

Meet the Women's Rights Activists

► **Supporting Question:** Who were the organizers of the Women's Rights movement, and were they radicals?

► **Introduction:** This is not a complete list of all women's rights advocates, but it is a snapshot into some of the leadership of the Women's Rights Movement after 1848. Some had formal roles in organizing, and some worked behind the scenes. Each had an important role to play as the Women's Rights Movement evolved past the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848.

► **Instructions:** Read the background and quotations of each activist, highlighting and annotating key information. Then, respond to the Guiding Questions on a separate sheet of paper.

Activist	Background	Quote about women's rights	Guiding Questions <i>Answer in complete sentences on a separate sheet.</i>
Elizabeth Cady Stanton 	- Was a major organizer and speaker of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 - Signed the <i>Declaration of Sentiments</i>, a document presented at the Seneca Falls Convention outlining the ideas of the women's rights activists. - She was an educated daughter of a lawyer from New York. - Stanton met Quaker and abolitionist Lucretia Mott in 1840. - She stayed home writing speeches for fellow women's rights activist Susan B. Anthony. - Stanton became better known during the Civil War when she traveled making speeches. - She is on record in public speeches making	"But we are assembled [gathered] to protest against a form of government existing without the consent [agreement] of the governed - to declare our right to be free as man is free, to be represented in the government which we are taxed to support, to have such disgraceful laws as give man the power to chastise [punish] and imprison his wife, to take the wages [money] which she earns, the property which she inherits, and, in case of separation, the children of her	- Why might Stanton have become so involved in the women's rights movement? - What about Stanton's quote would be considered radical for 1848? Why?

	racist remarks about her belief that Black men and immigrants should not gain the right to vote in addition to white women. <i>Further Reading:</i> National Park Service: Elizabeth Cady Stanton CyArk: Elizabeth Cady Stanton House 3D	love; laws which make her the mere dependent on his bounty [success].” <i>-Seneca Falls Convention keynote speech, July, 1848</i>	
Sojourner Truth 	• Truth spent her first thirty years enslaved in New York. She was freed in 1828 and inspired by Frederick Douglass’ writing, began to tell her own story as a preacher who moved around. • She was an honest activist for universal voting, and emphasized that poor, Black, and working class women must be included in the discussion of women’s rights. • She joined hundreds of women across the country and attempted to vote in the 1872 presidential election, but she was turned away. • She was a close ally of Anthony and Stanton, but later split with them over their anti-immigrant and antiblack comments. • She was the only African American woman featured in <i>History of Woman Suffrage</i>, even though there were many other Black women’s rights advocates. <i>Further Reading:</i> National Park Service: Sojourner Truth National Women's History Museum: Sojourner Truth	"I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed [farmed], and can any man do more than that?" -1851 "We are now trying for liberty [freedom] that requires no blood-that women shall have their rights, not rights from you [men]. Give them what belongs to them." -1866	3. In what ways was Truth different from activists like Stanton and Anthony? 4. Why might it be radical for Truth to have said, “Give them what <i>belongs</i> to them”?

Lucretia Mott



- Organized the Women's Rights Convention with Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
- Helped write and signed the *Declaration of Sentiments*.
- She was a Quaker, a religion that believes in the equality of all people under God.
- Began her activism in the anti-slavery movement with her husband. They took in slaves who had escaped, but she wanted to help more people.
- She spent time visiting the Cattaraugus tribe, a women-led society, near Seneca Falls weeks before the convention.
- Continued her abolitionist and women's rights activism her entire life.

Further reading:

[National Park Service: Lucretia Mott.](#)

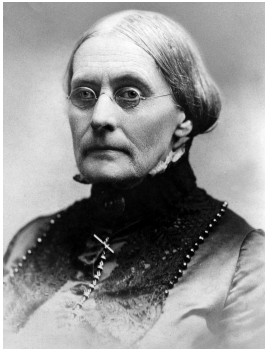
"The question is often asked, 'What does woman want, more than she enjoys? What is she seeking to obtain [get]? Of what rights is she deprived [doesn't have]? What privileges are withheld [not given] from her? I answer, she asks nothing as favor, but as right, she wants to be acknowledged a moral [good], responsible being. She is seeking not to be governed [ruled] by laws, in the making of which she has no voice.'

-From *Discourse on Women*, December 17, 1849

5. How might Mott have been inspired by her interactions with the matriarchal society, the Cattaraugus?

6. How might treating women as "moral responsible beings" be considered radical in 1848?

Susan B. Anthony



- Anthony's sister and mother attended the Women's Rights convention at Seneca Fall, but she did not.
- She was inspired by Quaker ideals that all were equal under God.
- Anthony met Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Women's Rights convention organizer, in 1851 and they worked closely together in the fight for women's rights for the next 50 years.
- In 1866, Anthony and Stanton created the American Equal Rights Association (AERA). This group split over the 14th and 15th Amendments; if

"One-half of the people of this nation, today, are utterly powerless to blot [rid] from the statute-books [laws] an unjust law, or write there a new and just [fair] one. The women, dissatisfied as they are with this form of government that enforces "taxation without representation"-that compels [forces] them to obey [follow] laws to which they have never given

7. Based on her life's work, why do you think the 19th Amendment, that grants women the right to vote, is named the 'Susan B. Anthony Amendment'?

8. Why would

	Black men should gain the right to vote before women, giving at least some of the non-voting population the vote. Anthony and Stanton were against, insisting that women have the right to vote also, even if it took longer. Some in the movement were opposed to Black Americans gaining the right to vote at all. • Was arrested for voting in the 1872 election in Rochester, New York. It made national news and both Stanton and Gage went on a speaking tour for women's rights. • In 1888, Anthony combined the two largest women's suffrage associations into the National American Women's Suffrage Association. • Anthony died in 1906; 14 years before women achieved the vote in 1920. <i>Further reading:</i> National Park Service: Susan B Anthony Susan B Anthony House	their consent [agreement]-that imprisons and hangs them without a trial by a jury of their peers-that robs them, in marriage, of the custody of their own persons [bodies], wages [money], and children, are-this half of the people-left wholly [entirely] at the mercy of the other half, in direct violation of the spirit and letter of the declarations of the framers of this government [Declaration of Independence], every one of which was based on the immutable [unchangeable] principles of "equal rights to all." <i>-Is it a crime for a U.S. Citizen to Vote? April 3, 1873</i> Given after Anthony was arrested and convicted of voting illegally in the 1872 election.	Anthony have been arrested for voting?
Matilda Joslyn Gage	• Gage was born into a family of abolitionists who made sure she had an education • Her home with husband Henry Gage was on the Underground Railroad. They hid slaves on their journey to freedom. • Gage became an important leader in the women's rights, abolition, and Native rights movements.	"To those who say women do not desire [want] their rights, or think they have them already, I would say, converse [speak] with any intelligent woman on the subject, and you will not find them indifferent [unconcerned]. Woman	9. How might Gage's upbringing have affected her dedication to the women's rights cause?



- With Stanton and Anthony, Gage started the National Women Suffrage Association in 1869.
- Gage was an editor of *History of Woman Suffrage*, which although it was the first book to detail the women's rights movement, it largely excluded the efforts of Black and Native women's rights activists.
- She openly criticized organized Christianity for abusing women.
- When Anthony formed a more conservative women's rights group, Gage left in protest. She wanted more people to be included.
- Gage stood up for Native American tribes, and she spent a lot of time with the Haudenosaunee. In 1893, the Wolf Clan of the Mohawk Nation adopted her into their tribe.

Further reading:

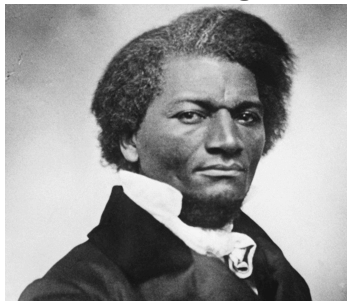
[National Park Service: Matilda Joslyn Gage](#)
[Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation](#)

feels deeply, keenly [intensely], her degradation [humiliation], but is bound [required] by the iron hand of custom [tradition] which so long has exercised [treated] tyrant [total] rule over her. An ignorant [uneducated] woman is virtually [basically] in the same condition [situation] as the peasant who thinks it right [correct] that a king shall rule over him; and to keep him content [happy], he is made to believe it would be blasphemy [disrespect] and treason in him to call in question this right."

-Speech at the National Woman's Rights Convention 1852

10. How might Gage's advocacy and relationships with Native tribes have affected her work in women's rights?

Frederick Douglass



- Douglass escaped enslavement in 1838.
- Douglass wrote three books about his life and used the profits from his first to purchase his freedom. An outstanding speaker, he quickly became a leading figure in the abolition movement in the U.S. giving speeches across the country.
- He founded the abolitionist newspaper *The North Star*.

"In respect to political rights, we hold woman to be justly [rightly] entitled [permitted] to all we claim for man. We go farther, and express our conviction [belief] that all political rights which it is expedient [helpful] for man to exercise, it is equally so for women. All that distinguishes

11. How might Douglass' background in abolition lead him to become a leader in the women's rights movement?

12. Why would it

	• Douglass attended the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls in 1848, invited by organizer Elizabeth M'Clintock. • Douglass joined the AERA (American Equal Rights Association founded by Stanton and Anthony). • He later split with Stanton about the 14th and 15th Amendments, believing that suffrage for Black men was "a question of life and death" (1869). • Douglass remained a supporter for equal rights until his death in 1895. <i>Further reading:</i> National Park Service: Frederick Douglass Frederick Douglass House	[separates] man as an intelligent and accountable [responsible] being, is equally true of woman; and if that government is only just [fair] which governs by the free consent [agreement] of the governed, there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the exercise of the elective franchise [vote], or a hand in making and administering the laws of the land. Our doctrine [belief] is, that "Right is of no sex."" -Published in <i>The North Star</i>, 1848	have been significant that Douglass attended the Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls in 1848?
Mary Ann Shadd Cary	• Born to free Black anti-slavery activists in Delaware in 1823. • Growing up, her family home was on the Underground Railroad; they helped enslaved people escape. • Shadd Cary became an anti-slavery activist. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, she moved to Canada where she became the first Black woman in North America to run a newspaper; <i>The Provincial Freeman</i>. • After the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War, Shadd Cary moved back to the U.S. • She became the second woman in America to earn a law degree, graduating from Howard University. • She became active in the women's suffrage movement later in life, speaking at the 1878 National Woman Suffrage Association Convention. <i>Further reading:</i>	"Their cry has long been ascending [rising] to the Lord who then will assume [take] the responsibility of prescribing [deciding] times and seasons for the pleading of their cause—of righteous [worthy] cause—and who shall overrule the voice of woman? Emphatically the greatest sufferer from chattel slavery or political proscription [prohibition] on this God's footstool [Earth]? Nay [No] we have Christ's Example who held the sexes indiscriminately [blindly] thereby [and so] implying an Equal inheritance. . ."	25. What were some of Shadd Cary's accomplishments? How did they help her activism? 26. What role might Shadd Cary's upbringing have had on her advocacy?



[National Park Service: Mary Ann Shadd Cary](#)
[Mary Ann Shadd Cary House, Washington DC](#)

Optional Extension Writing Activity:

1. Explain the connections between two of the activists on this sheet.
2. Explain how some of the activists on this page might be considered hypocrites.
3. Were these activists radicals? Why or why not?