talking about the need for a movement concerned directly with women's rights. Why do you think that meeting led them to this decision?
3. These two women took the lead in organizing the famous meeting of 1848 at Seneca Falls, New York. Can you sum up what this meeting accomplished?
4. The Seneca Falls meeting approved 12 resolutions. Only one was not supported by everyone present. Yet it was that one demand that would become the main focus of the women's rights movement—and the goal of a lifetime of work by Susan B. Anthony. What demand was that? Why do you think this one demand failed to get full support at Seneca Falls?

Follow-up Activity

1. **Small-group activity:** The above monument portrays Stanton, Anthony and Mott as the pioneers of the women's rights movement. What would these women think about today's women's movement? Learn more about these women. Based on what you find out, decide what each would think about the following issues, which often are of concern to the modern women's rights movement:

A woman as U.S. President
Publicly funded day-care
Women in combat
Equal pay for equal work
Abortion rights
Sexual harassment laws
Affirmative Action

As a group, try to determine where each of the three women would stand on each issue listed here. Present your findings to the class in a panel discussion called "Women's Rights: Then and Now."

*“A Complete Emancipation”—The Birth of the Women’s Rights Movement***OBJECTIVES**

1. Students will better appreciate the broad scope of the ideas early women’s rights advocates held about freedom and equality.
2. Students will understand some of the fears and doubts certain people felt regarding the women’s rights movement.

Emancipation and its Critics

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION**Illustration 1**

Elizabeth Cady Stanton once described the true goal of the women’s rights movement as giving women “the most enlarged freedom of thought and action; a complete emancipation from all forms of bondage, of custom, dependence, superstition.” This spirit of complete emancipation went beyond legal rights. Among those most inspired by this vision were the many people who worked to set up schools and colleges for women and provide them an education equal to that for men. One pioneer in this effort was Emma Willard, founder of the Troy Female Seminary, where girls could study all the classical and scientific subjects usually seen as suited only to men. Willard’s grand and classical educational vision is captured by her “Chronograph of Ancient History,” a visual representation of the entire story of ancient civilization.

Illustration 2

The large editorial cartoon here shows why the women’s movement of the 1800s struggled so long with so little success. Critics often ridiculed it and distorted its real aims. The cartoon suggests that women’s rights advocates wanted to reverse male and female roles, making women more masculine and sending them into a morally dangerous world while men stayed home tending children and doing housework. Actually, few women’s rights leaders were radical in their views about marriage, the family or children. Calls for looser dress, for example, were simply meant to give women greater comfort and freedom in public. But even this idea was often ridiculed—as in the case of the bloomers shown here, which were named for Amelia Bloomer who promoted them.

Illustration 3

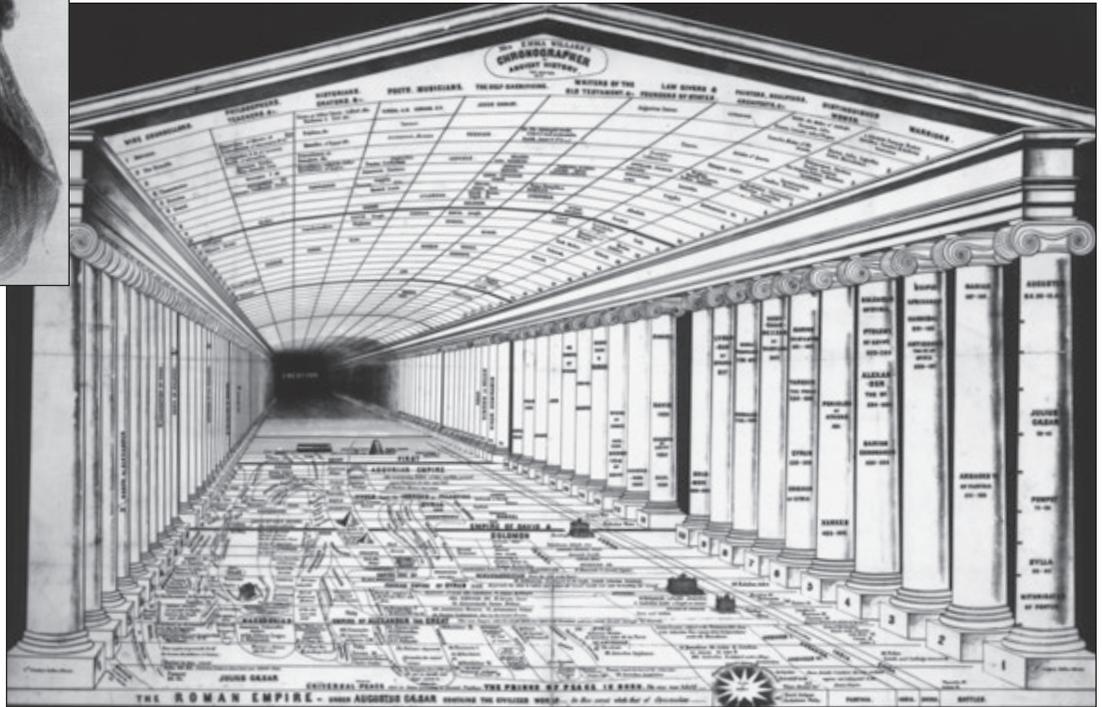
The Civil War was a turning point for the women’s rights movement. The end of slavery led many women to hope their rights would also soon be granted. Here, some women address a committee of the House of Representatives in 1871. They are arguing for a woman’s right to vote on the basis of the 14th and 15th Amendments, which declared all citizens equal before the law and guaranteed them voting rights. And yet, these rights would continue to be limited to men in most parts of the nation for years to come. Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton would not live to see the day of their “complete emancipation.”

Lesson 4—Emancipation and Its Critics

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. Voting rights and other legal rights were not the only goals of the women's movement of the 1800s. The woman on the left is Emma Willard. She was one of several women who paved the way for women in another area of life. Do you know what area of life?
2. In 1821, Willard opened the Troy Female Seminary. At the time, women could attend academies, but they only studied subjects seen as suitable, such as conversational French, embroidery and music. Why do you think these were considered female subjects?
3. Willard wanted women to study all the same subjects as men. The illustration here is called a Chronograph of Ancient History, which Willard compiled as a guide to a key area of knowledge she wished to see taught. Can you explain what this Chronograph shows?
4. Actually, Emma Willard and other female educational reformers held fairly traditional ideas, favoring the same classical learning men were receiving. How does the Chronograph help to show this?

Follow-up Activity

1. In 1819, Emma Willard addressed a pamphlet to the New York state legislature in an effort to get support to start a school for females. In it, she wrote:

"In those great republics which have fallen of themselves, the loss of republican manners and virtues has been the invariable precursor of their loss of the republican form of government. But is it not the power of our sex to give society its tone, both as to manners and morals?"

To better understand Willard's point, find and read her entire address. Then write a brief essay explaining the speech and your reactions to it—and in particular, your views about the selection printed above. You can find the speech in a book titled *Woman and the Higher Education*, Anna C. Brackett, ed., New York, 1893. It is also available on the Encyclopedia Britannica's "Women in American History" Web site. The address is:

<http://women.eb.com/women/index.html>

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustrations

1. The larger editorial cartoon here offers one view of what would happen if women could vote. What big changes does the cartoon suggest will occur?
2. For many decades, the women's rights movement would have little success in winning the right to vote. The attitude expressed in this 1869 cartoon may be one reason for this. Can you explain? Do you think there were any real reasons for the fear this cartoon seems to express? Why or why not?
3. The upper left drawing is of bloomers, a new, looser kind of clothing named for Amelia Bloomer, a temperance and women's rights worker who helped popularize this style. Why do you think many women in the 1800s liked the idea of this style change?
4. Elizabeth Cady Stanton once said the goal of the women's rights movement was to give women "a complete emancipation from all forms of bondage, of custom, dependence, superstition." What do you think she would say about these two illustrations?

Follow-up Activities

1. One important female writer of the mid-1800s was Catherine Beecher. Her most famous work was *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*. It dealt with all aspects of domestic life. Learn more about Catherine Beecher. Based on what you learn, decide whether or not she would have agreed with the cartoon shown here. Pretend you are Catherine Beecher and write a letter to the editor of the newspaper as if you had just seen this cartoon. Comment on it and relate it to what you (as Beecher) see as a woman's proper role.
2. Look through illustrated history books, books on fashion and clothing and other sources. Find ads and other illustrations of women's clothing in the 1800s. Make photocopies, slides or overheads of several of these. Also find illustrations of the outfits named after Amelia Bloomer. Use these illustrations in a talk in class on women's clothing in the 1800s. In the talk, try to explain why debates about clothing became a part of the women's rights movement.

Lesson 4—Emancipation and Its Critics

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Discussing the Illustration

1. The end of the Civil War led many women to believe their basic rights might soon be granted. When did the Civil War end, and why do you think it might have led women to have such hopes?
2. Here, some women address a committee of the House of Representatives in 1871. They are asking for the right to vote on the basis of the 14th and 15th Amendments. Can you briefly describe what these amendments were and why the women at this meeting would have been mentioning them?
3. Despite what these women said at this meeting, it would take nearly fifty more years before they would get what they were asking for. Can you explain?
4. Why do you think that even as of 1871, the movement for women's suffrage still had such a long way to go to victory?

Follow-up Activities

1. In the 1800s, large numbers of women worked in factories, and their experiences also contributed to the development of a movement for women's rights. Have your teacher or librarian help you find a copy of *The Lowell Mill Girls: Life in the Factory*, edited by Joanne Weisman Dietch, Discovery Enterprises, 1998. In it, read "The Spirit of Discontent," by "Almira" (pp. 33–36), and "Extract from *Factory Tracts Number 2*, by "an operative" (pp. 43–45). Pretend you are the operative and write a letter to Almira. Then pretend you are Almira and write a reply to your first letter. In class, explain the articles and share your two letters.
2. **Small-group activity:** The end of the Civil War and the end of slavery did encourage many women's rights advocates in the hope that their struggle could also be won soon. But the issue of African-American rights split the women's movement in 1869. Learn as much as you can about this split. As a group, play the parts of the key leaders involved in the split, and hold a debate in class about it.

Image Close-ups

A Woman’s Place in the Young Republic

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

A Woman’s Place in the Young Republic

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

A Woman’s Place in the Young Republic

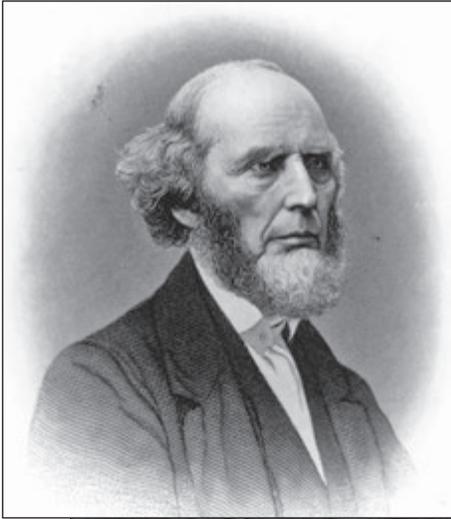
Illustration 3



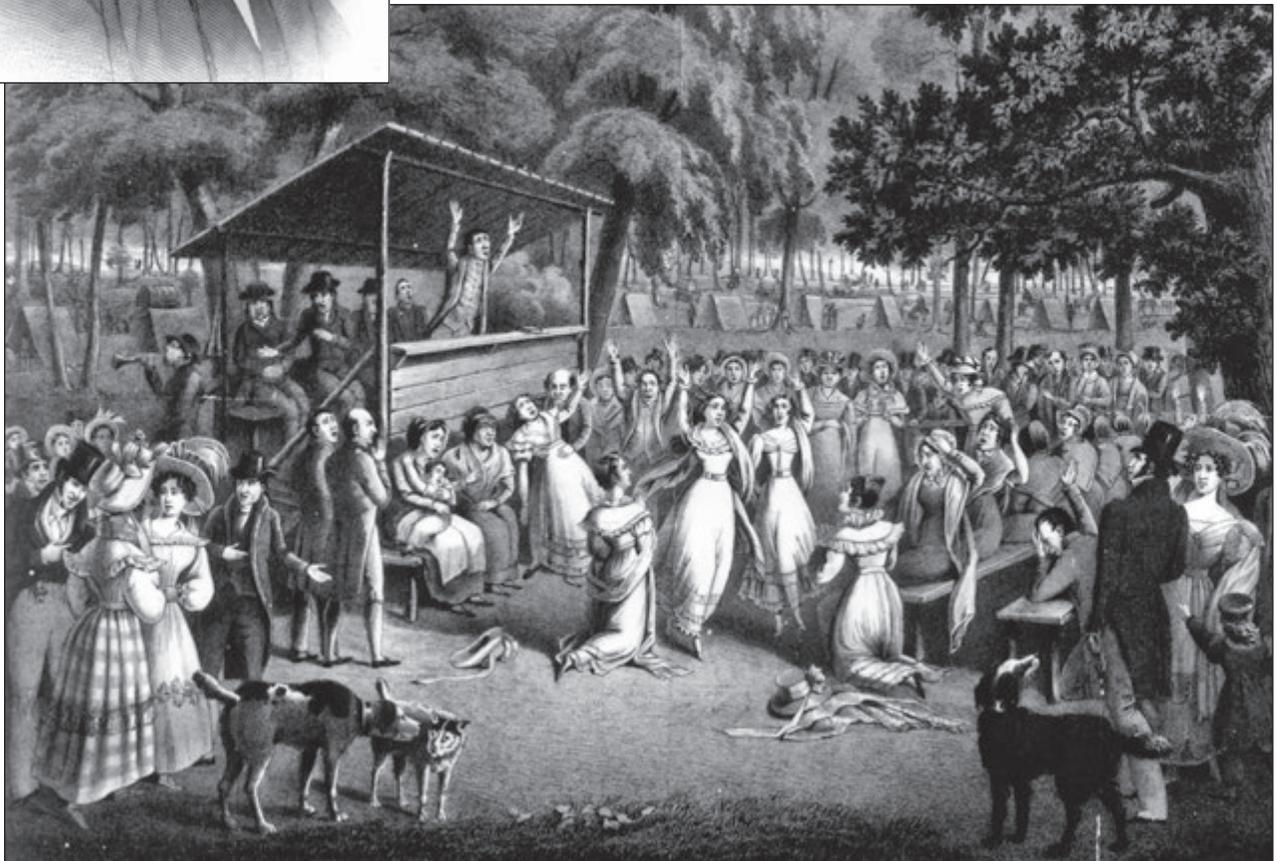
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

An Age of Moral Uplift

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

An Age of Moral Uplift

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

An Age of Moral Uplift

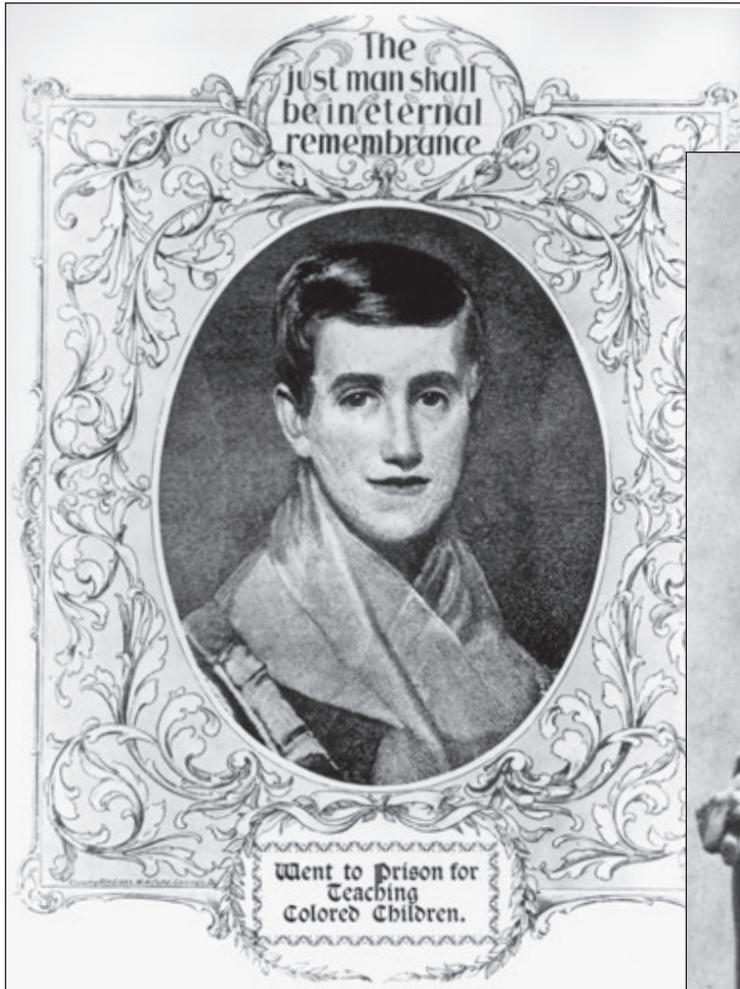
Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Early Struggle for Equality

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Early Struggle for Equality

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

He that STEALS a man, and SELLETH him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. —*Ex. xxi. 16.*

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him. —*Deut. xxi. 15, 16.*

And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake. —*Ex. xxi. 26, 27.*

If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right; hath not oppressed any; hath spoiled none by violence; hath executed true judgment between man

and man, he shall surely live. —*Isaiah lviii. 3-5.*

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke. —*Isaiah lviii. 6.*

Ye like mint, and anise, and cummin, and all manner of herbs, and pass over the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. —*Matthew xxiii. 23.*

Thou shalt deliver his fatherless: Choose him, and take him, and exact his estate.

With stripes, thou shalt smite with a bloody heart;

Whosoever shall see affliction on a man,

I would not have a sign to fill my ground;

To carry me, or fast me while I sleep,

And trouble when I wake, for all the wealth

That man's thought and toil have ever earned;

Not shall he see freedom;

I had much rather be struck off the altar,

And wear the bonds, than fasten mine on him.

—*Empyr.*

DECLARATION OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.

ASSEMBLED IN PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 4, 1840.

THE Convention assembled in the city of Philadelphia to organize a National Anti-Slavery Society, promptly seize the opportunity to promulgate the following DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS, as cherished by them in relation to the enslavement of one-sixth portion of the American people.

More than fifty-seven years have elapsed since a band of patriots convened in this place, to devise measures for the deliverance of this country from a foreign yoke. The corner-stone upon which they founded the *Texels* or *Faxnose* was broadly this— "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain foundations of the social compact, a complete extinction of all the relations, endowments, and obligations of mankind, and a presumptuous transgression of all the holy commandments—and that therefore they ought to be instantly abrogated.

We further believe and affirm—That all persons of colour who possess the qualifications which are demanded of others, ought to be admitted forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges, and the exercise of the same prerogatives, as others.—That the paths of preferment, of wealth, and of intelligence, should be opened as widely to them as to persons of a white complexion.

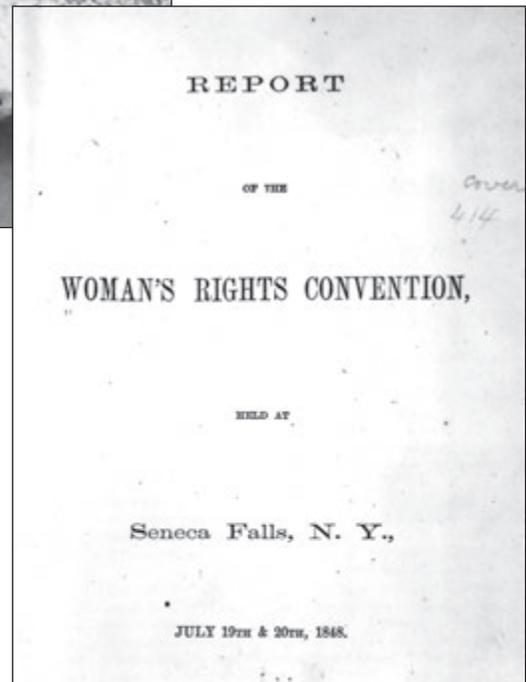
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Early Struggle for Equality

Illustration 3



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



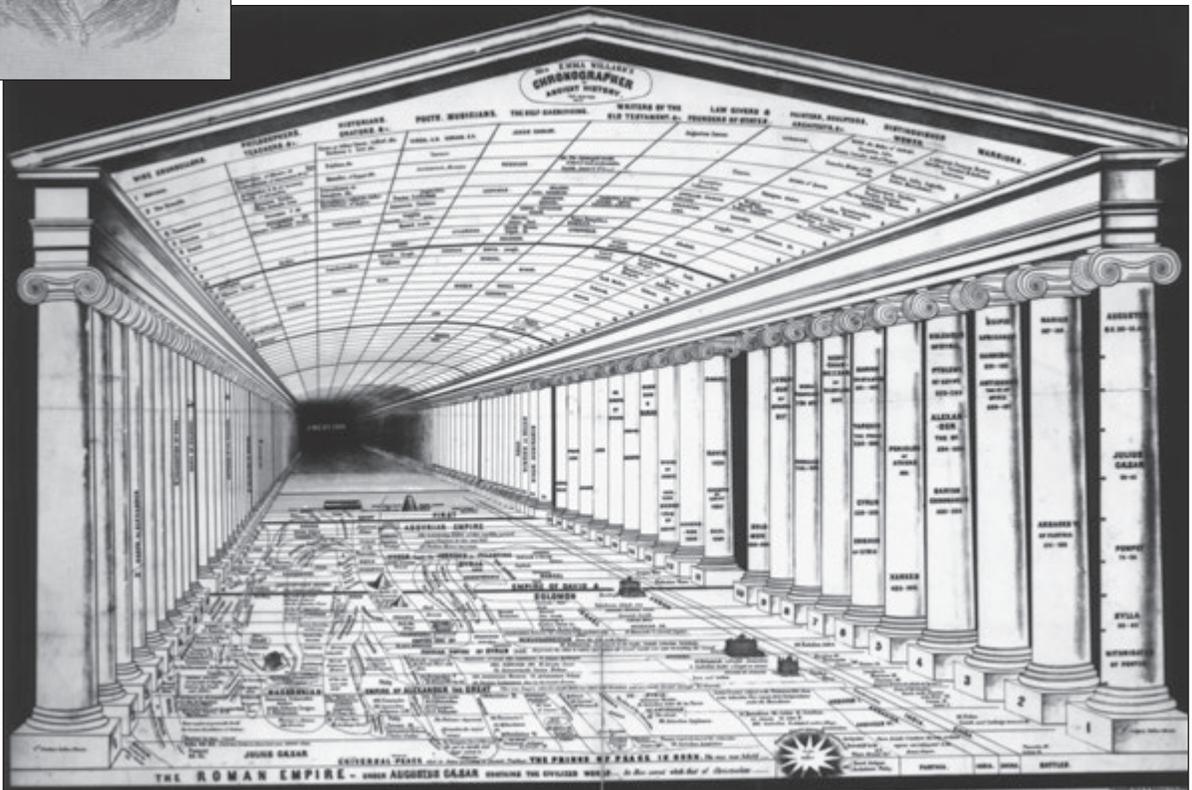
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Emancipation and Its Critics

Illustration 1



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



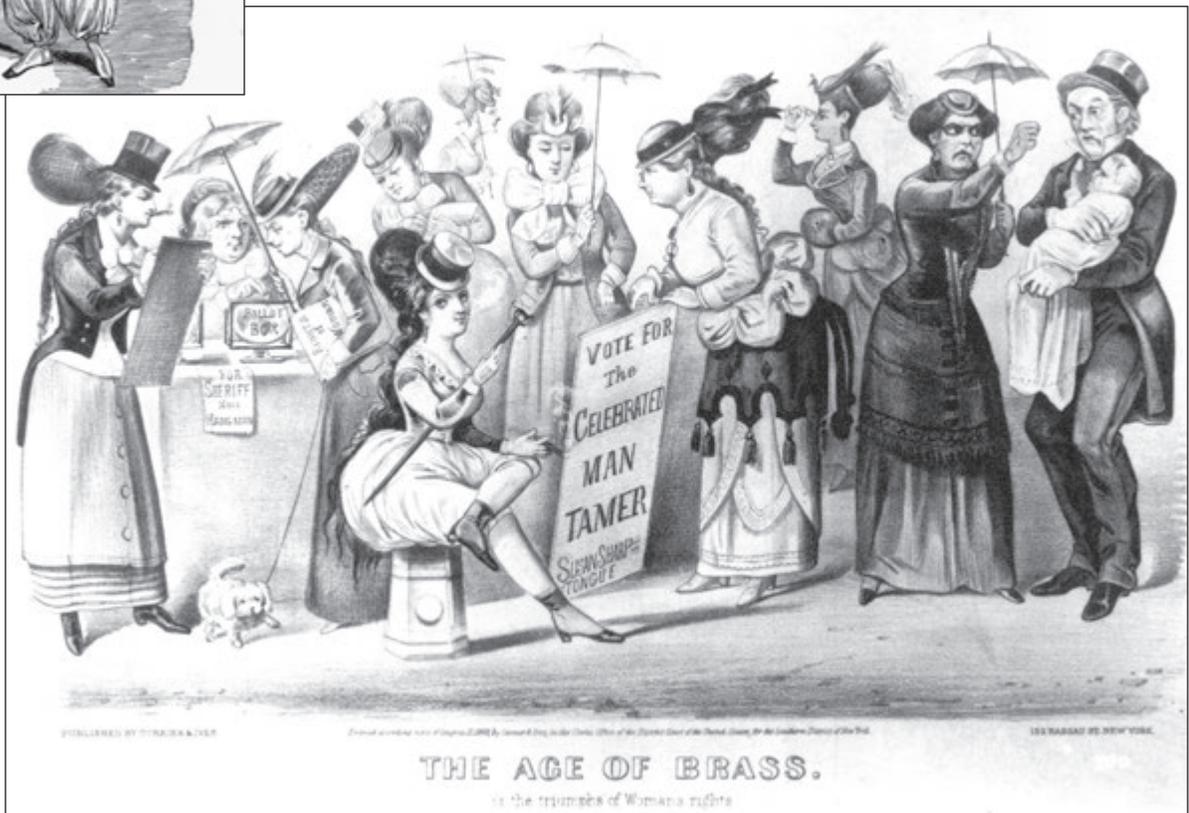
Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Emancipation and Its Critics

Illustration 2



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Emancipation and Its Critics

Illustration 3



WASHINGTON, D. C.—THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RECEIVING A DEPUTATION OF FEMALE SUFFRAGISTS, JANUARY 11th—A LADY DELEGATE READING HER ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF WOMAN'S VOTING, ON THE BASIS OF THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS.—See Page 161.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

