

Women in a Time of Division

Abolitionism, Suffrage, and the Civil War

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African American Demands for Freedom

- Escaping Slavery
 - Difficulties for most women
 - Ellen Craft
 - Gender and racial passing
 - Harriet Tubman
 - Escaped from Maryland in 1849
 - Helped 700 more escape
- Underground Railroad
 - black neighborhoods and churches
 - 3,000 members
 - 75,000 freed by 1861
- Significance of escape
 - Forcing political recognition of slavery
- Ex-Slave Testimonies and Narratives
 - Frederick Douglass (1845) – 30,000 copies
 - Sojourner Truth



2

Free Black Activism

- Colored Female Religious and Moral Society of Salem
 - 1st Female Antislavery Society (1832)
 - Self-help and abolitionism
- Maria Stewart
 - Public lectures for black audiences, 1831
 - African American women should “strive by their examples, both in public and private, to assist those who are endeavoring to stop the strong current of prejudice.”
 - 1833 farewell address due to resistance against women speaking in public
 - “What if I am a woman; is not the God of ancient times the God of these modern days? Did he not raise up Deborah to be a mother and a judge in Israel? Did not Queen Esther save the lives of the Jews? And Mary Magdalene first declare the resurrection of Christ from the dead?”

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Inter-racial Abolitionist Movement

- American Colonization Society (1817)
- By 1837, 1300 local antislavery societies
 - ¼ million men and women (10 million total in North)
 - 700,000 petitions in 1830s
- Abolitionist Literature
 - William Lloyd Garrison, weekly *Liberator* (1831)
 - Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (1833)
 - Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin, or Life among the Lowly* (1852) sold 300,000 in one year
- Northern Resistance to interracial organizing
 - 1834-1848, more than 100 incidents of mob violence against abolitionists or free blacks
 - Antislavery societies not all integrated

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Women’s Activism

- Abolitionism as training ground
 - Political organizing
 - speaking in public
- Defending the expansion of women’s sphere
- World Antislavery Convention in London (1840)
 - Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton



Oberlin College, class of 1855

Founded as coeducational school in 1833

1835-1865, at least 140 black women attended

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Seneca Falls (1848)

- 1st convention for women’s rights
- Declaration of Sentiments – full citizenship
 - “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.”
 - “We hold these truths to be self-evident...that all men and women are created equal.”
 - Women should “have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States...[particularly] the inalienable right to the elective franchise.”
- 200 women, 40 men, male chair
- Nearly two dozen other women’s rights conventions before 1860
- Difference or equality?

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Women's Rights Agenda

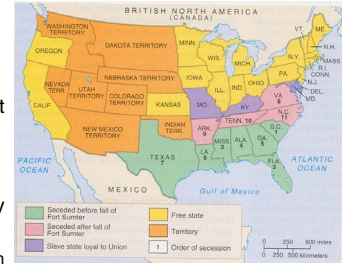
- Married Woman's Property Act (1848-NY)
 - Keep own earnings and inheritances
 - Invest and conduct business in own name without husbands' permission
 - Women removed from legal category of "children, idiots, and lunatics"
- Divorce Laws
 - Dissolution based not just on adultery
 - desertion or failure to provide
 - Brutality, drunkenness or incompatibility
- Women's clothing
 - Corseted dresses weighed up to 12 pounds
 - "In male attire, we could travel by land or sea; go through all the streets and lanes of our cities and town by night and day, without a protector; get seven hundred dollars a year for teaching, instead of three, and ten dollars for making a coat, instead of two or three, as we now do." Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1855
- Voluntary motherhood
 - "the right of a wife to her own person....Man in his lust has regulated this whole question of sexual intercourse long enough...let the mother of mankind...set bound to his indulgence."



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The coming of war

- Civil War
 - 1861-1865
- 633,000 died
 - Loss of life almost equal to all other U.S. wars
 - Old tactics; modern weaponry
 - Poor healthcare
 - 337,000 died from disease



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Expanding the meaning of war

- Saving the Union
- Colonization, 1862
- Emancipation Proclamation, 1863
 - "Where he has no power Mr. Lincoln will set the negroes free where he retains power he will consider them as slaves."
 - Refugees as "contraband"
 - Impressment of slaves and "military necessity"
- 13th Amendment, 1865
 - Women's Loyal National League collected 400,000 signatures
- African American soldiers
 - 179,000 in Union (130,000 from slave states)
 - 10% of army
 - 71% of black men 18-45 served



"If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that."
Lincoln, 1862

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Women and War

- Organized volunteer work
 - Bureaucratization and professionalization
 - U.S. Sanitary Commission
 - Distributed clothing, food, medicine, and recruited doctors and nurses
 - Raised over \$15 million
 - American Missionary Society
 - "Freedman's Relief"
 - Teaching and the beginnings of Reconstruction
- Women and manufacturing
 - 1/4 of workforce to 1/3 1860-1865
- Female clerks
 - Government offices
 - 1/2 of male pay
- Paid military nurses
 - 3,000 women

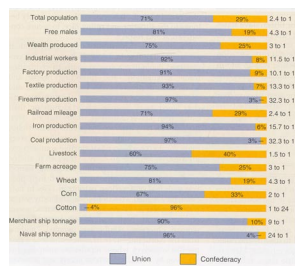


Dorothea Dix, head of the Dept. of Female Nurses, required nurses to be 30 years old and "very plain-looking women. Their dresses must be brown or black, with no bows, no curls, no jewelry and no hoop skirts."

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Managing at Home

- Inflation
 - Prices rose 80% in the North
 - 9,000% in the South
 - Effectiveness of northern blockade
- "A rich man's war but a poor man's fight"
 - 1862 Confederate conscription law
 - White men 18-35 (17-50)
 - Impressment of food, horses, wagons, and slaves
 - "Twenty-Negro Law"
 - 10% tax-in-kind on agriculture
 - 1/3 deserted before end of war
 - "We are poor men and willing to defend our country but our families [cons] first."
 - Proposed emancipation for slaves who fought for confederacy, 1865
- 1863 bread riots in dozen cities and villages
 - Richmond, 1,000 women involved
- "Managing" slaves
 - 100,000 fled slavery
 - "As to the idea of a faithful servant, it is all a fiction."
 - North Carolinian white woman



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Anti-Draft Riots in the North

- 1840-1860 4.2 million arrived in U.S.
 - 40% Irish refugees
- 1/3 Irish laborers or domestic servants
 - Single women and family economy
- Nativism
 - Know-Nothing party (American party) -1854-1855
 - Anti-Catholicism
- Draft law, 1863
 - Men 20-45 to enroll for lottery
 - Pay \$300 or hire a substitute
 - 6-day antidraft riots led by Irish, 105 died
 - Turns into attack on free blacks
- Irish demands for "whiteness"
- "free labor" and anti-slavery not the same as equal rights for African Americans

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Women in a Time of Division

- racial equality and women's rights
 - Interracial cooperation and conflict
- equality or difference argument
- Increasing Complexities
 - How to reconstruct the nation?
 - Immigration and increasing diversity
 - Manifest Destiny and Colonization
 - Industrialization and Class inequality

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