The Dual Legacy of Elizabeth Cady Stanton

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by

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Abstract

Cathy Hoult: The Dual Legacy of Elizabeth Cady Stanton

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the impact of Elizabeth Cady Stanton on her peers and subsequent generations involved in the fight for equality for women. Stanton's historical legacy has been obscured by her demand for the vote at the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and as a result, scholars have failed to engage in a detailed discussion of her significance. This project argues that Stanton's importance was twofold in nature, suggesting that the creation of the American women's rights movement and the development of an ideological vision for the equality of women, are in fact two distinct aspects of Stanton's legacy. As Stanton's philosophy directed the first generation of women to seek a broad range of goals for equality, including the right to vote, the inherent separation that existed between the women's rights movement and Stanton's ideas was initially concealed. However, the eventual rejection by the woman suffrage movement of Stanton's broad ideological platform in favour of the single issue of suffrage, illustrates the duality of her legacy. It is only by recognising and then by examining the two distinct areas of her legacy, her wide-ranging ideas for change, and the resulting women's rights movement, that Stanton's influence can be analysed and appreciated. Stanton's impact is highlighted through a series of case studies of selected individuals who can be connected to Stanton. The early character studies provide the opportunity to delve into the formation of Stanton's ideas and to briefly discuss the development of the women's rights movement. The later studies will expand on this base by tracing the process of transfer and evolution of Stanton's ideology, discussing the interaction between the organisation that she had established and her agenda for equality.
Acknowledgements

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I am saddened that my father, John is not here to see the completion of my dissertation, but I thank my mother, Diane for her continued support during a very difficult time. My endless gratitude to my mother-in-law Liz must also be acknowledged, she was able to be on baby duty for months at a time while I was busy completing my dissertation without her this work may have never been completed.

My final acknowledgements must go to my husband, Wes and daughter Abby, thank you for your love, patience and understanding. It has made the completion of my dissertation possible.
Preface

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the impact of Elizabeth Cady Stanton on her peers and subsequent generations involved in the fight for equality for women. Stanton's historical legacy has been obscured by her demand for the vote at the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and as a result, scholars have failed to engage in a detailed discussion of her significance. This project will reveal that Stanton’s importance is twofold in nature, illuminating that the emergence of the American women’s rights movement and the development of her comprehensive ideological vision for the equality of women are two distinct aspects of her legacy. As Stanton’s philosophy directed the first generation of women to seek a broad range of goals for equality, including the right to vote, the inherent separation that existed between the women’s rights movement and Stanton’s ideas was initially concealed. However, as the subsequent generation of the women’s rights movement increasingly equated the ballot to equality, Stanton’s broad ideological platform was rejected in favour of a focus on the single issue of woman suffrage. It is only by recognising and then examining the two separate areas of her legacy, her wide-ranging agenda for change and the women’s rights movement, that Stanton’s influence can be analysed.

In order to limit the size of this study this dissertation highlights Stanton’s impact through a series of case studies of select individuals who can be connected to Stanton. The early character studies provide the opportunity to delve into the formation of Stanton’s ideas and to briefly discuss the development of the women’s rights movement. The later studies will expand on this base by tracing the process of transfer and evolution of Stanton’s ideology, discussing the interaction between
the organisation that she had established and her agenda for equality. In order to explore the development of Stanton’s legacy the date range of the thesis against which the case studies will be explored predates the 1848 conference concerning the rights of women held at Seneca Falls. Connecting the emergence of the women’s rights movement with the agreement between Stanton and Lucretia Mott that on their return to the United States, they would work together to organise a convention to discuss the rights of women, the London Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 emerged as an ideal starting point for this project. At the ensuing 1848 Seneca Falls conference, Stanton urged her peers to fight for woman suffrage as a means of achieving equality. Representing the fruition of Stanton’s goal to enfranchise women, the achievement of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 provided a logical conclusion point to what otherwise would be an endless study of the battle for gender equality.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s legacy deserves to be expanded past her stipulation that the right to vote should be added to the Declaration of Sentiments in 1848. By not challenging this vision of her historical acclaim, contemporary scholars of women are failing to correct the mistakes of past historians that distort the value of women in relation to American history. If current historians continue the earlier trend of recognising suffrage history as the only form of women’s history or only study those women that are judged as being worthy of attention by male standards of history, women’s history will become stagnant and not reflective of the women it is supposed to represent.¹ This thesis endeavours to challenge the past

assumptions of Stanton’s importance to reveal the magnitude of her influence.

However, it will also explain how the spread of Stanton’s legacy shaped her future historical treatment in connection to the women’s rights movement. One of the key considerations of this work is that it will add to the dearth of current scholarly works on Stanton and hopefully encourage other historians to re-examine key figures of the women’s rights movement to bring fresh insight into their impact. Two questions posed by Gerda Lemer in 2003 offered further encouragement to new scholars to re-visit key figures of the women’s rights movement as she asks “Is it really the case that the recent past is more important and significant for scholarly inquiry than the more distant past?” and “If women’s ... struggles of the past are no longer of interest to women’s history specialists, then how will we ground our knowledge of present and future social struggles?” The answer to both of these questions reflects a commitment to the need to continue to expand the scholarship on women’s history.

After an examination of the historiographical context of women’s history, the thesis is divided into two sections. The first section, “Mothers of the Movement” examines the women’s rights movement and Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s role in it; the second “the Daughters of the Movement” reflects on how Stanton’s legacy can be traced through subsequent generations of women.


2 There are few scholarly works on Stanton perhaps the first is Elisabeth Griffith, In Her Own Rights: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (New York and Oxford, 1984). The best to date is Judith Wellman, The Road to Seneca Falls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman’s Rights Convention (Urbana and Chicago, 2004).

Chapter two, "An Introduction to the Women's Movement" discusses the history of the women's rights movement. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the status of women at the eve of the 1848 Seneca Falls conference. Against this historical context the development of the American women's movement that emerged during the nineteenth century will be explored to highlight the intellectual forces at work in the United States at this time that led to the rise and support of such a social movement.

The third chapter, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton" introduces the two elements of Stanton's legacy and offers a brief biographical sketch of key events that shaped her ideology and commitment to women's rights. In tracing the development of her ideas the institutions that Stanton targeted as restricting the rights of women will be highlighted, exposing the basis of her broad agenda for reform. Once Stanton's agenda has been established it will be possible to discuss the early connection between her ideology for equality and the women's rights movement that she initiated, appreciating her unique role as the spokeswoman of her era. Essentially this chapter is structured to link Stanton to the following chapters that contain the case studies to discuss Stanton's legacy.

Chapter four, "Lucretia Mott" allows for an essential exploration of the reciprocally important relationship of Mott and Stanton by examining the impact that the two women had on each other's ideas and the movement that they fashioned. Mott emerged as one of Stanton's most significant role models as she illustrated to Stanton for the first time women could have a public role outside their traditional sphere. The overall importance of this case study is to explore Mott’s
active role in constructing Stanton's double legacy. Mott facilitated the cross-fertilisation of ideas and connections with a variety of reform movements that would ultimately act as the impetus for the birth of Stanton's legacy with the formation of the women's rights movement and Stanton's ideological underpinning.

The objective of chapter five, "Susan B. Anthony" is to examine Anthony in connection with Stanton's double legacy, the movement that she inaugurated and the ideology that originally guided the movement. Anthony was the chief figure who conveyed Stanton's ideology and became the crucial organiser who pushed Stanton's movement to mature, supporting the cause as it narrowed its focus and as it changed direction breaking away from Stanton's broad reform agenda. Initially Stanton used Anthony as an instrument to spread her ideas to a larger audience. Later Anthony's commitment to woman's suffrage would increasingly transform her position from that of disseminator to that of a recruiter for new members to join the developing organisation, to finally being established as the icon of the women's rights movement by the younger generation who had inherited the suffrage cause. Eventually Anthony's allegiance would transfer from Stanton and her movement to solely supporting the women's movement revealing the rift in Stanton's dual legacy.

Beginning the second section of the thesis, chapter six introduces the first of the case study daughters "Charlotte Perkins Gilman." As Stanton's ideological daughter, Gilman will be explored as an example of those women who received the intellectual legacy of Stanton's ideas, the utilisation of which led Gilman to develop her own ideas even if this resulted in her taking Stanton's original ideas in
directions that Stanton would never have envisioned. One of the factors proving the ideological link between Gilman and Stanton is the fact that Gilman appeared to reject the conservative ideas of her own family by failing to embrace her Beecher heritage. Instead, Gilman followed in the apparently radical direction of Stanton’s ideas to embrace a broader vision of what women needed to achieve equality.

Chapter seven, “Catharine Waugh McCulloch” reveals the success of the transfer of Stanton’s ideas and the continued support for the women’s movement throughout the United States. It is important to recognise that Stanton’s influence should not be viewed only as an East Coast phenomenon. To regard Stanton in such a limited fashion would lead to a failure to appreciate the transfer or the extent of Stanton’s legacy in regards to her geographical impact, but also in terms of her influence extending from one generation to the next. Therefore, this chapter intends to trace the dissemination of themes and concerns that originated with Stanton on the East Coast, to reveal to what degree there was ideological interaction and transfer between the two locations. As a lawyer from Illinois McCulloch’s case study will broaden this project by representing the new generation of college educated, professional women that Stanton’s efforts had already produced as they have been exposed to her indirect influence through women such as Mary Livermore and Frances E. Willard. The focus on McCulloch allows for an appreciation of the success of Stanton’s early ideas and movement but also reveals how the women’s rights movement was being taken over by the next generation.

Chapter eight introduces “Carrie Chapman Catt,” as the leader of the women’s rights movement that finally succeeded in enfranchising women. Stanton
and Catt are historically linked by their subsequent roles in the seventy year struggle to enfranchise women, Stanton as the first woman to demand that women fight for the right to vote and Catt as the leader of the movement who finally achieved Stanton’s goal. This case study casts Catt as a representative of her generation and explains Stanton’s fate as her broad ideology was rejected and the movement that she had first called for in 1848 was reshaped to suit the goals of a new suffrage generation. As Catt’s generation took ownership of the women’s rights movement Stanton was increasingly perceived as a radical liability who was excluded from the organised movement as it became the woman suffrage movement. Unfortunately, Stanton’s historical value suffered a similar treatment as her legacy to the women’s rights cause was relegated to her demand for the vote for women and initiating the women’s rights movement. As a representative of a “New Woman” Catt embodied Stanton’s ideas concerning the development of women, she was a product of the goals that had already been achieved by the women’s rights movement. In connection to this development Catt’s role in transferring Stanton’s legacy will also be discussed as Catt’s radicalism is revealed through her efforts to reshape the women’s movement so that it would be successful in a conservative political environment.

Harriot Stanton Blatch’s position as Stanton’s daughter directly connected her to the legacy of her mother. However as chapter nine, “Harriot Stanton Blatch” reveals a case study of Blatch’s career as a suffrage leader in New York State. Blatch emerges as a “virtual daughter” of the women’s rights movement, another representative of the college educated women who were shaped by the battles of the early women’s rights movement and who now dominated the organisation which
Elizabeth Cady Stanton had initiated. In uniting, the two roles that Blatch occupied in connection to her mother’s influence Blatch can be analysed as a vehicle for the development and perpetuation of Stanton’s dual legacy. An understanding of Blatch’s resentment of Catt’s position as the leader of what she perceived to be her mother’s organisation reveals the division that existed within the generation that inherited the women’s rights movement. This division allows Blatch to emerge as her mother’s true ideological heir and highlights the fact that she recaptured the second aspect of her mother’s legacy in the new women’s organisations that she created. Blatch is the key in the preservation of Stanton’s dual legacy but it is also important to appreciate that she represented the ideas and new directions utilised by the leaders of the women’s rights movement during this period.

The final chapter, the conclusion will strive to reveal the final fate of Stanton’s full legacy by bringing all of the elements of the case studies together. Alluding to the fact that the woman suffrage movement fails to reflect the true purpose of Stanton’s initial organisation, which had first emerged as a mechanism to help women gain equality rather than solely suffrage. In addition as Stanton’s ideological voice was increasingly rejected by those who directed the women’s rights movement to suffrage success, evidence does suggest that Stanton’s beliefs did influence others to work for the goal of equality in ways in which Stanton may have never envisioned.
Section One: Mothers of the Movement
Chapter One  
**Historiography**

During the last forty five years American women’s history has emerged as a topic considered worthy of further scholarly attention. As one of the “new histories” its first task was to “place the female experience on the map of history.”¹ In a recent article addressing the “Past, Present, and Future” of women’s history the historian, Gerda Lerner looked back to her work in the late 1960s, acknowledging that at that point women’s history was little more than a fledgling academic field.² Her comments are testimony to the fact that the development of women’s history began with the simple mandate to make “women visible, to put women on the historical record.”³ As academics embarked on the “quest to integrate women into historical analysis,” women’s history began to eventually develop its own substructure and references.⁴ Answering the call to “redraw the map” to include women, scholars’ of women’s history created a conceptual framework which allowed noteworthy women to be recognised on their own terms, but failed to challenge the preconceived notions of male and female social identity.⁵

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⁵ May, “Expanding the Past: Recent,” pp.213-233. Gerda Lerner, “New Approaches to the Study of Women in American History,” in *The Majority Finds its Past Placing Women in History* (Oxford and New York, 1981), p.13. Gerda Lerner makes it clear that her comments on the need “to redraw the map” apply to the state of women’s history in 1969 (p.3) However the problem of identifying women and putting them in to their historical context remains a concern today as women’s history continues to develop as an academic field.
Traditionally a male domain, history has tended to concentrate on public action and the concept that women were passive and men were active within the political or economic arena. From the outset women’s history followed this pattern of “patriarchal history,” limiting the initial examination of women to those who entered the public domain either as individuals or as part of a larger social movement. Exceptional women who seemed at odds with their peers dominated women’s history as they were judged by a male scale of historical importance that placed them in the public arena as they stepped out of the traditional domestic sphere of women. Therefore those characters who were deemed as worthy of attention were women that were linked with organisations that sought a political voice, or whose radical ideas led them to claim that they should be allowed to vote.

As women’s history continued to develop in the 1970s it offered a new perspective on “the substance and the subject of history,” focused solely on the lives and activities of women it successfully illuminated the importance of women as historical agents. Reacting to the perceived limitations of the patriarchal interpretation of history that they had inherited, which ignored the majority of women, historians of women’s history sought to establish new paradigms that highlighted the historical significance of women. Directed by the political agenda of

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9 Cott and Gilpin Faust, “Recent Directions in Gender,” p.4.
second wave feminism, to expose and demolish discrimination against women, the construction of a historical identity for women served a dual purpose. As a female “community” was created “through a sense of a shared past,” the shared experience of women within the female sphere was highlighted as a positive rather than an oppressive cultural force on women’s lives, past and present.\textsuperscript{10}

Despite its growth as an academic field, women’s history continued to occupy a “marginal status” within mainstream American history.\textsuperscript{11} As scholars have increasingly recognised the standing of women’s history, they have questioned the usefulness of the separate spheres paradigm.\textsuperscript{12} In her article “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” the historian Linda K. Kerber suggested that the time had come to disregard the use of the separate spheres terminology by highlighting the limitations of a field of study that denied “the reciprocity between gender and society” and imposed a “static model on dynamic relationships.”\textsuperscript{13} Kerber’s belief that the “trope” of separate spheres was responsible for the marginalisation of women’s history led her to conclude that


\textsuperscript{12} For examples of historians’ that first challenged the value of the separate sphere construct especially as they have realised its limitations see Nancy A. Hewitt, “Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American women’s history in the 1980s,” \textit{Social History} 10 (October 1985),pp. 299-321. In this article Hewitt reflects that class and race divide groups more than gender, revealing that the use of separate spheres focuses on white middle class women as the dominant figures of women’s history ; Linda K. Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” \textit{Journal of American History} 75 (June 1988), pp.9-39. Kerber’s article argues that the separate spheres doctrine is rhetoric not reality; and Ellen DuBois et al.,"Politics and Culture in Women's History: A Symposium," \textit{Feminist Studies} 6 (Spring 1980), pp.26-64. This is one of many discussions of the value of the separate sphere methodology.

\textsuperscript{13} Kerber, “Separate Spheres,”p.38.
the field of gender history or to use her expression, “the reconstruction of gender relations,” provided an alternative to the restrictions imposed by a methodology that artificially isolated its subjects.\textsuperscript{14} Kerber’s willingness to abandon the rhetorical device of past historians reflects the current status of the historiography of women’s history, as it is redefined by a new generation of scholars. Since its conception, the field of women’s history has attracted students who have produced new scholarship that has expanded society’s vision of the historical map. As a result women’s history has become more complex as it has evolved.\textsuperscript{15} Although contemporary historians of women’s history vary in their assessment of the state of the field and are cautious concerning the new directions in women’s history, the continual presence of innovative scholarship is revealed by the current vigour of women’s history.\textsuperscript{16}

The rejection of patriarchal history limited the number of historical works concerning the women’s rights movement and the issue of woman suffrage after the opening stage of women’s history. The establishment of the new historical framework which illuminated and affirmed the private lives of women also prohibited detailed analyses of women who sought a public role in society. Increasingly the quandary of where to place the women’s rights movement and the fight for woman suffrage in the field of women’s history became apparent and led

\textsuperscript{14} Kerber, “Separate Spheres,” p.39. This shift from women’s history to gender history is generally dated from the early 1990s, linked to the impact of Scott, “Gender: A useful Category of Historical Analysis,” pp. 1053-75.


to their historical neglect. Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s role at the first women’s rights conference at Seneca Falls revealed a woman behaving as a man as she asserted herself publicly and demanding a political voice for woman, increasingly her actions and the behaviour of those that supported her goals seemed at odds with the purpose of women’s history. As a result any discussion of the historiography of women’s history during the 1980s tends to exclude woman suffrage.17

Barbara Welter’s article, “The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860,” provided the defining concept of separate spheres that initially structured research on the topic of women’s history.18 Since this article was published the concept of separate spheres and the restricted roles of women has been re-explored and reinterpreted to challenge the traditional view of women’s involvement and influence on political activities. Yet this added dimension to the field of women’s history illustrates the problematic relationship between women’s history and the women’s rights movement, the tension between the desire to examine women on their own terms and the difficulties of contextualising the movement as women consciously endeavoured to enter the male sphere. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg’s article "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," provides evidence of the changing direction of women’s history.19 This article is one of the first attempts to challenge the notion that women’s private lives were not historically important. It led to increased


examination and analysis of women's private writings to give credence to notions of female networks. Smith-Rosenberg's concept that private lives can be equally as important as public lives has led academics of women's history to try and unite the private and public lives of women. In the case of Elizabeth Cady Stanton the task of uniting her public and private roles has allowed for a deeper understanding of the evolving nature of her ideology and how her ideas were initially developed and transferred. Smith-Rosenberg's article is indicative of a broader trend of women's history in the 1970s of a shift away from the exceptional women and organisations of suffrage history to the lives of everyday women. Historians' today need to guard against being afraid to add to the lists of works that had focused on the so-called exceptional women identified during the first stage of women's history. By continuing to historically isolate those women who had challenged their role in society, by following male standards of behaviour, from the lives of her peers such women will be portrayed in a very limited fashion and their true impact will go unrecognised.

Ann D. Gordon, Mari Jo Buhle and Nancy Schrom Dye's discussion of early works of the American women's rights movement reveals that earlier historians viewed the movement as an institutional history of women in an organisation and as such women's history was initially viewed as being "synonymous" with the history of woman suffrage. The result of this is that many of the major players within the movement have only been granted the briefest of

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21 Gordon, Buhle, and Schrom Dye, "The Problem of Women's History," p.76. These authors conclude that Eleanor Flexner's Century of Struggle is one example of this problem.
analyses due to their connection to the suffrage movement. Too often the bid for the vote has been regarded as the key issue of the women's rights movement, the broader demand for equality (in such areas as education and economic rights) was ignored and categorised as a less important part of the women's rights movement. The traditional view of political activity clearly identified which women were worthy of historical analysis since the "writers of institutional studies assume that women have had a history... only when they have managed to step outside of their prescribed sphere and enter the world of men." After establishing the women's rights movement and presenting the initial demand for woman suffrage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton fits the profile of a historically significant figure. However scrutiny of Stanton in this fashion highlights one of the major problems in women's history. By focusing on women's actions either inside or outside of their traditional role, historians have failed to connect women such as Stanton to the broader framework of American history. In Stanton's case, this has resulted in the neglect of her full legacy as her historical importance has been confined to her demand for the vote and her connection to the emergence of the women's rights movement.

The pioneer members of the movement provided the first accounts of the American women's rights movement. The importance of such obviously biased first hand accounts is that they reflect the efforts of their authors to create or preserve their own historical legacy. These early works on the women's rights

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23 Ibid., p.84. This thesis is attempting to integrate Stanton into the mainstream of American History as the authors suggested is necessary in the next step of women's history.

movement placed value on the amount of detail that was included in the texts. These narrative accounts of women's history reveal that the vote initially was only one important aspect of the battle for the equality for women it was not the only issue on the agenda. More recent works have moved away from providing overviews to explore single aspects of the women's rights movement as the focus on the vote has been viewed as the most important aspect of the women's movement. Yet, there has been very little effort to study the major individuals in relation to the movement as a whole. The work of more recent historians tends to place more importance on the battle for suffrage than the other concerns of women of the era. Stanton, Anthony and Gage in contrast documented the wealth of concerns that the women's movement represented.  

Catt and Shuler's book first published in 1923 is an autobiographical account of their personal experiences in the American women's rights movement; it is therefore a valuable primary source. As one of the "daughters" that will be draw on to discuss Stanton's legacy, Carrie Chapman Catt's biography illustrates Stanton's impact on the American women's rights movement. In that it reveals how members of the woman suffrage movement reduced Stanton's historic role in women's history it offers evidence of the treatment of Stanton by the new members of the women's rights movement who clearly redirected the movement. This work also highlights that the final success of accomplishment of the woman's suffrage movement was achieved by Catt's "winning plan."

25 Stanton, Anthony, Gage et al. eds., The History of Woman Suffrage.

A major flaw of this book is also a source of information in connection to this project. The obviously selective way in which its authors edited what they believed should be included in a history of the woman suffrage movement highlights the way in which its authors sought to rewrite the history of the women’s rights movement. A clear example of this is not only the omission of Stanton but also the constant neglect of the role that men played in woman’s suffrage. Men are often only mentioned in connection with the abolitionist movement and its links with the women’s rights movement. As one of the key biographies on a major character in the American women’s rights movement, it does reflect an effort to discuss the leading characters in the women’s rights movement.

First published in 1959 Eleanor Flexner’s *Century of Struggle* has come to be regarded as essential first reading for the study of the women’s rights movement in the United States. Flexner focused on the battle for women’s suffrage at the expense of the other factions in the movement, highlighting the feminist nature of the women involved as a new politicised direction for women. Using a chronological study starting with the meeting held at Seneca Falls in 1848 through to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, Flexner endeavoured to examine the movement as a whole. Flexner’s monograph provides a clear example of a history focusing on exceptional women and the events that they orchestrated. Flexner’s work provided future scholars with a framework against which they can place their own ideas and research. Against this framework this project seeks to

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28 Ibid., p.38. Flexner stressed the view those women involved in abolitionism and then the women’s rights movement should be considered as the “first conscious feminists,” this view indicates that Flexner recognised such women as different and taking a new direction.
provide a more in depth analysis of one of the key figures of the movement, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and explore the impact of her ideas on future generations of women until the Nineteenth Amendment.

The major criticism of this book rests on the fact that Flexner tries to discuss the whole women's rights movement in one book. As one of the first serious scholarly efforts to study the women's movement this flaw should be forgiven. Flexner provided detailed records of her primary and secondary sources clearly indicating the path for future research. Flexner's effort to discuss the whole women's rights movement tended to illustrate for future historians that this was a virtually impossible task if each aspect of the movement was to be studied in any great detail. This realisation led many historians to concentrate on single aspects of the women's right movement, such as women's struggle to become enfranchised. Yet the drive to focus on single aspects of the women's rights movement has led to a disconnection of the movement and the ideas that influenced it. Flexner's work opened up women's history as a topic worthy of further investigation. While her work provided an informative introduction to women's history, Flexner led the way for future scholars to investigate further into the women's rights movement. Flexner's work failed to place women's history upon the map of general history. Her concentration on women and the vote succeeded in isolating the broader concerns of the women's rights movement. She inferred that the demand for the vote was radical and a new direction for women that should be identified as a breaking point from traditional action. Flexner's work made no effort to take women out of the spheres that the women's movement had been looking to expand. She chose to focus on those women that had made the conscious feminist decision
to step outside their traditional role yet by narrowing her work to focus on the battle
for suffrage Flexner fails to fully explore the ideology of the movement.29 She also
set in place the standard view that by failing to achieve the vote initially meant that
the movement had failed.

Aileen Kraditor endeavoured to explain the correlation between the
women’s suffrage movement and the Progressive Era.30 Her work stands out as it
reveals a shift from Flexner’s broad monograph to a much narrower perspective,
both in terms of time period and who was being examined but it still reveals the
focus on suffrage history.31 Kraditor argues that during the Progressive Era, the
reasoning behind women’s demand for the vote changed. Woman suffrage was no
longer viewed as a natural right but as an expedient measure. Why the women
wanted the vote was a significant change. Women now argued that the vote was a
necessity for women to protect themselves, their family and society. Kraditor’s
discussion of this gradual change demonstrates that women’s history was now
beginning to be placed within the context of long accepted historical developments.
The ideas and direction of the Progressive Era undeniably affected the woman’s
suffrage movement as the idea of the need for the improvement of society spread to
white middle class women. As Kraditor comments “middle-class women...wanted
the vote in order to reform society and not simply because they sought freedom for

29 Flexner, Century of Struggle, p.67. Although Flexner identifies Stanton as the “Leading
intellectual force in the emancipation of American women,” she does not explore why Stanton
should be viewed as such and how her impact can be judged.

30 Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890-1920 (1965; repr., New

Although Kraditor’s study reflected the trend to focus on the history of the suffrage movement rather than the women’s rights movement her work stands out as one of the first that revealed that women’s history was no longer being studied in a historical vacuum.

Kraditor’s effort to place women’s history into a broader historical backdrop of events serves to remind scholars of the need to look at the bigger picture. Kraditor’s work serves to illustrate the progress and change of style that historians of women’s history were beginning to undergo. Yet it still remains limited due to the fact that Kraditor concentrates on suffrage versus anti-suffrage, she makes no effort to discuss the various ideas that struggled for dominance during this period in the women’s rights movement that were reflected by the movement’s ostracism of Stanton. It is only in Kraditor’s preface to her 1981 reprint that historian’s were encouraged to conduct further research on the ideology of the leaders of the movement as their statements would “represent the ideology of [their organisation’s] cause.”

In the case of discussing Stanton such advice makes it possible to identify and discuss how her ideas and the movement that she originated were two separate aspects of her interests.

As the title of his work Beginnings of Sisterhood: The American Woman’s Rights Movement 1800-1850 suggests Keith Melder focused on the various forms of “Sisterhood” that led to the emergence of the women’s rights movement. He acknowledged that his research built on Welter’s belief that “Protestant

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32 Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, p.72.

33 Ibid., pp.xii-xiii.
Christianity” was “feminized” in the early nineteenth century and that “the gradual expansion of women’s religious activities and influence helped to create the sense of women’s sisterhood in faith.” Melder reveals that the “sisterhood of faith” allowed women to form a sense of “self confidence” and “mission,” that in part helps explain why women joined the women’s rights movement. Melder suggests that the impact of religion on the women’s rights movement can be seen through the path of the Second Great Awakening, a theory that he illustrated by asserting that the geographical areas where the Second Great Awakening and women’s religious education were present would emerge to become centres of reform activity. While acknowledging the validity of his theories especially in terms of the location of the emergence of the women’s rights movement at Seneca Falls, New York the importance of religion as a motivating force of women’s activism is more complicated than Melder reveals. Stanton’s relationship with religion highlights that religion’s impact on reform is not always due to its positive effect. As a factor that led to Stanton’s involvement in the women right’s movement and the development of her ideology, religion does not always provide her with the sisterhood that Melder envisioned.

A second factor that Melder attributed to the rise of the women’s rights movement was the developing role of education for women after the American Revolution. After the Revolution, education for women prepared them for “the


36 Ibid.
primary duties of mothers, the instruction of children." As "republican mothers" women needed to receive a better standard of education to ensure that they were equipped to guard the morality of their children so that they would protect the "republican institutions," and ultimately protect and preserve the democracy that they were not allowed to participate in. Yet the education that was provided to middle-class women at such institutions as the Troy Female Seminary, and the Hartford Female Seminary had the unexpected effect of disappointment for women, who after being educated recognised "the limited results of their endeavors." As Stanton's life illustrated even after receiving an education, women were still unable to enjoy the same level of education or involvement in the political world. Although Melder concluded that this realisation led to suffrage emerging as the key issue for women involved in the women's rights movement, the date range of his discussion indicate that he distorts the importance of the vote and ignores other key aspects of concern in the early women's rights movement.

Although discussion of the women's rights movement proved to be problematic for women's history, increasingly this problem has been rectified by studies that have expanded the arena of women's public activities, connecting the public and private actions of women. Many works acknowledged that the women's rights organisation can be traced back to the advent of female moral reform societies and as such reveal a sense of inevitable progression towards improving

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37 Melder, Beginnings of Sisterhood, p.15.

38 Ibid., p.15: This term "republican mothers" was first used by Linda K. Kerber, for an expanded discussion of Republican Motherhood see Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (New York, 1980).

39 Melder, Beginnings of Sisterhood, pp.15-29.
The connection between abolitionism and the emergence of the women's rights movement is highlighted by the relationship between Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. The claim of historians centres on the theory that the women who worked to "free the slaves" became aware of the limitations of their own position in society and seized the opportunity to develop the reform skills necessary to "help themselves." Blanche Glassman Hersch's work reflects this trend as she investigated the connection between abolition and the women's rights movement. In a slightly different interpretation of the value of abolitionism on the emergence of the women's rights movement that reveals how theories have changed, Ellen DuBois concluded that the lesson that female abolitionists learned was "less that they were oppressed than what to do with the perception, how to turn it into a political movement."

In a change of direction from the works of Kraditor and her focus on the intellectual origins of the woman suffrage movement, historians such as Barbara Berg discussed the suffrage movement in connection to key events of social history, such as urbanisation. While not abandoning the importance of the abolitionist movement, Berg looks to the middle class women who joined benevolent groups in the city to deal with problems made inherent by industrialisation as the source of


feminism. Berg credits the rise of industrialisation as stripping women of power and forcing them into the role of domestication that she identifies as the “woman-belle ideal.” In reaction to this she highlights how the middle class women who joined voluntary associations became politicised in that they began to question the socially accepted limitations that were applied to their role as women.

Nancy Cott’s work has added valuable insight into the politicising effects of the separate sphere experience on women and the emergence of the women’s rights movement. Having identified that gender was not only a circumstance that restricted the rights of women, Cott builds on the theory that the women’s sphere also gave women a sense of “solidarity” that allowed a movement to emerge. Cott’s analysis of “the bonds of womanhood” as the basis for the development of enriching female networks highlights the historical trends of the late 1970s and the beginning of a pattern of “uncritical acceptance and repetition” of the concept of separate spheres among women’s historians. In response, contemporary historians need to be encouraged to examine and redesign the historical framework that was developed for women’s history during the 1970s, in order to be able to offer an alternative paradigm.

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46 Ibid., p.5.
48 Ibid., p.1, p.9, p.156, pp. 200-201, p.204.
Cott's use of the term "feminism" in relation to the women's rights movement gave this project a workable definition to identify which women should be classified as feminists. Her suggestion that feminists deliberately entered the public sphere to challenge the traditional patriarchal society reinforces the idea that the concerns over women's rights should not be equated solely with the demand for the enfranchisement of women. In this regard it is appropriate to note that Stanton deserved the label of being a feminist and that the women's rights movement should not only be regarded as the fight for woman suffrage.\(^5\) The earlier view that the women's rights movement should be defined as "the emancipation of women winning legal rights" explains the focus on suffrage and the lack of a scholarly analysis on the broad wide range of concerns that the women's rights movement represented.\(^5\) Given that Stanton directed the early ideological growth of the women's rights movement that created the broad programme for reform that the organisation adopted, her impact needs further exploration to reveal the degree of her influence and the connection between the public and private activities of women.\(^5\)

DuBois' work stressed that the importance of the vote was not what it secured for women but that the demand revealed that women were stepping out of their traditional sphere in order to gain what they perceived to be social power by


\(^5\) An increasing awareness of a more broadly interpreted type of politics that progressive women shaped helped connect the women that appeared to operate outside of their prescribed societal role to those that were entrenched in their sphere. For an excellent article discussing this trend see Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," American Historical Review 89 (June 1984), pp.620-647.
voting.\textsuperscript{53} Highlighting the demand for suffrage as evidence that the women's rights movement deliberately acted to encroach on the dominance of men and as such indicated a break from the activities of other reform groups, DuBois is clear in her opinion that "more than any other legal element in the woman's rights program of...reform, woman suffrage embodied the movement's feminism."\textsuperscript{54} DuBois is perhaps one of the major historians who have aimed to reflect the events of their own lifetime onto history. DuBois seeks out the beginnings of the active feminism of her own era in the demand of the women who first sought the vote. DuBois' work illustrates the problem of presentism; she shapes her questions and answers to connect to the feminist movement of the 1970s rather than keeping her analysis neutral and centred in the period that she is studying. DuBois' technique reflects the desire of women's historians during the late 1970s to utilise the past experience of women to help shape a positive collective identity for women that could be linked to the goals and actions of second wave feminists.

Much of what DuBois writes is imbued with a strong feminist slant, yet she still manages to present a convincing argument. DuBois's success rests on the fact that she attempts to re-analyse already well known suffrage history. Her work serves to remind scholars of the need to constantly re-examine history within the developments of their own era. Throughout her lifetime the issue of feminism developed and DuBois responded by asking new questions in reference to women's history relating to her own experience. New scholars must be aware of the current events of their own generation and not be afraid to use their own experiences to

\textsuperscript{53} DuBois, \textit{Feminism and Suffrage}.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., pp.45-46.
direct their work. One of DuBois' more interesting re-interpretations was that the
women's rights movement was ultimately strengthened rather than weakened by the
split with the abolitionist movement and factions of the women's rights movement.
The break away from abolitionism and those women, who were willing to give
African American men the vote first, encouraged the women's rights movement to
develop which in this case resulted in the adoption of a narrower focus on the issue
of the vote rather than Stanton's broad agenda. DuBois succeeds in providing an
insightful examination of the allies and factions that existed under the title of the
Women's rights movement. The recognition of the conflicts within the women's
rights movement allows for a greater recognition of possible areas to examine the
impact of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's ideas and to discuss her true legacy. One area in
which this work intends to add to DuBois' work is by highlighting that the women's
rights movement that reflected Stanton's ideological impact began in 1848.

In the 1990s, the topic of suffrage and the women's rights movement had a
resurgence in popularity. Christine Bolt presents a detailed comparative study in
her history of The Women's Movements in the United States and Britain.55
Tackling an overwhelming amount of detail, Bolt endeavours to present an account
of the movements on each side of the Atlantic trying to connect common features
while also revealing what made them so different from each other. Bolt briefly
examines the regional differences that existed in terms of class and race but still
mainly concentrates on the white middle class that dominated the women's rights
movement. On the international front the women's movements in Britain and in
America shared similar aims. Yet it was often national trends and issues that

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shaped the character of the movements either in Britain or America. Bolt’s focus on the white middle class aspect of the women’s rights movement is possibly a reflection of which sources she utilised, the need for new sources detailing a more mixed make-up to the movement could be a further area for research for the international differences that existed.

Sara Hunter Graham’s work is one of the important new studies that reflect the growing interest in politics and suffrage. Focusing on the creation of the NAWSA, this book discusses the new generation’s inheritance of the women’s rights movement and the reorganisation that was initiated to reflect the central goal of the movement. What this book presents is a detailed study of the increased political awareness of the women’s rights movement which challenged the view that the 1890s were the “doldrums,” rather it was a “renaissance” of suffrage activity. By exploring Catt’s “winning plan”, Graham reveals the mobilisation of the women’s movement around one goal. This book demonstrates that Stanton’s movement was inherited and embraced, as was Stanton’s demand for female enfranchisement. However, Graham’s work also reveals that Stanton’s complex ideas concerning equality for women were clearly abandoned by the successors of the movement as they contrived to diminish her historical role in the women’s rights movement.

Recent scholarship reflects a new trend in challenging the once accepted similarities of women who coexisted in their separate sphere or that were involved in reform activities. One example of this shift can be seen in The Abolitionist

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Sisterhood, Women’s Political Culture in Antebellum America which endeavours to broaden the commonly held perceptions concerning the race and class of abolitionist women.\(^7\) This is an area of study that still needs to be expanded but currently highlights that the women’s rights movement was not simply made up of one type of woman in regards to their religious beliefs, class distinction, race or economic standing.\(^8\) In utilising this information scholars should be encouraged to revisit the treatment of the women’s rights movement and the individuals that emerged as its leaders in order to appreciate the ideological differences that were evident to expand women’s history. In regards to the treatment of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, this would perhaps offer new evidence to challenge the view that her ideology was overly radical in relation to the woman suffrage movement.

Jean H. Baker’s edited collection of articles serves to reinforce the resurgence of interest in woman suffrage that began in the 1990s and is ongoing.\(^9\) Offering a compilation of the latest historical interpretations of the fight for suffrage it also includes the most recent historiographical essays on the topic of woman suffrage.\(^60\) Asserting that this work is part of the effort to position suffrage on the “center stage” of the “narrative of democracy,” Baker is clearly trying to correct the historical isolation of the women’s rights movement and, as her title reflects, the

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\(^57\) Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood, Women’s Political Culture in Antebellum America* (Ithaca and London, 1995). Highlights that the female membership of the anti slavery movement is not all white or middle class.

\(^58\) In a recent study on the state of women’s history published in 2003, Gerda Lerner comments on the encouraging number of works on African American topics but is dismayed at the lack of significant work on class. Nancy Cott et al, “Considering the State of U.S. Women’s History,” pp.145-163.


struggle for suffrage.\textsuperscript{61} Indicative of the new directions that women’s history is taking, this work would seem to suggest that key figures such as Stanton, that have been marginalised alongside the movement that they have been associated with, should be re-conceptualised against the larger historical context of American history as a whole. Although as one reviewer of Baker’s work highlighted, \textit{Votes for Women: the Struggle for Suffrage Revisited} does not solve all the problems that the separate sphere rhetorical device had left behind, as the role of African American women in the woman suffrage movement remains under represented in this collection.\textsuperscript{62}

As women’s historians have begun to look more carefully at women’s public activities, the relationship between women that have stepped out of their traditional role and women’s history has become less problematic. Recent works on women’s public activities have revealed the interaction that occurred between women and the political world, an area which it had been assumed that women until they gained the right to vote possessed little to no influence over.\textsuperscript{63} While adding to the broadening perception of what constitutes political action such works also serve to further the debate about the public and private spheres that women occupied, highlighting that the two can not necessarily be examined as exclusive elements. As a central character of the women’s movement, Stanton’s actions need to be


\textsuperscript{63} For one strong example, discussing the use of petitions see Susan Zaeske, \textit{Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity} (Chapel Hill, 2003). For a slightly earlier work that reflects on how ordinary women within the abolitionist movement stepped outside the female sphere and justified their actions see Julie Roy Jeffrey, \textit{The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement} (Chapel Hill and London, 1998).
reconsidered against the backdrop of this recent scholarship. Stanton's demand for woman suffrage and the development of her ideological demand for equality connects her to the politicising influences of the antebellum period, diffusing the radical label that she had been given.

During her own lifetime Stanton was increasingly at odds with the movement that she had initiated as her broad ideological vision for women's equality was never limited to her demand for woman suffrage. Stanton took the controversial stance that other aspects of society outside the traditional political realm, such as marriage and religion, needed to be reformed before women enjoyed equal rights. Stanton's refusal to confine herself to the suffrage battle resulted in Susan B. Anthony being adopted as the figurehead and mentor for the younger generation of the women's rights movement with Stanton's historical input being limited to her 1848 demand for the enfranchisement of women.\textsuperscript{64} The neglect of Stanton's full legacy becomes apparent with the realisation that Stanton had been correct in her assumption that the vote would fail to achieve full equality for women. Her realisation that other aspects in society, in addition to the demand for the vote, needed to be targeted for reform was reconfirmed when women in the second half of the twentieth century tackled the same issues that Stanton had discussed in the nineteenth century. In addressing these issues Stanton's legacy needs to be explored and expanded against a "wider framework" and with a "narrower focus."\textsuperscript{65} In the context of this project Stanton's actions needed and deserved to be explored beyond her demand for the vote. The two separate aspects of Stanton's legacy need to be identified and discussed in order to re-incorporate


\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
Stanton’s full significance in the field of women’s history and to combine women’s actions within the separate spheres or as Linda Kerber has suggested abandoning the notion of separate spheres to present a truly broad illustration of the political activities of women.\(^6\) Stanton’s ideological agenda for equality and the women’s rights movement that she instigated illustrate that Stanton’s importance extended beyond the fight for woman suffrage and allows for a narrower focus on the impact and transfer of her true legacy.

Alma Lutz first acknowledged Elizabeth Cady Stanton as a “Torchbearer for women” in 1940.\(^7\) This was one of the earliest Elizabeth Cady Stanton biographies setting the pattern that others followed and highlighting the lack of scholarly attention that has been focused on Stanton. Lutz presented the details of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s life in a clear and concise narrative style offering the uninformed reader their first introduction to one of the most important characters in the women’s movement. Many recent biographers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton can be criticised due to the fact that they often tended to re-examine what Lutz wrote about Elizabeth Cady Stanton rather than endeavouring to conduct their own analysis of the manuscripts of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, revealing the lack of true scholarly research on Stanton.

The major flaw of Lutz’s work is that a lack of citation casts doubt on some of her statements since they cannot be supported. One example would be her report


that Stanton returned the love of her brother-in-law, something for which there are no real records other than Lutz's text. Since Lutz's work was one of the earliest biographies of Elizabeth Cady Stanton it can not go unappreciated, yet it must be remarked that many of the subsequent scholars have allowed Lutz's statements to stand unchallenged.

Lois Banner writes a disappointingly brief introduction to Stanton, revealing that lack of scholarly attention granted to Elizabeth Cady Stanton continued into the 1980s. Banner does not seem to have moved on from the basic assumptions made in Alma Lutz's 1940 biography. Banner's work reveals the need for further research on the central characters within the movement including a more in-depth analysis of Stanton. However, the historical rejection of Stanton for Anthony reflects why Stanton has been accorded so little scholarly attention. Casting Stanton as 'the foremost American woman of her generation,' Banner is representative of many of the scholars of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, tending to focus on her public works, accepting at face value assumptions about her private life. There is a real need for a balanced examination of Stanton's public and private lives to present a more accurate portrayal of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her impact on women's history. In acknowledging that women's history initially focused on the public more radical lives of women because they appear to be entering the male sphere, Stanton clearly appears to be an appropriate subject. However her importance has been distorted by focusing on Stanton just in connection to the bid

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69 Ibid.
for the ballot. Stanton needs to be explored by biographers to reveal her true importance.

Although Beth Waggenspack’s work on Elizabeth Cady Stanton focused on her skills as a public speaker, Waggenspack revealed aspects of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s impact. Because Waggenspack is not primarily interested in women’s history, the value of this work is limited. However, she is the first scholar who has made an effort to discuss the impact of Elizabeth Cady Stanton through her speeches. The discussion of Stanton’s role models from whom she learned her skills as an orator and as a leader was particularly interesting as it helped provide evidence of how Stanton developed not only her skills as a speaker but as an intellectual leader. This was a relevant piece of information to this project since its aim is to examine Elizabeth Cady Stanton as a role model who encouraged women to embrace the fight for equality across generations of women. An interesting point develops with the knowledge that Elizabeth Cady Stanton later abandoned her role models to develop her own ideas, just as eventually her own pupils would do the same to her.

Elisabeth Griffith’s biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton highlights the extreme self-confidence and ability that led to Stanton being recognised as the originator of the women’s rights movement in America. It is fortunate that while

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71 Waggenspack’s focus is on the development of Stanton’s rhetorical skills.

Griffith is aware of the strengths of Stanton's character she is still able to balance it with detailed information of her often racist and elitist ideas, revealing for the first time an accurate portrayal of Stanton, flaws and all. Griffith is the first biographer to try to balance the personal and public life of Stanton. Yet in connection to this dissertation it is an incomplete examination of Stanton because it lacks a detailed analysis of the impact of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's ideas on her followers. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's ideas and speeches would have been key recruitment tools; it is here that Elizabeth Cady Stanton's impact should be judged. However as yet there appears to be a gap in the historical treatment of Stanton that has neglected to examine Stanton's intellectual legacy on a large scale.

Ann D. Gordon is to be congratulated for her effort that has resulted in the compilation of the papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony on microfilm in their complete form and the selections that are printed in her books. Gordon focuses on papers written during the years 1840-1880. These publications are the first three of a six part series of books. For the first time scholars have relatively easy access to the works of the women who first led and organised the Women's Rights Movement. The ease of access to such primary evidence serves as the possible impetus for a fresh wave of studies based on personal research. In her introduction to each selection, Gordon provides a clear discussion of the variety of themes that can be seen in Stanton's and Anthony's work.

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The major impact of this series of books is that it has provided access to many of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's writings that have gone previously un-discussed. These documents may lead to fresh interpretations of some of Stanton's already well-known ideas and beliefs, but also encourages scholars to take their research of Stanton in new directions. This book provides an ample opportunity to provide a more detailed academic project on the impact of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The one criticism of some of the texts that Gordon had chosen was that she failed to select some of Stanton's more personal writings that would have balanced her public opinions. However once more this perhaps highlights something for a future historian to redress. On a positive note Gordon’s collection does provide a clear opportunity for scholars to examine Stanton’s evolving strategies and ideologies.

In trying to trace the impact and legacy of Stanton an obvious starting point would be an examination of her daughter, Harriot Stanton Blatch. However, to focus on Blatch as an empty vessel who received her mother’s intellectual inheritance would minimise Blatch’s own contribution. Ellen DuBois succeeds in giving Harriot Stanton Blatch some of the recognition that she deserves.\textsuperscript{74} Blatch wanted to earn acclaim on her own merits, not due to the fact that she was Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s daughter. Harriot Stanton Blatch had a major impact on the women’s rights movement in her own right; for example she campaigned for equal rights at work and state payment for mothers as well as providing some of the key tactics that were employed in the final struggle for suffrage. The biography on Harriot Stanton Blatch reveals that finally some of the lesser-known women who

\textsuperscript{74} Ellen Carol DuBois, \textit{Harriot Stanton Blatch and the Winning of Woman Suffrage} (Yale, 1997).
were involved in the American women’s rights movement are now being examined. The significance of this is that it reveals that women such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were not unique; it places them against a broader historical picture. In addition such new biographies provided this project with valuable references to trace the transfer and rejection of Stanton’s legacy throughout the women’s rights movement and from generation to generation.

DuBois provides an excellent and much needed biography, filling one of the gaps in American women’s history by adding a new member to its ranks. One major disappointment is that no other major work on Harriot Stanton Blatch has been published in order to compare DuBois’s work. Historians need to be encouraged to continue to add new biographies to the field of women’s history. Such works are needed to promote debate and future scholarship.

In her study of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the first women’s rights convention, Judith Wellman represents one of the latest works that have started the process of writing Stanton back into women’s history. Wellman’s research offers a comprehensive examination of the founding of the women’s rights movement in connection to Stanton. In focusing on Stanton, Wellman emphasises her belief that Stanton’s life reflected the fact that the three powerful elements, the antislavery movement, the radical Quakers and the legal reformers came together to work for women’s rights. Wellman’s significant research on Stanton ends with a discussion of the Seneca Falls Convention leaving other historians to tackle the task of

75 Judith Wellman, The Road to Seneca Falls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman’s Rights Convention (Urbana and Chicago, 2004).
expanding the work on Stanton. Wellman’s work highlights how Stanton had organised and initiated a social movement that reflected her concern with women’s rights, illuminating how Stanton’s broad ideological vision of equality directed the movement that emerged. Scholars should now take the next step and expand the limited view of Stanton’s legacy in regards to her ideas and the movement she set in motion.

Thus while several historians have written about the American women’s rights movement and, Elizabeth Cady Stanton there are still many areas that remain neglected or marginalised from mainstream history. Most of the writers, who have concentrated on the women’s rights movement or the key individuals within the movement, have done so in connection to the fight for suffrage during the initial efforts of writing women back into history. The few that have made an effort to see the individual as part of the whole movement have tended to focus on the impact of the movement on the individual, rather than the individual’s impact on the movement. This scholarship centres on reconnecting Stanton to the movement that she created, expanding on how her ideology inspired her peers and subsequent generations to activism to achieve equality for women. Her legacy is more complicated than a simple demand for suffrage, a fact that many historians have failed to explore. The biographies that focus on Stanton tend to be surprisingly lacking in scholarly effort often relying on earlier historians’ research, making little

76 Wellman, The Road to Seneca Falls, pp.209-240. Wellman does provide a brief overview in her last chapter covering 1848-1982.

77 Connecting to the recognition of Stanton’s legacy there is also a need to acknowledge its limitations and where other factors have contributed to interest in reform and women’s rights. For example historians of women’s history have increasingly examined the other routes that women took to enter into antebellum reform. For one of the best examples that reflects on the variety of factors that contributed to the development of women’s rights see Lori D. Ginzberg, Untidy Origins: A Story of Woman’s Rights in Antebellum New York (Chapel Hill and London, 2005).
or no attempt to challenge old assumptions by re-examining the evidence. This is even more surprising considering that many of the collections that deal with the women’s rights movement are easily accessible.78

This project seeks to examine Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the dual legacy she left for American women. This work is not a biography of Stanton’s life, although a new scholarly biography is certainly needed. This project will allow Stanton’s key ideas to be studied in an effort to illustrate the impact of her ideology on those who received her intellectual heritage. The movement she initiated will be explored in regards to the correlation and rejection of her ideas in an effort to understand Stanton’s legacy. Elizabeth Cady Stanton stands out as a token for the need for further research of the American women’s rights movement especially in regards to the women that were examined as public figures in the early accounts of the women’s rights movement. Stanton has emerged as something of an enigma, classified as radical by her own peers; modern historians need to take action to reveal an accurate portrait of her.

This study of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s influence reflects the need for current historians to reinvigorate scholarship concerning the women’s rights movement and its members by re-evaluating the contribution of those women who had been highlighted due to the standards of patriarchal history as this offers, at least in the case of Stanton, a one sided, overly simplified appreciation of her impact. This project offers an important contribution to the current historiography of women’s history as it places one of the key figures of the women’s rights

78 Many of the collections have been put onto Microfilm and are available at numerous libraries.
movement into mainstream American history. As Stanton’s complete legacy becomes apparent her ideological commitment to equality for women connects her to the politicising experiences and the complex ideologies that shaped the New Republic. By adding to the effort to re-conceptualise the framework of women’s history that has marginalised it as an academic field, Stanton’s legacy further illuminates the relationship between the public and private roles of women that other scholarship has already identified. Finally, as women’s history continues to develop in new directions that redefine its conceptual structure, historians of women’s history should be encouraged to revisit past scholarship and challenge old assumptions with the benefit of a fresh perspective. Part of this process should include reincorporating women as historical agents back into the larger historical record otherwise their actions will remain out of context, rendering their true historical value invisible.
Chapter Two: Introduction

The nineteenth century American women’s movement which urged women to demand and fight toward social and political equality has been identified as a topic worthy of scholarly attention since the early 1960s.¹ Increasingly historians have come to the conclusion that such action by women was not without precedent as they discovered that as early as the eighteenth century a few women had already begun to challenge their traditional role in society.² While this thesis intends to illuminate Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s legacy, this chapter endeavours to place her actions within their historical context in order not to offer a distorted view of her impact that would ultimately undermine Stanton’s significance. The organisation of the 1848 conference at Seneca Falls to discuss the rights of women in upstate New York did not come out of a vacuum; the fact that women attended the meeting offers evidence that they already shared common concerns about their situation and that they were willing at the very least to consider taking action.³

Although this dissertation is not intended as a biography of Stanton, it is important to reflect on a few key events of her life that offer an insight into the early influence of her family and the development of her women’s rights


³ The most recent research on the organisation of the Seneca Falls Conference is presented in Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman’s Rights Convention* (Urbana and Chicago, 2004).
philosophy. Elizabeth Cady the seventh of ten children, of whom only five would survive into adulthood, was born into an extremely prosperous family in upstate New York in 1815. Her social standing would influence the formative stage of Stanton’s intellectual philosophy. As the combination of the privilege that she received as a member of the “first family of Johnstown” and the restrictions of gender, which she encountered as a daughter and later as a wife, provided the ideological foundations for her search for political, social and civil independence for women.4

Through her parents, Stanton not only received the benefit of a high social standing and financial security, she would also acquire a sense of legitimacy for her later actions. Her father, Daniel Cady was a self-made man who had made the most of the opportunities that he had received. While pursuing a successful legal career as a lawyer and later as a judge, Cady had acquired a sizeable wealth through land ownership that would grant his family access to a very comfortable lifestyle. Stanton’s eventual access to the Cady wealth would later provide her with the financial means to support her long-term involvement in the women’s rights movement. Stanton’s mother, Margaret Livingston Cady was related to the influential Livingston family who owned sizable amounts of property in the Hudson valley.5 The daughter of a celebrated officer of the American Revolution, Colonel James Livingston, Margaret possessed a lineage that directly linked her to the goals of the War of Independence and the values of the New Republic.6 Stanton would

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5 Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls*, p.18.
6 Ibid.
utilize this familial connection to strengthen her demand for women's rights, as she battled for the "inalienable rights" of the Revolution that had yet to be extended to women.7

Stanton's first awareness of the importance of gender centred on her father's reaction to the death of her brother Eleazar in 1826, as this event highlighted the disparity of how the sexes were valued by society. Her father's inconsolable despair over the loss of his only son led Stanton on a path that challenged the educational, social and political boundaries of womanhood as she tried to fill the void left by her brother's death. Unfortunately, despite her father's occasional indulgences of Stanton's wishes, her efforts would prove to be a source of frustration rather than pride for her father. As she confided in a letter to Susan B. Anthony, her lifetime political ally, "To think that all in me of which my father would have felt a proper pride had I been a man is deeply mortifying to him because I am a woman."8 This sentiment would only make Stanton more determined to reform the existing patriarchal structure of society, especially concerning the education of women.

Stanton's family wealth ensured that she received the educational opportunity that few others could grant their daughters. Although she was not permitted to attend the same college as her brother, Union College, Schenectady, Stanton's parents allowed her to attend the very progressive Emma Willard Troy


Female Seminary; where she received the best female education available for young women at that time. Stanton later praised her “good teachers, who took us through the pitfalls of logic, rhetoric, philosophy, and the sciences.” Although the seminary offered courses that paralleled those of many male educational institutions it still failed to broaden the professional horizon for young women. The female students who attended seminaries such as Willard’s, were schooled to combine their education with the societal functions that was expected from them as women. Stanton and her peers were fashioned for “social leadership” within the context of their achieving a useful, positive and “visible role in civil society” within the boundaries of the female sphere. Although her frustration at not being able to attend Union College and her experience at Troy would later influence her demands for equal educational and increased professional opportunities for women, it would also help prepare Stanton for her role as the leader of the women’s rights movement.

Stanton developed a keen awareness of the legal standing of women through her access to her father’s law books and her exposure to his legal clerks with whom she engaged in theoretical legal discussions concerning the rights of women. The realization that marriage rendered women legally invisible highlighted to Stanton the inequality that existed between men and women. Her interest in the status of

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9 The Emma Willard Troy Female Seminary was a groundbreaking school for girls that opened in September 1821. Willard’s educational belief centred on the fact that girls could learn all classical material that up to that point had only be taught in male education institutions.

10 Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp.443-44.


women later led Stanton to actively campaign for married women's property rights in 1846.\textsuperscript{13} Her involvement in this organisation provided the ideological foundation for the development of Stanton's ideas. As Stanton later acknowledged "all phases of the question were touched upon, involving the relations of the sexes, and gradually widening to all human interests – political, civil, religious and social."\textsuperscript{14} Clearly as Stanton's ideas matured, she had come to recognise that women would need complete self-sovereignty in order to be truly equal members of society who could participate in all areas of human interest.

Stanton's cousin Gerrit Smith and his wife Ann, of Peterboro, New York, introduced Stanton to a variety of reform movements as they welcomed a number of prominent reformers into their home.\textsuperscript{15} It was through the Smiths that Stanton was first introduced to her future husband, anti-slavery reformer Henry Stanton in 1839.\textsuperscript{16} Her subsequent 1840 elopement to marry Henry in Johnstown would have a profound impact on Stanton's life and her involvement in the women's rights movement. As she accompanied her husband to London to a key Abolitionist Convention in London for their honeymoon in 1840, she was further introduced into the reform world. However, her meeting with the famed Quaker abolitionist Lucretia Mott was the pivotal point for Stanton. The refusal to seat the female abolitionists at the London Convention or to permit them to speak out against slavery signified the beginning of Stanton's commitment to reforming the status of

\textsuperscript{13} New York's Married Women’s Property Act would not become a law until 1848. Stanton and Susan B. Anthony would later campaign to extend this law in 1860.

\textsuperscript{14} Stanton, Anthony and Gage, eds., \textit{History of Woman Suffrage}, vol.1, pp.51-52.

\textsuperscript{15} Wellman, \textit{The Road to Seneca Falls}, pp.36-37.

women. It would also inspire the promise of future action and the eventual
development of the women's rights movement by Stanton and Mott.17

Stanton's life changed in 1847; it was the year she and her family moved to
Seneca Falls, New York, from Boston. Publicly the reason for the move was Henry
Stanton's health; however the historian Elisabeth Griffith suggests that the
motivation for the move was linked to his failing political career in New York.18
This move left Stanton feeling increasingly isolated from her friends and her
interests, and for the first time in her life, she was exposed to the drudgery of
housework. While Boston had allowed Stanton to enjoy all that a big city could
offer, especially the ability to find home help, the move to the countryside meant
that there were no trained servants available. In her Reminiscences, Stanton details
the contrast between Boston and Seneca Falls, "In Seneca Falls my life was
comparatively solitary, and the change from Boston was somewhat depressing.
There, all my immediate friends were reformers, I had near neighbors, a new home
with all the modern conveniences, and well trained servants."19 Stanton had no
choice but to take on many of the tasks that were involved in running a household
herself, and her comments reveal these were not tasks that she enjoyed: "the novelty
of housekeeping had passed away, and much that was once attractive in domestic
life was now irksome."20 Awareness that such domestic concerns were the reality
of many women's lives led Stanton to help organise the convention at Seneca Falls

17 There are many references to the importance of the Mott and Stanton meeting to the organisation
of the first meeting to discuss the rights of women at Seneca Falls. For the most recent see Wellman,
The Road to Seneca Falls, pp.58-64.

18 Griffith, In Her Own Right, p.48.

19 Stanton, Eighty Years and More, p.145.

20 Ibid.
to discuss women's issues. Although it was here that Stanton made her famous demand for woman suffrage in the Declaration of Sentiments, the issue of suffrage was not as central to the women's rights movement.

Stanton's relocation to Seneca Falls illuminates the climax of her dissatisfaction with married life as she recognised that unlike her husband who was free to participate in the intellectual community outside Seneca Falls and their home, she was restricted by raising children and the notions of her appropriate duties. However the move to Seneca Falls also geographically positioned Stanton within a community that had a variety of reform networks in its midst. The stage for the 1848 Women's Rights Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments had been established, as the ideas and the network of reformers to organise and attend such a convention converged. The result was not only the demand for female suffrage, but also a broad programme for reform that anticipated the need for complete self-sovereignty for women as it sought their political, social and civil equality. As Stanton shaped this vision for total equality in turn, her philosophy would direct the ambitions of the early women's rights movement to struggle to secure her philosophy of change.

Surprisingly the friendship between Stanton and Susan B. Anthony and their shared commitment to reforming the status of women, which lasted fifty-one years until Stanton's death in 1902, would not have its origins at the first women's rights convention in 1848. The two women would meet in 1851, brought together by a shared acquaintance, Amelia Bloomer, who was involved with the Temperance

Wellman, _The Road to Seneca Falls_, pp.121-154.
Movement. The partnership that evolved between Stanton and Anthony ensured the survival of the women’s rights movement first as the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869 and later as the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890. The value of this friendship hinges on the fact that through Anthony’s assistance Stanton was able to escape some of the burdens of her domestic life, enabling her to continue to develop her ideology of equality for women. Despite the length of their friendship, the Stanton and Anthony alliance progressively became strained as they increasingly disagreed on whether suffrage should be the sole focus of the women’s movement. In particular, Stanton’s strong commitment to religious reform and her publication of the Woman’s Bible in 1895 would undermine Stanton’s position as the mother of the women’s rights movement. Ultimately, Anthony would replace Stanton as the leader of the movement and as the historical figure associated with the battle for female suffrage after the Nineteenth Amendment finally secured the vote for women in 1920.22

During the nineteenth century, the lives of women were directed by the ideological construct of separate, gender specific roles for men and women that had emerged during the eighteenth century. According to Barbara Welter this division resulted in women becoming “the hostage in the home,” as women were judged by society on the strength of their four virtues, “piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.”23 Utilising the term “the Cult of True Womanhood” to describe her findings, Welter’s research introduced other historians to the notion of separate

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22 The Nineteenth Amendment, also known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, secured suffrage for all women over twenty-one in 1920.

spheres and encouraged them to share her interpretation that women were negatively restricted by the confines of their defined role.\textsuperscript{24} However while accepting that women occupied a uniquely defined position, other scholars have challenged Welter's analysis with the view that the creation of a distinct female identity actually equipped women with specific qualities and duties that enabled the expansion of their traditional boundaries.\textsuperscript{25} The repeated acknowledgement that women occupied a specific position that defined their social function, either in a negative or positive way, supports the view that women during the nineteenth century were expected to conform to the vision of "True Womanhood". The events at Seneca Falls are evidence of Stanton's own frustration at the boundaries that she faced as a woman, encouraged by those women who had already begun to step out of their defined role in society. However, Stanton's discontent is also indicative of the shared dissatisfaction of her generation as they responded to her demand for equality for women in the "Declaration of Sentiments."\textsuperscript{26}

In the 1840s the French traveller Alexis de Tocqueville commented on the unique position that women in the United States occupied during the nineteenth century. He recorded "that although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow circle of domestic life, and their situation is in some respects one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen women occupying a loftier


\textsuperscript{25} For those that see the separate spheres as a positive construct see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America," \textit{American Quarterly} 23 (October 1971), pp.562-84.

\textsuperscript{26} Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Declaration of Sentiments," Stanton, Anthony and Gage, eds., \textit{History of Woman Suffrage}, vol.1, pp. 70-71.
This extract reflects middle-class society’s acceptance of women becoming increasingly limited to the domestic sphere during the nineteenth century whilst also emphasising that this confined status acted to elevate the position of women. The subordinate status that women were expected to occupy was viewed as the natural order by most of society. “Females fill a particular station in society. They move in a sphere of their own which they alone were designed to occupy. It would be singular, if we did not find in woman, powers as different from those of man as the station which she is required to fill is different from his.” Nineteenth century women were expected to occupy a separate realm from men, a way of life that could be construed as having been “imposed on women”, “created by women” or “expected to be observed by women” depending on the intent of the interpretation and whether the idea of a unique female culture is viewed as a positive or negative construct. In addition the acceptance of the idea that men and women occupied distinct arenas, public versus private, has also led to the realisation that these two cultures while separate were still mutually influential. Ultimately, the impact of a culture based on the creation of a private domestic role for women would eventually become visible with the emergence of various reform groups and eventually the American women’s rights movement.

In the period following the American Revolution and into the early nineteenth century the status of women had drastically altered. The constraints of


30 Ibid., p.18.
the ideology of the domestic sphere that were imposed on women during the
nineteenth century provided a sharp contrast to the lives of Colonial women, whose
activities had been a crucial element of the successful productivity in the home.31
Historians stress that during the colonial period, due to a lower ratio of women to
men, women enjoyed a sense of equality with men as they worked side by side to
ensure their common survival.32 However, recent research has challenged this
concept of equality with the knowledge that the tasks, even during the colonial
period, were divided on the basis of gender.33 The puritan ethic that permeated
colonial society stipulated that women worked partly because it was considered
their “civic duty” and society approved of women who laboured to help to support
their families.34 Despite this apparent sanction by society, many of the jobs that
were taken on by women during the colonial period took place in the home and
even if the work duties of women appeared to take them outside of their private
domain, in actuality their tasks were often acceptable extensions of their traditional
roles.35 The work that the Colonial women accomplished did not signify their
independence or that they were trying to assert themselves in a patriarchal society.
Women’s work reflected their dependence on the traditional roles that existed in the

31 Glenna Matthews, JUST A HOUSEWIFE: The Rise and Fall of Domesticity in America (New
33 Matthews, JUST A HOUSEWIFE, p.4; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Good Wives: Image and Reality in
the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650- 1750 ( New York, 1982), p.6; Charles Sellers,
35 Ibid.
family structure, as they committed their efforts to the survival of their families and accepted the specialisation of tasks that came with the division of gender.\textsuperscript{36}

The end of the American Revolution and the ensuing construction of the New Republic rested on the belief that America and its citizens had successfully seized their national and personal liberation from Great Britain. Independence was connected to the duties and rights of the citizen and above all, citizenship was increasingly defined by the ability to vote. The construction of citizenship left women in an uncertain situation as the same men, who had battled to separate themselves from Great Britain over issues of liberty and self-representation, failed to grant women equal access to the political or legal systems that the New Republic established.\textsuperscript{37} In response, the republican ideology that had emerged during the American Revolution engineered a specific role for women that validated their position as citizens without granting them a direct political voice, rather the importance of the new role that republican women accepted centred on the value of their indirect influence on the New Republic.\textsuperscript{38}

Emerging in response to the politicising experience of the Revolution and ideas of the Enlightenment on women, the “Republican Motherhood” ideology presented a clearly defined role for women in the New Republic whilst the vote

\textsuperscript{36} Sellers, \textit{The Market Revolution}, pp.10-11. Sellers highlights that in the pre-market culture men and women accepted the division of labour based on gender as it was a key factor in their survival in the Colonial environment.


remained the male standard of citizenship. Acceptable to women as it provided them with a semi-political role, it was also sanctioned by men as they approved of the fact that it did not take women out of their traditional sphere. A term first introduced by Linda K. Kerber, she envisioned the political role of women within the family, "By refusing to marry unpatriotic men, by raising their sons to be the next generation of virtuous citizens, women could play a meaningful political role, assuring the future stability of the fragile republic." Increasingly acknowledged as the custodian and educator of the values of the republic, the traditional duties of women as moral guardians of the family took on a more significant meaning as women were conferred with the responsibility of action and the sense of duty that citizenship embodied. However despite the apparent gains of such a defined role in the New Republic, the same position restricted women to remain in their traditional arena and failed to offer them full political participation through enfranchisement. In response to the politicising experience of the American Revolution some women reacted by increasingly challenging their traditional place in society by entering into a variety of reform movements. As the enlightened message permeated society, women clearly viewed their efforts within the context of preserving and expanding the core tenet of the revolution, the right of all to pursue the happiness and liberty.


As the industrialisation of America took men out of the family home to earn a living in a new industrial environment what ensued was what one contemporary of the period identified as a “complete revolution of domestic life.”\textsuperscript{43} Although the Industrial Revolution is no longer blamed for creating the separate spheres for the sexes it did allow the ideology of true womanhood to flourish as middle class women remained in the home, expected to fulfil their duties as mothers of the New Republic. In the capitalistic world as men moved away from a subsistence existence to new dependence on wages, female work became what one historian has described as “socially invisible”, as it remained mainly domestic in nature and largely unpaid.\textsuperscript{44} Female labour in and out of the home took second place in terms of importance; men had a duty to support their families and were paid accordingly. In the cases where women did work alongside men their value was made clear, as employers paid female workers less than their male counterparts, excusing the difference with the belief that female work was a temporary situation as women waited for matrimony.\textsuperscript{45}

As men were increasingly separated from the home, the domestic life of women was exalted to a new higher status through the ideology known as the ‘cult of domesticity’.\textsuperscript{46} Responsible for highlighting the concept of separate spheres this ideological construct identified men as belonging to the public domain of employment and politics, while women were associated with the private domain of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{43} Reverend Horace Bushnell as quoted in Sellers, \textit{Market Revolution}, p.28.

\textsuperscript{44} Sellers, \textit{Market Revolution}, p.242.


\textsuperscript{46} Matthews, \textit{JUST A HOUSEWIFE}, p.35.
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home and family.\textsuperscript{47} The transformation from an agricultural society to a nation
driven by capitalism prompted the continued division of the sexes, as it reinforced
the existing gender divide of the pre-industrial world.\textsuperscript{48} The significance and true
nature of the concept of separate spheres has been debated among current scholars
of women's history as they have realised that some antebellum women had moved
beyond their traditional boundary and that not all women belonged to the white
middle class world that constructed this role for women.\textsuperscript{49} Increasingly the female
sphere became the “touchstone of values for reforming the entire society,” as
women as guardians of the home expanded their platform of activity to include any
aspect of the public arena that might impact their private domain.\textsuperscript{50} For many
women that were involved in a variety of reform networks, the public and private
domains were connected.\textsuperscript{51}

Reform was not the only factor that led women to branch across the gender
divide, as lower class women and widows had little choice but to enter the male
public sphere in order to support themselves and their families.\textsuperscript{52} The passage of
property acts during the mid-nineteenth century further illustrates the impact of

\textsuperscript{47} Amy Dru Stanley, “Home life and the Morality of the Market” in The Market Revolution in
America: Social, Political and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880, Melvyn Stokes and Stephen

\textsuperscript{48} Sellers, Market Revolution, p.11.

\textsuperscript{49} For overviews of the current discussion on the concept of separate spheres see Cathy N. Davidson,
“Preface: No More Separate Spheres!,” American Literature 70 (September 1998), pp. 443-463;
The American Historical Review 89 (June 1984), pp. 620-647. For a current discussion of women in
the public sphere see Branson, These Fiery Frenchified Dames.

\textsuperscript{50} Matthews, JUST A HOUSEWIFE, p.35; Baker, “Domestication of Politics,” pp. 621n.3.

\textsuperscript{51} Jeanne Boydston, Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early
Republic (New York, 1990), pp.75-119.

\textsuperscript{52} Sellers, Market Revolution, p.25, p.28.
capitalism on the lives of women, offering a new perspective of female entrance into the male world. Although the advent of women possessing the right to hold their own property would later play a role in the demand for female enfranchisement, initially the decision to award women legal ownership rights was more closely linked to the emergence of a capitalist society. Marriage for women resulted in her “dependence” on her husband, while her husband in contrast gained legal possession of his wife’s assets to support his independent status, a trade for his protection and representation.\footnote{Nancy F. Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934,” \textit{American Historical Review} 103 (Dec., 1998), p.1452.} Coverture rendered women legally invisible, as all rights of ownership were immediately transferred to the husband. In an environment where business empires were being moulded, the wealthy recognised the need to protect their newly garnished fortunes as it was transferred not only from one generation to the next, but also into the hands of future sons-in-laws. In response the possibility of granting property rights to wealthy daughters gained support, as this tactic seemed to be an acceptable method to preserve the economic integrity of many family fortunes. Although some states granted women the legal ability to own property, the right for married women to inherit either wealth or property, increasingly became a controversial issue. In New York State, many recognised that the issue of “property rights and political rights were inextricably bound together”, as land ownership was the caveat that typically granted citizens the right to vote in the New Republic.\footnote{Wellman, \textit{Road to Seneca Falls}, p.145.} This connection perhaps almost inevitably, alluded to future demands for female enfranchisement, as married women recognised that they were in the same position as pre-Revolutionary men, property
owners subject to taxation without political representation. Earlier exposure to the
effects and apparent success of the American Revolution had politicised women,
leaving them equipped with an example of a political agenda and a sense of
righteousness, as they saw themselves fulfilling the ideology of the revolution.
These women were poised for action.

The new wealth from industry brought with it new expectations of standards
of living. The acceptance of the puritan work ethic was disregarded as marriage
was no longer seen as a domestic partnership. Increasingly the separation of the
private domain from the public arena became a signal of success that both
couraged and accommodated the changing concepts of gender roles. The ability
to provide the women of the family with a domain that in theory isolated them from
the aggression of the capitalistic world, reflected the wealth of the family and
couraged women to fulfil their duties as moral mothers of the home.\textsuperscript{55} The
clearly defined roles that existed for both men and women were not only theorised,
they presented a sense of order and structure for a new secular society to develop.\textsuperscript{56}
The role of “womanhood” was matched by an equally defined concept of
“manhood”, a protective figure that not only represented his family politically but
was responsible for their financial and material well being in the industrial world.\textsuperscript{57}
Women, who breached the realm of their sphere, even in an effort to utilise their
moral attributes to improve society, were frowned upon by those who embraced the

\textsuperscript{55} Boydston, \textit{Home and Work}, pp.70-71. Boydston also reflects on the point that during
the nineteenth century work was not viewed as labour, due to its unpaid status rather it was view as an
aspect of leisure for the married middle class woman. p.141.

\textsuperscript{56} Boydston, \textit{Home and Work}, p.56.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p.56; Bolt, \textit{Women's Movements}, pp.6-7; Clapp, \textit{Mothers Of All Children} , pp.7-9.
notion of separate spheres. The divide that existed amongst women, on their appropriate position in society was illuminated by the materialisation of the anti-suffrage movement in America. Arising as a counter movement anti-suffrage action was a direct response to the efforts of the women’s rights movement to enfranchise women, fearful that such a shift in traditional political gender roles would have a negative impact on the family structure and society.\(^{58}\)

In the construction of the New Republic and the developing industrial world, education was offered to women on the basis that they needed advancement to be able to fulfil their duties as mothers and educate their children to be good citizens. However, access to education eventually encouraged women to broaden their traditional arena of action allowing them to expand past “the sphere where nature has placed them.”\(^{59}\) The Episcopalian minister John S. C. Gardiner illustrated how education for women was justified and tailored to meet the needs of “Republican Motherhood”, in an address to the Boston Female Asylum in 1809 he stated that it is dangerous for women to be lacking in a sound education “as beings, who are to be wives, and mothers, the first and most important guardians and instructors of the rising generation, as being endued [sic] with reason, and designed for immortality.”\(^{60}\) The successful justification for women’s education began a process of widening the female sphere of domesticity, as educational access began to increase. The female seminary movement surfaced as a response to the

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\(^{60}\) Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, pp.101-125.
prescribed role for women as "citizens of a republic and mothers of future statesmen." 61 Although the education provided at these institutions varied, the female seminary leader Catharine Beecher provides a strong example of the sentiment that prompted female action when she offered the advice that "A lady should study, not to shine but to act." 62 Beecher's advice and her commitment to educating women with the skills of domesticity revealed the paradox that existed in the practice of education for women. Access to learning was offered to women in order to preserve the traditional concept of separate spheres with the premise that women should have access to higher levels of education to develop their ability to fulfil their natural obligations. However, as women were provided with the skills to meet their duties in the New Republic, they were also being shaped unknowingly as agents of change. Education offered women access to new work roles that expanded their sphere of influence outside the home even if they could be considered as extensions of their home duties. 63 Entrance into educational institutions by women served to highlight the other restrictions that were placed on their lives, such as access to higher levels of education, equal opportunity to pursue all professions and the inability to vote. 64

The cult of true womanhood gave women a sense of obligation to use their female talents to improve society. 65 While an understanding of the motives of

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61 Melder, Beginnings of Sisterhood, p.15.
62 Catharine Beecher quoted in Melder, Beginnings of Sisterhood, p.16.
63 Access to the teaching profession would be the best example of this extension of the traditional roles of women.
64 Lerner, "Lady and The Mill Girl," p.27.
65 Branson, These Fiery Frenchified Dames, p.144.
action should include the view that women’s involvement in reform, was in part, an expression of the “ordinarily repressed desire for an expansion of their role.” It should also be acknowledged that the spark of action for many women was the belief that it was their duty to address the problems of society that were perceived to have a direct impact on the home. This impulse led many women to join a series of antebellum reform movements. As one of the most successful of these reform movements, temperance exemplified the problems of society reflecting how quickly it could be corrupted, in this case by the evils of alcohol. The temperance movement served to highlight the justification for action that women used to enter into the reform arena as “drinking came to symbolize the decline of traditional society...and the moral values” of society. The white middle class population of Jacksonian America became increasingly concerned with the effects of the evils of alcohol and the possible ensuing degradation of society. This trepidation directly connected to the increasing immigrant population and the amount of alcohol they consumed. In response to the apparent threat to the moral fabric of society, the temperance movement stirred into action, supported by both sexes as they advocated the prohibition of alcohol. However, in line with the accepted ideology of separate spheres, women were not allowed to play an active role in the temperance movement. Restricted by a doctrine that defined the degree of appropriate female participation in reform, women organised to create their own temperance societies. Susan B. Anthony stands out as one of the women that took such action with the establishment of a temperance group, the Daughters of


Temperance. Such groups based their activities on the belief that as women, the sanctioned moral guardians of the home, they possessed both a right and a duty to expand their realm and use their expertise to rectify the problems of society. As social reform allowed women to step into the public arena, their action signified their confidence in their ability to offer a critique of male society from their unique perspective of the private sphere.

As the origins of the women’s rights movement are currently re-examined by scholars, the bond between the Anti-Slavery and the women’s rights movements remains a constant illustration of the interaction and facilitation that reform networks fostered amongst their membership. Driven to join the abolition movement by their commonly shared belief, that was tainted with the “moralistic impulse” of the Second Great Awakening, women believed that “they had a moral and religious duty to eradicate” the sin of slavery. Increasingly standards of female propriety were challenged as women abolitionists strived to expand their virtuous influence beyond the confines of the family home. By accepting their appointed role as the moral guardians of the New Republic, women sought to participate in the fight to end slavery. Women were further encouraged to take a stand against the institution of slavery as they recognised that the fundamental promise of the Revolution, liberty had not been bestowed on all of the subjects of the New


69 Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, pp.144-145

70 Julie Roy Jeffrey, *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement* (Chapel Hill, 1998). For an example of an author that seeks to expand the origins of the women’s rights movement see Lori Ginzberg, *Untidy Origins*. For the most recent discussion of the origin story of the women’s rights movement see Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls*.

Republic. While initially the fight for freedom was undertaken on behalf of the slaves, women were increasingly presented with the reality of their own limited self-determination within the abolitionist reform arena. Evidence of discontent among women prior to the organisation of female abolitionists’ challenges the theory that women rallied themselves out of an increased awareness of the similar confinement that shaped their lives and the lives of slaves. The shared recognition of female anti-slavery workers concerning their status and their belief in their obligation to participate in reform were key factors in the emergence of the women’s rights movement.

The apparent failure to uphold the ideals of the Revolution fuelled the belief in both sexes that the institution of slavery should be abolished in Antebellum America. However even in the reform arena female activism was not necessarily advocated, as increasingly abolitionist women were viewed as “engaging in an unwomanly meddling in politics.” Woman abolitionists, like their male counterparts, were committed to fighting slavery yet their involvement was initially limited to gender specific tasks such as collecting petitions and raising money in “separate auxiliaries of the American Anti-Slavery Society” that existed in Philadelphia, Boston and New York. Although scholars have acknowledged the

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75 Parker, “The Case for Reform Antecedents,” p.29.

76 Bolt, *Women’s Movements*, p.63
value of such grassroots activity, recognising that these women helped spread the
issue of anti-slavery and that such action clearly took those involved in abolitionism
outside of their prescribed female societal role, key women abolitionists became
progressively more discontented with the restrictions that were placed on their
reform activities. Angelina and Sarah Grimké led the battle as the first women to
organise and to participate in a lecture tour before mixed gender audiences, they
promoted the anti-slavery cause and the right of women to publicly address the
issue of slavery. Despite the often hostile reactions that they received as female
lecturers, Angelina Grimké eloquently argued that as “instruments of reform”,
women had a duty to speak out against slavery and to endure the personal attacks
that ensued. The Grimké sisters had a visible impact on the abolitionist
movement, as their female recruits increasingly embraced a dual agenda of anti-
slavery and women’s rights.

The issue of the aptness and the prudence of unrestricted female activity
eventually created an unfixable divide in the abolition movement, resulting in a
split within the official anti-slavery organisation over the “woman question” in

77 For an excellent study of ordinary women abolitionists see Jeffrey, The Great Silent Army, pp. 88-95. For the connection between the use of the petition and the development of female political identity see Susan Zaekse, Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women’s Political Identity (Chapel Hill, 2003).

78 For a recent account of the deeds of the Grimké sisters see Gerda Lerner, The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Woman’s Rights and Abolition (New York, 1998).


80 Sklar, Women’s Rights Emerges, p. 47.
William Lloyd Garrison continued at the helm of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), which he had helped to establish in 1833. Garrison and his supporters welcomed the presence of women in support of abolition. In contrast the “new organization” that was created by the division, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (A&FASS), refused to entertain the concept of female membership or the right of women to participate in any public battle to end slavery. However, the crucial point of connection between abolition and women’s rights occurred against the backdrop of this debate, as the controversial presence of women at the 1840 World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London offered the opportunity for two key figures of the women’s rights movement to meet, Lucretia Coffin Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. As a delegate of one of the female auxiliaries of AASS, Lucretia Coffin Mott was refused a seat at the convention and the chance to participate in the proceedings. Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s attendance was more accidental as she was not affiliated with any anti-slavery organisation. Stanton had merely accompanied her new husband, Henry Stanton who was a member of the “new organization” to the convention, whilst they were on their honeymoon tour. The encounter between Mott and Stanton in London, allowed the two women to engage in dialogue about the restricted position of women. The conclusion of the discussion was their shared commitment to organise a convention dedicated to the topic of women’s rights, although the meeting would not take place for eight years, the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention marked the beginning of the women’s rights movement.

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81 As Julie Roy Jeffrey suggests the issue of whether women should be able to enter the public arena was not only connected to the concept of them breaking out of their traditional sphere but also that their presence might damage the anti-slavery cause by making it appear more radical by association. Jeffrey, Great Silent Army, p.97.

82 Jeffrey, Great Silent Army, pp.96-97.
The relationship between Garrisonian abolitionism and the women’s rights movement is complex. Operating on the broad principle of human equality, Garrison and his supporters demanded the immediate emancipation of slaves. This philosophy allowed the question of women’s rights to emerge as a valid reform issue within Garrison’s organisation as the inequality of women became increasingly apparent as their invisabled legal status paralleled that of slaves. Exposure to the fundamental doctrine of human equality that was clearly presented in the *Declaration of Independence* helped women to identify their right to protest against their apparent subjection. As the historian, Ellen DuBois succinctly argued, the women’s rights movement developed in the abolitionist arena because the abolitionists taught women how to utilise the knowledge of their oppression and how to develop it into a social movement. Garrisonian abolitionism showed that the institution of slavery and organised religion were the constructs of man, subject to the criticism of the society in which they existed. Female abolitionists were empowered to challenge the “human institutions” that defined their place in society through their increased awareness that the societal restrictions placed on women and the bondage of slaves were not intrinsic. Through their exposure to Garrisonian absolutism, women increasingly questioned the traditional institutions which they felt undermined their position in society, such as the church. Moreover, the principle of human equality initiated and sustained the emerging women’s rights movement as it gradually evolved into its own organisation, with a separate agenda.

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85 Ibid., pp.57-58.
to that of abolitionism. The abolitionist movement therefore gave the women’s movement a goal to work towards and the belief in the possibility for social progress, without this training and direction the women’s rights movement would have been lacking any sense of coherence.\textsuperscript{86} Ultimately, the abolitionist movement gave women’s rights the initial training, experience and direction that it needed to become an effective movement.

Abolitionism provided women with the sense of sisterhood needed to generate a women’s rights movement. In his discussion of Abby Kelley, a leading feminist abolitionist, the historian Keith Melder reflects on the central role of the Anti-slavery Conventions of American women in constructing a network of women that were united by “a sense of common purpose”, that highlighted both an awareness of anti-slavery and women’s rights.\textsuperscript{87} Yet, abolitionism also had a stifling effect on the early women’s rights movement. The high number of female reformers that abolitionism introduced into the women’s rights movement hampered the development of recruitment strategies in the early leaders of the movement and the spread of the women’s rights issue outside the reform network that was already in place.\textsuperscript{88}

Women’s rights as a facet of Garrisonian absolutism remained largely a secondary cause, a less significant issue, that many abolitionists believed should

\textsuperscript{86} Dubois, “Women’s Rights and Abolition,” p.61.


\textsuperscript{88} Dubois, “Women’s Rights and Abolition,” p.65.
follow the emancipation of slaves and the battle to ensure that all male African Americans gained the protective rights of citizenship, especially the right to vote. Eventually these sentiments convinced the leaders of the women’s rights movement to separate from their abolitionist heritage after the American Civil War. However, while this shift allowed the women’s rights movement to mature as a national organisation on its own terms, it also led to division within the women’s rights movement concerning the fifteenth amendment that would affect the effectiveness of the women’s rights movement in obtaining woman suffrage. The ensuing national women’s rights organisations reflected the two reactions to the fifteenth amendment within the women’s movement. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) dominated by Stanton and her followers, objected to the amendment’s failure to enfranchise women at the same time as the black male citizens. In contrast, the organisers of the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) such as Lucy Stone supported the fifteenth amendment. The women’s rights movement remained divided until the establishment of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890.

The 1848 Seneca Falls Convention remains representative of the inauguration of the women’s rights movement and the introduction of Stanton’s broad agenda for reform. Although this thesis serves to reveal that Stanton’s impact extended further than her role in the organisation of the first women’s rights conference and her unprecedented public demand for woman suffrage, her actions at Seneca Falls remain a vital aspect of her legacy. As scholars of women’s history have continued to highlight the Seneca Falls Convention in their work, the convention has been examined from a fresh perspective revealing the characteristics
which made Seneca Falls "the fulcrum point" for the organisation of women’s activism.\textsuperscript{89} Upstate New York was considered home by the three factions that contributed to the emerging women’s rights movement, identified by Judith Wellman as "political abolitionists", "legal reformers" and the pre-existing Quaker network that made up the "egalitarian abolitionists", these three elements helped create an environment that nurtured the development of a reform movement.\textsuperscript{90} Settling in the region due to the development of key transportation routes that linked major cities throughout New York State and the initial lure of fertile land, the presence of these three groups in the local community helps explain why the first women’s rights convention took place in Seneca Falls, as each were connected to Antebellum Reform.\textsuperscript{91}

As upstate New York shared the experience of the industrial revolution in the United States, Seneca Falls was transformed from a primarily agricultural community to a new capitalistic society, dependence on the wealth produced by industry. The consequent effects on family life and work echoed the patterns of the rest of industrialised America, leaving Seneca Falls in the unique position of having a direct connection to a variety of reformers, all influenced by the changes that they were experiencing. The presence of the three reform groups provided a favourable reception to the women’s rights cause and a ready audience that was willing to attend a convention at relatively short notice. Moreover, Stanton successfully unified the three disparate elements and utilised the reform networks that had already been established. Stanton’s discontent over her domestic role combined

\textsuperscript{89} Wellman, \textit{Road to Seneca Falls}, p.12 n.37, p.12.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., pp.91-154.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., pp.65-87.
with her own exposure to reform influences, constructed the basis of her women's rights doctrine. Whilst her personal dissatisfaction clearly echoed the emotions of many other women of the period, her commitment to the republican ideology of equality gave the issue of women's rights a sense of theoretical cohesion, which would allow the women's rights movement to emerge and to successfully attract supporters.

As the events at Seneca Falls have been re-examined and placed in their historical context, Stanton's role and influence at the conference should also be reconsidered. The revelation that the legacy that Stanton introduced at Seneca Falls was twofold serves to correct the one-dimensional view of her value. The creation of a coalition of women that agreed to challenge their position in society was only one component of her legacy. Stanton's ideological vision of complete equality for women, which was imbued in the *Declaration of Sentiments* presented at the 1848 Seneca Falls conference, was the second aspect of her influence that has been neglected in favour of the discussion of her demand for women suffrage. The failure to identify and analyse the two aspects of Stanton's legacy, separately, has resulted in a distorted interpretation of her influence from one generation to the next. It is only by addressing the fate of Stanton's movement and the reception of her ideas by subsequent generations of women that her impact will be illuminated, correcting the belief that the nineteenth amendment reflected both the completion and the extent of Stanton's legacy.
Elizabeth Cady Stanton emerged as one of the early leaders of the women’s rights movement after the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, yet her importance to the cause of women’s rights remains relatively unexplored. Many scholars see Stanton’s value resting solely on her demand for woman suffrage at Seneca Falls, failing to appreciate the complexity of Stanton’s influence as the binary nature of her legacy remained masked. As the creator of the women’s movement and as the ideological vehicle that drove the movement forward, the cohesive relationship between Stanton’s ideological vision of equality and the coalition of women that she stirred into action at Seneca Falls, obscured the intrinsic duality of Stanton’s influence. Stanton did not push other women to attend the convention; she attracted support and ultimately encouraged women to gather at Seneca Falls by articulating the widespread concerns regarding their political, social and civil rights as female citizens in the New Republic.

Ultimately, Stanton’s role at Seneca Falls illustrated her stance as the self-appointed spokesperson for women of her period, her concern centring on enabling and educating women to become autonomous citizens. Responding to her personal bitterness towards the common notion of the female sphere, Stanton’s demand for woman suffrage had grown out of her increasing awareness of the reality of the restrictions that she faced as a woman in the New Republic. However, it is important to reflect that Stanton’s women’s movement was not restricted to the goal of suffrage. As her beliefs guided the first generation of women to seek a broad range of goals for equality, woman suffrage was merely one aspect of Stanton’s
broad programme for reform as she sought political, social and civil sovereignty for women. Future generations of women who adopted Stanton’s organisation would later work to redefine it as solely a woman suffrage movement, rejecting Stanton’s ideas and leaving her true goals concealed by the successes and failures that women faced with the passage of the nineteenth amendment.

Initially, Elizabeth Cady Stanton dominated and directed the women’s rights movement to such an extent that it was difficult to divide the two elements of her legacy. Her ideas truly reflected the concerns of her peers, therefore they went unchallenged. Through the establishment of an enduring reform organisation Stanton had unknowingly shaped the situation that would eventually lead to the division of her legacy. The fact that her movement would continue to be attractive to subsequent generations would force its evolution. Stanton’s own ideas would also evolve but not in the same direction as those that inherited her movement. Increasingly Stanton’s ideas and the organisation that had emerged in response to her ideas would be at odds.

During Stanton’s 87 years, her equal rights philosophy was influenced by the social, economic and political issues that dominated the United States. The ideas that became central to Stanton’s reform programme developed in response to the changes that surrounded her, often prompting Stanton to revisit or revise her arguments to benefit from the current political or social climate. By tracing the chronological development of her beliefs, this chapter reveals the fragmented and piecemeal growth of Stanton’s ideas. Unfortunately, Stanton’s ideological evolution would separate her from the organisation that she had initiated, as
eventually her ideas failed to reflect the sentiments of the subsequent supporters of the women’s rights movement.

The new generation involved in the push to enfranchise women embraced only one of Stanton’s ideas; the demand for the vote. While pursuing this goal they commandeered Stanton’s movement, at least they increasingly dominated the organisational front of the women’s movement, leaving Stanton to lecture to women who were not part of the organisational aspect of the movement. Stanton’s broader ideas increasingly failed to reflect the narrowing concerns of the developing woman’s suffrage movement. Stanton and her ideas would be pushed out of the official organised aspect of the women’s rights movement or the suggestion can be considered that Stanton chose to abandon a movement that no longer reflected her agenda for women’s rights. In order to be able to appreciate Stanton’s influence, it is necessary to explore her key ideas in the context of the movement she created and identify some of the women who would continue and, in some instances, work to redefine Stanton’s legacy.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s autobiography *Eighty Years and More Reminiscences 1815-1897* [hereafter known as *Reminiscences*] allows a personal insight into the development of Stanton’s philosophy throughout her career. Stanton’s autobiography strived to create a sense of her political awareness stemming from her youth; the effect of this is that it is difficult to establish a true chronology on Stanton’s ideas. In an effort to overcome the artificial picture that Stanton has created, it is important to balance her *Reminiscences* alongside her public papers and speeches. Various historians have accepted the image that
Stanton has engineered through her memoirs. In the introduction to the 1993 edition to Stanton’s *Reminiscences*, Ellen DuBois concludes, “From her earliest years in her father’s law office, she was trying to understand America not just as a place but as a political principle.”¹ It is debatable that Stanton as a young child would have been as politically aware, but Stanton deemed that it was important for those looking back on her life to believe that she had this early political awareness. In her *Reminiscences*, Stanton engineers the impression that throughout her life she had been aware of the inequalities that existed between the sexes. However, in reality it was Stanton’s initial involvement in the abolition movement that made her aware of the need for reform, the possibilities for reform and the practical skills needed to initiate reform.² However, she later would reject the abolitionists’ position that women should wait for the vote until after the “Negro hour”, despite having gained the skills that she would utilise as a leader of the women’s rights movement during her involvement in the abolitionist movement.

As Stanton listened to the ‘eloquent’ and ‘earnest’ debates from the likes of William Lloyd Garrison while attending the anti-slavery conventions and fairs in Boston, she would learn the art of public speaking and the apparent inequalities that existed among the citizens of the republic based on race and gender.³ Her involvement in the abolitionist network was a totally enriching and educational experience for Stanton, as she “attended all the lectures...and conventions,” she “had never lived in such an enthusiastically literary and reform latitude before, and

¹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More Reminiscences* 1815-1897 (1898; repr. Boston, 1993), p.V.


³ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p.129.
my mental powers were kept at the highest tension.” 4 However, readers of
Reminiscences cannot dismiss the value of the work as it illustrates how Stanton
saw events and how she believed they had shaped her ideas. It shows the fact that
Stanton recognised that she had to establish a sense of political awareness to link
with the movement’s current focus on suffrage in order to be valued by the
movement that she had created. It would be a false assumption to believe that
Stanton’s ideas remained constant, for Stanton’s ideas through her lifetime were full
of contradictions as she pragmatically altered her tactics in an effort to achieve the
self-sovereignty that she sought for women. By writing her Reminiscences in an
effort to shape her image, Stanton edited the growth of her ideas to provide a sense
of continuity that obscures the true complexity and development of her ideas.

In order to highlight Stanton’s historical value and to reconnect her equal
rights philosophy to mainstream history, the development of her ideas must be seen
in context with the growing development of women’s awareness of their
subordinate position in a liberal society. As part of longer-term, transatlantic
debates about women’s role in civil and political society dating from the
Enlightenment, Stanton emerged as one of a select group who publicly presented
theories on the status of women based on their interpretations of liberal philosophy.
Liberal political theory holds the basic assumption that, “humans...share some
basic qualities that make them properly bearers of rights.”5 Simply stated, the
necessary qualities were believed to be the possession of rational thought and
autonomous action. Such liberal principles reflected the Enlightenment’s belief in

4 Stanton, Eighty Years and More, p.133.
5 Ruth E. Groenhout, “Essentialist Challenges to Liberal Feminism,” Social Theory
human progress and advocated, if followed to its logical conclusion, a gender-neutral access to a broad spectrum of civil, social and political rights. As part of the intellectual tradition that Stanton inherited, such liberal thought justified her arguments that women should challenge their currently subordinate status in society. However, Stanton’s ideological development was part of a larger intellectual tradition that had emerged in an international context. By relating Stanton’s philosophy for women’s rights to the ideas of other key intellectual theorists, the marginalised field of women’s history becomes reconnected to key events of mainstream history.

As the American and French Revolutions battled against traditional institutions of political power, the enlightened discourse that helped inspire them led to the construction of a new politicised identity for women on both sides of the Atlantic. The Enlightenment’s conviction in progress, believed to be achievable by reasserting natural rights, fused with republican concepts of citizenship that would take hold in both France and America. During the French Revolution “explicit claims for full female citizenship” were evident as women organised and participated in various political clubs as they sought to aid the revolutionary cause. In America just as the boundaries between independence and dependence had been challenged in the Revolution by the formation of the New Republic, women increasingly questioned their own lack of sovereignty to friends and family.

Patriotism in the female Sex is the most disinterested of all virtues.

Excluded from honours and from offices, we cannot attach ourselves to

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the State or Government from having held a place of Eminence. Even in the freeest countrys our property is subject to the controul and disposal of our partners, to whom the Laws have given a sovereign Authority. Deprived of a voice in Legislation, obliged to submit to those Laws which are imposed upon us, is it not sufficient to make us indifferent to the publick Welfare? Yet all History and every age exhibit Instances of patriotick virtue in the female Sex; which considering our situation equals the most Heroick of yours.⁷

The ensuing “philosophical dialogue” was further fuelled by a constant transatlantic exchange of literature.⁸ The rhetoric of rights that surrounded the Enlightenment and the revolutionary era recast the concept of female citizenship, as it was debated in the homes of women on both sides of the Atlantic.

As early as 1792, an Englishwoman, Mary Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, in response to the French Revolution and its apparent failure to confer the same political rights of citizenship on women that had been gained by men.⁹ This book represented the first time a woman had linked issues of equality and individual rights with the lives of women, beginning the Anglo-American debate over the status of women during the late eighteenth

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This particular tract became widely read in America, and, indeed, similarities between Wollstonecraft and Stanton’s ideas can be recognised, especially Wollstonecraft’s belief that the education system should be changed in order to make women stronger and more independent. Wollstonecraft’s assertion that women were not intellectually inferior to men formed the basis of her demand for the educational advancement of women and the need for the re-evaluation of their role in society. Wollstonecraft’s writing reflects her belief that education would free women from their current position as the unequal partners of marriage, wives who are totally “dependent” on their husbands. As Wollstonecraft envisioned a marriage of partners, her ideas clearly connect to Stanton’s later belief in the sovereignty of women. Stanton would also recognise that education would help transform the subordinate role of women, as their increased intellectual abilities would ultimately support the elevation of their social and civil status, eventually enabling women to break out of their role as dependents.

Wollstonecraft focused on education as a means to demand civil rights for women. She encouraged her audience to accept that the current status of women had been shaped by the lack of true educational opportunity and to reject the notion that women were naturally irrational creatures. During her written dialogue, she reflected on how men had created the current position of women in society as she

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insisted “that men have increased” female “inferiority till women are almost sunk below the standard of rational creatures.” As a cure to the current situation of women, she urged that the “faculties” of women should “have room to unfold, and their virtues to gain strength, and then determine where the whole sex must stand in the intellectual scale.” Female education in Wollstonecraft’s philosophy would therefore work to justify access to the civil and political rights that were currently being denied to women.

In Wollstonecraft’s view, education would permit women to participate on an equal intellectual footing with men within the existing patriarchal structure of society, a structure that she did not overtly challenge. Wollstonecraft’s doctrine conveyed her belief that education would take women out of the “dark” and the immaturity of their current status. However, she was careful to balance her demands with the assertion that educated women would become increasingly “attached to their duty -- comprehending it -- for unless they comprehend it..., no authority can make them discharge it in a virtuous manner. They may be convenient slaves, but slavery will have its constant effect, degrading the master and the abject dependent.” In this way, although she sought access to education for women it was not necessarily to challenge or to encourage women to abandon traditional gender roles. Although Wollstonecraft viewed access to education as an important part of the process by which women would take control of their own lives by


16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., p.xxviii.

making their own choices, she was not trying to encourage them to dismantle the
existing social structure. Wollstonecraft envisioned that education would encourage
women to reconfirm their commitment to their traditional roles as wives and
mothers. She felt confident that educated women, if given the choice, would
choose to utilise their new abilities to complete the assigned duties in order to
benefit society.

Stanton would give women a new sense of direction when she acted on her
beliefs and stepped out of the female sphere in search of female autonomy and
access to the rights of citizenship, but Wollstonecraft’s writing indicates that
Stanton’s actions were not without precedent. Mary Wollstonecraft is not the only
woman to be considered a feminist precursor to Stanton nor was she the only author
to participate in the debate over women’s rights in America and Europe. Judith
Sargent Murray has been acknowledged as one of the most significant American
authors who attempted to redefine gender roles during the late eighteenth century.¹⁹

In many ways Murray’s ideas paralleled those of her contemporary
Wollstonecraft, as she focused on the poor quality of female education as the cause
of female inequality rather than nature.²⁰ According to the historian Susan Branson,
Murray’s belief that society needed to be reformed to allow women to participate in
community affairs and to achieve their own financial independence “contributed to
the development of a protofeminist consciousness”, which can clearly be linked to

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¹⁹ Susan Branson, *These Fiery Frenchified Dames*, p.32.
²⁰ Ibid., pp.32-35.
the development of Stanton’s ideas. Similarly, Margaret Fuller’s book, *Women in the Nineteenth Century* became “a beacon to a generation of women;” Its message was unmistakable. Women had a duty as individuals to fulfil themselves in the same way children should be encouraged to reach their fullest potential; “to grow, as an intellect... to live freely, and ... to unfold such powers as were given.” Again, the similarities to Wollstonecraft and Stanton’s work are striking and highlight that Stanton’s work was not without precedent.

Stanton’s Declaration of Sentiments reflects the intellectual legacy of Wollstonecraft and her peers as it dared to demand that the status of women needed to be re-evaluated and redefined. Building upon the egalitarian language evident in both the French and American Revolutions by utilising the Declaration of Independence as her template, Stanton legitimised her broad demands for social, civil, religious and political equality for women as she echoed the aspirations of her female predecessors. The rights of citizenship that Stanton sought for women were not new, with the exception of the demand for the female ballot. However as Stanton weaved together the demands of the women’s rights movement she had constructed a vision of an autonomous woman that extended far beyond the intellectual boundaries of her forerunners.

Stanton’s first introduction to the legal treatment of women was through her father’s work as a judge. Access to the various law books, as well as exposure to the

21 Judith Sargent Murray, as quoted in Ibid., p.34, pp.33-35.


23 As quoted quoted in Ibid., pp.66-72.
opinions of her father's students, revealed to her that women would find little support from the law. Professions such as the law, the church and politics were considered out-of-bounds to women; the result of this was that women were often ignored in these areas. It was while showing one of her father's young law students a Christmas gift that Stanton supposedly learned that a married woman's assets legally became her husband's.

One Christmas morning I went to the office to show them (the law students)... a new coral necklace and bracelets. They... began to tease me with hypothetical cases of future ownership. "Now," said Henry Bayard, "if in due time you should be my wife, those ornaments would be mine; I could take them and lock them up, and you could never wear them except with my permission. I could even exchange them for a box of cigars, and you could watch them evaporate in smoke."^{24}

As with all of the events that Stanton reminisces about, the truth of this story is questionable; however, it does have an element of truth because it clearly conveys the situation of a married woman during this period. Stanton’s shaping of her memory highlights how she ultimately wanted to be remembered by the public. Stanton deemed that it was important to reveal that she had been concerned with the issue of equality from a very early age, perhaps thereby strengthening her image as the originator of the women's rights movement. As a result, her Reminiscences reflect how Stanton attempted to mould her own legacy, in an effort to control the perception of her actions after her death.

^{24} Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp.31-32.
It is doubtful that Stanton would be so aware of the need for reform until after the Second Great Awakening as it added to her ability to challenge traditional aspects of society. However, Stanton maintains that it was while discussing these "odious laws" which gave the husband control of the wife’s property that she became "convinced of the necessity of taking some active measures against these unjust provisions."²⁵ As the historian, Keith E. Melder suggests Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England largely influenced American laws concerning women and marriage. Blackstone offered the view that “the husband and wife are one person in law; that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage.”²⁶ In this context, the legal status of American wives was undeniably linked to their husbands and subordinate to them.

Through her discussion of female dependence, Stanton would increasingly come to regard education as a key stepping-stone to demanding equal rights. Although there had been a shift in thought regarding education since the American Revolution that promoted the improvement of female schooling. Post-revolutionary education failed to advocate learning for the advancement of women as individuals. Instead, the purpose of instruction reflects the perceived duty of female citizenship in the New Republic. The writings of Benjamin Rush a well-known proponent of educational reform for women, best exemplify the beliefs that were the impetus of educational reform. Rush’s premise was founded on his belief that "the first impressions upon the minds of children are generally derived from women."²⁷ As

²⁵ Stanton, Eighty Years and More, pp.32.
such, mothers had to be better educated in order to teach the ideology of the New Republic to their new sons and daughters, to strengthen and preserve the outcome of the War of Independence.\textsuperscript{28} Although this view permitted female education to flourish, Rush's ideas reflect how society viewed women. Rather than disputing the concept of differences between men and women, the new standard of female education was established on the perceived natural role of women, which continued to cast women in a subordinate role to men and limited the level of their education. Stanton would later benefit from the educational opportunities that reformers, such as Rush, had encouraged. However, her own experiences would lead Stanton to re-envision Rush's ideas to encourage equality and autonomy for women.

Stanton's resentment of the fact that she had not been able to go to Union College in 1830, the college that her brother had attended, would have a profound impact on her educational philosophy. In her \textit{Reminiscences}, Stanton describes her "vexation and mortification" at not being allowed to attend Union College, adding that she never "felt more keenly the distinction made on the ground of sex."\textsuperscript{29} Higher Education was not considered an attribute for wives and mothers; therefore, the institutes of higher learning remained closed to women. Through her writings and speeches, Stanton often addressed the importance of access to a good education that would grant equal choices and opportunities for both women and men.


\textsuperscript{29} Stanton, \textit{Eighty Years and More,} pp.33-34.
Building on Wollstonecraft's earlier ideas concerning the need to educate women, Stanton remained convinced that education was the key to more choices for women other than marriage and motherhood. In 1868, Stanton urged fathers to allow their daughters to have access to the world of education, she argued that by educating their daughters fathers would grant them "the surest of all fortunes, the full development of their immortal powers."\(^{30}\) In this eloquent extract, Stanton's ideas clearly parallel those of Murray, as she demanded that women should have access to all levels of education so that they can create a secure future for themselves. She took her argument a step further encouraging women to demand entrance to some of the best male dominated educational institutes in America, stating that there is nothing to prevent them from gaining access: "It is important for the girls now knocking at the doors of these venerable institutions to know that they have a right inside. There is no law, human or divine, nothing in their charters, that forbids. Nothing but the crotchets of a few conservative minds to combat, and conquer."\(^{31}\) Stanton's demands for female education began to reflect her maturing belief that it was acceptable for women to assert their autonomy as they battled for equality.

Although her personal educational experience and her exposure to her father's legal books would clearly influence Stanton's initial ideological development. It was the impact of the revivalism and evangelicalism of the Second Great Awakening that encouraged Stanton's initial move into the reform arena.


Contemporary feminist historians have recognised the connection between the
development of the women's rights movement and the Second Great Awakening.\textsuperscript{32} Evangelical religion was a "levelling force" that ultimately acted as an impetus for abolition, the women's movement, and other areas of reform with its belief that all are equal.\textsuperscript{33} Stanton's marriage to Henry Stanton provided her with a personal link to the key reviverist speaker, Charles G. Finney. Henry Stanton had become one of Finney's "\textit{Holy Band of Agents}" who were working throughout central New York State. It was the Holy Band's intention to promote community works of reform. However, one of Stanton's own experiences had led her to have a stronger connection to Finney.

Stanton's move toward scepticism was encouraged by her personal exposure to the preaching of Charles Finney during the Great Troy Revival of 1831. Stanton's change of religious direction was mainly the result of location, since 1830 Stanton had been enrolled at Emma Willard's Troy Female Seminary; this placed her right in the path of this religious force that was passing through Troy.\textsuperscript{34} Stanton concedes in her \textit{Reminiscences} that her character was profoundly shaped by Finney's message; Finney's sermons promoted new religious enquiry as they permitted a new examination of faith, an idea that advocated change for Stanton on


a broader scale as it permitted her to challenge other inherent assumptions.\textsuperscript{35}

However, Stanton's first reaction to Finney was based on fear, she clearly identified him as a "terrifier of human souls," such fear would have a lasting effect on her religious direction as she was increasingly contemptuous of the power that she perceived organised faith had over the construction of society. Stanton goes on to say that she viewed this incident 'as one of the greatest crimes to shadow the minds of the young with these gloomy superstitions; and with fears of the unknown and the unknowable to poison all the joy in life.'\textsuperscript{36}

The importance of the Second Great Awakening rests in the creation of an environment where the desire for reform flourished, and the young Elizabeth Cady Stanton was exposed to these developing ideas.\textsuperscript{37} The ideas of the Second Great Awakening were a springboard for Stanton that would push her into developing her own ideology and ideas throughout her public career. The Second Great Awakening allowed Stanton to cast aside her inherent beliefs, providing her with the opportunity to redefine her perspective on society and the key institutions that shaped that society. The purging of Stanton's traditional values allowed for the formation of her central ideological philosophy, the central premise that dominated her career, her belief in self-sovereignty through "freedom in thought and action" for women.\textsuperscript{38} These ideas contributed to Stanton's entrance into public life as a reformer both in abolition and in the women's rights movement.

\textsuperscript{35} Stanton, \textit{Eighty Years and More}, pp.41-43.


\textsuperscript{37} Stevenson-Moessner, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton," pp.675-676.

\textsuperscript{38} Stanton, \textit{Eighty Years and More}, pp.44-45.
A further bond between Stanton and the reform movement was established through her marriage to Henry Stanton and their honeymoon trip to the London World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840. It was here that Stanton had her first introduction to the issues of women’s rights, and indeed, it was here that she met Lucretia Mott. Mott was an established Quaker speaker on abolitionism, and Stanton’s meeting with her in 1840 led her to accept the possibility of a woman operating in the public sphere, speaking out for reform. “The acquaintance of Lucretia Mott, who was a broad liberal thinker on politics, religion, and all questions of reform, opened to me a new world of thought.”39 Mott’s bequest to Stanton was a lasting confidence in the justice of her cause whatever social reform she embraced; the key idea that women could and should make a difference grew out of Mott’s Quaker beliefs.40 Although Stanton would not take that first step into her early public career until 1848, these key events were constantly preparing her for her role in the women’s rights movement. Mott’s role in Stanton’s life was one of a mentor and a role model, planting the seeds that would form the foundation of Stanton’s ideologies and an inspiration for Stanton to learn the leadership skills that she would need as a public figure in the reform world.

Mott played a further role in shaping Stanton’s views on religion. Stanton clearly acknowledged the impact of meeting Mott on widening her religious ideology. “When I first heard from the lips of Lucretia Mott that I had the same


right to think for myself that Luther, Calvin, and John Knox had, I felt at once a 
new-born sense of dignity and freedom." Throughout the 1840s, Stanton and Mott 
often wrote to each other discussing religion. Mott encouraged Stanton, then living 
in Boston, to expand her religious education beyond her Calvinist upbringing. Acting under the influence of Mott, Stanton accepted the beliefs of Theodore Parker 
and religious liberalism. Parker stressed that it was the individual who was 
responsible for his or her own salvation. His controversial stance provides a direct 
link to Stanton's ideas, as can be seen by Parker's initial refusal to take the 
scriptures literally. When Stanton encountered the view that the bible was open to 
interpretation, she eagerly embraced this view because it set her free to seek reform 
for women in accordance with her own ideas. Parker had clearly suggested that 
women were responsible for their own salvation. After hearing Parker lecture, 
Stanton wrote "I have heard a course of lectures from him and I am now reading his 
discourses, he finds my soul -- he speaks to me or rather God (through him) to 
me." The solution for Stanton was that Parker seemed to confirm her religious 
beliefs but left her room to grow in her ideology, it was both the support and 
freedom that Stanton needed to flourish.

Although Stanton's later pledge to fight for woman suffrage revealed her 
efforts to secure legal equality that she considered was a right of citizenship, she

41 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., History of Woman 

42 Elisabeth Griffith, In Her Own Right the Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, (New York and Oxford, 
1984), pp.45-46.

43 Griffith, In Her Own Right, pp.45-46.

44 Reminiscences vol.2, ed. Stanton and Blatch, p.11; Dorrien, The Making of American Liberal 
Theology, p.221.
believed that it was the institution of marriage that kept women in their unequal position. Stanton reasoned that marriage restricted the individual liberty of women by making them possessions of their husbands. Marriage therefore became an early target for reform in a bid to gain easier divorce for women. In a letter to Susan B. Anthony, Stanton wrote, “It is in vain to look for the elevation of woman, so long as she is degraded by marriage...the right idea of marriage is the foundation of all reforms.”\textsuperscript{45} She went further stating that marriage “stripped womankind of true virtue, dignity and nobility.” Stanton’s perception that marriage was a chief obstacle to female equality was a key step towards the development of her belief that women should seek to secure their own self-sovereignty. Stanton’s basis for this argument in 1853 was that a husband could place sexual demands on his wife with the implication that this was a form of rape. Stanton now wanted “the mothers of mankind (to) set bounds to his indulgence.”\textsuperscript{46} She felt that women had a duty to see that they were happy, and if they were not happy, it was their duty to seek an end to the marriage. It was this ideology that she used to justify her later call for the reform of the divorce laws.

The movement that Stanton inaugurated in 1848 through her call for a gathering was the first stage in an organisation that evolved from being a women’s rights movement based on Stanton’s broad agenda to a woman’s suffrage movement with a narrow focus and what one historian stresses as the emergence of

\textsuperscript{45} Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony, 1 March 1853, in Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, series 3, reel 7.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
“an independent women’s movement”. The importance of Seneca Falls rests on the fact that it provided an opportunity for many women to voice their concerns about their situation and put them on the agenda for reform. Stanton’s insistence that women should battle to be enfranchised was based on her desire to achieve a series of reforms that would grant women equality. She clearly saw her call for the vote as an “inauguration of a rebellion”, similar to that of the American Revolution that would ultimately challenge the relationship between dependence and independence. Suffrage for Stanton would be the means of achieving equality; gaining the vote was never Stanton’s final goal or her only goal.

Unlike later leaders of the women’s rights movement, such as Carrie Chapman Catt, Stanton believed that woman suffrage should be the first step towards other goals of the women’s rights movement. Throughout her career she remained constant in her belief that other issues of equality were as important to women as suffrage. Stanton’s far reaching goal was that women should possess the same rights of citizenship and independence as men. The subsequent generation would increasingly reject Stanton’s ideas. Stanton’s resolutions at the Seneca Falls convention represented the spirit of her generation that would be rejected by subsequent peer groups. In essence, what the resolutions captured were Stanton’s basic ideology, her concerns for the social and political injustices against women, and the rejection of their basic rights as citizens. Stanton had put a voice to the

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concerns of many of her peers, it would not be her peers that would go on to reject her, rather it would be the next generation who had felt the benefit of Stanton’s voice throughout their lifetime.

Although Stanton’s authorship of the Declaration of Sentiments can be debated, evidence certainly suggests that Stanton wrote the earliest drafts. In the *History of Woman Suffrage* it is recollected that the decision to use the Declaration of Independence as the basis for writing the Declaration of Sentiments had been a joint decision based on the recommendation of “one of the circle.” The figure that urged the use of the Declaration of Independence as a guide for writing the resolutions for the convention has never been identified and none of the participants in the preparation of the document ever claimed the idea as their own. While Stanton never acknowledged her dominant role in writing the Declaration of Sentiments, Stanton was responsible for embedding the political seed into the women’s rights movement by demanding that women should have the right to a political voice through the right to vote, in essence she was reconfirming the rights of women as citizens. Increasingly the focus on woman suffrage would lead to the rejection of Stanton’s broader goals, but it does highlight that the ballot for Stanton was one aspect of her ideological plan to help women achieve equality. It was a right of citizenship and a key tool of the self-sovereignty she envisioned for women as her ideas matured.

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52 Stanton, Anthony, and Gage eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1. p. 68.

53 For a more complete discussion of the creation of the Declaration of Sentiments see Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls*, pp. 190-208.
The entanglement of Stanton’s movement and her ideologies has restricted the possibility for a true appreciation of her legacy. The ideas that Stanton articulated through her writing and speeches, which revealed her true areas of concern and her value, have been neglected in favour of recalling only her demand for the vote and the apparent success of the woman suffrage movement rather than the failure of the broad goals of Stanton’s women’s rights movement. The assumption has been made that since Stanton demanded the vote and that women were ultimately enfranchised, that her goal must have been achieved and her legacy completed. This view fails to highlight the complexity of Stanton’s ideological vision as it went beyond the demand for woman suffrage and her intent to secure the full political and legal benefits of citizenship for women. As such, the vote is one part of Stanton’s much larger agenda for the equality of women.

Despite the interpretation that Stanton’s demand for the vote for women was a radical action, the subject of female suffrage would have still been included on the agenda of the 1848 conference to discuss the rights of women. By the 1840s, the United States had radically altered the political horizon by abolishing property qualifications for voting in most states. Universal white manhood suffrage reflected the enlargement of the electorate in America, providing a strong contrast to the voting process in England, which remained committed to the use of land ownership as a qualifying status for enfranchisement. However, the apparent process of democratisation also drew attention to the continued political exclusion of women. Further more, debate by the New York legislature regarding female suffrage continued to keep the issue at the forefront of women’s minds.
The historian Judith Wellman’s discussion of the 1846, New York constitutional convention reveals how the women of New York State demanded suffrage as a natural right and as a right of citizenship. Via petitions, various groups of women presented their arguments to the legislature, focusing on the unfairness of taxation without representation and the perceived departure of New York “from the true democratic principles upon which all governments must be based by denying the female portion of the community the right of suffrage.”

Reflecting the impact of the American Revolution, the petitions highlight how the vote had become the key to citizenship. During a period when democracy appeared to be flourishing, women and African Americans battled to gain control over their own lives. Influenced by the republican values that surrounded them, suffrage represented access to an equality that both groups sought. Unfortunately, the battle for enfranchisement would also lead to a dispute over who should have the right to vote first, women or African Americans.

The acceptance of Stanton’s Declaration of Sentiments at the convention and the broad range of concerns that it revealed about women’s rights, allows for the interpretation that the original members of the women’s movement clearly adopted and accepted the wide spectrum of Stanton’s ideas. This is not surprising since the majority of the women involved in the early women’s movement had

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54 Wellman, The Road to Seneca Falls, pp.148-151.

55 As quoted in Wellman, The Road to Seneca Falls, p.150.

56 This key aspect of this debate was over the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which granted only male African Americans the right of citizenship and the right to vote.

previously been involved in the abolition movement, signifying that these women had already stepped outside their traditional private roles in the home. Such women were also part of the literary circle that transmitted the ideas of writers such as Wollstonecraft and Fuller. For many women, Stanton’s words echoed issues that dominated their lives as she explored ideas regarding the connection between female autonomy and the rights of citizenship in the fledgling republic. However, as her ideas developed and the women’s movement continued to attract a new generation of members, increasingly Stanton’s demands were perceived as being too radical and potentially damaging to the women’s rights movement. Stanton was increasingly pushed out of the movement she had created as it was re-centred as the woman suffrage movement under the leadership of Susan B. Anthony.

It was lack of options, among other concerns, which first pushed Stanton into addressing the issue of women’s rights. The restrictions that women faced presented Stanton with evidence of the lack of autonomy that women had over their own lives. Stanton recognised that there would be little chance of change in society unless women had the power to start change themselves. In 1852, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote a piece for the *Lily*, a reform newspaper from Seneca Falls emphasising the endless duties of a wife. Stanton contrasted all the tasks that a woman was expected to do as part of her everyday life with the professions she could never enter because it was out of her ‘sphere’. Women were placed in a hierarchy that cast them as subordinate to men; allotted only the roles of wife and mother, they were educated only to the point that they would be best equipped to fulfil these tasks.

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58 Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls*, p.229.
The word wife does not, in our opinion, simply mean, as Walker has it, "a woman that has a husband"…In society she is a woman, in the parlor a lady, in the nursery a slave, in the dining room a mistress, in her chamber a mother, in the sick room a nurse, to her children a teacher, to her husband a companion and an equal, but in no situation whatever can she be a politician, a preacher, a lawyer, physician, or philosopher.\textsuperscript{59}

This extract reveals that women as wives were expected to carry out numerous duties in the household. Yet, as Stanton illustrates, there would be no discussion of the wife taking her skills outside the home.

The literature of the period acted as a force that kept women in their domestic roles. Magazines and articles spread the pervasive view that women should remain in the home to create an aura of stability for their families in the face of increasing social change. The historian Barbara Welter provides the classic discussion of the idea of women and men being confined to different roles in their separate spheres.\textsuperscript{60} Welter appears to echo Stanton's opinion that the female sphere was an oppressive force on women's lives and that the only career open to women was marriage or something akin to marriage, such as cook or seamstress. Yet, without access to the political sphere, it would seem that women had little chance of changing their roles in society. However, Stanton also used the notion of the female sphere and women's role in society to her advantage.

\textsuperscript{59} Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "'Wife'". \textit{Lily}, (Seneca Falls, NY), Jan 1852, in Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony; series 3, reel 7

\textsuperscript{60} Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," \textit{American Quarterly} 18 (Summer 1966), pp.151-76.
In the ten years after Seneca Falls, Stanton felt increasingly trapped in her own marriage to Henry Stanton, realising that her marriage was not one based on equality. Henry had the freedom that all men seemingly enjoyed while women remained restricted. She was becoming increasingly frustrated that she was forced to put her reform interests on hold while she looked after her children. Her frustration was increased because Henry was free to follow his career. Stanton realised that her sentiments must be shared by other wives in similar positions and increasingly commented on how men as husbands could continue in the pattern of their lives while women as wives found their lives more restrictive. In a letter to Susan B. Anthony, Stanton summed up how this problem affected her and her role in the women's rights movement as early as 1857. "I seldom have one hour to sit down and write undisturbed. Men who can shut themselves up for days with their books and thoughts know little of what difficulties a woman must surmount." That Stanton's original stance for reform was linked to marriage can be seen by her involvement in the campaign for the Married Women's Property Act, which was first passed by the New York legislature in 1848. Stanton felt that the bill was one way for women to be able to act independently of their husbands.

Stanton felt that women were currently in a similar position to that of slaves, owned by their husbands. In an article that she wrote for Frederick Douglass' paper

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61 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, p.189.

62 Ibid., p.95.

63 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony, (Seneca Falls, New York), 16 Jan 1854, in *Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, series 3, reel 7.

64 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, p.100.
the North Star, she listed the “Tyranny” that men exercised over women, quoting from the Declaration of Sentiments she had presented in July 1848 at Seneca Falls:

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise...he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her if married, in the eyes of the law, civilly dead.

.... In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master.65

In a lesson learned from her involvement with the abolition movement, Stanton recognised liberty as the ability to vote and to defend oneself by having a political influence. Her call for the liberalisation of divorce laws was based on the same belief; she was seeking ways in which women might put an end to their entrapment and inequality. After 1867, Stanton would demand an end to inequality due to the belief that women were morally superior to men. Stanton’s avocation of liberal divorce laws helped establish her reputation as a radical.

Divorce was seen by many as a threat to the traditional family structure, the downfall of which would lead to the destruction of the balance of society. In contrast, Stanton argued that placing women in an equal position with men would improve the fabric of American society. She viewed marriage as a “man-made institution,” supported by the church and the state, enabling men to strip power away from married women. Stanton’s arguments were tailored to emphasise the different qualities of men and women. She stressed that by placing women in a position to defend themselves, women would be able to protect society from the

immorality of men. Stanton believed that men had all of the power, leaving their wives at their mercy, and she notes, "He has so framed the laws of divorce.... as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands." 66

In emphasising that men exercised complete control over their wives, Stanton introduced the idea that women needed access to easier divorce laws in order to protect themselves and their children from the immorality of men.

To enforce the idea of divorce as a form of defence, Stanton used the imagery of men and the abuses of alcohol that often led to violence. 67 She recognised that the majority of people would support the women's rights movement in its bid for more liberal divorce laws if they connected the issue of divorce with an accepted social evil, in this case alcohol. Woman suffrage alone was viewed as a threat because it appeared to encourage women to step out of their traditional role, threatening to disturb the basis of society. By using the temperance issue Stanton hoped to gain the support of a much larger group. For she recognised that the women's rights issues were perceived as being too radical by the majority of the public because the movement encouraged women to step outside their sphere, yet the issue of temperance had a large following in the community though it was still radical in itself. The issue of temperance was seen as strengthening the base that society rested upon by attacking the evils of alcohol abuse.


67 Stanton is not the only figure to use such imagery to support their cause; other women were using similar images at the time within the temperance and moral reform movements. For a discussion of the public presentation of such images on the stage see John W. Frick, Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth-Century America (Cambridge, 2003).
In an article published in the *Revolution*, Stanton clearly angles her argument, using the traditional role of man as the protector to encourage fathers to help daughters escape from unhappy marriages. She comments “What father could rest at his home by night, knowing that his lovely daughter was at the mercy of a strong man, drunk with wine and passion, and that, do what he might, he was backed up by law and public sentiment?” By addressing the men, Stanton clearly recognised that they had power to achieve reform by their ability to vote. Written in 1868, this article reveals that Stanton recognised that without any immediate hope for the vote at this time, women remained powerless to defend themselves politically. Her change in tactics using the traditional values of society provides an example of Stanton’s ability to shift her tactics according to the events after the Civil War. The loss of the alliance with the abolitionists meant that the women’s rights movement had lost ground, and, Stanton wisely was trying to address her appeals to those with the greatest political influence: men with the vote.

Stanton believed that the ideal of the feminine role in society often had little to do with reality; the membership of the women’s rights movement reveals little evidence of any members outside of a mainly white middle class socioeconomic group other than the presence of a few black abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. After the split with the abolitionist movement, the women’s rights movement briefly formed an alliance with the “Labor movement”, revealing that at least once the middle-classes and the working classes attempted to form an uneasy alliance. However, this was a short-lived attempt of the middle and

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68 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Revolution*, vol.11, no.16, (New York), 22 October 1868, in Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, series 1, reel 1.
working classes to achieve reform together. This alliance with the labour movement reveals that Stanton was trying to establish what direction the women’s rights movement should take, and the split from the abolitionists after 1867 pushed Stanton to try working with new political allies in developing her ideas.\(^{69}\) Despite the events that had forced Stanton to change direction, she continued to look towards the educated classes as the means for reform.\(^{70}\) Later, Stanton’s daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch would reveal how a cross section of women would be more successful in gaining the vote than the middle-class alone would be. Through Blatch’s interaction with the women’s movement that her mother had created, Blatch would highlight that she had inherited her mother’s legacy. In one sense Blatch would reveal herself as the truest inheritor of Stanton’s legacy because she would go on to support her mother’s key ideologies rather than the movement that seemed to be going against her mother’s vision.

Stanton’s view that the female sphere kept women in a subordinate role would lead her to the life commitment to reveal and attack what she held to be the forces keeping women in their inferior status, even if this resulted in her discussing radical areas of thought, especially after 1868.\(^{71}\) Stanton’s bid for woman suffrage was directly linked to her effort to help women achieve equality with men. Stanton reasoned that because men alone had the power to vote, they controlled the lives of women. It was a stance that followed in the pattern of Wollstonecraft’s early


\(^{70}\) Ibid.

philosophy. A clear indication of Stanton’s commitment to the vote is revealed after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. After the Fifteenth Amendment secured the vote for all men, there was no apparent support for any future Sixteenth Amendment to give women the vote. The women’s rights movement led by Stanton now began to speak out for voting rights for educated, white, middle-class women, believing the voting privilege would protect the country from the ignorant vote of many African Americans and non-native-born male voters. This method used education as a weapon to support the issue of woman suffrage; later generations of the women’s rights movement would also use education as a means to justify their demand for the franchise.

Stanton’s development of the idea for an educated vote represents a change of tactic at the time when the goal of woman suffrage seemed in danger. Stanton remained certain that once women had the vote, they would be able to achieve equality with men and be able to shape their own futures. However, efforts to secure the franchise for women were part of Stanton’s ambition for the broader women’s rights movement. Clear evidence of Stanton’s viewpoint can be witnessed through her comments to fellow reformer Olympia Brown stressing her trepidation that the women’s rights movement was becoming too narrowly focused on the issue of suffrage as the National American Women Suffrage Association was on the verge of being formed:

The National Association has been growing politic and conservative for sometime. Lucy (Stone) and Susan (Anthony) alike see suffrage only. They do not see woman’s religious and social bondage. Neither do the
young women in either association.....they have one mind and one purpose.\textsuperscript{72}

Ultimately it would be the focus on this one purpose that would lead to Stanton’s rejection of the movement by her resignation from the movement, she herself was increasingly aware of her lack of influence in changing the current direction of the woman’s suffrage movement.\textsuperscript{73}

Between 1880 and 1888, during a visit to London with her daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch, Stanton’s stance on religion continued to be influenced. Stanton was to learn much from British secularism after witnessing how the church and the state were so inextricably intertwined in England that it again helped to ignite her outrage at the institutional aspect of religion and the control that it exercised over aspects of non-religious life.\textsuperscript{74} It was in England that Stanton made one of her first public speeches on religion and its effect on women. In her *Reminiscences* Stanton wrote, “I never enjoyed speaking more than on that occasion, for I had been so long oppressed with the degradation of women under canon law and church discipline, that I had a sense of relief in pouring out my indignation.” She adds, “I showed clearly that no form of religion was indebted for impulse of freedom, all alike have taught her inferiority

\textsuperscript{72} Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Olympia Brown, 8 May 1888, Olympia Brown Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, folder 135, reel 8.

\textsuperscript{73} Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Olympia Brown, (New York, New York), 11 Nov., (1892), Olympia Brown Papers, in *Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, series 3, reel 30.

\textsuperscript{74} Ellen Carol DuBois, *Woman Suffrage and Women’s Rights*, (New York and London, 1998), pp.162-163. DuBois highlights the fact that in England due to the link of Church and State, non-Christians were not allowed to serve in Parliament. However view is undermined by the fact that Great Britain had a Jewish Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81)
and subjection.” The truth of this statement is debatable, since Stanton’s own entrance into the reform movement was partially the result of the Second Great Awakening that had proved to be a liberating rather than an oppressive experience, allowing Stanton to shed the confinement of her own religious upbringing. In addition, Stanton’s link with Lucretia Mott and the Quaker faith are other examples of the impact of religion in shaping Stanton’s own reform career.

Stanton claimed that she “was always courageous in saying what [she] saw to be true, for the simple reason that [she] never dreamed of opposition”, yet this obviously was not true. Stanton wanted to shake all male-dominated institutions such as the church, educational institutions, the state, and marriage. The foundation for the women’s rights movement rested on how women could gain equality. Stanton had turned marriage reform and the divorce laws into a method of seeking equality for women. She would eventually point her finger at religion as the major source of repression. In her writings in *The Revolution*, which she began after the end of the Civil War, Stanton provided examples of how the church acted to undermine the position of women. Religion played a key role in shaping her ideology concerning the status of women, and central to Stanton’s core ideas was her belief that religion, like the institution of marriage, oppressed women. *The Woman’s Bible*, first published in 1895 was to be the ultimate reflection of Stanton’s conviction that religion was the major method by which women were kept in an inferior position.

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75 Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp.356-357.

76 Ibid., p.216.
The chief obstacle in the way of woman's elevation today is the degrading position assigned her in religion of all countries—an afterthought in creation, the origin of sin, cursed by God, marriage for her a condition of servitude, maternity and degradation, unfit to minister at the altar and in some churches even to sing in the choir. Such is her position in the Bible and religion.\textsuperscript{77}

Stanton's initial distrust of religion stemmed from her early experience at Troy, New York. Although it was during the later half of her public career that Stanton began to really attack the ideas of the church and organised religion, she felt that it was wrong for the church to have such a profound influence on the lives of people. Stanton's major problem with the "Christianity of the churches," was their use of the Bible to reconfirm women to their 'divinely ordained sphere.'\textsuperscript{78}

Stanton's reaction to religion in the form of The Woman's Bible is perhaps unsurprising, especially since the Christian Church often appeared to be blocking the reforms that Stanton was attempting to achieve. Stanton regarded the church as a barrier in its use of the bible and that the male translation of the Bible that had deleted any evidence of the early religious leadership roles of women to keep them in a subservient position. As such, she recognised the Bible as a tool that Orthodox Christianity used as the basis of woman's oppression. In her introduction to the Woman's Bible, Stanton made her position clear when she stated "from the

\textsuperscript{77} Elizabeth Cady Stanton to E. H. Slagle, 10 Dec. 1885., Theodore Stanton papers, Mabel Smith Douglass Library, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., in Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, series 3, reel 24.

\textsuperscript{78} Dorrien, The Making of American Liberal Theology, pp.257-260; Griffith, In Her Own Right, p.155.
inauguration of the movement for woman’s emancipation the Bible has been used to hold her in the divinely ordained sphere prescribed in the old and new testaments.” 79 In reaction Stanton committed herself to attacking the male dominated institution that she felt was falsely interpreting the will of God by keeping women in subservient roles to men.

Any efforts that Stanton and the women’s rights movement made to make changes in areas such as religion and education were quickly criticised as an attempt to step outside the female sphere. Therefore, Stanton and her supporters were seen as contradicting the will and the word of God as spoken by the clergy.80 The publication of the Bible in a new revised edition in 1881 presented Stanton with the opportunity to interpret the Bible. According to Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner the fact that there had been no women on the revision board became a prime target for Stanton.81 Stanton considered that the male bias of the Bible served to confine women in the female sphere.

The newer members of the movement believed that Stanton’s position on religion would lose the women’s rights movement any chance at gaining suffrage. They feared that Stanton’s stance against Christianity in The Woman’s Bible would prove too radical for many of her peers. Indeed, one theologian suggests that Stanton stepped beyond the boundaries of being a reformer by publishing The Woman’s Bible. Her move to free women from the constraints of society, in this

79 Stanton, The Woman’s Bible, p.7.
instance, organised religion, cast Stanton in the role of a revolutionary.\footnote{Stevenson-Moessner, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton," Ibid., pp.673-689.} The concept of Stanton as revolutionary is debatable, despite the fact that she clearly saw her actions in this way as her statement in 1895 confirms. “For so far-reaching and momentous a reform as her complete independence, an entire revolution in all existing institutions is inevitable.”\footnote{Elizabeth Cady Stanton, The Woman’s Bible (1895; repr., Boston, 1993), p.11.} Stanton wanted to construct herself as a radical. She was at the end of her life trying to engineer her long lasting legacy, unfortunately it would have the opposite effect. Whether or not Stanton did or did not change from a reformer to a revolutionary is not the key concern; more important is the concept that her ideas and ideologies continued to evolve throughout her career. Through her Reminiscences, Stanton tried to shape her life into one of ongoing political awareness although her public papers and speeches often unwittingly reveal the evolution of Stanton’s ideas.

In The Woman’s Bible, Stanton clearly illustrates the key to reforming the institutions that she perceived as controlling women. She hoped to encourage women to gain access to the Christian church. The Woman’s Bible addressed the fact that women were not involved in the church, much the way the bid for women suffrage was due to the fact that women had no voice in politics. Stanton was working on the basic assumption that in order to achieve change, a reformer, had to work from the inside. Stanton believed that women had little or no awareness of the control that organised religion had over them, and she felt that reform could be achieved if she and the women’s rights movement were able to educate women to realise the inferior position that they occupied in both politics and religion. Stanton
was confident that the Bible was one of the traditional notions that prevented the equality that she desired; indeed, she believed that Christianity was the primary barrier to reform.\(^8\) In short, it was Christianity that kept women confined to the traditional notions of the female sphere, stopping any possible access that women might have to better jobs, higher education and even control of their own lives. *The Woman's Bible* illustrated that Stanton recognised the importance of acknowledging which key institutions kept women in their subordinate positions.

Carrie Chapman Catt’s response to Stanton’s work reflects the reaction of the women’s rights movement to *The Woman's Bible*. Catt, who would later become the new leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, rejected *The Woman's Bible* and pushed for a censure resolution against Stanton.\(^8\) Stanton’s introduction in *The Woman’s Bible* served as an adequate rejection of their opposition.

Others say it is not politic to rouse religious opposition. This much-lauded policy is but another word for cowardice. How can woman’s position be changed from that of a subordinate to an equal, without opposition, without the broadest discussion of all the questions involved in her present degradation? \(^8\)

This extract serves to re-iterate Stanton’s obvious belief that all major institutions needed to be attacked in order to achieve the complete equality of women. The extract also serves to highlight the rejection of Stanton’s brand of radicalism, for the

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\(^8\) Stevenson-Moessner, “Elizabeth Cady Stanton,” p.685.

\(^8\) Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, pp.212-213.

\(^8\) Stanton, *The Woman's Bible*, p.11.
generation that followed Stanton concentrated on unifying the movement, but it also reiterates Stanton's refusal to compromise in her goals signalling her own refutation of the current movement. In fact, even Susan B. Anthony, Stanton's partner in leading the women's rights movement, would side with the younger generation in an effort to unite the movement in a single bid for suffrage rather than accept Stanton's broad reforms. Stanton's ideas had led to her outgrowing the movement that she had first established. However although the later generations of the women's rights movement had publicly announced their separation from Stanton's ideas and influence, their actions reveal a different truth.

As the women's rights movement developed after the Civil War, many of the younger suffragists argued that they should concentrate on the single issue of woman's suffrage, sacrificing other areas of reform such as marriage and education. This decision was made in an effort to unite the members of the women's rights movement behind one issue. Stanton refused to compromise in her bid for equality and eventually withdrew from the forefront of the women's rights movement's formal organisations. Stanton would continue to travel, lecturing on her ideas for achieving a broad base of reforms; the fact that she continued to discuss women's rights rather than just woman suffrage reflects Stanton's belief in her strategy and in her targeted audience. Indeed, it was this same strategy that had enabled her to create the women's movement and the fact that she continued to attract spectators emphasises that the women's movement was more than just members of a formal organisation seeking one goal. In this area evidence suggests

87  Wellman, The Road to Seneca Falls, p.228.

88  Griffith, In Her Own Right, p.119.
that Stanton's legacy continued past the establishment of the formal organisation of the women's rights movement, NAWSA.89

Stanton's life experiences shaped her desire for reform, yet Stanton's role as wife and mother was not unique to her. What made Stanton so different was that she was one of the few who spoke out about the need for change. She consistently offered methods for achieving equality and at least initially revealed a talent for shaping her ideas to complement the accepted notions of the era. Ultimately, Stanton recognised that the patriarchal family was a model for the State that she was trying to reform. Stanton shared the philosophy that the family was the fabric of society by making it her first target for reform. Therefore, it is unsurprising that marriage and the notion of the female role within the family became an early target for Stanton. However, the success of the Seneca Falls Convention reveals that other women echoed Stanton's frustrations, and that these women were not only willing to listen to her speak, but they were also willing to adopt her ideas and strategies for change. This awakening caused a new reform movement to emerge. Eventually later generations would question Stanton's ideas, asking whether they had become too radical for the women's rights movement or whether the movement that she had initiated had outgrown her ideas and needed to be re-directed by future generations. Stanton in turn rejected a movement that she felt was becoming too conservative and was no longer reflective or receptive of her agenda for obtaining the full rights of citizenship for women. Stanton remained committed to the egalitarian principles of the Revolutionary period that had initiated the debate regarding the rights of the

89 Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls*, pp.229-240.
individual, regardless of sex, which had inspired her generation to demand change and to contribute to the continuing literary discussion of civil liberties.

As the exchange of literature continued from the eighteenth century into the nineteenth century, philosophers in America and England began to develop theories regarding the key themes of self-sovereignty, citizenship and the vote. It is unsurprising that within the trans-continental intellectual environment that had emerged it is possible to discover two theorists on different sides of the Atlantic who developed parallel arguments concerning the rights of women. The intellectual cross currents shaped not only the ideology of Stanton but also the philosophy of one of her peers, the key British liberal thinker, John Stuart Mill. While these two philosophers clearly developed their own original ideologies concerning the status and the rights of women, their work reflects common themes of concern, issues of self-sovereignty, citizenship, education and access to the vote.

Mill’s philosophy was based on his belief that the intellectual capacity of women was unknown due to what he believed was their “unnatural... state”, lacking in educational opportunity, and denied the basic natural civil and political rights of citizenship, he described their current “nature” as “artificial”.90 Mill’s demand for female suffrage therefore embraced the concept that it would add to the civilising of society, asserting the view that access to a political voice would remove one of the “chief hindrances to human improvement” that existed in the liberal society.91 By connecting education and female suffrage, he offered the

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“corrective to this defect” in the form of “general knowledge” that would prepare women for the responsibility of the vote.92

Education and political rights were for Mill also stepping stones towards building more equal relationships between men and women within the institution of marriage. Yet despite his thorough discussion of women’s rights, advocating their access to all political and civil rights as autonomous citizens, Mill failed to entertain the suggestion that women might embrace the opportunity to reject their traditional roles. His failure to envision a society that truly redefined gender roles becomes apparent as he elaborated that through the choice of marriage “Like a man when he chooses a profession….it may in general be understood that she makes choice of the management of a household, and the bringing up of a family, as the first call upon her exertions, during as many years of her life as may be required for that purpose.”93 Despite their access to education and political and civil rights, Mill reveals his belief that most women would want to remain in their traditional domestic role. He ultimately fails to provide women with a complete picture of their own self-sovereignty by neglecting to portray the possibility of married women working outside of the home and leaving the childcare and housekeeping duties to others.

Although published at the end of Stanton’s public career “The Solitude of Self” defines the boundaries of Stanton’s ideology, illuminating its truly expansive


93 Ibid., p.179.
nature, as she demanded nothing less than complete independence for women as autonomous individuals.\(^9^4\)

The strongest reason why we ask for woman a voice in the government under which she lives; in the religion she is asked to believe; equality in social life, where she is the chief factor; a place in the trades and professions, where she may earn her bread, is because of her birthright to self-sovereignty; because, as an individual, she must rely on herself.\(^9^5\)

While claiming these rights for women under the guise of the “republican idea, individual citizenship”, Stanton connects the key themes of her public ideology, the struggle for civil and political rights that are intrinsic to the concept of citizenship, and essential to building the structure of self-sovereignty for women that she envisioned as her ideas reached maturity.\(^9^6\) Inherent to her doctrine, Stanton endeavoured to attack any institution that she perceived to threaten or undermine the rights that she was seeking for women as citizens. In her intellectual maturity it is clearly evident how Stanton’s ideas are linked to the earlier writings of Murray, as she builds on Murray’s recognition that women needed both education and financial security to achieve any sense of autonomy over their own lives.

\(^{9^4}\) Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Solitude of Self,” address delivered by Mrs. Stanton before the Committee of the Judiciary of the United States Congress, 18 January 1892. Available from Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection [Online], http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/nawbib:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbnawsa+n8358)) (acceded 8August 2006).

\(^{9^5}\) Stanton, “Solitude of Self.”

\(^{9^6}\) Ibid.
Stanton’s “The Solitude of Self” as well as presenting the most complete vision of the self-sovereignty she wants for herself and all women, illustrates one example of the division that existed between the often parallel ideas of Wollstonecraft, Stanton and Mill. Although, Wollstonecraft and Mill both envisioned equal access to education like Stanton, and Mill shares in Stanton’s demand for female suffrage and the rights of citizenship it is only Stanton that takes the truly radical step of dismissing the traditional roles of women as being the “incidental relations of life, such as mother, wife, sister, daughter,” to allow women to truly assert themselves in the search of self-sovereignty. Although it should be noted that Stanton was not above the pragmatic use of the notion of republican motherhood and requesting education for women on the grounds of improving the morality of the nation, in the fashion of intellectuals such as Benjamin Rush or Murray, if she believed it would further her goal of female equality. Both Wollstonecraft and Mill, to varying degrees, still present a view of women as possessing the “indispensable duty of mother” and wife. They fail to consider a role for married women that would take them out of the home completely. Although the implication of what Mill and Wollstonecraft want for women does blur the line between the public and private domains, the civil, social and political benefits that they both seek for women ultimately serve to make women better equipped in their traditional roles. In contrast to the established restrictions that her philosophical peer struggled to move beyond, Stanton’s ideological maturity enabled her to redefine the concept of female citizenship by constructing a vision of women outside of their domestic domain. It would not be until the twentieth century that

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97 Stanton, “Solitude of Self.”

98 Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, p.231.
the work of the feminist thinker, Charlotte Perkins Gilman would build on Stanton’s ideas. As Gilman advocated equality for women that centred on economic opportunities rather than political rights, she continued to encourage society to accept women as more than wives and mothers.

Stanton’s radical demand for woman suffrage set the tone for the rest of her public career. Although her ideas often clashed with the convictions of society and eventually isolated her from the movement that she had initiated, Stanton never failed to affirm her beliefs. While Stanton never wavered from her conviction that women needed the vote, she did not remain constant in her reasons why or even if it was the most important gain for women. However, Stanton was certain that the vote would prove to be a key tool that would allow women to overcome the imbalance in society. This conviction was the key to her ideology of achieving equal rights for women throughout society not just on the political stage. Stanton believed that enfranchised women would be able to attack traditional institutions that she perceived were keeping women in their subordinate position in society. She recognised that without a political voice no group could encourage sweeping change and that this lack of political influence would continue to confine women to the private sphere where their husbands and fathers would continue to misrepresent them. For Stanton the vote was just the beginning of the changes that women needed to make, it was part of her strategy for the women’s rights movement to achieve its goals. Stanton wanted women to be aware of the limitations of their lives in order to embrace both her ideas and the movement that she established.
Initially, Stanton was very successful in her aims, thanks to the work of Susan B. Anthony. It was through Anthony that Stanton's main tenets were transmitted throughout the United States for the women's rights movement, yet the dualistic nature of Stanton's legacy becomes apparent as the support for Stanton's ideas and her movement appeared to separate. The question of Stanton's legacy will be further explored through a series of case studies designed to reveal the continuation and growth of the movement that she created and the ideas that initially propelled it forward. It is interesting to note that on Stanton's death Anthony wrote and predicted that both she and Stanton would be forgotten, "Our names may be mentioned now and then but there will be no feeling of "presence," however, this fate would be Stanton's alone."99

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99 Susan B. Anthony to Helen Leslie Gage, (Rochester, New York) 16 June 1903, in Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, series 3, reel 43.
Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793-1880) surfaced as a significant force in the life and works of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, taking an active role in constructing Stanton’s double legacy. This chapter allows for an essential exploration of the reciprocally important relationship of Mott and Stanton by examining the impact that the two women had on each other’s ideas and the movement that they fashioned together. Mott facilitated the cross-fertilisation of ideas and connections with a variety of reform movements, providing Stanton with the ideological groundwork, the constituency and the momentum to ensure the inauguration of the women’s rights movement. In short, Mott acted as the impetus for the formation of Stanton’s legacy. However, despite the fact that historians widely acknowledged that the 1840 Stanton and Mott meeting in London left an undeniable impression on the life of Stanton, little has been written on how this meeting influenced the life and ideas of Mott.\(^1\) It is surprising that no scholar appears to have explored this avenue further especially since the meeting of these two significant women can be linked to such a specific date. Stanton’s acknowledgement of the impact of her first meeting with Mott and the subsequent evolution of her ideology supports the possibility that the encounter held the same degree of importance for Mott and her future reform work.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Various historians discuss this meeting and the impact on Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the most recent treatment of this event can be found in Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman’s Rights Convention* (Urbana & Chicago, 2004).

As Mott and Stanton worked together, developing the ideas that led to the formation of a new reform movement, which was solely concerned with the issue of women’s rights, the transfer and growth of beliefs was clearly not exclusive to Stanton. Mott unlike Stanton was no stranger to the reform network, before she and Stanton organised the meeting at Seneca Falls in 1848 to discuss women’s rights, Mott had occupied prominent positions in a variety of reform movements. Mott’s involvement in the reform community before she and Stanton met allows for both an acknowledgement and an exploration of her evolving beliefs next to those of Stanton as well as a more in depth appreciation of how Stanton’s legacy was originally shaped.

Mott was a Quaker Minister who during her lifetime supported a variety of reform issues, such as peace, temperance and the women’s rights movement. Ultimately Mott’s life was spent encouraging people to seek out and practice the principle of equality that she preached. Mott’s Quaker faith enabled her to justify her entrance onto the reform stage, working for both an end to slavery and for equality for women. Mott’s involvement in such a wide range of reform movements occurred even though many alleged that she had stepped out of her appropriate sphere. However, she ignored the assertion that she had exposed herself to public mockery as she defended the right of women to speak out in public based on her interpretation of “Christian equality” and the fact that she acted on her professed need to speak out to highlight the “rights” and “duty” of women. Mott presented an example that Stanton and succeeding leaders of the women’s rights movement would follow. Mott’s active defence of her right to speak out for reform reinforced

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her stance that her actions were based on her moral duty to act in accordance with her Quaker faith:

I am willing even, as the Apostle said, “to be no reputation among men” if I can hold forth the truth, so that any may be brought to accept the truth. This divine power is in every human being to lead forth into correct principles, into correct actions, out of all impurity, out of the excessive indulgence of the propensities, to lead to a regard of life and our great duties in the spiritual, true, inward light.  

Implicit in the final section of this excerpt is Mott’s belief that all men and women should speak out against what they perceive to be social injustices. Mott’s conviction that both the women’s issue and the institution of slavery were in need of reform led her to urge other women to have the courage to speak out in support of these causes. As a successful lecturer who had the ability to win over an audience despite her sex, Mott’s actions illustrated the capability of women to participate in the public realm, as one spectator’s reaction to hearing her speak confirmed:

As soon as she spoke, I felt myself her captive. Her voice was inexpressibly sweet, deep-toned, and earnest. Her manner easy and dignified; her Christianity broad and practical, without bigotry and mysticism; her words flowed freely, but not superfluously, and seemed the best she could have chosen to express her meaning.  

In 1923 the Equal Rights Amendment was first introduced to Congress as the “Lucretia Mott Amendment.” The use of Mott’s name indicates an awareness of the value that her lifetime of reform work had on society. However, despite this obvious tribute given to Mott forty-three years after her death, there are still remarkably few scholarly discussions of her work. One historian attributes this

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4 Lucretia Mott, “There is a principle in the human mind,” Address delivered at Friends Meeting, Race Street, Philadelphia, 14 March 1869, in Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons, ed. Dana Greene (New York and Toronto, 1980), pp. 327-341


problem to the scale of Mott’s reform activity, stating that the breadth of Mott’s involvement in the reform arena makes it difficult to discuss Mott in conjunction with any single reform movement. A further problem that scholars have faced while studying Mott has been that many of her speeches were never documented. Mott was a public speaker who spoke from memory; she never wrote her speeches before she appeared in public as this was not the Quaker method, as Mott herself remarked in one sermon, “I have no prepared address to deliver to you, being unaccustomed to speak in that way.” The documents that contain Mott’s words that exist today are those that were recorded by various stenographers who came to hear her speak, unfortunately her failure to document her own speeches or sermons has resulted in the loss of many of Mott’s own words. Those speeches that were recorded contain various flaws as they were often paraphrased and Mott rarely checked that her words were taken down exactly as she had spoken them. This lack of attention to the legacy of her own work provides an insight into one of the major differences that existed between Mott and Stanton. Although Mott and Stanton were comparable in that they were both involved in reform in an effort to improve society, the two women differed in that while Stanton was very conscious of how her work would be viewed after her death and the construction of her legacy, Mott in contrast was just concerned with the impact that her work had during her lifetime. According to the historian Margaret Bacon Hope, Mott’s

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technique was the traditional Quaker way of giving a speech or sermon only when
the spirit was moved, with no thought to how her words would be interpreted by
future generations. Despite her presentation style and her own reluctance to think
about her impact in its broadest sense, Mott’s impact as a female reformer across
movements deserves further exploration that is currently lacking.

It has only been during the last ten years that the impact of female public
speakers in general has begun to be examined, especially in the case of nineteenth
century women speakers. Although Mott as a Quaker Minister and as a member of
the reform movement expressed her concerns on a variety of issues as a lifelong
“public speaker”, her impact has gone largely unexplored even while it has been
briefly acknowledged. Mott illustrates a circumstance that has befallen many of
her peers who were involved in the same lecture circuits that have also gone largely
ignored. Hopefully current speech anthologies are working to address this omission
by including a variety of women’s words in their collections. Historians have
included chapters on Mott’s importance especially concerning the women’s rights
movement, yet beyond Stanton’s own words stating Mott’s impact on her and the
beginning of the women’s rights movement few scholars have chosen to focus their
attention solely on Mott or given any depth to the scale of her importance. Out of

11 Margaret Bacon Hope, *Lucretia Mott Speaking, Excerpts from the Sermons and Speeches of a
Famous Nineteenth Century Minister and Reformer* (Lebanon, Pennsylvania, 1980), p. 3.
12 Christine A. Buck, “Hearing Lucretia Coffin Mott Speak” (Masters thesis, Ball State University,
1997), pp. 1-15. While there are two recent works that provide access to the letters and works of
Lucretia Mott there are no recent major scholarly works that have been published.
14 Many of the books that are full length on Lucretia Coffin Mott are juvenile literature with only
five adult books currently available, Anna Davis Hallowell ed., *James and Lucretia Mott’s Life and
Letters* (Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1884); Greene ed., *Lucretia Mott: Margaret Bacon,*
the few scholars that have examined Mott’s work one of the most valuable is Dana Greene’s *Lucretia Mott: Her Complete Speeches and Sermons*. Not only does this book group together some of Mott’s key speeches but Greene also attempts to explore the factors that led to the development of Mott’s reform impulse. A more recent work that compliments Mott’s speeches is Beverly Wilson Palmer’s *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*.15 This volume presents an interesting portrait of Mott’s public and private life through a selection of her letters to family and friends. Both of these works have tried to bring to light the importance of Mott who has been overshadowed by the attention paid to the other key leaders in both the abolitionist and women’s rights movements.16 Other additional articles that have been written on Mott tend to analyse her rhetorical skill through her lifetime of preaching to reform audiences. Although primarily not intended to focus on Mott’s historical importance the rhetorical studies of her work are valuable tools for the historian as they often have re-published speeches that might otherwise be inaccessible.17

During the Great Separation of the Quakers 1828-1829 Mott sided with the Hicksite Quakers, this decision would shape her fundamental reform ideology. The Great Separation resulted in the Hicksite Quakers abandoning the “Quietist theology,” a tenet that had kept Quakers isolated from the activities of the non-

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Quaker world. As they repudiated the belief that had prevented them from engaging in reform or entering into "mixed associations with the world's people," Hicksite Quakers became a fundamental aspect of the reform community. Mott’s presence in Garrisonian abolitionism and other reform communities reflects the Hicksite commitment to action, as Mott declared she had no intention “of submitting tamely to injustice inflicted either on me or the slave. I will oppose it with all the moral powers with which I am endowed. I am no advocate of passivity. Quakerism, as I understand it, does not mean quietism.”

Hicksite Quakers increasingly focused on the central belief that within everyone dwelled an inner spirit or an inner light that acted as a moral guide to highlight the social problems of the period. The light for these Quakers emerged as a social conscience, a method of preventing many Quakers from disregarding the social problems of the period and leading them directly into the reform arena. The importance of the inner light is clearly evident in this extract as it is described as the: “Spirit of the Truth, God, Christ, the holy spirit, the seed of God, the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” By dominating the lives of many Quakers the inner light shaped their actions and sanctified their reform activity. Mott focused on this Hicksite belief throughout her reform career, encouraging those that listened to her lectures to use their own “Inner Light” to seek

the truth and to examine their own actions. Mott's decision to separate from the Orthodox Quakers not only influenced the focus of her own beliefs but in the long term left a lasting impression on those who heard her speak, including Stanton. Mott's insistence on focusing on the truth as her inner spirit, led her to attack the methods that she felt the Church and State employed to control society.

Mott's connection with the Society of Friends further shaped her philosophy concerning the function and role that she perceived that women should play in society. The Hicksite teaching that the inner light existed in all humans was central to how Quakers viewed women in society; it led to the belief that women were spiritually equal to men. Spiritual equality allowed Quaker women the opportunity to be ministers within their faith, granting them access to public roles that most of Mott's female peers in other religions were denied. During this period Mott would be held as an example not only as a respected female Quaker Minister, but also as a woman with an accepted public role in society. However, even within the Society of Friends women were not treated with total equality. Quaker women while allowed to speak out in public were still structured in separate organisations from those of Quaker men. However, this separation of male and female spheres spread beyond the immediate Quaker arena onto the abolitionist platform where many Hicksite Quakers spoke out.


When investigating Mott and her ideas, the text that has been examined numerous times has been the "Discourse on Women."²⁵ In this sermon Mott clearly links the concept of inner light to the role of women by relying on the accepted notion that women were moral and virtuous beings as a justification for reform action. She concluded that participation in reform was a natural extension of the traditional role of women, advocating that women should look to their own inner light to reshape society. Mott's apparent acceptance of the natural order of society was the key to her success as a reformer. In her speeches Mott clearly acknowledged that women have a specific role in society as moral guardians and she does not dispute that role:

We would admit all the difference, that our great and beneficent Creator has made, in the relation of man and woman, nor would we seek to disturb this relation; but we deny that the present position of women is her true sphere, until the disabilities and the disadvantages, religious, civil, and social, which impede her progress, are removed out of her way."²⁶

Yet by accepting the traditional role of women Mott's arguments were designed to expand the boundaries of the female sphere to include the need for moral action by women. Mott implicitly implied that it was the duty of women to contribute to society and engage themselves in the public world as they were directed to do so by their inner light.


Historians have highlighted the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London as the impetus that pushed Mott to take a stance concerning the rights of women, driven into action by her indignation of the convention’s organisers’ refusal to allow female delegates the right to publicly address the injustices of slavery.\textsuperscript{27} Faced with the reality of the inequality of women, Mott increasingly shaped her belief of spiritual equality into a “full-blown claim for the secular equality of women.”\textsuperscript{28} Although her meeting with Stanton would provide the final catalyst for the emergence of the women’s rights movement, the organisation of the women’s conference would have been impossible without the combination of Mott’s intellectual dogma and the relationships that she had already established in the reform arena. From the point of the London Anti-Slavery Convention onwards Mott introduced Stanton into the reform arena, conveying her respect and affection for Stanton as she facilitated Stanton’s entrance into the international network.\textsuperscript{29}

Mott’s Quaker doctrine on the question of women’s rights led her to help organise the women’s rights convention at Seneca Falls. As the historian Nancy Hewitt argued the Quaker influence can be seen in many areas of the convention, one key area illustrating the presence of Quakers at the convention was their

\textsuperscript{27} For one example that exemplifies the historical treatment of the 1840 London Abolition Convention in connection to the development of the women’s rights movement see Keith E. Melder, Beginnings of Sisterhood: The American Woman's Rights Movement 1800-1850 (New York, 1977), p.118.

\textsuperscript{28} Greene ed., introduction to Lucretia Mott, pp.9-10.

\textsuperscript{29} Mott introduced Stanton to a number of abolitionist associates, such as Hannah and Richard Webb. Mott described Stanton to the Webbs as “one belonging to us,” Quoted in Anderson, Joyous Greeting, p.127.
signatures on the Declaration of Sentiments. Stanton would benefit from her connection to Mott as it allowed her to enter a reform network that had already been established by a variety of Quaker denominations. Access to an established reform network ensured that the women's rights movement had an educated reform constituency already in place. In many ways the instant presence of an experienced reform army, versed in the use of petitions and other extensions of politicised activity, in support of the women's movement would help Stanton's organisation build a solid foundation without having to train its supporters. Thanks to Mott, the fundamental aspects of Stanton's legacy were in place.

The acceptance of women as ministers was linked to other areas of equality in the Quaker organisation. As early as 1836 one sect proposed “that the discipline be so altered that men's and women's meetings shall stand on the same footing in all matters in which they are equally interested”, eventually this proposal would be passed and become accepted by the Genesee Yearly Meeting in 1838. The importance of this event rests on the claim that the same Quakers that were pushing for change within their own movement were also involved in outside areas of reform such as women's rights and the abolitionist movement. Therefore linking the “radical Quakers” and the “Garrisonian abolitionist network”. This link between

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32 Ibid., p.2.

33 Ibid.
radical Quakers and those fighting to put an end to slavery highlights that many of the women that participated in the organisation of the initial meeting to discuss women's rights already possessed some experience in the reform arena. Indeed in 1837 Lucretia Mott helped organise the National Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in New York, revealing the commitment of female abolitionists to contribute in the fight to end slavery and their increased awareness of the restrictions that they faced due to their gender. At the convention Mott supported a resolution that advocated that women should fight all oppression, including their own, using "her voice, and her pen, and her purse and the influence of her example" to reflect their dissatisfaction of "the circumscribed limits" of their sphere. Mott not only gained experience of organising a convention, she and the other women that attended abolitionist events were exposed to the violence that could accompany the protests of those that objected to their reform efforts.

Stanton as the only woman involved in the convention without a link to the Quaker faith stands alone in her lack of public experience. Her comments in the History of Woman Suffrage that those involved in organising the meeting at Seneca Falls had "no experience in the modus operandi of getting up conventions," or that "they were quite innocent of the herculean labors they proposed," is misleading.


36 The destruction of the Pennsylvania Hall, Philadelphia, May 16, 1838 after an abolitionist meeting was one of the most violent episodes that women abolitionists were exposed to, see Angelina Grimke Weld, *Speech at Pennsylvania Hall, Philadelphia, May 16, 1838*, in Ibid., pp.153-156.
because they seem to apply mainly to her.\(^{37}\) It is at this point the value of the Stanton and Mott meeting can be acknowledged, with Mott giving Stanton entrance to not only the Quaker network but also the Garrisonian connections which would provide Stanton with her initial ideology for reform. Although Stanton’s husband would have also provided her with access to Garrison through his involvement in the abolitionist movement, his relationship with Garrison failed to reflect the respect and loyalty that was evident in the friendship between the Motts and Garrison.\(^{38}\) Just as Lucretia Mott had embraced and encouraged Stanton’s desire for action, she had also helped shape Garrison for his reform career, tutoring him on effective speaking techniques.\(^{39}\) The special bond that had been established between the Motts and Garrison permitted Lucretia Mott to play a unique role in presenting the Garrisonian ideology, which she had helped mould, to Stanton. Stanton in return introduced Mott to the idea of woman’s suffrage, politicising the goal of equality for women.

The influence of outside authors on Mott and how she would transfer that influence to Stanton and her networks should not be ignored as key elements of building reform connections. One of the key writers that influenced many women on the issue of women’s rights, including Mott, was the eighteenth century feminist author Mary Wollstonecraft and her work *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. As one historian noted, Mott kept this text on display for decades in her home.\(^{40}\) It was

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\(^{38}\) When the American Anti-Slavery Society divided, Henry Stanton joined the Anti-Garrisonians. Garrison credits the Mott’s for broadening his religious views.

\(^{39}\) Cromwell, *Lucretia Mott*, p.47.

\(^{40}\) Anderson, *Joyous Greeting*, p.69.
also Mott who encouraged Stanton to revere Wollstonecraft as one of the women who has inspired the *History of Woman Suffrage* by her acknowledgment of Wollstonecraft’s “great moral courage, in coming out in that day 60 or 70 years ago with her radical claim of the Rig. of Wom.” Mott identifies Wollstonecraft as a ‘pioneer’ of the women’s movement and during the 1866 Women’s rights Convention in New York, Mott encouraged the ‘young women of America’ to acquaint themselves with the history of the women’s rights movement starting from the work of Wollstonecraft. Wollstonecraft’s key message that with access to education women would be guaranteed equality resonates throughout Mott’s and in turn Stanton’s work as a key area of concern. Mott and Stanton both asked for the opportunity for women to expand their minds in order to reach their full potential:

> Let woman then go on — not asking favors, but claiming as a right the removal of all 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 ministering to her necessities, strengthening her physical being by proper exercise and observance of the laws of health.

Mott embraced a further component in the development of her ideology and consequently had an impact on the evolution of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s own ideas.

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through her association with the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Through their exposure to the ideas of William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia and her husband James had both accepted Garrison's principle that the only cure for the evil of slavery was the immediate emancipation for all "Negroes". Mott's support of Garrison's aim of an immediate end to slavery would not only influence the direction of her reform impulse it would also affect the style in which she enacted future reforms.

Eventually the development of Mott's reform philosophy including Garrison's influence would be shaped into a new direction by her subsequent meeting with Stanton. Stanton encouraged Mott to challenge the teaching of Garrison and take a new direction by merging new and old ideas together. Garrison's belief that the problems of society, such as the confined status of women, would be solved by agitating the public into action through appeals to their sense of morality and reason contrasted with the political drive of Stanton's ideas, especially her push to enfranchise women. However, Garrison's ideas supported Mott's conviction that the key social institutions needed to be reformed in order to reshape society, an idea that she passed on to Stanton. Two targets that Mott condemned were the Church and the state, Stanton would later continue Mott's ideological attack on these two institutions and in doing so continue to form her own reform beliefs that would allow her to organise the women's movement, an action that would include a demand for the vote. Mott initially combined Garrison's ideas with her own viewpoint that all people contained the inner-light and that they should be encouraged to judge the truth in what the Bible taught them and the morality of their own actions for themselves. Mott no longer wanted people to trust in what

45 Greene ed., introduction to Lucretia Mott, p.10.

46 Ibid., pp.10-11.
custom and tradition dictated they should do, she wanted to have faith in the inherent good nature of people and a belief that if needed they would act in the face of social injustice even if that pushed people to challenge traditionally accepted beliefs and institutions. Stanton would follow Mott and eventually learn to make these judgements for herself; she would also continue to advise the next generation to the same.

The influence of Garrison on Mott reveals that throughout her life Mott combined her own Quaker beliefs with other ideas and doctrines of others to create an evolving ideology. Mott’s developing set of ideas and how they were formulated would have a clear impact on how Stanton would eventually create her own belief system, with Mott providing a foundation from which Stanton established her own developing ideological theory. Garrison would not be the last instance of influence on Mott; she would go on to select elements from a variety of sources to enrich her reform ideology. From Unitarianism Mott accepted the idea that human nature was naturally good and that it would lead to universal salvation. Through the teachings of the transcendentalists Mott found support for her own Quaker teachings that religion was within everyone and that was the standard with which you should judge your actions. Mott was able to use select components from the major influences of her life to help shape her unique viewpoint on society and to specify how it might be enhanced. Mott’s reform activities stemmed from the ideology that she eventually developed through a combination of all of her influences. Centring on Mott’s belief that it was every individual’s duty to look to themselves to judge the morality of their own actions rather than to seek the approval of an institution.

such as the Church or the State, she applied standards of righteousness and truth to her own life and encouraged those that she met to do the same by making people publicly aware of the need for reform. For Stanton, Mott would emerge as a symbol of action and courage who had granted Stanton the individual strength to challenge the imperfection of society as she saw fit.

At the beginning of her public career, Stanton’s support for the abolition of slavery and her involvement in organising Seneca Falls connected her directly to Mott’s influence. Mott emerged as a mentor and a role model who shaped Stanton’s complex legacy. However, later in Stanton’s career as she became more confident in her ability to develop and validate her own ideology away from Mott’s tutelage, her ideas appeared to be increasingly radical and appear to be taking a different direction from those of Mott. This apparent process of radicalisation makes it difficult to appreciate the connection and transfer of ideas between Mott and Stanton and how in reality the two women fertilised each other’s beliefs.

After Mott’s meeting with Stanton, her efforts for the advancement of women would include supporting the demand for women’s suffrage. Stanton’s influence encouraged Mott to support the enfranchisement of women, however this is not necessarily due to the fact that Stanton was more radical in her ideology than Mott. Mott’s initial failure to support Stanton’s demand for woman’s suffrage in the Declaration of Sentiments, centred on Mott’s Quaker and Garrisonian beliefs, which embraced the desire to stay outside the political world. The same faith that encouraged Mott to listen to her own inner light and speak out for reforming society, did not believe that a political voice was needed in order to achieve
equality. However, Mott clearly went on to embrace the right of women to participate in the political world in which they had no voice as part of an agenda for equal rights for women. As Mott argued in her most famous work *Discourse on Woman*, women were not looking for favours but rights: "she is seeking not to be governed by laws, in the making of which she had no voice. She is deprived of almost every right in civil society." Written in 1849 it confirmed that the politicising impact of Stanton’s demand for the enfranchisement of women in 1848 at Seneca Falls had combined with Mott’s own long standing Quaker concern on the status of women in society.

Although Elizabeth Cady Stanton never belonged to the Society of Friends, she utilised Mott’s ideas on the need for reform to shape her own developing ideology. Stanton’s publication of *The Woman’s Bible* is one of the more obvious indications of her following Mott’s reform ideas although Stanton never directly acknowledged that she was actually basing her ideas on religion on those of Mott in connection to *The Woman’s Bible*. While it is frustrating that there is no direct mention of Mott’s influence on *The Woman’s Bible*, Mott’s impact is still evident in Stanton’s actions. Stanton valued her acquaintance with Mott as a point of redirection and independence in the development of her ideology. Her description of Mott’s importance as guide that led her out of a dark cave and into “the rays of the noonday sun,” reveals the deep degree of influence that Mott had on Stanton. The extent of Mott’s influence is further supported by Stanton’s later tutelage of her

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own followers. After being directed into the intellectual light by Mott, Stanton would later offer similar instructions to those who supported her by advising all that listened to her to recognise “that governments and religions are human inventions” and as such they should be challenged and reinterpreted.\footnote{Stanton, 	extit{Eighty Years and More}, p.285.} Mott had allowed Stanton to develop her faith in her own belief and to challenge the established practices of society. As a true testimony of Mott’s impact Stanton would endeavour to pass this lesson on to future generations of reformers.

Abolition stands as the first major reform arena that Mott was involved in through William Garrison’s influence, as early as 1833 she established the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society (PFAS) to encourage women to take a stand against slavery. In 1840 Mott travelled to London to visit the World Anti-Slavery Convention, although she and the other women that attended the meeting were excluded from sitting at the discussions. Her meeting with Stanton would alter the direction of the reform careers of the two women into organising then meeting to discuss the rights of women at Seneca Falls in 1848. Although Stanton was never strictly an abolitionist, since her interest would remain largely focused on women’s rights throughout her reform career, her early connection to the abolitionist movement was through her husband, Henry Stanton. Stanton in the initial stages of her reform career supported the abolition of slavery and the belief that all ex-slaves should possess the vote, yet when it seemed that the “Negro’s hour” would take precedence over the “woman’s hour”, Stanton was quick to respond with a change of argument often resorting to racist tactics and educational requirements to secure woman suffrage.
We have fairly boosted the negro over our own heads, and now we had better begin to remember that self-preservation is the first law of nature. Some say, "Be still, wait, this is the negro's hour." But I believe this is the hour for everybody to do the best thing for reconstruction. A vote based on intelligence and education for black and white, man and woman — that is what we need. Martha, keep your lamp trimmed and burning, and press in through that constitutional door the moment it is opened for the admission of Sambo.52

Due to Mott's involvement in the abolitionist movement she would never support or agree with Stanton's change of tactics, however even while she disapproved she remained involved in the women's rights movement.

Marriage would become an early target for reform for Stanton. Her relationship with Lucretia and James Mott gave her the chance to view a marriage where a man was clearly happy and supportive of his wife's desire to step outside the traditional female sphere in the name of reform. Through her speeches Mott promoted the need for equality in marriage. Her marriage to James Mott was one based on equality, as her longstanding reform career testifies. Stanton throughout her career would be an ardent speaker on the need for marriage reform demanding that marriage should be a partnership as she commented to Susan B. Anthony "It is in vain to look for the elevation of woman, so long as she is degraded by marriage.... The right idea of marriage is the foundation of all reforms."53 The fact that Stanton remarked on the degradation of marriage for women can be directly linked to the ideas of Mott. Mott in her speech "Luther's Will" had commented on


53 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony, 1 March 1853 in Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, series 3, reel 7.
how wives still remained dependent rather than equal to their husbands even after
death: "The extract from Luther's will which has been read..... Still only proves the
degrading relation she bore to her husband. There is no recognition of her equal
right to their joint earnings. While the wife is obligated to accept as a gift that
which in justice belongs to her, however generous the boon, she is but an inferior
dependent."54 Mott gave her speech a year earlier than Stanton wrote her letter to
Anthony; however the date remains unimportant next to the fact that is possible to
show a clear link of ideas between the two women. It is clearly apparent that
Stanton's ideas were encouraged by Mott's personal ideology on the subject of
marriage. Mott clearly states in Discourse on Woman, that "The independence of
the husband and wife will be equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations
reciprocal."55 This extract highlights the link between the ideas of Mott and
Stanton on marriage, supporting the idea that the two women shared and developed
ideas together.

One of the major aspects of society that Mott felt needed reforming was
religion and how it was practised through the Church. Although Mott was never
explicit about which faith she was discussing, Stanton's work The Woman's Bible
provides the answer mainly because Stanton is following Mott's own stand against
the Orthodox Protestant Christian church whose conservative nature was often a
blocking element to the reform movements of the nineteenth century. Stanton
embraced Mott's belief that the Church was distorting religion by the dogma it

54 Lucretia Mott, "Luther's Will," Remarks Delivered at West Chester, Pennsylvania, June 2 1852,
in Lucretia Mott, pp.191-192.
55 Lucretia Mott, "Discourse on Woman," Delivered in Philadelphia, December 23 1849, in Ibid.,
p.162.
created. As Mott denounced "the still prevailing King and Priestcraft," Mott revealed the broad target of her religious reform as she declared "that Protestantism was only a modification, not a thorough reform of a degrading superstition." Religion for Mott was following "the Spirit in a life of righteousness and truth", which was linked to her personal ideology rather than what she felt was the priest craft and superstition that the church encouraged by conforming to an established doctrine. The transfer of religious beliefs is clearly evident in the following extract as Mott and Stanton shared terminology as well as ideology:

> Priestcraft did not end with the beginning of the reign of Protestantism. Woman has always been the greatest dupe, because the sentiments act blindly, and they alone have been educated in her. Her veneration, not guided by an enlightened intellect, leads her as readily to the worship of saints, pictures, holy days, and inspired men and books, as of the living God and the everlasting principles of Justice, Mercy, and Truth.

Although many of Mott's peers would regard her reform activities as stepping out of her sphere, she was assured that her effort to work for the equality of women was a further example of her own use of the inner light. Through her labour, she hoped to encourage others to examine the constraints that society placed upon them. Mott's actions illuminated the confinements that surrounded women and encouraged them to want to expand these boundaries. Indeed Mott did not deny that women had a separate role to that of men, she merely argued that it should be better defined to give women equality. As early as Mott's first teaching job at

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Quaker school she had been surprised that male teachers were paid a higher salary for the same duties and additionally after marrying her husband James Mott, she was not expected to keep working. These were early signs for Mott that women needed to work towards equality in everyday life. The fact that over half of all of Mott’s speeches comment on the condition of women merely reinforces her desire for change.  

To support her argument that religion acted to control the lives of women, Mott was one of the first women who would demand that the major teaching tool of the Church, the Bible, should be re-examined and re-interpreted to reveal how it portrayed women. By examining Mott’s discussions on the status of women it is clear she had developed the view that the female role had not been defined by women themselves but through custom and tradition that had been reinforced by the teachings of the Church. Mott often described the teachings of the Church as priestcraft used to restrict women, which she radically encouraged people to cast aside. Mott declared, “We are too prone to take our views of Christianity from some of the credulous followers of Christ, lest any departure from the early disciples should fasten upon us the suspicion of unbelief in the Bible….The importance of free thinking and honest speech cannot be over-estimated. Be not afraid of the reputation of infidelity or the opprobrium of the religious world.”  

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61 Greene ed., introduction to Lucretia Mott, p.17.


Mott's willingness to re-interpret the scriptures was linked to the Quaker view that their authors were not divinely inspired. Therefore because the words did not come from God, Quakers believed that it was up to each individual person to judge for themselves the merit of the Bible, as they interpreted its meaning. Similarly this might explain why Mott believed that the nineteenth century concept of separate spheres, which restricted women to their domestic roles within the home, was not a realistic portrayal of a true woman. By recognising the ability of religious institutions to distort the words of the Bible, Mott argued that the prescribed role of women was a constructed notion rather than evidence of the true position of God. Although Mott disputed the accepted ideal of how a woman of her period should behave she failed to go into any real depth about what "true womanhood" actually involved.

Mott's demand for a re-examination of the Bible would have a direct influence on Stanton, especially her belief that the Bible was deliberately misinterpreted in order to keep women in an inferior position in society. The Woman's Bible first published in 1895 was to be the ultimate reflection of Stanton's conviction that religion was used as a force to suppress women.

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64 Carlson, "Defining Womanhood," pp.91.

65 For the most famous example of Mott's views on the misuse of the scriptures see Lucretia Mott, "Discourse on Woman," Delivered in Philadelphia, December 23 1849, in Lucretia Mott, pp.143-162.


Although Stanton's own re-interpretation of the Bible would lead her to be recognised as a radical not only by her peers but also by future generations, there is clearly a strong link between her own ideas concerning the Bible and Mott's comments fifty years earlier. The transfer of ideology and Quaker influence is also apparent in Stanton's own words as she reflected as early as 1854, that "the writings of Paul...are susceptible of various interpretations. But when the human soul is roused with holy indignation against injustices and oppression, it stops not to translate human parchments, but follows out the law of its inner being, written by the finger of God in the first hour of its creation." Stanton's speech illuminates her acceptance of Mott's belief in the practice of misreading of scripture as a method of preserving the subordination of women. However it also offers further evidence revealing how Stanton had imbibed Mott's Quaker concept of inner light to justify action against inequality and subjugation.

One of Mott's significant contributions to the reform movement was her linking role between the women's rights movement and the abolition movement. This link was encouraged by the fact that women and slaves both appeared to be second class citizens in the New Republic. Mott provides an early example of the parallel that existed between women and slaves. In "The Mothers should depart and Give Place to the Children", Mott compares the life of women to the situation of the slaves, claiming that women should "enterprise, to free woman from her enslavement; for it is an enslavement, although not equal to the degradation of the poor black slaves, and although I have never liked to use the word "slavery," as

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applied to the oppression of woman, while we had a legalised slavery in our
country. But the oppression of woman has been such, and continues to be such, by
law, by custom, by a perverted Christianity, by church influence." 69 Mott's
recognition of the relationship that existed between the institution of slavery and the
condition of women was shared by other key female abolitionists, as they began to
assert themselves publicly they acknowledged that "the rights of the slave and of
woman blend like the colors of the rainbow." 70 The female abolitionists who had
the courage to address mixed audiences such as Angelina Grimké, hoped that their
actions inspired others to join their reform efforts as they accepted that their roles as
"pioneers, going before a host of worthy women" who would follow and continue
to expand the rights of women. 71 The recognition that the torch for reform would
pass from one generation to the next, undoubtedly influenced Mott's interaction
with Stanton. Stanton represented the fulfilment of Mott's "great hope" as one of
the "new recruits" who once trained would continue the reform work of the "older
warriors". 72

Mott's connection with Stanton, her role in organising the meeting to
discuss women's rights at Seneca Falls and her ties to the abolitionist movement
combined to place Mott in a unique position to act as a link between the two

69 Lucretia Mott, "The Mothers Should Depart and Give Place to The Children", remarks delivered
at the Eleventh National Woman's Rights Convention, New York, 10 May 1866, in Lucretia Mott,
p.268.

70 Letter from Angelina Emily Grimké Weld, 1837, in The Grimké Sisters: Sarah and Angelina
Grimké, The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights, ed. Catherine H
Birney (Boston, 1885), pp.201-203.

71 Ibid.

72 Lucretia Mott to Adeline Roberts, March 5, 1852, Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society Records,
Essex-Peabody Institute, Essex-Peabody Library, in Black Abolitionist Papers 1830-1865, ed.
movements. However after the Civil War, the ensuing fourteenth and fifteenth amendments would drive Mott to make a choice between the abolitionist’s assertion that this should be just the “Negro’s hour” or supporting the claims of the women’s rights movement that it should be their time as well. Although ultimately she would stand beside Stanton and the women’s rights movement, this was not an indication that Mott totally agreed with Stanton’s developing views or ideas why women should achieve equality. Yet early in 1860 Stanton’s speech to the Anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society provides evidence that she had accepted Mott’s ideas that women and slaves suffered the same injustices and that they should be linked together. “For while the man is born to do whatever he can, for the women and the Negro there is no such privilege. There is a Procrustean bedspread ever ready for them, body and soul, and all mankind stand on 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.” Later Stanton would develop her own ideas stating that women should have the vote before the “Negroes”.

Although Mott was never concerned with creating a lasting self-image like Stanton, how she was perceived by her peers would affect how her demands for reform were received. Mott unlike Stanton, was viewed as a conservative figure who had hesitated at the point of adopting the Declaration of Sentiments resolution that women should be enfranchised, as such her reform activity did not appear as

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radical as Stanton’s.\textsuperscript{75} Yet in many ways Mott was a radical figure who fashioned Stanton early in her career as a reformer. Mott’s entrance to the abolitionist movement had been preceded by her career as a Quaker Minister; this role educated her as a public speaker and clearly cast her outside of the traditional female role in society. Her involvement in the slavery issue further indicates that Mott was not as conservative as she might appear. Mott’s age and matronly appearance would lend her an air of respectability that would often tend to legitimise the areas of reform that she was involved in. For future generations of women that would be involved in the women’s rights movement Mott would be singled out as an example to her successors, including Stanton. Later Stanton seemed to deliberately emulate Mott’s style, actively trying to achieve a matriarchal status within the movement. In 1828 Mott along with many others had split away from the Orthodox Quakers to join the so called radical Hicksites’ so that they could speak out freely about reform. As one of the first women to demand equality for women, Mott’s actions seem to challenge the image of her that has been left behind. In order to be able to examine the exchange of ideas between Mott and Stanton, it is important to be able to recognise the real ‘faces’ of Mott and Stanton. Mott was no more completely conservative than Stanton was completely radical.

Mott’s career as a minister and as a lecturer placed her in a unique position of being in contact with a variety of people involved in a wide range of reform movements in an international arena. Through her contacts Mott was exposed to a constant circulation of current ideas that allowed her to shape her own ideology and enabled her to spread her own ideas. The significance of Mott’s exposure centres on

her connection and accessibility to those that surrounded her, facilitating an
international cross-fertilisation of ideas across a variety of reform networks. On
this stage Stanton was introduced to a complex range of reform issues, a fact that is
reflected in the wide range of interests that her organisation the women’s rights
movement would embrace as issues, including education, religion, and the reform
of punishments where they concerned women. A more direct link demonstrating the
impact that this complex reform network had on Stanton and her peers that would
become involved in the women’s rights movement is clearly illustrated by the
example of another reformer, Marian Kirkland (Mrs Hugo) Reid. Reid had attended
the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention in London when women were not allowed to
speak and was so influenced that in 1843 she had published a piece on women’s
rights, *A Plea for Women*, in which she called for women to be given political
equality through suffrage. Reid’s actions reveal a parallel that can be drawn
between her and Stanton. Both Reid and Stanton became concerned with the issue
of women’s rights as a result of attending the Anti-Slavery Convention and being
exposed for the first time to women such as Mott who had established a presence in
the reform world. This shared experience was not only that of either Reid or
Stanton. The influences and connections that were made within the abolitionist
movement would later create a “matrix-like” structure amongst a variety of women
on an international scale who would join together in a bid for equality for women.
The network that existed as the Anti-Slavery movement, in which Mott was a key
figure, provided the foundation from which the women’s rights movement would

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77 Ibid., p.20.

78 Ibid.
grow. However, later Stanton would persuade Mott and the women's rights movement to split from the abolitionist movement highlighting the growth on the part of Stanton and the movement that she created. A major part of Mott's importance and influence on Stanton rests on the fact that she provided access to this network and to numerous supporters and ideas from various reform movements, encouraging the development of Stanton's dual legacy.

While organising the meeting at Seneca Falls in 1848, Mott's reluctance to ask for the enfranchisement for women has often been noted, impeding a more in-depth analysis of her value. Her initial hesitation in seeking the vote for women has often been explained away due to the fact that Mott was a conservative figure next to the more radical, younger Stanton. This view tends to block the value of the relationship that emerged between Mott and Stanton beyond the call for the enfranchisement of women. Although there is truth in that Mott was reluctant to include the demand for the vote in the Declaration of Sentiments it was not due to her conservative nature. Mott felt that there were other means besides the vote that would ensure equality for women.79 In many ways her lack of desire to demand the vote should be viewed as a product of the influence of William Lloyd Garrison and her Quaker upbringing that had shaped her viewpoint. Mott was concerned that by demanding the vote the women’s rights movement would appear to be urging women to step out of their traditional sphere and as a result of this the movement

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79 Mott’s signature on the Declaration of Sentiments, in addition to the fact that she only objected to inclusion of the goal of woman suffrage would seem to support her belief that she supported a full agenda to achieve equality for women other than the vote. For her concerns about the Stanton’s belief that women should be enfranchised see Stanton, Anthony and Gage eds., History of Woman Suffrage. vol. 1 (1881; repr., New York 1979), p.70.
would lose public support. Her fears were well founded, especially when it is taken into account how long it took women to win the right to vote.

Mott worked within the acceptable boundaries of her sphere while always challenging those boundaries. Mott did sign her name to the *Declarations of Sentiments* which included the demand for the vote and later went on to defend the right of women to be able to vote even though she clearly acknowledged the possibility that some women may not want to be enfranchised. "The unwillingness of some to vote (assuming such to exist), does not destroy the right of a class."80 As scholars have researched the events leading up to the Seneca Falls Convention and endeavour to fill the gaps that remain in the historical account, evidence of a second meeting prior to the convention has been discovered.81 While Mott’s absence at this meeting has been noted its relevance has been overlooked, as it reflected that her presence was not needed. Mott’s importance rested in her attendance at the main event. It was at the actual convention that she fulfilled her importance as her name attracted supporters and drew the networks together; Mott facilitated the alliance between the old reformers and the new recruits. Mott would continue to play this role in the women’s rights movement even as she reflected the effects of the politicisation of Stanton’s influence by accepting the role of convention president at the Syracuse convention in 1852.82

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81 For a discussion of the second meeting see Livingston and Penny, *A Very Dangerous Woman*, p.73.

82 At the Rochester Convention, August 2, 1848 both Stanton and Mott had believed that it was hazardous to have a woman preside over a convention. See Stanton, Anthony, and Gage eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1, p.75.
Although Mott was trying to help women realise the need for reform to achieve equality she never took the next step casting them in a superior role to men. As Stanton developed her tactics to claim woman suffrage on the basis of moral superiority of women, especially after 1868, Mott remained focused on equality for both sexes: "We ought to put woman on a par with man, not invest her with power or claim for her superiority over her brother. If we do, she is just as likely to become a tyrant as man is." In this instance we can see Stanton expanding on the ideas of Mott and her religious convictions in an effort to secure her own bid for the vote. Mott as a Quaker was reluctant to be involved in political matters. Mott had already pushed the Quaker boundaries and become involved in various reform movements it was only through Stanton’s urgings that she overcame her natural reluctance to demand the vote for women. The two women interacted with each other to expand the ideas of each other.

Despite the fact that Mott has not really been examined in an in depth fashion by many recent scholars, Mott clearly emerges as one of the central figures of the reform movement. She had a direct influence on Stanton, exposing her to a broad range of liberal reform ideas and reform styles through her network connections, allowing Stanton to develop her own reform ideology and to have the courage to shape a movement around her own ideas. However, by focusing solely on Mott’s influence on Stanton the full value of the relationship between Mott and Stanton is not revealed. Stanton also has an influential impact on Mott, for both Mott and Stanton this was obviously a reciprocally beneficial relationship of support and growth in the reform world. Stanton clearly adopted Mott’s ideologies

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83 Lucretia Mott, “The Laws in Relation to Women”, Remarks delivered at the National Woman’s Rights Convention, Cleveland, Ohio, 5-7 October 1853, in *Lucretia Mott*, p.218.
without embracing Mott’s Quaker faith and through her connection to Mott she was able to gain entrance to the pre-existing reform network that existed between the Quakers and the abolitionists that otherwise would have been closed off to her. It is challenging to measure the true impact of Mott’s ideas on Stanton, but Mott’s value in the establishment of Stanton’s dual legacy can not be ignored. Mott influenced the development of Stanton’s ideas and the formation of the women’s rights movement. It is perhaps fair to comment that the impact of Mott’s direct ideas was not as important as Stanton’s entrance to the reform support system that Mott enabled, as this allowed the women’s rights movement to grow and gather strength during its developing years. It is difficult to be able to reveal the level of influence that Mott and Stanton had on each other, yet the testimony of the creation of the women’s rights movement reveals the importance of the ideas of both women and their interconnection on the reform network.
Chapter Five
Susan B. Anthony: Sister and Aunt of the Movement
1820-1906

After Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had devoted their lives to the battle for women’s rights, their bond has been examined by scholars as a “study in contrasts,” of two women united by a common cause.\(^1\) Given that the partnership of Anthony and Stanton has been well-researched the aim of this chapter is to allow for a shift of focus on the Stanton-Anthony relationship. The objective of this chapter is to examine Anthony in connection with Stanton’s double legacy, the movement that she inaugurated and the ideology that originally guided the movement. Anthony is a fundamental figure that conveyed Stanton’s ideology and who became the crucial organiser that pushed Stanton’s movement to mature, supporting the cause as it narrowed its focus and as it changed direction breaking away from Stanton’s broad reform agenda.

During their friendship Anthony occupied three clear roles in connection to Stanton and the organisation that she created. Initially Anthony was utilised as an instrument by which Stanton could spread her ideas to a larger audience; later Anthony’s commitment to the woman’s suffrage movement would increasingly transform her position from that of disseminator to that of a recruiter for new members to join the developing organisation, to finally being established as the historical icon of the women’s rights movement in favour of Stanton by the younger

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generation that had inherited the suffrage cause. The evolving relationship of Stanton-Anthony did have a direct impact on Anthony’s role in the women’s movement. Originally cast in a deferential role to Stanton, Anthony’s function in the movement reflected this position as she became Stanton’s ideological mouthpiece in an effort to attract attention to Stanton’s movement. As the Stanton and Anthony relationship matured, Anthony became increasingly confident in her role in the movement and her loyalty gradually appeared to rest with the woman’s suffrage movement rather than with Stanton. Eventually Anthony’s transfer of allegiance from Stanton and her movement to solely supporting the women’s movement, made the rift in Stanton’s dual legacy more apparent.

Born in 1820 in Massachusetts to a Quaker family, Anthony was one of six children. Later she would move to New York with her family where she was educated as a Quaker and became for a brief period a teacher. In 1851 Anthony met Stanton. Although currently Anthony is far more recognised in connection with the women’s movement she was not involved in the first women’s rights convention at Seneca Falls. Her association with reform was initially through her links to the temperance and abolition movements. Anthony’s upbringing as a Quaker propelled her into the temperance movement. As early as 1840 Anthony was campaigning for temperance, it was her activity within the temperance movement that would bring her into contact with Stanton. An equally important development that steered Anthony in the cause of women’s rights was that increasingly women who were involved in either temperance or abolition were able to work within the reform movements but they were often denied prominent positions supporting their causes. In one account of her attendance at a temperance meeting organised by the Sons of
Temperance in Albany, reference was made to the fact that she was not allowed to speak as the role of women at these gatherings was just to "listen and learn".\textsuperscript{2} Anthony’s anger at this treatment of women echoed what many of the other women activists were feeling and left her determined to act.

The 1851 meeting of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony provided the impetus for one of the most active partnerships within the women’s movement. Anthony’s formal introduction to the women’s rights movement took place at the third national convention in Syracuse in 1852. The relevance of these dates is to acknowledge that Anthony’s initial attraction was to Stanton and her ideas rather than to the movement that Stanton had already established. Anthony’s changing role from that of agitator and loyal organiser for Stanton to becoming an independent organiser for the goals of the woman suffrage movement uncovers her gradual shift in allegiance. Her rigorous campaigning for new members from coast to coast and her unwavering commitment to the enfranchisement of women would place Anthony in conflict with Stanton.\textsuperscript{3}

Anthony’s activities also expose the complexity of Stanton’s legacy revealing that progressively Stanton’s movement and her ideology were at odds, as the ideas that had originally orchestrated an infant women’s rights movement were abandoned by new members. The Syracuse convention stands out as the largest convention up until that point with 2,000 delegates from eight states and Canada, standing as a testimony to the early impact of Stanton’s ideas and the movement.


that these ideas forced to emerge.\textsuperscript{4} The relationship between Anthony and Stanton promoted the formation of some of the key ideas of the women's movement. The interaction between Stanton and Anthony must be explored from a new perspective to appreciate Stanton's dual role as an ideological leader and a creator of a movement. While Anthony's value was evident in her successful ability to facilitate the transfer of Stanton's ideas from the East coast to other locations, her increasing loyalty to the women's rights movement would eventually lead to her rejection of Stanton's ideology, illuminating the duality of Stanton's legacy.

Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments" with her focus on a broad base of women's social and political rights provides evidence of her ideological starting point, while her act of organising the first women's rights convention would allow her to emerge as a matriarchal figure in the women's movement. Anthony complemented Stanton as the recognised organiser of the women's rights movement in its early stages, a key role of which was to promote the ideological beliefs of Stanton while she remained restricted by her family commitments. Later, Anthony continued to battle for the woman suffrage movement, working to keep the issue of woman suffrage alive even if this resulted in abandoning Stanton's ideological platform. It is through an analysis of Anthony's shifting role and duties throughout the development of the women's rights movement that the division of Stanton's movement and her ideological beliefs become evident.

One of Stanton's and Anthony's earliest collaborations took place on the temperance stage in New York State. As reported in the \textit{Lily}, Stanton acted as chair

at the founding meeting of the Women's New York State Temperance Society in April 1852. Anthony would later join this same organisation to act as an agent. The working bond of Stanton and Anthony started from this point onwards. Stanton and Anthony's conference meeting is representative of the connections that were being made inside the reform network. Important links were formed when like minded individuals attended events on the social reform circuit. The letters between Stanton and Anthony reveal that early in the relationship Stanton was responsible for providing the words that Anthony would utilise as outlines for her own lectures; Stanton acknowledged their speeches can be considered the united product of both her and Anthony's minds. Stanton was tutoring Anthony in the art of delivering lectures as she wrote "I have no doubt a little practice will make you an admirable lecturer. I will go to work at once and write you the best lecture I can." It would be an educational relationship that would serve both Stanton and Anthony well.

The rapport between the two women was one that was based on mutual dependency. Initially Anthony was clearly being groomed as an extension of

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6 Appointment of Susan B. Anthony as Agent of Women's New York State Temperance Society, 23 May 1852, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington D.C., Ibid.


9 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony. [after 25 May 1852], Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Vassar College Library, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., in Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony; series 3, Reel 7.
Stanton, a voice to the public when Stanton was home with her family. In a letter that Anthony wrote to Lucy Stone, Anthony accepted that she would be presenting Stanton’s speech to the legislature, acknowledging her subservient role in their relationship. “Mrs. Stanton is writing the Appeal to the Legislature, and says I must read it.”¹⁰ To look at the Stanton and Anthony relationship as just that of teacher and student would offer a very narrow perspective of their working patterns. The meeting of Stanton and Anthony should be regarded as a key event in the continued growth of the movement that Stanton had already established. Anthony’s intervention enabled Stanton to remain in ideological control of a movement that increasingly she was physically disconnected from due to her family circumstances. The simple explanation of their relationship being that of tutor and student to the cause would also fail to acknowledge the role of the reform network that provided the backdrop for the meeting and how both Stanton and Anthony were able to quickly cement their relationship into their running a movement.¹¹ The question of how such a relationship developed should not be overlooked. The connections to the reform networks allowed for an atmosphere to be created where introductions were easily made and members of various causes were able to easily travel in and out of reform circles.

The meeting of Anthony and Stanton highlights how the reform networks allowed for connections and growth to occur. Anthony’s involvement in the Temperance cause provided her with the opportunity to meet the temperance

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delegate from Seneca Falls, Amelia Bloomer. In 1851 Bloomer would be the connecting point between Stanton and Anthony by introducing the two women.\textsuperscript{12} The connection to the reform network was also one of political education for the two women on how to run a reform organisation, indeed the comment should be made that the abolitionist movement would act as key supporter of the foundling women's movement until 1869 when the women's rights movement would emerge as an autonomous organisation.\textsuperscript{13}

The accepted belief that the relationship of Stanton and Anthony was a partnership, with Anthony adopting the subservient position, would not reveal the pivotal role that Anthony played in this relationship. This view does not allow for an appreciation of the growth of Anthony's role in the women's movement. Early in the partnership, Stanton and Anthony structured their relationship with Anthony becoming a subservient student to Stanton's instruction. Anthony's commitment to Stanton was encouraged by her strong belief in Stanton's ideologies and Stanton's need for contact with her followers when she was struggling with family commitments. However, even in the early stages of their partnership Stanton was reliant in a variety of ways on Anthony, as Stanton herself reported "In writing we did better work together than either alone. While she is slow and analytical in composition, I am rapid and synthetic. I am the better writer, she is the better critic. She supplied the facts and statistics, I the philosophy and rhetoric, and together we

\textsuperscript{12} Farrell, Collaborative Circles, pp.229-230; For Stanton's vivid recollection of her first meeting with Susan B. Anthony, see Stanton, Eighty Years and More, p.163.

have made arguments that have stood unshaken by the storm."\textsuperscript{14} Recent scholarship suggests that the interdependence of Stanton and Anthony was the result of a process of negotiation between the two women with Anthony accepting the deferential role in the relationship.\textsuperscript{15} Anthony’s acceptance of her role as follower illuminates the impact of Stanton’s ideas and the fact that initially the women’s movement and Stanton’s ideology were inseparable.

The Stanton and Anthony relationship in its early stages reveals the strongest connection between Stanton’s philosophy and the movement that she created. Anthony’s adoption into the women’s movement through her acceptance of Stanton is a testimony to that fact. Anthony facilitated Stanton’s work by providing a direct link to the women’s rights movement; without Anthony’s support Stanton’s movement would have at worst lost momentum, at best been taken over by another women’s rights leader. Anthony allowed Stanton to rule by proxy. If it was Anthony making the public appearances on the reform stage, she was giving Stanton an opportunity to make sure her ideological voice was heard. Anthony at this point was Stanton’s mouthpiece, articulating Stanton’s leadership style and allowing Stanton to dominate the movement that she had originated. The initial personal closeness of the relationship of the two women is reflective of the harmony that existed between Stanton’s ideas and the movement that she had established because of the role that Anthony played in keeping the two elements of Stanton’s legacy together. Anthony’s function in the women’s rights movement would lead to a growth in public and private persona in association with the woman


\textsuperscript{15} Farrell, \textit{Collaborative Circles}, p.233
suffrage movement. Anthony's loyalty during this period was beginning to switch from Stanton to solely the movement that she had engineered. The link between Stanton's ideas and the movement would become increasingly strained as the relationship of Anthony and Stanton evolved.

After her first address at Seneca Falls in 1848 Stanton accepted a large variety of speaking engagements even though she was unable to attend due to her family commitments. It is surprising to acknowledge that after the 1848 convention Stanton attended no other women's rights conventions until 1860, although she addressed both a Woman's State Temperance meeting in Rochester in 1852 and the New York legislature in 1854.16 However Stanton's lack of appearances reveals to what degree Anthony acted as her envoy. Stanton clearly believed that every speaking occasion was an opportunity to convert others to the cause of women's rights, even though she would delegate the duty of speaking to Anthony. Stanton's belief rested on her own tutelage from the abolition school of reform and the constant needed to agitate the public into supporting a cause by making lectures and speeches.17 In Anthony, Stanton had a trustworthy and capable lieutenant, who performed the task of public speaking on the reform arena as a sign of her dedication to the ideas and early methods of Stanton. As Anthony's allegiance aligned itself more with the movement that she was campaigning for evidence of her impact becomes visible as the tactics for recruitment and support of the movement moved in a new direction.

17 DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, pp.182-3.
Stanton was confined to the lifestyle that many women had to endure, her family life kept her firmly in her traditional sphere. Stanton's relationship with Anthony was one, which allowed Stanton to step outside her role as wife and mother. The fact that Anthony did not attend the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls despite the fact that her mother and sister both attended reveals her initial lack of awareness in the women's rights movement until she met Stanton. Ultimately it would be this contact and loyalty to Stanton that drew Anthony into the woman's movement. Anthony gave Stanton the opportunity to write and draft the ideology and the ideas that shaped the movement, and then acted as the transmitter that Stanton needed to export her ideas to the public. Thinking of Anthony in these two roles, as the enabler who afforded Stanton the opportunity to write and as the transmitter of Stanton's ideas, Anthony's importance begins to gain focus. It is Anthony's collaboration with Stanton at this time that reveals Anthony's support for Stanton's ideas and the woman's movement because they were so symbiotic. Later Anthony would have to decide which was more important as younger members were beginning to take the movement in a direction that conflicted with Stanton's ideas. The eventual switch in loyalty is not as surprising as it would first appear, nor was it as complete as is expected in that Anthony would always hold on to Stanton in connection to the history of the women's rights movement. It can not be ignored that Anthony not Stanton had always been the one that actually ran the organisation of the women's rights movement. Anthony's early management of the cause was based on Stanton's ideas and her personal connection to Stanton. This reveals the degree of involvement and loyalty that Anthony had in

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connection to the movement, while additionally highlighting the fact that Anthony utilised and respected Stanton’s ideas. Anthony tied the two aspects of Stanton’s legacy together during the early stages of the women’s rights movement hiding the division that existed. The duality of Stanton’s influence would become increasingly apparent as her ideas seemed to endanger the success of the movement and its key objective, the enfranchisement of women. While Anthony’s friendship and respect for Stanton was unwavering, Anthony’s work would support the gap that was beginning to emerge between Stanton’s ideas and the movement that she had first proposed.

The lecture circuit that existed during the antebellum period was an important tool, to spread the messages of a variety of reform movements from coast to coast. Stanton and Anthony both embraced the lecture circuit as a method of broadening support for their cause. Unlike Anthony, Stanton was married with children; increasingly this circumstance prevented Stanton from lecturing. The friendship of Anthony and Stanton allowed for a creative solution to this problem when Anthony emerged as Stanton’s mouthpiece to the audience that she sought for her concerns about the position of women in society. The value of the relationship did not escape the notice of either woman especially in regards to their efforts to broaden the rights of women, as Stanton herself commented:

So closely interwoven have been our lives, our purposes, and experiences that, separated, we have a feeling of incompleteness -- united, such strength of self-assertion that no ordinary obstacles, difficulties, or dangers ever appear to us insurmountable.\(^{19}\)

\(^{19}\) Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 184.
Stanton’s marriage and her numerous children had the immediate effect of restricting her travel to express her concerns about the status of women. Stanton’s homebound situation did not mean a disinterest in the subject, in effect this time spent restricted in her home was to highlight to Stanton the true lot of women. It was through this experience that many of Stanton’s arguments would take shape and evolve. During this period Anthony played an extremely important role, facilitating Stanton’s presentation of her ideological outlook. Anthony cajoled Stanton to keep writing and to expand her arguments so that she could travel in Stanton’s place and act as her public voice. Anthony’s dedication to the movement and to Stanton ensured the expansion of membership and the continued ideological development of the organisation that Stanton had fashioned.

Oh, dear, dear! There is so much to say and I am so without constructive power to put [it] in symmetrical order. So, for the love of me and for the saving of the reputation of womanhood, I beg you, with one baby on your knee and another at your feet, and four boys whistling, buzzing, hallowing "Ma, Ma," set yourself about the work. 20

As the arena where amendments had been submitted both for woman’s and Black suffrage in 1867, Kansas offers an example of the working relationship of Stanton and Anthony in 1868. In their desire to reach as large an audience as possible even when the two women travelled to a destination together, they separated to cover as much territory as possible presenting their arguments state-wide. In the early stages of their relationship Anthony’s support of Stanton manifested itself in her belief that she best served Stanton and the movement by promoting Stanton. Anthony commented on how her key work for the cause was initially getting Stanton “seen and heard,” and

Kansas emerges as one example of that. At other times Anthony would travel alone to lecture on the women's rights cause. Often taking on what were incredibly gruelling schedules of travelling to a city a day, Anthony's determination to prod women into demanding the vote is evident. Anthony's support of suffrage would take her on lecture tours across the United States with and without Stanton. During the developing stages of the women's movement Anthony transmitted Stanton's ideology by delivering her lectures, often Anthony would be called upon as a fact finder so that Stanton could write the required speeches.

It is relatively simple to trace many of Anthony's early lecture subjects back to Stanton; the subject of divorce provides one example. After an earlier discussion with Stanton, Anthony wrote to Lucy Stone, that the case for "the right for divorce can be most clearly proved." As Stanton's spokesman Anthony would later speak out in support of a woman's right to obtain divorce in public. However, Anthony's early role in the cause was not just lecturing for Stanton, it was also about making her presence felt and keeping her connection with the reform movement alive even when she was

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incapacitated, looking after her children. Anthony was very much aware of her status in relationship with Stanton and clearly identified her role in the early stages of the women’s rights movement. “I can clearly tell you exactly what my business is…it is making arrangements for meetings in the Large Cities of our State & securing such speakers as…Mrs Stanton to address them.”

However, through Anthony’s contact with others that supported the cause, her independence and confidence in herself increased, this would lead to a change in her role inside the movement. After committing herself to Stanton for over ten years, Anthony was ready to speak out for the cause on her own. As she wrote in a letter to her mother that she enjoyed the “opportunity to sharpen my wits a little by answering questions doing the chatting, instead of merely sitting a lay figure and listening to the brilliant scintillations as they emanate from her.” This comment is indicative of the shift that was occurring; Anthony was outgrowing her role as Stanton’s mouthpiece and organiser and in time would define a new role for herself by focusing solely on the success and the goals of the woman suffrage movement. Anthony’s experience in being so centred in connection with the movement and the recruitment of new members allowed her to develop a new function in the movement that Stanton never experienced and was unable to

26 Susan B. Anthony to Sara Pellet, 8 Aug 1854 in vol.1, In the School of Anti-Slavery, pp.280-281.
control or shape in regards to Anthony’s organisational and intellectual growth. The climax of Anthony’s growth in that the balance of her loyalty was beginning to tip in favour of the cause, was the formation of the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869. The creation of NWSA as the product of growth from Stanton’s early movement gave Anthony the perfect arena to demonstrate her perfected organisational skills in running a movement that now had to be independent in the political world.  

Anthony and Stanton both wrote numerous articles for a variety of publications. However their own newspaper “The Revolution” worked as a mouthpiece for the ideas of Stanton and Anthony and their organisation, the NWSA. The motto of the newspaper highlights the demands of the movement. “The true republic - men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less.” Anthony recognised that in order to spread the ideas and words they needed a public forum to reach as many people as possible. She was not the only woman who felt that way as illustrated in a letter, which Olympia Brown wrote to her in 1868, “I am delighted to learn that we are to have a paper. It is what we most need. When we have a paper and a party we shall have weapons to fight

28 One of the best examples of Stanton’s political maneuverings of the NWSA can be seen in the 1872 "Grant and Wilson-Appeal to the Women of America from the National Woman Suffrage Association," in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 2 (New York, 1882), pp.517-520. It clearly reveals her goal to launch the issue of woman suffrage on to the political arena. Anthony is clearly seen as the leader of this political campaign as she is referred to as “the veteran commander-in-chief” and “the Garrison of the woman’s rights movement.” Ibid., pp.536-7, 544.

29 Sochen, Herstory, p.135.
with." Even though Anthony and Stanton had no experience in publishing a newspaper it was hoped that *The Revolution* would be a successful tool in spreading the issue of women's rights. Through *The Revolution* Anthony clearly acknowledged that the woman's movement was looking to totally abandon the patriarchal foundations of society. "New constructions, not reconstructions. Old foundations as well as old fabrics must be removed." Even the chosen title of this publication, *The Revolution*, clearly defined its intended role in society, as explained by Stanton: "A journal called the Rosebud might answer for those who come with kid gloves and perfumes to lay immortal wreaths on the monuments which in sweat and tears others have hewn and built; but for us . . . there is no name like the Revolution."  

The content of *The Revolution* is testimony to the wide variety of interests that were shared by Stanton and Anthony. "Early issues of the weekly covered such topics as women workers, divorce reform, the status of suffrage in various states and territories, international feminist activities, wife abuse, and other topics naturally of interest to women." While the younger generation and increasingly Anthony focused on the single issue of suffrage in the hope of success, these other concerns remain topics of issue even after women had achieved the right to vote.

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Stanton first highlighted the vote for women as a means to securing equality in other areas of their lives; she did not feel that it would be a solution by itself. It was this belief that society in its entirety needed to change that would lead to many others labelling her as being too radical.

If *The Revolution* helped spread the ideas of Stanton and Anthony it also helped the women’s movement to split. In articulating their views in such a public forum Stanton and Anthony presented their opinions to a membership that did not necessarily share their beliefs. Both Anthony and Stanton refused to publish statements that they supported either the Fourteenth or Fifteenth Amendments due to the fact that neither amendment took a stance on Equal Rights and instead denied women the right to vote. Anthony’s published response to a letter that had condemned the *Revolution’s* failure to support the Fifteenth Amendment revealed the source of their discontent:

> The Revolution criticizes, “opposes,” the Fifteenth Amendment, not for what it is, but for what it is not. Not because it enfranchises black men, but because it does not enfranchise all women, black and white. It is not the little good it proposes, but the greater evil it perpetuates that we depreciate...Our protest is not that all men are lifted out of the degradation of disenfranchisement, but that all women are left in.34

This would ultimately lead to a split in the movement as increasingly both women rejected the ideas that blacks needed to vote before women. In itself this would start the trend towards new arguments why women should be granted the right to vote. A whole variety of ideas would develop as to why women needed or deserved the vote; one of the most popular ideas that would endure through the generations was the idea of an educated rather than ignorant voter. As Anthony herself commented,

"If you will not give the whole loaf of suffrage to the entire people, give it to the most intelligent first."\(^{35}\)

Anthony and Stanton spoke out and supported a variety of topics that came under the umbrella title of human rights rather than just women’s rights.\(^{36}\) The decision to attack such a broad range of concerns reflected Stanton’s ideological foundation of a woman’s need for total equality and her recognition that so many aspects of society needed to be challenged. During this period Anthony was committed to Stanton’s philosophy when she defended the need to keep a broad platform of issues alive in the cause of women’s rights. However, eventually the women’s rights movement would turn direction and accept a need to converge on one single issue with Anthony’s support. To recognise that the extensive range of issues would increasingly narrow, grants the opportunity to discuss the evolving nature of the women’s rights movement. The issue of divorce is one that both Stanton and Anthony supported and encouraged women to claim divorce as a right, working in tandem to present a well thought out ideology to present on a state-wide basis, reflective of Stanton’s claims that all aspects of women’s inequality had to be examined and attacked. The idea that in the state of marriage women had lost all of their rights was one that both women acknowledged and were determined to address on the political stage even when others might have preferred the topics that the two women chose to present to be less emotive.\(^{37}\) Issues such as marriage


\(^{37}\) Susan B. Anthony to Lucy Stone, 16 June 1857, Ibid.
reform or religion remained controversial and members were increasingly
concerned that by linking suffrage to such issues that the goal of the
enfranchisement of women would never be attained. Supporters of the women’s
rights movement increasingly urged the two women to concentrate solely on the
suffrage issue as it became a socially acceptable goal, rejecting the broad range of
issues that Stanton had placed on the agenda:

I am very sensitive about fastening theological questions upon the
women movement...because I think when it is done officially that it is
really unjust to the cause. It is compelling it to endorse something
which does not belong to it. When you write for yourself say exactly
what you please, but as you write as Cha'n Woman’s Rights Con. Do
d not compel us to endorse anything foreign to the movement.

In part Stanton’s movement grew into the creation of the National Woman
Suffrage Association (NWSA), a politically independent movement. The
formation of NWSA highlights the working rapport between Stanton and Anthony
while also establishing a stage on which the future complexity of the two women’s
transforming relationship would emerge. In 1869 at a meeting of the American
Equal Rights Association (AERA) to discuss the fifteenth amendment, a group that
Stanton and Anthony had formed in an effort to secure the vote for both blacks and
women, the two women contended with the view of many that the vote for black
men was more important than enfranchising women. Frederick Douglass summed
up the argument when he declared “I must say that I do not see how any one can
pretend that there is the same urgency in giving the ballot to woman as to the negro.
With us, the matter is a question of life and death.” It is well documented that

38 Antoinette L. Brown to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 28 Dec 1854, vol. 1, In the School of Anti-Slavery.
39 DuBois, Feminism and Suffrage.
their reaction to this rationale led Anthony and Stanton to create the NWSA. The issue for both Stanton and Anthony was that "if a woman is intellectual, of good faith and character... it makes no difference what her color or nationality may be."\textsuperscript{41} The tone of this statement tends to point to a positive view that all people deserve the vote. In this extract from a speech by Parker Pillsbury that statement is made even clearer, "Manhood or make- hood suffrage is not a remedy for evils such as we wish removed. The Anti-Slavery Society demands that; and so, too, do large numbers of both the political parties.... But we, as an \textbf{Equal Rights} Association, recognize no distinctions based on sex, complexion or race. The Ten Commandments know nothing of any such distinctions. No more do we."\textsuperscript{42}

The concept of Universal suffrage would be utilised by Stanton and Anthony as a justification for women to be allowed to vote but they would also use the less attractive argument that others did not have the necessary qualifications to be entitled to the vote. This demand for educational standards would lead them to form new alliances. Efforts to strengthen the women's movement after it had separated from the abolitionist organisation would lead to continued searching for new support for the women's rights cause. This would take the women's rights movement into new directions both geographically and in terms of ideological alliances. In the South, the vote was highlighted as a method for ensuring white supremacy. Arguments for educated voters were utilised as methods in which


\textsuperscript{42} Parker Pillsbury, "The Mortality of Nations, an Address Delivered Before the American Equal Rights Association," 9 May 1867, in \textit{Votes for Women: Selections from the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, 1848-1921} [Online], http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/naw:@field(DOCID+@lit(rbnawsan8620div1)). (Accessed August 14, 2004).
blacks could be stripped of their voting rights. Mississippi led the way in 1890 with the Second Mississippi Plan, which provided for a poll tax, a literacy test with a property qualification, and an "understanding clause" as a loophole for poor whites. The formation of NWSA is a turning point in that it should be recognised that it establishes the beginning of a division between Stanton’s ideology and her movement. Unknowingly this split was engineered by Anthony’s organisation of NWSA as she sought to ensure the future of the woman’s suffrage movement. Anthony’s management of NWSA promoted a change of direction in the women’s rights movement with new members and increasingly a focus on a single issue, the vote for women with the loss of support of Stanton’s broad range of concerns. Anthony would emerge as the organisational leader, while increasingly Stanton’s ideas seemed out of step with the new formal movement.

In the early stages of the NWSA Stanton and Anthony focused on the positive changes that could be afforded to women by winning the vote, the vote was targeted as a tool to achieve Stanton’s broader goals for women. At this point Anthony and Stanton appeared to remain united in their aims, the ideas that Stanton exposed were ones that she and Anthony crafted together and built the women’s movement around. The vote transpired as the centre of the campaign of the women’s rights movement, highlighting that the initiation of the NWSA was the direct result of Stanton and Anthony’s refusal to accept “the aristocracy of sex” that had been established by the enfranchisement of black men. Repudiating the amendment that failed to grant woman suffrage, both Anthony and Stanton acknowledged that the vote was a symbol of citizenship and as Stanton identified in many of her written

works, the vote was not just about the elevation of woman’s status it was also in recognition of their value as their own ‘Sovereigns.’ That is the appreciation for women to be in control of their own lives. This was a theme that both Stanton and Anthony clearly advocated as for both of them “Disfranchisement means inability to make, shape or control one’s own circumstances.” For Stanton this focus did not mean that the broader issues that she had always presented to the public should now be abandoned, yet progressively the bid for the vote for women had overshadowed and would eventually replace Stanton’s broad ideological platform of equality.

Prior to the creation of NWSA and during its formative years Anthony gave Stanton structure and organisation redirecting her away from her original agitation based style of politics to a more educational political style. Stanton would find this new way of campaigning challenging and increasingly resented having to forsake, at least in connection with the woman’s suffrage movement, her wide range of concerns for women. Anthony had committed herself to the success of the woman’s suffrage movement and Stanton’s ideological goals, unaware of the paradox that existed between the two. Anthony’s early loyalty to Stanton had introduced her to the reform arena in which her presence as Stanton’s representative ensured her full education as a leader of a reform movement. On this stage...

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46 DuBois, Feminism and Suffrage, pp.182-83.
Anthony's own ideas would be fully developed, as would her ability to lead and perform in pursuit of woman's suffrage. Anthony's growth in confidence in her own abilities as a political activist would lead her to cast aside many of Stanton's ideas in reaction to her mounting commitment to Stanton's movement and her desire to see women enfranchised. Anthony's shift in loyalty is highlighted in a letter to Stanton concerning the Californian suffrage campaign in which she stressed to Stanton that she would not deviate from the woman suffrage platform:

Now, especially in this California campaign, I shall no more thrust into the discussions the question of the Bible than the manufacture of wine. What I want is for the men to vote "yes" on the suffrage amendment, and I don't ask whether they make wine on the ranches in California or believe Christ made it at the wedding feast. I have your grand addresses before Congress and enclose one in nearly every letter I write. I have scattered all your "celebration" speeches that I had, but I shall not circulate your "Bible" literature a particle more than Frances-Willard's prohibition literature. So don't tell Mrs. Colby or anybody else to load me down with Bible, social purity, temperance, or any other arguments under the sun but just those for woman's right to have her opinion counted at the ballot-box.

Anthony was initially attracted to the women's rights movement by Stanton's charisma and her broad ideological vision. Anthony's support of Stanton's ambitions for women's rights shaped Anthony as a true supporter who had learned to act on the reform stage and who began to actively seek out and persuade new members to join the growing organisation. As the recruiter of the next generation of women who would enter into the movement, Anthony ensured the continuation of

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47 In her diary Stanton refers to the fact that she has encouraged Anthony and her "younger coadjutors" to demand equality rather than suffrage, highlighting that she maintained her commitment to her broad agenda for equality she asserted that her "intellectual vision grows clearer." Diary of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 4 February 1899, in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, As Revealed in Her Letters, vol. 2, eds., Blatch, and Stanton, p.338. For another instance of similar sentiments by Stanton in which she stated that “To my mind, our Association cannot be too broad.” See Ibid, 3 December 1899, p.345-347.

Stanton’s ambitions while at the same time still supported the movement as it began to change direction.

Dating back to her early days of involvement with Stanton when they were both connected to the temperance movement, Anthony identified that the crucial tactic to reach audiences and to educate them to support a cause was through the practice of the "Foolishness of Preaching." The technique of preaching reflected the Abolition movement’s style and their belief that in order to attract support for a reform cause they needed to agitate the public by lecturing or writing essays. It would be a style that both Stanton and Anthony would be committed to during the opening stages of the women’s rights movement as both endeavoured to be “agitators to make public sentiment.” Even though later the purpose of these written and spoken words would change tone as their purpose altered from agitating to educating, the desire to attract support and to remain in the forefront of public attention continued. Far from being a foolish plan, Anthony’s comment was an astute observation of the need to reach as wide an audience as possible to ensure the continuation of the cause. It was to be a commitment that Stanton, Anthony and many other activists of the period would make in an effort to guarantee the success of their organisations. Anthony’s willingness to travel offers the perfect opportunity to judge the true depth of her allegiance to Stanton and her movement as her loyalty began to shift. It is in Anthony’s capacity as the transmitter of ideas that her role continued to expand as she began to embrace the task of recruiting new reformers to

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49 Susan B. Anthony to the Editor, Lily, (Seneca Falls, New York), 25 May 1852, in Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, series 3, reel 7.

50 DuBois, Feminism and Suffrage, p.182.

51 Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 25 August 1860, in vol.2, In the School of Anti-Slavery, pp.439-441.
the cause. At this point the women’s rights movement was increasingly dominating Anthony’s life and her devotion to Stanton unknowingly to either of them had imperceptibly begun to waver.

Anthony’s value was far more involved than just a direct transfer of Stanton’s ideas to the public. Anthony was the recruiter of a whole new generation of women into the woman suffrage movement, from NWSA to NAWSA. Her connection to the recruits linked Stanton to the new membership but also added future friction to the Anthony-Stanton bond. The relationships that Anthony built ensured the continuation of the movement. However, Anthony’s public presence as the spokeswoman for the woman suffrage cause; and her involvement with the new membership would strengthen her commitment to the movement. Many examples of Anthony’s interaction with younger members of the woman’s movement exist, illustrating her role as a mediator between Stanton and the next generation. One instance of such a relationship is illustrated through Anthony’s friendship with Rachel Foster (later Rachel Foster Avery). Elected corresponding secretary of the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1880, Foster was responsible for making arrangements for a number of suffrage conventions. In regards to her relationship with Anthony, Anthony herself revealed her role as an “Aunt” to the younger members of the woman’s movement as she described Rachel Foster Avery as “My dear, first-adopted niece.” As the first of such nieces Foster was not the last of the women that Anthony would take under her tutelage. This in itself was an

important aspect of Anthony’s role as mediator of Stanton’s ideas but also ensured the continuation of the movement. Anthony would strengthen her relationship with the new membership by rewarding their allegiance to the movement, which was increasingly associated with just Anthony rather than Stanton. In a letter to Olympia Brown, Anthony commented on the devotion and value of one of her favoured nieces, Mrs Rachel Foster Avery on the eve of her resignation from the office of corresponding secretary of the national association. Anthony detailed the invaluable assistance of Avery as her “right hand” while she was president of NAWSA.53 Such a strong bond between mentor and mentored provides strong clues to explain Anthony’s eventual transfer of loyalty. While certainly unintentional in the beginning, Anthony’s support for the woman’s suffrage movement would divide loyalty.

Anthony’s talent at adding to the ranks can be clearly examined though her connection to Anna Howard Shaw during her campaign in Kansas. In 1890, Shaw was selected as the National Lecturer to the NAWSA and went on to a career as one of the most capable orators of the suffrage movement.54 In the eulogy that Shaw presented on Anthony’s death is one of the best indicators of Anthony’s impact on her recruits.

There is no death for such as she. There are no last words of love. The ages to come will revere her name. Unnumbered generations of men shall rise up to call her blessed. Her words, her work, and her character will go on to brighten the pathway and the lives of all peoples. That which seems to our unseeing eyes as death is to her translation. Her work will not be finished, nor will her last word be spoken while there

53 Susan B. Anthony to Olympia Brown, 1 May 1901, Olympia Brown Papers, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, reel 8, box 5, folder 137.

remains a wrong to be righted or a fettered life to be free in all the earth. You do well to strew her bier with palms of victory and crown her with unfading laurels, for never did a more victorious hero enter into rest.  

Another important recruit who Anthony added to the ranks was Abigail Scott Duniway. Duniway freely acknowledged the impact of meeting and touring with Anthony on her Northwest campaign trail, during which Anthony passed on the skills that she had learned from Stanton. Duniway continued the pattern of recruitment and knowledge and reflects how the new membership become part of the cycle of recruitment and education that Anthony had started. Duniway and Foster were only two of the many women that were recruited to the women’s rights movement that wanted to narrow the focus of their campaigns to just the issue of the vote, a move that Anthony did support. The importance of Anthony’s recruits can not be over acknowledged, the fact that it would be one of her recruits who would finally stand at the helm of the woman’s suffrage movement when women finally won the right to vote is testimony to Anthony’s legacy and the impact of Stanton’s movement. Anthony had ensured that Stanton’s movement has survived, but she had done so by allowing the new generation to take it into a new direction. This allows the question to emerge to what degree the suffrage movement that won the vote was not really Stanton’s movement at all. In her effort to win the vote and ensure the success of the woman’s suffrage movement Anthony had shaped a movement that eventually evolved to

55 Anna Howard Shaw, "All Absorbing Love," eulogy given in Rochester, N.Y., 15 March 1906, Anna Howard Shaw, Series X of the Mary Earhart Dillon Collection, 1863-1955, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, box 22, folder 508.

become a very different movement than the one that Stanton had established in 1848.

One important event that aided Anthony in her task of recruiting the next generation to the suffrage movement was her attempt to vote in Rochester in 1872 at the Presidential election. When she was found guilty of voting illegally she made the following statement

I have many things to say; for in your ordered verdict of guilty, you have trampled under foot every vital principle of our government. My natural rights, my civil rights, my political rights, my judicial rights, are all alike ignored. Robbed of the fundamental privilege of citizenship, I am degraded from the status of a citizen to that of a subject; and not only myself individually, but all of my sex, are, by your honor's verdict, doomed to political subjection under this, so-called, form of government.57

Anthony’s actions resulted in her successfully gaining notoriety and support for the movement but this episode additionally cast her as a role model to the younger generations. This event added to the rebalance of the relationship between Stanton and Anthony. Increasingly the fact that the younger generation were turning towards Anthony as their mentor rather than the creator of the movement shows a shift in terms of the influence and the direction of the movement. Anthony had been the one who had initially recruited them to the movement, she had been the one who had committed herself to the lecture circuit, it is not surprising that the younger generation identified the movement with Anthony rather than Stanton. Through her effort to vote, Anthony had placed herself in a position where she became linked to the actual act of voting even though initially the demand for the vote at Seneca Falls had been Stanton’s idea.

The split between Stanton’s ideologies and the movement that she had created became more pronounced. Anthony tried to prevent the division as she was increasingly torn between Stanton, who had ensured her introduction into the women’s rights movement and the new recruits who wanted to revitalise the movement by taking it in a new direction. Increasingly the younger generation focused on the single goal of the vote rather than the myriad of causes that Stanton favoured. To many, suffrage had become the acceptable goal of the women’s rights movement with many of Stanton’s other interests being too radical.

The view in the latter half of the Progressive Era was that women deserved the vote due to the fact that they were morally superior to men. Although Stanton had never been above utilising any argument to try and win her cause, increasingly she had taken the view that men and women had an equal right to vote, this stands as evidence of the different direction that the movement was taking. 58 Although Stanton’s movement became increasingly separated from her original broad agenda, Anthony still battled to link her mentor with the organisation that was changing shape with the fresh membership. Anthony ensured that Stanton was still elected as president of the NAWSA in 1890. 59 The inauguration of Stanton as president of NAWSA reveals the woman suffrage movement had completely split away from Stanton. As contradictory as it may seem Stanton’s election at this point is reflective of her loss of leadership of the organisation to Anthony. Stanton’s own

58 Edwards, Sowing Good Seeds, P.266.

popularity faded as her ideas seemed distant from the aims of the movement. Many of the younger generation would have rather seen Anthony elected as their new official leader, but they bowed to Anthony's wishes to elect Stanton out of their loyalty to Anthony.  

After the Civil War both Stanton and Anthony recognised that they needed to create a more organised movement that reached from State to State. The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) was symbolic of this desire and a tool that they would utilise in an effort to achieve their goals of expansion and support. Indeed it was from this point onwards that Anthony representing the NWSA began to travel extensively spreading information about women's rights on a state-wide basis. During the 1870s and 1880s Anthony had sustained the NWSA through her determination to educate the public about suffrage in an effort to gain support for the women's rights movement. In many ways the creation of the NWSA reflected Anthony's immense organisational skills and the ideological aims of Stanton. For Stanton, the National Woman Suffrage Association reveals her ideological bid for the separate political identity of women while for Anthony the creation of the NWSA had a different meaning. As the historian Ellen DuBois points out, after Stanton has called for the creation of the NWSA, the organisation of such a movement fell to Anthony. "She was a consummate organization builder and dedicated herself to creating an enduring feminist organization," DuBois goes on to credit Anthony with keeping the NWSA alive during the "low times" so that it would go on and expand.  

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61 Ellen Carol DuBois, Elizabeth Cady Stanton- Susan B. Anthony Reader (Boston, 1992) p.94.
assert control over the movement. One example of the depth of Anthony’s organisational skill is illustrated through her involvement in the details of running both the NWSA and later the NAWSA. It is apparent that even when Anthony was delegating responsibility to others that she was involved in planning every detail putting her stamp on everything.62

In her effort to preserve the movement that Stanton created, Anthony’s role in facilitating the unification of the divided women’s movement into the NAWSA in 1890 also highlighted the new direction that the organisation had taken. As the Progressive Era began, women’s desire to step into more political roles of social concern became much more legitimate. Reflective of a general desire to improve society the Progressive Era permitted the women’s rights movement to highlight the lack of political rights for women as barriers to progress, by claiming to act in reaction to societal problems such as alcohol abuse, suffrage became a less radical issue.63 The variety of other social concerns inspired the splintered women’s rights movement to come back together with the recognition that a divided movement would never successfully achieve its goal. Anthony never wavered from her commitment to the vote as she increasingly felt that all of the other reforms sought by Stanton would only be successfully gained if they were supported by the power of female enfranchisement.

62 Two key instances of Anthony’s skill in organising are revealed in two letters to Rachel Avery Foster in which she gave instructions on details on organising NAWSA conventions. Susan B. Anthony to Rachel Foster Avery, 8 Sept 1897, 20 Sept 1897, Anthony Avery Papers, University of Rochester.

Anthony’s dedication rested on the fact that she recognised that the strength of the woman’s suffrage movement rested in uniting the two groups behind one cause. As a keen tactician, Anthony identified that half of the battle in winning the vote and ensuring the success of the movement involved refuting the arguments of the anti-suffragists. One of the common arguments that Stanton and Anthony had to defend against was the concept that by earning the vote women would be degraded and that they would increasingly abandon their roles as wives and mothers. As Anthony argued in response, “the ballot would not degrade, but elevate woman morally, intellectually, and therefore socially.”

Anthony did more than convince women that they needed the vote, she campaigned for its success tirelessly and organised a whole movement behind this single issue, although eventually the movement that she fashioned would have little resemblance to Stanton’s early organisation. Referred to as the “General” and recognised as the driving force of the women’s rights movement, this was Anthony’s tribute to Stanton and the movement that her ideologies created. After having to organise Stanton as well as her ideas, Anthony never forgot that the demand for the vote had originally come from Stanton and she used this to aid the woman’s suffrage movement’s effort to secure the vote. In an extract of a letter to the president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, Anthony linked Stanton’s demand for the vote and the aims of the current movement; “Dear Mr. President: It was most beautiful and appropriate that the last act of Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton should have been to appeal to the President of the United States for a recognition of that right which she had labored over half-a-century to obtain for women,” Anthony

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64 Susan B. Anthony as quoted in Sherr, Failure is Impossible. p.63.
goes on to add that “her last words...are fully endorsed...by the National Suffrage Association.”\footnote{Letter from Susan Brownell Anthony to Theodore Roosevelt, November 28, 1902, in The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony, vol 3. ed. Harper, pp. 407.} To a certain degree this connection promoted by Anthony can account for her loyalty to Stanton as she referred to Stanton as the “philosopher” of the movement when she died after Stanton had become increasingly distanced from the movement as she was considered radical in her objectives.\footnote{“Tribute from Miss Anthony,” New York Times, 27 Oct 1902.}

Anthony acknowledged that while many women found the demand for the vote less extreme, the apparent radicalism of the movement kept many of its potential supporters away. In reaction Anthony worked hard to reorganise the woman’s movement to ensure its increased strength and success, in one perspective establishing the continuation of Stanton’s movement to eventually win the right to vote but in another view allowed it to transform into a political organisation that veered completely from Stanton’s intentions. Anthony’s decision to support the merger of the women’s rights movements into NAWSA was suggestive of Stanton’s future, as a victim of the growing conservatism of the movement.\footnote{DuBois, Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony, pp.181.} Yet as the movement grew more conservative in nature, the key point of discussion emerges as the issue of Stanton’s legacy leads to the question was Stanton increasingly rejected as her movement outgrew her, or did Stanton refuse to conform to the goals of a movement that no longer reflected her ideology? In either situation one half of her double legacy progressively separated from Stanton. The union of the two movements is indicative of Anthony embracing the new conservative direction of the woman’s movement. By the time of the unification of
NWSA and AWSA the issue of suffrage was no longer the radical issue that it had been in 1848 and the NAWSA under Anthony’s direction focused on the now apparently moderate platform of suffrage much to Stanton’s increasing dissatisfaction.68

During the 1890s, Anthony continued to shape the next generation of women for leadership, women such as Carrie Chapman Catt and Anna Howard Shaw were chosen by her to continue the movement. Anthony was well accepted by the next generation of women that were linked to the women’s movement as their leader as her role as “aunty” of the movement had ensured that it continued to survive. Stanton was increasingly neglected by the new membership of NAWSA in favour of Anthony; the explanation of why this occurred is complicated by the variety of factors involved. Stanton’s daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch in part represented the new membership of the movement, yet her mother’s exclusion from the cause has been attributed to her actions. Blatch’s exposure to her mother’s ideology and the actions of the British Suffrage Movement led her to become more radical in her ideas than much of the more conservative membership that now dominated the movement. Blatch criticised the suffrage movement as being stagnant leading other members of the NAWSA to become hostile to her and her mother’s legacy.69 Blatch’s statement should be linked to her effort to actually continue her mother’s legacy or at least steer the movement that her mother called into action back on track.


The belief that Stanton's image as a radical would be damaging to the woman's suffrage movement had taken firm root amongst members of the women's rights movement. The one radical demand for the female enfranchisement and the movement to obtain those goals had become respectable. A younger generation had been educated to demand the vote and to support the women's rights movement. They thought that they were rejecting Stanton and all of her radical ideas without being totally aware of the fact that they were connected to her legacy. Increasingly Anthony's loyalty was divided between Stanton and the next generation of women involved with the woman's suffrage movement. Anthony acted on her belief that she had ensured Stanton's heritage by preserving the women's rights movement that had already outgrown Stanton's ideological direction. Anthony sanctioned the division of Stanton's legacy, rejecting Stanton's broad agenda as its goals seemed to be contradictory and damaging to the future success of the woman's suffrage movement. Anthony did not comprehend that by manipulating the women's rights movement in this fashion rather than preserving Stanton's legacy she could be accused of pushing it aside. To what degree the movement that Anthony engineered can be linked to Stanton's movement can only be revealed in correlation with a discussion of those that were connected to the women's rights movement.

Stanton's Woman's Bible caused a division that would signify the end of her role as the apparent mother of the movement in favour of Anthony when a resolution was passed in 1896 at the NAWSA meeting, totally rejecting any

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70 Stanton highlights the fact that because of her initial demand for suffrage it has become an acceptable goal for the younger generation. See Diary of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 4 February 1899, in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, As Revealed in Her Letters, vol. 2, eds., Blatch, and Stanton, p.338.
association between Stanton’s work and the NAWSA. Anthony was vocal in her support of Stanton and did consider resigning from the NASWA. In 1860 Anthony had recognised the need to step out of the traditional aspects of life when she commented that “cautious, careful people, always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform,” yet her ability to connect with the next generation helped her recognise that the initial radicalism of the demand for the vote had passed and with it perhaps her loyalty to her radical mentor Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Anthony’s ultimate loyalty was to preserve the women’s movement so that it might fulfil its goal of suffrage for woman even if this resulted with her rejection of the Stanton ideologies. Anthony’s loyalty to the movement reached maturity when the members of the woman’s suffrage movement chose to distance themselves from Stanton’s Woman’s Bible. Anthony’s commitment to the movement was made clear when she failed to embrace the religious aspect of Stanton’s wide agenda as part of the directive that the NAWSA would pursue. In a meeting that Anthony orchestrated between Carrie Chapman Catt and Stanton her support of Catt is clear, "Catt asserted that the NAWSA leadership had no desire to censure what Cady Stanton wrote as an individual but only to make clear that the organization did not endorse the work;" the movement had finally become more important to Anthony than her mentor’s ideas.

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71 Reference to this action by NAWSA can be seen in “Notes of Suffrage Work,” Woman’s Tribune, 16 May 1896, in The Gerritsen collection of Women’s History, reel 231.


73 Lois W. Banner, Elizabeth Cady Stanton: A Radical for Woman’s Rights (Boston, 1980). 164-165.
Finally the organisation had separated itself from Stanton’s ideas. Although many would conclude that this was a split between radical and conservative ideologies, reflected in the new and old leadership styles of Catt and Stanton this is an oversimplification. It is important to query to what extent NAWSA truly separated from Stanton’s ideological directive, after all as a movement it had developed out of her initial call for action and its focus remained one of her most impassioned causes, the right for women to vote. However the NAWSA rejected her broad agenda and under Anthony’s guidance moved away from her original agitational style. Therefore can the NAWSA be considered reflective of Stanton’s movement? Is the NAWSA a key component of the legacy of Stanton’s movement or is it a diminutive aspect of a broad based movement that existed outside of the organised movement of the NAWSA, which still needs to be explored? In an historical context the NAWSA is part of Stanton’s legacy as her call for action did lead to the creation of a new women’s rights movement that would develop into the NAWSA. Yet in its political guise and its sole focus on the vote it reveals the clear rejection of other aspects of Stanton’s legacy. The NAWSA therefore should be regarded as evidence of the separation of Stanton’s legacy.

In 1900 when Carrie Chapman Catt succeeded Anthony as president of the NAWSA it signalled the passage of leadership to a new generation. Anthony believed that Catt had the necessary administrative and organisational skills that would enable the women’s movement to survive and achieve its goals.74 Catt’s talents would lead to her selection over Anna Howard Shaw, the vice president of the NAWSA and one of Anthony’s famous nieces but by this time Anthony’s

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74 Harrison, Connecting Links, p.32.
loyalty had moved beyond belonging to any individual rather it focused on the movement. Anthony's shift in commitment to the movement away from Stanton, was revealed through Anthony's pursuit of a single issue, suffrage rather than the broad platform of issues that Stanton preferred. All through her career Anthony had placed a high value on the vote. In her support of Stanton's Declaration of Sentiments, Anthony initially had seen the vote as part of a broader agenda for the improvement of the status of women. However, increasingly her focus shifted as she became convinced that the vote would be the gateway to change for women and that suffrage without the other issues was an achievable goal. After Stanton's presidency of the NAWSA, the Anthony, Catt and Howard Shaw presidencies narrowed their focus onto the suffrage goal, emphasising the traditional role of women as homemakers and protectors as justification of why they deserved the vote.75 In the following extract the role of women as moral guides and protectors is linked to the concerns regarding the abuse of alcohol, as the enfranchisement of women was presented as a tool to expand the traditional roles of women into improving society.

The two most strongly marked instincts of woman are those of protection for herself and little ones, and of love and loyalty to her husband and her son. On the other hand, the two strongest instincts that today defend the liquor traffic and drink habit are avarice in the dealer and appetite in the drinker.... [M]ay it not be found that in the home, through the reserve power never yet called into government on a large scale, woman's instincts of self-protection and of love are a sufficient offset to appetite and avarice, and will outvote both at the polls?76

One of Anthony's most enduring legacies to Stanton, her movement and her


ideologies was Anthony’s commitment to see them recorded in the *History of Woman Suffrage* volumes 1 to 3. Although it was Stanton’s idea to create such a document it was testimony to Anthony’s organisational skills that the project was finished. It would be another of Anthony’s protégées that would continue the task of finishing the *History of Woman Suffrage* in the last two volumes. The act of compiling the *History of Woman Suffrage* tied the two elements of Stanton’s legacy together for future generations to analyse and separate for themselves. Through the publication of such a history of the women’s rights movement Anthony had ensured that the movement that Stanton had inaugurated and the ideologies that she used to shape that early movement would forever be tied to the suffrage movement that eventually won the right to vote. The partnership of Anthony and Stanton was one of the most powerful couplings in the women’s movement. Both women recognised the importance of their bond even though in the later stages of their relationship they did tend to pull apart. As Stanton herself testified “Through all of these years, Miss Anthony was the connecting link between me and the outer world—the reform scout who went to see what was going on in the enemy’s camp and returned with maps and observations to plan the mode of attack.”

Anthony’s role in connection to Stanton’s endowment is almost as complex as the duality that existed within Stanton’s legacy. Her loyalty to Stanton was clear; it led her to join a movement and to embrace one of Stanton’s chief demands for women, the right to vote. Yet it would ultimately be this loyalty that would set Anthony on the path that would bring her into greater contact with Stanton’s

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movement and new generations of reformers. Through her efforts to spread Stanton’s ideas Anthony became entwined with the movement to such an extent that it would be her name that was associated with the women’s rights movement over Stanton’s. Anthony eventually made the decision to support the new generation over Stanton in her fight to win the right to vote for women. Her commitment to Stanton’s movement can be regarded as evidence of loyalty as Anthony believed that she had worked to preserve the movement that Stanton had created, unaware that the movement that had emerged reflected the rejection of the broad goals of Stanton’s early movement. Anthony’s actions must be regarded as a bid to see that Stanton’s ideologies survived perhaps to remerge at such a time that they would not be seen as being too radical. Anthony played the important roles of transmitter of ideas and the recruiter of a new group of suffrage supporters. In the final analysis Anthony worked to ensure Stanton’s movement continued but unfortunately in doing so she transformed it in something that either can be perceived as rejecting Stanton or that Stanton herself rejected as it appeared to abandon her ideological direction. Ultimately the movement that Anthony fashioned succeeded in answering Stanton’s 1848 call for the enfranchisement of women ensuring the historical connection between Stanton and the woman’s suffrage movement. However the success of the suffrage movement was based on the apparent widespread rejection of Stanton’s broad agenda for achieving the equality of women in society, the original platform of the women’s rights movement. The final fate of Stanton’s dual legacy still needs to be explored further in the following chapters.
Section Two: Daughters of the Movement
Charlotte Perkins Gilman has been recognised as one of the most influential feminists to emerge during the Progressive Era. Born into the famous Beecher family in 1860, a well know name in the world of woman suffrage, literature and domestic instruction Gilman became a notable figure in her own right after publishing a major work concerning the economic and social status of women that was influential throughout the United States and Europe. Although the claim that Gilman’s family provided the connection between Gilman and the women’s rights movement can be justified, this chapter intends to focus on Gilman as one of Stanton’s ideological daughters. Gilman’s theories reflected the impact of Stanton’s ideas as Gilman’s work clearly builds on Stanton’s earlier ideological agenda for the expansion of the rights of women. While acknowledging the difficulty in substantiating that Gilman directly adopted any of Stanton’s ideas, the transfer of Stanton’s philosophy is supported by Gilman’s efforts to move away from her conservative Beecher family heritage. Gilman’s work reveals that her beliefs connect her to Stanton’s legacy and support the fact that she ultimately followed the precedent set by Stanton by continuing to challenge the position of women in society.

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While highlighting Stanton’s impact on Gilman it would be foolish to assert that she solely shaped Gilman’s views on society. Gilman’s own unusual family circumstances played an influential role in determining her feminist beliefs. Gilman’s life experiences allowed her to question the commonly accepted “domestic ideology” of the period, leaving Gilman free to criticise the notions of separate gender roles in society. When Gilman was abandoned by her father, Frederick Beecher Perkins, Gilman and her mother Mary Westcott Perkins were placed under the protective wing of the Beecher family bringing Gilman into closer contact with her three great Aunts. Gilman’s familial relationship with Isabella Beecher Hooker supported her connection to Stanton through Isabella’s work for the NWSA. Yet equally important to Gilman’s ideological development were her other Great Aunts, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catharine Beecher, neither of whom challenged the “domestic ideology” of the day, indeed Catharine Beecher maintained an anti-suffrage stance throughout her lifetime and supported the concept that women’s purity and morality should be their basis for the claim of an elevated position from within the home. Although Harriet was not an anti-suffragist like her sister Catharine, her famous novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* illustrated her support of the separate sphere mentality. As one historian contends through Harriet’s writing she “sought to rally the nation's women into becoming a force for the eradication of slavery's evils.” Harriet therefore was not urging women to fight

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against her sphere rather to use it to improve society. However, Harriet and
Catharine’s success revealed to Gilman that it was possible for a woman to achieve
some degree of independence through fame, a lesson that appeared to contradict
their traditionally held notions about women. Catherine and Harriet took active
roles but rather than challenging the sphere of women they worked with the notion
of male and female roles, a concept that Gilman would fight against as she sought
to redesign society. In addition the fact that Gilman’s mother had survived as a
single parent further reinforced Gilman’s personal belief that women did not need
men to survive, and that the traditional notion of family could be successfully
challenged and replaced with other options. Gilman’s own experience in marriage
and divorce added to her belief that a woman’s value should not be connected to her
marital status.

The concept that Gilman should be viewed as Stanton’s ideological daughter
is strengthened by Gilman’s apparent rejection of the arguments and theories of her
family, especially those of her great aunt, Catharine Beecher. Beecher’s book A
Treatise on Domestic Economy was published in 1841, it proposed a domestic
ideology in which men and women were encouraged to occupy the traditional
spheres, the public and the private. In contrast Gilman attacked the idea of women
remaining in the private sphere throughout her career, as she wanted women to
engineer new societal roles that challenged and broke out of the traditional roles

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7 Margaret G. O’Donnell, “Early Analysis of the Economics of Family Structure: Charlotte Perkins

advocated for women. Her feminist vision cast women outside their sphere in a radical new fashion. In building on the legacy of Stanton, Gilman wanted to redefine the position of women by breaking down the notion of separate spheres and creating new functions for the lives of women. The lack of any in-depth documentation that indicates a direct influence between the two women makes it difficult to prove that Stanton directly influenced Gilman’s growth as a feminist thinker. However the purpose of this chapter is not to prove Stanton’s direct influence, the key objective is to present evidence of Stanton’s indirect ideological influence on ensuing generations of women. Gilman’s theories cast her in the role of Stanton’s ideological daughter as they revealed that she ultimately stepped away from her Beecher heritage to develop her own feminist vision that can be connected to Stanton’s agenda for equal rights for women. Gilman’s family still need to be introduced to reveal the contrast between Gilman’s ideas and those of her family.

By exploring Gilman’s ideas against those of her female relatives Gilman’s philosophical distance from her family becomes evident. In recognition of Gilman’s connection to her famous family it would be foolish not to appreciate that they would have an impact on Gilman. However the crucial endeavour is to consider whether Gilman only utilised the ideas of her relatives or if she redirected or even rejected their beliefs after her exposure to Stanton’s ideological vision. In addition although she is being treated as Stanton’s ideological daughter it is important to reflect that Gilman’s final philosophy would not necessary confine itself to Stanton’s initial theory of equality for women.
Considering Gilman’s heritage it is unsurprising that she became increasingly frustrated by the domestic pressures that were piled on her as the result of not having a father and being female. Her diary provides illustrations of Gilman taking on a series of tasks in an effort to earn money to help her mother support them both. Throughout her career as a writer on the topic of women she attacked the rigid distinctions between male and female roles in society, compelling women to look at their domestic roles and realise not only the restrictions that were imposed on them but also that women were restricted solely on the basis of gender, “Now I want you to look at this awful fact, that so far, as a sex, we have been confined solely to the functions of nutrition and reproduction.” It is clear that by identifying as a group the restrictions that united them, she wanted women to join in action to widen their role in society.

The point of direct contact between Gilman and Stanton occurred when the two met while Gilman was active on the lecture circuit from 1898 to 1914. Gilman commented on the impression that meeting Stanton had on her, acknowledging that she was in many ways continuing in the tradition that Stanton had started. “Of the many people that I met during these years I was particularly impressed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. To have been with her ...seemed to establish a connection with a splendid period of real heroism.” Gilman’s tribute to Stanton reflected her respect for Stanton’s status as a pioneer member of the old suffrage guard. However it also

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10 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 8 lectures 1891, “Social, Domestic and Human Life”, address for the woman’s club, 3 February 1891, Charlotte Perkins Gilman Papers microfiche 177, folder 165, pp.1-30, Scheslinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University

revealed Gilman's desire to be linked to the radical heritage that Stanton embodied. When Gilman attended the twenty-eighth annual Woman's Suffrage Convention, held in Washington D.C., in January 1896 in the presence of Stanton, the two women were united in their desire to see the rights of women expanded. As an example of the next generation of women that were involved in the woman suffrage movement, Gilman understood Stanton's connection to the vote. However unlike her peers Gilman viewed the importance of the vote in a similar fashion to Stanton, that suffrage represented the beginning of the bid for equality not the end. Reflecting Stanton's beliefs, Gilman recognised that by gaining the vote women would be able to redesign their position in society. Evidence of Stanton's frustration that women did not have the right to vote and how she perceived that this restricted the rights of women is perhaps most visible in connection with the issue of the Fifteenth Amendment. Stanton denounced the intention of the Fifteenth Amendment to grant African Americans the right to vote before women by stating that such a measure forced women to become a "slave of custom as well as of false creeds and codes." In essence Stanton recognised that women would not expand their role in society if they never challenged the status quo that existed. Gilman embraced this main tenet of Stanton's work as she envisioned a new society that built upon Stanton's original beliefs.

Gilman like Stanton viewed the task of enfranchising women as part of a larger issue, the need to redefine the role of women by addressing the inequality

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12 Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, pp. 260-261. Gilman attended the convention as a representative for both the Pacific Coast Woman's Congress and the Californian Suffrage Association.

that existed throughout society. Therefore the “feminism” that Gilman advocated
dwelled on a complete spectrum of women’s rights issues, inherited from Stanton’s
vision for complete equality for women. Gilman’s understanding that woman
suffrage would not grant women full equality is apparent in her statement that:

In spite of the simple justice, the obvious necessity, and the
conspicuous advantages of political equality, claims sufficiently strong
to quite satisfy most of the workers for woman’s advancement, there
were some who recognized further needs. Economic as well as political
independence was demanded, and a swift outpouring of women
workers into practically all trades, businesses and professions, marked a
change fully as important as that of their enfranchisement.14

This extract revealed Gilman’s belief that women’s equality rested upon economic
independence as well as access to the political world. Gilman clearly acknowledged
that she comprehended that the vote alone could not grant equality to women; after
all it would not grant women financial security to be separate from their husbands
or fathers. Gilman’s ideology stressed that economic freedom would grant women
autonomy in all aspects of their lives; her most famous work presented her
perspective on women and their role in society. Ultimately it would be Gilman’s
concepts on a women’s role in society that actively led to her inclusion in this
project. Gilman built on Stanton’s initial demand to enter the male dominated
sphere but she also recognised that this alone would not be the solution to the
current situation of women. Through her work Gilman would strive to find a
resolution to the problem of women’s social inequality that would challenge the
whole concept of the role of women.

Gilman’s theories echoed the early women’s rights movement demand for
“universal suffrage,” an argument used at a point of time when Stanton’s

14 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Feminism,”(189?), Charlotte Perkins Gilman Papers microfiche 177,
folder 175, pp1-6.
ideological influence was at its strongest over the women's rights movement before the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified in 1870. Gilman's contention that it should be the right of all citizens to vote reflects her desire to abandon the notion of separate spheres in regards to the vote as she remarked "In a Democracy, all citizens must vote conscientiously and intelligently to keep the government clean and sound. Women are half our citizens."\(^{15}\) Gilman clearly made the connection between women as educated and intelligent voters who should possess expanded rights in society, while also reflecting on the moralising and stabilising influence that they would assert over the government. Gilman's recognition of women as citizens highlighted that women did not possess the true symbol of American citizenship, the right to vote. Gilman's understanding of women as citizens clearly built on earlier demands for the vote based on the justice argument, echoing Stanton's earlier assertion that women possessed the natural right to vote that was evident in the *Declaration of Sentiments*.\(^{16}\) By voicing her support of the justice argument Gilman was embracing her heritage as Stanton's ideological daughter, as she actively encouraged women to step out of the female sphere into the male sphere. In continuing the tradition of challenging the rigid boundaries of gender that Stanton had begun, Gilman embraced a philosophy that anti-suffragists claimed sought to undermine the femininity of the role of women.\(^{17}\)

\(^{15}\) Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Women and Social Service," 1907, History of Women, reel 935, no. 7975, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.


Stanton’s and Gilman’s battle for women’s rights stemmed partially from their discontentment with their marriages and their responding ideas on how marriage needed to be reformed. As explored in an earlier chapter, Stanton’s frustration and anger at being tied to the family home and looking after her children, prompted her to take the drastic step of organising the first meeting to discuss the rights of women. Gilman’s marriage to the painter Charles Walter Stetson and the restrictions that she felt in her relationship echoed Stanton’s earlier experiences in also having an impact on Gilman’s public career. Early in her romance with Stetson, Gilman acknowledged that she had no desire to marry. The following extract from one of her poems signifies the pressure that Gilman felt even considering marriage and that she clearly identified marriage as part of the traditional role that she was obliged to play as a woman.

In duty bound life hemmed in...
An obligation preimposed, unsought,
Yet binding with the force of natural law.\(^\text{18}\)

Despite this view Gilman did go on to marry Stetson in May 1884. Gilman initially was happy with all the domestic chores of marriage yet her later comments on the burden of caring for a home and being married resonated the same level of frustration that Stanton had felt decades earlier and shared the recognition that “the woman in marrying becomes the house-servant, or at least the housekeeper, of the man.”\(^\text{19}\) Gilman’s sentiments clearly reflected the concerns of Stanton yet Gilman endeavoured to solve her discontent by building on Stanton’s theories in an effort to find a practical solution to her discord with married life. In her diary Gilman records that a few days after she was first married she suggested to her husband that

\(^{18}\) Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*, pp.76-77

he pay her for her household ‘services,’ an obvious attempt by Gilman to place her on an equal financial footing with her husband but also to reflect the importance of her domestic role.\textsuperscript{20} His reaction was such that she wrote, “I am grieved at offending him, mutual misery. Bed and cry.”\textsuperscript{21} Gilman later utilised her magazine \textit{The Forerunner} to voice her dissatisfaction with the role of women and as an instrument to spread her views of how married women were forms of un-paid slaves. Gilman stressed her opinion that men would never put themselves in this position.

If each man did for himself the work that he expects of his women there would be no wealth in the world; only millions...of poor men, sweeping, dusting scrubbing, cleaning, sewing mending, cooking, washing, ironing- and dying for the lack of food...Suppose there were no women in the world. Would each man think he must have a whole other man to cook for him? Would each man think he must do it- on board and wages, so reducing the wealth of the world by half- and getting very little of that?\textsuperscript{22}

While Stanton never envisioned a system in which mothers received payment for the duties of motherhood she had acknowledged that the position of married women was akin to slavery.\textsuperscript{23} Stanton had also briefly envisioned the practicality of families joining together in “Co-operative homes” to look after children to free mothers of their burdens so that they could pursue a greater number of intellectual pursuits.\textsuperscript{24} In Stanton’s case her vision connected with her belief that women

\textsuperscript{20} Knight ed., \textit{The Abridged Diaries of Charlotte Perkins Gilman}, pp.80-81.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{24} Stanton, Anthony, and Gage eds., \textit{History of Woman Suffrage}, vol. 1. p. 21
needed the opportunity to develop their minds to become Self Sovereigns, fully autonomous human beings that shed off the “ignorance and degradation” that limited their function in society.²⁵

Gilman’s role as a wife and later mother eventually led her to a deep state of depression that had a profound effect on her life. Throughout her depression, Gilman relied on her writing as a method to express and explore the frustration that she felt in reaction to her situation. In December 1883 after successfully submitting her writing to the *Woman’s Journal*, the newsletter of the American Woman Suffrage Association, Gilman made her first contact with the organised women’s rights movement. After Gilman had attended a series of women’s rights conventions Alice Stone Blackwell, the editor of the *Woman’s Journal*, asked Gilman to manage a suffrage column for a Providence newspaper, called *the People*.²⁶ For the first time Gilman was able to reach out to a large audience of women to present her views on the current situation of housewives and their subjection to a life time of unpaid work. If Gilman had inherited any aspect of her ideological make up from the Beechers it would hinge on her sense of duty to society.²⁷

Gilman followed in Stanton’s philosophical path by attacking the traditional role of women. Gilman’s work revealed that she expanded on Stanton’s original ideas by presenting a solution to the continued confinement of women in the

²⁵ Stanton, Anthony, and Gage eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1, p. 21


domestic sphere. Using her magazine *The Forerunner* as her forum, Gilman expounded a revolutionary new lifestyle that was based on her concepts of communal style living. Her plan sought to assign a few women to household chores, while other women would be free to seek other jobs outside their traditional roles. As one of Stanton’s ideological daughters, Gilman had inherited Stanton’s commitment to the belief that women should be able to enter a wider variety of careers other than marriage and housework. By encouraging young women to embrace the same life of economic and professional “self-dependence” as young men, Stanton had led to the creation of a new type of woman.28 In many respects Gilman’s ideas would be aimed toward the “new constituency of professional women” that Stanton’s work with the early women’s rights movement had produced, linking Stanton and Gilman together ideologically but also locating Gilman on the contextual map of the women’s rights movement.29 However once again Gilman’s theories reflect how she built upon Stanton’s earlier beliefs as Gilman targeted professional married women.30 Stanton had lectured extensively on the topic of women and work throughout her career in reaction to her own increasing frustration at her own limitations as a wife and mother. Later when Gilman managed a column on suffrage for the weekly newspaper her writing revealed her connection to Stanton’s ideology as Gilman’s work reflected that she too believed that options for women should exist beyond marriage and that motherhood and career should not be so conflicted.31 Stanton solved her own

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28 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Woman’s Rights Convention at Akron, OH, *Lily* (Seneca Falls, NY), 16 May 1851, in *Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, series 3, reel 7.


30 Ibid., pp.203-204

conflict between her martial duties and her desire to work for women’s rights with
the help of Susan B. Anthony, who devoted herself to looking after Stanton’s
children allowing Stanton freedom to write her speeches. In contrast Gilman never
found a way to balance motherhood and career. Gilman felt forced to make the very
unusual decision after her divorce to allow her daughter to live with her father.
Gilman’s actions are indicative of her views on motherhood and represented a
challenge to the traditional notions of motherhood that left her open to attack.

The combination of Gilman’s roles of wife and mother clashed with her
desire to address the problems of society, as she revealed in her diary that she had
“lost much of my self abandoning enthusiasm and fierce determination in the cause
of right. Perhaps it is as well for the ultimate work done. I do not feel so. I feel in
some ways lowered-degraded-traitor to my cause.”32 As her depression grew in
response to what she perceived to be the conflicted situation of her life, Gilman
sought treatment from Dr. S. Weir Mitchell a respected “nerve specialist”. He
quickly diagnosed Gilman’s condition as self-inflicted, a reaction to Gilman’s own
ambitions and efforts to step outside her imposed role. Gilman was encouraged to
take a six-week rest cure, which was complete bed rest, with no outside influence.
Mitchell’s response to Gilman’s illness reflects how society viewed women who
challenged their traditional position. Mitchell’s treatment of Gilman rested on
society’s belief in the traditional roles in society and that women that strayed from
their established roles as wives and mothers needed to be redirected to focus on
their established duties. After initially following Mitchell’s cure Gilman ultimately
abandoned the doctor’s regime, illuminating the strength of her customary character

32 Knight ed., The Abridged Diaries of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, p.98.
to imagine a new role for herself and other women despite the pressure of society to conform.\(^{33}\) Such actions revealed Gilman’s own strength and sense of self and cast her more clearly as Stanton’s ideological daughter, as Gilman embraced the independence that Stanton envisioned. Gilman further reinforced her actions by taking a self-initiated separation from her husband and daughter, an action that defied conventional behaviour.

Gilman’s argument that women needed to have economic independence from their husbands, in many ways reiterates Stanton’s original conviction that marriage as an institution was a restrictive force on the lives of women, forcing them to take a role in an unequal partnership. Stanton’s initial concern over the issue of marriage focused on the question of divorce as a method by which women would be able to put an end to their entrapment and inequality. After 1867 Stanton would add to her argument that women should demand an end to their inferior status based on their apparent moral superiority, stressing that women would be able to protect society from the immorality of men. Many women in the suffrage movement developed and utilised this argument. In 1896 Gilman addressed the NAWSA Convention in Washington D.C. discussing *The Ballot as an Improver of Motherhood.*\(^{34}\) In this piece Gilman continued to expand on the ideology that women should have the vote due to their superior morality to men. Gilman went on to state that if women were to be enfranchised this would add to their morality and skills as mothers, making them of more use within society.

\(^{33}\) Hill, *Charlotte Perkins Gilman,* pp.147-152.

We have heard much of the superior moral sense of woman. It is superior in spots but not as a whole...What is suffrage going to do for motherhood? Women enter upon this greatest function of life without any preparation...The suffrage draws the woman out of her purely personal relations and puts her in relations with her kind, and it broadens her intelligence...A woman will no longer be attached solely to one little group, but will be also a member of the community. She will not neglect her own on that account, but will be better to them and more of a mother.\textsuperscript{35}

A second key element that this extract presents was that Gilman is also clearly answering the claim of many anti-suffrage supporters that the vote would take them away from the family and outside their traditional role. Gilman followed in Stanton’s steps in supporting women’s enfranchisement on the grounds that women possessed within their everyday lives as wives and mothers the necessary skills of moral guardianship. Gilman took this idea a step further in that she claimed that the current restricted role of women was responsible for preventing society from any real improvement and that it should be a woman’s moral obligation to seek to improve society. As she noted: “Every mother seeks to keep her child from the wicked world. We used to keep the boys at home. But this does not improve the world. Instead of trying to keep the children safe from the wicked world, the mothers ought to get together and try to make the world a decent place for the children.”\textsuperscript{36}

The tone of this extract also serves to connect Gilman to the progressive movement and the broader push to improve society.


\textsuperscript{36} Gilman, “Women and Social Service,” History of Women.
Gilman and Stanton both focused on the need for women to achieve a greater degree of equality in their married lives, with Stanton emerging as one of the most controversial figures to express the common sense of dissatisfaction women experienced by being confined to the family home. Gilman added to this pattern by stating that women continued to be restricted by their economic status. For her, women's traditional role produced a life of economic dependence, a life of virtual slavery. Gilman clearly discussed the fact that the income of a married woman was not relative to her own economic exertion but depended on "(a), her husband's economic exertions, and (b), to his good pleasure." For Gilman the fact that women were not able to earn their own wage was as restrictive as women not being able to vote. Gilman's focus on the economic status of women can be traced back to Stanton's earlier concern for the ownership of marital property and the battle for access to the same rights for wives as their husbands. Stanton had earlier realised that women lost the right of private ownership when they married and as a result of marriage a woman's private possessions became those of her husband. Stanton's recognition that women lost economic independence through this loss of property as a result of the marriage contract added to her perception that women did not enjoy the same legal rights as men. As one legal expert suggested such an understanding that marriage resulted in the loss of property and possible economic independence for women highlighted "that women's economic dependence on men was a condition imposed and enforced by law." Stanton's reaction was to fight to expand the rights of women, a trend that Gilman continued.

37 Gilman, "Does A Man Support His Wife?" History of Women.

Stanton had presented an implicit challenge to the traditional role of women by revealing the loss of rights of married women. The lack of ownership rights of a married woman provides evidence of the connection between Stanton and Gilman’s ideas, as Gilman’s notion that housework had no monetary value supported the loss of property or lack of a salary for women, which Stanton had already begun to challenge.\textsuperscript{39} Gilman had embraced and reshaped Stanton’s philosophy as her own ideas evolved. Although both women shared a commitment to the expansion of the role of women, Stanton had never attacked a woman’s role in connection to her family. Stanton’s condemnation of the traditional duties of women centred on her belief that women possessed little choice in their position, thanks to the societal restrictions that were imposed on them. Stanton had been constant in her efforts to expand the role of women but she never presented an argument that directly criticised women for working within their traditional roles, her argument centred on women having the right to an opportunity for self expansion and the development of personal autonomy. Gilman’s focus on the economic independence of women took Stanton’s search for self sovereignty in a new direction as she argued that women’s labour in the home was not only restrictive but the lack of payment was indicative of its importance. Gilman’s theories reveal an expansion of Stanton’s original ideas. Gilman supported Stanton’s earlier viewpoint that women should have access to the professional world in an effort to assert their independence. However, Gilman recognised that by embracing new careers women would inevitably now have the problem of balancing their traditional roles of wife and mother with their professional duties which would only be solved by regarding

\textsuperscript{39} Siegal, “Home as Work,” p.1078
duties of wives and mothers as a business that can be completed by others.\textsuperscript{40} Gilman’s position had advanced as she now believed that women had to totally redesign their traditional roles to achieve the level of self sovereignty that Stanton advocated. In an effort to restructure the traditional “family environment” and to “enhance the freedom of women to expand their …place in society,” Gilman moved beyond Stanton’s desire for access to equal opportunities for women by providing another standard by which independence could be judged and obtained, the aspect of economic freedom.\textsuperscript{41}

Gilman’s work represented one conclusion to Stanton’s ideas that she would have never envisioned. Gilman’s ideas not only attacked the role of wife from an economic standpoint, it also implied that in expanding the role of women professionally that some women would reject their traditional roles as mothers. Gilman dispelled the belief that marriage was an economic partnership of equals by revealing how women did not have access to the same economic independence as men.\textsuperscript{42} By centring her work around the theory that economic freedom demanded that an “individual pays for what he gets, works for what he gets” Gilman had revealed that women did not have that ability because they were confined to their non-paying role of wife and mother.\textsuperscript{43} She added to her argument that men

\textsuperscript{40} Falguni A. Sheth and Robert E. Prasch, “Charlotte Perkins Gilman: reassessing her significance for feminism and social economics,” \textit{Review of Social Economy}, 54 (Fall 1996), pp.323-335; For a example of a serial fiction in which Gilman explores the idea of hiring others to complete domestics tasks leaving other women to focus on their work see Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “What Diantha Did,” \textit{The Forerunner}, vol.1, November 1909-December 1910, microfiche 1-5.


\textsuperscript{42} Gilman, \textit{Women and Economics}, pp.10-11, 17.

\textsuperscript{43} Gilman, \textit{Women and Economics}, p.11.
possessed financial freedom because of their ability to earn money due to their ability to exchange the “services of ...specialized individuals.”  

Gilman believed that men had the advantage over women since they had been allowed to identify their special skill and were able to earn a living by utilising that ability. In contrast Gilman suggested that women were not allowed to develop their natural talents because they were forced to accept their traditional role in society even if they were lacking in the ability to take on that role.  

Gilman had reacted to Stanton’s call for the equality of women by redesigning the role of motherhood to suit the goals of professional freedom and personal development of a new social order. Gilman’s solution was to enlarge the role of motherhood beyond the confines of the traditional family, highlighting her belief that women should understand their “social responsibility as individuals” and possess an awareness of their “importance as makers of men” on a scale that expanded beyond the traditional family unit.  

Although it could be argued that Gilman’s construction of a broader vision of motherhood can be traced back to her aunt, Catharine Beecher’s version of motherhood: “the woman who labors in the schoolroom; the woman who, in her retired chamber, earns, with her needle, the mite to contribute to the intellectual and moral elevation of her country; even the humble domestic . . . ;--each and all . . . are agents in accomplishing the greatest work that ever was committed to human responsibility”, Gilman’s beliefs rest on her intention to free women from the

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45 Ibid., pp.66-67

46 Ibid., p.vii.
domestic realm.47 In order to create a strong and successful society, Gilman called upon those that have a talent for educating children not to just teach their own family but to also expand their usefulness by establishing a cooperative system of education for all. To stress the need for a select few with higher levels of ability to manage the education and shaping of the children Gilman wrote that the ability to have children was “an animal function. Education is collective, human, a social function.”48 In this fashion Gilman was starting to separate the ability to have children from the action of raising a child as her aunt had done by revealing that the act of giving birth did not indicate that a woman had the ability to be a successful mother. However in contrast to her Aunt’s ideas by identifying and paying those individuals in society that possessed a special talent for nurturing children, those women who were not equipped for the role of motherhood were freed from their traditional role and allowed the opportunity to develop their own skills to support themselves financially. As Gilman notes such a change in society “would give the mother certain free hours as a human being, as a member of a civilized community, as an economic producer, as a growing, self-realizing individual.”49

By expanding on Stanton’s original quest for equality, Gilman had added to her vision a new role for women that accepted that some women would and should reject their roles as biological mothers. By suggesting that society should be shaped in part by women who were encouraged to cultivate their specialist gifts Gilman created an environment which permitted women to choose their role in society as

47 Catharine Beecher as quoted in as quoted in Boydston, Kelley, and Margolis, The Limits of Sisterhood, p.118.
49 Ibid., pp.289-290
"servants", advocating the choice of woman to such an extent that she revealed to future students of her theories that it was not necessary for all women to act as mothers of their own children.\textsuperscript{50} For Gilman her restructuring of the social environment for women constituted a key stage of progress in "social organization" that she connected with the earlier work of Stanton and the women's rights movement: "Into this phase of life comes a new spirit,-the spirit of such women as Elizabeth Cady Stanton…and her splendid sisterhood; of all the women who have battled and suffered for half a century, forcing their way, with sacrifices never to be told, into the field of freedom so long denied them, - not for themselves alone, but for one another."\textsuperscript{51} Gilman's work presented one final interpretation of Stanton's search for the independence of woman by presenting a theory that advocating access to choices for women that would have fulfilled Stanton's search for the self-sovereignty of women, but would also allow future generations to reject their biological function.

In her efforts to achieve her ideological vision of equality for women, Stanton attacked the institution of marriage from a variety of viewpoints. She lectured on how women should be able to gain a divorce as a means of protection and independence. Gilman took a further stand for the independence of women by stating that that even after gaining a divorce from her husband a woman should take the extra effort to make sure that their separation was complete, even in a financial sense. After identifying that marriage for women was a "livelihood," a means by which women sought financial security Gilman's key point was that women should not seek any

\textsuperscript{50} Gilman, \textit{Women and Economics}, p.269.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p.162; pp.166-167.
form of alimony or what she regarded as a financial tie to her husband.\textsuperscript{52} This is again another example of Gilman explaining to her contemporaries that they would never achieve the independence that they desired if they remained economically tied to their ex-husbands and unwilling to support themselves. On a topic that upon first inspection would seem to have very little relevance to her peers, Gilman wrote, “An adult woman, not sick crippled or under witted, should scorn to be supported by any man. Most of all by an ex-husband.”\textsuperscript{53} This is a radical way of thinking even for women of today. The fact that both Stanton and Gilman were not afraid to push the boundaries of the roles and level of independence of women reflects their ideological connection and supports the presence of Gilman as Stanton’s ideological daughter.

During the 1898 woman’s suffrage convention at Washington D.C., many of the women delegates attacked Stanton’s \textit{Woman’s Bible} out of fear that Stanton’s religious stance would be damaging to the success of woman’s suffrage. The success of these delegates in passing a resolution disavowing any responsibility for the \textit{Woman’s Bible} clearly conveyed that Stanton’s successors in NAWSA had moved away from her broad demands for women’s rights to a much narrower demand, the enfranchisement of women. In contrast to the majority of her peers, Gilman was one of the few who spoke out in defence of the \textit{Woman’s Bible} and later would publish her own views on religion in \textit{His Religion and Hers: A Study of the Faith of Our Fathers and

\textsuperscript{52}Gilman, \textit{Women and Economics}, p.38

\textsuperscript{53}Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Alimony,” (189?), Charlotte Perkins Gilman Papers, microfiche 177, folder 175.
the Work of our Mothers.\textsuperscript{54} In His Religion and Hers, Gilman clearly followed in Stanton's footsteps as she examined religion through a feminist viewpoint. Although Gilman does not make any statement indicating that she perceived that she followed in Stanton's wake, the two women's views are clearly connected as they viewed religion as a restrictive force on the lives of women. This link is undeniable when it can be recognized that Gilman's developing views on religion clashed against those of her family.

Catharine Beecher's views on religion provide strong evidence to support Gilman's rejection of the religious ideology of her family. Beecher's religious beliefs centred on the virtuous behaviour of women who occupied their correct position in society and who were committed to acts of self sacrifice for the sake of the family. She acknowledged that such virtue could be "taught" as part of the proper "social conduct" of women and ultimately constructed a religious vision that continued to keep women in their traditional roles as she revealed that Christianity highlighted the correct position for women in the world.\textsuperscript{55} Beecher's perspective led her to the conclusion that the influence of women should be indirect in nature in order to preserve women as the guardians of morality within the home.\textsuperscript{56} One example of Beecher's stance on the true position of women in relation to her religious beliefs can be witnessed in her work An Essay on Slavery and

\textsuperscript{54}Charlotte Perkins Gilman, His Religion and Hers: A Study of the Faith of Our Fathers and the Work of our Mothers (1923; repr., Walnut Creek, 2004); Hill, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, pp. 260-263.

\textsuperscript{55} Catharine E. Beecher, The Elements of Mental and Moral Philosophy, Founded upon Experience, Reason, and the Bible (Hartford: Peter B. Gleason and Co., 1831), as quoted in Boydston, Kelley, and Margolis, The Limits of Sisterhood, p.115

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p.116
Abolitionism, in which she condemned the direct action of Sarah and
Angelina Grimké in relation to the abolitionist cause. One of her key
criticisms of the Grimké sisters contained in this essay is an attack on their
efforts to incite women into taking public roles in the fight against slavery.
Beecher advised them to remember that “Christianity” had given women the
talent for “persuasion, tending, by kind and gentle influences, to make men
willing to leave off their sins,” and that “Christianity” had “given to woman
her true place in society.” Beecher’s essay highlighted her belief that
women who became involved in public reform work challenged both their
true roles in society and attacked Christianity. By asserting that Christianity
revealed women’s true place in society, Beecher clearly viewed religion as a
positive influence on the lives of women. In contrast Gilman went against her
aunt’s vision for indirect action as she sought to enable women to break out
of the female sphere and she challenged the notion that Christianity was a
positive influence for women.

Gilman’s argument that the negative religious imagery of women
should be replaced by the more positive “God the mother” picture,
highlighted that she had joined Stanton in her attack on the dominant male
religious influence. Gilman’s discussion of religion centred on her belief that
religion focused on the afterlife more than the everyday life of people, a
problem which she identified as having come from men and a male obsession
with death, thus resulting in male dominated religion. In contrast a woman’s

57 Catharine E. Beecher, An Essay on Slavery and Abolitionism, with Reference to the Duty of
American Females (Philadelphia, 1837) as quoted in Boydston, Kelley, and Margolis, The Limits of
Sisterhood, pp.125-129.

58 Ibid., p.127.
religion would be based on life and birth. For Gilman “Religion is the strongest modifying influence in our conscious behavior,” she went on to emphasise that most religions had continued their “guileless habit of blaming women for the sin and trouble of the world” a factor that she considered reflective of the need for religious reform as she saw the current religious trends as another indication of the fact that religion was an institution dominated by men. That Gilman appeared to be continuing the ideas of Stanton is clearly significant. However the fact that Gilman viewed religion as a negative force on the lives of humanity reflected that she rejected her Beecher family heritage for the more radical path of Stanton, as both Stanton and Gilman stand out in their desire to rewrite religion in a general sense with a view to portraying women in a more positive light.

Stanton and Gilman shared concerns that expanded beyond the framework of suffrage. Both believed that women should be able to enlarge their roles in society and often looked to education as a starting point. Stanton had been keenly disappointed when she had not been allowed to attend the same college as her brother and often lectured on the need for education for all. Gilman likewise focused on education but as a method of creating a better environment. Gilman felt that women should take an active role in society creating institutions that would help engineer a better society such as free schools and libraries. Gilman’s focus on the improvement of society and the enrichment of future generations connects her to her Beecher heritage and to

60 Ibid.
the Stanton legacy. It is important to recognise that while Gilman herself
opposed the idea of two traditional spheres, she was not above using accepted
societal views in her bid to gain equality for women.

I travel about lecturing, and whenever I have the opportunity, I lecture
on suffrage. And I find everywhere people who admit that equal
suffrage is right and fair, but not important. They ask me what
difference it will make. It does not make so much difference...giving
the ballot to women does not alter human nature. It does not modify the
earth, nor the States, nor the City. The thing that must be modified is
human stock, and that is easily modified in children. This is in the
hands of women.61

Gilman’s work highlights the need for women to stress their role in society as
individuals and to break free of the restrictions of their place in the traditional
female sphere. However as she envisioned a new role for women she softened
the apparent radicalism of her goals by recasting women in the role of
mothers of a new and successful society, revealing the legacy of Stanton and
the Beecher family.

In conclusion Stanton and Gilman shared a philosophical belief that
women should possess the same rights as men, politically, financially and
socially. They both advocated reform and were unwilling to compromise their
vision of equality even though their ideas represented a direct challenge to the
accepted notions of the correct position of women in society. Gilman built her
ideas on Stanton’s ideological platform as her work continued Stanton’s
efforts to free women from the restriction of the home and to enable such
women to enter into what had previously been regarded as the male sphere,
the arena of work and politics. Stanton’s foresight had allowed her to
recognise that woman needed access to higher education in order to improve

their status in society. Such ideas had directed the efforts of the early women’s rights movement and resulted in the emergence of a new type of educated, professional woman. These new women are evidence of Stanton’s success and they become Gilman’s audience as she expanded on Stanton’s beliefs to fit her generation. Therefore Gilman’s connection to Stanton is twofold, as Stanton provided not only the ideological foundation that Gilman bases her own ideas upon but also that Stanton was responsible for granting access to the opportunities that shaped Gilman’s generation. Gilman emerges as an ideological daughter as a product of Stanton’s work and as a visionary whose theories reflect and expand on Stanton’s goals for women. Both the ideas of Gilman and Stanton had been all but forgotten until the 1960s when the feminist movement in an effort to identify their own heritage began to study women’s history. While it is easy to hypothesise that Gilman’s work can be linked to the original ideas of Stanton it is harder to prove conclusively that Gilman adopted Stanton’s theories and then developed them. The fact that Gilman and Stanton did meet might have made this task easier, however such a meeting should not be regarded as the sole evidence that a conveyance of ideas took place nor should this meeting be the standard by which other ideological daughters might be recognised. Gilman is a representative figure for the transfer of Stanton’s convictions, in examining Gilman’s work the aim is to highlight how other women might be analysed in a similar fashion to reveal Stanton’s legacy on a broader scale. Gilman stands as an example of the next generation of activists who were exposed to Stanton’s ideas and the movement that she initiated and expanded on Stanton’s vision for equality for
women. In Gilman's case this led her to expand her concern with the status of women to more socialist concerns, the concern for humanity.
Chapter Seven

Catharine Waugh McCulloch:
Extended Family and the next generation.
1862-1945

The fight to enfranchise American women lasted for seventy years during which time Stanton’s influence is evident on a variety of women from the East Coast. However, it remains debatable to what degree the same statement can be applied to women who were geographically remote from the nucleus of the women’s rights movement. As historians have explored the interaction that existed between the national and local branches of the women’s rights movement, they have acknowledged the importance of examining the history of women’s suffrage from both a regional and a national perspective in order to reveal the existence of a mutually influential relationship.¹ The recognition of the individual character of the local women’s rights groups grants the opportunity to discuss Stanton’s work in relation to state work for women’s equality and prevents the assumption that Stanton asserted an equal degree of influence from coast to coast. A recent study of the Southern suffrage movement has highlighted the importance of examining regional events as part of the history of the national organisation, when illustrated how the slow pace of industrialisation in the South contributed to the tardy emergence of a localised women’s rights group in that area.² The unique regional characteristics, which apparently influenced the degree of support that existed for the goal of woman suffrage on a local level, have concealed the full extent of Stanton’s influence. Stanton’s impact needs to be examined on a local level not


² Elna C. Green, Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question (Chapel Hill, 1997), p.2.
only to determine the degree of influence that her movement and her ideology asserted, but to also illustrate how her legacy was diffused from the East coast.

Although Anthony’s role in transmitting Stanton’s dual legacy has been explored and has permitted a limited understanding of the extent of Stanton’s influence away from the East coast and on the younger generation, research is needed to appreciate the true scale of Stanton’s impact. An investigation to trace the dissemination of themes and concerns, from what originated as an East Coast movement through into the Midwest, will help to present a balanced analysis of Stanton’s ideological effect on American women. Catharine Waugh McCulloch (1862-1945), a lawyer from Illinois emerged as a suitable candidate to discuss the involvement of Midwestern women in the women’s rights movement and to add to the discussion of the transfer of ideas from generation to generation. McCulloch’s involvement in the woman suffrage battle highlights Stanton’s expanding influence and allows for the exploration of the exchange of ideas from coast to coast that resulted in the continued “vitality of several generations of women who participated in the movement,” that would ultimately win the battle to enfranchise women.3 However, in trying to trace the expansion of Stanton’s legacy it becomes apparent that the distribution of her ideas and the movement that she had established occurred through a network of sources and individuals rather than from Stanton directly. By exploring how McCulloch was imbued with Stanton’s ideas through women such as Mary Livermore (1820-1905) and Frances E. Willard (1839-1898), rather than through a personal relationship with Stanton, the scale of Stanton’s potential influence becomes enlarged and multifaceted. In order to recognise the

degree of Stanton’s impact this chapter’s intent is not to focus solely on Catharine McCulloch but also to provide an illustration of the complex nature in which Stanton’s legacy reached American women through an exploration of the chains of connection that occurred from the East coast into the Midwest. Women such as Livermore and Willard demonstrate the passage of Stanton’s legacy, geographically and generationally, while also revealing whether Stanton’s dual legacy was equally adopted.

The relationship between the women’s rights organisations from the East Coast and the Midwest provides the opportunity to observe the interaction of ideas that occurred between the national and state organisations. The ability to identify and discuss the exchange of beliefs from a national to a local level reveals the physical and ideological extent of Stanton’s double legacy by tracing the growth of the women’s rights movement across the United States. Stanton’s role as one of the first women to demand that women should be enfranchised remains undisputed. Yet what still needs to be explored is to what extent Stanton’s broad goals for women were absorbed away from the impetus of reform that centred on the East coast. In order to support the theory that Stanton’s influence expanded beyond the East coast, the possible routes of transfer between the East and the Midwest need to be considered, while at the same time acknowledging (as does the historian Nancy Hewitt) that there is ‘no straight or singular path’ that women followed as they entered the women’s rights arena. The historian Steven M. Buechler illustrated this


point through his work on Illinois in which he suggested that Illinois had been relatively inactive when it came to the concerns of women until after the Civil War, a fact that Buechler supports by evidence that there were no major women's rights organisations or conventions in this area until after the war. He goes on to note that women in Illinois were involved in the abolitionist cause from 1844 and like women from the East Coast this eventually provided some women with the opportunity and desire to become involved with the women's rights movement. Yet a simpler connection is evident as the recognition of an increased number of women's rights organisations that emerged in areas such as Illinois are placed against an awareness of the fluidity of people relocating from the East Coast to the Midwest.

Influence originating from the East Coast is traceable through a variety of sources that tied the North Eastern states directly and indirectly to the Midwestern region. Educated Eastern women that had relocated to work in the female seminaries and academies of Illinois are identifiable as one of the first points of connection, bringing with them a direct transfer of ideologies. An example of an important institution that encouraged connections between the two coasts was the United States Sanitary Commission 1861-1865 (USSC). The USSC was established in the North during the Civil War, providing the impetus for local relief organisations to work together. The women who were involved in the USSC and

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7 Ibid., p.58.
8 It was approved by President Lincoln 13 June 1862
the relief effort had little choice but to broaden their concept of their sphere in order to deal with the realities and demands of war.\(^9\)

Mary Livermore (1820-1905), serves as an example why an Eastern woman made the decision to make the move westward and what kind of influences she might bring with her to the women of Chicago. In many cases it would be her husband’s “Western Fever” that would initially lead to the decision to move, in the case of Livermore this led her and her family to Chicago.\(^10\) During her time in Chicago, Livermore felt compelled to express her patriotism through voluntary relief work for the Union army and became involved in the Sanitary Commission.\(^11\) Livermore later reflected on her reluctance to join the relief effort in her autobiography, stressing her initial concern that it would take her away from her home and her appropriate place in society.\(^12\) As Livermore continued in her discussion of her involvement in the Commission she emphasised that her actions were in response to “the call of my country,” it would be that same call that led a variety of women to the same experience.\(^13\) Livermore’s decision to join the USSC would eventually lead her to alter her position about the issue of woman’s suffrage.

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\(^12\) Livermore, *The Story of My Life*, p.471.

During the mid-1850s, Livermore had lived in Auburn, New York. Livermore’s first introduction to the reform movement occurred while in New York through her meetings with Martha Wright and William Lloyd Garrison. In the case of Livermore, her exposure to the reform activity did not lead to her immediate membership of any of the major reform societies of the day. However, Livermore’s connection to Wright had led to her exposure to the ideas that formed the basis of the Eastern reform impetus.\(^\text{14}\) The existence of mutual acquaintances, such as Wright and Garrison, between Stanton and Livermore highlights that she would have not been ignorant of Stanton’s reform beliefs. Moreover, Livermore’s initial decision not to join the women’s rights movement, based on her own judgement that she did not feel that women needed the ballot, reflects her awareness of Stanton and the organisation that she had established around the goal of woman suffrage.\(^\text{15}\)

Yet Livermore’s move westward cast her in a role that she would have been unaware of as she carried the various influences with her, unknowingly becoming a vessel for ideological transfer from the East to the West. Her own exposure to these ideas giving her the ideological basis for change that her own experience would allow her to build upon when her life provided evidence of the need for action in order to improve the status of women.

The actions of Livermore and numerous other women who became involved in the USSC revealed that they had extended their traditional roles as women.

During the antebellum period the notion of separate spheres had shaped the role of men and women, however the civil war brought about the necessity for women to

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\(^{14}\) Venet, "The Emergence of a Suffragist," pp. 143-164.

\(^{15}\) Livermore, *The Story of My Life*, p. 479
reengineer the structure of those positions. Women had responded to the call that they should utilise their nurturing talent to offer support and healing for the victims of war, yet it was the application of these skills that pushed women into the public sphere as activists or as leaders. Livermore's response to seeing women successfully adapt their expertise to the war effort by pledging that she would support the efforts of women to expand their realm illustrates the point. As she acknowledged that by "Knowing... the qualities of woman and her courage and bravery under trials, I can never cease to demand that she shall have just as large a sphere as man has." Livermore's commitment to a leadership role within the Sanitary Commission reveals her expanded role in society. Livermore's actions were not without precedent, as Stanton had already started the fight for women to assert themselves in the male sphere of action. Stanton's vision for women reflected her broad ideological goals that intended to enable the women's rights movement to reposition women in society; Livermore's actions clearly indicated that she was working within this framework even though she would not have acknowledged that fact.

Livermore's appointment as an Associate Manager in Chicago in 1862 reflected a shift in trends of the acceptance of women in active political roles to improve society, providing evidence that East coast ideas were asserting their

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16 The effect of the Civil War on women is evident in numerous areas. For a discussion of the politicising effect on female literature see Lyde Cullen Sizer, The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War, 1850-1872 (Chapel Hill, 2000).


influence in the West.\textsuperscript{19} Established in the North and transmitted into the Midwest, the benevolent role of women combined the concepts of “True Womanhood” and “Republican Motherhood” to shape a new role for women.\textsuperscript{20} However, as other historians have explored, this is not a direct transfer of ideology, rather the women of the West treated the ideologies that were established in the East with “diverse perceptions of its tenets, and modified it to meet changing realities. In so doing, these migrants became creators as well as preservers of ideology,” the fact remains that the East influenced the West.\textsuperscript{21} As volunteers involved in charitable organisations, women were able to exert their influence over society without apparently rejecting their societal roles. Politically these ideological shifts had an impact on the suffrage argument that the women’s rights movement articulated, the use of duty to justify women seeking the ballot became increasingly popular as a less radical reason for claiming the vote for women. This approach allowed women to not only remain in their sphere but also in contrast to the original demand for the vote shifted the reasoning for the enfranchisement of women away from a claim that was based on concerns over individual rights to a new apparently selfless objective, the benefit of society.\textsuperscript{22} One clear indication of the success and the acceptance of women’s expanding roles was the 1863 Sanitary Fair organised in part by Mary Livermore. Planned and directed entirely by women, the fair’s success


\textsuperscript{21} Griswold, “Anglo Women and Domestic Ideology,” p.17.

became obvious and the ability of the women involved in the orchestration of this event unquestionable, as they raised over seventy thousand dollars at the fair.\textsuperscript{23}

Through their involvement in the Civil War and the USSC, more women recognised their ability and even their duty to enact change to improve society.

During the war, and as a result of my own observations, I became aware that a large portion of the nation’s work was badly done, or not done at all, because woman was not recognized as a factor in the political world. In the work of public education, and municipal government,- in the struggle with the liquor traffic, and with social impurity...men and women should stand shoulder to shoulder, equals before the law; and until this is attained, the highest success in departments of work and reform can never be accomplished.\textsuperscript{24}

As her writing illustrates, Livermore’s sense of duty not only led her to help in the war effort, it also resulted in her increased awareness of the need to take action concerning the issue of women’s rights by seeking a political voice. The Civil War opened her eyes to the need for action, allowing her to accept Stanton’s goals for increased women’s rights. Through her work for the Sanitary Commission Fair, a builder had questioned Livermore’s legal right to make a contract as a woman.\textsuperscript{25} In reaction to her own recognition of her lack of legal rights even in connection to her professional position, Livermore vowed “that when the war was over I would take up new work—the work of making law and justice synonymous for women.”\textsuperscript{26}

While Livermore’s experience in terms of being a leader and president within the women’s rights movement is uniquely hers, involvement in the Civil War and the


\textsuperscript{24} Livermore, \textit{The Story of My Life}, pp.479-480

\textsuperscript{25} Mary A. Livermore, \textit{My Story of the War} (1887; repr., New York ,1972), pp.435-436

\textsuperscript{26} Livermore, \textit{My Story of the War}, p.436.
experience of working for the USSC was an experience that numerous women shared. The assumption that Livermore’s experience was common to women who had encountered similar events and that such women shared in her realisations, needs highlighting as it resulted in an increased acceptance of a widening role for women in society. In the *History of Woman’s Suffrage*, the impact of the Civil War on women was acknowledged as Stanton wrote that it resulted in a "revolution in woman herself, as important in its results as the changed condition of the former slaves."\(^ {27}\) The concluding section of this extract contains the most important element, the recognition that “this silent influence is still busy,” illuminating that the impact of the Civil War combining with Stanton’s ideology continued to shape the next generation of women as they were determined to “stand by man’s side his recognized equal in rights as she is now in duties.”\(^ {28}\) Access to the women’s rights movement complimented the experience of the Civil War as it provided women with the tools to seek action. However, the connection between the fight for suffrage and women’s war experience was not always a straight path. Moreover, Livermore’s support of woman suffrage, rather than the other aspects of Stanton’s legacy reveals that her full influence had not been recognised even though it was evident.

An important interconnection between the East Coast and the Midwest came from Stanton and Anthony. In order to attract support for the women’s rights movement their leaders had to take on a series of public speaking engagements designed to gather support both in terms of new members and financially to the

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\(^ {28}\) Ibid.
cause. While the value of appearances made by Stanton and Anthony would vary from place to place, it is important to recognise that in many cases these lectures were often the first points of connection that some had with the women’s rights movement. The point of such travels for Stanton was to inspire women to organise in pursuit of suffrage. In the case of Minnesota, the efforts of Stanton were successful as they encouraged the initiation of a number of suffrage clubs throughout the state.29 However, as Stanton’s goal for woman suffrage was accepted and the women’s rights movement grew on the local level, her broad agenda for equality was increasingly ignored, Stanton’s ideology became a victim of the success of her movement.

One example of the widespread influence of the Stanton and Anthony partnership is evident in the formation of the National Woman’s Loyal League to support Abraham Lincoln’s emancipation policy in 1863. In 1866, Stanton organised the formation of the National Woman’s League in New York with the call “Let the women of every State be largely represented in person or by letter.”30 Stanton and Anthony sent out letters, seeking connections with women outside the East Coast, their efforts resulted in over 5000 members for the league.31 Those that responded to Stanton’s urgings centred their work on the need “to impress on the nation’s conscience that freedom for the slaves was the only way to victory.”32


31 Flexner and Fitzpatrick, Century of Struggle, pp.104-105.

However, the establishment of the Loyal League granted Stanton and Anthony the opportunity to disseminate the ideology that had initiated the East Coast women’s rights movement in a westward direction. Stanton and Anthony used the league as an opportunity to present evidence of the contradictions of the rights of citizenship that existed for women, as they claimed that the “Woman's Loyal League voiced the solemn lessons of the War: Liberty to all; national protection for every citizen under our flag; universal suffrage, and universal amnesty.” As women responded to Stanton’s call from a variety of States, they asserted their commitment to the War effort and their belief in the Republic. As one letter stated the “ball” that had been set “in motion in New York” now rolled “all over the North.” As it moved, it not only united women in the beliefs that slaves should be free, it also introduced women to Stanton’s influence and the goals of the women’s rights movement. However, Stanton’s successful use of the league as a recruitment tool reflects that suffrage had been placed at the top of the agenda, ensuring that it would increasingly become the most prominent goal of the women’s rights movement as future generations took the leadership helm.

The partnership of Stanton and Anthony and the event of the Seneca Falls convention encouraged many women to organise themselves to become involved in


35 Mariam H. Fish to Susan B. Anthony in Ibid., pp.884-885.
the issue of women's rights. In 1869, Livermore utilised her East Coast connections and provides evidence of the link between an emerging state association and the national organisation when she organised Chicago's first suffrage convention. At Livermore's request, Stanton and Anthony had attended encouraging the establishment of the Illinois Woman Suffrage Association, clear confirmation of the bond that existed between the national and state organisations.

As Stanton reported in the Revolution regarding the Chicago Convention "Western women are wide-awake to-day," clear in her implication that the women who had attended the event were exposed to the East Coast ideology that she had shaped, and that as a result they were now committed to action. It is important to realise the value of Anthony's role in transporting Stanton's ideologies across the United States. The Anthony and Stanton partnership has been the focus of many historians, the idea that each in their different way complimented each other working to fulfil their goals as set forth in the Declarations of Sentiments. The apparent success of the initial working relationship of the two women is revealed in their 1850s speeches of Anthony and Stanton, considered by one historian as "the foundation of the politics and philosophy of their movement."

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37 Venet, "The Emergence of a Suffragist," pp.143-164


39 Since Stanton was married and had children it was often Anthony who attended conferences and on speaking tours presenting audience with many of Stanton speeches and ideas.

Susan B. Anthony’s effort to test her theory that the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments had already extended the right to vote to women, reveals the strength of the link between the state and national women’s rights organisations. As Anthony wrote to Stanton about her attempt to vote in 1872 “Well, I have been and gone and done it!” She went on to stress that she hoped others would follow her example, “I hope the morning telegrams will tell of many women all over the country trying to vote.” Anthony’s actions appeared to have had the desired result as her effort to vote led many others on the state level to test her theory in practice. "In order to test this possibility, and acting under legal advice, women in several States, inspired by the action of their national leaders, attempted to register and vote in 1871 and 1872." Additionally, the resulting publicity that Anthony and the women’s rights movement received was supported by the fact that Anthony was charged and later found guilty of a federal offence for trying to vote for a member of Congress. The attention that this generated encouraged the spread of discussions on the issue of woman suffrage across the United States.

The lecture circuit of the antebellum period provided both men and women with the opportunity to lecture on a broad range of topics to audiences across the United States once again allowing for state and national interaction. An increasing

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41 Susan Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 5 November 1872, In Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, eds., History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 2, pp.934-935.

42 Carrie Chapman Catt, and Nettie Rogers Shuler, Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement (New York, 1923), p.92. This had included women from the state of Illinois

43 For an account of the trial see An Account of the Proceedings on the Trial of Susan B. Anthony, on the Charge of Illegal Voting, at the Presidential Election in Nov., 1872 (Rochester, N.Y., 1874). Susan B. Anthony Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

44 Anne Mattina, "I am as a bell that cannot ring: Antebellum women Oratory," Women and Language 16 (Fall 1993), pp.1-6. This article reflects on the existence of a
interest during the 1860s encouraged feminists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone to travel westward and present a variety of lectures. In Minnesota the value of these efforts become clear when the presence of lecturers such as Stanton and Anthony are viewed as “influences coming like the rays of the morning sun directly from the East where so many noble women are at work for the freedom of their sex.” The image that Stanton arrived in the West in order to enlighten western women to the existing struggle for increased rights for women stresses that Stanton’s role was recognised and that her ideological influence was welcomed, or at least her goal of woman suffrage was accepted. Stanton and Anthony shared the common belief that only by gaining equal rights would women be in a position to help address the social problems of the United States, it was from this stance that they shared the stage and lectured on the necessity for woman suffrage. As Anthony and Stanton’s actions received attention they reveal how Stanton’s ideas were increasingly transferred to the Midwest and beyond, but it also illustrates how Stanton’s initial call for a women’s rights movement in New York resulted in a national and local network of organisations.

Newspapers emerged as the medium that helped unite and motivate the women’s movement both on a national and regional scale. Anthony and soon the others that would share her views on the important roles that newspapers played,

\[\text{wide variety of women’s lectures that have not been explored in reference to their legacy or importance.}\]

\[\text{Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, eds.,} \text{History of Woman Suffrage, vol. 3.}\]

\[\text{David Mead,} \text{Yankee Eloquence in the Middle West; The Ohio Lyceum, 1850-1870 (East Lansing, 1951), p.225.}\]
recognised that "as long as newspapers and magazines are controlled by men, every woman upon them must write articles which are reflections of men's ideas. As long as that continues, women's ideas and deepest convictions will never go before the public."  

Women's newspapers such as the Revolution and Woman's Home Journal would be in a unique position to broaden the sphere of women and to encourage the transfer of ideas from the East Coast throughout the United States. In the case of Chicago, Mary Livermore launched the Agitator and provided a link between the East Coast and the North West, in which she demanded women's "admission with man to political partnership in government." The Revolution was one of "the first postwar women's rights publication," as such it inspired a host of other newspapers that were concerned with women's rights such as Livermore's Agitator. In her role as a "pioneer" of suffrage reform in Illinois, Livermore's support for woman suffrage led her to take on the financial and editorial responsibilities of "a woman suffrage paper," which was modelled after Stanton's and Anthony's, Revolution. Livermore would eventually move to Boston to work with the American Woman Suffrage Association, to edit the Woman's Journal before serving as president of the AWSA 1875-76. Her actions were not necessarily a rejection of Stanton's main beliefs. Indeed when Livermore later wrote, "We ask suffrage for women as a means, not an end," she like Stanton was advocating educational and job advancement with the firm belief that the vote for women


48 Livermore, The Story of My Life, pp.482-483


50 Livermore, The Story of My Life, p.482.
would result in equality and opportunity.\textsuperscript{51} In many ways, Livermore’s stance echoes Stanton’s own early beliefs concerning the value of the vote.

One of the key areas that encouraged women to unite was the issue of temperance. Temperance organisations exposed many women to a political agenda for the first time. Under the umbrella term ‘temperance,’ women embraced a broad range of social concerns, yet for many there was an underlying belief that the issues of temperance and suffrage had the same goals. Temperance was viewed as a crucial element of social change by most nineteenth-century reformers including Susan B. Anthony. Yet for most of them, it was a secondary area of interest.\textsuperscript{52} However, involvement in temperance reveals evidence of contact between two movements but also adds to the discussion of the transfer of influence between different geographical locations. As one account of the first Woman’s National Temperance Convention illustrated when its author reflected that the women met “‘with one accord in one place,’” gathered up from Maine and Oregon, from Alabama and Iowa, from Massachusetts and Colorado, and many States between.”\textsuperscript{53} As with the women’s movement, one of the key tools of the temperance reform movement was the use of lecturers throughout the United States.\textsuperscript{54} The rhetoric employed by these public speakers reflected the skill of speakers in exposing their

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item Livermore rejected Stanton’s methods but not her ideology, although she unlike Stanton would continue to present the different qualities of men and women.
\item Frances Willard, \textit{Woman and Temperance} (Hartford, 1883), p.128.
\item Many examples of lectures for the Temperance Cause are contained in the Temperance and Prohibition Papers. For a specific example of a lecture by Frances Willard see Unknown Author "Heard Miss Willard: She Addresses Large Crowd at Logan Temple," unknown publication, 22 December 1895, National Headquarters Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Evanston, Illinois, Temperance and Prohibition Papers (UCI, SRLF,1977), section III, reel 43, scrapbook 72.
\end{thebibliography}
audience to a combination of progressive and traditional ideas that would have made them more receptive to the issue of woman suffrage.\textsuperscript{55}

Frances E. Willard (1839-1898), the president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) emerged as one of the key temperance figures in Illinois, illustrating the connection between the temperance and women's rights movements by presenting an expanded vision for the role of women. “The W.C.T.U. is doing no work more important than that of reconstructing the ideal of womanhood. . . . Woman is becoming what God meant her to be and Christ's gospel necessitates her being the companion and counsellor, not the incumbrance and toy, of man”.\textsuperscript{56} Willard’s words reveal the philosophy that temperance exposed women to in the Midwest and the rest of the United States. The Corresponding Secretary’s Report from Colorado, provides additional evidence of the magnitude of the influence that the temperance movement had as it highlights the large membership in Colorado and their success in raising funds and organising conventions, demonstrating the movement’s impact and sizeable network.\textsuperscript{57} As one of the largest organisations of the nineteenth century, temperance leaders argued that women needed to develop their public self so that they could benefit society on an equal level with men.


\textsuperscript{56} Frances Willard as quoted in Mattingly, \textit{Well-Tempered Women}, p.53.

These organized movements are, as we think, God's great recruiting station for the new war in which He is enrolling, drilling and disciplining. If men were at the front in these societies, as they would necessarily be if there at all, women would not develop so rapidly, or become so self-respecting and individual in character: they need to learn how to use the weapons with which the future is certain to equip them. . . . We work alone in order to become experts so that we can hold our own when we go into societies with men. That is the short of it. 58

From 1874 onwards, Willard became aware of the merging of interests between temperance and the women's movement. Female temperance workers had entered into a political action through the demands of their temperance work that had committed them to "lobbying" and "direct action" for their cause. 59 In the case of Willard, this move into the political arena of temperance involved seeking out connections within the East Coast women's movement and such figures as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. The relationship between Willard and the leaders of the women's movement strengthened the bond between temperance and suffrage, fusing the two movements together as a method of protecting the home and the family. 60 In linking the fight for prohibition with a vision of women as protectors of the home, Willard advocated "Suffrage as a Temperance instrumentality." 61 Willard's support of suffrage as a tool of protection gave the issue a greater degree of respectability as she legitimately extended the role of women without challenging the ideal vision of women occupying a separate sphere. In an article "The New Ideal of Womanhood," Willard introduced the idea

58 Mattingly, Well-Tempered Women, p.58.
60 Ibid., pp.99-100.
that the role of a woman should be extended into the public world as she wrote: "the mission of the ideal woman...is to make the whole world home-like...A true woman carries home with her everywhere."\textsuperscript{62} Given that Willard had extended the qualities of the home outside the physical family dwelling, she had also justified women seeking to protect the newly defined home by seeking the ballot. The temperance movement had therefore helped fight against the apparent radicalism of Stanton’s initial demand for the vote, but also provided her with access to a countrywide organisation that would put her beliefs into action in a respectable framework.

Women’s rights and the bid for higher education by Stanton and others initially made little progress on the East Coast while in contrast institutions in the Midwest offered women earlier access to educational programmes. This presented the opportunity for a whole new generation of educated women to emerge, shaped not only by Stanton’s ideology and by her early confidence that access to education would help break down the barriers to equality, but also by the desire to equip women to fulfil their obligations as protectors of the home.\textsuperscript{63} Catharine Waugh McCulloch characterised the success of Stanton’s influence. She was included in this project was because she represented the fulfilment of educational and professional opportunities that Stanton advocated for all women and that she believed had been denied to her. McCulloch’s presence offers the chance to explore the multifaceted nature of Stanton’s influence and the complexity of the process of transfer as it finally reached her and other Midwestern women.


\textsuperscript{63} Flexner and Fitzpatrick, \textit{Century of Struggle}, pp.116-117.
McCulloch exemplifies the new generation of educated women that emerged from the Midwest. However, McCulloch is also representative of the younger women who had begun to dominate the development of the women’s rights movement, reflective of the greater participation of women who linked the issue of suffrage to the goals of the progressive era.\textsuperscript{64} The women who emerged in the Midwest were not only receptacles for the new educational experiences and resulting professional opportunities that they were offered, Midwestern women were acquainted with the philosophies and actions of women such as Mary Livermore and Frances Willard. While these two women were products of their own politicising experiences and values, they reflect the experiences of a whole generation of women in the Midwest. Willard and Livermore provide the link between generations and across territory. As figures that facilitate the transfer of the rhetoric and ideology from the East Coast to the Midwest suffrage and temperance movements, the experiences of women such as Willard and Livermore helps to explain the introduction of new women such as McCulloch into the reform arena.

Access to education had been one of the key topics of the women’s rights movement since its conception. Stanton had recognised that women would never possess an alternative to their status as housekeepers until they had access to further education and the ability to become fully independent. Mary Livermore’s speech “What shall we do with our daughters” continued to transmit this message on the lecture circuit, exposing mid western women to Stanton’s belief that women should

\textsuperscript{64} Buechler, \textit{Transformation of The Woman Suffrage Movement}, p.148.
possess the tools to allow them to select their future careers.\textsuperscript{65} As Stanton's goal seemed to have been achieved and an increasing number of women were able to receive a higher level of education, the purpose of education for women began to shift. Women began to justify their desire for education by seeking access to the traditionally male preserve of professionalism. As the male standard of professionalism was equated with careers in medicine, higher education and especially the law, Catharine McCulloch's desire to be a lawyer is placed in the context of the forces that were shaping the new women and as a result the membership of the women's rights movement.

Catharine Gouger Waugh was born in New York, on June 4, 1862, but moved shortly afterwards to Illinois with her family in 1867. She began her higher education at the Rockford Seminary where she became fully committed to the ideas of women suffrage. Later in one of her articles that addressed why women should vote, McCulloch clearly identified education as one of the key reasons that women should receive the vote. "Women are well educated, almost all women in Illinois being able to read and write and their intelligent vote would greatly benefit the state.\textsuperscript{66}" Her statement clearly alluded to the changes that had already occurred thanks to Stanton and the first group of women who had opened the door to equal opportunities in education. As early as 1868, Stanton had urged, "Give your daughters then, the surest of all fortunes, the full development of their immortal


powers." However, McCulloch’s statement also hints at the argument that her generation would later use to justify why women should be granted the right to vote.

McCulloch’s personal connection to both the fight for suffrage and the temperance movement is an experience many women involved in State level organisations shared. McCulloch’s parents both came from families that opposed alcohol, indicating the breadth and impact of the temperance movement and highlighting her initial point of contact with the temperance movement. Women that were involved in the temperance movement were frustrated by their lack of a political voice to cause change or to present any of their major concerns, even though suffrage remained a controversial issue for women across the United States, women progressively became united behind the suffrage banner in order to encourage social change.

Stanton’s influential role in demanding equal educational opportunities for women had opened the door to higher education for the next generation of women, women such as McCulloch. The decision to pursue an education in order to enter a professional field takes on a special relevance in connection to the field of law. As the most “masculine” of all the professions, law represented an all male network of lawyers, judges and juries. The male dominance over the practice of law kept out

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68 Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill, 1997), p.3.

women, as they could not justify entering into the legal field in the same way women were able to support their entrance into the educational field. The female fight to gain equal rights as lawyers shared a unique connection to the women’s rights movement as one historian revealed by the understanding that those who struggled to become women lawyers followed the “ideological tradition of woman’s rights, -suffrage, equal rights, and full citizenship for all.” In essence, the entrance of women into the legal profession reveals the impact of Stanton’s ideological vision for women as citizens, entitled to same legal and political rights as men. McCulloch’s recognition of women as citizens, “Fellow citizens (for I believe we are even if debarred from voting),” highlights her acceptance of Stanton’s key principles of the rights of women and the need for women to claim the right to vote as citizens of the United States as both a lawyer and a supporter of the women’s rights movement.

After studying at Union College of Law, McCulloch was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 1886. Yet this fact alone does not signify her success as a female lawyer, as after an unsuccessful hunt to find a job in a Chicago Law firm she realised that in order to practice law she would have to establish her own legal practice. This experience was not unique to McCulloch as female lawyers struggled to shape their professional identity and fight against notions that they were stepping out of their appropriate sphere. As McCulloch later recollected in her

70 Drachman, *Sisters in Law*, p.11. Women were able to enter those fields as apparent extension of their natural roles.

71 Ibid.

autobiography, concerning the amount of advice that she had received from prospective employers, urging her to return to the home had encouraged her to resolve that she would remain single and practice law.\textsuperscript{73}

McCulloch’s professional status provides evidence of the new type of woman that had emerged and who were joining the women’s rights and temperance movements. McCulloch advocated suffrage to solve the legal inequities suffered by women and the social problems that accompanied disfranchisement.\textsuperscript{74} The link between the legal and economic status of women remains constant in her writings, a reflection of her belief that the ballot would enable women would be able to help themselves and others.\textsuperscript{75} McCulloch’s arguments for the enfranchisement of women reveal that the new women who had inherited the women’s rights movement did not necessarily introduce a set of new ideas or justifications for the vote. McCulloch’s work reflected that the new and old ideas and strategies were blended together. McCulloch’s article “Why Illinois Women Should Vote” illustrated how the new generation of reformers still utilised many of the ideas that Stanton and the first wave of the suffrage movement had introduced. McCulloch’s statement that “women are mothers of citizens and future citizens, they have the greatest possible stake in the government, and deserve the greatest possible honor and power,” reflects many of Stanton’s arguments such as women having rights as

\textsuperscript{73} Catharine Waugh McCulloch, \textit{Autobiography}, (n.p., n.d); Catharine Gouger (Waugh) McCulloch 1862-1945 Papers.


\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., p.456.
citizens. Yet the stronger theme of this argument is the idea of women as Republican Mothers guiding the moral principles of future citizens of the United States. McCulloch later added to this view that the government in response to the benefit of the full woman citizen should open its doors to women voters rather than forcing them to access suffrage through “the precarious and varied window climbing method.” McCulloch was advocating that the government enact a legislative amendment entitling women to vote rather than the continued battle for State suffrage, again paralleling Stanton’s belief.

Stanton could not have completely foreseen the development of the new female as early as 1868, when she had challenged the assumption that women should not enter the field of law. Her response to the argument that women should not study or work in the field of law as it was “combative; and it is her prerogative to conquer without combat,” was to assert that “when woman enters the professions, she will do for them what she has already done for the literature of the age in which we live; for the true woman must elevate and ennoble whatever she touches, and beautify every path in which she walks.” As female students worked to broaden their minds, the pursuit of higher education directed them to larger goals. In the case of law school, young women realised that “it is not a world of dreams, like college, but a world where you see life as it really is. I am glad to be

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77 Catharine Waugh McCulloch, Door and Windows, (n, d.) Catharine Gouger (Waugh) McCulloch, 1862-1945 Papers.

78 Revolution, 31 December 1868, p.410.
taking up a career. I feel in a bigger world, a man's world." 79 Having graduated, the same student later reflected on the importance of obtaining a professional degree as she commented that she was "sure a professional education is of value to a woman. There is more to learn than the mere subject. It trains the mind, develops the reason and teaches the woman a lot of common sense." 80 It is interesting to note that while seeing the fight for the vote shift from the natural rights argument to an increasing focus on the claims of special female character, in contrast the purpose of female education continued to reflect Stanton's original directive for women, equality. These apparent contradictions would be equally evident in the efforts of the new women struggling to win the vote and to redesign their role in society.

In 1876, Elizabeth Boynton Harbert became President of the Illinois Woman Suffrage Association (IWSA), from this point onwards, there is a direct affiliation between the Midwest and East Coast as the IWSA was tied to Stanton's NWSA. 81 However, the connection between women in a variety of regions had already occurred on a broad scale, as state involvement in the suffrage and temperance movements had encouraged and provided the necessary network for interaction and social reform to create stronger national and local ties. Against this backdrop, women such as Willard and Livermore illustrate the transfer of ideas and the complex connections that existed between reform movements throughout the Midwest.

79 Diary Entry in One Woman Determined to Make a Difference: The Life of Madeleine Zabriskie Doty, ed. Alice Duffy Rinehart (Bethlehem, PA, 2001), p.47.
In 1876, the Chicago Woman’s Club (CWC) emerged; its constituency was focused on a variety of social concerns. The development of the women’s clubs had initially centred on interests in education and the impact of religious reform dating from the antebellum period.\textsuperscript{82} The formation of women’s clubs permitted its members to experience “personal growth and development from the viewpoint of social and intellectual improvement”, they also directed women to the acquisition of “speaking, organizational, and leadership skills that enabled them to develop and express their ideas.”\textsuperscript{83} The significance of the club movement is similar to that of the reform movement in that both provided their members access to a network, which enabled them to gain skills that would later be used in the fight for woman for suffrage. The development of the CWC illustrates the evolving role of the women’s clubs. In 1894, the CWC linked itself directly to the suffrage movement with the establishment of the Chicago Political Equality League (CPEL), though it did not declare its own support for woman suffrage. As one of the founders of the CPEL, McCulloch played a key role in linking the Midwest to the larger national suffrage organisation. By 1910, the CPEL was a major force in the suffrage movement. McCulloch’s work reflected many of the same women’s rights ideas that Stanton and those that she had already influenced had spread throughout the United States. McCulloch’s position on the situation of women was made abundantly clear in the following extract.

> Women should be joint guardians with their husbands of their children. They should have an equal share in family property. They should be paid equally for equal work. Every school and profession should be


open to them. Divorce and inheritance should be equal. Laws should protect from man's lust by punishing severely, vile assaults on women. All of these desirable reforms can come through the vote of women.\textsuperscript{84}

In the extract, McCulloch listed all of Stanton's targeted areas for reform in the battle for equality for women, clearly embracing Stanton's broad ideological vision. McCulloch's view on the position of women is evident as she acknowledged the need for further action to enfranchise women. By carefully revealing her appreciation for the advancement of women's rights that past generations had achieved, McCulloch was able to illustrate the need for future action. McCulloch highlighted in the case of marriage that initially "a wife had no control over her property, her wages or her history," she adds, that after the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, "thousands of meetings and conventions have been held and the condition of women has been steadily improved until now in almost all states women have control of their own wages and property, and in some of the states mother and father had joint and equal control of their children."\textsuperscript{85} Her awareness of the change that had occurred presents a compelling link between the old and new generations of the women's movement. As Stanton had stressed to the earlier generation, women needed to seek legal equality in the institution of marriage to protect themselves and their family, McCulloch continued in this vein in 1899, when she fought for the passage of an Equal Guardian Act using her fictional novel \textit{Mr. Lex} to illustrate the danger of an unequal family situation.\textsuperscript{86}

\textsuperscript{84} Catharine Waugh McCulloch, “The Bible on Women Voting,” \textit{History of Women}. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, reel 950, no. 9213.


Catherine Waugh McCulloch stands out as one of the key legal figures involved in the ratification of the suffrage amendment as she presented the first example of combining the strategies for fighting for suffrage in Illinois. McCulloch not only committed herself to a federal constitutional amendment, she also battled for suffrage on a municipal level. McCulloch’s “brilliant idea” or essentially her fresh approach to the suffrage situation was that women in Illinois should revise existing Illinois statutes to grant them partial suffrage rather than push for a constitutional amendment, a move that suffrage historians acknowledged as “the turning point in the enfranchisement of twenty-five million women.” McCulloch’s legal argument centred on her realisation that women were entitled to vote for any municipal office, which was not mentioned in the State Constitution. However, despite the accolades for her innovative approach to suffrage McCulloch remains a relatively unexplored character of the suffrage movement.

Stanton had the ability to tailor her arguments to suit her goals, especially in defence of why women should have the power to vote. As a result Stanton’s arguments for the ballot developed. After initially focusing on the argument that women should have the vote because of their rights as citizens and as a symbol of equality, Stanton later argued that women should have the vote because of their special characteristics. Stanton addressed the fact that by placing women in a

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May 2005); Catharine Waugh McCulloch, Mr. Lex or The Legal Status of Mother and Child, 1899. History of Women, reel 950, no. 9158.


88 In part, this fact can be attributed to the fact that her papers were not donated to the Schlesinger Library until the 1980s.
position to defend themselves legally they would also be able to protect society, foreshadowing many of the later arguments that would be used as part of the “municipal housekeeping” of the progressive era.\textsuperscript{89} Stanton’s belief that male political power had left women unrepresented: “He has so framed the laws of divorce…. as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.”\textsuperscript{90} In emphasising that men exercised complete control over the law and society, Stanton focused on the legal inequality of women. McCulloch continued Stanton’s argument as she sought the vote due to the difference between men and women, “Women are not identical with men and their special interest should be represented at the ballot box as are the interest of men.”\textsuperscript{91} This is a tactic that McCulloch continued to use, as evidenced in 1913 when the women of Illinois were celebrating their suffrage victory McCulloch urged these women to use their new political voice to vote on “everything that affects our lives and our homes and our health and our happiness.”\textsuperscript{92} There is the recognition between Stanton and McCulloch that the vote is just the beginning of the women’s movement and achieving its aims.

McCulloch identified the vote as a right of citizenship for American women.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{89} Maureen A. Flanagan, “Gender and Urban Political Reform: The City Club and the Woman’s City Club of Chicago in the Progressive Era,” in Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore ed., \textit{Who were the Progressives?} (Boston and New York, 2002), p.212.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{90} Elizabeth Cady Stanton, \textit{North Star} (Rochester, New York) 11 Aug., 1848, in \textit{Papers of Stanton and Anthony}, series 3, reel 6.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{91} Catharine Waugh McCulloch, “Why Illinois Women Should Vote,” Catharine Gouger (Waugh) McCulloch, 1862-1945 Papers, reel 20.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{92} Joanne L. Goodwin, \textit{Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform: Mothers' Pensions in Chicago, 1911-1929} (Chicago, 1997), p.1.}
In her article “The Protective Value of the Ballot,” she highlighted the fight for the rights of the citizen in the United States as she wrote, “The spirit of struggle against oppression and dependence is in the air, and all have breathed it in, women as well as men.” She goes on in her article to link her concept of justifying the fight for rights with her arguments why women need the vote: “Women need the ballot, not only for their peers, but for the practical value it will be to them in protecting them in the exercise of a citizen’s prerogatives. This is perhaps a selfish view. It might be more lofty and unselfish to benefit others, the nation, the world, through women’s ballots, but...women need protection of life, liberty, property.” McCulloch’s arguments reflect the two key arguments that continued through the suffrage movement, the natural rights and expediency views that are utilised interchangeably by Stanton and those that inherited her women’s rights movement. Yet her arguments also show how Stanton’s demand for woman suffrage had been made more respectable by the protective potential of the vote.

In 1890, the formation of the National American Woman Suffrage Association promoted a closer connection between the national and state organisations and the divide that had separated the women’s movement was removed allowing for the development of a larger reform network. One of the first decisions of the newly unified movement was to encourage support for NAWSA on the state level. To that end, NAWSA appointed vice presidents in every state, whose assignment was to create as many local suffrage clubs as possible and then

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94 Ibid.
form state associations. In the case of Illinois and its bid for the vote, McCulloch’s article, “Illinois Laws Concerning Women” reported that the effort to secure the ballot had been ongoing for 40 years in a variety of forms from letters to public speeches. She focused on the point that in their bid for the vote, the women of Illinois have been respectful rather than revolutionary in their methods, she made a point of comparing their methods in contrast to the more radical tactics of the English suffragettes. This comparison also serves to illustrate that even though it can be argued that the next generation of the women’s rights movement continued their use of Stanton’s ideas, they did not willingly embrace any radical methodology. McCulloch clearly stated that the women of Illinois had not formed any “howling mobs, tore down no State house, killed no officials”, her tone, her arguments clearly indicate that women in their demand for the vote were not radical but seeking to represent themselves, as promised in the Illinois constitution in a “free and equal manner.” She contends that “if suffrage is not our right, but a privilege only, any law which gives, men alone the privilege of voting, is unconstitutional. We wish the Supreme Court saw it this way.” Once again, there is the contention that women need the vote to protect themselves and their families by gaining new rights, which they had been denied but also evidence of Stanton’s original awareness of the contradictions that existed in the concept of female citizenship.

98 Ibid.
Although like many state women involved in the suffrage movement McCulloch’s value has yet to be explored, in her case this was arguably the result of the fact that her papers were not donated to the Schlesinger Library until the 1980s. Those that have focused on McCulloch have done so due to her legal position rather than from an historical perspective. In reference to her work within the NAWSA, her professional role as a lawyer complimented her suffrage goals as she used her expertise to find the ‘window’ access to woman suffrage, since it became apparent that women could not depend on a new federal amendment to open the door to vote. Her important contributions as the legal adviser (1904-c.1911) and as first VP (1910-1911) of the NAWSA make her a perfect candidate for future study on her own merit. McCulloch’s work for the woman suffrage movement revealed the emerging “new woman” reflected Stanton’s vision for equality and the continued use of her arguments to battle for woman suffrage. However, McCulloch’s main value to this project has been in the context of the routes of transmission from the East Coast to the Midwest. McCulloch’s role in the suffrage movement illuminates the complex nature of the network that emerged across generations and from coast to coast. A structure that embraced different generations, reform movements, and women’s clubs that were linked by women such as Willard and Livermore and key events equally. The set of contacts that was established is revealed as a training ground of skills and ideas that allowed for movement between associations and pushed the new woman one step closer to her final objective, the vote, and the confusion that emerged as the new woman tried to find her way in the political new world.

Whereas this chapter has targeted the transfer of Stanton’s legacy from the
East coast to the Midwest, these assumptions can be applied to other regions of the United States. By tracing how Stanton’s legacy was dispersed and how it came to permeate Midwestern women, Mary Livermore’s experiences illustrated the effect of the Civil war on Midwestern women. As Livermore was encouraged to change her preconceived notions about the ideas of gender specific roles, her exposure to the Civil war demonstrated how women increasingly became receptive to Stanton’s demand for suffrage and her women’s rights movement. In addition Willard’s involvement with the temperance movement and her role in making the demand for woman suffrage respectable, built on the destruction of the previously constructed notion of gender roles. Willard’s organisation helped attract new recruits to the women’s rights movement as they responded to the need to protect the home with the ballot, also introducing them to a nationwide network of women. As a new generation of women emerged, shaped by their regional experiences and the impact of the ideas of Stanton, the women’s rights movement continued to fight to enfranchise women. Finally, in the cases of McCulloch, Livermore and Willard, they demonstrate how Stanton’s desire for woman suffrage rather than the other aspects of her legacy had been willingly adopted by those that inherited her movement.
As one of the leaders of the movement, that Stanton had initiated and as the suffrage worker who had finally fulfilled Stanton’s demand for woman suffrage, Carrie Chapman Catt would appear to be entrenched in Stanton’s legacy. However, Catt’s acknowledgment that she “never liked nor admired” Stanton, and that she felt little affection for her, offers the distorted impression that Stanton’s influence had failed to make an impact on the subsequent generation.¹ Catt’s limited regard for Stanton reflects the fate of her legacy in Catt’s hands, as Stanton’s broad ideology was increasingly rejected by a constituency of conservative ‘new women’ who reshaped the women’s movement, that Stanton had first called for in 1848, into the woman suffrage movement to suit the goals of a solely suffrage focused generation.

As a representative of the conservative element who came to dominate the next generation, historians have hailed Catt as the suffrage leader who finally steered the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) to success without appreciating Catt’s connection to Stanton.² Moreover, as Catt and her peers took ownership of the women’s rights movement and distanced themselves from Stanton, any analysis of their actions has been limited by the belief that the rejection of Stanton reflected the growing conservatism of the woman suffrage movement.


movement. Scholars have failed to explore to what extent Catt shaped her strategy for suffrage success in response to public sentiment, deliberately obscuring the radical inheritance that she had received from Stanton in order to achieve woman suffrage.

Stanton's long held belief that society needed to be reformed on a grand scale had led her to attack the institution of marriage and the Bible. Although Stanton had at times utilised the argument that women should be granted the right to vote due to their natural abilities, the new generation adopted this argument on a much larger scale. Influenced further by the temperance movement, and the added respectability that the idea of woman suffrage gained, as it was presented as a progressive force to moralise society, Stanton's broad vision for equality was regarded as a liability to the newly acquired respectability of the goal of woman suffrage. While her long-term partner, Susan B. Anthony had begun to stress the conservative arguments that were increasingly linked to woman suffrage, such as in order for "woman's moral influence to be effective" the "political backing of the vote," was necessary Stanton in contrast, was unwilling to confine her energy to the suffrage topic or to remain silent on the broad range of interests that classified her as a radical figure. In response, Stanton was increasingly excluded from the movement that she had created for holding on to the ideology that she had used to motivate women to demand the vote in 1848. While Stanton's demand for woman suffrage had been embraced, her call to transform society had been rejected on the foundation that the vote alone would transform society.

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Stanton’s assertion that women should possess the right to vote was radical in its intent, as she had sought to promote a revolutionary change in the lives of women. As a component of her broad agenda to achieve equality, the vote for Stanton represented access to a political voice for women. However, she recognised that the vote would not grant women the opportunity to resolve all aspects of their current position in society as she noted when she insisted that women should seek the franchise: “I saw clearly that the power to make the laws was the right through which all other rights could be secured.”\(^4\) Stanton’s view of the vote clearly placed it in the context of her ideological vision for a new role for women. Yet as the new generation of women gained control of the women’s rights movement they struggled to accept Stanton’s complete doctrine as it appeared to be self-defeating, with her radical stance on issues such as religion hampering the future success of woman suffrage.

Stanton’s historical legacy was shaped by the fate of the women’s rights movement and her ideology. While Catt’s effort to win the vote with her “Winning Plan” represented the partial fulfillment of Stanton’s goals, the achievement of the nineteenth amendment allowed the viewpoint to develop that Stanton’s demand for women’s equality had been fulfilled. It would also suggest that the women’s rights movement had been a completely successful organisation. It is only with the realisation that the vote failed to grant total parity for women that future generations became aware that Stanton’s ideological vision had not been achieved through the

accomplishments of the women’s rights movement, that at some point her dual legacy had separated.⁵

The National American Women’s Suffrage Association (NAWSA) which had successfully battled for the nineteenth amendment evolved out of Stanton’s 1848 women’s rights conference in Seneca Falls. However, the NAWSA was not a true reflection of Stanton’s legacy, as Catt’s leadership and her devotion to suffrage, led to the rejection and transformation of Stanton’s movement. The NAWSA under Catt’s directive, represented a women’s rights movement that Stanton had never envisioned, as it became solely a woman suffrage movement. Catt’s commitment to the suffrage cause and the apparent success of the NAWSA had masked the loss of Stanton’s women’s rights movement, an organisation that was directed by her broad ideological goals. However, through the NAWSA, Catt continued to battle for women by challenging their existing social boundaries by fighting for their right to vote. Ironically, Catt’s role in redirecting the women’s rights movement into a perfected “Suffragists Machine,” which was “run with all the method of experienced men politicians” not only enabled the achievement of winning the vote for women, it has also cast Catt as a more radical figure than historians have conceded.⁶

Although Catt’s actions illustrate the rejection of Stanton’s broad agenda in favour of a focus on suffrage, Catt failed to appreciate her connection to Stanton’s

⁵ Ellen Carol DuBois, Woman Suffrage and Women’s Rights (New York, 1998), p.16. This awareness can be linked to the rise and actions of the second wave feminist movement that led to the development of the field of women’s history. See Chapter One Historiography for more detail.

radical ideology and to what extent her actions reflected and shaped Stanton's legacy for future generations. As a representative of a 'New Woman,' Catt embodied Stanton's ideas concerning the development of women, she was a product of the goals that had already been achieved by the women's rights movement and evidence of the geographical distance that these ideas had been transmitted across from their origins on the East Coast. Stanton had provided the basic drive for women's rights that shaped Catt and the new generation, allowing them the opportunity to focus on the strategy of winning the vote. Stanton had agitated and educated women across the United States through her dual legacy, exposing them to her ideas and recruiting them to the women's rights movement directly and indirectly. Catt, in a similar fashion to the experience of Catharine Waugh McCulloch, would have been exposed to the indirect influence of an established network of women who were committed to the women's rights cause. Catt's own leadership style reflected a recruitment strategy that actively sought out the right kind of women to support her suffrage goal, failing to recognise that the women who were compelled to join the NAWSA under her leadership further illustrated the impact of Stanton's legacy on the next generation of women through the opportunities that they had been granted, and their allegiance to the women's rights cause.

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7 Catt was originally from Iowa and was involved in many Campaigns for the Woman's Suffrage Movement away from the East Coast. For a discussion of the new woman see Sara Hunter Graham, *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy* (New Haven and London, 1996), pp.28-29.

8 Because of the Society Plan, Catt is soliciting membership from elite women who will draw positive attention to the cause of Woman Suffrage. For evidence of this see Carrie Chapman Catt Report no. 3, 7 December1898, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, *Women's Studies Manuscript Collection Series 1 Woman's Suffrage, Part A: National Leaders*, eds. Anne Firor Scott and William H. Chafe, (Bethesda, 1990), reel 1.
Although Stanton critiqued the “single-minded concentration on suffrage” her radical demand for the vote in 1848 became an acceptable goal for progressive era women.\(^9\) To a certain extent, it is clear that Catt and her peers believed that many of the battles that Stanton and the early women’s rights movement had fought, such as access to education and great numbers of work opportunities, had been won. In the NAWSA Declaration of Principles, co authored by Catt there is an acknowledgement of the increasing numbers of girls graduating from high schools and attending colleges, as well as reference to work options that are now open to women.\(^10\) Catt and the generation that she represented failed to appreciate to what extent they operated within Stanton’s ideological blueprint as they sought to extend their influence into the political arena. As acceptable as the bid for the enfranchisement of women had become during the Progressive era, the strategies and arguments used to win the vote continued to reflect Stanton’s radical tradition of expanding the role of women in society. Although Catt herself would have rejected the notion, she was an heir to Stanton’s legacy that was broader than woman suffrage and her leadership of the NAWSA, as her work for women’s rights after the nineteenth amendment would reveal.

Carrie Clinton Lane was born in Ripon, Wisconsin in 1859, although later with her family she would move near Charles City, Iowa. It would be in Iowa that Carrie Lane would be first exposed to the concerns of women. Carrie Lane attributed her first exposure to the inequality of women to her recognition that

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women were not allowed to vote in the 1872 presidential election when she witnessed her own mother being denied the chance to place her ballot. Catt would later say of this event, "I never forgot that rank injustice done to my mother. I verily believe I was born a suffragist."\textsuperscript{11} It was clearly no accident that Catt's mother's attempt to vote coincided with Anthony's 1872 attempt to vote, an act which encouraged women throughout the nation to make the same attempt.\textsuperscript{12} Catt's mother, Marie Clinton Lane had also attended college when it was rare for a woman to do so. This factor offered Catt an unusual example to follow and provides an indirect connection to Stanton's earlier work for women's rights.\textsuperscript{13} Carrie Lane would go on to attend and graduate from Iowa's State College, and after her graduation she became a teacher and later a superintendent of schools.\textsuperscript{14} Catt's graduation from Iowa State reflected the increased opportunities in higher education that she and her peers were able to take advantage of, thanks to Stanton's earlier efforts.\textsuperscript{15}

Catt epitomised the type of woman who emerged from the opportunities that Stanton had achieved for women, an educated young woman determined to enter the professional workforce. These same women were indicative of the new


\textsuperscript{14} Isobel V. Morin, \textit{Women who Reformed Politics} (Minneapolis, 1994), pp.61-77

\textsuperscript{15} Two of Catt's biographers offer contradictory information about the number of women in Catt's class. Voris recorded that Catt was one of six, while Fowler reports that she was the only woman in a graduating class of 17. Jacqueline Van Voris, \textit{Carrie Chapman Catt: a public life} (New York, 1987), p.7; Fowler, \textit{Carrie Catt Feminist Politician}, p.4.
suffrage army that steered the movement in the progressive political climate to achieve one goal, the vote for women. Stanton’s responsibility for shaping these new women should not be ignored as she had clearly campaigned for women’s education as part of her focus on the need to expand the traditional role of women. These women represented the success of the early work of the women’s rights movement as they revealed the outcome of Stanton’s influential ideology.

Acknowledged as a radical thinker because she publicly demanded a political voice for women as early as 1848, Stanton’s ideological legacy should be viewed as a success since the campaign for suffrage kept going for over seventy years. However, it would be Catt’s executive ability which would ultimately be responsible for giving the woman’s suffrage movement a clearly identifiable single goal to get organised behind, the enfranchisement of women. While scholars have not appreciated that Catt’s dedication to the suffrage battle exposes the success of Stanton’s earlier radicalism rather than its failure. Catt’s dedication to the NAWSA led her to conceal her personal anti-war beliefs due to her fear that her personal objection to the war would prove to be damaging to the goals of the woman suffrage movement, evidence of her commitment to Stanton’s belief that women should possess the right to vote became apparent when she pledged that the NAWSA would support President Wilson and the war effort if the United States entered World War One.\(^{16}\) It is difficult to trace the direct impact of Stanton’s ideas on the younger, suffrage-focused, generation that Catt organised, partly owing to the radical or moderate labels that have been attached to Stanton and Catt and the generations that they both represented. Historians have acknowledged that the issue

\(^{16}\) Carrie Chapman Catt, Speech “Woman Suffrage as a War Measure,”1918, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, reel 7.
of the vote became a less radical demand as moderates such as Catt had entered the woman’s suffrage cause. Clouding the reality of the connection that existed across the cohorts involved in the women’s rights movement.

The view that Catt’s leadership reflected the increasingly conservative nature of the woman suffrage movement has prevented any consideration whether the question of woman suffrage would have remained a radical issue if its full consequences had been explored and comprehended by society. By suggesting that Catt both appreciated the radical potential of woman suffrage and embraced it, her apparent conservatism is exposed as a façade, constructed to help her secure the ballot for women as she intentionally engineered the woman suffrage movement as a conservative organisation to gain support. Catt’s deliberate strategy to de-radicalise the demand for woman suffrage is exposed, as she opted not to discuss the full impact of women voters on society for the same reason that she had also publicly rejected Stanton’s radicalism, she considered that these issues would be detrimental to achieving the goal of woman suffrage. While Catt’s efforts to enfranchise women would prove to be successful as women were finally awarded the right to vote after a 70-year battle, Catt’s strategy prevented the vote from being part of the larger agenda that Stanton had first envisaged or even achieving the level of impact that she had expected. As she continued to present the view that, the vote would instantly rectify the inequality of women, Catt failed to highlight its full potential as a tool for equality, limiting its effectiveness.

Evidence of Catt’s own realisation that the vote failed to fulfil its promise is reflected in Catt’s own membership in a variety of groups seeking social reform, including the League of Women Voters that she established.
The broad set of goals presented in the *Declaration of Sentiments* revealed that Stanton had recognised that the vote alone would not be enough to incorporate women into the political world. However, beyond her agenda for equality and her desire that women should break free from their traditional constraints, Stanton provided no instructions for women on what the next step in reforming their positions in society should be once the initial demands had been granted. Perhaps indicating that she felt that the next generation would channel her ideological vision into practical action, as Anthony had done so for her own generation. The lack of attention or effort in educating women in the world of partisan politics by Catt and her supporters before they were enfranchised, might suggest a lack of awareness that women were about to enter the male dominated sphere or indeed that women were not about to achieve instant political equality.\textsuperscript{18} Yet it also allows for the development of a new theory, that the conservative ideology that Catt constructed around the woman suffrage issue in order to give the movement both respectability and credibility, also restricted her ability to offer political education for women. Through the establishment of an educational programme for women about to enter the political world, Catt would have highlighted that woman suffrage inevitably allowed women to step beyond their traditional boundaries into the male sphere as Stanton had suggested, rather than as a means by which women would expand their own realm. Catt’s connection to Stanton would have been exposed by Catt’s inadvertent acknowledgement of the inherently masculine nature of the right to

\textsuperscript{18} Carrie Chapman Catt, *Political Parties and Women Voters*, Address delivered to the Congress of the League of Women Voters, Chicago. [n.p.] 1920, History of Women Microfilm, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, reel 950, no. 9181. It is interesting to highlight that while Catt campaigned vigorously for the vote for women she did not establish an educational programme for women on political parties and voting to prepare women for the ballot until after the Nineteen Amendment had been ratified. Once she had created this new organisation she transferred its control to the younger generation.
vote, and her own role in seeking to give women access to this instrument for
change would have illuminated the radical nature of her actions as one of the heirs
of Stanton's legacy. Although Catt never set up such an educational forum for
women while she campaigned for woman suffrage, her lack of action reflects her
awareness that the vote remained a radical issue.

Catt's recognition of the fundamental significance of woman suffrage only
becomes apparent after the passage of the nineteenth amendment in 1920, when she
acted to establish an organisation to educate women on political parties and voting,
the League of Women Voters. Although the League of Women Voters had been
first mentioned by Catt as early as 1917 at the Convention of the National Woman
Suffrage Association, Catt had made it clear that it would only be established as an
organisation upon the enfranchisement of women, with the resulting disbandment
of the NAWSA.\textsuperscript{19} Catt's delayed effort to introduce women to the reality of the
significance of the vote, illustrates her hesitation to draw attention to the inherently
radical nature of woman suffrage, and her belief that women did need to be
informed how to use the vote as it did represent their entrance into the male sphere.
The League of Women Voters was as Catt had remarked intended to "finish the
fight and to aid in the reconstruction of the nation," after woman suffrage had been
granted. If it had been established at the same time as the NAWSA it would have
revealed Catt's own recognition that the vote would have been limited in its
effectiveness.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 684.
Carrie Chapman Catt first attended a women’s rights convention in Washington D.C. in February 1890, as a member of the Iowa delegation. She had begun her active work for suffrage in 1885 when she had attended local conventions. Catt’s presence in the women’s rights movement is indicative of Anthony’s success in creating a strong national movement that attracted support. Again it must be recorded that the early strength of the women’s rights cause hinged on the ideological work of Stanton. While there is little evidence from Catt that makes the correlation between her role in the woman’s suffrage movement and her exposure to the direct and indirect influences of Stanton’s legacy, such a notion should still be explored.²¹

Catt was not only a product of the new era she also shaped the suffrage movement to mirror the current climate against the vote. The 1890 Washington D.C. convention, stands out not because of Catt’s presence, but due to the fact that this was the first time since the split of the women’s rights movement in 1869 and the creation of two organisations under the umbrella title of women’s rights (the AWSA and the NWSA), that the two sides were reunited under the presidency of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.²² The resulting development of a new organisation (NAWSA) revealed the establishment of a women’s rights movement that would be totally devoted to the battle for suffrage, as Catt identified it was “very plain that the chief fight is now.”²³ Catt would eventually take her place as the President of

²¹ See McCulloch Chapter for examples of the direct and indirect influences on women in the Mid-West.

²² Mary Gray Peck, Carrie Chapman Catt A Biography (New York, 1944). pp.53-57

NAWSA, emerging as the leader who would build a successful political suffrage campaign on the foundation that the "sentiments" that Stanton's legacy had provided, by redefining the movement to reflect the conservative politics of the period.24 Catt’s 1901 speech at the annual suffrage convention highlights that she recognised the political tone that the woman’s movement faced as it tried to find a political party to place woman suffrage on their agenda, hinting at the future direction that she would take the NAWSA in:

Although the conservatism of political parties does not offer much encouragement to its continuance, yet the conviction of every believer in woman’s suffrage gives prophetic knowledge that the time will come when some great, successful political party will be able to write the enfranchisement of women in its platform.25

At the 1890 Washington Convention, Catt first encountered Stanton and her daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch, unaware of the tensions that would eventually develop between her and Blatch over Stanton’s place in the woman suffrage movement.26 Catt would accomplish what Blatch considered to be her legacy from Stanton; Catt had finally given women the right to vote by the passage of a Constitutional Amendment that had been first presented by Stanton and Anthony in 1878. Catt’s success led to the establishment of a lasting historical link between Stanton, the vote, and the preservation of Stanton’s connection with NAWSA. At the same time Catt’s success also joined Catt and Stanton together. Blatch’s discontentment was increasingly provoked when she witnessed the acclaim that Catt acquired as the leader of a successful campaign for suffrage. Blatch’s belief

26 Peck, Carrie Chapman Catt, p.58.
that she deserved credit for her role in enabling women to vote is linked to her need
to shape her own legacy in connection to that of her mother. Blatch failed to realise
that Catt reflected both the fulfilment of one of Stanton's key demands while at the
same time altering how she would be historically received by future generations.

The membership of the NAWSA was organised on the acceptance that the
enfranchisement of women would be the sole woman's issue.27 By 1890, the two
separate women's rights organisations agreed to abandon all ideas that were not
connected to the demand for suffrage. Stanton's ideology, that attacked all aspects
of inequality for women, no longer directed the organised women's rights
movement. Although this development lends itself to a new theory that should be
explored further, that Stanton's ideology led to the establishment of an informal
movement of women who were not tied to any one reform association, but were
still exposed to Stanton’s broad vision of equality for women. Such a vision of
Stanton’s legacy should be considered in the context of Catt’s remarks concerning
the emergence of feminism, as she described it as a “world-wide revolt against all
artificial barriers which laws and customs interpose between women and human
freedom...an evolution, like enlightenment and democracy” with “no
organisation.”28 The question emerges to what extent was this a new direction for
the women’s movement, and was the resulting rejection of Stanton evidence of the
change?

27 Fowler, Carrie Catt, p11.
28 “Mrs. Catt on Feminism,” Woman's Journal, 9 Jan 1912, p.12, History of Woman Suffrage, reel
198.
Catt deliberately shaped NAWSA to appear less radical. In support of the view that Catt had to redirect the women’s rights movement in a more conservative direction as a necessity “in order to appeal to popular opinion.”

Catt’s decisions reflect her commitment to the success of the women’s movement as well as supporting the suffrage goal. Stanton as a symbol of the earlier pioneer radicalism was apparently rejected in favour of the movement, as Catt worked to shape a winning plan to achieve Stanton’s call for woman suffrage. In order to gain acceptability and success for the suffrage battle, Catt understood that her loyalty would be to the NAWSA and in a lesson learned from past incidents, she worked to remove the taint of radicalism from the suffrage issue.

Surprisingly, evidence of Catt’s condemnation of the “queer folk” that entered the suffrage world is evident in her review of the autobiography of Lucy Stone: Pioneer of Woman’s Rights. In her review, Catt criticised the author of the text for paying too much attention to those events or people that she felt did not add any historical importance to the women’s rights movement. Naming particular events and individuals such as ‘Victoria Woodhull’ and the ‘Beecher-Tilton Scandal’, Catt added the telling comment that the real history of the suffrage movement should not focus on “the curious behavior of chance droppers-in which sometimes perturbed the judgement of leaders.”

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30 Earlier scandals that had been associated with NWSA were the Train and Woodhull controversies. Part of Catt’s effort to remove the taint of radicalism is reflected in her efforts to link suffrage and temperance issues together. See Carrie Chapman Catt, “Our Real Enemy,” History of Women microfilm, reel 950.


the links of scandal, Catt reconfirmed this assumption as she chose to distance herself from any scandal in her effort to de-radicalise the image of the woman suffrage movement.

Stanton acknowledged that she believed that she was more progressive than the new leaders of NAWSA that succeeded her, revealing her failure to appreciate her own role in this shift of focus onto the single issue of suffrage. After Stanton perceived she had lost the ballot to the newly freed African Americans, the suffrage issue became a "mythic" sized legacy with all of Stanton's goals linked to the demand for the vote. Against this backdrop, the ballot became a symbol that the next generation were taught to focus on.\(^{33}\) In 1848, Stanton had entwined her demand for the vote, an obvious challenge to the traditional role of women, with Republican ideology. Recognising that the Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution had defined citizenship of the Republic by the possession of the ballot, Stanton's claim for woman suffrage was based on her belief that without enfranchisement, women did not possess the full rights of citizenship. The passage of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendment led her to the conclusion that without representation, women were not true citizens of the Republic and that their lack of political power was indicative of the larger problem, the inequality between men and women in the United States.

Stanton's ideological vision for women was shaped in reaction to her belief in the founding principle of the Unites States, equality. Her commitment to her this

basic principle had earlier led Stanton to form an alliance with the Republican Party and a shared commitment with the abolitionist movement to fight for universal suffrage. However, the decision of the majority of the abolitionists and the Republican Party to support the vote for freed male slaves rather than women was viewed by Stanton as disloyalty. The perception of this “Republican Betrayal,” led Stanton and Anthony to use the vote to represent the broader inequality that they were attacking throughout their long careers. As one political scientist reflected “the ballot” became “a symbol of all grievances demanding redress and the possession of it as a symbol of all things hoped for.”

As the younger generations joined the women’s rights movement, they were exposed to Stanton’s and Anthony’s apparently non-stop effort to win the battle for woman suffrage. These new members increasingly thought of the vote as the key objective, a fact that appeared to be supported by the historical accounts of the Convention at Seneca Falls and Stanton’s role in demanding the vote for women. As the bid for the ballot went on over an extended period, the perception grew that the vote would be the instant solution to the problem of inequality, effectively heightening its importance in the women’s rights movement. Stanton was in the paradoxical position of apparently narrowing her own broad goals to woman suffrage by her own efforts to win equality for women. Catt in this context was therefore working within the boundary of the legacy that she inherited from

34 Young, “Women’s Place in American Politics: The Historical Perspective,” pp.295-335
35 Ibid.
Stanton, shaping the women’s rights movement to attract the support of the “American Man” whose political voice was key to the goal of woman suffrage.36

In the Declaration of Sentiments Stanton had demanded that women should be enfranchised; yet initially for her the vote had been one of many areas targeted for reform to enable women to achieve equality. Stanton had suggested that it was not the lack of the vote alone that acted to restrict the lives of women. She had long since felt that the Church and the Bible were the main obstacles keeping women in positions of subordination.37 This belief that organised religion and the Bible placed restraints on women would result in Stanton’s condemnation by her successors as a radical. As the Chairman of the “Organization Committee” (1895-1900), Catt would take on the role of representing the “conservative” ideas of the younger women in the women’s rights movement as they voiced their concerns over the publication of Stanton’s The Woman’s Bible. Catt passed the resolution that denied any connection of NAWSA with Stanton’s work.38 Catt justified her actions by acknowledging that those that worked for the enfranchisement of women had been attacked, so they did not want to be associated with the publication of Stanton’s book for fear of adding fuel to this criticism.39 Catt’s strategy was designed to

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36 Although the tactics of the two women were very different, Stanton had long since acknowledged the need to gain the support of the American Man as a political force in the effort to enfranchise women. See Letter from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 28 August 1884, in Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and reminiscences, vol.2, Harriot Stanton Blatch and Theodore Stanton, eds, pp.219-220. While Stanton believed in agitation to attract support, Catt believed in reshaping the movement to appear as conservative and non-threatening as possible to attract political support on a large scale.


38 Mary Gray Peck, Carrie Chapman Catt A Biography, (New York, 1944), pp.85-87

39 The fact that Catt would be attacked years after the publication for her supposed involvement in the revising committee of Stanton’s Woman’s Bible supports her actions. For one example of the criticism that Catt received see Anonymous, “Another catt-tale” The woman patriot : dedicated to
neutralise the lack of popularity that surrounded the women’s rights movement that she had inherited, so that it might finally succeed in enfranchising women. It would be this sentiment that would lead the woman’s movement to make the statement that Stanton spoke as an individual and not for the entire women’s rights movement on the topic of religion and women. The action taken by Catt to distance the women’s movement from its original leader would not be the end of Catt’s and Stanton’s interaction. Catt attended, at Stanton’s request, a debate on educational qualification on suffrage since Stanton’s own daughter Blatch had opposing views to her mother. Interestingly, Catt was not given the chance to discuss any of her own ideas at this meeting but the meeting itself suggests that Stanton respected Catt’s actions as a strategy rather than as a personal attack.

After Stanton died in October 1902, Catt spoke out at her memorial service identifying what she felt to be some of Stanton’s traits, “She met personal attacks with patience, ridicule with tolerance, argument with argument.” again highlighting a lack of animosity.

Catt had clearly led the way for the split between the NAWSA and Stanton, yet it would be wrong to imply that she had no views on the broader topics that

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*the defense of womanhood, motherhood, the family and the state, against suffragism, feminism, and socialism, Vol.4, issue.2, (Washington D.C.), Dec 1932.*

40 Catt made the statement when she took over the leader of the NAWSA that “compared with the work of prohibition, always remembering ours is the more unpopular.” Letter from Carrie Chapman Catt, September 1890, in *The life and Work of Susan B. Anthony: Including Public Addresses, Her Own Letters and Many from her Contemporaries During Fifty Years*, vol. 2. Ida Hustered Harper ed. (Indianapolis, 1898), pp.693-694.

41 Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, p.88


43 Stanton Memorial Meeting, Presbyterian Bldg., 19 Nov 1902, incomplete manuscript, p.7, Carrie Chapman Catt papers, reel 7.
Stanton addressed, such as women and religion. Catt had merely separated the woman suffrage movement from Stanton's broad agenda for change, as she felt that by keeping the two connected it was damaging to the battle for woman suffrage. Stanton had held the belief since the 1840s that religious orthodoxy was threatening to radical reform. It was from this standpoint that Stanton began to attack the Judeo-Christian tradition throughout her career often using historical evidence and contemporary biblical criticism to support her viewpoint that the Bible reflected a hatred of women.\(^4^4\) One of the key suggestions that Stanton made was that women must re-examine their own religious beliefs to find out for themselves if there is anything "natural" about their subordinate position in society.\(^4^5\) This demand for women to reinterpret the Bible was something that did not go unheeded. While many women later rejected Stanton's radical viewpoint in *The Woman's Bible*, many women began to examine the Bible for justification for woman's suffrage.

Catt attempted to reinterpret one of the verses from the Bible that the anti-suffragists looked to, to support their views. In an essay written in 1890, Catt wrote that many passages from the Bible could not be applied literally to modern times and if they were they were totally misused. She goes on to state that in the case of Paul, his comments were about the institutions of his day and that in modern times with different customs he would not expect the same standards.\(^4^6\) In *The Woman's Century*, a speech presented to Sweet Briar College in 1936, Catt acknowledged

\(^4^4\) Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *The Woman's Bible* (1898; repr., 1993), pp.xix-xx.


\(^4^6\) Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890-1920*, p.88-89; Carrie Chapman Catt Papers 1887-1947, "Woman-Suffrage and the Bible," New York Public Library. This is the same time that she attends a Woman's Rights Convention.
that religion as well as the law acted to confine the lives of women.\textsuperscript{47} While never acknowledging that she had developed her views of such Biblical figures as Paul from Stanton, it is possible that Catt had to expand her vision of the constraints that prevented the equality of women after the vote failed to achieve equitability for women. Prior to the nineteenth amendment, Catt reflected the acceptance of her generation that the vote symbolised access to equal rights for women. That Catt later recognised that the vote had failed to grant women this opportunity is illuminated by her recognition that the lack of political rights was not the only factor that prevented women from claiming equality with men. This realisation connects Catt once more with Stanton's broad agenda for change and highlights that Stanton's objection to the sole focus on woman suffrage was justified.

In 1916, at the NAWSA convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Catt unveiled her "Winning Plan" to campaign simultaneously for suffrage on both the state and federal levels, and to compromise for partial suffrage in the states resisting change.\textsuperscript{48} Catt has been credited with the transformation of the NAWSA when she became its president, running it like an organised business with clear strategies and goals. Yet as early as 1885 at Stanton's eightieth birthday banquet sponsored by the National Council of Women, Stanton clearly defined her importance to the woman's movement by acknowledging her role for the ideology of suffrage, as she saluted "... the great idea I represent - the enfranchisement of women."\textsuperscript{49} Even

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{47} Carrie Chapman Catt, A Message to Sweet Briar College The Woman's Century 1820-1920, 9 June 1936, Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, Box 10, reel 8.

\item\textsuperscript{48} For an overview of Catt's work see Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/rnawsahtml/cattbio.html (Accessed January 2006).

\item\textsuperscript{49} Elisabeth Griffith, \textit{In Her Own Right The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton} (Oxford and New York, 1984), p.209
\end{footnotes}
while Stanton acknowledged her role in the new movement, she would never give up her broad platform of issues; her focus on the vote for women remained constant even while her strategies to achieve this goal would not.

It has been acknowledged that Stanton left behind no treatise summarising her ideologies other than *The Woman's Bible* and *The Declaration of Sentiments*, the problem presented by this was that the huge numbers of her speeches and other writings have a tendency to contradict each other. One of the key points that Stanton continued to present was that until women had access to the right to vote they would not be independent citizens in their own right. The *Solitude of Self* published in 1892 should be considered as one of Stanton’s most important speeches, presenting her ultimate arguments for women’s rights by offering her completed vision of what women needed to achieve in order to be fully functioning citizens. In the following extract, Catt makes a very similar statement in 1911, the key words of which reflect upon the need of the vote as a tool that would allow women to achieve equality:

This modern movement demands political rights for women. It demands a direct influence for women upon the legislation which concerns the common welfare of all people. It recognises the vote as the only dignified and honourable means of securing recognition of their needs and aspirations.

While it is easy to regard Stanton and Catt as being either radical or moderate, how their peers and historians perceive them both should be re-examined to reveal that these labels can be challenged. Catt and Stanton are described and viewed in

50 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, p.165

very similar terms by their followers. “A powerful and beloved matriarch and mother,” this statement is talking about Catt, however very similar descriptions of Stanton exist.\(^{52}\) Catt herself challenged how people viewed her by her confession that her public moderate image was false. Catt desired to create what she termed as “Pandemonium”, as she remarked to Mary Grey Peck “To you privately I will say that I can keep up with you in radicalism and if I should unleash myself I might outstrip you.”\(^{53}\) Catt’s actions did reflect a radicalism that might otherwise not be apparent. Her work on the suffrage campaign and her efforts to redefine and expand the public role of women highlights a dedication to the woman suffrage cause that is indicative of her extreme zeal and her growing dedication to the woman’s suffrage movement. Another piece of contradictory evidence that seems to cast doubt on the radicalism of Stanton suggested that on the lyceum circuit between 1870 and 1879 she was perceived as being “maternal, dignified, and eminently respectable.”\(^{54}\) Yet Stanton herself would again defend the view that she is a radical by noting in her diary “I get more radical as I get older, while [Anthony] seems to grow more conservative.”\(^{55}\) By recognising that Catt and Stanton both actively shaped the image that they presented in connection to the women’s rights movement, the importance of the radical and conservative labels take on new relevance as they are examined as deliberately constructed public personae that were connected to the agendas of the two women. As the self appointed pioneer it had suited Stanton to be viewed in revolutionary terms that cast her as breaking out

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\(^{52}\) Lillian Faderman, *To Believe in Women What Lesbians have done for America – A History*, (Boston and New York, 1999), p.65.


\(^{54}\) Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, p.163

\(^{55}\) Ibid., pp.194-5

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of the mould in a radical fashion by demanding that women should possess the right
to vote. As Stanton had recognised, her notoriety brought with it attention to the
women’s rights movement. In contrast, Catt cast herself as a new woman, an
educated professional woman who sought the vote to benefit society by including it
under her protective realm. As such, any hint of radicalism would have a negative
effect on the woman suffrage campaign that Catt had directed. The realisation that
both women engineered their images to reflect the interests of the period offers the
possibility that a continued strategy passed from Stanton to Catt.

When tracing Stanton’s ideas in relation to those that she influenced it would
be easier if Stanton’s ideas remained static. However, Stanton’s arguments are full
of contradictions. Stanton’s 1892 address *The Solitude of Self* presented a solid
example of the natural rights argument for woman suffrage based on the heritage of
the Declaration of Independence.\(^56\) Yet Stanton’s ideas do not remain solely
concentrated on the justice argument. To a certain extent, this reflects Stanton’s
adaptability and her ability to change her tactics to achieve her aim of granting
women equality. This would be one of the chief lessons that Stanton passed on to
subsequent generations, as they successful moulded her ideas to achieve their own
goals.

Stanton’s reasoning for the enfranchisement of women developed from the
claim for justice to the argument of expediency. One of her expediency arguments
cast the female vote as a source of protection from the ignorant voter. This was a
turn away from the demands of democracy to the articulation of ideas that appealed

to the men who women needed to support their cause, for it to gain any recognition in the political arena.\textsuperscript{57} Once again, this is not a static argument, what takes place is a shift from the concern of how the vote could help women on an individual basis, to how women using the vote can help the rest of society. Although the expediency argument would come to dominate the women's rights movement during the progressive era, the natural right argument was still presented by some suffragists. However, the expediency argument would emerge in a slightly different form, focusing on the special qualities that women would bring to the political world rather than the individual protective nature of the vote.

It was while the NAWSA was distancing itself from both radical issues and leaders that it also began to move away from the traditional association of women's rights and African Americans that had existed prior to the civil war, employing the use of racism to support their effort to gain the vote.\textsuperscript{58} Catt is often cited as being one of the many women who enlisted racism and xenophobia in defence of woman suffrage, her inheritance from the impact of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments. Her arguments clearly targeted those that she believed were too ignorant to use the vote wisely and indicates that she believed that the ignorant voters were easily corruptible:

This Government is menaced with great danger... That danger lies in the votes possessed by the males in the slums of the cities, and the ignorant foreign vote which was sought to be bought up by each party, to make political success... There is but one way to avert the danger - cut off the vote of the slums and give to woman, who is bound to suffer all, and more than man can, of the evils his legislation has brought upon

\textsuperscript{57} Kraditor, \textit{The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement}, p.53.

the nation, the power of protecting herself that man has secured for himself – the ballot.59

Catt clearly stressed that a woman, in order to protect herself and others from this "danger", needed to be granted the ballot so that she might use it wisely. Her words reflect the progressive movement's desire to improve society and Stanton's earlier sentiments of protection. Catt goes on to implore that the vote should be "in the hands of every person of sound mind in the nation," she is, of course, including women in this category stating that if any group should not be enfranchised it should be those that inhabit the "slums".60 In *The American Sovereign*, Catt once more stressed that immigrants through their ignorance were easily "controlled voters" for those that want to use these votes to their own political advantage.61 Again she points to women to supply the "intelligence and patriotism to outvote the slum influence" indeed she goes on to state that with women supplying these qualities to the electorate, American politics would be purified and that the Republic would continue to flourish.62

In Catt's continued attack on the ignorant man whose vote appears to be easily controlled, she like Stanton draws our attention to drunken men but Catt expanded on Stanton's vision, as she attacked the political machines that controlled these weak figures she highlighted that alcohol was the real enemy of society that women must protect against. Catt's desire is not to protect women from physical violence

62 Ibid.
suffered at the hands of a violent husband, rather she is building on Stanton’s earlier imagery to contrast the drunken ignorant men who were enfranchised with the white educated women who were denied the right to access the public arena. This is clearly illustrated when Catt sought to lay the failure of the New York Suffrage referendum at the hands of drunken men. Catt was continuing to build on a tradition of using popular images to present her argument. This image was used by Stanton with a slightly different focus yet the end result remained the same, the determination to win women the vote casting them in a superior role to men. Catt’s focus is to reveal women should be granted political equality because of their special moral characteristics.

The argument that the ignorant or foreign men had been granted the right to vote before women, the fact that their value as full citizens who possessed the right to vote was greater than many educated middle class white women angered Stanton and her supporters. Dating back to the 1848 conference at Seneca Falls, Stanton reflected on the fact that many white middle class women did not have any control over their own fates, while many less educated men did. Here is a clear example of an argument that continued to be used by the new leaders of the women’s rights movement in their effort to achieve the right to vote:

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 withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men--both natives and foreigners.

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The fact that the Declaration of Sentiments was first presented in 1848 and the language and ideologies that it presented appear to be repeated much later by Catt (and the next generation of women’s rights leaders) helps prove the impact of Stanton’s ideas on the next generation, even though they appeared to have rejected her for being radical. What should be considered is thanks to the introduction of the demand for the vote for women in 1848 by Stanton, the issue of enfranchising women was no longer thought of as being radical, therefore casting the next generation of women in a very different role to that of Stanton. One could make the statement that Stanton had remained radicalised while the vote had not or that she had succeeded in radicalising the next generation in accepting the bid for suffrage. While both of these views have their value, it is evident in the following extract that more women were finding the idea of female enfranchisement in certain circumstances more acceptable:

The idea of the most conservative of us- of what is womanly has changed. Even those timid souls who think it is unwomanly to cast our vote for mayor no longer think it is to cast a school vote, and gradually our idea of woman’s spheres is enlarging until soon we shall describe its limitlessness.65

While fighting for female enfranchisement, the woman’s suffrage movement had in fact embraced both radical and conservative elements that were used to justify the ballot as an appropriate tool for women. The demand for the vote for women remained a radical concept that directly challenged the traditional role of women. However, by linking the issue of woman suffrage to the temperance movement and utilising arguments that centred on the protective and moral force of

the female vote, a strong conservative element had been introduced to temper the radical demand. Against such a background a new generation of women were increasingly exposed to the notion that the female vote did not challenge the traditional role of women and was therefore a conservative demand. As Catt inherited and continued to fight for one of Stanton's key demands, the question that should be considered is whether she really thought of the vote as a conservative issue or if she acknowledged that she was pursuing a radical goal.

In Catt's second term as president of NAWSA she used intense lobbying in Washington, she also, according to Faderman, adopted the ploy of Anna Howard Shaw, reminding the country how important the actions of women were to the war effort.\(^6\) Employing the current political climate in the same way that Stanton had done earlier, Catt used the public war sentiment to reinforce her portrayal of how an illiterate man was a danger to society, again revealing how educated women were still being denied the vote.\(^7\) Her continued efforts to secure the vote for women even during the First World War reflect the frustration of her generation having fought for the battle so long, and a willingness to embrace any strategy in order to enfranchise women. Catt's willingness to campaign for woman suffrage during the war highlights her belief that Stanton and Anthony had made a mistake in cancelling their efforts for women's rights during the Civil War, and her ability to learn from their actions.

\(^6\) Faderman, *To Believe in Women*, p.68

The greatest division between the issues of sex and race occurred over the fifteenth Amendment. The discussion over the amendment would lead to the end of the traditional alliance between African Americans and white middle-class women, and to the split of the women's rights movement. This amendment acted to prevent voter discrimination based on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

Even while the fifteenth amendment was on the drafting board, Stanton was increasingly vocal through her publication, *The Revolution*, attacking the amendment for not granting universal suffrage. Stanton supported Susan B. Anthony's resolutions opposing the ratification of the fifteenth amendment and demanding educated suffrage. Stanton clearly stated her opinion when she wrote, "she did not believe in allowing ignorant Negroes and foreigners to make laws for her to obey." Again, the objections to the ignorant voter that Stanton promoted were later utilised by Catt and her generation of suffrage supporters in the NAWSA.

Catt had been politicised through the earlier experiences of Anthony and Stanton, as a result, Catt knew how to conduct a political campaign, this is one way in which she was much more skilled than Stanton. However, the political awareness that Catt possessed was reflective of Stanton's legacy.

Even though Stanton refused to be re-elected as the president of the NAWSA after 1892, she still kept herself involved in the women's rights movement by meeting with the younger members of the movement. She commented in her

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diary about a meeting with Carrie Chapman Catt and her husband.71 These meetings with the next generation of women, including Catt, continued even though Stanton had been rejected from the NAWSA due to the publication of the Woman's Bible.72 Catt picked up the reigns of leadership of the NAWSA determined to organise the suffrage movement into a successful campaign, her inherited legacy from Stanton. Catt’s ability to manage and achieve her campaign goal reflected the effective transmission of Stanton’s legacy on a broad scale. Although Catt would have objected to the view that her success was connected to the educational aspect of Stanton’s ideology and her radical challenge to the accepted position of women, without it Catt’s organisational talents would have been fruitless and the suffrage movement would have failed to flourish.

Catt continued the work of both Stanton and Anthony, as she represented the next stage in the journey for the enfranchisement of women. While this might seem like an obvious statement given that Catt reflected the younger generation who came into the movement, Catt remained unique in her ability to organise and redirect the movement’s ideology and direction. This was her radicalism, her single-minded focus on the suffrage issue and her total redesign of the movement to meet her key goal of suffrage. While initially it was Stanton and Anthony’s aim to gain attention for the women’s movement, thanks to their perceived radicalism by demanding the vote for women and their broad platform of women’s rights issues, it would fall to Catt to channel the notoriety they had captured. It would have been impossible for Catt to present her deliberately narrowed target of the vote for

71 Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York, 1922) vol. 2, p.312.
72 Ibid., p.356.
women without the foundations that Stanton had established. Without the exposure that Stanton had ensured for the women it would have been necessary for the conservative next generation to have taken on very different roles in the woman’s suffrage movement. The idea that Catt was the moderate after Stanton’s apparent radicalism therefore can be contended with the knowledge that Catt would not have been successful without building on the work of Stanton. The apparent divergence that existed between Catt and Stanton appeared to be one that was manufactured by Catt, as she battled to enfranchise women. In addition the perceptions of radicalism and conservatism are so ingrained when examining Stanton and the next generation of women involved in the women’s rights movement that misleading images of Stanton and Catt were presented, images that both women sought to shape for their own benefits. Overall this has resulted in a tendency to present the idea that a complete separation of ideologies had occurred rather than the continuation, the growth and the narrower focus on the single issue that would ultimately win the vote for women in Catt’s winning plan.

Chapter Nine
Harriot Stanton Blatch: Stanton’s Daughter
1856-1940

As the daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriot Stanton Blatch’s (1856-1940) link to the platform of woman suffrage would seem assured. As the historian Ellen DuBois theorised Blatch symbolized: “America’s most venerable feminist matrilineage, a living embodiment of the historical depth …of the women’s rights tradition.”¹ Her position as Stanton’s daughter directly connected her mother’s legacy as she emerged “eager to finish the work [that her] mother had begun.”² However, Blatch’s career as a suffrage leader in New York State demands the acknowledgement that she should also be viewed as a “virtual daughter” of the women’s rights movement, a representative of the college educated women that were shaped by the battles of the early women’s rights movement and who now dominated the organisation that Elizabeth Cady Stanton had initiated.³

The few historians that have highlighted Blatch’s contribution to the suffrage battle have cast her into a feminist role that appears at odds with the evidence; failing to fully explore the effect of Stanton’s impact on her daughter’s political agenda and her commitment to the suffrage platform.⁴ Blatch felt that her own role in the successful enfranchisement of women was obscured by Carrie

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⁴ One of the few authors who has paid attention to Harriot Stanton Blatch is Ellen Carol DuBois. DuBois, Harriot Stanton Blatch and the Winning of Woman Suffrage (New Haven and London, 1997).
Chapman Catt and the NAWSA. She resented Catt’s position as the leader of what she perceived to be her mother’s organisation (NAWSA) and the acclaim that Catt enjoyed as the celebrated leader who had led the woman’s suffrage movement to success. Blatch failed to fully appreciate that she was her mother’s true ideological heir and that she had also unknowingly recaptured the second aspect of her mother’s legacy in the new women’s organisations that she created. While recognising that Blatch is the key in the preservation of her mother’s dual legacy it is also important to appreciate that she represented the ideas and new directions utilised by the leaders of the women’s rights movement during this period. As a representative of the new leadership that has been credited with lifting the movement out of the ‘doldrums’ of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Blatch and others like her deserve further study especially in regard to recent assertions that cast this period as a “Suffrage Renaissance.” However while trying not to denigrate Blatch’s own importance on the suffrage stage this chapter endeavours to focus on Blatch solely as a vehicle for the development and perpetuation of her mother’s dual legacy.

Blatch spent her life being groomed to play a pivotal role in the women’s rights movement. In her memoirs, Blatch reflected on her birthright as Stanton’s daughter, to many the creator of the women’s movement. “I was born on January 20, 1856 to that great woman, born in the very cradle of the feminist movement, for it was in my native village of Seneca Falls, New York, that the first Woman’s

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Rights Convention of the world met in 1848."6 During her childhood, Blatch was encouraged to pursue the opportunities that Stanton herself had been denied; indeed Stanton’s daughters were shaped to support her views on the capacity of women as Stanton cast herself as the mother of a new generation of women. In a letter to her daughter Margaret, written while Stanton was on an extensive lecture tour, she asserted her maternal presence and the fact that she envisioned herself as the mother and guide of a whole new generation of women as she wrote: “that I am doing an immense amount of good in rousing women to thought and inspiring them with new hope and self-respect, that I am making the path smoother for you and Hattie all the other dear girls.”7

In 1862 the Stanton family moved to New York City, from this point onwards Blatch became increasingly connected to her mother’s reform work as Stanton and Anthony increasingly devoted themselves to the women’s rights cause at the Stanton home. In her memoirs Blatch illustrated the Anthony-Stanton dynamic as they worked for the women’s rights cause from the Stanton residence as she perceived Anthony’s presence in their lives as a signal that their mother would “be entirely engrossed in writing a speech for Anthony to deliver in some meeting, while she kept the children out of sight and out of mind.”8 Blatch went on to comment that “as the years rolled on,” her mother continued to write numerous lectures for Anthony to present in her mother’s stead.9 The Anthony-Stanton

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6 Blatch and Lutz, Challenging Years, p.4.
8 Blatch and Lutz, Challenging Years, pp.13-14.
relationship that Blatch and her siblings witnessed provided their first introduction to the reform arena. In 1868, the Stanton family moved again, this time to Tenafly, New Jersey. At a time when Stanton and Anthony were becoming more radical in their views, Stanton carefully crafted her daughter’s behaviour to reflect Harriot’s apparent growing ideological independence. In one episode concerning Stanton’s role in the Tilton-Beecher scandal, Stanton reported to Anthony that Harriot felt that her mother should tell the truth about her knowledge of the affair. The truth of the event is not as important as the fact that Stanton was constructing her daughter in her own image and asserting Blatch’s confidence to voice her opinions. Blatch’s sister reinforced her sister’s character, when she recorded that during her sister’s school attendance Blatch had rebelled against the idea of boys and girls playing separately. Blatch’s immediate reaction to the situation clearly casts her in the same mould as her mother, as identifying a situation of gender equality that needed to be acted upon and then action taken:

But Harriot Stanton had been brought up in the midst of men and boys who had a respect for petticoats—she had trotted on the knees of Garrison, Horace Greeley...Gerrit Smith, and her own father Henry Brewster Stanton, the distinguished Anti-slavery orator, she began gathering her books together and suddenly stood up and with blue eyes blazing with indignation said, “Mr. Ritchie, I am going to leave your school; I cannot stay in a place where petticoats are not considered as good as trousers.”

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12 Ibid.
Not only is this extract very similar in tone and contents to accounts of Stanton’s childhood in her *Reminiscences* it also connected Blatch directly to the reform movement. However, as maybe the mention of her father in association to the abolition movement indicates, Blatch had internally separated what she perceived to be her mother’s and her father’s spheres of influences over her. Blatch felt that her mother was concerned solely with woman’s issues while her father, Henry B. Stanton, in contrast was portrayed as being interested in politics on a broader scale as both an abolitionist and a participant on the political stage. Blatch demonstrated the political tutelage that she received from her father as she and her father discussed the 1876 presidential campaign and she recollected the reading that he advised for her concerning the Democratic Party.\(^{13}\) Blatch utilised the political education that she perceived that she had gained from her father to organise a Democratic Club at Vassar, which she was proud to claim “was the first time politics had crossed this higher institution of higher learning.”\(^{14}\) Due to her belief in the division of influences in her life, Blatch often commented on the fact that her interest in politics came from her father rather than her mother. However, it would be the infusion of Blatch’s political awareness that she gained from her experiences in England and inherited from both her parents that she would later use to stimulate the American woman suffrage movement.

When Stanton designed her intended vision of an expanded role of women, education was a key component. Her initial focus on an education for women centred on women’s “special duties,” but as she developed her view of education for women she demanded that women should have the right to attend colleges that

\(^{13}\) Blatch and Lutz, *Challenging Years*, pp.36-37.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p.38.
already existed so that women might possess not only the freedom to learn what they choose, but also have the ability to support themselves.\textsuperscript{15} Stanton’s writings and speeches reflected her belief that higher education was the key to future equality for women and the construction of an independent woman that she fully developed in her later work the \textit{Solitude of Self}. She argued that education for women was a necessary step if women were to be awarded the right to vote. In order for women to fully participate in society they needed to be equipped with an education and the right to vote to create a progressive society. Stanton recognised that such measures would lead women to become autonomous and to control their own roles in society. Stanton determined that women who were educated and enfranchised would have broader options than just the roles of wife or mother “to serve a higher purpose in life than she has heretofore known.”\textsuperscript{16} Stanton carefully crafted the position of girls to reflect her view on how they should be permitted to develop and the “equal place” they would hold with men “in the world of work, the colleges, in the state, in the church, and in the home.”\textsuperscript{17} She continued by remarking that a woman’s sphere was “no longer bound by the prejudices of a dead past, but her capacity to go wherever she can stand. A … girl is to be an independent, self-supporting being.”\textsuperscript{18}


\textsuperscript{17} There are more than one version of the “Our Girls” lecture for two versions see Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Our Girls,” 1872, Elizabeth Cady Stanton papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D. C., reel 4; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Our Girls,” (Winter 1880), in \textit{Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony}, series 3, reel 21.

Stanton’s focus on the independence of women is made visible and through her influence, her daughters were shaped according to her ideology. One of the most lasting legacies that Blatch inherited from her mother was the desire and the ability to achieve self sovereignty. Stanton had been denied the opportunity to pursue higher education that her brother had been allowed, and she was determined that her daughters would not be so restricted in their choices. Stanton ensured that Blatch was equipped with the education and ideological background that she felt was necessary for women to break out of their traditionally restrictive spheres. Stanton’s actions were part of her continuing battle for the women’s rights movement, but she also propelled Blatch and the generation that she represented into place as her heirs in the continuing conflict for women’s equality.

Blatch received the college education that Stanton had desired, graduating from Vassar College in June 1878, one of the first generations of women to receive a college education. Yet the importance of education as an arena of discrimination would not be fully presented to Blatch until 1881, when the Ecole Libres des Sciences Politiques (School of Political Economy) in Paris turned down her application to study. A year later when Blatch was back in the United States speaking before a women’s rights meeting, she acknowledged that this was the first time that the limited achievements of her mother’s generation of women in the pursuit of equality became apparent as she felt that her sex had blocked her aspirations.19 Through Blatch’s ideological training from Stanton and the education that she received, Blatch had witnessed an act of discrimination that her heritage could not let her ignore. Evidence of a pattern of a duality of influence in Blatch’s

life emerged, as she was shaped by her own key life events and her reactions to a certain extent were predetermined by her mother's training. Throughout her lifetime Blatch's emerging political agenda and ideology would be shaped by her mother's influence.

Stanton did not just use education as a means of broadening the sphere of women. The education of women was also utilised for claiming the vote for women over that of an ignorant "Negro" voter when it became apparent that African Americans would be enfranchised before women. During a NAWSA Convention held in Atlanta in 1895, making a speech trying to rally the white southern politicians into supporting the suffrage cause; Stanton repeated her concern about the danger of placing the vote in the hands of the illiterate. During her public career Blatch would draw from Stanton's experience despite a public rejection of her mother's views, offering similar elitist views based on the issue of class rather than race. Blatch shared the common view of many elite women in the search for the vote that they as "educated women" would set an example for other members of their sex to follow and that they should be granted the right to vote. When the women suffrage amendment failed to pass the New York legislature in 1915 and Blatch turned her attention to gaining a Federal Amendment she stressed the main argument for such a measure "was that in winning it the women of the United States would not have to appeal for their fundamental rights to every foreigner newly arrived on our shores," once again revealing her elitist legacy. Stanton's

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stance against the illiterate or the foreign voter and her advocation of an educated
universal suffrage qualification eventually led her to speak out against members of
her own sex, blocking their effort to become enfranchised. As Stanton wrote to
Anthony “one of the greatest objections to woman suffrage today is ‘that it would
double the ignorant vote.’ We should have a constitutional amendment requiring an
educational qualification. We need to throw some dignity and sacredness around the
ballot box; it seems unwise to give all classes of humanity…a voice in the
government.” Under this kind of qualified voter strategy many African American
women would have never gained the right to vote. In contrast to her mother, Blatch
was one of the New York Suffrage leaders that supported African American
participation.24

Blatch’s support of the rights of African Americans reveals the impact of
her father’s involvement in the abolitionist movement and the political legacy that
she felt that she had inherited from him rather than her mother. Henry B. Stanton’s
fame as an abolitionist has been neglected, however his peers celebrated his
abilities as an abolitionist orator. “His oratorical powers were remarkable. He could
lift, move, and control an audience to suit his will. In the whole body of apostles of
freedom not one was better known, better liked, or more effective than he.”25
Regardless of Blatch’s own belief, a legacy of ‘nativism’ had been passed on from
mother to daughter. The African American did have Blatch’s full support. She

23 Woman’s Tribune, vol.14, no.6, (Feb 15, 1902) quoted in Ellen Carol Dubois ed., The Elizabeth
Cady Stanton- Susan B. Anthony Reader (Boston, 1992), pp.296-297.

24 Penn, African American Women, p.123.

targeted the unassimilated Europeans who had flocked into America. When the passage of a woman suffrage proposal in New York began to look increasingly possible, those who watched for its passage began to recognise that the immigrant wives of American citizens would be allowed to vote without naturalisation. The fact that under American law a wife’s status of citizenship followed that of her husband had been an area of contention for Blatch when she had lost her claim to citizenship. Yet in 1911 when it came to giving these European immigrants the vote, Blatch was vocal in her demand to have the proposal modified, to include a request for a separate naturalisation process for the wives of US citizens.  

This was a clear reaction to the possibility of creating an “ignorant voter”. The bill that Blatch passed onto the New York Legislature for consideration contained the qualification “that a citizen by marriage shall have been an inhabitant of the United States for five years.”

Blatch had the pressure of being one of the first high profile second-generation feminists. Aspirations were high as Stanton tried to push her daughter to the forefront of the movement in New York, urging her to make use of her “eloquence” and encouraging her to “build up a successful association in this city.” Certain events during Blatch’s life highlighted her struggle to gain independence of her own ideological identity in the face of her mother’s demands.

Stanton’s desire to have her daughter tour with her after she had graduated from

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28 Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony, 15 Sept. 1902, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, reel 1.
Vassar and her insistence that Blatch also attend a year at the Boston School of Oratory to prepare her for the lecture circuit, had left Blatch “puzzled about the future” as she remarked that, “no one had given a moment’s consideration to the place I was suited to fill.” However, Blatch’s ‘place’ on the women’s rights stage had been predetermined by Stanton’s influence as she engineered Blatch’s future role to be a part of her legacy. Furthermore when Blatch sought advice for her future from outside sources she was encouraged to seek out her mother’s guidance on the subject. Blatch was groomed to continue her mother’s dual legacy, yet ironically a key part of the training that Stanton provided fostered Blatch’s search for independence that challenged the ideology that she inherited.

In the case of the *History of Women Suffrage*, Blatch was allotted the task of writing an account of the American Woman’s Suffrage Association (AWSA). The task of writing for the “enemy” gave Blatch a huge sense of freedom from her mother and essentially she was encouraged to develop and write about her own conclusions. The writing of the *History of Woman Suffrage* proved to be a turning point in the relationship between Stanton and her daughter. For Stanton this was the time when she acknowledged that increasingly her interests spread beyond the field of suffrage that her long-term suffrage partner, Anthony, seemed content to focus upon. In her reminiscences Stanton sought to justify her decision to distance herself from Anthony and the suffrage movement due to the fact that Blatch wanted her to travel to Europe with her. “All through the winter Miss Anthony and I worked diligently on the History. My daughter Harriot came from Europe in February,

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29 Blatch and Lutz, *Challenging Years*, p.45.

30 Ibid., p.46.
determined that I should return with her.... Having worked diligently through nearly two years on the second volume of "The History of Woman Suffrage." I looked forward with pleasure to a rest ... beyond the reach and sound of my beloved Susan and the woman suffrage movement."31 This would prove to be the beginning of over a year long trip throughout Europe by Stanton and her daughter. During this time away from the United States, Harriot Stanton would marry an Englishman, William H. Blatch (November 1882) and give birth to a daughter Nora Stanton Blatch (September 30 1883). Ironically it was this union that provided Blatch with the reason for remaining in England and exposed her to the strategies of the English militant suffragist that she would use on the American suffrage stage. However, Blatch’s marriage would also result in the denial of her rights as an American citizen and halted her search for self-sovereignty. Matrimony for Blatch had resulted in the demise of a key part of her identity through her loss of civil rights and of her American citizenship.

Stanton’s bid for woman suffrage was linked to her effort to help women to achieve equality with men. For Stanton the lack of political voice for women revealed a lack of independence and control over their lives, these beliefs drove her forward in her quest for equality. Stanton identified marriage as one of the fundamental inhibitors of women in a variety of lectures, her daughter was exposed to these statements but she was also directly exposed to the limitations that marriage could impose on women. In Blatch’s situation, marriage had effectively denied her any possibility of being considered an independent citizen. Harriot’s marriage to William H. Blatch, an Englishman, had stripped her of the right to be an

31 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More: Reminiscences 1815-1897 (Boston, 199) pp.336-337.
American Citizen—she would be considered an alien until her husband’s death when she quickly reclaimed her citizenship. The issue of citizenship would have not been such a subject of concern, if the same policy were in place for American men marrying other nationalities. However as Blatch had noted, her own brother had married a French citizen and he was still considered an American with no loss of citizenship. The idea that she was not a citizen would have ramifications on her life in England but also on her identity as a political woman. Blatch recognised that through marriage she had lost her independent identity, her “birthright” to the American suffrage movement. Her mother’s words from 1848 were still true for Blatch’s generation and for both English and American women, that once a woman married she became to the law “civilly dead”. From Stanton to Blatch this would still remain an issue of concern that they would spend their lives trying to redress this apparent inequality.

Stanton had shaped her daughter’s areas of interests to echo her own. Blatch like Stanton was concerned with the notion of the limitations imposed by the concept of a woman’s sphere and she became occupied with the need to combine the public and private lives of women. Blatch’s areas of contemplation remained close to her mother’s ideological trail as she focused on the problems of married women. She revealed an inherited awareness of the problems of women and their need to nurture themselves as individuals, while at the same time maintaining their responsibilities to their family. Stanton’s ideas had been transferred to Blatch who

32 Harriot Stanton Blatch to Susan B. Anthony, Woman’s Tribune, April 1887; Dubois, Harriot Stanton, (New Haven and London, 1997), p.65

placed her mother’s ideology against the backdrop of the modern era. As her mother had done before her, Blatch successfully shaped her views to reflect the generational concerns of her peers, becoming in many ways the representative of the new college educated women that shared her lack of direction.

In one of her most famous works *Voluntary Motherhood*, Blatch shared her mother’s stance that women should be able to choose their own function in society, as revealed in her continued focus on the issue of Motherhood. Blatch’s own ideological independence had been shaped by Stanton and now Blatch endeavoured to expand her mother’s vision as she battled for her peers to have the right to control their own bodies. Blatch was resolute in her conviction that women should have the right and the ability to control the size of their families to ensure the development of the human race. Her argument centred on the belief that motherhood was a special career that nature has chosen for women and as such the role of women would be damaged if women’s “authority” or “responsibility” was limited unnaturally, the final conclusion of her argument was that women needed to be granted more freedom to shape society not less. Blatch wanted mothers to be glorified and to be given what she termed as a “motherhood endowment”, to grant women economic freedom by receiving a State funded salary for mothers. The financial independence that Blatch wanted for women clearly reflects her mother’s

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35 Ibid.
call for "self sovereignty", as Blatch called for legislation to secure for "woman her fair share of the family income and giving her absolute right to her children."\textsuperscript{36}

Blatch revealed her mother's interests in creating an autonomous woman when she demanded that women should have access to topics, including family planning that would broaden their realm of choices. She called for "all discrimination in the law...all laws forbidding to women information on questions of child-bearing and contraception" to be abolished.\textsuperscript{37} Blatch successfully adapted her mother's ideology of the individual and natural rights and linked it to her own concept of the economic contribution of women to create a modern political doctrine. Blatch expanded her mother's ideas of women's right of ownership of self, by linking them to her generation's controversies, such as the debate over contraception information. In doing so she sought to expand women's role in society and battled to strengthen her mother's achievements.\textsuperscript{38} Blatch's acceptance of the contraceptive battle reflected her inheritance of her mother's broad range of social concerns and placed her at odds with other factions of the woman suffrage movement. The National Woman's Party (NWP) which refused to support debates on family planning as it weakened its "singleness of purpose" that "makes for strength and for the speedy achievement" of the enfranchisement of women, provides one example of the single-minded focus on the suffrage battle that

\textsuperscript{36} Blatch "Voluntary Motherhood," reprinted in \textit{Up From the Pedestal}, Editor Aileen S. Kraditor, pp.167-175

\textsuperscript{37} Blatch and Lutz, \textit{Challenging Years}, p.333-334

\textsuperscript{38} Margaret Sanger was arrested under the Comstock Laws for distributing material on family planning for women.
Blatch's views paralleled the views of the birth control advocate Margaret Sanger, when she asserted that the use of "responsible parenthood" would solve the problem of the rising taxes in America that maintained "an increasing race of morons." Inherent in this statement is the vision of a better citizen that would emerge if women enjoyed greater freedom in society, that both Blatch and Stanton advocated.

Blatch's life experience led to the evolution of the ideology that she had inherited from her mother. The link that existed between the English and American women's movements can be traced back to the Abolitionist convention in London in 1840 and the meeting between Mott and Stanton. Stanton and Blatch reconfirmed the transatlantic connection when they travelled to Europe together. Stanton emerged at this time as not only a literal and figurative mother to Blatch, but also to the women's rights movement on both sides of the Atlantic. By meeting with women such as Frances Power Cobbe, Stanton was exposed to the ideas of the British women who were concerned with the woman's question in England. It was through this connection that Blatch was drawn into a network that exposed her own ideological beliefs, drawn from those of Stanton to new influences that would shape her legacy further.


41 Margaret H. McFadden, *Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth Century Feminism* (Kentucky, 1999), p145.

42 Ibid., p146-147, 168, 189; Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp.362-3.
During her time in England, Blatch took her mother's ideas in a new direction as she examined the issues of class and suffrage together, exploring how the two were related. She recognised that working class women combined their public and private lives out of economic necessity. Unlike her mother, whose views reflected those of many middle-class American women, Blatch’s time in England resulted in her appreciation that the middle-class women and working-class women should have a reciprocal educational existence, in helping each other they would become enfranchised sooner. Under Stanton’s guidance the membership of those involved in the women’s movement in the United States had been primarily white middle-class members. A brief early attempt at an alliance with the “labor movement” had failed and then the working classes were mainly ignored. Blatch believed the resulting focus on white middle-class women restricted the possible success of the women’s rights movement. In apparent contrast to her mother’s views she accepted that a cross section of women would be more successful in securing the vote than middle class women alone would ever be. Despite the fact that Blatch had initially believed the notion of educated women leading the way for other women, she spoke out against her mother’s call to limit the democratic participation of the working classes as “ignorant voters”. Blatch felt that like women, the working classes, both men and women “needed” the vote to protect them. As she noted the words of a working class woman, Mrs. Clara Silver: revealing Blatch’s redirection of her mother’s ideas:

We working women are often told that we should stay at home and then everything would be alright. But we can’t stay at home. We have to get out and work. I lost my husband...I had to go back to my trade to keep the family together. Gentlemen, we need every help to fight the battle of life, and to be left out by the State just sets up a prejudice against

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43 DuBois, Harriot Stanton Blatch, pp.60-61.
Her focus on working women would lead Blatch in a different direction from her mother, yet Blatch’s path led her to the modern world of feminism. Increasingly Blatch identified work for women as a means for emancipation and that the elite women should follow the example set out for them by the traditional working classes.  

In England as in America an early effort to secure the vote for women was defeated, in the form of the reform bill passed in 1884. During her time in England, Blatch was increasingly involved in the fight for British Suffrage. Blatch’s personal connection to the British suffrage movement in the form of the Equality Franchise Committee led to her acquaintance with the radical Suffragette family, the Pankhursts. In her memoirs, Blatch focused on revealing her growing political awareness and her connection with the militant suffragists in England when she linked both the Women’s Social and Political Union and the Women’s Political Union to the Committee that she and Emmeline Pankhurst had served on in England. In her Reminiscences, Stanton acknowledged both her and Blatch’s presence in England when she recorded that in October 1887 her daughter “Hattie”

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44 Harriot Stanton Blatch ed. Appearance at Suffrage Hearing of Industrial Women under Equality League, Two Speeches by Industrial Women, 6 Feb., 1907, Harriot Stanton Blatch Papers, reel 1, container 1.


46 Dubois, Harriot Stanton Blatch, pp.62-3.

47 Blatch and Lutz, Challenging Years, p.73.

48 Ibid.
attended a meeting to form a Woman’s Liberal Federation.\textsuperscript{49} Stanton’s comments on the double standard of the Liberal Party which encouraged women to work to create support for them, while they had denied women any political rights for twenty years, revealed an awareness of partisan politics that she and Blatch would share as they were both exposed to the political situation in England. Stanton reveals further that the Conservatives were also interested in obtaining the help of women in the political arena.\textsuperscript{50} Stanton’s discussion of the political situation in England highlights her awareness of the parallel situation that existed in the United States with the Democratic and Republican Parties vying for the support of women. In Stanton’s construction of her daughter’s ideological identity it would be unlikely that they would not discuss the political world that they witnessed in England. It would be this construction of a political identity that Blatch would bring into the Woman’s Suffrage Movement in the United States.

In 1902 the Blatch family moved from England back to the United States where Blatch became increasingly involved in the woman suffrage movement. Blatch was acting on her heritage of radicalism, which had passed between mother and daughter. Blatch was raised by Stanton to be independent in her outlook and to challenge what was not working or what was perceived as tradition. The combination of these beliefs and Blatch’s exposure to the new style of militant action that had emerged in Great Britain, allowed her to lead the American movement in a whole new political direction and would also encourage her to expand their tactics.

\textsuperscript{49} Stanton, \textit{Eighty Years and More}, pp.397-398.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
Historically, Blatch has been recognised as being one of the most dynamic women involved in the bid for the vote, in one of the key states, New York.\textsuperscript{51} Blatch earned her fame mainly through her use of the British tactic of Suffrage Parades that intended to awaken "hundreds of women" to the cause of women's rights and attracted additional attention to the suffrage cause "far and wide."\textsuperscript{52} At the time her use of public parades was so controversial that Blatch claimed that the NAWSA had criticised her activities as they felt that a "parade would set suffrage back fifty years."\textsuperscript{53} However, Blatch felt compelled to re-direct the women's rights movement to fulfil Stanton's bid for the vote. Blatch's return to New York highlighted that the suffrage movement was in a "rut" and it had to "organize, organize, and organize to the end of educating, educating, and educating."\textsuperscript{54} As she saw it her mother's radical and original idea had been lost in outdated methods of trying to win the vote. As Blatch wrote in her memoirs "A vital idea had been smothered by uninspired methods of work."\textsuperscript{55} In one sense Blatch was clearly embracing her mother's ideas while utilising her experience in England to help her develop new strategies for the American movement. Although Blatch would witness the developing militant style that was emerging in Great Britain, she did not encourage the use of violence in the United States. Blatch was politically aware that such militant tactics would alienate support for the enfranchisement of women. Indeed Blatch really only directly viewed the early stages of militancy, even though

\textsuperscript{51} Flexner and Fitzpatrick, Century of Struggle, p.242.
\textsuperscript{52} Blatch and Lutz, Challenging Years, p.129.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p.129.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p.92.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p.93.
through the link between the British and American woman's movements she remained connected to the leaders of the radical British suffrage movement, the Pankhursts.

During Stanton's leadership of the woman's movement it had focused on achieving a federal amendment to enfranchise women. The following generation had abandoned this scheme and focused on the state level to achieve change. Blatch would be one of the leaders that linked the process of federal and state action together. The belief was that the success at state level, if well organized, could be utilised to force a constitutional amendment. In Blatch's own words if women had been enfranchised at the state level they could use their votes as "levers in bringing pressure on congress."56 This view would allow Blatch to become excited, as young militant leaders began to rise through the ranks of the suffrage movement, in particular one English trained American, Alice Paul, who became increasingly focused on the prospect of gaining a federal amendment. "Now, with young leaders of promise in Washington trained in the Pankhurst school of dramatic direct action it looked as if things were going to happen."57 Yet even before women were successful in gaining the vote, Blatch, like her mother, was becoming more interested in a broad arena of concerns in the lives of women. It would be this issue and her link to militants such as Paul, which would deny Blatch the key position of leadership that her mother had enjoyed, but now belonged to Carrie Chapman Catt.

57 Blatch and Lutz, Challenging Years, p195
The NAWSA’s rejection of Blatch would ensure that she inherited her mother’s legacy in that she was able to shape her ideological self sovereignty and call for the creation of organisations that reflected Stanton’s goals for equality. Stanton’s broad range of social concerns had been increasingly abandoned since NAWSA had first been formed under Anthony’s guidance, therefore Stanton’s link to NAWSA was mainly a historical construct (defended by Blatch) rather than an actual adoption of Stanton’s complete legacy. Blatch connected her mother’s concern with a women’s rights movement that focused on the issue of suffrage, to her own fears, repeating her mother’s statement that “when women get the vote they will be totally unprepared for the part they ought to play in American political life.” Blatch sought to expand the focus of suffrage, incorporating her mother’s ideological vision with a new focus on politicising women’s politics, as she became one of the first women who actively lobbied the legislature in an effort to support her cause.

Blatch first recognised the lack of political awareness that existed among the American women’s rights movement upon her return to New York. She worked to rectify the fact that women did not have a “grain of political knowledge,” by campaigning for a referendum in New York on the issue of Suffrage. Her efforts to gain the referendum on the state level educated a generation of women on how to assert political pressure without the vote. They were trained to become “politically minded” suffrage workers. In many ways her belief that attention needed to be

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59 Blatch and Lutz, Challenging Years, p.93.

60 Ibid.
attracted to the cause reflected her mother’s earlier beliefs. However when women were finally enfranchised, Blatch truly embraced her mother’s ideas on the continued need for economic equality for women, centring on the problem of motherhood and independence that women would continue to face for years. Stanton’s radical vision for the expansion of the rights of women would increasingly be recognised as a feminist agenda for complete equality.

One of Stanton’s most radical ideas is represented by her work the *Woman’s Bible*. This undertaking began with her desire to create a committee of scholarly women to study the Bible and record all mention of women, to determine whether the Bible aided the subjection or the emancipation of women under the Jewish and Christian Religion. In her memoirs, Stanton noted that unlike the other women she contacted to be involved on her bible project, her daughter agreed to work on the assignment through the winter of 1887. According to Stanton, after completing the Pentateuch, Blatch declined any further involvement because it was so “derogatory” to women and it was such a “dry history.” Religion has been identified as playing a key role in shaping Stanton’s ideology on the status of women. Stanton wanted to give recognition to the fact that she believed that religion like marriage was a key obstacle in the fight for equality for women. Blatch’s decision like so many others not to get involved in her mother’s re-interpretation of the bible can be viewed as a reflection of their generation’s desire not to have conflict once again within the woman’s movement or just evidence of a

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61 Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp.389-390

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid., pp.390-392.
desire to move beyond her mother’s interests. The reaction to Stanton’s *Woman’s Bible* was to portray Stanton as a radical figure who should be separated from the women’s movement and its continued battle for the enfranchisement of women. This effort was largely successful with Stanton being increasingly ignored in favour of Anthony.64

As the movement that Stanton initiated rejected her, she was increasingly left out of scholarly research as the woman’s suffrage movement wiped any trace of radicalism out of its history and focused on Anthony as their “suffrage saint.”65 Unlike many of her peers, Blatch was not content to let her mother’s apparent radicalism destroy her historical importance for women’s history. It quickly became apparent to Blatch that Stanton’s role in the woman suffrage movement was being ignored and then forgotten. A key acknowledgement of her mother’s ideology was reflected by Blatch’s efforts to ensure that they were not lost. Stanton’s children revealed their awareness and respect of her desire to leave behind a legacy when they preserved her writings. One of Blatch’s most valuable connections to her mother’s legacy is that she engineered to preserve Stanton’s role in the women’s movement for future examination. Blatch and her brother attempted to shape the image of their mother that they revealed to the public. Editing her journals for publication, they worked to create a more moderate image of Stanton in an effort to make her appear as acceptable as Anthony, in the hope that she would no longer be ignored by the organisation that she had founded. Blatch was also instrumental in organising a centennial in celebration of Stanton in 1915, once again an effort to

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64 In her memoirs Blatch battled against this by casting Anthony as a clear subordinate to her mother. Blatch and Lutz, *Challenging Years*, pp.13-15.

preserve her memory in connection to the movement that she helped create. In one reply to Blatch’s invitation to this celebration, the President of the New York State Suffrage Association, Mrs Raymond Brown wrote of Stanton, “She was the only one of the celebrated group of pioneers whom I ever saw or heard, and as a child I remember very well listening to her spellbound. I can still see her handsome face, with its wreath of snow white curls.”

This was as much a tribute to Blatch’s efforts to preserve the memory of her mother, as it was to Stanton’s impact.

Stanton’s granddaughter, Nora Stanton Blatch provides the final evidence of the transfer and development of Stanton’s beliefs from generation to generation. The notion of three generations of women involved in the suffrage movement had not escaped Blatch’s attention, indeed when she wrote *A Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*: she chose to put a photograph of herself, Stanton and her daughter, Nora Blatch Deforest on the front cover. Nora’s involvement with the Congress of American Women (1946-50), the organisation that, although disbanded very quickly after it was created, ensured that many women remained actively involved in reform issues such as peace, social justice and women’s rights after women had been enfranchised. The CAW’s constitution praised Stanton for fighting for the enfranchisement of women. Yet at the same time the CAW reflects the ideas of the next generation such as Blatch, by illustrating a deeper awareness of the importance of class and race than Stanton and her suffrage generation.

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66 Mrs Raymond Brown to Harriot Stanton Blatch, 29 October 1915, Harriot Stanton Blatch Papers, reel 4, container 12.


had passed on to her daughter, Nora the same training and ideologies that her mother had strived to instil in her, as one scholar stated. Blatch regarded her “primary responsibility as seeing her daughters met the highest standards of achievements and self-esteem as women.”69 This pattern of motherhood that Blatch learned through her own childhood ensured that the legacy of Stanton’s ideology, her inherently feminist doctrine, offered a valuable contribution to the women’s movement that emerged in the twentieth century. In addition, Blatch’s final efforts to preserve her mother’s ideas, when the movement that she created endeavoured to formulate a more moderate suffrage history, ensured the legacy of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

Stanton’s impact expanded beyond the organisation of the first women’s rights conference at Seneca Falls and her demand that women should be enfranchised. Although both of these elements are vital aspects of her legacy, Stanton’s success at motivating women around the suffrage goal until it was finally achieved in 1920 only reveals one dimension of Stanton’s significance. The success of the suffrage movement with the Nineteenth Amendment has obscured the second part of Stanton’s bequest to her successors, her ideological vision that demanded equal opportunity for women. The dominance of the scholarship on Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt in connection with the battle for the ballot has had the adverse effect of limiting both the amount and the depth of analysis that has been completed on Elizabeth Cady Stanton.¹ As her full impact had been virtually ignored, historians who have focused on her work have over simplified her importance by stressing the value of her demand for the vote for women in 1848. This view has prevented the development of an understanding that Stanton’s legacy was not limited to the establishment and apparent success of the women’s rights movement.

The heritage that Stanton bestowed contained two distinct elements, one of which was the creation of a coalition of women who worked together in an effort to challenge their position in society. The second component was Stanton’s broad ideological vision of equality for women that would be transmitted across

generations. Historians have made the error of uniting the two aspects of Stanton’s importance by discussing Stanton’s ideas as an integral part of the women’s rights movement throughout its history, preventing a thorough analysis of her influence on her peers and subsequent generations up until the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. Although Stanton’s philosophy had guided the first generation of women to seek a broad range of goals for equality, including the right to vote, the second generation in contrast began to reject her complete ideology as they began increasingly to focus on the enfranchisement of women.

Stanton’s demand for woman suffrage should be valued. However, it is important to demonstrate that the vote for women was not the key issue of the movement that Stanton had initiated at Seneca Falls. Stanton presented the argument that women should be granted the right to vote as a natural right in 1848. However, she carefully linked her claim for the ballot to the republican belief, equality for all. Stanton’s belief that women should have equality in all aspects of society led to the formation of her broad agenda for reform that included access to education, marital rights and the ability to vote. However, as the vote was granted to African Americans before women, the importance of the ballot in the women’s rights movement shifted as it became symbolic of the republican rights that women were denied. Stanton was responsible for this shift presenting the paradoxical situation of orchestrating the younger members around the demand for woman suffrage, while still advocating her comprehensive plan for change. Although initially suffrage had been an element of Stanton’s programme for equality, increasing suffrage and equal rights were identified as two separate aims that clashed, as the vote was viewed as a method to widen the sphere of women rather
than an instrument to help them reject their traditional roles as Stanton had intended.

Although the early women’s rights movement was directed by Stanton’s programme for equality, as the importance of the right to vote was raised in status it began to dominate the direction of the women’s rights movement. Stanton was unwilling to confine her ideology in support of this shift, unaware of her own role in shaping this change; she continued to embrace an agenda for the complete equal rights for women. Increasingly Stanton emphasised that the vote, although an aspect of equal rights, would not grant women the total equality that her ideas represented. Demonstrating that as the women’s rights movement pulled away from her principles, her ideology also continued to evolve. As the woman’s suffrage movement no longer represented Stanton’s platform for reform it, at least in part, became separated from Stanton’s legacy. What should be considered by future scholars is that Stanton’s dedication to parity between men and women continued after her involvement with NAWSA, through her lectures and her writings possibly leading to the emergence of a new informal women’s rights organisation that has yet to be examined.

The belief that Stanton’s legacy was binary in nature is strengthened as a series of case studies offers evidence revealing the true extent of her impact. By focusing on Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Susan B. Anthony as the mothers of the women’s rights movement, the two aspects of Stanton’s influence are illuminated. The case studies on Stanton and Mott reflect the evolution of Stanton’s ideological agenda and the development of the women’s rights movement. An understanding of
Anthony’s role in preserving Stanton’s legacy allows a new view of the Stanton and Anthony partnership to emerge. By examining how Anthony transmitted Stanton’s ideas and worked to add to the ranks of the women’s rights movement prior and after the Civil War, her shift in allegiance from Stanton and her programme of reform to the woman suffrage movement and the goal of enfranchising women becomes apparent. Although Anthony facilitated the successful growth of Stanton’s movement by her vigorous campaigning, Anthony’s success would increasingly lead to the belief that she was the true leader of the organisational aspect of the women’s rights movement instead of Stanton. By repositioning Anthony as the force that shaped the membership of the movement, the division of Stanton’s legacy becomes apparent. As the new members of the woman suffrage movement acted to limit Stanton’s historical impact, focusing solely on her assertion that women should have the right to vote, when the nineteenth amendment was finally achieved in 1920. The success of the woman’s suffrage movement in winning the vote for women historically linked Stanton with the fight for the vote and the NAWSA, a movement that did not embrace her ideology and at the point of winning the vote for women, did not represent the movement that Stanton had first orchestrated. Stanton had therefore rejected the NAWSA at the same time as its leaders worked to distance themselves from Stanton’s broad agenda for change, while they still attempted to immortalise Stanton’s demand for woman suffrage and their success at achieving that specific goal.

The argument that Stanton’s legacy was made up of two elements is strengthened through a series of case studies of significant figures that were selected from the second generation of members that had joined the women’s rights
movement. Examined as the daughters of the women’s rights movement, Catharine Waugh McCulloch, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Harriot Stanton Blatch and Carrie Chapman Catt provided the opportunity for an in-depth discussion of the repercussions of Stanton’s influence. The fate of Stanton’s women’s rights movement and her broad vision for equality is best revealed in connection with these figures as they accepted, rejected and eventually transformed Stanton’s legacy.

McCulloch’s involvement in the suffrage movement illustrates how Stanton’s double impact was transferred into the Midwest by reflecting how key events, in this case the Civil War, cleared the way for Stanton’s ideas to take effect. McCulloch takes on the role of representing women from the Midwest, and exemplifies the emergence of a new professional woman. McCulloch’s presence in the woman suffrage movement and her work for the vote, highlights the de-radicalisation of the issue of woman suffrage as the connection between the suffrage issue and temperance movement is revealed. As the temperance movement advocated that the vote could be used as a tool for prohibition, the ballot for women appeared to be an instrument that women could utilise to protect the home without challenging their traditional role. In the hands of the temperance movement the enfranchisement of women appeared conservative as it did not challenge the accepted view of the role of women. Stanton’s view of the vote in contrast was radical in its intent, as it was part of her agenda for equal rights for women, it aimed to grant women the opportunity to step beyond the strict boundary of their traditional sphere. As the basis for the demand for the vote changed from one generation to the next, from arguments based on natural rights argument to
expediency, McCulloch’s work for woman suffrage revealed that this was not necessarily a complete shift from one view to another. Moreover, McCulloch’s involvement in the woman suffrage movement illustrates the successful transfer of Stanton’s legacy across geographical distance and across generations by granting the opportunity to trace Stanton’s indirect impact through women such as Mary Livermore and Frances E. Willard. Livermore and Willard, highlighted how Stanton’s legacy travelled from the east coast to the Midwest, revealing how as Stanton’s movement grew in size it increasingly became dominated by a generation that would focus on the goal of suffrage, abandoning the other aspects of Stanton’s programme for change. Ironically, having pursued a career in law, McCulloch’s professionalism illustrated the success of Stanton’s early equal rights goals as an increasing number of educational opportunities and professional careers had clearly opened up for the next generation, which rejected Stanton’s ideology.

Viewed as Stanton’s ideological daughter, Charlotte Perkins Gilman symbolised the creation of the independent free thinking woman that Stanton had always envisioned. Gilman exemplifies the “self sovereignty” that Stanton advocated for women and although in terms of ideas this is not necessarily reflected by a direct transfer of beliefs between the two women, Gilman’s independent free thinking is a reflection of Stanton’s impact. As Gilman sought to reposition women in society by designing an alternative world for women and their families, she continued the trends of radical thought that Stanton had started. Just as Stanton’s ideas had an impact on Gilman, they also influenced Gilman’s peers, who would become Gilman’s receptive audience. As Stanton was the voice of her generation, Gilman represented the new women from the next generation and in trying to solve
the problems of the inequality of her professional peers she shaped her ideas on economics accordingly. Although Stanton had envisaged the development of educated, professional women, Gilman added to Stanton’s foundations by designing a new family environment that supported these new women.

Harriot Stanton Blatch and Carrie Chapman Catt are examined as the two daughters that inherited Stanton’s legacy, each reflecting the fate of the movement and the ideas that Stanton had set in motion. As Stanton’s literal daughter, Blatch represented her mother’s radical tenet for equal rights for women as Blatch sought to educate the new generation of the women’s rights movement to the continued need for action. Although Stanton’s vision for equality was intended for a white middle-class audience that made up the majority of the first generation of the women’s rights movement, Blatch expanded her mother’s vision by widening the audience that she was targeting by including the working classes. Although Blatch failed to comprehend that she had inherited the true intent of Stanton’s women’s movement, Stanton’s influence is evident as Blatch sought to create an alternate organisation to the National American Woman’s Suffrage Association that did not focus solely on the suffrage issue. In addition Blatch was aware of the need to provide women with political instruction before they gained the right to vote, reflecting her mother’s awareness that the vote was a useless instrument if it was viewed as evidence of instant equality rather than as a means to achieve equality through political change. Blatch also worked to preserve her mother’s ideological impact as she was increasingly rejected by NAWSA. Although Blatch was jealous of the fact that Catt inherited the movement that Stanton had initiated, in reality the
organisation that she directed did not reflect Stanton’s complete programme for equality.

Catt’s connection to Stanton is apparent as she achieved the seventy-two year struggle for woman suffrage, winning Stanton’s public goal of the enfranchisement of women. Catt did in fact inherit and build upon the legacy that Stanton had established. Although Catt might have not appreciated the connection, without the educational campaigning that Stanton had coordinated, she would not have had the ability to successfully implement her winning plan. In addition, Catt’s focus on suffrage reflects the impact of Stanton’s reaction to the fourteenth amendment and her bitterness that African American men were enfranchised before women, as Catt dominated and changed Stanton’s movement to become a woman suffrage movement. In trying to make the suffrage movement appear less radical, in effect Catt actually revealed the extent to which she had inherited Stanton’s radical appreciation for the power of the ballot. In claiming that the vote would solve the problem of inequality for women, Catt had effectively put herself into a position where she could not embrace Stanton’s broad vision for change, essentially stalling the women’s rights movement after the nineteenth amendment until the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. The fact that the issues that Stanton highlighted in the Declaration of Sentiments were still areas of concern for women in the 1960s suggests that Stanton was correct in her assumption that the vote alone would not be enough to grant equality for women. Although Catt was the leader that the NAWSA needed to achieve the suffrage goal, her ability as an organiser rather than as a visionary, restricted the possibility of the woman suffrage movement reclaiming Stanton’s broad agenda for change when the nineteenth amendment had
enfranchised women. Catt appeared unwilling to cooperate with new members of the woman suffrage movement who echoed Stanton’s sentiments, such as Alice Paul. By restricting the woman suffrage movement to the issue of the ballot, Catt prevented the organisation from evolving again, forcing women to seek equality as envisioned by Stanton elsewhere. As Catt built on Stanton’s successful establishment of a movement to educate the public to the necessity of the vote, she failed to appreciate the need to instruct the upcoming generation on the next level of action that was needed to achieve equal rights for women throughout society. Catt’s campaign to enfranchise women had been built on the idea that women would use their special characteristics to improve society. From this perspective, once women were enfranchised the vote served to keep women within the traditional sphere, as wives and mothers, rather than allowing them to use it as a political tool to break down the gender boundaries. For the female vote thus focused on society rather than equality.

As Stanton’s legacy has been explored, the full extent of her impact can be appreciated. By initiating the first women’s rights movement and demanding the right to vote at the Seneca Falls Conference, Stanton brought public attention to the concerns of women. As her ideology developed Stanton envisioned, in the style of the Enlightenment, the construction of new roles for women in society in which women were able to dismantle or transform the traditional patriarchal institutions that dominated the United States. A representation of her republican heritage, Stanton had faith in a system that emphasised equality as part of the natural rights of man. However, until the fourteenth amendment the term “man”, for Stanton and many others represented a common descriptive for all citizens of the United States.
The addition of the word “male” as a qualifying statement for the right to vote, represented a huge setback to the effort to enfranchise women, forcing women to seek an amendment to possess the right to vote, a task that would take over seventy-two years.

As the only part of Stanton’s ideological agenda that was achieved by the NAWSA, it is important to explore how the vote reflected both the successful and the unsuccessful dissemination of Stanton’s ideology. The nineteenth amendment represented the fulfilment of a seventy-two year battle to enfranchise women that incorporated the lives of Stanton, the other mothers of the movement and the daughters of the movement who were explored in this thesis. As a component of Stanton’s vision for equality, the ballot had been increasingly adopted by the younger members of the woman suffrage movement, as it signified the full rights of citizenship that they had mistaken as access to equal rights. In the context of Stanton’s ambitions for women, the ability to vote represented that women had finally managed to enter the political domain, finally placing women in a position to improve society and to be able to reach their full potential.

While historians have discussed the limited impact of the vote in political terms, the significance of the enfranchisement of those who had been involved in the women’s rights movement centred on the fact that it did grant women the rights of citizenship. Yet the political impact of women voters was weakened by the inability to agree on the political role of women and whether they should continue

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to be non-partisan in their political action. The movement’s lack of direction after gaining the ballot prevented women from organising themselves into a powerful political voting machine that would be able to complete the task of granting women access to equality through the use of woman suffrage.

As members of the women’s rights movement presented their arguments why women should possess the right to vote, they reflected Stanton’s ability to change her tactics and argue from whatever point of view that she felt would enfranchise women. Although Stanton never intended to have her broad programme for reform narrowed to the suffrage goal, she never presented a cohesive political agenda once women had gained the ability to vote. As Catt inherited the framework of the movement that Stanton had created, her talents as the architect of the winning plan reflected her inability to build on the ideological foundation that Stanton had already established, to fulfil her agenda for equality. Catt’s strategy and suffrage focus prevented her from considering the next stage in the fight for equal rights for women, effectively stalling the women’s rights movement.

Although the vote allowed women to enter the political arena, it did not alter their lives as wives and mothers. In fact as more women entered into the realm of professionalism, the problems of combining their traditional roles and their new positions became more apparent. The failure of the right to vote to achieve equality for women suggests that Stanton’s belief in a broad agenda for change had been


4 Richard A. Seltzer, and Jody Newman, Sex as a Political Variable: Women as Candidates and Voters in U.S. Elections (Boulder, Co, 1997), pp.64-74
correct, especially as future generations of women involved in the 1960s feminist movement would revisit Stanton's ideological programme for equality. By identifying the conference at Seneca Falls as the first wave of the feminist movement, feminists from the 1960s sought to establish a connection between their actions and the demands of the early women's rights movement. Identified as second wave feminists, they continued to battle to extend the rights of women by highlighting the discrimination that still existed against women in "every facet of American life." Second wave feminists would continue to seek the key goal that Stanton had emphasised, equality, as they demanded further legislation to achieve economic, educational and political parity for women.

The advent of woman suffrage did not result in the end of women's involvement in reform, as the belief that women were the protectors of society directed women into new types of political activity, often on the State rather than national level. Recognised as maternal feminism, there was a continued attempt to extend the role of mother in the home as a carer and nurturer to the rest of society. Reflected in the work of Jane Addams and Hull House, this type of reform kept women within their traditional spheres, while at the same time acting to enlarge those boundaries as women worked to improve society.

In contrast to the maternal feminists, some women still worked to achieve the political and social equality that Stanton had first demanded. Alice Paul and the

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5 Amber E. Kinser, "Negotiating Spaces For/Through Third-Wave Feminism," NWSA Journal 16 (Fall 2004), pp.124-153; Barbara Ryan, Feminism and the Women's Movement; Dynamics of Change in Social Movement Ideology and Activism (New York, 1992), p.43.

National Woman's Party (NWP) supported the introduction of an Equal Rights Amendment, a legislative act that intended to provide women with the equality that Stanton had worked towards throughout her involvement with the women's rights movement. The need for an Equal Rights Amendment as it was introduced in 1923 reflected the limitations of the ballot in expanding the role of women. Representing the continued fight for full women's rights after the success of the suffrage battle, Paul and the NWP embodied the purpose of the movement that Stanton had envisioned, as Paul vowed that the NWP would work for "the removal of all forms of the subjection of women."\(^7\) Clearly identifying herself with the Declaration of Sentiments, Paul asserted that she would not "add to or subtract from 1848."\(^8\) Paul's actions provide the final confirmation that Stanton's legacy was evident after the nineteenth amendment. To have achieved Stanton's complete vision for equality, the NWP and NAWSA would have had to combine their efforts. In the same way in which Anthony provided the means to transfer Stanton’s legacy on a broad scale, a similar working relationship between the two organisations would have possibly led to the completion of Stanton's goals for women. However, although the Equal Amendment Act was defeated in 1983, its existence is a symbol of the effect and importance of Stanton's legacy as it legitimises the creation of the women's rights movement and Stanton's equal rights philosophy.


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**Dissertations**
