

*The Selected Papers of  
Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*

◀ VOLUME I ▶

IN THE SCHOOL OF ANTI-SLAVERY  
1840 TO 1866

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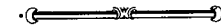
1. Home of her sister Martha Coffin Wright. Lucretia and James Mott spent much of the summer of 1848 in New York and Canada, with visits to the Seneca tribe at the Cattaraugus Reservation and African-American refugees in Canada West, attendance at Genesee Yearly Meeting, and participation in two woman's rights conventions. (L. C. Mott to Edmund Quincy, *Lib.*, 6 October 1848.)

2. Mary Ann Wilson McClintock (1800-1884) moved to Waterloo with her husband Thomas in 1836, and like him was a leader among Quakers and an abolitionist. She and Lucretia Mott were visiting Quaker communities, like the one at De Ruyter, in Madison County east of Auburn, about the Congregational Friends. (*Quaker Genealogy*, 2:240, 274, 807; *History*, 3:454; *Friends' Intelligencer* 41 [1885]: 250.)

3. Martha Coffin Pelham Wright (1806-1875) had married, at age eighteen, an army captain from Kentucky named Peter Pelham and moved with him to Florida. Two years later she was back in Philadelphia, a widow and a mother. After a stint teaching, she married David Wright (1805-1897), a lawyer, in 1829, moved to New York, and had six children in addition to the daughter from her first marriage. Though she did not share her sister's religious faith, Martha Wright was a stalwart of the state antislavery society and, after attending the meeting at Seneca Falls, one of the inner circle of woman's rights leaders until the end of her life. An avid letter writer and a wit, she left a valuable archives of correspondence on woman's rights and woman suffrage. (*NAW*; Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*.)

4. Martha Mott (1828-1880) was the youngest of Lucretia Mott's children. In 1853 she married George W. Lord. (Hallowell, *James and Lucretia Mott*, 337, 376, 404, 421.)

5. The New York State prison at Auburn, completed in 1820.



## 23    ♪    WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION, HELD AT SENECA FALLS

[19-20 July 1848]

A Convention to discuss the Social, Civil, and Religious Condition of Woman, was called by the Women of Seneca County, N.Y., and held at the village of Seneca Falls, in the Wesleyan Chapel,<sup>1</sup> on the 19th and 20th of July, 1848.

The question was discussed throughout two entire days: the first

day by women exclusively, the second day men participated in the deliberations. Lucretia Mott, of Philadelphia, was the moving spirit of the occasion.

On the morning of the 19th, the Convention assembled at 11 o'clock. The meeting was organized by appointing Mary M'Clintock<sup>2</sup> Secretary. The object of the meeting was then stated by Elizabeth C. Stanton; after which, remarks were made by Lucretia Mott, urging the women present to throw aside the trammels of education, and not allow their new position to prevent them from joining in the debates of the meeting. The Declaration of Sentiments, offered for the acceptance of the Convention, was then read by E. C. Stanton. A proposition was made to have it re-read by paragraph, and after much consideration, some changes were suggested and adopted. The propriety of obtaining the signatures of men to the Declaration was discussed in an animated manner: a vote in favor was given; but concluding that the final decision would be the legitimate business of the next day, it was referred.

Adjourned to half-past two.

In the afternoon, the meeting assembled according to adjournment, and was opened by reading the minutes of the morning session. E. C. Stanton then addressed the meeting,<sup>3</sup> and was followed by Lucretia Mott. The reading of the Declaration was called for, an addition having been inserted since the morning session. A vote taken upon the amendment was carried, and papers circulated to obtain signatures. The following resolutions were then read:

Whereas, the great precept of nature is conceded to be, "that man shall pursue his own true and substantial happiness," Blackstone, in his Commentaries, remarks, that this law of Nature being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other.<sup>4</sup> It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this, and such of them as are valid, derive all their force, and all their validity, and all their authority, mediately and immediately, from this original; Therefore,

Resolved, That such laws as conflict, in any way, with the true and substantial happiness of woman, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and of no validity; for this is "superior in obligation to any other."

Resolved, That all laws which prevent woman from occupying such

a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore of no force or authority.

Resolved, That woman is man's equal—was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.

Resolved, That the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation, by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance, by asserting that they have all the rights they want.

Resolved, That inasmuch as man, while claiming for himself intellectual superiority, does accord to woman moral superiority, it is pre-eminently his duty to encourage her to speak, and teach, as she has an opportunity, in all religious assemblies.

Resolved, That the same amount of virtue, delicacy, and refinement of behavior, that is required of woman in the social state, should also be required of man, and the same transgressions should be visited with equal severity on both man and woman.

Resolved, That the objection of indelicacy and impropriety, which is so often brought against woman when she addresses a public audience, comes with a very ill grace from those who encourage, by their attendance, her appearance on the stage, in the concert, or in the feats of the circus.

Resolved, That woman has too long rested satisfied in the circumscribed limits which corrupt customs and a perverted application of the Scriptures have marked out for her, and that it is time she should move in the enlarged sphere which her great Creator has assigned her.<sup>5</sup>

Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.<sup>6</sup>

Resolved, That the equality of human rights results necessarily from the fact of the identity of the race in capabilities and responsibilities.

Resolved, therefore, That, being invested by the Creator with the same capabilities, and the same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of woman, equally with man, to promote every righteous cause, by every righteous means; and especially in regard to the great subjects of morals and religion, it is self-evidently her right to participate with her brother in teaching them, both in private and

in public, by writing and by speaking, by any instrumentalities proper to be used, and in any assemblies proper to be held; and this being a self-evident truth, growing out of the divinely implanted principles of human nature, any custom or authority adverse to it, whether modern or wearing the hoary sanction of antiquity, is to be regarded as self-evident falsehood, and at war with the interests of mankind.

Lucretia Mott read a humorous article from a newspaper, written by Martha C. Wright. After an address by E. W. M'Clintock, the meeting adjourned to 10 o'clock the next morning.

In the evening, Lucretia Mott spoke with her usual eloquence and power to a large and intelligent audience on the subject of Reforms in general.<sup>7</sup>

#### THURSDAY MORNING.

The Convention assembled at the hour appointed, James Mott, of Philadelphia, in the Chair. The minutes of the previous day having been read, E. C. Stanton again read the Declaration of Sentiments, which was freely discussed by Lucretia Mott, Ansel Bascom,<sup>8</sup> S. E. Woodworth,<sup>9</sup> Thomas and Mary Ann M'Clintock, Frederick Douglass,<sup>10</sup> Amy Post,<sup>11</sup> Catharine Stebbins,<sup>12</sup> and Elizabeth C. Stanton, and was unanimously adopted, as follows:

#### DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on

such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.<sup>13</sup>

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.<sup>14</sup>

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of

the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.<sup>15</sup>

He allows her in Church as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependant and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation,—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our

behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Firmly relying upon the final triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration.<sup>16</sup>

Lucretia Mott,	Hannah Plant,
Harriet Cady Eaton,	Lucy Jones,
Margaret Pryor,	Sarah Whitney,
Elizabeth Cady Stanton,	Mary H. Hallowell,
Eunice Newton Foote,	Elizabeth Conklin,
Mary Ann M'Clintock,	Sally Pitcher,
Margaret Schooley,	Mary Conklin,
Martha C. Wright,	Susan Quinn,
Jane C. Hunt,	Mary S. Mirror,
Amy Post,	Phebe King,
Catharine F. Stebbins,	Julia Ann Drake,
Mary Ann Frink,	Charlotte Woodard,
Lydia Mount,	Martha Underhill,
Delia Mathews,	Dorothy Mathews,
Catharine C. Paine,	Eunice Barker,
Elizabeth W. M'Clintock,	Sarah R. Woods,
Malvina Seymour,	Lydia Gild,
Phebe Mosher,	Sarah Hoffman,
Catharine Shaw,	Elizabeth Leslie,
Deborah Scott,	Martha Ridley,
Sarah Hallowell,	Rachel D. Bonnel,
Mary M'Clintock,	Betsey Tewksbury,
Mary Gilbert,	Rhoda Palmer,
Sophrone Taylor,	Margaret Jenkins,
Cynthia Davis,	Cynthia Fuller,
Mary Martin,	Eliza Martin,
P. A. Culvert,	Maria E. Wilbur,
Susan R. Doty,	Elizabeth D. Smith,
Rebecca Race,	Caroline Barker,
Sarah A. Mosher,	Ann Porter,
Mary E. Vail,	Experience Gibbs,
Lucy Spalding,	Antoinette E. Segur,
Lavinia Latham,	Hannah J. Latham,
Sarah Smith,	Sarah Sisson.

The following are the names of the gentlemen present in favor of the movement:

Richard P. Hunt,	Charles L. Hoskins,
Samuel D. Tillman,	Thomas M'Clintock,
Justin Williams,	Saron Phillips,
Elisha Foote,	Jacob Chamberlain,
Frederick Douglass,	Jonathan Metcalf,
Henry W. Seymour,	Nathan J. Milliken,
Henry Seymour,	S. E. Woodworth,
David Salding,	Edward F. Underhill,
William G. Barker,	George W. Pryor,
Elias J. Doty,	Joel Bunker,
John Jones,	Isaac Van Tassel,
William S. Dell,	Thomas Dell,
James Mott,	E. W. Capron,
William Burroughs,	Stephen Shear,
Robert Smalldridge,	Henry Hatley,
Jacob Matthews,	Azaliah Schooley.

The meeting adjourned until two o'clock.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION.

At the appointed hour the meeting convened. The minutes having been read, the resolutions of the day before were read and taken up separately. Some, from their self-evident truth, elicited but little remark; others, after some criticism, much debate, and some slight alterations, were finally passed by a large majority.<sup>17</sup> The meeting closed with a forcible speech from Lucretia Mott.

Adjourned to half-past seven o'clock.

#### EVENING SESSION.

The meeting opened by reading the minutes, Thomas M'Clintock in the Chair. As there had been no opposition expressed during the Convention to this movement, and although, after repeated invitations, no objections had presented themselves, E. C. Stanton volunteered an address in defence of the many severe accusations brought against the much-abused "Lords of Creation."

Thomas M'Clintock then read several extracts from Blackstone, in

proof of woman's servitude to man; after which Lucretia Mott offered and spoke to the following resolution:

Resolved, That the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions and commerce.

The Resolution was adopted.

M. A. M'Clintock, Jr. delivered a short, but impressive address, calling upon woman to arouse from her lethargy and be true to herself and her God. When she had concluded, Frederick Douglass arose, and in an excellent and appropriate speech, ably supported the cause of woman.<sup>18</sup>

The meeting was closed by one of Lucretia Mott's most beautiful and spiritual appeals. She commanded the earnest attention of that large audience for nearly an hour.

M. A. M'Clintock, E. N. Foote,<sup>19</sup> Amy Post, E. W. M'Clintock, and E. C. Stanton, were appointed a Committee to prepare the proceedings of the Convention for publication.

↵ *Report of the Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19th and 20th, 1848* (Rochester, 1848). The resolutions were also published in *Seneca County Courier*, 4 August 1848. The report was reprinted in 1870 by Robert J. Johnston of New York within *Proceedings of the Woman's Rights Conventions at Seneca Falls and Rochester, N.Y., July and August, 1848*. Though he reset the type, Johnston reproduced the original title page that named John Dick, at the North Star Office, as printer. Also in *History*, 1:70-73.

1. The First Wesleyan Society of Seneca Falls broke away from the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1843 and built its chapel at the corner of Mynderse and Falls streets.

2. Mary Ann McClintock (c. 1823-1880), sometimes designated "Jr.," was a daughter of Thomas and Mary Ann McClintock. She married James Truman of Philadelphia in 1852, and after he completed his medical training, they lived in Waterloo, Philadelphia, and for a time in Germany. (*Quaker Genealogy*, 2:824; *NCAB*, 24:299-300; research by Judith Wellman.)

3. None of the speeches made at the convention was reported, despite the presence of at least three newspapermen: Nathan J. Milliken of the *Seneca County Courier*, Frederick Douglass of the *North Star*, and E. W. Capron of the *National Reformer*. On the problem of recovering what ECS said, see editorial note below at September 1848.

4. This entire paragraph and the sense of the one following are taken from the section, "Of the Nature of Laws in General," in the introductory book of William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books* (New York, 1841), 1:27-28. The quotation marks are in Blackstone.

5. From a resolution by Angelina Grimké adopted at the female antislavery convention of 1837. (*Turning the World Upside Down: The Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, Held in New York City, May 9-12, 1837*, ed. Dorothy Sterling [New York, 1987], 13.)

6. New York's constitution of 1846, like that of many states, defined eligible voters as "males." For white men it guaranteed universal suffrage. Black men could vote only if they owned sufficient property. Prior to 1848, claims that women shared an equal right to the franchise arose not only in debates about their property rights but also in connection with efforts to amend the constitution and grant equal political rights to African-American men. The restriction on black voting remained in place until after the Civil War. (N.Y. Const. of 1846, art. II, sec. 1; Judith Wellman, "Women's Rights, Republicanism, and Revolutionary Rhetoric in Antebellum New York State," *New York History* 69 [July 1988]: 353-84.)

7. E. W. Capron described Lucretia Mott's address as "one of the most eloquent, logical and philosophical discourses we ever listened to." Speaking on a similar topic to the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1848, she urged each reformer to "be as the Jesus of the present age"; "Let us no longer be blinded by the dim theology that only in the far seeing vision discovers a millennium, when violence shall no more be heard in the land—wasting nor destruction in her borders; but let us behold it now, nigh at the door—lending faith and confidence to our hopes." (*Auburn National Reformer*, 3 August 1848, in ECS Papers, DLC; Mott, *Complete Speeches*, 71-79.)

8. Ansel Bascom (1802-1862), a lawyer, reformer, and local political leader, was the Free Soil party's candidate for Congress. He represented Seneca County in the constitutional convention of 1846, where he urged equal suffrage for blacks, and propounded a radical view of the laws of marriage and property. Marriage, he argued, should not vest in either party the property of the other, nor should it impose liabilities for debts acquired before marriage. Bascom was also a member of the legislature that passed the Married Women's Property Act of 1848. (Edward Doubleday Harris, *A Genealogical Record of Thomas Bascom and His Descendants* [Boston, 1870], 61-62; Glenn C. Altschuler and Jan M. Saltzgaber, *Revivalism, Social Conscience, and Community in the Burned-Over District: The Trial of Rhoda Bement* [Ithaca, N.Y., 1983], 22-27, 81; Wellman, "Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention," 18; Basch, *In the Eyes of the Law*, 151, 168; *Eighty Years*, 144-45, 153.)

9. Stephen E. Woodworth (1816-?), a member of the Baptist Church, owned a general store in Seneca Falls. A bachelor in the summer of 1848, he was married soon after the convention either to signer Mary Gilbert or to a sister of hers. (Research by Judith Wellman.)

10. Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), the only African American at the meeting, escaped from slavery in Maryland in the fall of 1838 and settled in Massachusetts. Early in the 1840s he began to lecture and swiftly became one of the most persuasive and appealing witnesses against slavery. William Lloyd Garrison encouraged him, and Douglass toured with agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society. After two years in England, he returned in 1847 with the idea of publishing his own paper, an act of independence opposed by Garrison and his friends in Boston. Douglass moved to Rochester and issued the first number of the *North Star* on 3 December 1847. He tried to straddle the division between local Garrisonians, among whom he found close friends like Amy Post and Daniel Anthony, and the region's political abolitionists, like Gerrit Smith, whose ideas he shared and whose support made his newspaper possible. Though Douglass disagreed with elements of the antebellum woman's rights platform, particularly with the demand for equal property rights within marriage, he was a consistent supporter of woman's right to vote, and he maintained a friendship with ECS and SBA until his death. (William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* [New York, 1991]; Benjamin Quarles, *Frederick Douglass* [1948; reprint, New York, 1968]; Douglass, *Papers*, 2:451.)

11. Amy Kirby Post (1802-1889), well known as an abolitionist in Rochester, was joined at the convention by her sister Sarah Kirby Hallowell and her stepdaughter Mary Post Hallowell. She and her husband Isaac Post (1798-1872) were founding members of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society. Like other antislavery Friends in the region, the Posts parted company with the Genesee Yearly Meeting to join the dissidents who organized the Congregational Friends in 1848. There was little of radical reform in Rochester that did not pass through their house; spirit communication was studied and authenticated there; radical lecturers and fugitive slaves stayed there; campaigns against capital punishment met there; and Amy Post helped to arrange Rochester's woman's rights convention on 2 August 1848. (*NAW; ACAB*; Nancy A. Hewitt, "Amy Kirby Post," *University of Rochester Library Bulletin* 37 [1984]: 4-21.)

12. Catharine Ann Fish Stebbins was the daughter of Rochester abolitionists and radicals and wife of the antislavery lecturer Giles Badger Stebbins. Her marriage took place while her family lived in a utopian community at Sodus Bay on Lake Ontario, but the couple settled in Rochester for many years. Active in the Congregational Friends, they were also early believers in spiritualism. Catharine Stebbins was identified with woman's rights and woman suffrage the rest of her life. In 1871, when women in many parts of the country tried to vote, she made a well-publicized attempt to register in Detroit. She held numerous offices in the National Woman Suffrage Association, and she contributed to the *History of Woman Suffrage*, writing a reminiscence of Josephine Griffing and a chapter on Michigan. (Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change*, 130, 192-93, 214; *History*, 2:26-39, 3:47-48, 523-25; Giles Badger Stebbins, *Upward Steps of Seventy Years. Autobiographic, Biographic, Historic* [New York, 1890].)

13. With this passage and the list of legal wrongs that follows, the authors join a debate about reforming American law to remove remnants of English common law. They point to the infamous passage in Blackstone's *Commentaries* about the effect of marriage on the woman: "By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband; under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs every thing." From a considerable literature about married women's rights, legal reform, and the common law, the authors appear to have known the work of Elisha Powell Hurlbut especially well. Hurlbut (1807-?) was born and practiced law in Herkimer County, until he moved to New York City in 1835. His *Essays on Human Rights, and Their Political Guaranties*, published in 1845, is an extreme statement of inalienable individual rights, informed by phrenology and legal history and laced with sarcasm. Reformers kept the book in print. The Scottish phrenologist George Combe added preface and notes for an edition published in Edinburgh in 1847, and the American firm of Fowlers and Wells reprinted Combe's edition between 1848 and 1853. Hurlbut was elected a judge of New York's Supreme Court at the same time as Daniel Cady in 1847, and ECS met him in Albany in the 1840s. Like other legal reformers, Hurlbut rejected the English common law as a feudal artifact unsuited to modern America, but his criticism included a scathing portrait of male domination that is echoed in the Declaration of Sentiments. The common law, he wrote, was "the law of the male sex gathering unto themselves dominion and power at the sacrifice of the female." Its influence rendered the laws "touching the Rights of Woman, . . . at variance with the laws of the Creator; and the question is, Which shall stand?" In his chapter on "The Rights of Woman," he described woman's civil death; "in the eye of the law" the woman who marries "exists not at all," she is placed in a "legal tomb." Her property is conferred upon her husband because "every body knows that the dead cannot keep their property—and the wife is legally dead." The authors of the Declaration followed Hurlbut in all their examples. Of woman's criminal impunity, he asked, "Hath not woman a *right* to be ever regarded as a free moral agent?" He condemned any coercion of a wife "as an inferior and dependent," no matter how mild, and he singled out the male-defined laws of divorce and custody as proof that women needed a voice in legislation. (Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 1:355; Elisha P. Hurlbut, *Essays on Human Rights, and Their Political Guaranties* [New York, 1848], 120-21, 148, 161, 163, 167; Henry H. Hurlbut, *The Hurlbut Genealogy, or Record of the Descendants of Thomas Hurlbut, of Saybrook and Wethersfield, Conn.* [Albany, 1888], 232, 350-51; ECS to Editor, Boston *Index*, 16 October 1876, *Film*, 18:1055-56.)

14. This statement omits the new Married Women's Property Act of 1848.

15. Oberlin College was the exception; it admitted women at its founding and granted them bachelor degrees in 1841.

16. One hundred names appear in this list. ECS recalled that some people later removed their names. Signers who appear elsewhere in this volume are identified at the dates listed below. E. W. Capron, 14 April 1854; Jacob P. Chamberlain, 27 September 1860; Harriet Cady Eaton, 15 April 1847; Mary H. Post Hallowell, 25 May 1852; Jane C. and Richard P. Hunt, 3 October 1848; Elizabeth W. McClintock, 14 July 1848; Mary Ann Wilson McClintock, 16 July 1848; Thomas McClintock, 3 February 1843; Nathan J. Milliken, 23 July 1848; James and Lucretia Mott, 25 June 1840; George W. and Margaret Wilson Pryor, 3 February 1843; Martha Wright, 16 July 1848.

Most of the signers took no further public part in the movement for woman's rights. Historian Judith Wellman has identified eighty-three of the sixty-eight women and thirty-two men. By and large, she writes, they were drawn to the convention by local ties. The majority lived in Seneca Falls and nearby Waterloo; others traveled from Rochester, Auburn, and surrounding counties. Not only did ECS bring her sister Harriet Eaton, and Lucretia Mott accompany her sister Martha Wright, but more than half of the signers attended the convention in the company of a sister, parent, child, cousin, or spouse. Wellman describes public networks that drew people to the Wesleyan Chapel as well. Every church in Seneca Falls was represented by someone, but dissident Quakers made up the largest group. The Junius Monthly Meeting in Waterloo, a center of the Congregational Friends, was well represented, and Quakers traveled the longest distances to attend. Another network consisted of local Free Soilers, proponents of a new political party to unite antislavery Democrats and Whigs, who held a series of meetings in Seneca Falls in the summer of 1848. Eighteen of the twenty-six people from the village had family members who supported the Free Soil movement, including ECS, whose husband was out of town lecturing for the new party. The third network was made up of legal reformers, whose ideas shaped discussion, but Ansel Bascom, the most conspicuous among them, did not sign the Declaration. (Wellman, "Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention.")

17. Of this discussion and its outcome, E. W. Capron reported, the resolutions "were finally adopted, nearly as they were originally drawn up" by the women meeting alone on Wednesday morning; not even the lawyers who opposed "the equal rights of women, and who were present," dissented. In the *History of Woman Suffrage*, ECS wrote that only the resolution about the elective franchise "was not unanimously adopted." "Those who took part in the debate," she recalled, "feared a demand for the right to vote would defeat others they deemed more rational, and make the whole movement ridiculous." She and Frederick Douglass, who saw that suffrage "was the right by which all others could be secured," carried the resolution "by a small majority." (Auburn *National Reformer*, 3 August 1848; *History*, 1:73.)

18. Though no record of his speech survives, Douglass wrote in the July 28 issue of the *North Star*, that from atop "the watch-tower of human freedom," he applauded all movements "to improve and elevate the character and condition



of any members of the human family." "In respect to political rights, we hold woman to be justly entitled to all we claim for man. We go farther, and express our conviction that all political rights which it is expedient for man to exercise, it is equally so for woman. All that distinguishes man as an intelligent and accountable being, is equally true of woman; and if that government is only just which governs by the free consent of the governed, there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the exercise of the elective franchise, or a hand in making and administering the laws of the land. Our doctrine is, that 'Right is of no sex.'" (Clipping in SBA scrapbooks, Rare Books, DLC; also in ECS Papers, DLC; reprinted in *History*, 1:74-75.)

19. Eunice Newton Foote (1819-?) came to the convention and signed the Declaration with her husband Elisha Foote (1809-1883). She married Foote in 1841 after he completed his legal studies with Daniel Cady, and they settled in Seneca Falls. There he served as district attorney, judge of the county's court of common pleas, and village president in the 1840s. The Footes shared an interest in science and technology and took part in meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in the 1850s. One of their daughters, Mary Newton Foote Henderson of Missouri was a prominent suffragist after the Civil War. (*NCAB*, 21:339-40; *New York Times*, 27 October 1883; research by Judith Wellman.)



24 ECS AND ELIZABETH W. McCLINTOCK TO  
THE EDITORS, *SENECA COUNTY COURIER*

[after 23 July 1848]<sup>1</sup>

Messrs. Editors: If your columns are open to the women of Seneca county, we throw down the glove to any one who will meet us, in fair argument, on the great question of Woman's Rights. Depend upon it, this soon will be *the* question of the day. All other reforms, however important they may be, cannot so deeply affect the interests of humanity, as this one. Let it therefore be fairly and candidly met. Ridicule will not have any effect on those who seriously feel themselves aggrieved; argument is far better.

We have recently had the pleasure of listening to a sermon on this subject, and we feel truly grateful that the pulpit is, at length, calling public attention to this important question.<sup>2</sup> In the course of this sermon the Bible argument was *touched upon*. We hope it may yet be gone into more fully; for the Bible is the great Charter of human rights,

when it is taken in its true spiritual meaning; though its great, immortal, life-giving truths can be perverted by narrow, bigoted, sectarian teachers so as to favor all kinds of oppression, and to degrade and crush humanity itself. No reform has ever been started but the Bible, falsely interpreted, has opposed it. Wine-drinking was proved to be right by the Bible. Slavery was proved to be an institution of the Bible. War, with its long train of calamities and abominations is proved to be right by the Bible. Capital punishment is taught in the Bible. Now, it seems to us, the time has fully come for this much abused book to change hands. Let the people no longer trust to their blind guides, but read and reason for themselves—even though they thus call down on themselves the opprobrious epithet of "infidel," than which no word in our language is more misunderstood and misapplied. We throw back the charge of infidelity on the religionists of the present day, for though they assert their belief in the Divinity of Christ, they deny, in theory and practice, his Divine commands. Do they not rally around and support all the great sins of this guilty nation? What say they to the golden rule, and the injunction, "Resist not evil"?<sup>3</sup> Why, the self-styled christians of our day have fought in and supported the unjust and cruel Mexican war,<sup>4</sup> and have long held men, women, and children in bondage. Oft-times, when no conclusive arguments can be brought to bear upon a subject, a cry of "infidelity" is raised, that the mind of the public may be prejudiced against it. In the sermon referred to, the speaker endeavored to make still stronger the fetters that bind the spirit of woman, and one of his most effective instrumentalities, or one that he seemed to consider the most effective, from its many repetitions, was this charge of infidelity; as if a regard for the rights of any portion of God's children can merit such an epithet; as if a belief in and a desire to act in accordance with the truth, that, there is "neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus"<sup>5</sup> can be so termed; as if a conviction that woman possesses a conscience, active and clear, which proves for her as able a guide as that of man, can be called infidelity. Rather let the term apply to him who, in direct opposition to the spirit of Christianity, endeavors, by isolated passages of Scripture, to destroy the conscience and the sense of moral accountability in one half the people of the earth; to make it their duty to look up to and obey man instead of that Divine Being who claims the reverence and obedience of all his sons and daughters. It is time this