

The Women's Rights Movement



The **Women's Rights Movement** emerged from the Abolitionist Movement. During the 1830's and 1840's, middle-class, educated women were actively involved in their churches. This led to women focusing on movements such as temperance and anti-slavery. Despite being actively involved, many women faced discrimination when participating in these movements. Therefore, it was a logical progression that women now actively worked for women's rights. Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Sojourner Truth were among many well-known individuals who were active in the early Women's Rights Movement.

Sarah and Angelina Grimké

They were sisters from a slaveholding family in South Carolina who hated the institution of slavery so they moved to Philadelphia and became Quakers. In the early 1830's they were recruited by William Lloyd Garrison to speak out about slavery in the Northern cities.

During their speeches they were often insulted and threatened as women were not allowed to speak publicly, especially to audiences of both sexes in many areas. Due to this, they became activists for women's rights.

Another example of women being verbally abused when speaking was seen in the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Both **Elizabeth Cady-Stanton** and **Lucretia Mott** were banned from the event because they were women. Back in America, the American Anti-Slavery Society was splitting due to various political opinions, especially because of those who saw that women's participation in the abolitionist movement hurt their cause.

The Seneca Falls Convention in 1848

The Women's Rights Movement officially began in 1848 at the **Women's Right Convention** in Seneca Falls, New York. Over 300 people attended the convention, including 40 men, Frederick Douglass the most famous.

At the meeting, Elizabeth Cady-Stanton read her **Declaration of Sentiments**, a declaration to end legal inequalities for women. In 1848, New York had passed the **Married Women's Property Act**, but in most states the husband still had legal right to control his wife's property, earnings, and children. A married women existed legally only through her husband.

The convention delegates unanimously approved of the demands in the Declaration of Sentiments except for women having the right to vote. Frederick Douglass made a strong speech in favor of suffrage and it eventually passed, but not unanimously. **One hundred of the three hundred at the convention signed the Declaration of Sentiments.**

Elizabeth Cady-Stanton

The intellectual and philosophical leader of the movement, especially for suffrage – the right to vote for women.



Lucretia Mott

A quaker and a well-known abolitionist.

Much of the newspaper coverage of the convention was negative but it did bring the issue to the public's attention. The Seneca Falls Convention helped launch a national movement for women's rights.