

# *The Role of Women and the Social/Political Climate of the United States During the Civil War*

*A Web Quest Developed by Marie McNamara & Bobbie Kane*

**Context:** The Civil War was the result of the diverse lifestyles of the North and South. The North wanted to keep the Union together while the South tried to claim state's rights and secede from the Union. It was the bloodiest war the nation had ever seen with brother fighting against brother. Yet the part played by women in the unfolding of this nation's history cannot be denied.

Amidst the actual fighting, other battles were occurring that would also leave an indelible mark on the nation's history. These included the suffrage, abolition and temperance movements. Women played a remarkable role in the changes taking place in the United States. They were also instrumental in the actual events that took place on the battlefields. Everywhere there was a call for strong people to lead, to assist, to fight for change, women were represented.

**Task:** You will be divided into groups of four. Each member of your group will have a specific subject to research. These four subjects are:

- 1.) [Abolition](#)
- 2.) [Woman Suffrage](#)
- 3.) [Temperance](#)
- 4.) [Women in the Civil War](#)

When you have been assigned to one of the above, click on the topic and it will take you to a set of questions you are responsible for answering. These answers will be found in the web addresses listed below the questions and are hypertext.

Once you have collected all of the material you will come together as a group and create an essay that describes the efforts and triumphs of women during this period in history.

Be certain to describe the social climate of the times, especially the forces that were working against these women. Include the women who specifically brought about change or set the example for others. Once you have accomplished this you will present your essay to the class.

## 1.) Abolition

- A. How was the struggle for abolition different for African Americans than for the white abolitionists?
- B. What was David Walker's Appeal?
- C. How was it (David Walker's Appeal) dispersed in the South and what was its impact?
- D. Who was William Lloyd Garrison?
- E. Name five of the most important women involved in the abolition movement.
- F. How did they participate and what hardships did they face?
- G. Evaluate their contribution.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4narr2.html>

- A. What was the relationship between the suffragists and the abolitionists?
- B. Who was Lucretia Mott?
- C. What argument caused a split among some of the members of the Women's Rights groups and the abolitionists (with which sides did the prominent individuals ally themselves?)?

<http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/index.html?body=abolitionists.html>

## 2.) Woman Suffrage

- A. Define the word enfranchise.
- B. What occurred at Seneca Falls?
- C. What was the Declaration of Sentiments and what was it modeled after?
- D. What did separate spheres mean for men and women and how did this belief block women's progress?
- E. Were all women in favor of woman suffrage? Why or why not?
- F. The Anti-suffrage people found support from what other organizations?
- G. Why did this occur?
- H. Was winning the vote the end of the struggle for women? Why or why not?

<http://www.feminist.com/resources/artspeech/remember/rtl5.htm>

- A. What are two of the fears held by Americans who were against giving women the vote?
  - B. What argument dating back to the American Revolution did Susan B. Anthony use to argue that women should be allowed to vote?
  - C. What occurred that resulted in Susan B. Anthony's arrest?
  - D. What illegal action did the Judge in her case take?
- <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/web09/segment2.html>

### 3.) Temperance

- A. Define the word Temperance.
- B. Where and when were the first temperance organizations in the U.S. founded?
- C. What was the first international temperance organization?

[http://search.eb.com/women/articles/temperance\\_movement.html](http://search.eb.com/women/articles/temperance_movement.html)

- A. What society published hundreds of pamphlets and informational brochures?
- B. What kinds of evils did the pamphlets and brochures warn against?

<http://www.hds.harvard.edu/library/exhibitc/11.html>

- A. Describe several purposes people had for liquor.
- B. Why was temperance seen as a woman's issue?
- C. What reasons did women have for wanting to get rid of alcohol?
- D. What specific things did women do, in order to bring about the end of drinking alcohol?
- E. What was the result?
- F. What did this show about women as a group?
- G. What is the relevance of this to other feminist activities?

<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/wctu.html#history>

### 4.) Women in the Civil War

- A. During all wars women have been noted for their tremendous contributions on the home front. What was the contribution of the women in this article?

- B. Why did the Records and Pension Office deny that there were female soldiers in the Civil War?
- C. How were women able to pass the physical exam without being detected?
- D. Why was it never noticed that they had very little prior training with the use of a gun?
- E. Why did the writers in the 1800's describe the women who had served in the war as freaks?

[http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/spring\\_1993\\_women\\_in\\_the\\_civil\\_war\\_1.html](http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/spring_1993_women_in_the_civil_war_1.html)

- A. What caused Harriet Tubman to begin thinking she should be a free woman?
- B. How many times did Harriet Tubman return to the South?
- C. About how many slaves did she eventually lead to freedom?
- D. What caused Harriet Tubman's status of "free" to revert back to slave?
- E. Describe the personal characteristics of Harriet Tubman that helped her to achieve her goals.

