

The Big Idea

Reformers sought to improve women's rights in American society.

Main Ideas

- Influenced by the abolition movement, many women struggled to gain equal rights for themselves.
- Calls for women's rights met opposition from men and women.

The Seneca Falls Convention launched the first organized women's rights movement in the United States

Main Idea 1: Influenced by the abolition movement, many women struggled to gain equal rights for themselves

- Fighting for the rights of African Americans led many women abolitionists to fight for their own rights.
- They found that they had to defend their right to speak in public.
- Critics did not want women to leave traditional female roles.

Early Women Reformers

Grimké Sisters

- **Sarah Grimké** wrote pamphlet in 1838 arguing for equal rights for women.
- **Angelina Grimké** refused to promise to obey her husband during their marriage ceremony.

Transcendentalist Margaret Fuller wrote *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), stressing importance of individualism to people, especially to women

Sojourner Truth

- Powerful supporter of both abolition and women's rights
- Born into slavery in 1797
- Took name Sojourner Truth because she felt her mission was to be a sojourner, or traveler, and spread the truth
- Never learned to read or write, but impressed people with her speeches

Main Idea 2:

Calls for women's rights met opposition from men and women.

The Movement Grows

- Women's concerns became a national issue when women took a more active and leading role in reform and abolition.
- Some men also began to fight for women's rights.

Opposition to Women's Rights

- Some women believed they did not need new rights.
- Some people thought that women lacked the physical or mental strength to survive without men's protection.

Main Idea 3: The Seneca Falls Convention launched the first organized women's rights movement in the United States.

- **Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the Seneca Falls Convention.**
- **The convention was the first public meeting about women's rights held in the United States.**
- **The convention opened on July 19, 1848, in Seneca Falls, New York.**
- **Organizers wrote a Declaration of Sentiments.**

Declaration of Sentiments

- Document detailed beliefs about social injustice toward women.
 - Used Declaration of Independence as basis for language
 - Authors included 18 charges against men
 - Signed by some 100 people
- About 240 people attended Seneca Falls Convention
 - Men included such reformers as Frederick Douglass.
 - Many other reformers who worked in the temperance and abolitionist movements were present.

Women's Rights Leaders

Lucy Stone

- **Well-known spokesperson for Anti-Slavery Society**
- **Was a gifted speaker who stirred the nation on women's rights**

Susan B. Anthony

Turned fight for women's rights into a political movement

Argued for equal pay for equal work—no woman could be free without a “purse of her own”

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

- **Wrote many documents and speeches of the movement**
- **Founder and leader of National Woman Suffrage Association**