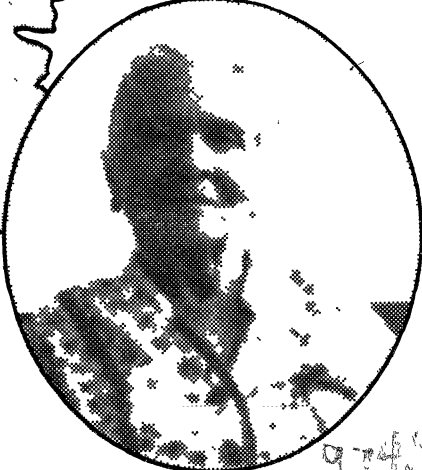


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# Women in the History of New Jersey



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Office of Equal Educational Opportunity  
New Jersey State Department of Education

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WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF NEW JERSEY  
(Pre-European to the End of the Civil War)

A curriculum resource for educators published by the  
New Jersey State Department of Education

Saul Cooperman, Commissioner of Education

Prepared under the direction of the  
Division of General/Academic Education

Harriet Doss-Willis  
Assistant Commissioner

Office of Equal Educational Opportunity

Nida E. Thomas  
Director

Developed by  
Willa C. Blackshear

FIELD TEST MATERIALS  
NOT FOR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

Sex Desegregation Project

Willa C. Blackshear, Susan Davis,  
Theodora F. Martin and Rebecca White-jones  
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Christeen Taylor, Senior Clerk Typist

This curriculum resource was produced under a Title IV grant from the United States Department of Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the United States Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the United States Department of Education is implied.

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## INTRODUCTION

The 1980 census showed that over half of the people who live in New Jersey are women. Recent reports compiled by the New Jersey State Department of Education indicate that nearly half of the children in New Jersey public schools are female. In history books which many of these schools use, however, girls and women play a very minor role.

The Feminist Press, a publishing firm which is very concerned about the treatment of women in print, supplied shocking evidence of the male/female imbalance in history books in a 1979 study which found that post-1974 history textbooks devote an average of 14 pages to the discussion of women. The textbooks which they reviewed had an average length of 700 pages.

Since its establishment, the Office of Equal Educational Opportunity has sought to help overcome biases related to sex, race and national origin through seminars, conferences and the dissemination of materials. One of the office's most widely circulated manuals has been the Women's History Curriculum Guide, which was published by a group of women in Santa Rosa, California.

This manual, Women in the History of New Jersey, has been developed to assist educators who wish to supplement their teaching of New Jersey history with more information about the role of women in the history of this state. Beginning with the first women who lived in the area that is now called New Jersey, the guide presents an overview of women's experiences from the pre-European era to the end of the Civil War. In each section a brief discussion of the quality of life which women in general enjoyed during that period is followed by a description of the experiences of New Jersey women. The discussion is followed by suggestions for activities that can be pursued in the classroom.

The chronological arrangement has been used as a result of discussions with social studies teachers who felt that the approach would fit in best with the way most courses are organized. Teachers who use thematic approaches will probably find the guide less convenient to use.

A draft version of Women in the History of New Jersey was presented to a group of social studies educators at a conference, "Completing the Picture: Presenting the Women in New Jersey History," at the Educational Improvement Center- Northwest last fall. Despite the limited time which was available for review and discussion, the conference participants provided very helpful recommendations for improving the guide.

Because of budget considerations, it became necessary to print the manual in its present form, omitting the period 1880-1980, which was included in the first draft and, hopefully, will reappear in the final version. This second draft is being used for field testing to determine how the guide works in the classroom and how the final edition may be improved.

To achieve this goal, we welcome ideas which will expand the content and increase the resources for teachers and students. We will appreciate suggestions about audio-visual aids, books and articles which will enhance teachers' and students' knowledge about the role of women in the history of the state. We are especially eager to receive students' art work and writing and teachers' lesson plans and strategies to include in the final version. Any such material should be mailed to:

Willa Blackshear  
New Jersey Department of Education/ OEE0  
CN 500  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

We would like to hear from everyone who uses the material, and we are requesting that each user complete the form on page iv and mail it to us at the above address.

Many people helped develop the guide. John Harbison of the Pennsauken School District and Dr. Brenda Williams of Paterson Schools were very helpful in initial discussions about the guide. Warren Blackshear provided invaluable assistance in researching, writing and editing the first draft. Charles Aquilini, chair of the Social Studies Department of the Elizabeth Schools, provided essential guidance in the section on the Lenape women. Howard Green, research director of the New Jersey Historical Commission critiqued the first draft and made valuable comments. Barbara Irwin and Carl Lane of the New Jersey Historical Society and the staff of the New Jersey State Library helped identify materials in their excellent collections. The following typists helped at various stages of the development of the manuscript: Edna Telep, Christeen Taylor, Mary Clark, Joan Bartkowski, Janice Peyton and Joann P. Darvas.

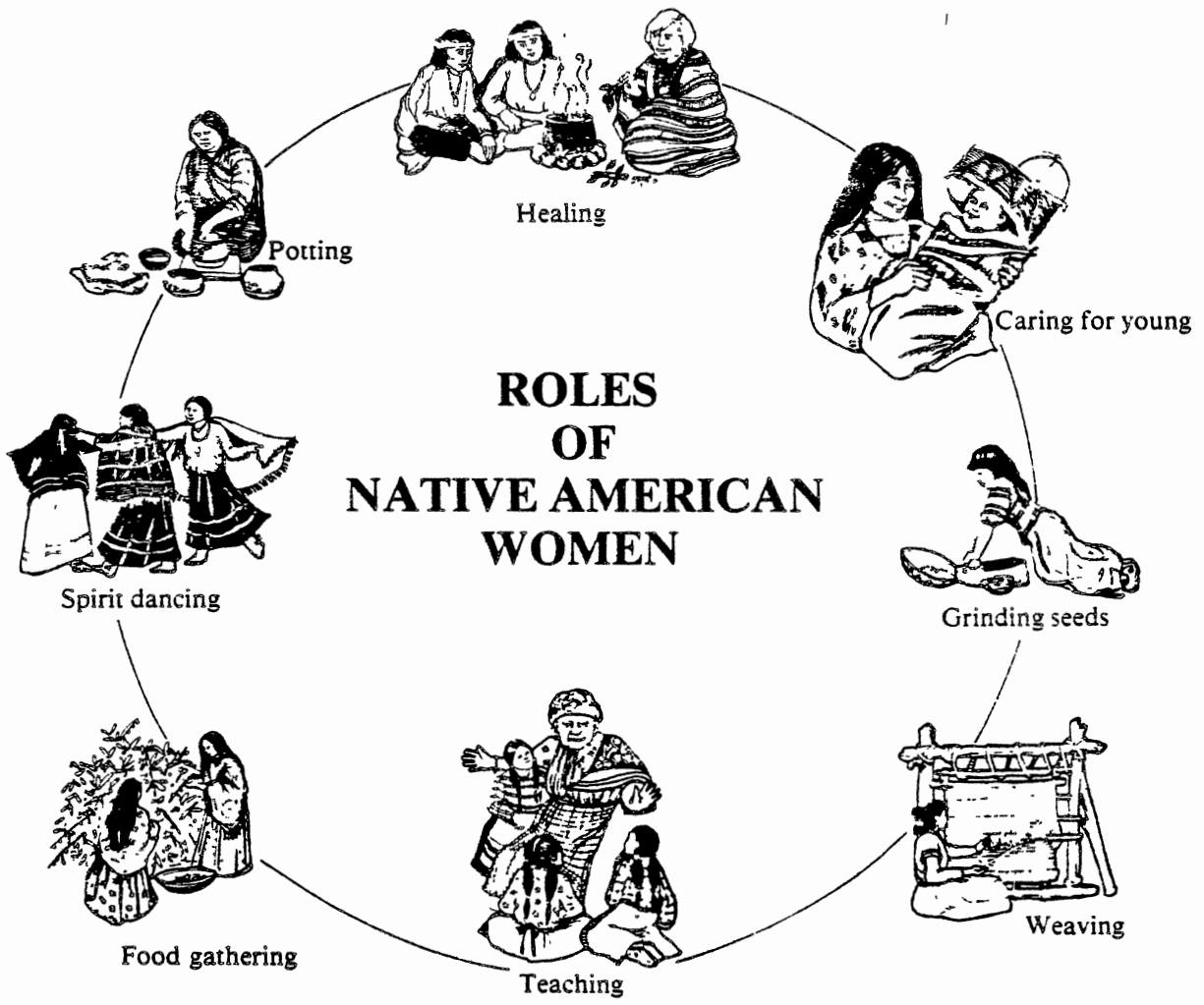


## WOMEN OF THE LENNI LENAPE

At the time Europeans first arrived in North America, and for centuries after, Native American women dominated agricultural production in the tribes of the eastern half of the United States. In many of these tribes, the work of the women provided over half of the subsistence and secured for them not only high status but public power.<sup>1</sup> In addition to their significant role in the tribal economy, women also headed family groups called gens. A woman had the support of all members, male and female, of her gens.<sup>2</sup>

In many tribal communities there was a strict division of labor based upon sex, although Roger Williams told of native men and women sharing the responsibilities of planting "in a very loving sociable speedy way.." Most communities divided the labor so that women raised and prepared food, made clothes, and preserved the meat and skins of slaughtered animals. When the group traveled, women usually carried back packs, while men led the way. An essential part of every young girl's education was instruction in the tasks she would be required to perform as a woman.<sup>3</sup>

Some European observers charged that native men used their women as drudges, but other recorders found the position of native women to be "far from unfavorable." The latter saw native women "secure in the possession of their property and their children" and even represented in the selection of chiefs.<sup>4</sup> Others noted that women influenced decisions made by male councils by refusing to carry out tasks which only women could perform. For example, women could veto a decision to go to war by refusing to make mocassins.



Source: Women's Educational Equity Act Program, "In Search of our Past," produced by Women's Studies Program, Berkeley, California Unified School District.

Giovanni da Verrazano, the Italian explorer who sailed into New Jersey waters in 1524, supplied the first European view of the women whom he found living there. Verrazano wrote:

These are the goodliest people and of the fairest conditions that we have found in this our voyage. They exceed us in bigness, they are the color of brasse . . . with long and black hair, which they are very careful to trim and decke up, they are black and quick-eyed, and of sweete and pleasant countenance, imitating much the old fashion . . . The women of like conformitie and beautie, very handsome and well favored, of pleasant countenance and comely to behold- . . . they are as well-mannered and continent as any women, and of good education . . . they adorne their heads with divers ornaments made of their own hair; which hang down on both sides of their brestes, otheres use other kind of dressing themselves like unto the women of Egypt and Syria. . . 5

The native people who resided in this area called themselves Lenni Lenape. <sup>6</sup> The Europeans later designated them as the Delawares and part of the Algonquin Family found from the Carolina to Canada. Geographically, observers divided them into three major groups: the Minse or Mimci (people of the stony country), the Unami (fishers or people down the river) and the Unalachtigo (people living near the ocean). <sup>7</sup>

In the Lenape language the word for woman is ochqueu, pronounced ochquay-oo, or, by softening the guttural, osquay-oo, which was readily modified into squa or squaw. Kif-ochqueu was a single woman; kiskeyochqueu, an elderly woman; wuskiochque, a young woman; och-quenk of a woman; wilawiochqueu, a rich woman.

Stating that the work of squaws was neither hard nor difficult, John Heckewelder, who recorded many of his long experiences with the Lenapes, wrote:

Their principal occupations are to cut and fetch firewood, till the ground, sow and reap the grain, and pound the corn in mortars for their pottage, and to make bread which they bake in the ashes. When going on a journey, or to hunting camps with their husbands, if they have no horses, they carry a pack on their backs which often appears heavier than it really is; it generally consists of a blanket, a dressed deer skin for mocksens (moosasins), a few articles of kitchen furniture as a kettle, bowl, or dish, with spoons, and some bread, corn, salt, etc., for their nourishment. I have never known an Indian woman complain of carrying this burden . . .<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the food which they cultivated, women gathered food which grew in the fields and forests. Along the banks of the Delaware River and in the coastal area from New Brunswick south, they found the groundnut. In deep, loamy river flats they dug the tubers of the morning glory, and they dived under water for the roots of the yellow pond lily, which they boiled with wild fowl.

Lenni Lenape girls received early training in the work of squaws. David Zeisberger, who spent many years among the Iroquois and Lenapes, noted:

Girls are more accustomed to work by their mothers, for as the women must pound all the corn in a stamping trough or mortar, they train their daughters in this and also in such other work as will be expected of them, as cooking, bread-making, planting, making of carrying-girdles (tumplines) and bags, the former used to carry provisions and utensils on their backs while journeying and the latter to hold the provisions. . .<sup>9</sup>

Marriages among the Lenapes were not necessarily contracted for life. It was understood by both parties that they should live together only as long as

Squaws took great pride in maintaining their gardens. Babies were often taken along, so that they could be watched.



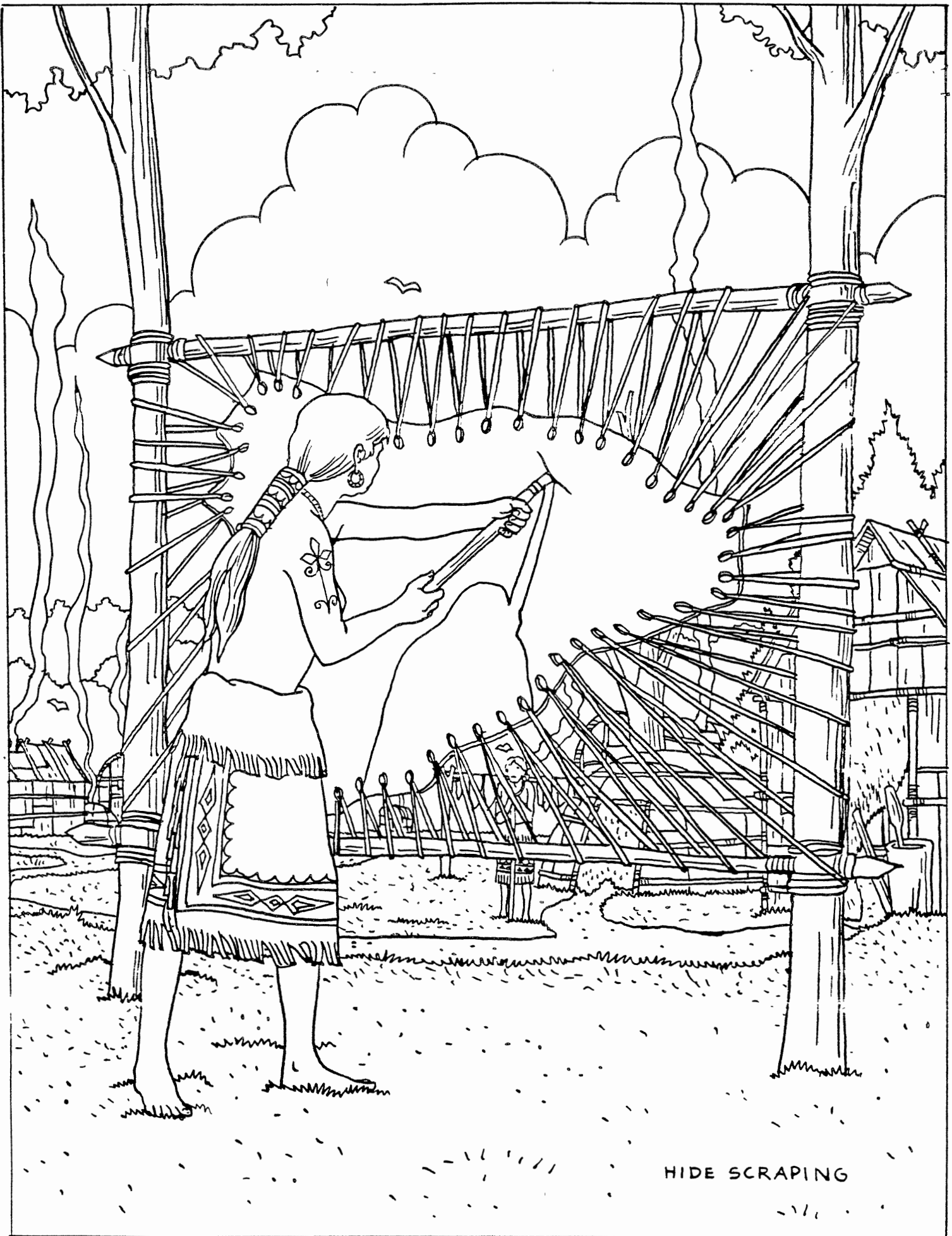
they were pleased with each other. The husband could divorce his wife whenever he chose to do so, and the woman could in like manner abandon the husband. Heckewelder explained that when a marriage took place, the duties and labours incumbent on each party were well known to both.

It is understood that the husband is to build a house for them to dwell in, to find the necessary implements of husbandry, as axes, hoes, etc., to provide a canoe, and also dishes, bowls, and other necessary vessels for housekeeping. The woman generally has a kettle or two, and some other articles of kitchen furniture, which she brings with her. The husband, as master of the family, considers himself bound to support it by his bodily exertions, as hunting, trapping, etc.; the woman, as his helpmate, takes upon herself the labours of the field, and is far from considering them as more important than those to which her husband is subjected....while their field labour employs them at most six weeks in the year, that of the men continues the whole year round. <sup>10</sup>

Heckewelder stated that were a man to take upon himself a part of his wife's duty, in addition to his own, "he must necessarily sink under the load, and of course his family must suffer with him." The woman, therefore, did "every thing in her power to leave no care to her husband but the important one of providing meat for the family."<sup>11</sup>

Supporting this view of the division of labor among the Lenapes, Mrs. Nora Thompson Dean, a Lenape traditionalist, who is among the last fluent speakers of the Delaware language and an acknowledged authority on Lenape culture, stated:

The wife usually has the say about the household. She also has control over the children. A man's duty is to be out at farmwork, or hunting game, or cleaning game, or something like that. The mother, the wife of the household, has charge of rearing the children and caring for the household. She teaches her children all of those things that they are supposed to know. <sup>12</sup>



HIDE SCRAPING

From the portfolio, "The First Americans: Lenape Indian Drawings," by Wm. Sauts Netamuxwe Bock published by The Middle Atlantic Press, Box 263, Wallingford, PA 19086. Used by permission.

Records of the early people show at least one female leader, Bathsheba Moolis, existed among the Unalachtigos. Corpulent and rather short, she was reputed to be an amiable leader who was greatly respected by her people. Annually, Bathsheba journeyed from the interior region to visit the shore at Egg Harbor. These annual treks continued as long as she could withstand the fatigue of the journey.

13

Lenape women were key members of the community. They provided a significant portion of the family's food supply and generally supervised the household and the rearing of children. Though their involvement in public matters was not on equal terms with the men, it appears that they did, sometimes in covert ways, exercise influence upon public decisions. While these women worked hard at certain times, they also appear to have had time for crafts and other leisure-time activities. By sharing their work and by understanding the significance of their roles in the survival of the group, Lenape women led relatively secure and satisfying lives.

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2. William Nelson, The Indians of New Jersey (Paterson: Press Printing and Publishing Company, 1894), p. 93.
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4. Nelson, op. cit., p. 92 and John Upton Terrell and Donna M. Terrell, Indian Women of the Western Morning (New York: The Dial Press, 1974), p. 27.
5. Irving S. Kull, New Jersey (New York: The American Historical Society, 1930), p. 16.
6. Etymologically Lenape is composed of two terms, "lan," which means ordinary, real, original, and "ape," which means person. The tendency has been to restrict the term (Lenni) to one's own sub-group as is done by the Oklahoma Delaware. (Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 15, p. 236.) "Lenape means common or ordinary people... Lenni Lenape is redundant." (Kraft, p. 2).
7. William W. Newcomb, Jr., The Culture and Acculturation of the Delaware Indians (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, ), pp. 5-8.
8. Heckewelder, op. cit., pp. 155-156.
9. David Zeisberger, History of the North American Indians, ed. Archer Hulbert and William Nathaniel Schwarze (Columbus: Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society, 1910), pp. 16-17.
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## SOME SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### ELEMENTARY

1. Plan a field trip to a wooded or marshy area where children may search for foods that native women gathered. They might seek the tubers of wild morning glories, wild artichokes, roots of pond lilies or herbs such as boneset, penny royal, and catnip. For additional foods and their approximate locations, see Charles Philhower's article, "Agriculture and the Foods of the Indians of New Jersey," in Proceedings: New Jersey Historical Society, New Series, Vol. XVI, 1931, pp. 96-97.
2. Have students experiment with grinding corn, wheat, rye, or barley. They might bring a mortar and pestle (even a small one will be all right) to school. Whole grains are available in health food stores.
3. Take students to the Newark Museum or to the Center for Anthropological Research at Seton Hall to view the implements, tools, utensils and crafts of Lenape women.

### SECONDARY

1. Investigate the many uses of corn to develop an appreciation for the value of this contribution which native American women made to people throughout the world.
2. Read "Putting Down the Myth: A Male View" and "Putting Down the Myth: A Female View" in James Axtell's Indian Peoples of Eastern America, A Documentary History of the Sexes (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) and either agree or disagree with the European belief that native women were used as drudges.
3. Obtain a copy of the interview of Nora Thompson Dean ("Delaware Indian Reminiscences", The Archaeological Society of New Jersey, Bulletin No. 35

(1978), pp. 1-9). Have two students role play the interview for the rest of the class.

## WOMEN IN COLONIAL NEW JERSEY

Women helped found virtually every colony. Once a colony was established women labored along with men to maintain it. Women's presence in numbers conveyed a sense of permanency upon a settlement. The fact that men outnumbered women, at least in the early years, and that women's labor was critical in maintaining a homestead, led to the belief that colonial women had significant economic and political power. Recently discovered evidence, however, indicates that 17th century English women transplanted to American shores might not have found the imbalanced ratio to be beneficial.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, by 1720 the numbers of men and women had evened out and any advantage which women had enjoyed because of their scarcity disappeared.

Studies of Loyalist husbands and wives have indicated a fairly rigid line separated the male and female spheres in the colonies. Both sexes appeared to have a strong sense of the proper roles of women and men; women did not meddle with politics or economics, which were their husbands' provinces, and men did not interfere with their wives overseeing of domestic affairs, excluding child-rearing, where they did take an active role.<sup>2</sup>

As wives and mothers, white women were expected to devote their chief energies to housekeeping and to the care of children, just as their husbands were expected to support women by raising crops or working for wages.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the common chores still done today - - cooking, cleaning and washing - - colonial women had the primary responsibility for food preservation and cloth production.<sup>4</sup>

One role surfaced early in regard to the labor of white women: ordinarily, they did not work in the fields. DePauw says that as early as 1656, it was a

set policy that white servant women would be put to work as domestics.<sup>5</sup> Although at the time of the Revolution Blacks constituted one fifth of the population of the colonies, a higher percentage than at any time thereafter, historians have completely neglected the study of female slaves in this period. While white women's lives were governed by the whims of men, legally and in reality, Black women's lives were governed by white men and white women, and perhaps even by white children.<sup>6</sup>

Women were barred from the innovation that made the colonies distinctive from the Old World. They could not participate in governmental institutions such as town meetings. Women could not vote or otherwise exert political rights. The colonists followed English common law which held that any property rights held by a woman passed to her husband upon marriage. And since women were not permitted to become lawyers, legislators, or ministers, little care was given to their schooling. Further, it was believed that accomplishment would unsex women, and educated women would abandon their proper sphere.<sup>7</sup>

Childbirth was an event shared by the female community. The birth process was supervised by a midwife. Since white women had an average of six children and Blacks ten or twelve, midwives were much in demand. As in Europe, women in America monopolized the practice through the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Anne Firor Scott notes in her essay "Self-Portraits " that the essential theme of the eighteenth century experience was not so much achievement as the fragility and chanciness of life. She said:

Death was an omnipresent reality. Three children in one family die on a single day from epidemic disease; fathers are lost at sea; adolescents mysteriously waste away; mothers die in childbirth; yet life goes on to a constant underlying murmur of "God's sacred will be done."<sup>9</sup>



Penelope van Princis at work near Sandy Hook, from a drawing in Frank Stockton "Stories of New Jersey" (1896).

The first European women to settle on present-day New Jersey soil were among a small band of people -- two Dutch families and eight single men -- who established homes on Burlington Island in the Delaware River. The first permanent European women residents, however, settled in the community of Pavonia, which included what is now Jersey City and Hoboken. Women also lived in Old Bergen, the first New Jersey village, and in settlements at Shrewsbury and Piscataway-town.

PENELOPE VAN PRINCIS

The name of one early female settler, Penelope van Princis, has come down in history. Penelope was among a band of immigrants who were shipwrecked off the coast of Sandy Hook. While other survivors sought assistance inland, she remained on the beach with her injured husband. Her husband was killed in an attack by natives and Penelope was badly injured. Friendlier natives, however, found Penelope and helped her reach the white settlement.

SILVIA DUBOIS

While white married women did not own property, Black slave women were themselves considered chattel property. And like the majority of Black men, slave women were for the most part field workers. Silvia Dubois, who was born a slave in Rock Mills, New Jersey on March 5, 1768, told of her mother's efforts to become a free woman:

My mother was Dorcas Compton, a slave to Richard Compton, the proprietor of the hotel at Rock Mills. When I was two years old, my mother bought her time of Richard Compton, Minical Dubois going her security for the payment of the money. As my mother failed to make payment at the time appointed, she became the property of Minical Dubois. With this failure to make payment, Dubois was greatly disappointed, and much displeased, as he did not wish to fall heir to my mother and her children, as slaves to him. So he treated mother badly-- oftentimes cruelly. On one occasion, when her baby was but three days old, he whipped her with an ox-gad, because she didn't hold a hog while he yoked it. It was in March; the ground was wet and slippery, and the hog proved too strong for her under the circumstances. From the exposure and the whipping, she became severely sick with pleural fever; but after a long while she recovered.



SILVIA DUBOIS,  
BORN MARCH 5th, 1708.

# SILVIA DUBOIS,

(NOW 116 YERS OLD.)

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## A BIOGRAFY

—OF—

The Slay who Whipt her Mistres

—AND—

## GAND HER FREDOM.

BY C. W. LARISON, M. D.,

PRINCIPAL OF THE ACADEMY OF SIENO AND ART AT RINGOS, N. J.;  
FORMERLY PROF. NATURAL SIENO IN THE UNIVERSITY AT LEWIS-  
BURG, PA.; AUTHOR OF ELEMENTS OF ORTHOEPEY;  
THE TESTING SCHOL, &c., &c.

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RINGOS, N. J.:  
C. W. LARISON, PUBLISHER.  
1888.

A

In contrast to recent studies, DePauw found that the frontier character of life in New Jersey in the seventeenth century, gave women of European background relative freedom. She noted that women did not have to be fastidious in their dress and related the accounts of various visitors to New Jersey who expressed surprise upon seeing how white New Jersey women dressed. A missionary who traveled in New Jersey prior to the Revolutionary War told of finding mothers and daughters in Perth Amboy busily sewing and spinning while dressed only in their shifts.<sup>11</sup> A Swedish clergyman who traveled in Salem and Gloucester counties found "the mistress and the young ladies barefooted at the coffee table."<sup>12</sup>

DePauw also commented upon women's freedom to move around. She related the journey of Hannah Callendar who traveled across the state in 1759 with another woman, Anna Pole. They traveled 50 miles from Burlington to Amboy, a journey which took them from four in the morning till six in the evening. The two stayed overnight in a lodging house in Amboy.<sup>13</sup> At that Perth Amboy was not an idyllic village but the slave mart of the colony where "Blacks were sold at public auction and coffles of slaves in chains could be seen in the streets."<sup>14</sup>

The recent study of Loyalist exiles in London after the American Revolution showed fewer than ten percent of the women were active in business and of that number, most worked in their husband's enterprise. Though it appears that businesswomen were far from common, some New Jersey women did engage in business activities. Mary Alexander was an importer in New York and New Jersey. Her business was so successful that it was commonly said that a ship never docked without a consignment for her.<sup>15</sup> Widow Johnson operated a ferry at Perth Amboy.<sup>16</sup> Silvia Dubois, the slave woman described above, operated a ferry across the Susquehanna River when her master moved from Flagtown, New Jersey.<sup>17</sup>

#### ELIZABETH HADDON

Elizabeth Haddon, whose name today is probably better known than any other New Jersey woman who lived during the colonial period, was a member of the

Quaker community. She was born into a Quaker family in England about 1860. As a child Elizabeth heard William Penn talk about America. In 1698 John Haddon, her father, bought from a Quaker neighbor a tract of 500 acres in western New Jersey, intending to emigrate with his family. When it became impossible for him to carry out his plan, his daughter, Elizabeth, at the time in her twenty-first year, volunteered to come to America and "to provide a home in the wilderness for traveling Ministers." During the first winter at "Haddonfield" she realized her vision: her house became a regular stopping place for friends traveling from one meeting to another.

In 1702 she married a young preacher, John Estaugh, who had been in America for three years. The two lived together in a house built in 1713. At Haddonfield a village grew up and a Quaker Monthly Meeting was established. Elizabeth served as clerk of the Women's Meeting for 50 years. <sup>18</sup>

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#### JUDA BODINE

Juda Bodine was born on March 17, 1735 near Ambrose's Brook, a stream that flowed mid-way between New Brunswick and Metuchen. When her father moved away, to a home farther up the Raritan River, Juda met and married a young Scotchman, and the two moved to a farm home on the Susquehanna River, not far from presentday Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

When Juda and her husband were informed one day that a band of Senecas was close at hand, they sought safety in a stockade seven miles away, which had been constructed for that purpose. Once safe within the stockade, the Bodines decided that the possibility of an Indian attack appeared unlikely, and Juda's husband returned to the homestead on the Susquehanna River to save the family's cattle. He was killed by a party of Senecas and a Tory neighbor on June 10, 1778.

A neighbor rowed Juda and her son down the river to Fort Augusta, then under the command of a Colonel Hunter. As soon as arrangements could be made,

she joined a party returning to New Jersey. She traveled on foot with the son in a little wagon which she had been able to obtain. And "this vehicle she pulled through storm and sunshine, along the gorges, across the streams, through the beech woods, down the valley of the Lehigh, and over the Jersey hills to the place whence she had set out. Three hundred miles the brave woman dragged that little cart." Destitute, she arrived at her New Jersey home, with the only relic which she had saved, a Bible.<sup>19</sup>

PATIENCE LOVELL WRIGHT

Patience Lovell Wright was a gifted modeler in wax who was born in Bordentown in 1725. From childhood she was apt in modeling from dough, putty and wax. When her husband, Joseph Wright, died and left her with three small children, she turned her talent for wax sculpture into a means of generating income.

Already well known in the colonies for her busts and bas-relief portraits, in 1772 she and her children went to London, where she sculpted life-sized figures of prominent people of the times. Though there are few details regarding her activities, it is generally believed that she played the part of an American spy (for the Americans) during the Revolution.<sup>20</sup>

SYBILLA MASTERS

Sybillia Masters, a native of New Jersey, secured the first patent issued to any citizen of the colonies. She invented an instrument to pulverize corn into meal by a stamping process. The power source could be either a water wheel or a horse. In view of the large amount of time devoted to grinding corn by hand, this invention provided a great boon to women and lightened their household tasks considerably.<sup>21</sup>

In 1763 Elizabeth Hoffmire sold 300 acres of land, including a grist mill, barn and house. Eight years later, Elizabeth Clark Bodly purchased 213 acres of wilderness for 260 pounds sterling. To encourage others to settle in the area, she was instrumental in getting the town of Port Elizabeth in Cumberland County

laid out.<sup>22</sup>

Among Quakers, women had a greater opportunity for self-expression than women normally enjoyed. Women were accepted as ministers and elders. In their separate meetings, women played a strong part in church governance, discipline of women, and control of church membership. The first American women's monthly meetings were formed in 1681, on the advice of a Yearly Meeting held in Burlington, which decided that, since Friends were becoming more numerous, it was necessary to establish a women's monthly meeting "for the better management of the discipline and other affairs of the church more proper to be inspected by their sex."<sup>23</sup>

In an effort to carry out the disciplinary role, Hannah Hill made the following recommendations for dress and conduct at the Yearly Meeting held at Burlington on July 21, 1726:<sup>24</sup>

Dear and Well-beloved Sisters:

A Weighty Concern coming upon many faithful friends at this Meeting, in Relation to divers undue Liberties that are too frequently taken by some . . . Tenderly to Caution & Advise friends against those things which we think Inconsistent with our Ancient Christian Testimony of Plainness . . .

At first, That Immodest fashion of hooped Pettycoats . . .  
And also That None of sd friends Accustom themselves to wear their Gowns with Superfluous folds behind, but plain and Decent.  
Nor to go without Aprons . . .  
And that friends are careful to avoid Wearing of Stript Shoos, or Red or White heel'd Shoos . . .  
And also that no friends Use ye Irreverent practice of taking Snuff, or handing Snuff boxes one to Another in Meetings . . .  
Also that friends Avoid ye Unnecessary use of fans in Meetings . . .

Signed on behalf & by ord<sup>r</sup> of ye sd meeting By

Hannah Hill

NOTES

1. Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, Women in America (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979), p. 41.
2. Ibid., p. 43.
3. Ibid., p. 37
4. Ibid.
5. Linda Grant DePauw, Founding Mothers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), p. 71.
6. Berkin and Norton, op. cit., p. 38.
7. Linda Kerber, "Daughters of Columbia: Educating Women for the Republic, 1787-1805," in Linda Kerber and Jane Mathews, Women's America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 81.
8. Catherine M. Scholten, "On the Importance of Obstetrick Art: Changing Customs of Childbirth in America, 1760-1825" in Kerber and Mathews, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
9. Anne Firor Scott, "Self-Portraits" in Kerber and Mathews, op. cit., p. 66.
10. C.W. Larison, A Biography of the Slave Who Whipped her Mistress and Gained Her Freedom (Ringoos, NJ: C.W. Larison, 1883), pp. 44-45.
11. Linda Grant DePauw, Fortunes of War: New Jersey Women and the American Revolution (New Jersey Historical Commission, 1975), p. 6.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Rudolph J. Vecoli, The People of New Jersey, p. 42.
15. Sharon Valiant, Women at Work, New Jersey State Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education and Career Preparation, Office for Equal Access, p. 6.
16. Ibid.
17. Larison, op. cit., pp. 50-52.
18. Dictionary of American Biography.
19. John Bodine Thompson, "A Jersey Woman of the Eighteenth Century" (Read before the New Brunswick Historical Club, March 16, 1893).
20. Dictionary of American Biography.
21. Sharon Valiant, op. cit., p. 6
22. Ibid.
23. Mary Maples Dunn, "Women of Light," in Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, Women of America (Hopewell, New Jersey: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1979), pp. 121-123.
24. Ibid., p. 135

## Suggested Classroom Activities

### Elementary

1. Write a letter from a European female settler in New Jersey to a family member in England. Describe what life is like in the New World, especially the tasks that women must perform.
2. Investigate one household task from the colonial period such as quilting, soap-making, candle-making, baking bread, spinning, brewing for non-natives; and grinding corn, preparing skins for clothing, and pottery-making for Native American women.

Consider the following:

What technology was used to complete the task?  
What skills were required? How were they learned?  
How long did the work take? How frequently was the process carried out?  
Was the task accomplished alone or by working in groups?  
Were children involved? How?  
Where was the work done?  
In wealthy homes, who did it?

Write directions for completing the task.

3. Invite a person skilled in any one of the above to demonstrate the craft to the class.

### Secondary

1. Contrast life styles of the following women:

A white settler and a female slave  
A colonial wife and an English woman of similar economic station  
An indentured servant and a well-to-do colonial lady  
A rural and urban white woman

2. Prepare reports on Patience Lovell Wright, Sybilla Masters, Elizabeth Haddon, or Silvia Dubois.
3. Adapt any of the elementary activities for use by older students.
4. Contrast the Puritan and Quaker views on the role of women.
5. Investigate and report upon the education of young women in the early female academies.
6. Have students imagine and discuss a conversation between an indentured servant and a slave who worked on a large farm. Let them discuss: how their days pass, how they are treated, what they dislike about their situations, how they got where they are, their compensation, what kinds of protection are available in case of abuse, how they resist exploitation, what they hope for in the future, and what their homelife is like.

# Cornelius Low House/Ivy Hall

A RESOURCE FOR LEARNING ABOUT  
COLONIAL (AND OTHER) WOMEN



1225 River Road, Piscataway, N.J. 08854

PLEASE DIRECT ALL INQUIRIES TO:

841 Georges Road, North Brunswick, N.J. 08902

PROSPECTUS: "Women's Sphere"

Exhibit to take place at the Cornelius Low House/  
Ivy Hall (the Middlesex County Museum) during  
September and October, 1983.

#### Planning

Committee: Lynn Miller, Media Librarian  
Rutgers University Libraries

Ferris Olin, Art Librarian  
Rutgers University Libraries

Jeffrey A. Kesper, Administrator  
Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission

Barbie Hutchings, Acting Curator  
Cornelius Low House/ Ivy Hall

The proposed exhibit is planned in celebration of Middlesex County's tercentenary and will document and describe the life styles of women who have lived in Middlesex County between the years 1683 and 1983.

It is hoped that through this exhibit museum visitors will gain better understanding of the nature of women's lives since 1683 and of changes that have occurred in women's lives over the past three centuries, of the ways in which women have implemented changes, and have been beneficiaries or victims of societal developments primarily within the context of the Middlesex County area, but also throughout New Jersey. We would like to bring to life for current residents of Middlesex County the ways in which women have impacted on and contributed to the development of the county, and the state, and the ways in which Middlesex County's women have asserted leadership over the past three hundred years. Although the exhibit will revolve around women who have lived in Middlesex County, it will not necessarily be limited to this scope.



Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, 841 Georges Road,  
North Brunswick, New Jersey 08902 (201) 745-4489 (9am-4pm weekdays)

In order to better focus on this wide topic, it has been divided into seven sub-spheres, each consisting of women's roles and/or activities. The sub-spheres are as follows:

- 1) Women in the market place
- 2) Women in the home
- 3) Women in the community
- 4) Women in the arts
- 5) Women in sports
- 6) Women as victims/victimizers
- 7) Women as healers

Documentation will include but will not be limited to photographs, household and other implements used by women, diaries, cookbooks, charts (childbirth, marriage, death, market place and employment rates at 50 year intervals), oral histories (video tapes), visual art work and crafts, literature written by, about, and/or for women, and gynecological instruments.

Programs will be held to complement the exhibit. Ideas include sampler-making workshops, a fair that would feature food made from 17th, 18th and 19th century recipes, a run ("From the Parasol to the Marathon") and excerpts from literature and letters produced as a play or a monologue.

Resources will include but not be limited to the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Institute for Research on Women's Studies, the Douglass College Middlesex County Alumni Club, the Embroiderers Guild of America, the Home News Library, the Federated Women's Clubs of New Jersey, the New Jersey Blue Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the New Jersey Historical Society and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Division on Women.

As a product of the research, exhibit and programming, a catalogue will be published.

## WOMEN IN THE REVOLUTION AND IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

Although women could not vote or hold public office, women helped create the political climate which preceded the Revolutionary War. They assured the success of the American boycott of British goods by making cloth at home and not using British tea. Thus spinning, like not drinking tea, became a patriotic and political act of defiance which many women employed.

Women responded to the war in different ways, but on one point women agreed: almost none of them wanted their men taken away from home to fight, and they continually implored British and American officers to release their men from duty.<sup>1</sup> These requests reflected the hardships which women experienced. The reduction in harvests and the demands of foraging parties created a shortage of food. Troops encamped in areas of conflict took over homes, requiring families to crowd into single rooms or to find other quarters. Strange men bivouacked in the home also brought the threat of disease, theft, and sexual assaults.

For Black female slaves, the chaos of the Revolution brought unprecedented opportunities to escape. The British commanders, eager to disrupt the labor supply, offered freedom to slaves who joined their ranks. Many slaves -- men, women and children -- ran away from their owners to find freedom under the British flag. In the later years of the war, each time a British ship left port, it carried large numbers of former slaves. Of the 2,863 former slaves whose sex was specified on the embarkation lists, 42.3 percent were women. The family groups included "Jane Thompson, 70, worn out with a grandchild five years old"; and Hannah Whitten, 30, with her five children, ages eight, seven, six, five and one.<sup>2</sup>

As long as the war was far off, many people -- both men and women -- did not choose sides. But when soldiers took the livestock or the family's winter food supply, people made up their minds. They chose the other side.

The war, since it was a civil conflict, created splits in communities and within families. Because men dominated in public matters, wives were expected to have the same politics as their husbands. Wives of men who were serving with the British faced the censure of patriot neighbors, and many followed the British army. Because neither the British nor American armies included a quartermaster unit, both forces employed women to wash, nurse, and cook for the soldiers; and thousands of women traveled with both armies. In August of 1777, General Washington complained, "The multitude of women...especially those who are pregnant, or have children, are a clog upon every movement."<sup>3</sup>

The American colonists' quest for fair and democratic government starkly contrasted to their own practice of human slavery and the inferior status of women. British taxation without representation angered the American colonists, but few appear to have believed that Blacks and women should vote.

At the close of the war, Americans gained a new sense of independence and civic responsibility which positively affected attitudes toward education of women. Women as nurturers of future citizens had a need for education. They needed to learn more than embroidery, spinning, and needle point. They needed to become acquainted with the ideas which were shaping the world. As a result, there were major improvements in education between 1790 and 1830. Schools for young women of the upper class flourished. Middle-class girls attended school for longer periods and town academies began to open female departments. As more women became teachers, they added new academic courses and they developed better instructional materials.

There were those who opposed the intellectual development of women, saying that learning was a male province and that knowledge led to masculinity and pedantry. Women's magazines cautioned women against too much emphasis upon education and the neglect of the female virtues. Even the most privileged and enlightened women were careful to maintain their domestic image, and women who wanted to be free of domestic responsibilities had few role models. Mary Wollstonecraft had inspired many women to seek freer lives with her book, Vindication of the Rights of Women, which was published in 1792, but the later discovery that she had engaged in an extramarital affair was used to discredit her work in 19th century America.

The English heritage affected women in legal ways. Just before the war, the publication of William Blackstone's Commentaries on the Common Law had provided lawyers with a concise and ready interpretation. Blackstone was extremely harsh toward women. His interpretations followed the tradition of coverture, which gave the husband power over his wife's property and authority to represent her in public affairs. Married women could not make a will. Widows received one-third of their husband's estate. The only safe way a married woman could protect the property she owned before marriage was to place it in trusteeship controlled by another man.

#### New Jersey During this Era

New Jersey women did not follow the course of the Revolutionary War simply by reading about it in the newspapers. Where records exist of political activity by women's circles in New Jersey during the war, the activity was on the patriot side.<sup>4</sup> The war, especially in the earlier years, was fought in New Jersey towns, neighborhoods and homes.

Evidence that war was a reality was dramatically supplied to residents of the coastal area on a July morning in 1776 when they awakened to find more than 100 British ships anchored in the Arthur Kill. When the troops landed, local

people could view the redcoats drilling and parading on Staten Island. Soon after British troops conquered Fort Washington in New York and climbed the Palisades Cliffs to rout the Americans who were defending Fort Lee. The badly shocked patriots fled from the fort, leaving ammunition and scarce provisions of war behind. Following this debacle, George Washington, the American general, beat a hasty retreat from his Hackensack camp site across the state to a safer position on the banks of the Delaware River.

During three winters Washington's army bedded in the state. Each time the American general looked to farmers in the surrounding countryside to purchase food for his hungry troops. When British troops marched through New Jersey, they foraged for provisions, plundered and intimidated local inhabitants. Bloody battles at Trenton, Springfield, Princeton, and Freehold left scores of injured and sick men lodged in the homes of local citizens.

Jemima Condict, who was born August 24, 1755 in a section of the town of West Orange known as Pleasantdale, has supplied a firsthand account of the impact of the war upon the community in a diary, which she kept from 1772 to 1779. The first account of the impending war was entered on October 1, 1774, soon after the tax on tea was passed. Jemima wrote:

It seems we have troublesome times a coming, for there is great disturbance abroad in the earth and they say it is tea that caused it. So then if they will quarrel about such a trifling thing as that, what must we expect but war. I think or at least fear it will be so.<sup>5</sup>

On April 23, 1775 she heard news of Lexington and Concord:

As every day brings new troubles, so this day brings news that yesterday, very early in the morning, they began to fight at Boston. The regulars (British troops) we hear, shot first. They killed 30 of our men. A hundred and fifty of the regulars were killed.<sup>6</sup>

Word of the huge British armada reached Pleasantdale in May and Jemima described the unsettling effect that the news had upon her community:

This day, I think, is a day of mourning. We have word come that the Fleet is coming into New York. Also, today the men of our town is to have a general meeting to conclude upon measures which may be most proper to be taken. They have chose men to act for them. I hope the Lord will give them wisdom to conduct wisely and prudently in all matters.<sup>7</sup>

On September 12, 1777, she described a military encounter at Wardgesson (now Bloomfield), which was about four miles from Pleasantdale:

On Friday there was an alarm. Our militia was called. The regulars (British) came over into Elizabethtown where they had a brush with a small party of our people, then marched quietly up to Newark and took all the cattle they could... On Saturday morning marched up towards Wardgesson. Our people attacked them there, where they had a smart scrimmage. Some of our people got wounded there; but I do not learn that any was killed. There was several killed of the regulars but the number is yet uncertain.<sup>8</sup>

Though most of New Jersey was at least passively sympathetic to the patriots, women tended to choose sides for pragmatic rather than purely political reasons. Baroness Friederike Charlotte Luise von Riedesel, wife of the chief of Hessian officers in America, accompanied her husband throughout the war and wrote of her displeasure with the changing loyalties of a New Jersey family. While providing overnight accommodation to the Baroness in Middlebrook (present-day<sup>1</sup> Bound Brook), the Van Horne family announced their loyalty to the king and asked the Baroness to give their regards to British General Charles Cornwallis. Three days later, when the Baroness was back in Middlebrook, she found American officers already lodging with the Van Hornes. The Baroness was especially peeved that the daughter of the house "allowed (them) all sorts of liberties and sat up most of the night with them singing 'God save great Washington! God damn the King!'" But the next time she passed the Van Horne's home in her carriage, they came out to greet her smiling and asked her to give regards "to the King and assure him of their loyalty."<sup>9</sup>

Women known to have Loyalist sympathies were in many instances banished from the state. As early as 1777, the state legislature authorized the New Jersey Council of Safety "to send into the Enemy's lines such of the wives and children of persons lately residing within this State, who have gone over to the Enemy, as they shall think necessary." And although Sally Medlis, a Newark resident, promised that she would never hold any correspondence whatsoever with her Husband or in any manner or way injure the State," she was exiled along with other wives of Newark Loyalists.<sup>10</sup>

According to historical accounts, New Jersey women suffered brutally from the hands of British soldiers. Two such accounts were circulated widely during the war. One occurred at the time of the battle of Trenton, in December 1776, when a company of British regulars occupied all but one room of the farmhouse of William Clark. While the husband was away, a second company of British soldiers descended upon the house and demanded that they be provided with a room. When the wife protested, the British officer verbally abused the poor woman so that she "fell into a violent disorder and soon after miscarryd."<sup>11</sup> While recovering from this incident, another party of British soldiers descended upon the Clarks' home, forced the woman from her bed, and proceeded to plunder everything of value in the house.<sup>12</sup>

A second incident involved Hannah Ogden Caldwell of Connecticut Farms (now the town of Union). While her husband served with New Jersey troops, British soldiers passed through pillaging, plundering and burning. Hannah Caldwell hid the family's most valuable possessions, then barricaded herself and her children in a back room. A British soldier fired through the window, killing the mother, who was nursing the youngest child when she was hit.

One of the best known examples of a New Jersey woman's confrontation with British forces occurred at the Battle of Monmouth. The identity of Molly Pitcher, who reputedly took over her husband's gun after he was slain in battle, has never been clearly established. DePauw notes that a good many women were on the field that day, and at least two were observed going beyond the usual role assigned to women and handled weapons. Neither was referred to at the time as Molly Pitcher. One whose husband was killed was observed firing a musket. Another, whose husband received no injury, lost the bottom of her skirt to a British cannon, which sailed between her legs as she assisted her husband in firing an artillery piece.

Another well known story of female ingenuity involved Tempe Wick of Jockey Hollow.<sup>13</sup> When ordered to turn over her horse to a group of Washington's soldiers, Tempe rode home as fast as she could. When she arrived, she led the horse into her guest bedroom, knowing that the soldiers would look for it in the stable. The horse remained there for three days, some accounts say three weeks, until the soldiers stopped looking for it.<sup>14</sup>

One of the most striking developments to emerge from the Revolutionary War period reflected a new consciousness regarding the political rights of some formerly disenfranchised citizens of the state. Two days before the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence, the state of New Jersey adopted a new constitution that stated, "All inhabitants of this Colony, of full age, who are worth fifty pounds proclamation money, clear estate in the same and have resided in the county in which they claim their vote for twelve months immediately preceding the election, shall be entitled to vote..."

An election law passed in 1790 by the New Jersey legislature clearly referred to voters as "he and she." In line with this legislation, women and Blacks in New Jersey who could meet the requirements of the suffrage law voted until the year 1807 when the legislature acted to restrict voting rights to "free, white,

male citizens." The reason given for the action of the legislature was that voting practices in the state were corrupt and that the new voters were being exploited by unscrupulous politicians.

New Jersey women made important contributions to the new emphasis placed upon the education of women. Almira Phelps (1793-1884) was mostly responsible for bringing science into the standard curriculum in public schools. She wrote popular texts in botany, chemistry and geology. From 1839-1841 she was the head of the Rahway Female Institute. Clemence Logier (1813-1888) of Plainfield was vitally interested in reform and medicine. In her school she was one of the first to teach physiology, anatomy and hygiene. After going to medical school she helped establish the first women's medical college in New York. Her reform activities were varied. She advocated clothing reform for women, women's higher education, suffrage, the abolition of slavery, improved prison conditions, better treatment of Native Americans and sanitary reform.

NOTES

1. Linda DePauw, Fortunes of War (Trenton: N.J. Historical Commission, 1975), pp. 12-13
2. Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), pp. 209-211.
3. De Pauw, op. cit., p.28.
4. Ibid., p. 23.
5. Jemima Condict's Diary (Newark: The N.J. Historical Society).
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. DePauw, op. cit., pp. 14-15.
10. Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), p. 51.
11. DePauw, op. cit., p. 17.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., pp. 29-30
14. Ibid., pp. 22-23

## Suggested Classroom Activities

### Elementary

1. Imagining yourself a colonial woman, write a letter to General Washington imploring him to release your father or husband from duty with the American army. Explain how much he is needed at home and describe how difficult your life is without him.
2. Divide students into small groups and ask each group to develop an illustrated talk on women's role during the Revolutionary War. The drawings could be made on long sheets of brown wrapping paper and unrolled by two members of the class while a third member of the group explains what the drawings represent or reads from a text which the group has written.
3. On a map of the state, indicate the location of towns in which events occurred which involved Revolutionary women.
4. Dramatize a conversation between Tempe Wicke and the British soldiers.
5. Visit the Jockey Hollow farmhouse in which Tempe Wicke lived.
6. Role play two New Jersey colonial women who try to vote after 1807.

### Secondary

1. Read and report on the life of Mary Wollstonecraft and how her book, Vindication of the Rights of Women, laid the groundwork for the feminist movement.
2. Compare the education which a 16-year-old New Jersey young woman would have received in 1800 and 1900; 1800 and 1983.
3. Read and report on the remarkable woman, Baroness Frederike Charlotte Luise von Riedesel, who accompanied her husband throughout the war as he commanded the Hessian troops, and who wrote an account of her experiences.

4. Consider and discuss the irony of the following:
  - a. The Declaration of Independence and the practice of human slavery
  - b. Taxation without representation and the disenfranchisement of women and Blacks
  
5. Contrast the hardships and difficulties faced during the Revolutionary War by
  - a. Loyalist and Patriot women
  - b. White women and slave women

## WOMEN DURING THE ERA OF EARLY INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE CIVIL WAR

The face of America changed between 1820 and 1880, but in many ways the status of women did not improve. Married women still had no legal right to their earnings or to their children, and in many states they could not own property. They could not testify against their husbands in court; they could not make a contract, could not sue or be sued, and, unless everything was left to the husband, could not make a will without their husband's consent. When a husband died, the widow could stay only forty days in the house without paying rent; she had the life use of only one-third of his real estate. No liberal arts college, with the exception of Oberlin, admitted women. With the exception of writing and school teaching, the professions were closed to them. In all occupations women were paid much less than men.

The owners of the textile factories of the first wave of industrialization clearly counted on a steady supply of cheap female labor when they built the mills. As a result, women formed the first new workforce that was shaped into "modern" patterns. They became disciplined workers, spending long, uninterrupted hours of labor in a mechanized factory with little or no room for individual initiative.<sup>1</sup>

At first factory owners employed young, native white women, while private families hired immigrant women as domestic servants.<sup>2</sup> Whatever their specific trade, women industrial workers came from the lower ranks of society; they were primarily young and single, and held jobs with few opportunities for advancement or even permanent employment.<sup>3</sup> These women worked mostly in industries making garments, hats, gloves and shoes. Without exception, they were excluded from supervisory positions and apprenticeship programs. The practice described below applied to the shoe industry, but it was typical of the treatment which women workers received:

. . . In the shoe and boot industry, men received a long apprenticeship when they were boys and learned all the processes involved in making the finished product. Women, on the other hand, though they played an important part in the development of the industry, were employed almost exclusively in sewing or binding.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the growth of industry, analyses of women's jobs since 1800 have shown some surprising continuities with earlier periods. Although the mechanization of textile production created industrial jobs for white women, textile manufacturers did not employ as many women as private households where half of all women wage earners in the United States worked as domestic servants in 1870. Black women worked in large numbers both before and after emancipation. The employment rates of urban Black married women remained consistently higher than those of all white women, both native-born and immigrant, throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

Both native-born and immigrant white women entered the labor market because of need -- to help save a farm, send a brother to school, finance a family's move to the West, or help a family survive economically. For similar reasons, women worked in the home, taking in boarders, washing their clothes and cooking for them.

The lives of farm women were also hard. In 1862, in its first annual report, the Department of Agriculture published a study by Dr. W. W. Hall on the condition of farm women. Dr. Hall wrote:

In plain language, in the civilization of the latter half of the nineteenth century, a farmer's wife, as a general rule, is a laboring drudge . . . It is safe to say that on three farms out of four, the wife works harder, endures more, than any other on the place; more than the husband, more than the 'farm hand,' more than the 'hired help' of the kitchen.<sup>6</sup>

Gerda Lerner argues that both working and middle-class women suffered and their status declined between 1800 and 1840. She says that working class women were confined to sex-typed, low-skilled, poorly-paid, and often temporary, jobs, while the middle-class women had fewer opportunities.<sup>7</sup> The new technological developments did help women in some ways, however. The improvement of transportation, for example, made it possible for women to move around and to become involved in the abolition and temperance movements and the effort to establish women's seminaries.



The lives of immigrant women reflected the harsh conditions imposed upon workers by the new wave of industrialization. Both at home and and at work these women struggled to help the family survive. Pictures are from "In Search of our Past," produced by the Women's Studies Program, Berkeley, California Unified School District, under the sponsorship of the Women's Educational Equity Act Program.



The Civil War was the most traumatic event of the century. Women were involved in the great national debate which preceded the war, in the fund-raising, nursing, and political organizing. The leaders of the women's rights movement suspended their conventions and directed their efforts toward the goal of emancipation of the slaves. In May, 1863, these women called a meeting to organize the Women's National Loyal League, with the goal of collecting one million signatures to petition Congress to pass an amendment freeing the slaves.

Women also supported the war by forming soldiers' aid societies. They made bandages, sewed hospital garments, knitted socks, and collected food and other supplies for the wounded. A Sanitary Commission, organized by women, became an indispensable part of the Union medical services. Together the women of the North raised \$50 million for its work.

One of the most pervasive ideas that affected women during the nineteenth century was the concept of the "true woman." The true woman, as defined by editors, writers and educators, had the virtues of piety, purity, submission and domesticity.<sup>8</sup> The true woman was deeply religious, pure, chaste and removed from anything that suggested sexuality. She bestowed her greatest gift to her husband upon marriage, and thereafter submitted her own desires to that of her mate. She and her husband moved in separate spheres: he represented the family in the public domain; she was sovereign in the home.

Recently, some historians have reassessed the view that the cult of domesticity stripped women of power. Instead, they suggest, the ideology of separate spheres, by giving women an area of relative autonomy, enhanced their individual and collective self-image and ultimately permitted women to extend and even to transcend their sphere.<sup>9</sup>

Newspapers and women's magazines disseminated the ideology of the true woman, and women, who had closed the great gap in literacy between men and themselves,

read the publications eagerly. As further evidence of women's educational progress, within a single generation women replaced men in the ranks of teachers, where until this day women continue to dominate. As many observers have pointed out, however, the "effective reason" that women were employed in schools was that they were cheaper than men. If they had not been cheaper, "they would not have replaced nine-tenths of the men in American public schools."<sup>10</sup>

Finally, discontent with the narrowness of women's lives provoked the historical meeting at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. Here under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, with some strong support from Sojourner Truth, women collectively stated their grievances and laid the ground work for the modern feminist movement.

#### NEW JERSEY DURING THIS ERA

During the nineteenth century, thousands of New Jersey women labored in the mills in Newark, Paterson, and other growing industrial centers. Conditions in many of these factories spawned strong worker protests. In the summer of 1828, the children of Paterson, including a large number of girls, marched out of the cotton mills after the owner attempted to change their lunch hour from 12 to 1. One observer noted, "The children would not stand for it, for fear that the next thing would be to deprive them of eating at all." The children were supported by their parents and joined by carpenters, masons and machinists. They also extended the strike to include a demand for a ten-hour day. The militia was called out to end the disturbance and the strike ended when the owners reestablished the 12:00 lunch hour.<sup>11</sup>

The immigrant women were not the only exceptions to the true woman concept, as slave women were hardly thought of as women. They frequently did the same kind of work that men did and, in their role as servants, were sexually assaulted by male owners. This interview of a former New Jersey slave supplies a first-hand opinion of treatment they sometimes received:

Interviewer: Well, your mistress was always kind to you, wasn't she?

Former Slave: Kind to me; why she was the very devil himself. Why she'd level me with anything she cud get hold of -- club, stick of wood, tongs, fire shovel, knife, axe, hatchet; anything that was handiest; and then she was so damned quick about it, too.

Interviewer: Well, did she ever hit you?

Former Slave: Yes, often. Once she knocked me till I was so stiff that she thought I was dead; once after that, because I was a little saucy, she leveled me with the fire shovel and broke my pate (skull) She thought I was dead then, but I wasn't.<sup>12</sup>

A source of strong anti-slavery sentiment in New Jersey was a newspaper published in Boonton called the New Jersey Freeman. The Freeman condemned the Constitutional Convention of 1844 which denied the vote for women and blacks. The newspaper also condemned the racism encountered by non-white children who sought to attend the free schools in New Jersey.<sup>13</sup>

The Underground Railroad followed varied routes through New Jersey, the variety of travel patterns aiding in the constant effort to evade fugitive hunters. Escaped slaves would be met in southern New Jersey by Quaker sympathizers who helped them travel through the state and head north. One of the best known Quaker women was Abigail Goodwin of Salem, who reportedly gave so much to the anti-slavery movement that she lived in abject poverty.

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#### HARRIET TUBMAN

One of the most famous operators on the railroad was Harriet Tubman, who worked as a cook in a Cape May hotel during the summer of 1852. From this location, this courageous woman helped slaves from Maryland and Delaware escape across the Delaware to New Jersey. It is estimated that during her lifetime, Tubman, who had escaped from slavery in 1849, helped more than 300 slaves escape from bondage.<sup>14</sup>



Source: Women's Educational Equity Act Program, "In Search of our Past," produced by Women's Studies Program, Berkeley, California Unified School District.

Escaped slaves were far from safe in New Jersey, The Freeman observed: "Our State still continues to be the hunting ground of the kidnapper, and some of our inhabitants have during the past year been dragged away without even the forms of law, into hopeless Slavery."

There were many bonds between New Jersey and the South which caused many residents of the state to sympathize strongly with the Southern cause. Half the student body at Princeton College reportedly came from the South and Southern families vacationed annually at Cape May. Powerful New Jersey political and editorial forces supported the South on the slavery question. Perhaps the primary reason that New Jersey had not become a major slave-holding state was the industrial nature of its development. Certainly the early New Jersey farmers had not found the use of slaves objectionable and the treatment which these bonded persons received appears to have conformed to practices followed in more southern states.

The first antislavery societies formed in the 1830s were all-male, but women soon became a part of the anti-slavery movement with an organization of their own. Black women in some sections of the North organized anti-slavery societies as early as 1830.

#### LUCY STONE

One of the most active New Jersey women in the anti-slavery struggle was Lucy Stone, who lived in Orange for many years, although she was born near West Brookfield, Massachusetts. As a young woman, she became deeply concerned about the subordinate position of women in all public affairs. Fired by a strong desire to gain a college education, Lucy Stone entered Oberlin College, the first United State college to accept Blacks and women. Following her graduation from college, she began lecturing for the Anti-Slavery Society, including in her presentation a plea for the elevation of women.

Although it is said that she had intended to remain single, she married Henry Brown Blackwell, but refused to take his name, merely substituting the title Mrs. for Miss. The two moved to Orange, where Lucy Stone continued her campaign for women's liberation. In 1858 she refused to pay taxes and let her household goods be sold as a protest against taxation without representation.

When the Fourteenth Amendment to the federal Constitution was pending, she and Henry Blackwell vainly strove to win suffrage for women by getting the word "male" struck from the bill. In 1869 Lucy Stone introduced the resolution declaring the women's support for the Fifteenth Amendment at a Women's Rights Convention in Chicago and asserted that "we rejoice in every extension of suffrage." The resolution carried with only two dissenting votes. Stone declared that the vote was an accurate expression of the feeling of the woman's suffrage advocates in regard to the Fifteenth Amendment.<sup>15</sup>

Frederick Douglass was critical of woman's rights leaders who addressed audiences from which Blacks were barred. His particular target was Lucy Stone. While Douglass often praised this abolitionist and veteran fighter for equal rights for women, he criticized her for not having cancelled a lecture in 1853 at Philadelphia's Music Hall when she discovered that Blacks were to be excluded. Later, he was more severe when he learned that she had invited Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, one of the architects of the infamous Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and author of the pro-slavery Kansas-Nabraska Act, to join the women who were to meet in Chicago in 1859 to publicize the women's rights cause. 16

In 1866, when the American Equal Rights Association was formed, Lucy Stone was made a member of the executive committee. In 1867, partly through her efforts, the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association was organized and she became its first president. In 1868, while still living in New Jersey, she and her husband helped organize the New England Woman Suffrage Association.

When a split occurred in the American Equal Rights Association and the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association were organized, she helped form the latter, which concentrated on gaining suffrage by states.

Stone raised most of the money with which the Woman's Journal was founded in 1870. Two years later she and her husband assumed the editorship and were in charge of it for the remainder of their lives. Under their direction, the publication became a tower of strength in the cause of woman's rights.

Throughout the nineteenth century women tried to influence public policy despite the fact that they could not vote: individual women sent private petitions to legislatures; philanthropic groups established charities when

public pensions failed; women dominated the temperance movement; they joined the abolitionist movement and shaped its campaign.

DOROTHEA DIX

The New Jersey legislature and thousands of mentally deficient citizens in the state were affected by one woman's ability to initiate change. When the New Jersey legislature failed to act on a report to improve the facilities for the treatment of the insane, Dorothea Dix, whose work in behalf of insane persons in Massachusetts had brought national attention, made an independent study of facilities for mentally ill persons in New Jersey. Dix visited nearly every place where mentally ill were housed and her report pointed out shocking conditions. In Middlesex County a man was chained "in a sort of a box next to which in a cell a madman stood naked except for a laced strait-jacket"; Morris County kept its inmates in quarters which were "dark, damp, unfurnished, unwarmed, and unventilated." After persistent lobbying by Dix, the legislature in April 1844 voted to build a new mental hospital. And four years later the most modern mental health facility in the nation was opened in Trenton.

CORNELIA HANCOCK

Cornelia Hancock was a New Jersey woman who went to the battlefields of the Civil War. July 4, 1863 she left her home in Hancock's Bridge in Salem County to head for the Gettysburg, Pennsylvania battlefield. She was 23 years old. Too young to become a nurse she was rejected for service.

Undaunted she took the train for Gettysburg and having reached the battlefield found, "the need was so great there was no further cavil about age."

Cunningham writes:

She had no training, no medicine, no supplies, but Cornelia instinctively knew that kindness was most needed by Gettysburg's casualties. She wrote letters home for dying soldiers. She obtained food without a voucher, made sandwiches, and passed them out to soldiers staying on the battlefield. She obtained tobacco for wounded men despite her hatred for smoking. . . She went South to continue nursing. After the war, she stayed in the South to devote most of her remaining life to

working with freedmen.<sup>17</sup>

#### CLARA BARTON

As a young woman, Clara Barton, who later went on to Civil War fame and national renown as the founder of the American Red Cross, taught school in Bordentown. At the time her school was established, fees paid by students made up the teacher's salary. Miss Barton was disturbed by the large number of children running in the streets, and offered to serve three months without pay if the town would make the school free to all. In the face of the strongest opposition, she persuaded the school committee to try the experiment. So many children enrolled in her school that soon the town built a much larger school house and employed an assistant teacher. Opposition to a woman's heading so large a school arose, however, and a male principal was appointed. Clara Barton resigned and her career as a teacher ended.<sup>18</sup>

Women seeking to develop new lifestyles were very involved in the establishment of new utopian communities. These communities sought to prove that people could live together, sharing equally in the work and produce of their work, with women having equality in all things. Brook Farm near Boston, founded in 1842, is the best known of these experimental communities, but the North American Phalanx at Red Bank was more successful. Other New Jersey utopian communities included New Harmony and the Raritan Bay Union, near Perth Amboy.

Notable figures who participated in the Raritan Bay Union Community included Sarah and Angelia Grimke, key figures in the abolition struggle, and Elizabeth Peabody, who founded the first American kindergarten in Boston. Mrs. Marcus Spring, wife of the founder of Raritan Bay Union provoked wide

spread censure by bringing two of John Brown's executed raiders to the community for burial.

## Notes

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17. Cunningham, op. cit., p. 190.
18. Dictionary of American Biography, pp. 18-21.

## Suggested Classroom Activities

### Elementary

1. Plan a field trip to Paterson and visit the museum and the old textile mills. Look for such things as: early methods of weaving, dyeing and storing fabric. Identify the kinds of jobs that women held.
2. Dramatize the Paterson children's strike of 1828 and discuss the conditions that led to the strike -- work day, pay, age of workers, attitude of parents. Discuss the differences in working conditions for children today.
3. Point out reasons that women worked in the early industrial period. Are reasons similar to those of women today?
4. Plan a field trip to Bordentown and visit the school in which Clara Barton taught. In a post-trip discussion, contrast the difference between Clara Barton's school and your own.

### Secondary

1. Describe patterns of work employed by various groups:

working class white women,  
Black female slaves  
middle class white women  
newly arrived immigrants

Consider such factors as compensation, work schedule, status and skills.

2. Consider the impact of capitalist industrialism upon the lives of women, children, families. Identify positive and negative aspects.
3. List the grievances which women had which led to the Seneca Falls Convention. Which ones still exist?
4. Contrast the "ideal woman" of the nineteenth century with the model woman of today. Identify devices (then and now) used to sell the ideal to women.

It is a policy of the State Board of Education and the New Jersey Department of Education that no person, on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, age, sex, handicap or marital status, shall be subjected to discrimination in employment or be excluded from or denied benefits of any activity, program or service for which the Department has responsibility. The Department will comply with all state and federal laws and regulations concerning non-discrimination.





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