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A Family Affair: The Marriage of
Elizabeth Cady and Henry Brewster Stanton
and the Development of Reform Politics

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Linda Christine Frank

2012

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Family Affair: The Marriage of
Elizabeth Cady and Henry Brewster Stanton
and the Development of Reform Politics

by

Linda Christine Frank

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2012

Professor Ellen C. DuBois, Chair

Although devoted to insuring universal freedom and human rights for more than 60 years, Henry B. Stanton's historical legacy and his many contributions to antebellum reform have been obscured and even vilified in the shadows of his famous wife, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and his oftentimes tactical opponent within abolition circles, William Lloyd Garrison. Frequently portrayed as the antagonist in his wife's struggle for women's rights, as a husband and a father Henry Stanton has become synonymous in the historical discourse with the very oppression his wife devoted her life to ending. Because of this, Elizabeth's reformism is frequently depicted as having emerged from an imagined unhappy domestic life, rather than from an awareness of social and political inequalities. Elizabeth's feminism is thus all too frequently explicitly or implicitly viewed as first a private and then a public rebellion.

Through extensive primary source research, this dissertation seeks to redefine the pivotal moments in the Cady-Stanton marriage to better understand the many reasons, causes, and inspirations that led to Elizabeth Stanton's leadership of the Seneca Falls Convention in particular and the woman suffrage movement in general. This study offers an analysis of Henry Stanton's reform activities in the years prior to the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, and establishes the centrality of Henry Stanton, his extended family, and the example he provided of a politically based reform agenda in the decades before 1848 to the story of his wife.

The dissertation of Linda Christine Frank is approved.

Michael Meranze

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University of California, Los Angeles

2012

Dedication

To my parents, Pauline W. Niethamer and Edward R. Frank for making this possible and for never letting me give up; to my dear friend Harry Rice, whose pioneering work on Henry Stanton made my job easier and whose kindnesses sustained me in every imaginable way since this project began; to my son, Matthew Telesky, who makes everything worthwhile; and to Susanna Brewster Stanton for having lived so courageously, I dedicate this dissertation with love and gratitude.

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My committee chair, Ellen Carol DuBois, inspired my return to UCLA as an undergraduate, and she has shown me everyday since why returning to school was the best decision I have ever made. Not only has Ellen been incredibly generous with her time and knowledge, she modeled both scholarship and mentorship at every step of the way. As an intellectual mentor, Ellen allowed me the freedom to find my own way, pushed me when needed, and her unflagging support of my work has sustained me many times over the past several years. Every graduate student should be so lucky.

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The professionalism and friendship of Mary Huth, longtime librarian at the University of Rochester Special Collections, welcomed me into the Rochester women's history network. The kindness of the staff and volunteers at the Susan B. Anthony House in Rochester are also much appreciated. The staff at Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, in particular, Andrea DeKoter, Jamie Wolfe, John Stoudt, Dave Malone, Jessica Queener, Meghan Barbay made my tenure as a park guide an enriching and enjoyable experience. The Park's cultural

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----- “The Antebellum Women’s Rights Movement,” in *Oxford University Encyclopedia of Social History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

----- “The 1848 Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention,” in *Oxford University Encyclopedia of American Political & Legal History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Introduction

“Mr. Stanton said that he was in favor of woman suffrage; indeed he did not know whether he would be permitted to live in his own house unless he were.”¹

History has not been kind to Henry B. Stanton (1805-1887). Although devoted to insuring universal freedom and human rights for more than 60 years, Stanton's historical legacy and his many contributions to antebellum reform have been obscured and even vilified in the shadows of his famous wife, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and his oftentimes tactical opponent within abolition circles, William Lloyd Garrison. A well-respected leader within the nineteenth century abolition movement, Henry Stanton's support of women's rights and the important link and example he provided to the nascent woman suffrage movement of a politically based reform agenda have been overlooked and under examined. Moreover, historians have largely ignored or misconstrued Stanton's leadership within antislavery circles, while his efforts to direct the abolition movement away from Garrisonian moral suasion and toward mainstream American politics have gone unrecognized.²

¹ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 24, 1866. Speech made at the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. Henry Stanton's comments and speech followed those of Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony and Frances Gage.

² The only book-length scholarly treatment of his life is the excellent dissertation by Arthur H. Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist" Columbia University, 1968. However, Rice confined himself almost exclusively to Henry's role as an abolitionist, and did not focus on his role in women's rights or the ways in which Henry's efforts impacted his wife's reforms. See also Ira Cohen, "Henry Stanton: The Abolitionist as Politician," *Lincoln Herald*, no. Spring 1971 (1971). Cohen relied heavily on Rice's sources and analysis, without citation (correspondence with Arthur H. Rice).

However, perhaps the most important consequence of the previous historical treatment of Henry Stanton's life story is related to his personal life. Because he has been depicted as the antagonist in his wife's struggle for women's rights, as a husband and a father Henry Stanton has become synonymous in the historical discourse with the very oppression his wife devoted her life to ending.³ Despite the fact that Henry had long supported women's rights within the abolition movement, his alleged (but unproven) absence during the Seneca Falls convention has been misinterpreted as proof of his lack of support for Elizabeth's causes and efforts. Because of this, Elizabeth's reformism is frequently depicted as having emerged from an imagined unhappy domestic life, rather than from an awareness of social and political inequalities. Elizabeth's feminism is thus all too frequently explicitly or implicitly viewed as first a private and then a public rebellion.

The man Elizabeth Cady married in 1840 had been a reformer for over a decade when they met. In an era when slavery was seen by many as a "necessary evil," Henry Stanton not only devoted most of his adult life to ending slavery, he actively agitated for black social and political equality as early as 1834, faced over 200 violent pro-slavery mobs, aided freedom seeking slaves, organized local and national antislavery societies, and raised thousands of dollars for the abolitionist cause. By the age of 35, he had survived an impoverished childhood and watched as his mother nearly singlehandedly raised six children to adulthood. At the time he met Elizabeth Cady, his sister Frances was already a social reformer, and his mother not only

³ For example, in the most recent work covering the Seneca Falls Convention, Judith Wellman's *Road to Seneca Falls*, Wellman opens with an imagined view of the first day of the convention. Wellman imagines Elizabeth's internal dialogue as she thought "ruefully...too bad for Henry" as she walks from her home to Wesleyan Chapel. See Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004, p. 4.

survived abuse, divorce and excommunication, she also helped organize the first female antislavery group in Rochester, New York. Given Henry Stanton's background, the negative claims about his historical legacy are all the more puzzling.

Moving closer to the sources, Henry Stanton's character and support for his wife's reform efforts have not always been depicted so negatively. Theodore Tilton, a close friend of Elizabeth, wrote the first lengthy biographical sketch of her as part of a larger collective biographical work in 1869 entitled, *Eminent Women of the Age*. Tilton did not mention Henry Stanton as being against the suffrage resolution, writing instead that it was Elizabeth's father, Daniel Cady, who "fancied her crazy" at the idea of including suffrage among the resolutions at the convention. According to Tilton, Daniel Cady was so concerned for his daughter's sanity that he immediately trekked 140 miles to see whether or not her "brilliant brain had been turned." Tilton wrote that the conversation lasted until the wee hours of the morning, and ended with Cady lamenting that he wished Elizabeth "had waited till [he] was under the sod before [she] had done this foolish thing."⁴

Alma Lutz, the author of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's first full-length biography published in 1940, did not depict the marriage as troubled nor did she portray Henry as being unsupportive of Elizabeth's overall participation in women's rights. Nonetheless, Lutz did uphold the assertion, first written in an 1884 brief biographical sketch of Elizabeth by Laura Curtis Bullard, that that Henry was so vehemently opposed to the suffrage resolution that he refused to attend the convention. However, Lutz's surviving research notes tell a much different story from her published account. Lutz wrote that Henry was "Always in sympathy with wife's work," that he

⁴ James Parton, et. al., *Eminent Women of the Age: Being Narratives of the Lives and Deeds of the Most Prominent Women of the Present Generation* Hartford, Conn.: S. M. Betts & Company, 1869, pp. 347-48.

possessed a “gentle & affectionate disposition,” and had a “broad & noble way of viewing questions.”⁵ Later biographers relied almost exclusively on both the 1884 account and Lutz’s retelling of Henry’s reaction to the suffrage resolution in their discussions about the days leading up to the Seneca Falls Convention.⁶

While there is no direct evidence that Henry Stanton was in attendance at the Seneca Falls Convention, there is no question that he played an important role in this historic event.⁷ Serving as “chairman of the committee” charged with drafting what would become the Declaration of Sentiments, Stanton’s legal expertise, organizational background and the importance he placed on the American political process is evident in the finished document.⁸ Further, although seemingly contradicting her depiction of Henry in the days before the 1848 convention, in her sketch, Bullard credited Henry as being responsible for drawing up extracts

⁵ For Lutz’s coverage of Henry and the Seneca Falls Convention see Alma Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902* New York: The John Day Company, 1940, p. 46. Much of the language used by Lutz can be found originally in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, ed. *Our Famous Women* Hartford, Conn.: A. D. Worthington & Co., 1884, p. 613-14. Lutz’s biographical notes concerning Henry can be found in the Alma Lutz Papers, Vassar College. No later reconsideration or any evidence from other sources that might have altered Lutz’s opinion of Henry Stanton is included in this file or within the larger collection.

⁶ Elisabeth Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* New York: Oxford University Press, 1984. Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*. Lori D. Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: An American Life* New York: Hill and Wang, 2009.

⁷ To date, no historian has pinpointed where Henry Stanton was during the Seneca Falls Convention.

⁸ *The Post-Standard*, Syracuse, NY, May 27, 1908. The quote and details are taken from an article discussing the upcoming festivities commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the first woman’s rights convention in Seneca Falls. Henry Stanton was recognized in the article as one of two male “leaders,” of the convention along with James Mott. Henry and Elizabeth’s daughter, Harriot Stanton Blatch, was the “moving spirit” of the anniversary celebration.

from laws relating to women's property issues for inclusion in the Declaration of Sentiments.⁹ Moreover, no secondary work has explained Henry Stanton's presumed change of heart on the matter of woman suffrage when three years later, while serving in the State Senate of New York, Henry introduced and vigorously supported two petitions for the enfranchisement of women, one from Seneca Falls and the other from the neighboring town of Waterloo.¹⁰

The historical coverage of the events surrounding the 1848 suffrage resolution are symptomatic of a broader pattern of overreliance on published sources at the expense of searching out primary documents by Elizabeth Cady Stanton's biographers. For the most part, they have not substantively questioned previous accounts, including Elizabeth's late life autobiographical recollections.¹¹ Further, in many instances, Stanton's biographers have also

⁹ See Laura Curtis Bullard's brief biographical essay of Elizabeth wherein she noted that Henry "had drawn up for presentation to the convention a series of extracts from laws bearing unjustly against woman's property interests." Phelps, ed. *Our Famous Women*. See also Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 46. Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 193. An 1856 letter from Martha Wright to her sister Lucretia Mott substantiates Henry's presence in Seneca Falls in the days leading up to the Women's Rights Convention. Wright wrote that in a recent visit with Henry, he remembered how much trouble the women had "get[ting] up enough grievances" for the Declaration of Sentiments. Martha Coffin Wright to Lucretia Mott, January 6, 1856, Garrison Family Papers, Sophia Smith Collection. Thanks to Vivien Rose for a copy of this letter.

¹⁰ *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session*, Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851, p. 175. The suffrage petitions introduced by Henry did not originate with Elizabeth who had given birth to her son Theodore only a few days before, but from other men or women in his constituency. Only one other member of the New York Senate introduced woman suffrage petitions during this session, and Henry Stanton's was the first. The petitions were greeted with ridicule, prompting Henry to "pounce on them" and insure that the petitions were assigned to the proper committee for review. See Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Albany, February 15, 1851. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

¹¹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton's autobiography, *Eighty Years and More*, often combined story elements out of chronological order in order to make Stanton's points. Further, the work was written with a decided aim of securing Stanton's place at the center of the woman suffrage movement and also to portray her as being keenly aware of her life's work even as a child. See

added their own embellishments to the narrative in order to portray Stanton, even as a young girl, as being keenly aware of and committed to her life's work. One such example is the oft-told story of Elizabeth's first attempt to change the unfair laws of inheritance by cutting them out of her father's law books. Elizabeth relates in her autobiography that she confided her plan to Flora Campbell, and Campbell told her father about the upcoming assault on his law books before Elizabeth could execute her plans.¹² In 1940, Alma Lutz offered new details about Mrs. Campbell, writing that the Campbells lived on a farm left to Mrs. Campbell by her late father. According to Lutz, Flora Campbell's visit that day was not to tattle on Elizabeth, but instead to seek legal help from Elizabeth's father, lawyer Daniel Cady, because unbeknownst to her, Flora's husband had taken out a mortgage, and the Campbell's farm was about to be seized by creditors.¹³ Later biographers, Lois Banner and Elisabeth Griffith also added to the story, while citing the very limited information provided by the aging Elizabeth Cady Stanton.¹⁴

Ann Gordon's essay in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898; reprint, Introduction by Ellen Carol DuBois. Afterword by Ann D. Gordon. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993. See also Kathi Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001., esp. Chapter 1. Although this dissertation relies on Stanton's autobiography where no other source exists, it does so as sparingly as possible and usually to supply personal information, rather than political or historical questions.

¹² Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 32.

¹³ Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 4.

¹⁴ Lois W. Banner, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: A Radical for Woman's Rights* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980, pp. 7-8. Griffith changed Flora Campbell's story altogether. In her version, the family farm passed to the Campbell's son "who treated his mother unkindly." Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 11. Kathi Kern notes that in Stanton's 1894 "Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton" (undated typescript, Political Equality Club of Minneapolis Papers, Minnesota Historical Society), Stanton used the story of Flora Campbell to not only show that she was keenly aware of women's inequality within the legal system, but Stanton added that she planned to carry out the editing of her father's legal books on a Sunday morning "when they are all at church." Kern notes that in this way, Stanton

Despite a thorough search of newspaper, census, genealogical and cemetery records, there is no record of a “Flora Campbell” at all. The 1830 census, however, does show a “Wid[ow] Ann Campbell listed immediately following Daniel Cady’s family in the census report. In 1830, Ann Campbell was listed as living not with a son, but with a female between the ages of 20 and 30.¹⁵ Cemetery records show that Ann Campbell’s husband, James, died at the age of 69 on April 17, 1828, when Elizabeth Cady was thirteen years old.¹⁶ The widow Ann Campbell died on July 28, 1831 and was buried next to her husband. In the 1830 census records for Johnstown only one other “Campbell” family is listed, also shown on the same page as the Cadys, but this family is far too young to have included “dear old Flora Campbell.”¹⁷

While “Flora Campbell’s” doubtful existence may not undermine the point that Stanton was attempting to make in her childhood recollections, it does expose the lack of rigorous research by Stanton’s biographers, and it also illustrates the ways in which Elizabeth’s late-life

was able to show “evidence of her childhood anticlericalism.” Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible*, p 236 n63.

¹⁵ 1830 U S Census: Johnstown, Montgomery, New York, Page: 188; NARA Roll: M19-95; Family History Film: 0017155. Johnstown, p. 7. The 1820 census shows the James Campbell family as including two males between the ages of 16 and 25. While the Campbell family is listed immediately following the Cady residence, it appears that the census records for that year were either compiled or recopied in rough alphabetical order. The Cady entry in the 1820 census also shows male one slave, age 26 to 45, likely representing Peter Teabout. 1820 U S Census: Johnstown, Montgomery, New York, Page: 358; NARA Roll: M33_63; Image: 266. Johnstown, p. 4.

¹⁶ Records of the Johnstown Cemetery, Johnstown, NY. The Campbell family is buried in Section “O,” <http://fulton.nygenweb.net/cemeteries/JohnsCemO.html> accessed January 31, 2012.

¹⁷ Robert Campbell was listed as being between ages 20 and 30 as was the female residing with him. 1830 U S Census: Johnstown, Montgomery, New York, Page: 188; NARA Roll: M19-95; Family History Film: 0017155. Johnstown, p. 7.

recollections have been embellished by later writers, and how the combination of Stanton and her biographers have added to the “origin myth” of the women’s rights movement.

When additional primary evidence is added, it becomes clear that Henry looms quite large in his wife’s feminist beliefs and reform activism. Unlike Elizabeth Cady’s family of origin, nearly every member of Henry Stanton’s family was a reformer in his or her own right. The inclusion of the extended Stanton family into the historical narrative thus offers an intriguing way in which to enlarge the somewhat mythological historical narrative surrounding the suffrage resolution introduced in Seneca Falls.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s late life account of the origins of the Seneca Falls convention has its roots in the shadow of the Civil War, and she constructed it in large part to secure her own place in the history of the movement. While the addition of female reformers in her martial family certainly does not fully explain Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s development as a reformer, it does perhaps allow the consideration of something more fundamental and more important. If Elizabeth Cady Stanton, generally accepted as the author of the suffrage resolution introduced at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and the intellectual and strategic leader of the nineteenth century women’s rights movement, was, in fact, championing women’s rights not as an oppressed wife, but as one enjoying both a unique vantage point as an important part of a family of reformers and a supportive and unconventional marriage which provided an intellectual and practical equality rare in mid-nineteenth century America, the entire foundation upon which much of women’s history is based is also decidedly altered.

The methodology used in this dissertation follows an entirely different path taken by Elizabeth’s recent biographers, and thereby argues from an entirely different vantage point.

Rather than relying on secondary accounts, this dissertation is based on extensive primary source research, and challenges many aspects of nineteenth historiography.

This dissertation seeks to redefine the pivotal moments in the Cady-Stanton marriage to better understand the many reasons, causes, and inspirations that led to Elizabeth Stanton's leadership of the Seneca Falls Convention in particular and the woman suffrage movement in general. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born into a wealthy and conservative family in Johnstown, New York and yet during her lifetime became one of America's most radical female leaders. By family tradition she was expected to marry well and spend her days as women of her era and class were expected: in the trappings of what her future husband referred to as "fashionable follies." Yet despite the objections of her father and extended family, she married a young reformer well below her economic status and this entirely changed the trajectory of her life.

This dissertation, therefore, seeks to explain this transformation by offering an analysis of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's husband, Henry Brewster Stanton – both before they met and throughout the first decade of their marriage – in order to establish the centrality of Henry Stanton, his extended family, and the example he provided of a politically based reform agenda in the decades before 1848 to the story of his wife. This dissertation attempts to provide an original and underappreciated context within which to understand Elizabeth Cady Stanton's development as a reformer.

The second and related primary focus this study explores is the connection between political abolitionism and the antebellum women's rights movement, and more specifically, the demand for woman suffrage. While historians generally recognize the connection between American abolitionism and the women's rights movement, the traditional narrative emphasizes the role of Garrisonian moral suasion as the arm of the abolition movement that served as the

cornerstone of and inspiration for the emerging women's rights movement.¹⁸ Although William Lloyd Garrison had long supported women's rights within antislavery organizations and made substantial contributions to raising the awareness of gender inequality within American society, beginning in 1837, his rigid adherence to the doctrine of "no human government" and complete rejection of the utilization of political means to achieve slave emancipation runs counter to the shift in emphasis within the broader women's rights movement spearheaded by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, toward woman suffrage following the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention.¹⁹

The anti-Garrisonians, including Henry Stanton, who after the 1840 schism within the antislavery ranks focused on political agitation, are traditionally viewed by historians as being socially conservative, and thereby, against women's equal participation within the antislavery

¹⁸ Historians often use the term "antislavery" to mean those seeking to end slavery prior to 1831 and the publication of Garrison's *The Liberator*. Antislavery, therefore, often refers to slavery's end as either gradual and/or compensated. In referring to agitators following 1831, historians frequently use "abolition" to mean those seeking an immediate and uncompensated end to slavery. However, the abolitionists themselves used the terms interchangeably, and I follow their lead. For works relying on Garrisonian moral suasion as the influence for the women's rights movement, see for example: Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage the Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America 1848-1869*, Reprint Edition, 1999 ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978. Aileen S. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850* New York: Pantheon Books, 1967. Blanche Glassman Hersh, *The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978. Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998. Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*. Banner, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: A Radical for Woman's Rights*.

¹⁹ The terms "women's rights" and "woman suffrage" were used interchangeably by Elizabeth Cady Stanton after the 1848 convention. Prior to that time, which was also before the formal introduction of the suffrage resolution, the term "woman's rights" was used more as a catchall term that encompassed ideological, Biblical, and social arguments for female equality with men and was employed primarily by women in the antislavery movement, rather than in the broader society. Especially after the "Pastoral Letter" and the abolition rupture, this term was used to argue for women's equal participation within anti-slavery circles. Unless otherwise stipulated, this dissertation follows Elizabeth Cady Stanton's lead.

movement and within the larger social structure of antebellum reform.²⁰ However, many within the leadership of the political abolition movement, including Henry Stanton and those within the Stantons' inner circle in the years leading up to the Seneca Falls Convention, were not nor had ever been anti-women's rights; but rather, in breaking with Garrisonianism in 1840, they sought to redirect the abolition movement away from morally persuasive rhetoric alone and toward a more pragmatic strategy utilizing political and legislative tactics to end slavery in America. Far from exhibiting the staid and anti-women's rights characterizations of historians' consensus, Liberty Party members demonstrated a long history of advocacy toward gender and racial equality in their reform efforts before and during the life of the political party.²¹

In fact, in Western and Central New York, Libertyites found their established churches far too restrictive and it was during the early years of the Liberty Party that members began ceding from Methodist and Baptist congregations and forming more progressive organizations. For example, Liberty members formed the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Seneca Falls in 1843

²⁰ Twentieth century scholars of the abolition movement, more often than not, tend to focus their attention on William Lloyd Garrison and his cohort of apolitical activists arguing that the Garrisonian wing of the movement was the "radical" wing in contrast to the "conservative" political abolitionists such as Henry Stanton. For example see Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850*. Michael D. Pierson, *Free Hearts and Free Homes: Gender and American Antislavery Politics* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003., etc. A notable exception is Bruce Laurie, *Beyond Garrison: Antislavery and Social Reform* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. However, Laurie's title alone supports my claim that Garrison has served as the historiographic fulcrum, to which all other reformers are compared. I would further argue that the distinction used by historians to categorize abolitionists as either "radical" or "conservative," terms that are currently charged with meaning themselves, to distinguish between the Garrisonians and the political abolitionists, also reflects the historiographic bias toward Garrison's efforts, and the continuing legacy of politics as "dirty" and politicians as somehow less authentic in their quest for societal reform.

²¹ Douglas M. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999.

because their former minister refused to announce an upcoming speech by the Garrisonian-abolitionist Abby Kelley. The new church quickly became the “hub of radical politics” in the area and was the site of the first women’s rights convention in 1848.²² These breakaway congregations frequently had women and African American members on their boards.

Henry Stanton and Elizabeth Cady married only two weeks before the formal break within the abolition movement. Between 1840 and the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, Henry Stanton was a leading organizer and proponent of the Liberty and Free Soil parties – both formed with the expressed purpose of utilizing the electoral system to end slavery in America.²³ The Cady-Stanton marriage thus provides a unique point of contact between the two most significant reform movements of the nineteenth century and offers the opportunity to examine the influence and example provided by the political abolitionists to the women’s rights movement that has not previously been considered.

Perhaps the central event in the historiographical linkage of abolition and women’s rights took place during the Stanton’s honeymoon trip to the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in

²² See Ibid., esp. pp. 129-31. Alisse Portnoy also notes that while “gender solidarity around women’s activism was not the norm” during this period, women acting within “recognized social structures...benefited from the active support, even direction of men in their churches, neighborhoods, and families.” While much of Portnoy’s work focuses on female anti-removal activism of women in the decade prior to Liberty, it poses interesting questions about Strong’s findings among Liberty churches in New York. Alisse Portnoy, *Their Right to Speak: Women's Activism in the Indian and Slave Debates* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005, esp. pp. 59-60.

²³ The goal of both parties was to elect party members – from the local to the national level—who would legislate the end of slavery (as in the case of Liberty) and to stop the extension of slavery (as in the case of Free Soil). See Reinhard O. Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848; Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009. Theodore Clarke Smith, *The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest* New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897; Vernon L. Volpe, *Forlorn Hope of Freedom: The Liberty Party in the Old Northwest, 1838-1848* Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy*.

London. Henry and Elizabeth married on May 1, 1840, and the first ten days of their marriage were filled with visits to Henry's circle of reform friends before the couple set sail to London.

This convention has become notorious, not for any material progress made in transatlantic antislavery cooperation, but rather as the symbolic beginning of the women's rights movement in the United States. The controversy surrounding the appearance of seven women delegates from the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Association (MAS) and the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society has dominated historical interest in the convention. Although the women delegates were duly qualified and endorsed by their American societies, the British organizers of the convention refused to recognize their credentials and they were excluded from official participation in the proceedings. The rejected delegation included Lucretia Mott and Sarah Pugh who were well known both in Britain and in America as early and tireless workers in the antislavery movement.²⁴ These eminently qualified female abolitionists were forced to sit behind a curtain during the convention and were even prevented from holding their own formal gathering.²⁵

²⁴ All seven of the female delegates who attended were from Garrisonian controlled antislavery societies. Representing the MAS was: Lucretia Mott, Ann Phillips (wife of Wendell) and Emily Winslow. The Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society and the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society sent Mott, Mary Grew, Sarah Pugh, Abby Kimber and Elizabeth Neall. Mott also represented the AAS. Donald R. Kennon, "An Apple of Discord: The Woman Question at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840," *Slavery & Abolition* 5, no. 3 (1984): p. 248.

²⁵ Frederick B. Tolles, ed. *Slavery And "The Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840*, Supplement No. 23 to the *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* Haverford, PA: Friends' Historical Association, 1952, p. 29. Mott noted that this was even a step forward for women, as they had not even been allowed to be present during meetings in Great Britain. Regarding a separate women's meeting, Mott noted in her diary entry for June 19: "J. Sturge came to us—doubted whether the ladies would have a meeting—they feared other subjects would be introduced and he partook of the fear. Some were then invited to meet us at our lodgings—much disappointment to find so little independent action on the part of women." Tolles, ed. *Slavery And "The Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840*, p. 38.

The historical narrative of this event, rooted in Elizabeth Cady Stanton's late-life recollections and continuously echoed in subsequent scholarship, ties the exclusion of the women delegates in London directly to the Seneca Falls Convention even though it occurred eight years later.²⁶ In other words, the outrage experienced in London prompted the social movement, beginning eight years later, as remedy. However, the circumstances surrounding the exclusion of women in London were far more complex than is usually acknowledged. Not only were the women delegates aware that they were not welcome in London nearly four months in advance of the convention, but the credentials of four of the seven women delegates, including Lucretia Mott, had been rescinded by their own organizations a month before the convention.²⁷ Equally important, William Lloyd Garrison sailed to England fully expecting a battle over the women delegates, writing to his wife that he would not easily be "intimidated or put down,"

²⁶ Stanton wrote, "'The movement for woman's suffrage, both in England and America, may be dated from this World's Anti-Slavery Convention.'" Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. I New York: Fowler & Wells, 1881, p. 62.

²⁷ Lewis Tappan to Theodore Weld, May 4, 1840. Tappan notes, "at Philadelphia the Ex. Com. revoked their commission (made out and signed) to 4 female delegates." Editors Barnes and Dumond clarify that this was the decision of the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, Eastern Branch. Lucretia Mott was one of the affected delegates, although she was also attending as a delegate of the AAS. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, II vols. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965, p. II: 834. On February 15, 1840, the British and Foreign Antislavery Society issued a revised call for the convention noting that only "gentlemen" recognized by their societies were invited. Henry Stanton wrote a letter to Gerrit Smith on the inside and back cover of his copy of the second call. Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, April 17, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library. Stanton had yet another copy of this circular and used the blank page space to compose a letter to Amos Phelps. Letter dated "Saturday," Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

adding that it was probable that he would be “foiled in his purpose.”²⁸ Thus even before the women’s arrival in London the stage was intentionally set for the battle over women’s participation in the American movement to continue at the World’s Convention.

This study suggests that Garrison deliberately intended to use the issue of women’s rights and the presence of the female delegates to attempt to win the support and sympathy of the transatlantic community following the abolition rupture in America. This hypothesis has important ramifications. Much of the historiography of the women’s rights movement, beginning with Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1881, treats the seven female delegates solely as victims of male oppression. However, the female delegates to the London convention were fully aware that they would not be seated in the convention prior to leaving the United States, but traveled to London regardless in order to bring the issue of women’s equal participation in the antislavery movement onto a world stage. Thus while the objectives of Garrison and the women delegates were complimentary, they were not identical.

Although this might perhaps seem a subtle distinction, it raises important questions: Why has the long historical trail of the convention omitted the important fact that half of the women arrived in London without their credentials? Why did these women insist on attending when their own Garrisonian-controlled society had pulled their credentials? Why had their home organization done so? While with twenty-first century analysis it would seem the women were empowered by their determination to participate, the traditional narrative was perhaps far more useful to the first historians, and particularly to Elizabeth Cady Stanton following the division in the women’s rights movement in 1869. By portraying the women as victims of narrow-minded

²⁸ William L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, May 19, 1840 in Walter M. Merrill and Louis Rucharnes, eds., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Volume II: A House Dividing against Itself, 1836-1840* Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1971, p. 616.

men, the traditional narrative emphasized the inherent unfairness of the women's exclusion, but also, and more importantly, the event served to tie Stanton and Mott to the historiographic birthplace of the women's rights movement. In reality, this calculated and bold move by the female delegates happened prior to Elizabeth Cady Stanton's entrance into the reform arena and without her influence. Writing the influential *History of Woman Suffrage* during the disunion of the women's rights movement, Stanton was perhaps unwilling to remove herself from this intrepid and important event of 1840.²⁹

Chapter Summary:

Chapter one examines Henry Stanton's tumultuous childhood in Connecticut. Throughout his youth, Stanton was profoundly influenced by his father's staunch (and even violent) allegiance to Jeffersonian policies in a strongly Federalist county and his father's financial misfortunes and mismanagement. Henry's childhood indoctrinated him into the world of partisan politics and the changing economic climate of the times. In contrast, Elizabeth Cady was the daughter of a wealthy lawyer, jurist and former Federalist member of the House of Representatives. Although her childhood was economically stable, Elizabeth Cady's relationship with her father was a complicated one filled with a mixture of adoration and frustration. The

²⁹ Prompted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton's witnessing the events at the Convention, the traditional narrative continues with Stanton and Mott deciding to hold a women's rights convention upon their return to the United States. Importantly, no such conversation is recorded in Mott's otherwise detailed diary of her European trip, nor in Stanton's surviving letters written during her travels. Mott would note in a letter to Stanton in 1855 that the idea was first discussed in Boston in 1841. Beverly Wilson Palmer, ed. *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002, p. 236.

Stanton and Cady families were slaveowners, and this experience would shape both Henry and Elizabeth's later life.

Chapter two begins with Henry's move to Rochester, New York in 1826 where he quickly became involved in local and statewide political issues such as the anti-Masonic movement. Although seemingly headed toward a politically based career, Stanton's life direction changed after attending Charles Grandison Finney's revival meetings in the winter of 1830-31. The following year, Stanton decided to become a minister, and he enrolled at a new institution, Lane Seminary, in Cincinnati, Ohio. There, Stanton became acquainted with the cause of abolition and would lead the study body to withdraw from the seminary due to the forced suspension of their antislavery activities.

Chapter three of this study is focused on Henry Stanton's extended family in Western New York. Likely converted to the abolitionist cause by Henry in 1834, his family formed antislavery breakaway churches, aided freedom seeking slaves, participated in a range of benevolent organizations and formed male and female antislavery societies. Throughout these years, Henry Stanton assumed increasingly important roles within the American Antislavery Society (AAS) and almost singlehandedly "abolitionized" the state of Rhode Island. Within a few years, Stanton held a pivotal role on the Executive Board of the AAS.

In chapter four, this dissertation offers a detailed examination of the AAS in the years leading to the formal split within the movement in 1840. Throughout the period from 1837-1840 the movement was becoming increasingly polarized over issues concerning the political duties of abolitionists. Soon, the issue of women's participation would be added to the already contentious atmosphere at the annual meetings. Henry and Elizabeth met at the height of these

debates and only days before the first motion for an independent abolitionist political party was proposed.

Chapter five examines the couple's early marriage, from 1840-1847, including the Stanton's honeymoon trip to the 1840 London World Anti-Slavery Convention following the formal division in the abolition movement. It was on this trip that Elizabeth met Lucretia Mott as well as many of the men and women with whom she would later work in the women's rights movement. When the couple returned, they lived with her family while Henry began studying for a legal career with Elizabeth's father, Daniel Cady. In 1843, the Stanton family moved to Boston where Henry would continue to strengthen the abolitionist vote through the Liberty Party.

Chapter six focuses nearly exclusively on the pivotal year of 1848. During this important year, Henry played a major role in brokering the coalition of Conscience Whigs, Liberty Party members and Barnburner Democrats to form the nation's second antislavery political party, the Free Soil Party. Seneca County's Free Soil meeting was held in the Wesleyan Chapel just a month prior to the first women's rights convention. In July 1848, Elizabeth, together with Lucretia Mott and several other women organized the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls. This chapter also examines the convention's most controversial resolution, the resolution calling for woman suffrage.

The epilogue highlights events spanning the next two decades that illustrate the ways in which the Stantons' marriage fostered and aided their mutual reform efforts in the years beyond 1848. In 1851, Henry Stanton served in the New York Senate where he vigorously introduced two woman suffrage petitions, while at the same time, the growing woman suffrage movement incorporated strategies utilized by the political abolitionists. Also that year, Elizabeth's "bloomer costume" complicated Henry's reelection campaign. In 1860, the Stantons worked

together to insure the election of Abraham Lincoln. Two years later, the family left rural Seneca Falls for New York City where they would remain until Henry's death in 1887.

Chapter One: A Tumultuous Beginning

The second child and eldest son of Susanna Brewster and Joseph Stanton, Henry Brewster Stanton was born into a marriage that united two politically and religiously prominent New England families. Susanna Brewster was a direct descendent of William Brewster, the ecclesiastical leader of Plymouth Colony, and her father, Simon, was a local magistrate and one of the defenders of Fort Griswold during the Revolutionary War.³⁰ Joseph Stanton's third great grandfather, Thomas Stanton, arrived in Massachusetts in 1635 and after mastering several dialects of local Native American tribes, was appointed chief interpreter and negotiator of the region.³¹ By the time of Henry's birth on July 27, 1805, members of the Brewster and Stanton families had served in military, legislative, judicial and religious leadership roles throughout the families' long tenure in New England.

Susanna Brewster was born on February 18, 1781, and she was raised in the home her father built shortly after his marriage in 1770. The Brewster farm was located a few miles from the center of the tiny hamlet of Pachaug, then a part of the town of Preston, Connecticut, in the southeastern part of the state.³² The Brewster family was well established in Preston, and

³⁰ Emma C. Brewster Jones, *The Brewster Genealogy, 1566-1907. A Record of the Descendants of William Brewster of The "Mayflower," Ruling Elder of the Pilgrim Church Which Founded Plymouth Colony in 1620* New York: The Grafton Press, 1908, pp. 160-61. See also Henry B. Stanton, *Random Recollections*, Third ed. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1887, p. 3.

³¹ William A. Stanton, *A Record, Genealogical, Biographical, Statistical, of Thomas Stanton of Connecticut and His Descendants, 1635-1891*. Albany, NY: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1891, pp.9-10. See also Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 2.

³² The Brewster homestead is still standing and is presently a bed and breakfast. Members of the Brewster family occupied the home until the mid 1990s.

Susanna's aunts, uncles and grandparents were an important part of the family's social and political network.

A native of a seaside community located just across the Rhode Island border, Joseph Stanton's father, Lodowick, also served as an officer in the Revolutionary War, and the extended Stanton clan included naval hero Oliver Hazard Perry. Lodowick was a farmer, and he raised, bred and boarded horses at his coastal farm.³³ Born in 1780, Joseph Stanton left his birthplace of Charleston, Rhode Island as a young man to partner with an established shopkeeper, James Treat, in his first mercantile enterprise. The firm of Treat & Stanton carried "a general assortment of European, East and West India goods," and was located in Pachaug, near the town's North Society Meeting House.³⁴

Joseph and Susanna married on January 25, 1803 in Pachaug at the first Congregational Church, where Susanna was a full member.³⁵ Within two months of his marriage, Joseph purchased the Pachaug store together with the surrounding land and dissolved the partnership with Treat to form a new enterprise with his father, Lodowick and his new father-in-law, Simon

³³ See for example the advertisement placed in the *Newport [RI] Herald*, May 14, 1789. A detailed description of the Stanton homestead can be found in the advertisement placed February 4, 1801 in the *Connecticut Gazette* [New London] when Lodowick was attempting to rent the property for a five-year term.

³⁴ *Connecticut Gazette* [New London, CT], May 27, 1801.

³⁵ Griswold [Conn.] First Congregational Church Records, 1720-1887, Vol. 1, p. 145. The hamlet of Pachaug was the site of the Brewster-Stanton marriage and the birthplace of all of their children. In 1815, this hamlet, then part of the town of Preston, became part of the newly formed town of Griswold, along with the village of Jewett City. Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp 1-3. See also Daniel L. Phillips, *Griswold--a History. Being a History of the Town of Griswold Connecticut from the Earliest Times to the Entrance of Our Country into the World War in 1917*. New Haven, Conn.: Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, 1929, pp. 88-92.

Brewster.³⁶ The new firm of Joseph Stanton & Co. operated at the same location as the previous partnership and advertised the same imported goods.³⁷

In his late-life, semi-autobiographical book, *Random Recollections*, Henry Stanton described his father as “an enterprising country merchant;” however, life as a country merchant was not easy, enterprising or not. For example, during the winter of 1812, an editorial appeared in a local newspaper charging that Stanton’s gin was so watered down that he added soapsuds to the mixture in order to produce a head. Ever mindful of his reputation, Stanton fired back by placing an advertisement in the same paper, written not under his own name, but under the name of his accuser, fully recanting the story and adding that the incident was reported solely out of “malice and envy.”³⁸ This would not be the last time that Joseph Stanton’s temper and his need to retaliate against real or presumed slights overcame more practical considerations. Further, as an importer of goods, Stanton’s available merchandise undoubtedly fluctuated due to the trade embargoes of the Jefferson and Madison administrations, but these unpopular trade policies did not seem to diminish Joseph’s support of the Democratic Party’s candidates or principles.

Despite the uncertain economic and political climate of the 1810s, Joseph Stanton’s enterprises prospered. While maintaining his store in Pachaug, Stanton also partnered in two

³⁶ Joseph Stanton purchased the lot, store and a home on the property from his partner’s father, Amos Treat, for \$180.00 on March 17, 1803. Town of Preston, Connecticut, Land Deeds, Vol. 14, p. 12.

³⁷ The firm of Treat & Stanton was dissolved on March 21, 1803. *Connecticut Gazette*, April 13, 1803. Joseph Stanton & Co. announced the new enterprise on September 26, 1803. *Connecticut Gazette*, October 19, 1803 and October 26, 1803.

³⁸ Stanton’s advertisement was placed under the name “Israel Burton” and appeared in the *Connecticut Gazette* on May 20, 1812. Israel Burton responded with a lengthy reply the following month claiming the original story had been “ironically spoken” and that Stanton was a man “so tenacious of his own feelings” he had proven to be “absolutely void of pity.” *Connecticut Gazette*, June 3, 1812.

other similar shops in Preston.³⁹ The revenues from his mercantile businesses allowed Stanton to continue to invest in farmland and in other local businesses and he was financially secure enough to carry mortgages on some of the land parcels he sold.⁴⁰

According to his son Henry, Joseph Stanton was also wealthy enough to own at least one slave. Although unsubstantiated by the 1810 and 1820 census records for Preston or Griswold, Henry recalled being lulled to sleep as a child by the “sweet cadence” of a family slave.⁴¹ Importantly, Henry’s only mention of the family slave was also tied to another iconic legend of New London County, that of the death of Narragansett sachem, Miantonomoh. An ally of Uncas and the Mohegans during the Pequot War of 1637, seven years later, Miantonomoh and his Narragansett warriors attacked Uncas after he falsely accused Miantonomoh of an assassination attempt. The Mohegans captured Miantonomoh and surrendered him to the English authorities in Norwich. Not wanting to involve themselves in the dispute, the English magistrates returned

³⁹ Stanton & Brown (1808-1812); Brown, Stewart & Co. (1808). See for example, *Norwich Courier*, November 8, 1808 and August 17, 1812. Mortgage to Isaac Pierce (\$600.00) dated November 27, 1812, Town of Preston Land Records, Vol. 16 pp. 154-55. A year later, Pierce defaulted on his note, and Joseph Stanton filed a suit for damages and ejectment that was not settled for four years. *Stanton v. Pierce*, New London County Superior Court Records, Connecticut State Archives, RG 3.

⁴⁰ Stanton owned interests in a blacksmith’s shop as well as purchasing hundreds of acres of farmland in Preston’s North Society. Town of Preston, Connecticut, Land Deeds, Vol. 15, pp. 134 and 341. Land values in the 1810s and 1820a in New London County were surprisingly high. Joseph’s holdings included a 144-acre farm, purchased for \$3,000.00 in 1814. Griswold [Connecticut] Land Deeds, Vol. 1, pp. 182-183. Stanton’s last store in Griswold was located on the main street in Jewett City on a 62’ roadside lot. Stanton paid \$2,000.00 for the property in 1816. *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

⁴¹ The 1810 and 1820 census records that include the Stanton family were not completed on preprinted census forms, but were handwritten. This might be the reason that there were no slaves or free blacks counted in the area during these years. The preprinted census forms listed columns for both. Joseph Stanton’s 1817 insolvency petition does not mention slaves, and he died in 1827 intestate, thus leaving no record. Surviving church records do not mention baptisms, marriages or deaths of any local slaves.

Miantonomoh to Uncas for execution. According to Henry Stanton, a dirge was composed in the eighteenth century to the memory of Miantonomoh and it was this lament that was sung to him so memorably by the family's female slave when he was a young boy. "It sank deep into my breast, and moulded [sic] my advancing years," wrote Henry. As an elderly man, the still powerful memory of the lilting dirge commemorating the death of Miantonomoh and sung to him by a slave, became the foundation upon which he built his life as a reformer noting, "Before I reached manhood I resolved that I would become the champion of the oppressed colored races of my county. I have kept my vow."⁴²

In his late-life recollections of his childhood, Henry Stanton emphasized the patriotism of his extended family and his obvious respect for his father's stubborn adherence to principle, despite personal consequence. Although the state of Connecticut refused to supply troops to the Federal government during the War of 1812, when British forces blockaded and frequently fired

⁴² Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 5. Although beyond the scope of this work, throughout Henry Stanton's lifetime there was no clear historical consensus concerning the battle between Uncas and Miantonomoh, nor what occurred following Miantonomoh's defeat. Many accounts contend that Miantonomoh was the unprovoked aggressor and that he planned an attack on Uncas that was discovered, preventing a rout. In order to spare the deaths of his warriors, Uncas allegedly proposed that he fight one on one with Miantonomoh, and the winner would be the battle victor. Miantonomoh rejected this suggestion; however, Uncas had prearranged a signal to his men, who began firing upon the unprepared Narragansetts. When Miantonomoh was captured, due in part to being encumbered by heavy armor given to him by an English ally, he was taken to English magistrates in Norwich, who then released him back to Uncas for execution. According to Henry Stanton's telling of the incident, Uncas was the aggressor; and the English delivered the innocent and noble Miantonomoh to Uncas to be slaughtered. Uncas and his descendants were considered "royalty" by later generations, and his family retained a burial ground in Norwich. In contrast, Miantonomoh's burial location was not marked by the State of Connecticut until the mid-nineteenth century, although the spot was sacred to the Narragansetts since Miantonomoh's death. Currently, a marker commemorating the site is more in line with Henry Stanton's retelling. See esp. William L. Stone, *Uncas and Miantonomoh, a Historical Discourse, Delivered at Norwich, (Conn.) on the Fourth Day of July 1842, on the Occasion of the Erection of a Monument to the Memory of Uncas, the White Man's Friend, and First Chief of the Mohegans*. New York: Dayton & Newman, 1842, pp. 151-55.

upon New London County for nearly a year, the Connecticut state militia rallied to protect the shores. According to his son, Joseph spent nearly half of this time at the front, drilling the volunteers and composing verses to motivate the militia such as “Brave boys, don’t be afraid or skittish, but go and learn to fight the British,” and “If you’ll boil a lobster in a stew, he’ll look as red and gay as they do.”⁴³

In addition to Joseph’s service in the militia, the War of 1812 marked an important turning point for the Stanton family. Politically Connecticut in general and Griswold in particular were largely Federalist enclaves, but Joseph Stanton had long been a staunch and outspoken Jeffersonian. The serious partisan differences affected all age groups, and Henry recalled being drawn into hair pulling fights in school and was taught as a young boy to stand on a chair and recite, “The Hartford Convention was hatched in the purlieus of hell.”⁴⁴ However, his father’s political clashes were far more serious. On September 11, 1813, a newly formed militia corps, comprised of local Federalists, attempted to file the required militia enlistment papers with Joseph Stanton who was then serving as Town Clerk.⁴⁵ Joseph responded “in a

⁴³ The British blockade began in June 1813. See Frances Manwaring Caulkins, *History of New London, Connecticut* New London, Conn.: H. D. Utley, 1895, pp. 630-36. Calkins Joseph Stanton served as a Captain in Lt. Com. William Belcher’s Company during the summer of 1813. See Phillips, *Griswold -- a History*. p. 87 and 333 and Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 6-7. After the War of 1812, Joseph Stanton was frequently referred to as “Capt. Joseph” or “Capt. Stanton.”

⁴⁴ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 9-10. The Hartford Convention, held in December 1814, was a meeting of New England Federalists who met to strategize against the policies of the Madison administration. Although no official minutes were published at the time of the meeting, among the topics discussed were Federalist opposition to trade policies, the war with Britain, and even the secession of New England. See Theodore Lyman, “A Short Account of the Hartford Convention: Taken from Official Documents, and Addressed to the Fair Minded and the Well Disposed.” Boston: O. Everett, 1823.

⁴⁵ Joseph Stanton took the “Freeman’s Oath” officially joining the citizens of Preston on April 8, 1805. Town Meeting Minutes, Town of Preston, Vol. 1-3, p. 271. Later that year, he was

furious, angry and hostile manner” by donning a military coat, drawing his sword and placing it at the breast of the self-appointed Sergeant, Roger Coit, and ordering him and the others to leave the premises. According to Coit, Stanton “threatened” his life and promised to “shew him the use of said sword.”⁴⁶

Three weeks later, on October 7, 1813, Coit filed a complaint against Stanton with the Preston Justice of the Peace seeking \$1,000.00 in damages and charging that he [Stanton] was “unmindful...of his duties as a publick officer...or as a gentleman [and] did in a furious angry and hostile manner and with force and arms an assault make in an upon the Body of the Plff.” The New London County Constable was ordered to arrest “the body of Joseph Stanton,” and on October 9, Stanton was read the charges at the first hearing following his arrest the previous day.

⁴⁷ Despite the seriousness of the charges against him and the many witnesses of the altercation poised to testify for Coit, Stanton nevertheless refused to back down or admit wrongdoing. At his first court appearance, Joseph Stanton pled “not guilty” but according to the local magistrate, when questioned, Joseph “exhibited sufficient evidence of his being probably guilty.” The town justice ruled that it was beyond his jurisdiction to give a definitive judgment and referred the

selected town “kee keeper,” an office he held for three years. [Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 34] In 1811, the town clerk/treasurer died suddenly, and Stanton was appointed to serve both posts. Ibid., Vol. 4, p. 49.

⁴⁶ *Roger Coit vs. Joseph Stanton*, October 7, 1813. Connecticut State Library, New London County Superior Court Files. RG 3, Box 41.

⁴⁷ *Roger Coit vs. Joseph Stanton*, October 7, 1813. Connecticut State Library, New London County Superior Court Files. RG 3, Box 41.

case to the county courts. He ordered Stanton to become bound to a surety in the amount of \$1,200 and to appear in County Court in Norwich on December 6.⁴⁸

When the case was heard before the County Court in December, the jury found Joseph Stanton guilty as charged, and ordered him to pay \$87.00 damages to Coit as well as court costs. Additionally, the Court ordered Stanton to pay a fine of \$25.00 for “breaking the Peace.”⁴⁹ Rather than paying the fine, which represented less than one-tenth of the penalty that was originally sought, Stanton continued to assert his innocence and filed an appeal, this time to the County Superior Court. The following month, the Superior Court jury also found Stanton guilty as charged and increased the fine to \$200.00, plus the additional court costs, and upheld the \$25.00 fine for disturbing the peace. Stanton quietly paid the fine on February 2, 1814.⁵⁰ Fortunately for the Stanton family’s finances, following the jury’s verdict on appeal, Joseph didn’t pursue further action.

Henry Stanton’s later retelling of the incident was far more heroic than the historical record would indicate. To his young son, who was only eight years old at the time, the memory of his father’s arrest and the subsequent trials served as an example of his father’s bravery and commitment to his minority political views, and the incident served as evidence of the bitter

⁴⁸ *Roger Coit vs. Joseph Stanton*, October 7, 1813. Connecticut State Library, New London County Superior Court Files. RG 3, Box 41. The choice of Joseph Stanton’s surety is a further indication of his unyielding partisan allegiances and his connections within local political circles. Stanton’s surety was Alexander Stewart, Jr., the leading local Democrat and one of the few of his party to be elected to the Connecticut Legislature in the Federalist district. Phillips, *Griswold -- a History*, p. 134.

⁴⁹ *Roger Coit vs. Joseph Stanton*, October 7, 1813. Connecticut State Library, New London County Superior Court Files. RG 3, Box 41.

⁵⁰ *Roger Coit vs. Joseph Stanton*, October 7, 1813. Connecticut State Library, New London County Superior Court Files. RG 3, Box 41.

polemics of the times. Henry claimed that his father drove “out of his grounds at Pachaug, sword in hand, a whole company of Federalist militia, who had come there to insult him,” without reference to Joseph’s responsibilities as Town Clerk.⁵¹ Perhaps Henry’s claim that the group had used the opportunity of filing official paperwork as a means to “insult” Joseph Stanton and his politics was correct; however, more importantly, the incident provided Henry Stanton, who would himself one day face the violent mobs of the anti-abolitionists, with an indelible memory of his father’s refusal to bow to political pressure and insults. From his father, Henry Stanton learned the importance of tenacious commitment to one’s principles, despite the financial cost and the weight of popular opinion.

It is unknown whether or not Joseph Stanton’s arrest was directly responsible for the removal of the family from Pachaug to nearby Jewett City, but within two weeks of the final verdict in the assault case, Joseph decided to close his store and sought payment of all open accounts.⁵² By the end of May, 1814, Joseph announced that his new stand in Jewett City was offering imported goods “on as reasonable terms at the times will permit.”⁵³ At the annual Preston town meeting later that year, Joseph Stanton was not in attendance, and he was replaced as Town Clerk. Stanton never again held public office.

Joseph Stanton’s legal difficulties came at a time of change in Preston and in the state of Connecticut. The area encompassing the hamlets of Pachaug and Jewett City, referred to as the North or Second Society, had first petitioned the legislature in 1787 seeking independence from the town of Preston. This was due in part because the town of Preston was geographically large

⁵¹ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 9.

⁵² *Norwich Courier*, February 9, 1814. Notice dated January 31, 1814.

⁵³ *Norwich Courier*, June 1, 1814. Notice dated May 25, 1814.

and cumbersome, necessitating separate churches and prompting town meetings to switch locations every year. However, the differences were also political: the majority of Preston's Jeffersonian Democrats resided in the southern portions of the town, while the North Society had a decided Federalist majority. Jeffersonians had pushed for the separation for several years in an attempt to forge an electoral district large enough to consolidate as a voting bloc, while the Federalists of the North Society sought the same. By the spring of 1815, 142 members of the North Society once again issued a formal petition to the Connecticut Legislature asking for separation. This time, their petition was granted, and the town of Griswold was formed on October 26, 1815. Neither Joseph Stanton nor his father-in-law, Simon Brewster, signed the petition, and Joseph's move to Jewett City insured that his political views would continue to be unpopular with his neighbors and customers.⁵⁴

The newly formed town of Griswold also held much of the burgeoning industry in the area. In 1810, Englishman John Scholfield settled in the Norwich, Connecticut area and opened the county's first woolen "factory." This was Scholfield's second mill in New London County, and within a few years Joseph Stanton became his partner.⁵⁵ By 1814, Joseph Stanton, together

⁵⁴ See Phillips, *Griswold -- a History*, pp. 88-92. for an overview of Preston's political and social divides. The Town of Griswold, Meeting Minutes, Volume 1 [Griswold Town Clerk's Office] contains minutes and early goals of the newly formed town leaders.

⁵⁵ Brothers John and Arthur Scholfield, often misspelled as "Schofield," arrived in the United States in 1793 and built several wool carding machines in Connecticut and Massachusetts. While their machines were not the first, because the brothers built and sold carding machines, they enabled the fledgling new industry to grow and expand. John's first factory, powered by the Pachaug River, opened in 1799 and was sold in 1806 due to financial difficulties. There are conflicting dates about the opening of his second factory in the area. Contemporary newspapers report March 1810, while secondary sources claim the Jewett City/Montville factory opened in 1813. See *Norwich Courier*, March 28, 1810 and Grace L. Rogers, "The Scholfield Wool-Carding Machines," *United States National Museum. Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology Bulletin* 218. (1959). The terms of the partnership between Scholfield and Stanton are not known. Stanton is not mentioned in historical accounts of Scholfield's

with his uncle-in-law and two others, formed the area's first cotton yarn factory. The Fanning Cotton Manufacturing Company, located near Scholfield's woolen factory, produced cotton yarn for local weavers.⁵⁶

Despite the upheaval of moving his store, Joseph Stanton's financial situation initially stabilized and he continued to expand his business interests. In addition to his partnership in the two mills, by 1815, the store in Jewett City offered a "good supply of new and fashionable goods" on "liberal credit and at very reduced prices for cash." The cotton yarn, produced at the Fanning mill as well as yarn from other sources, was available at the Stanton store for local weavers, and Stanton offered cash and goods for woven cloth.⁵⁷ However, by early 1816 Stanton's fortunes had changed. Placing a notice in the *Norwich Courier*, Joseph announced that he was leaving Jewett City and that his merchandise was being sold "very cheap indeed" for cash or "other good pay." Additionally, he cautioned his debtors that they "will do well to call and settle their accounts...as they can settle them cheaper with me than with an attorney."⁵⁸ By April 1, Stanton had not left Jewett City, but had instead relocated his family and place of business to another village house and was selling groceries for cash only.⁵⁹

enterprises; however, when both men faced insolvency in 1818, they are named together as debtors. Henry Stanton's autobiography notes the partnership. See *Norwich Courier*, July 29, 1818 and Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 19.

⁵⁶ *Norwich Courier*, March 1, 1815. Notice written December 5, 1814. Charles Fanning married one of Simon Brewster's sisters.

⁵⁷ *Norwich Courier*, July 19, 1815. The *Courier* of October 18, 1815 noted that Stanton had received a large quantity of cotton yarn that was manufactured in Patterson, New Jersey.

⁵⁸ *Norwich Courier*, January 10, 1816.

⁵⁹ *Norwich Courier*, April 17, 1816. Notice dated April 1, 1816.

The following year, 1817, was no better, and Joseph Stanton's finances continued in a downward spiral. Although Joseph previously carried paper on numerous parcels of land, by August 1817, he was forced to mortgage his 1/6 share of the Fanning Cotton Company to his brother, New York City merchant George W. Stanton, for \$403.00. Then, just before Christmas on December 22, 1817, twelve-year-old Henry watched as his father was arrested for the second time, this time, as Joseph was imprisoned for insolvency.⁶⁰

Although from the mid-eighteenth century forward the linking between moral character and insolvency had been weakening, in 1817, the two were far from completely severed.⁶¹ This is illustrated by the wording used in Joseph Stanton's insolvency petition:

Joseph Stanton...humbly showeth that for fourteen years he has been deeply engaged in the mercantile interest, and the manufacturing of Cotton Goods, has ever been honest and industrious, but by reason of many loses and misfortunes that he would not resist or avoid, he has become insolvent, and unable to pay and discharge his just debts.⁶²

When the petition was granted, the Court noted that Stanton had proven that he "sustains a fair character for probity and industry, and is not justly chargeable with idleness or mismanagement in his affairs."⁶³ The petition recorded debts amounting to nearly \$3,000.00, many to prominent businessmen in New York City. Joseph Stanton was ordered to turn over all remaining real

⁶⁰ Town of Griswold [CT] Land Deeds, Vol. 1, pp. 182-183.

⁶¹ See Bruce H. Mann, *Republic of Debtors: Bankruptcy in the Age of American Independence* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 78-89. for an overview of the transition. Although Mann's work is concerned primarily with the eighteenth century, a permanent Federal bankruptcy statute did not pass Congress until 1898. Much of the debate surrounding treatment of insolvents became politicized as an economic debate between encouraging industrial and commercial enterprises and safeguarding established businesses from reckless expansion.

⁶² New London [Connecticut] County Superior Court Papers by Subject, 1711-1900, Inquests-Insolvents, RG 003, Box 46.

⁶³ Ibid.

property to the court-ordered commissioners, and the two remaining lots he owned, were awarded to his two largest creditors.⁶⁴

Although he would live another decade, following the insolvency proceedings, Joseph Stanton never again owned real property or held an interest in a mercantile enterprise. Throughout the period of his mercantile career, Joseph was frequently mentioned in newspaper advertisements and editorials in the two Norwich, Connecticut newspapers. However, following the final notice to creditors in the spring of 1818, Joseph Stanton nearly disappears from both town and church records until his death in 1827. It is therefore impossible to know the precise extent of the chaos and turmoil that the rest of the Stanton family endured in the years following Joseph's insolvency. However, as we will see, it does appear likely that Joseph's financial support of his family ceased shortly after the filing. It is also unclear from existing documentation why Joseph Stanton's seemingly prosperous enterprises failed in 1817.⁶⁵ Henry Stanton omits his father's insolvency and the ensuing instability altogether from his autobiography, choosing instead to depict his later childhood as stable and full of interesting political events such as his meeting with cousin Oliver Hazard Perry shortly before the Commodore's death in 1819 and Lafayette's tour of Griswold in 1825.⁶⁶

Henry Stanton's only surviving mention of the family's financial troubles came more than two decades later in a letter to his then fiancé, Elizabeth Cady. Writing that from the age of

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Several of Joseph Stanton's partners also filed for insolvency within six months of Joseph's filing. Scholfield's mill failed, as did the Fanning Cotton Manufacturing Company. Fanning partner, Christopher Avery, filed for insolvency in mid-1817 and went to work as a day laborer at the Slater Mills – the only remaining mill in Jewett City by 1817. Slater Mills Collection, Dodd Library Special Collections, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

⁶⁶ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 8- 9 and 19-20.

thirteen he had been “thrown entirely upon [his] own resources, especially as to money,” Henry did not explain why he was forced to support himself at such an early age, and used the statement to illustrate the foundation upon which he developed his own sense of industriousness and self-reliance. However, in reality, the family unit was forever disrupted by Joseph’s financial collapse, and the shame of his insolvency was hidden from many, if not all, members of subsequent generations.⁶⁷ Henry was still several months away from his thirteenth birthday at the time of his father’s financial collapse. As the eldest son and at the age of only twelve, Henry Stanton, still a child himself, not only provided for his own needs, but those of two of his younger brothers.⁶⁸

According to his autobiography, Henry Stanton spent a great deal of time in the local mills as a boy, noting that his “close acquaintance” with the machinery in his father’s mills provided a solid foundation and understanding of mechanics that would serve him well in his later career as a patent lawyer.⁶⁹ However, while Henry may have visited the mills with Joseph as a very young child, it is more likely that Henry’s knowledge of factory operations came not from visits as the mill owner’s son, but as an apprentice following Joseph’s insolvency.

⁶⁷ From Henry’s nephew, Robert Brewster Stanton’s unpublished family history, it appears that he did not know that his father’s family suffered a financial crisis. Robert’s father was Henry’s younger brother Robert Lodowick Stanton who was only seven years old at the time of Joseph’s insolvency. According to Robert Brewster, his father was unaware of the reasons behind his removal from school and stint as an apprentice. It is unknown from surviving documentation whether or not Robert Lodowick chose to conceal his father’s insolvency or simply did not know about it.

⁶⁸ Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady, January 4, 1840 in Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, Reprinted by Arno & The New York Times, 1969 ed., II vols., vol. II New York: Harper & Brothers, 1922, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁹ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 19.

Decades later, Henry's nephew, Robert Brewster Stanton (son of Henry's younger brother Robert Lodowick Stanton), composed a family history for his children, and was seemingly unaware of the dire financial situation in his father's family. Robert B. Stanton noted that, "for some reason" his father was forced to leave school at an early age and was apprenticed to a carpet weaver in Jewett City. Robert Stanton could not understand why his father was "selected for work" and received such "bad treatment," while his brothers continued at school, but noted that it was a "source of sorrow" to Robert Lodowick that he had been forced to work at the age of seven.⁷⁰ It is unlikely that the seven-year-old Robert was singled out and apprenticed: and, taken together with Henry's claim that he was self-supporting from age thirteen, Joseph's insolvency was more than a financial downturn and represented an important turning point in the lives of his family.

Although the early pages of Henry's semi-autobiographical work, *Random Recollections*, are laden with heroic stories of his father, in his private correspondence, Henry credited "the ingenuity of a New Englander, trained up by a mother," as the foundation he built his life upon.⁷¹ In contrast to her husband, the historical record contains little information about Susanna Stanton. Of his mother, Henry wrote that she was "intelligent, high-spirited and pious," which perhaps made her relative powerlessness in the nearly constant financial upheavals of her married life all the more difficult.⁷² Susanna gave birth to at least six children: Susan in 1803,

⁷⁰ Robert Brewster Stanton's family history is unpublished and lacking page numbers. Robert Brewster Stanton, "Notes from My Note Books," (Robert Brewster Stanton Collection, New York Public Library, ca. 1909).

⁷¹ Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady, January 4, 1840 in Stanton and Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, pp. 4-5.

⁷² Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 4.

Henry in 1805, Frances in 1807, Robert in 1810, Joseph in 1812 and George in 1815, and was a full member of the First Congregational Church. It was under her membership that all of the children were baptized.⁷³

Members of Susanna Brewster Stanton's birth family were well established both in Griswold and later, in western New York. Her father, Simon, was a local Griswold magistrate and prominent citizen. Susanna's eldest brother and her son's namesake, Henry Brewster, left Connecticut as a young man and settled in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. However, his land proved to be of poor quality and together with a neighbor, Samuel Baldwin, Henry Brewster set out in 1805 for the "Big Tree Country" of western New York. After purchasing land close to the Genesee River, only a few miles from what would become the city of Rochester, and selecting a suitable area in which to build a dwelling, the following year Brewster moved his already large family to Western, New York. In addition to being one of the first four settlers of the area, the Brewster home was the first building in the vicinity. Brewster was also instrumental in the formation and construction of the town's Congregational Church, schoolhouse, and the

⁷³ From available records it appears that Susanna and Joseph Stanton did not share a commitment to a religious denomination. Joseph never became a member of the Congregational Church and the baptism of the couple's first three children was delayed by a few years: Susan, born in 1803, was baptized on June 25, 1809 with her brother Henry (born 1805) and sister Frances (born 1807). Records of the [Griswold] First Congregational Church, 1720-1887, Vol. 1 – Meetings, Vital Records, p. 112. Joseph Stanton's populist political leanings were also evident in his choice of religious denomination. After moving to Jewett City in 1814, Joseph, together with Charles Fanning, John Scholfield and business partner Christopher Avery, joined with other town leaders to form a Protestant Episcopal Church, St. George's, in Jewett City. Joseph Stanton was elected Treasurer of the new congregation and was responsible for procuring all materials needed for construction of the church building and collecting all subscription fees from members. Stanton also owned two shares of the new church. *Minutes of St. George's Church*, Connecticut State Archives, Hartford, CT.

establishment of the town government. Henry Brewster was the first, but would not be the last of the Brewster-Stanton family to venture westward.⁷⁴

Other than the record of her marriage and children's baptisms, Susanna Stanton's name does not appear in historical records until July 22, 1823 when she filed a petition with the county superior court requesting a divorce from her husband of twenty years.⁷⁵

Susanna's complaint charged that Joseph had deserted the family on May 1, 1820 and from that date, had provided "no support to her or her family" and for the past three years he had displayed a "total neglect of duty." Divorce on the grounds of desertion in Connecticut required a three-year period of absence, and Susanna filed her petition only two months after this required waiting period ended, suggesting that she was both aware of the prevailing statutes and filed her petition accordingly. Although Susanna's complaint did not specify where Joseph had moved, records from his father's real estate transactions show that Joseph was living with his father in Pittsfield, Massachusetts by the end of 1820.⁷⁶ Three years later, it was also in Pittsfield, on

⁷⁴*Buffalo Courier*, March 11, 1858 and Jones, *The Brewster Genealogy*, p. 340. See also, Town of Riga, Records of the First Congregational Church. In 1806 when the Church was formed, Riga was known as the town of West Pultney, part of the city of Northampton, Genesee County. The town of Riga was formed in 1809. See also "Town of Riga Newsletter," Vol. 1, No. 7, November 2006.

⁷⁵ *Susan Stanton V. Joseph Stanton*, Connecticut State Archives, RG 003, New London County, Superior Court Papers, [1823].

⁷⁶ Berkshire County Town Clerk, Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Record of Deeds, Pittsfield [Massachusetts], Vol. 3, page 322. Joseph's father, Lodowick Stanton, sold all of his property during the early 1820s to Joseph's brother, George W. Stanton. Joseph first signed as a witness in one such transaction dated December 18, 1820. The transfer of Joseph's last remaining asset on April 27, 1820, two shares in the struggling St. George's Episcopal church for the sum of twenty dollars, further substantiates the date of his desertion. Town Clerk's Office, Griswold, Connecticut. Griswold Land Deeds, Vol. 1, p. 363

August 4, 1823, that Joseph was served with the complaint, and where he agreed to the dissolution of his marriage in October of that year.⁷⁷

Although the date of the final decree is unknown, its certainty can be established by surviving church records. In November 1823, church meeting minutes noted that in two consecutive meetings, church elders debated the abstract question of “can a Husband or a Wife obtain a bill of divorce for any cause but fornication or adultery, without violating the Divine Law?”⁷⁸ At the second meeting, it was unanimously decided that the church had a “duty to discipline” members that had obtained a divorce on grounds other than fornication or adultery.⁷⁹

Undoubtedly the questions being debated in church committee were prompted by knowledge of the Stanton divorce, and initially church elders attempted to discipline Susanna by consulting with her privately. However, by March 1824, it was clear that more drastic and formal measures were required in order to “bring [their] sister to a sense of her duty.”⁸⁰ Church elders lodged a formal complaint against Susanna on March 3, noting that they had attempted the first two steps required by church doctrine in such situations: first, a committee member was sent to her to formally notify her of her fault; and second, the committee held another meeting

⁷⁷ *Susan Stanton v. Joseph Stanton*. The complaint was left “at said Joseph Stanton’s usual place of residence,” but court documents do not specify where Joseph was residing in Pittsfield. Joseph did not respond to the complaint until October 14, 1823, wherein he acknowledged service and agreed that the petition be entered into the court docket. The exact date of the final decree is not noted on surviving court documentation.

⁷⁸ “Griswold [Connecticut] First Congregational Church Records, 1720-1887. Volume 2, Meetings, 1812-1867..” p. 45.

⁷⁹ Meeting held November 20, 1823. Ibid., p. 45.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

with Susanna, this time sending at least two or three others.⁸¹ However, despite Susanna's devotion to the church and strong piety, the firm and suasive arguments of committee members were received "without effect." Later that month, the rhetoric of the church elders became even stronger. The committee resolved that Susanna was required to make a "penitential confession of her fault," and they demanded that she "remove the legal obstacle she has put in the way of rendering to [Joseph] all the duties of a wife."⁸²

Then, on April 6, 1824, the committee again met, this time with Susanna Stanton in attendance, at a meeting specifically called in order for Susanna to answer to the charges brought against her. When questioned, Susanna displayed a radical determination and resolve that would be echoed decades later in the work of her daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Susanna stated quite forcefully that she not only "felt justified" in seeking a divorce on grounds other than fornication and adultery, but further, it is clear by her testimony that she felt entitled, even absolved, of any transgression of Divine Law. Citing Joseph's "willful absence and total neglect of support" along with other reasons "in her view" that were sufficient to justify her actions, Susanna refused to retreat from her position, despite her piety and strong allegiance to the church and her religious beliefs.⁸³

⁸¹ Church meeting notes cited the protocol as being taken from *Matthew 18* [15-18]. Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., p. 47. From examination of other cases concerning conduct of church members in the years surrounding the Stanton divorce, in most cases, the guilty party responded to the official charges by admitting wrongdoing and being forgiven by a vote of the entire congregation. However, there were only a few other cases of transgression in the decade before and after 1823, and no other cases concerned divorce. The only other issue with a female church member was for fornication; and after the woman admitted to her sin, she was restored to full membership and presumably forgiven.

⁸³ See Ibid., p. 48. Although Henry only briefly mentioned his mother in his autobiography, piety was among his few descriptive words. Robert Brewster Stanton also mentions his grandmother's devotion to her faith in his unpublished family history. Further, Susanna

Importantly for this study, Susanna's claims for divorce rested on civil grounds, but then as now, these claims were not necessarily grounds sanctioned by religious orthodoxy. Marriage, viewed as a civil contract, required not only a husband's faithfulness, but also his financial support. Civilly, Joseph had ceased to be a husband by virtue of his lack of financial support of Susanna and their children, and indeed, these were the grounds under which Susanna obtained her legal divorce. Throughout her testimony before the church committees, Susanna continued to argue for the soundness of her position on civil, not religious grounds and she continually asserted her right to do so.

Although the legal system recognized her right to dissolve her marriage based on no more than proof of Joseph's desertion, the church committee remained unmoved. However, from her continued testimony, we learn that Joseph's role in the demise of the marriage went beyond simple desertion and lack of support. Never relenting from her belief in the rightness of her position, Susanna revealed more intimate details of her marital life, explaining to the church committee that Joseph "had often abused her by threats & acts of violence by which she considered, that in view of the Divine Law the bonds of marriage were sundered," and as a result, Susanna concluded that she was "freed from any obligation to perform the duties of a wife."⁸⁴

The church committee responded to her claims of abuse and desertion by challenging Susanna to supply the appropriate ecclesial "rule" under which she asserted her right to divorce.

tombstone contains a Latin phrase, illegible in part, but clearly mentioning her devotion and love for "Christ." Further, as we shall see, despite her excommunication from the Congregational Church in 1823, she continued to enroll as a full member in other Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in New York State.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

In a spirited and radical reply, Susanna simply stated that she “had a right to determine for herself without reference to any particular rule” when her marriage bonds had been sundered. Church minutes noted that although “much was said” to convince Susanna of the “error of her thinking,” their comments were received “without any apparent effect.”⁸⁵

For the next few weeks, the church continued to send members to talk to Susanna in an attempt to bring her to an awareness of her “sense of duty.” Despite the frequency and firmness of the committee visits, their reports noted that Susanna “still adhered to [her] sentiments” and a likely exasperated Susanna finally declared, “It would be useless for the church to deal any further with her.” Then, on April 30, 1824, Susanna Brewster Stanton was excommunicated from the church she had attended for nearly 40 years because she refused to relinquish her rights to secure a divorce from her abusive and absent husband.⁸⁶

Joseph and Susanna Stanton’s divorce is important for this study in two significant ways. First, as such a crucial and important turning point in the life of Henry Stanton – an event that likely colored his own views of marriage, organized religion and fatherhood, but also, and perhaps more importantly, Susanna Brewster Stanton’s unyielding commitment to securing and defending her own rights to divorce her absent and abusive husband – rights she fought for on

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 49-50. A court-sanctioned divorce was a rare procedure in 1823. According to Nancy Cott, more commonly, the so called “self-divorce” was the norm. Spotty record keeping, coupled with desertion often resulted in a community’s acceptance of a mutually dissolved partnership without a formal divorce. Further, although bigamy was a crime in every state, most of those convicted received no jail time reflecting the lack of serious consequences of “self-divorce.” Cott writes that as late as 1870, divorce rates were “miniscule,” (less than two divorces per thousand marriages) as compared to modern figures. Nancy F. Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 38 and 107. See also Hendrik Hartog, *Man & Wife in America: A History* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000, esp. pp. 64-76.

both civil and religious fronts – provided a living example of what would become the cornerstone of her daughter-in-law’s reform agenda.

Historian Nancy Cott’s research into marriage and divorce found that not only were divorce rates “miniscule” during this era, but also, far more common than legal divorce were the so-called “self divorces.”⁸⁷ Although we cannot know with certainty why Susanna took the important step of securing a legal divorce from Joseph, rather than simply continue to lead a separate life without this step, it is nonetheless significant to note what Susanna Stanton gained by obtaining a divorce.

As Cott explains, throughout most of American history, “the common law turned the married pair legally into one person—the husband. The husband was enlarged...while the wife’s giving up her own name and being called by his symbolized her relinquishing her identity.”⁸⁸ In Susanna’s case, being legally subsumed under Joseph, especially following his insolvency, was likely an onerous one. Legal scholar, Hendrik Hartog notes that divorce proceedings were often filed as a means to secure financial support from absent husbands. Hartog explains that oftentimes, simply the filing of a divorce petition would compel the errant husband to return to the family circle, rather than face the legal proceedings. However, from the Griswold church records, it was clear that Susanna was firm in her decision and did not entertain a return to the

⁸⁷ Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*. Cott notes that although rates of divorce prior to 1860 steadily increased, they were minute compared to rates later in the nineteenth century. For self-divorce, see p. 38ff. Cott explains that self-divorce was, in fact, the same as desertion. Surprisingly, many communities were aware that such marriages were legally intact, however, in some instances allowed the partners, usually only the “wronged” party to remarry without a formal divorce.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

marriage in exchange for financial support.⁸⁹ As a married woman, any funds Susanna might have earned would have become the property of her husband.⁹⁰ Likewise, any financial or propertied assistance she might have received from her father or other family members would have been exposed to the same situation. By securing a legal divorce from Joseph, Susanna removed the net of coverture and became an independent agent, both personally and economically.⁹¹

Following her excommunication, Susanna Stanton's name does not appear in the records of the First Congregational Church of Griswold; however, six months later in November, 1824, she enrolled in the Congregational Church in Riga, New York, and it's likely that her new congregation was unaware of the proceedings in Connecticut and of Susanna's status as a divorced woman. From available records, it appears that Susanna joined her brother, Henry Brewster, and eldest daughter in Riga, leaving Henry and Robert in Jewett City, likely with their great-uncle and local businessman, Charles Fanning.⁹²

In stark contrast to the financial and emotional instability of his early life, Henry Stanton's retelling of his adolescence in *Random Recollections*, was packed full of much happier memories than the historical record would seem to support. Carefully avoiding any direct

⁸⁹ Hartog, *Man & Wife in America: A History*, p. 125.

⁹⁰ Cott, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation*, esp. pp.11-12. See also Hartog, *Man & Wife in America: A History*, 115-22.

⁹¹ Although she never married again, it is also possible that the freedom to do so was a motivation to secure her legal divorce. No child custody agreement was filed in the courts.

⁹² Henry's eldest sister, Susan M. Stanton married the son of Samuel Baldwin on December 18, 1823. Samuel Cutler Baldwin was the son of the Brewster's neighbor who originally settled in western New York with Susan's uncle, Henry Brewster. See *Rochester Telegraph*, December 30, 1823.

mention or even suggestion of the family's true circumstances, Henry chose stories that highlighted his interest in politics and the larger political issues of the times. Although it is nearly certain that he worked as an apprentice during some of the years after Joseph's insolvency, Henry was also able to continue his education in the town's one-room schoolhouse.⁹³ Susanna's wealthy uncle, Revolutionary War hero, Charles Fanning, owned several mills in the Jewett City area and it is likely that Henry was apprenticed in one of these cotton mills.⁹⁴

However, Henry's late adolescence was also punctuated with other indelible memories that would shape his later life in meaningful ways. On July 4, 1824, at the age of nineteen, Henry gave his first impromptu speech at his extended family's Independence Day celebration, praising presidential candidate Henry Clay, as the champion of "domestic manufacturers and internal improvements." The following year, Henry looked on as General Lafayette arrived in Jewett City and greeted his uncle Charles Fanning after a 45-year separation.⁹⁵ Although in later years, Henry would not support either Henry Clay or publically-funded internal improvements, his politically minded family of origin and the highly charged partisan debates within their community helped to foster Henry's interest in politics, public speaking and the issues of the times.

⁹³ See Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 17-18 for a discussion of Henry Stanton's education. His teacher, George Prentice, was nearly the same age as Henry and was responsible for teaching in the one-room school in Griswold at the age of 15. Prentice later had a long career as a journalist at the *Louisville Journal*, and may have given Henry his first job as a newspaper writer during Prentice's brief stint as an editor in Norwich.

⁹⁴ At least one mill bore his name – the Fanning Cotton Mill was incorporated in 1814. Joseph Stanton was a 1/6 partner. See *Norwich Courier*, March 1, 1815.

⁹⁵ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 19-20. Henry Stanton's position on internal improvements would change considerably by the 1850s.

It is not known with certainty where Henry and his siblings resided after their mother moved to Riga, New York in late 1824. Susanna's divorce petition does not mention the couple's children at all, but due to Joseph's abandonment of the family, it is likely that he did not want physical custody of the children, and they remained with Susanna. Surviving records indicate that Henry and his brother Robert remained in Griswold, while Susanna likely took her younger children with her to New York.⁹⁶

Joseph Stanton's whereabouts after the divorce proceedings are also unknown, although it is presumable that he either remained with his father in Pittsfield or perhaps had already moved to New York City, where he would die in 1827. Henry Stanton does not mention his father in his recollections of the later part of his childhood and Joseph did not reestablish himself as a shopkeeper or landowner in New London County following his insolvency filing. Although several of Joseph Stanton's partners in earlier enterprises had also been forced to file for insolvency, unlike Joseph, they remained in Griswold and rebuilt their lives. Prior to 1817, Joseph Stanton was an outspoken, proud and enterprising man. Undoubtedly controversial as we have seen, his personality was a strong one as was his adherence to his sense of outrage at presumed wrongs and his equally stubborn refusal to admit his own wrongdoings.

Joseph's brother, George Stanton, was a successful merchant in Berkshire County, Massachusetts and Albany, New York. It was George who held a mortgage on Joseph's share of the Fanning Cotton Manufacturing Company and it was likely through George's influence and aid that Joseph moved to New York City sometime between 1824 and 1827. There, on July 26, 1827 at the age of 48, Joseph Stanton died. An obituary published in the *New York Evening*

⁹⁶ Henry moved to Rochester in 1826, and from his son's unpublished family history, we learn that Robert accompanied him on the journey west. Ibid., p. 21. The remaining Stanton children ranged in age from 17 year old Frances, to nine-year-old George.

Post, invited relatives and friends to attend his funeral; however, it is doubtful that word reached any of Joseph's six children or his ex-wife, in time for them to attend the services.⁹⁷ Henry Stanton was silent on his relationship with his father after Joseph's insolvency. From Joseph's public quarrel with Israel Burton, we learn that Joseph sold gin in his stores, and from his very public legal cases, it seems entirely clear that Joseph was an emotionally excitable and sometimes violent man perhaps indicating that after he lost his stores and land in 1817, he began to drink excessively.⁹⁸

In April of 1826, twenty-year-old Henry Stanton, together with his younger brother, Robert, left Connecticut for the "far west" of Rochester, New York to join his mother and younger siblings. The experiences of his childhood, from his father's first arrest when Henry was seven to his parents' divorce when he was eighteen, had left an indelible impression on the young man. He had witnessed violent political clashes, learned the mechanics of the mill industry, help support his family while still a child himself, and received an education that would serve him well in the years to come. Equally important, before the age of twenty, Henry Stanton had witnessed something very few men of his time had seen: a woman, his mother Susanna, asserting her right to self-determination.

⁹⁷ *New York Evening Post*, July 27, 1827. Joseph Stanton's obituary read, "Last Evening, Mr. Joseph Stanton, aged 48 years. His relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend his funeral this afternoon at five o'clock from his dwelling in Lombardy, near Walnut street." Joseph Stanton left no will and no probate was opened in the Manhattan Surrogate's Court. Although Walnut Street is no longer existent, an 1836 map of New York City showed Walnut Street located on the eastern shore of lower Manhattan. The area was populated by merchants and importers, suggesting that Stanton was employed in some fashion by either his brother or another merchant/importer. His name does not appear in city directories in the four years prior to his death.

⁹⁸ Henry Stanton's first foray into reform was in the temperance movement. Although many young men untouched by an alcoholic family member did the same, Henry's vehemence against "rum sellers" both in reform and as a lawyer, suggest that his fight was perhaps more personal.

The World of Fashionable Follies

In stark contrast to Henry's unstable and often chaotic childhood, when she was born more than ten years later on November 12, 1815, Elizabeth Cady's father, Daniel Cady, was a Federalist member of the United States House of Representatives, and a very wealthy man.⁹⁹

Daniel Cady was born a British subject, on April 29, 1773, in Canaan, New York, and his third great-grandmother was Hannah Stanton, a daughter of Thomas Stanton, and a sister to the direct ancestor of Henry Brewster Stanton.¹⁰⁰ Daniel Cady was the eldest son of Eleazar and Tryphena Beebe Cady, and his father was one of seven sons born to Ebenezer Cady, all of who served in the Revolutionary War. In the 1760s, Eleazar and his younger brother Ebenezer

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton's child and young adulthood has been previously chronicled by her biographers, most notably Alma Lutz and Elisabeth Griffith, and also in her own autobiography, *Eighty Years & More*. For this study, I have chosen to include aspects of her early life most relevant to Elizabeth's development as a reformer and new findings not previously mentioned in other works. Important additions to Elizabeth's biographies can be found in Kathi Kern's *Mrs. Stanton's Bible*. For a meaningful critique of Elizabeth's autobiography, see Ann D. Gordon's afterward in Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*.

The New York Commercial Advertiser, June 16, 1814, listed the final election results. Cady served as a representative of the Fourteenth District and won his seat by less than 200 votes out of a total of more than 5,000 cast.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Stanton's daughter, Hannah married Nehemiah Palmer. Their son, Jonathan Palmer, married Mercy Manwaring. Their daughter, Prudence Palmer, married Ebenezer Cady, Daniel Cady's grandfather. Thus, Henry Brewster Stanton and Elizabeth Cady were equally descended from Thomas Stanton who arrived in Massachusetts in 1635. For Cady ancestry see: Orrin Peer Allen, *Descendants of Nicholas Cady of Watertown, Mass., 1645-1910* Palmer, Mass.: The Author, 1910. For Stanton ancestry see: Stanton, *A Record, Genealogical, Biographical, Statistical, of Thomas Stanton of Connecticut and His Descendants, 1635-1891*.

married sisters Tryphena and Chloe Beebe, and settled in Columbia County, New York, just across the border from Massachusetts.¹⁰¹

Elizabeth's mother, Margaret Livingston Cady, was born on February 18, 1785, four years to the day after Henry Stanton's mother, to another Revolutionary War veteran, Colonel James Livingston.¹⁰² Margaret was the sixth of nine surviving children born to Elizabeth Simpson and James Livingston, and was born nearly 17 years later than her eldest sister, Elizabeth.¹⁰³

As a young man, Daniel Cady farmed alongside his father but was eventually apprenticed to a shoemaker. After a short time in the profession, a cobbling accident left Cady blinded in one eye and ended his career as a cobbler. After spending some time as a schoolteacher, Cady began

¹⁰¹ Chloe Beebe Cady was perhaps the first known female member of the Cady family to become involved in politics. In 1840, at the age of 91, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's great aunt gave a speech in support of William Henry Harrison for president. Allen, *Descendants of Nicholas Cady of Watertown, Mass., 1645-1910*, p. 91.

¹⁰² James Livingston's military career was expertly chronicled by James F. Mason in 1988 as part of the Fulton County Bicentennial of the United States Constitution and is available online at: <http://fulton.nygenweb.net/military/livingston.html>

¹⁰³ Elizabeth Cady's maternal grandparents were both born in present-day Canada. Elizabeth's grandfather, James Livingston, later claimed to be the first man in Canada to raise troops and take up arms for the American cause. After the Revolutionary War, the British government confiscated all of Livingston's land. Livingston had had an illustrious career during the war, including being summonsed by George Washington to relay his first-hand knowledge of Benedict Arnold's treason. He was given land near Johnstown, and it was there that he lived the remainder of his life. While in Johnstown, James Livingston was a farmer and shop owner and served in the New York Assembly from 1784-1791. Margaret Livingston's younger sister, Catherine, married Henry Brevoort Henry, inspiration for the name selected for Elizabeth Cady's younger sister, Catherine Henry Cady, and perhaps a confirmation of Elizabeth's close-knit maternal family, many of who resided in Johnstown. Cuyler Reynolds, *Hudson-Mohawk Genealogical and Family Memoirs*, vol. III New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1911, pp. 1154.

to study law and was admitted to the bar in 1795. In the first recorded case in which he participated, the young Daniel Cady served as co-counsel with Aaron Burr.¹⁰⁴

Four years later, in 1799, Cady moved about 80 miles west to Johnstown, New York. There, in 1801, at the age of 28, he married sixteen-year-old Margaret Livingston on July 8.¹⁰⁵ Marrying into the Livingston family would alter the course of Cady's life in many ways. Although he appeared to have a promising career as a lawyer, his financial future and indeed his renown as an attorney, were greatly enhanced by the connections Cady made through his in-laws.

The most important of these connections came through Margaret Livingston's eldest sister, Elizabeth. In 1792, Elizabeth married Utica, New York merchant, Peter Smith. As a young man, Smith, together with partner John Jacob Astor, established an extensive fur-trading network with several Native American tribes in the Mohawk Valley, and they quickly became two of the wealthiest men in New York. Smith maintained a store in Utica that served as the base of the acquisition side of the operation, and the furs were then sent for sale to Astor in New York City. Early in their partnership, Smith began acquiring large tracks of land in central New York, and he eventually amassed holdings in excess of half a million acres.¹⁰⁶

When Elizabeth Livingston Smith died in 1818, Peter decided to sell his business interests to his second son, Gerrit and his brother-in-law, Daniel Cady. The contract was for

¹⁰⁴ Henry B. Stanton, "Daniel Cady," *New York Daily Times*, January 25 1855.

¹⁰⁵ Allen, *Descendants of Nicholas Cady of Watertown, Mass., 1645-1910*, pp. 173-74.

¹⁰⁶ Norman Dann, *Practical Dreamer: Gerrit Smith and the Crusade for Social Reform* Hamilton, NY: Log Cabin Books, 2009, pp. 17-19. See also, Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *Gerrit Smith: A Biography* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1878; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969, pp. 6-10.

\$225,000 (in 1819!) and called for yearly payments spanning a decade. In addition to his land speculation business, Cady also continued to practice law, and likely because of his ties to the Smith family, he eventually began specializing in land patents and mortgages.¹⁰⁷

Politically, Cady was a Federalist, the party of Washington and Adams. He was elected to the New York State Assembly in 1808 and served until 1814 when he ran for a seat in the United States House of Representatives. He won, by the rather slim margin of less than 200 votes out of the approximately 5,000 cast and took his seat in the Fourteenth Congress in March 1815.¹⁰⁸ While in Congress, Cady served on several committees related to Indian affairs and land claims as well as being appointed to a committee to review a petition from an abolition society seeking stronger penalties for those who kidnapped free blacks. It is not known why Cady did not stand for reelection in 1816; however, he would never again hold legislative office, despite a failed run for Congress in 1832.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps the most often told story about Elizabeth's relationship with her father is also the most disparaging. The story first appeared in print in 1869, when Elizabeth was 55 years old, and was quoted nearly verbatim in every later lengthy biographical treatment. According to

¹⁰⁷ For the partnership between Smith and Cady see Dann, *Practical Dreamer: Gerrit Smith and the Crusade for Social Reform*, p. 22. Peter Smith's holdings amounted to about \$400,000. At the time of the transaction in October 1819, debts amounting to \$75,000 transferred to the new partnership, along with the requirement that Peter Smith continue to receive the income derived from \$125,000 and also stipulated that one half of the remainder of the estate be divided equally among Peter Smith's grandchildren. Frothingham, *Gerrit Smith: A Biography*, pp. 20-21. Substantiation for the income requirement is found in Daniel Cady to Gerrit Smith, March 24, 1820, Peter Smith Collection, Syracuse University. Transcription available at www.danielcady.com.

¹⁰⁸ *New York [NY] Commercial Advertiser*, June 11, 1814, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ For example, see *Journal of the House of Representatives*, Vol. 10:39; 10:70; 10:163; and 10:357.

Elizabeth's recollection, when her only surviving brother died in 1826, the eleven-year old Elizabeth tried to comfort her father. She wrote that he really hadn't even noticed she was there and "mechanically" put his arm around her when she sat on his lap. Daniel Cady then spoke the words that would immortalize him as not only a cold, stern and unsympathetic figure, but a reply that would also serve as the first explanation, the awakening if you will, of Elizabeth's feminist consciousness: her father reportedly lamented "My daughter, I wish you were a boy."¹¹⁰

Although he was forward-looking and progressive in his business affairs, in his personal life, Daniel Cady was a man of his times. He held a devout and unyielding religious faith, even in the hour of his greatest trials and those of his family; and his faith, and that of his wife and family were often tested. Margaret Livingston Cady give birth to eleven children; however, only six would survive to adulthood, and of these six, Eleazar was the only Cady son to live beyond the age of eight.¹¹¹ It was on the occasion of this only surviving son's death that Elizabeth later wrote so poignantly of her father's grief.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Parton, *Eminent Women of the Age: Being Narratives of the Lives and Deeds of the Most Prominent Women of the Present Generation*, pp.336-37. The story was repeated, nearly verbatim, fifteen years later in Phelps, ed. *Our Famous Women*, pp. 605-06. An abbreviated version was included in her autobiography, and she retained the word "mechanical" in her description of her father's physical affection. Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 20.

¹¹¹ According to Griffith, two Cady sons were named Daniel. One, the twin of Eleazar, reportedly died at the age of 8 in 1814; the other, was born and died in 1814. Source information for the Cady children is not included, and all of the children were born well in advance of required registration of births in New York State. With the exception of Daniel (1806) and Eleazar, all other Cady sons died before their second birthday.

¹¹² Eleazar Livingston Cady was born May 26, 1806 and died on August 16, 1826 – a few months shy of Elizabeth's eleventh birthday. Eleazar's death came shortly following his graduation from Union College in Schenectady, NY. At the time of his death, Margaret Livingston Cady was pregnant with her last child, a boy born on January 28, 1827, and named after his deceased brother. The second Eleazar died at 20 months of age. Allen, *Descendants of Nicholas Cady of Watertown, Mass., 1645-1910*, pp. 173-74.

It is important, however, to remember that whether or not Daniel Cady really told his young daughter that he wished she were a boy, in 1826 and arguably even in 1926, it would not have been an unusual, nor an unexpected expression. As the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments would later articulate, women's roles during Elizabeth's lifetime were severely limited and rigidly constrained. Taken in this light, perhaps we can understand Daniel Cady's comment to reflect more than simply a one-dimensional piece of evidence indicating his apparent indifference to his female children, and perhaps even begin to think of it as a great compliment to his daughter, Elizabeth. Perhaps it might even show her father's acknowledgment her intelligence and potential, combined with the sad realization that with all she possessed, because she was a woman, her talents would likely remain undeveloped and Daniel Cady was lamenting these very limitations.

Elizabeth's surviving recollections of her childhood, like those of her future husband, were primarily written in late life (over six decades later) and with an agenda and editorial eye of that era that still confounds modern historians seeking a more balanced and complete narrative. While Henry Stanton's childhood recollections served to explain his lifelong interest in politics, Elizabeth's telling of her early life was first constructed during the months preceding the rupture within the women's rights movement, and as a result, emphasized her awareness of gender inequality at the young age of eleven, likely in an effort to substantiate her leadership of the movement in the years following the split. In Elizabeth's late life retelling of her childhood and indeed continuing throughout the years before the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, nearly every incident serves to reinforce this central theme.¹¹³

¹¹³ Although a full interrogation of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's, *Eighty Years* is beyond the scope of this work, many aspects of her recollections have been expertly examined by Kathi Kern and

However, from Daniel Cady's surviving correspondence, it is possible to consider him in a more intimate and balanced fashion. From a letter written following the loss of the couple's third son at the age of only six months, Cady wrote of his grief to Peter Smith in 1814, the year before Elizabeth's birth:

It is true that I have lost my youngest child. I thought too much of him...I flattered myself he was formed to contribute largely to my happiness...Such is the fleeting nature of the treasures of this world – one moment they are the objects of our warmest affections and at the next the source of the bitterest anguish...The death of my boy has robbed [sic] me of one object of my affections, has dried up one source of my anticipated happiness, but to him, I doubt not, death was gain and had he lived, instead of fulfilling my expectations and contributing to my happiness, he might have covered himself with disgrace and filled me with shame.¹¹⁴

This son, named Daniel Cady in honor of his father, was the second son of the same name to die in 1814 at a young age. The first Daniel was Eleazar's twin whose own death occasioned such profound grief fourteen years later.¹¹⁵

Additionally, from this same letter, another side of Daniel Cady emerges, one that is seemingly absent from Elizabeth's later writings. Responding to Peter Smith's unhappiness with his daughter's choice of a husband, Daniel Cady responded in a way that contradicts not only his historical depiction as a tyrannical and unsympathetic ruler of his household, but also in a way that was completely different from his own reaction when faced with a similar situation in 1839:

If a daughter disoblige an indulgent father and gets a bad husband, God knows she is sufficiently punished without one frown from her Father; but if she happens

Ann Gordon. See especially chapter 1 in Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible*. Ann Gordon, afterword essay in Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*.

¹¹⁴ Daniel Cady to Peter Smith, December 2, 1814. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress. For Daniel Cady's date of birth, see Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 227.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

to get a husband who does every thing in his power to render her happy what then ought to be done? Shall the Father look constantly at the gloomy side of the picture and torment himself by reflecting that he had a loved daughter...Would he not more promote his own happiness by saying, I have done my duty. The happiness of my daughter was my object, and although she has cruelly disappointed me, may God forgive her, and make that marriage a prosperous one which promised nothing but misery. Although my feelings and my honor may not permit me to take her to my arms nothing shall tempt me to say one word, or do any act which shall give her pain.¹¹⁶

Like the recollections of her future husband Henry, Elizabeth's writings contain very little information about her mother, and it is her father, together with the family's "servant" Peter Teabout that dominate her retelling of her childhood.¹¹⁷ Despite the fact that he played an integral part in Elizabeth's childhood, Peter Teabout's role is frequently minimized or omitted altogether by some of Stanton's biographers.¹¹⁸ Perhaps this is due, in part, because Peter's initial presence in the Cady household was due to his being the property of Daniel Cady.

¹¹⁶ Daniel Cady to Peter Smith, December 2, 1814. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress. Peter's daughter, Cornelia's marriage was seemingly a happy one, lasting until Cornelia's untimely death at age 33 in 1825. Cornelia and Walter Cochran had eight children, and following her death, her husband, Walter, sent the eight children to live with their uncle Gerrit Smith for three years. Dann, *Practical Dreamer: Gerrit Smith and the Crusade for Social Reform*, pp. 155-56. Cornelia's son, John Cochran (1813-1898) was a successful lawyer and politician, serving as Attorney General of New York State during the Civil War era as well as acting as counsel for Henry during the Custom House scandal in 1863-64 and for Elizabeth when a lyceum circuit brought a suit against her in 1872. John Cochran added the "e" to his last name in 1855. Ann D. Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Against an Aristocracy of Sex 1866-1873*, vol. II New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000, p. 300 n.7.

¹¹⁷ In Elizabeth's autobiography, the Rev. Simon Hosack also receives more attention than Margaret Livingston Cady. In at least one respect, Hosack was Elizabeth's intellectual mentor as a child, teaching her ancient Greek and encouraging her to study traditional male subjects. Unlike Daniel Cady, according to Elizabeth, Hosack also claimed to prefer girls to boys. Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 21.

¹¹⁸ For example, Griffith omitted Peter Teabout from her 1985 biography of Elizabeth.

Although today we don't readily associate the idea of slavery in New York State, the institution lasted surprisingly far into the nineteenth century. The 1799 Gradual Manumission Act stated that children born into slavery after July 4 of that year were born "free," but were forced to serve as indentured servants until the age of 25 for girls and 28 for boys. The act also stated that slaves born prior to 1799 would remain slaves for life. Thus, because his 1755 birth date was well in advance of this date, Peter Teabout's status as a slave remained unchanged by the legislation. It was not until 1817 and the passage of the so-called Final Abolition Act, that Peter Teabout would achieve his freedom. Importantly while this second act freed slaves unaffected by the 1799 manumission act, it did not take effect until July 4, 1827 – ten years after passage and not until Elizabeth was twelve.¹¹⁹ Thus until her adolescence, Elizabeth's companion and babysitter was, in fact, the property of her father.

In addition to being a slaveowner himself, Daniel Cady's legal practice also included slaveholding clients. In 1812, Cady, representing fellow Johnstown resident Andrew Wimple, filed suit complaining that Wimple had purchased the unexpired term of a female slave who was sold as being "sound in all aspects," but who was, in fact, "unsound and lame" in addition to being incontinent and possessing a bad hip. The poor woman died a month later, however, it was her new owner, Wimple, through his attorney Daniel Cady, who claimed that he had been "injured" and "hath sustained damage." The ruling in the case is unknown.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ The most thorough examination of slavery in New York is Graham Russell Hodges, *Root & Branch: African Americans in New York & East Jersey, 1613-1863* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

¹²⁰ *Warpole v. Hosford*. Abbott Collection, New York State Archives, Collection BA9691; folder 107-110, box 1, item 110.

After he became a freedman in 1827, Peter Teabout continued to work in the Cady household and it is likely that freedom did not significantly change his day-to-day life. In 1845, long after the Cady children were adults, Teabout is listed in the New York census report immediately following the Cady household, indicating that he continued in their employ while living nearby in a modest home valued at \$100.00. In the 1850s, in a letter to his sons, Henry Stanton wrote of his departure for Johnstown, noting that “Black Peter” would likely be at the depot to pick him up.¹²¹ The 1860 Federal Census listed Teabout as still employed as a “day laborer” at the age of 85, and two years later, Peter Teabout died in Johnstown.¹²² These few meager facts are all that remains of Peter Teabout in the historical record, however, his influence on Elizabeth’s childhood was immeasurable and far-reaching.

Nearly every moment of childhood joy that Elizabeth recalled in her autobiography was due chiefly to Peter, and in the absence of similar stories about her own parents, his role in her childhood is all the more important. From his violin accompaniment of her dancing, to his preparation of Christmas dinner, and from his storytelling to rescuing Elizabeth and her sisters from a fast-moving stream, Peter was Elizabeth’s protector, “guardian angel,” and likely the one she turned to for nurturing and affection.¹²³ However, in her autobiography, Stanton does not mention Peter’s status as a slave, and although she speaks highly and frequently of his contributions to her health, intellect and happiness, following the death of her brother, Eleazar,

¹²¹ Henry B. Stanton to sons Daniel and Henry, Jr. February 22, 1852. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

¹²² Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible*, pp. 24-25.

¹²³ Margaret Stanton Lawrence, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1915: A Sketch of Her Life by Her Elder Daughter Margaret Stanton Lawrence. An Afterword by Her Younger Daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch," (Poughkeepsie, NY: Vassar College, [1915]), p. 4.

Peter disappears from the narrative and was replaced by her intellectual mentor the Rev. Simon Hosack.¹²⁴

It is widely acknowledged by historians, based solely on Elizabeth's own recollections, that as a child, she spent a great deal of time in her father's law office, located just next door to the Cady household. Although the details often vary, Elizabeth expressed an early appreciation for and interest in her father's legal books. According to the generally accepted record of Elizabeth's first understanding of the unfairness of the legal system with respect to women, she was present when her father met with a potential client, a neighbor, Flora Campbell.¹²⁵ Although in her autobiography Elizabeth discussed at length Peter's interest in the law and writes of his bringing her and her sisters to the courthouse, the jail, and the hotel where the lawyers held their conferences, the connection between Elizabeth's fascination with the law and Peter's visits with her to court has been largely unexplored.¹²⁶

According to Elizabeth's daughter Margaret, it was Peter who would "carefully explain the merits and demerits of the lawsuits to his young charges before entering the courthouse, then with one child on each knee and a third standing beside him, they would sit contentedly and listen."¹²⁷ Perhaps it was due to Peter's influence that Elizabeth achieved an appreciation for and

¹²⁴ See Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp. 14-19.

¹²⁵ See Introduction for details about the identification of Flora Campbell.

¹²⁶ Although Kathi Kern offers the first detailed look at Peter Teabout's influence on Elizabeth's childhood and offers the most thorough interpretation of Stanton's autobiographical account of her childhood, Kern stops short of considering Peter's potential influence on Elizabeth's interest in the law and the courts.

¹²⁷ Lawrence, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1915: A Sketch of Her Life by Her Elder Daughter Margaret Stanton Lawrence. An Afterword by Her Younger Daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch," pp. 4-5. Although a full consideration of the choice of the inclusions and exclusions employed by Elizabeth in writing her autobiography is beyond the scope of the present work, from the first

an interest in the laws. As an adult, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was known as an interesting and impressive storyteller and from an early age, she expressed an interest in debate. It seems logical then, to note the important role that Peter likely played in Elizabeth's intellectual development.

Equally important, Peter Teabout also served as an example of someone who although severely restricted by social, political and cultural conditions, possessed unbounded curiosity for and interest in the world around him – a world in which he was also not permitted to take part. It was also with Peter that Elizabeth experienced an event similar to what she would later encounter at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, where the female delegates were excluded from participation because they were women. It was with Peter that Elizabeth sat near the door of the church in what was called "the negro pew" during services on Christmas morning.

Of her mother, Elizabeth described her as "a tall, queenly looking woman," possessing courage, self-reliance and at "ease under all circumstances and in all places."¹²⁸ A later biographer noted that Elizabeth was uncomfortable in her mother's presence because of Margaret's air of authority and perhaps even austerity; however, from Elizabeth's late life

of her own published recollections of her childhood (1868), it is clear that Elizabeth had assembled a retelling of her childhood through the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention that would account for her feminism and interest in reform. To credit Peter, or for that matter any man with this development would have been entirely unsatisfactory to Stanton and arguably to her audience. It is also worth our consideration to contemplate how this selective account has altered the course of women's history in the broader sense. Because in many respects Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's *History of Woman Suffrage* and their other writings have become the movement's foundational history, the women's rights movement and feminism in general have, and largely continue to be, seen as movements originating from the oppression of the founding mothers, rather than as an intellectually and leadership-based reform movement originating from the same impulses as "men's" movements. Unfortunately, the evidence needed to attribute Elizabeth's interest in the law, beyond anything more than a passing introduction by Peter Teabout is absent.

¹²⁸ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 3.

recollections and the choice of words she used to describe her mother, it seems doubtful that the young girl sought out Margaret for nurturing and consolation. While Henry Stanton's mentions of his mother were also brief, it seems clear that the choice of emphasis/de-emphasis in the Stantons' autobiographical works allow us to draw different conclusions and meanings.

As we have seen, Henry Stanton's childhood recollections were carefully constructed to conceal the family's dire economic conditions, his father's erratic behavior and his parent's divorce, and it also seems clear that the public persona that Henry was cultivating required that his childhood was filled with vivid political images that would explain his lifelong interest and passion in electoral politics. Further, as a man, who had spent his working life in the largely male-dominated professions of law and journalism, his reading audience would likely have expected to learn more about his father, than his mother. However, an entirely different analysis seems fitting in the case of Elizabeth's neglect of her mother in her autobiography. As a woman's rights activist, it would seem that were there memories of her mother's pushing her toward male-dominated arenas or even a mother's sympathetic understanding of the frustrations her daughters faced with the rigid cultural roles available to them as women, such memories would have dominated Elizabeth's depiction of her childhood. Importantly, other than her sister Margaret, no woman emerges in a sympathetic or encouraging role in Elizabeth's retelling of her childhood. Instead, according to her late-life autobiography, Elizabeth's childhood was dominated by men, and importantly, men who encouraged her intellectual abilities and curiosities; men who allowed her to explore the world in which she lived, and men who she sought to emulate in her adulthood.

Chapter Two: The “Infected” District

When Henry and Robert Stanton arrived in Rochester, New York in April 1826, they found a city that had grown with startling rapidity. In the nine-year period from 1817 to 1826, Rochester’s population had grown from 700 to ten times that.¹²⁹ Although white settlement in Western New York had begun in the late eighteenth century, towns were primarily clustered in the southern part of the state near the Pennsylvania border. Between 1812 and 1830, what had been “unbroken wilderness” had transformed into a thriving city of 10,000, due in large measure to Rochester’s waterpower that was harnessed to mill flour that was grown throughout the region.¹³⁰ Demographic figures in 1830 noted that men, three quarters of whom were under thirty years old, overwhelmingly populated the new “Flour City.” However, Rochester’s population in the 1820s was constantly in flux. According to historian Paul Johnson, it was estimated that everyday 130 new arrivals reached the city on the Genesee, replacing the 120 residents who left on a daily basis.¹³¹

What drew Henry and Robert Stanton to Rochester was in some respects out of the ordinary. While they fit the demographic model of Rochester’s new arrivals, they were joining family members who had been area pioneer founders. However, while this pattern of family migration was not unique, the Brewster-Stanton clan was not part of the wealthy landowning

¹²⁹ Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* New York: Hill and Wang, 2004; reprint, 2004, p. 72. Henry Stanton noted a population of only 3,500 Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 24.

¹³⁰ Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, p. 13.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 37. Johnson also found that less than one in six stayed in Rochester for six years or longer.

Rochester city founders who typified this type of kinship recruitment to the area.¹³² In addition to their uncle, Henry Brewster, their mother, Susanna, and siblings Susan, Frances, Joseph and George had already lived in Western New York for three years when the two brother arrived. Henry's eldest sister, Susan, married neighbor and son of Riga town founder, Samuel Baldwin, and the Baldwin and Brewster clans were already well established as political and church leaders in the Genesee Valley well before Henry and Robert arrived, but were not wealthy or particularly influential beyond the confines of their small village. Thus, while many young men flocked to Rochester to work as laborers for a time before moving on, Henry and Robert were joining already established family networks.

Perhaps as a result of these kinship networks, within a few months of his arrival, Henry was already close to the center of Rochester politics. His first position was a clerkship in the Rochester canal office, where he met many political leaders of the Albany Regency as they stopped in to visit with the Canal Commissioner.¹³³ At the same time, Henry and his brother Robert also worked for a local newspaper, the *Monroe Telegraph*, which was run by an eccentric young publisher, Thurlow Weed. By the time of his acquaintance with the Stanton brothers, Weed had already developed a local and statewide reputation for his keen political insights and ability to sway large numbers of voters by his somewhat unorthodox personality and editorial practices.¹³⁴

¹³² Ibid., p. 25.

¹³³ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p.30. The Canal Commissioner, John Bowman, was a member of the so-called "Immortal Seventeen:" immortal because seventeen state senators voted against allowing the direct voting of presidential electors. Bowman was a Democrat. Ibid., p.30.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 30. Weed joined the *Monroe Telegraph* initially as editor in 1824. The year before Henry's arrival, Weed served a term in the New York Assembly and then returned to Rochester in 1825 determined to overcome his financial difficulties by purchasing and then expanding the

Chronically broke and disheveled, Weed purchased the *Telegraph* from Rochester pioneer settler, Everard Peck in 1825, and shortly thereafter took on partner Robert Martin, and expanded the paper to a semi-weekly by October of 1826.¹³⁵ Weed's timing could not have been better: a month earlier, in nearby Canandaigua, New York, an itinerant stone worker, William Morgan, disappeared under suspicious circumstances following his release from an Ontario County jail. The so-called "Morgan Affair" forever changed the face of New York politics and helped propel Thurlow Weed to national prominence.

William Morgan was a member of a Masonic lodge in LeRoy, New York. According to Weed, Morgan fell out with the lodge in LeRoy, prompting a move to nearby Batavia, New York. When the Batavia lodge refused to enroll Morgan, he retaliated by writing an exposé of the secret rituals of the organization. Through an agent, Morgan approached Weed to publish his book, but Weed declined because his new partner, Robert Martin, was a Mason. Morgan eventually located a Batavia publisher willing to take on the project and according to Weed, the book was published in strict secrecy in the dead of night and on Sundays due to its inflammatory content.

Shortly after the exposé was published, word spread that Morgan had made good on his promise to reveal the secret Masonic rituals. Morgan was arrested and brought to the Ontario County jail in Canandaigua and held on a charge of theft. Bail was soon posted, and Morgan

paper. Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947, pp. 35.

¹³⁵ The *Telegraph* became a daily paper by April 1827. Catskill [New York] *Republican*, May 2, 1827.

was allegedly spirited away in a carriage by unknown assailants screaming “Murder” as the carriage drove away. William Morgan was never seen publically again, dead or alive.¹³⁶

The following month, New York’s governor DeWitt Clinton, a Mason himself, called for the cooperation of the citizens in apprehending those responsible for Morgan’s abduction. By November, four Masons were indicted by a grand jury for the crime of kidnapping (a misdemeanor at the time) and received light sentences. Although dozens of other defendants were eventually tried over the course of the next five years, the most important legacy of William Morgan’s disappearance was the changes it brought about in New York politics.

While trials and grand juries continued to convene, in March 1827 Canandaigua attorney and legislator, Francis Granger, proposed doubling the reward initially offered for the return of Morgan or the discovery of his body and those responsible. Politically, Granger represented the Adams/Clay wing of the Bucktails, and he further called for a special committee to investigate the entire Morgan affair. The measures were soundly defeated in the assembly, controlled at that time by the Martin Van Buren wing of the Bucktails known as the Albany Regency. Already sensing the discontent of the supporters of the Granger resolutions, Governor Clinton signed into law two bills that he hoped would silence the growing suspicions and anger aroused by the light sentences given to those convicted in the Morgan affair. The bills raised the crime of kidnapping

¹³⁶ Henry Stanton believed that Thurlow Weed’s account of the Morgan abduction and aftermath were the most accurate as of 1885. See Thurlow Weed, *Autobiography of Thurlow Weed*, ed. Harriet A. Weed Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884, pp. 211-52. A more modern account can be found in Ronald P. Formisano and Kathleen Smith Kutolowski, "Antimasonry and Masonry: The Genesis of Protest, 1826-1827," *American Quarterly* 29, no. No. 2 (Summer) (1977). and William Preston Vaughn, *The Antimasonic Party in the United States 1826-1843* Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983, pp. 1-20. The summary of the events is from these accounts. Although a body washed up on the shores of the Niagara River in 1827, it was never conclusively determined whether or not the corpse was Morgan or a missing Canadian man who was presumed drowned. See also Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1950, pp. 114-25.

to a felony carrying a penalty of three to fourteen years at hard labor as well as denying local sheriffs the authorization to call grand juries. Clinton hoped that by stiffening the penalties and removing judicial power from local authorities, he could quell the growing cries of corruption and cover-up: however, the measures accomplished neither.¹³⁷

Throughout the state, non-Masons began to view the entire “Morgan Affair” as a miscarriage of justice and evidence that the highly placed fraternal members within Masonry had not only kidnapped and murdered Morgan, but also had purposefully obstructed justice and controlled the investigation into Morgan’s disappearance. Masonry was thus seen as incompatible with the very foundations of American citizenship, and it engendered a passionate response from non-Masons, especially in the western part of the state. It was claimed that Masons thought themselves above the law, and that because their members were placed in such prominence within the state government, Masonry itself was a threat to the function and stability of the republic.

In his autobiography, Henry Stanton noted that he witnessed three bitter political eras in his life: the first being the Jeffersonian Democrats versus the Federalists which as we have seen

¹³⁷ Thurlow Weed would later praise Clinton for his honest and aboveboard handling of the Morgan affair. Weed claimed that Clinton obtained a copy of Morgan’s manuscript in early September 1826 while chairing a statewide Masonic meeting held in New York City. Understanding the magnitude of Morgan’s betrayal, Clinton assigned the manuscript to a special committee for their recommendation. The committee summoned the man who had brought the manuscript to the meeting for further information and clarification. The messenger was none other than Thurlow Weed’s partner at the *Telegraph*, Robert Martin. Martin told the committee that the manuscript had been obtained by unscrupulous means and it was ordered returned from whence it came by Clinton and the special committee with the statement that they hoped no further “mischief” would ensue. Thurlow Weed maintained that although Clinton did not betray the Masonic brotherhood despite his extraordinary knowledge of the Morgan case, as an honest public servant, he attempted to follow the law in prosecuting the perpetrators involved in the kidnapping and charges of murder. Clinton died suddenly, following a full day of work, on February 11, 1828, just as the Anti-Masonic political agitation was in its infancy. See Weed, *Autobiography of Thurlow Weed*, pp. esp. 250-52.

above, resulted in his father's financial reversals, and the second was the anti-Masonic excitement. Stanton wrote that he was "a witness to the whole of it" and commented that the "Anti-masonic feuds excelled them [other political contests] all," but he stopped short of including either his analysis of the events or his own participation in the Anti-Masonic movement.¹³⁸

As a part time writer for Thurlow Weed's Rochester *Telegraph*, Henry Stanton could not have been placed any closer to the epicenter of the beginnings of Anti-Masonry.¹³⁹ Throughout 1827, outrage continued to grow as trial after trial resulted in either the acquittal of the accused or the light sentencing of those convicted in the Morgan conspiracy. However, Henry Stanton's initial foray into politics was not prompted by the Anti-Masonic excitement, but rather by his longtime support of Henry Clay and the administration of John Quincy Adams.

In the mid-1820s, predating the Morgan affair, political power in New York State was bitterly divided between two distinct factions: the Clintonians, followers of then Governor DeWitt Clinton and their political enemies, the Albany Regency, headed by Martin Van Buren, supporter of Andrew Jackson. This rather clean distinction in alliances belies the complex splintering within these two groups. Each group had within their coalition a block calling themselves "Bucktails" but the Bucktails themselves supported entirely different candidates and

¹³⁸ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 24-25 and 9.

¹³⁹ Stanton's autobiography is vague on the dates of his employment with Weed; however, an 1864 letter from Henry's brother Robert to Weed, reminded Weed that he had worked for him when the firm was "Weed & Martin." Weed and Martin parted ways because of Weed's involvement in the Anti-Masonic political movement in August 1827. Henry autobiography notes that he was writing for Weed's paper beginning in the fall of 1826. Ibid., p. 26. It is not known whether or not Henry Stanton continued to write for Weed's new paper, *The Anti-Masonic Enquirer* that began publication in February 1828. See Robert Lodowick Stanton to Thurlow Weed, September 3, 1864, Thurlow Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

programs.¹⁴⁰ Additionally, within each wing of the Clintonian and Regency groups were supporters of President John Quincy Adams as well as his adversary, Andrew Jackson. Complicating an already thorny political landscape, by 1827 DeWitt Clinton allied with Martin Van Buren, and thereby Andrew Jackson, creating not only political chaos, but also a vacuum in party politics that did not escape the keen eye of Thurlow Weed.

Clinton's defection left followers of John Quincy Adams' National Republican Party in New York without a state leader. The timing could not have been worse for the National Republicans: the legacy of the charges of the "corrupt bargain" that gave Adams the presidency, were still being felt throughout New York serving to further bolster the Albany Regency under Van Buren. According to Thurlow Weed, shortly after the Morgan controversy began, John Quincy Adams wrote to state leaders declaring that he was not then, nor had ever been a Mason.¹⁴¹ However, as anti-Masonic sentiment began to rise in the western part of New York, already being called, the "infected district," the party leaders of the Adams/National Republicans saw the potential to build a coalition with the nascent Anti-Masonic groups.

As early as February 1827, only six months after Morgan's kidnapping, meetings were held in several towns in western New York to discuss the handling of Morgan's abduction. Resolutions were passed at these meetings to withhold votes from anyone in the Masonic fraternity; however, political agitation outside of localized pockets caused by Morgan's

¹⁴⁰ Although many Adams and Clay supporters in New York desired a Jeffersonian-Republican coalition, some former Jeffersonians supported the Democratic tickets making the idea impossible. Thus, during the last half of the 1820s, within both the Democrats and National Republicans, there were supporters of Adams/Clay on the one side and Jackson on the other. See Van Deusen, *Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby*, pp. 30-31.

¹⁴¹ Weed, *Autobiography of Thurlow Weed*, p. 302. Jackson was a prominent Mason.

kidnapping did not happen immediately.¹⁴² By early 1828, after eighteen months of Morgan-related trials and outrages, groups comprised of non-Masons and Masons who had left the order because of Morgan's kidnapping began to organize into a political entity, with Thurlow Weed steering the movement by the head.¹⁴³

Whether because of Weed's influence or at his suggestion, the young men of Rochester "friendly to the National Administration" began to organize well in advance of the presidential contest of 1828. Meeting first at the end of January 1828, the group reaffirmed their support of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay noting that their confidence remained, "undiminished" by the "unfounded and disproved charges of corruption and corrupt coalition."¹⁴⁴ At this meeting, Henry Stanton was appointed to the Standing Committee, along with a young Rochester merchant, George A. Avery.¹⁴⁵ By the time of the group's next meeting on February 9, the resolutions of the young men were far more anti-Andrew Jackson than they were pro-Adams. Charging that Jackson exhibited a "habitual disregard of the constitution and laws of his country" and possessing a "rashness and violence of temper" the group concluded that were he elected, the event would be "fraught with evil consequences" and "dangerous to the future liberties of the

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 242.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 257. Also serving on the committee was future President and Buffalo resident, Millard Fillmore.

¹⁴⁴ [Rochester, New York] *Album*, date unknown (after February 4, 1828).

¹⁴⁵ This gathering is the first documented meeting of Henry Stanton and George A. Avery. Avery married Henry's younger sister, Frances, three years later.

American people.” This time, Henry sat on the Central Committee with the renegade son of Rochester founder, Nathaniel T. Rochester.¹⁴⁶

Henry Stanton’s first presidential campaign as an adult, the bitterly contested Adams-Jackson election of 1828, gave him the opportunity to further his already wide network of political acquaintances. In the spring, he gave speeches for Adams in Rochester, and also served on the standing committee for the Monroe County Republican Party.¹⁴⁷ Perhaps more importantly, Henry attended the statewide convention of Republican Young Men, held in Utica, on August 15, 1828, where he met the meeting’s chairman, a young lawyer from Cayuga County, William Seward. Although they would disagree many times over political issues throughout their long careers, the two were personally warm friends and their friendship dated from this meeting when they were both in their twenties.¹⁴⁸

Following the overwhelming defeat of Adams in the November election, Henry turned his attention elsewhere. In January 1829, he became Deputy Clerk of Monroe County, and because the clerk lived several miles outside of Rochester, many of the office’s daily responsibilities fell onto Henry. As Deputy Clerk, Henry officiated in a wide variety of legal situations: from attesting to signatures on Revolutionary War Pension requests to recording of

¹⁴⁶ [Rochester, New York] *Album*, date unknown (ca. February 12, 1828). Nathaniel T. Rochester likely had a contentious relationship with his father, Colonel Nathaniel Rochester. His father was a well-known member of the Masonic fraternity and a devout supporter of Martin Van Buren and the Albany Regency. In 1832, N. T. Rochester ran for Rochester Town Supervisor on the Anti-Masonic ticket. See *Rochester Republican*, April 10, 1832.

¹⁴⁷ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 33. [Rochester, New York] *Album*, May 27, 1828. Also on the committee was Henry’s brother-in-law, Samuel Baldwin of Riga, New York.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33. Minutes of the meeting were printed in the *Broome Republican* [Binghamton, New York] August 29, 1828. This convention of “young men” was the first of its kind and became an important way to mobilize young voters.

land deeds and he also represented Monroe County in many legal contests. It was this function of the clerkship that most intrigued Stanton, and he later wrote that during the three years he held this position, he was, in fact, studying law.¹⁴⁹

In October 1829, a full ten years before he met Elizabeth Cady, Henry Stanton expanded his attention from partisan politics to include reform as he helped found the Young Men's Temperance Society of Rochester and served as the group's first secretary.¹⁵⁰ The Young Men's Society was formed a year after Rochester's Society for the Promotion of Temperance and the groups' aims were most likely similar.¹⁵¹ Perhaps the most important part of Henry's involvement with the early temperance movement were the strategies he learned. Rochester's temperance societies were affiliated with Rev. Lyman Beecher's movement that emphasized moral suasion, a tactic that would later be employed by antislavery agitators, to reduce the consumption of alcohol rather than by advocating for prohibitive or coercive laws. Rochester leaders also believed that the weight and example provided by their involvement in the temperance crusade would serve to further their aims. Henry Stanton's participation in the

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 35-36. See also documents in the official records of Monroe County and the National Archives such as the June 10, 1829 Revolutionary War Pension File of Chafey Greene that was witnessed by Henry Stanton as Deputy Clerk at the time of Greene's filing.

¹⁵⁰ The call for the meeting to form the organization was published on September 30, 1829 in the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*. Henry's name appeared, along with 40 other "Young Men" of Rochester. The group included men from both political parties: Democrats such as newspaper publisher Henry O'Reilly and National Republicans/Anti-Masons such as Stanton. Another committee member, S. D. Porter, would be an active antislavery agitator with Henry Stanton in the years to come. Minutes of the meeting, taken by Henry Stanton as Secretary, were published in the *Rochester Daily Advertiser and Telegram* on October 3 and Thurlow Weed's *Anti-Masonic Enquirer* on October 6, 1829.

¹⁵¹ Newspaper announcements of the Young Men's meeting did not include specifics about the meeting's resolutions. No other meeting announcements were published in area newspapers, suggesting that the young men likely joined the "adult" society.

organization of the area's youth suggests that in only three years he had distinguished himself enough within the Rochester elite to hold such a position.¹⁵²

Historian Paul Johnson argues that the 1828-1829 Rochester temperance movement was organized not only against the growing problem of alcohol consumption of the times, but that it was also a reaction against the behaviors of wage earners by the city's elite businessmen, and further, that the temperance reform movement served to drive a wedge between these two groups that some felt was a little too fraternal. In part because Rochester was such a new city, business owners and workers tended to drink together, and oftentimes, a daily dram was a part of the laborers' compensation. However, during this time Rochester was maturing as a city at a fast pace, and as the city elites crusaded against drink by encouraging businessmen and shop owners to prohibit drinking on the job and in the neighborhoods populated by business owners and the upper class, residential neighborhoods throughout Rochester became increasingly segregated by class and occupation.¹⁵³

By 1830, what had begun as an isolated movement against members of the Masonic fraternity running for local office in western New York had matured into a well-organized political movement. Undoubtedly because of his close relationships with Anti-Masonic leader Thurlow Weed, his involvement with the Adams Bucktails and temperance reformers, Henry Stanton was well informed about the aims of the new political organization. In May 1830, Henry served as Secretary of the Anti-Masonic Young Men of the village of Rochester alongside the

¹⁵² Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, p. 79.

¹⁵³ Ibid., pp. 77-82.

sons of many of Rochester's pioneer residents.¹⁵⁴ Later that summer, Stanton's leadership among Monroe County Anti-Masonic "young men" was evident by the many committees he chaired and his leadership roles at both the local and state conventions.¹⁵⁵ In mid-September, Henry and George A. Avery, attended the Young Men's Anti-Masonic State Convention in Utica as delegates from Monroe County.¹⁵⁶

The Revival Winter

Despite his increasing involvement in reform politics, Stanton's political ambitions took a backseat for nearly two decades when, in October 1830, he heard the Rev. Charles Grandison Finney preach in Rochester.¹⁵⁷ Although Henry was baptized in the Congregational Church as a

¹⁵⁴ Although listed as the organization's secretary, surviving correspondence suggests that Stanton's contributions to the group's strategy were considerable. A letter written on behalf of the Young Men's Central Committee in May 1830 urging the Oneida County Chairman to reschedule a statewide convention employs nearly identical strategic language as letters Stanton would write a decade later for the antislavery cause. See Henry B. Stanton to Samuel P. Lyman, May 22, 1830, Lyman Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan. Thanks to Ellen DuBois for alerting me to this letter and collection.

¹⁵⁵ *Anti-Masonic Enquirer*, August 31, 1830.

¹⁵⁶ *Lyons Republican*, [September ?, 1830] published a list of Monroe County delegates. Avery became Henry Stanton's brother in law within six months of the Utica convention.

¹⁵⁷ By political ambitions, I'm referring to Stanton's own quest for public office. At the time Stanton first heard Finney speak, he was serving as Deputy Clerk of Monroe County, had already worked alongside local and state political leaders, chaired important political gatherings, and seemed well-positioned for a political career. His first Rochester employer, Thurlow Weed, was serving in the New York Assembly in 1830 and had already begun publishing the *Albany Evening Journal*. Stanton could have not had a more astute political mentor.

child in Connecticut, there is no record of his membership as an adult in any denomination until January 1831 – or as historian Paul Johnson termed it, “the revival winter.”¹⁵⁸

Stanton recalled Finney as “tall and grave” with “sparkling” blue eyes, and at “the fullness of his powers.” However, Finney’s impact on Henry Stanton’s life direction was more than the example of his rhetorical style: rather than employing the preaching style of the time, Finney’s sermons were “like a lawyer arguing a case before a court and jury.”¹⁵⁹ According to Stanton’s recollections, Finney’s liberal use of legal principles to explain ecclesial tenets appealed first to the “judges, the lawyers, the physicians, the bankers, and the merchants” until “nearly everybody” had joined the movement.¹⁶⁰ Within a few months of Finney’s arrival in Rochester, the entire Stanton family joined Rochester’s First Presbyterian Church.¹⁶¹

At the time of Finney’s arrival in Rochester, Henry Stanton seemed poised for a successful career in politics or law. He was serving as Deputy Clerk for Monroe County, and was already recognized on the state level as a leader in reform politics and locally in social reform. However, Finney’s message reached Stanton at a level that no other clergyman had. Although the dates and circumstances are unclear, during the spring of 1831, Henry Stanton began “supplying deficiencies in an imperfect education” by enrolling at a new manual labor

¹⁵⁸ Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, p. 113.

¹⁵⁹ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁶¹ Although Finney held services at the Third Presbyterian Church, Henry’s younger siblings, Robert and Frances joined the First Church “on confession” during Christmas week, 1830. Henry did the same on January 31, 1831. Susanna Brewster Stanton joined the First Church a year earlier, in January 1830, and the record notes that she had previously been a member of the Second Church. Transcript of the Records of the First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York. Special Collections and Local History, Rochester, New York Public Library.

institute in Monroe County. From Stanton's writings, it appears that he continued his education while still serving as Deputy Clerk; however, the manual labor movement was designed not only to provide a liberal arts education, but also to train young men for the ministry, suggesting that Stanton's career had already taken a decided turn by the spring of 1831.¹⁶²

The manual labor seminaries allowed men of all economic backgrounds to formally train for the clergy, and importantly, by requiring work from all students regardless of their wealth, it democratized the seminaries and fostered friendship and an egalitarian atmosphere at the institutions. As payment for tuition, room and board, students worked, primarily in agriculture, but also in small-scale industrial endeavors run by the institutions while completing their studies.

It was also during the revival winter that Henry first became acquainted with Theodore Dwight Weld.¹⁶³ Only two years Henry's senior, by 1831 Weld was already well respected

¹⁶² See Paul Goodman, "The Manual Labor Movement and the Origins of Abolitionism," *Journal of the Early Republic* Vol. 13, no. 3. (Autumn) (1993). *passim*. Henry Stanton is often mistakenly said to have been a student at the Oneida Institute at this time. Although no author provides a precise citation for his inclusion among the student body at Oneida, it appears that the confusion stems from a letter written by Lewis Tappan to Theodore Weld on October 25, 1831. In it, Tappan asks Weld to press Tappan's sons, both students at Onedia, to write him. In the same sentence, Tappan asks Weld to also see that "Mr. Stanton" write to him as well. Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, pp 1:50-51. However, there are no records of Stanton having attended Oneida, or any other evidence to suggest that he left Rochester, NY until the summer of 1832 when he attended Lane Seminary. It is likely that Tappan added Stanton to his list of those he wished to hear from out of sequence, rather than because Stanton was at Oneida.

¹⁶³ Weld (1803-1895) is the subject of two biographies: Robert H. Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld & the Dilemma of Reform* New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1980. and Benjamin P. Thomas, *Theodore Weld: Crusader for Freedom* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1950. The publication of Theodore Weld's correspondence and those of his wife and her sister in 1934, have enabled scholars to readily access important material that had not been available for study. See Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*. Additionally, the discovery of the Weld-Grimké letters by Gilbert Hobbes Barnes resulted in Barnes' only book in 1933, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844*, a work that continues to be a foundational part of antislavery historiography.

within reform circles in the Northeast. It is unclear under what precise circumstances the two met because Weld was serving in so many capacities by this time and many of these overlapped with Henry Stanton's interests. The wealthy evangelical Tappan brothers from New York City hired Weld in 1831 to act as an agent to promote manual labor institutions. Weld was also very close to the Rev. Charles Finney by the time Finney spoke in Rochester, and he was very active in the temperance movement. On December 31, 1830, Weld delivered a four-hour temperance lecture in Rochester, and because of the Stanton family's previous involvement in Rochester's temperance movement and Henry's own role in organizing the Young Men's Temperance Society, it seems likely that Henry Stanton was in attendance at Weld's lecture.¹⁶⁴ Although it is unknown precisely when Stanton and Weld first met, it was most likely during the revival winter of 1830/31, and the two quickly became close friends. The timing of Weld's temperance lecture and Henry's decision to enroll at the newly created Rochester Manual Labor Institute suggest that the shift that had begun during Finney's revivals, culminated under Weld's influence and prompted the abrupt change in Henry Stanton's life direction.

On January 25, 1831, Henry's younger sister, Frances Mehitabel Stanton, married Henry's friend and co-anti-Masonic agitator, George Anson Avery, with the Rev. Joseph Penney of the First Presbyterian Church of Rochester officiating. In addition to his reform work, Avery was a successful dry goods merchant in Rochester, and until fire destroyed his holdings, he was

¹⁶⁴ For Weld's speech, see Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, p. 113. The Monroe County Temperance Society met a week later on January 7. Weld, along with First Presbyterian Church pastor, the Rev. Joseph Penney, was in attendance and collaborated with Penney on resolutions and speeches. The Young Men's Temperance Society, the group Stanton helped to organize in 1829, was mentioned during the proceedings, although surviving documents do not mention who was in attendance at this meeting other than the major speakers. See *Albany Evening Journal*, January 13, 1831.

also the owner of a gristmill on Rochester's river run. Avery was also born in Connecticut, but had moved to western New York by 1818. He too was a new member of the First Presbyterian Church, and like his brother-in-law, Henry Stanton, he was also a political reformer prior to his conversion by Finney. The Stanton and Avery families were previously united in reform efforts and religious conversion, were now also formally united by marriage.¹⁶⁵ The last of the family to do so, Henry joined Penney's congregation a week after his sister's wedding, "on confession."¹⁶⁶

As part of his work on behalf of the Manual Labor Society, throughout 1831 Theodore Weld continued to search for the best location in which to build a national institute. The new seminary was to serve as a model institution for the growing need of training intuitions for the so-called "millennial ministers." Although for a time Rochester was considered as a potential site, Weld soon turned his attention westward to the Ohio Valley at the urging of a former Oneida classmate, J. L. Tracy. Weld's friend, now a teacher in Kentucky, suggested the area because he claimed that the Ohio Valley was "to be the great battlefield between the powers of light and darkness."¹⁶⁷ Further, the language used by Tracy to describe Cincinnati as being ideally situated "within sight of the enemies camp," suggests a double meaning: not only did Tracy see

¹⁶⁵ Frances was an early member of the Rochester Female Charitable Society and would play an active role in abolition, church and temperance reform in the coming decades. Avery was already active in Anti-Masonic and church reform at the time of their marriage. In the coming years, Avery joined his brother-in-law at state antislavery conventions and will share Henry's enthusiasm for the Liberty Party.

¹⁶⁶ For Frances Stanton and George Avery's marriage, see the *Rochester Republican*, February 1, 1831. For Henry Stanton's church membership, see Transcript of the Records of the First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York. Special Collections and Local History, Rochester, New York Public Library.

¹⁶⁷ J. L. Tracy to Theodore Weld, November 24, 1831 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, 1:56-58. Also quoted in Abzug, *Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld & the Dilemma of Reform*, p. 74.

the Ohio Valley as fertile ground for Christian converts to Finneyism, but Cincinnati's location was also "within sight" of the neighboring slave state of Kentucky.

Weld's close friend, British reformer, Charles Stuart, had been urging Weld to adopt the antislavery cause as early as March 1831, and only two months after William Lloyd Garrison began publishing *The Liberator* in Boston. Stuart himself had only recently begun studying the conditions of slaves in the British colonies, and wrote to Weld that he found "such burning cause for gratitude to God" for not "breaking up the world beneath our feet" for the "amount of their misery and of our guilt." Stuart included with his letter to Weld several antislavery pamphlets by British authors, and urged his friend to work for an end to slavery.¹⁶⁸ Although a year later Weld would write that his "heart aches with hope deferred [sic]" for the slave, he was also clear that as late as September 1832, Weld, like much of the larger reform community, believed that the Colonization Society offered the best hope of ending slavery, "Light breaks *in from no other quarter*," Weld explained.¹⁶⁹ Although Henry Stanton was deeply engaged in both political and social reform prior to 1832, no evidence suggests that his interests extended to either the colonization or nascent antislavery movements.

Henry's newfound devout religious faith and commitment to Finney's doctrines were solidified into a radically new future when, in the spring of 1832, Henry decided to become a Presbyterian minister. Resigning his position as Deputy Clerk of Monroe County, Henry left his interest in the law and politics behind and together with two of his younger brothers, Robert and

¹⁶⁸ Charles Stuart to Theodore Weld, March 26, 1831 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, 1:42-44.

¹⁶⁹ Theodore Weld to James G. Birney, September 27, 1832 in William Birney, *James G. Birney and His Times: The Genesis of the Republican Party with Some Account of Abolition Movements in the South before 1828*: D. Appleton and Company, 1890; reprint, (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 1:26-29. Emphasis as written.

George, Henry enrolled at the new Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio.¹⁷⁰ Although Henry had decided to leave the Rochester Manual Labor Institute before selecting another seminary, Henry's decision to enroll at Lane was likely because of Weld's influence.¹⁷¹

The new Lane Seminary had a somewhat rocky financial start. However, the board secured renowned and controversial minister Lyman Beecher, to serve as its first President helping to insure that both financial donations and an increased student body would follow. Lane was a clerical institution, and like the Rochester institute that Stanton attended the year before, the seminary was also founded on the manual labor model.¹⁷² According to historian Lawrence Lesick, the seminary allowed the students to unite their newly found evangelical enthusiasm together with an "immediate involvement in saving the world." Although Lane's antislavery society is the most well known of the seminary's reform efforts, the seminary

¹⁷⁰ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 43. Due to financial constraints, Henry, Robert and George travelled to Cincinnati in an unusual way. In order to pay their passage, Henry helped load a raft full of lumber and then helped steer the raft, with his brothers in tow, down the twisting Alleghany River from Olean, NY to Pittsburgh. From there, the Stantons traveled by steamboat to Cincinnati. Accompanying the Stanton brothers on the raft to Pittsburgh was Theodore Weld. Henry and Robert failed to notify the First Presbyterian Church in Rochester that they were moving to Ohio. On May 29, 1832 the brothers were dismissed from the congregation and were noted as being "at large." Records of the First Presbyterian Church of Rochester, NY, Local History Division, Rochester Public Library.

¹⁷¹ Stanton wrote to Weld in early March 1832 noting his disappointment with the Rochester Institute. Stanton hoped that an influx of Oneida students might help, but wrote to Weld that if they did not arrive, he was planning to leave in April or May. Other problems at the Rochester Institute included the departure of theological instructor John Morgan, who had recently left to teach at Lane. In this letter, Stanton pointedly asked Weld about Lane, and because of Stanton's departure for Ohio within a few months, it seems likely that Weld wrote favorably of the new seminary, prompting Henry and his brothers to enroll a few months later. H. B. Stanton to Weld, Rochester, March 7, 1832 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, pp. 1:69-71.

¹⁷² For the founding and financial difficulties of Lane's beginnings, see esp. Lawrence Thomas Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America* Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1980, pp. 27-45.

students also participated in temperance societies, arranged prayer meetings and helped to establish twenty-one Sunday schools.¹⁷³

Students wishing to study at Lane were required to demonstrate a “good acquaintance with the common branches of an English education” and possess “testimonials of a good moral character and industrious habits.”¹⁷⁴ In addition to the agricultural work performed by the students, Lane students were also employed at the seminary’s print shop. Given both Robert and Henry’s previous work for *Rochester Telegraph* publisher, Thurlow Weed, it is likely that they performed the required three hours of daily labor in the print shop. The Stantons’ arrival in Cincinnati predated that of the seminary’s new president, minister Lyman Beecher, and throughout their first year in attendance, the school’s future seemed uncertain. Infighting between Cincinnati’s Old and New School Presbytery left the administration and board of directors in nearly constant conflict.¹⁷⁵

In the summer of 1832, and within months of Henry’s arrival at Lane, the debate club’s topic for the evening caught his attention: “If the slaves of the South were to rise in insurrection, would it be the duty of the North to aid in putting it down?” The topic was likely suggested because of the rebellion of Virginia slave, Nat Turner, just the year before. According to Stanton, when he arrived for the evening’s debate, he was shocked to see that he was the only student seated in the section reserved for those responding to the debate question in the negative. It was on this occasion that Henry Stanton delivered his first antislavery address, and in his

¹⁷³ Enrolled in these Sabbath schools were many from “the most destitute neighborhoods” and total enrollment was close to 1,200. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

words, the evening marked “the beginning of [his] life-work, and lent color to my whole future existence.”¹⁷⁶

Only a few months later, the cholera epidemic that had already ravaged Western New York, swept west to Cincinnati. However, because of Lane’s isolated location in the Walnut Hills area outside of town, the disease didn’t reach the seminary for nearly ten months.¹⁷⁷ The month before the term began in July 1833, the first Lane student was diagnosed with “premonitory symptoms,” prompting the student-led Board of Health to engage a physician and distribute disinfectant. However, on July 19, the first Lane student succumbed to the illness, and before it was over, close to thirty Lane students exhibited symptoms and four would die of the disease. Among the dead, Henry’s younger brother, George Stanton, who succumbed on July 23 after less than a day’s illness. The attending physician held out little hope that George would recover, calling his case the most “desperate” he had ever seen.¹⁷⁸

Theodore Weld attended George Stanton from the moment he first experienced symptoms, and he stayed with George until his death. Despite the fact that George had already attended several revivals and was being “religiously educated” as an enrolled student at Lane Seminary, throughout his final days the young man was questioning his faith. On his deathbed, Weld tried repeatedly to convince George to accept his faith, but to no avail. In a desperate attempt, Henry “threw himself in tears upon his neck, and, with a bursting heart, cried, “Oh

¹⁷⁶ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 46-47.

¹⁷⁷ Cincinnati’s first recorded death was on September 20, and before it was over nearly thirteen months later, the disease claimed over 800 in Cincinnati alone. An additional five thousand residents left the city. Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 73.

¹⁷⁸ Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, 1: 109-12.

George! dear George, won't you listen to your brother?" George asked Henry to leave him alone, to which Henry asked "What shall I tell your poor mother," but he received the same response.¹⁷⁹

The cholera epidemic at Lane lasted only a couple of weeks, but as one student wrote shortly after it was over, "they [the students] were so surrounded by such a power of steadfast christian [sic] self-possession, as [to have] effectually repressed the contagion of panic fear." As young ministers in training, their strong faith helped the students and the institution to survive the ordeal and, according to Lesick, the cholera epidemic left in its wake a more united student body who were more "mature, able, self-reliant, and evangelical" in its aftermath.¹⁸⁰ The unity of the student body and their evangelical commitments would soon be tested.

Henry Stanton enrolled at Lane Seminary a year before Theodore Weld, and nearly two years before a large influx of Finney converted students arrived from Central New York's Oneida Institute. Although Weld was initially offered a professorship, he declined the position and enrolled as a student in June 1833.¹⁸¹ Despite Henry's intellectual opposition to slavery in his maiden antislavery speech the previous summer, Weld contended that at the time he enrolled at Lane "there was not a single immediate abolitionist in this seminary."¹⁸² This was soon to change.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 1:111. Out of her six surviving adult children, Susanna lost her youngest child, Joseph in 1832, George in 1833 and her eldest child, Susan, in 1836.

¹⁸⁰ Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 74.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 77. Former Oneida students would represent about 20% of Lane's total enrollment.

¹⁸² Weld to Lewis Tappan, March 18, 1834 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. 1:132.

Charles Finney's ministering has long been compared to that of a legal argument, and his message was delivered in a way that appealed to the reason as well as the moral convictions of those in attendance. However, there was another element to Finney's doctrine that resonated with young men living in the shadows of the Revolutionary era's ideas surrounding virtue. For Finney, sins were caused by "self-gratification," and he taught that those "who actually prefer his own selfish interest to the glory of God" were "impenitent" sinners.¹⁸³ Thus the secular view of "virtue" as self-subordination for the good of all citizens, became a way to enter the kingdom of heaven by putting aside one's work for the work of God. Combining Finney's fundamental teaching that man was a "free moral agent," with the need to do God's work before self-gratification, and the young ministers in training had a powerful reason to remake the troubled world around them. According to Lesick:

Man is a free moral agent and bound to sin by nothing except his voluntary preference. The change of heart, from the "preference for one's self-gratification to that for God's glory and the interests of his immense kingdom" involves a moral, or voluntary, change. This moral change must be voluntary, because man is responsible or obligated for his sin. One's obligation is "commensurate with his ability."¹⁸⁴

The Lane student body increasingly began to see that slavery prevented those in bondage from making this voluntary change for themselves and from fulfilling the slaves' responsibility to God.¹⁸⁵ As Theodore Weld explained, "God has committed to every moral agent the privilege, the right and the responsibility of personal ownership. This is God's plan...therefore, I am

¹⁸³ Quoted from Finney's 1831 sermon "Sinners Bound to Change Their Own Hearts," as quoted in Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 85.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 85.

deliberately, earnestly, solemnly, with my whole heart and soul and mind and strength for the immediate, universal and total abolition of slavery.¹⁸⁶

Although located amid a largely anti-black, pro-colonization population, on February 5, 1834, against the request of the seminary's administration, the Lane student body announced that they would hold a series of debates on the subject of slavery. The meetings would be held over the course of eighteen evenings and each meeting would last two and one half hours. Despite the fact that by early 1834 there "were but few decided abolitionists in the seminary," it was decided that the students would confine their debate to two questions: first, "Ought the people of the Slave holding States to abolish slavery immediately," and second, "Are the doctrines, tendencies, and measures of the American Colonization Society, and the influence of its principal supporters, such as render it worthy of the patronage of the Christian public?"¹⁸⁷ To the student body, it was through "investigation and discussion" that their "duty" should be determined, and thus it was vital to their mission as Finneyites and Christians to discuss the issue of slavery, despite the advice of the administration that the topic was too inflammatory.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. 1:120. This was written in reply to Arthur Tappan, Joshua Leavitt and Elizur Wright's invitation for Weld to attend the formation of the American Antislavery Society in 1833.

¹⁸⁷ Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 79.

¹⁸⁸ H. B. Stanton, "Anti-Slavery in the Great Valley," March 10, 1834 as printed in the *American Anti-Slavery Reporter*, April 1834, p. 52 and *A Statement of the Reasons Which Induced the Students of Lane Seminary to Dissolve Their Connection with That Institution* (Cincinnati, 1834), p. 8. James A. Thome's speech at the first annual meeting of the American Antislavery Society (published in pamphlet form by Garrison & Knapp, Boston, 1834) also contains a detailed transcript of the points raised during the Lane debates. See also *Ibid.*

Before the announcement of the Lane debates, Henry Stanton was already a committed abolitionist.¹⁸⁹ Although it is unclear precisely when he adopted an antislavery stance, by January 24, 1834, Stanton was already a subscriber to the *Emancipator* and had overpaid his dues to the American Antislavery Society.¹⁹⁰ The timing of Stanton's adoption of the abolition cause, suggests that he was working closely with Weld and played an important role in the decision of the student body to hold the debates, notwithstanding the administration's request to delay the discussions.

According to Henry Stanton, at the commencement of the debates, Lane's student body included eleven men born in slave states, seven of whom were the children of slaveowners, one former slaveowner, and one black student, James Bradley, who was a former slave.¹⁹¹ The Lane students were not relying on moral based argument alone in their debates, but rather, they had collected colonizationist literature and compared the claims of colonizationists to those possessing first hand accounts, and were concerned with "facts, facts, facts."¹⁹² The result, after nine evenings of conversation, was that those in attendance voted unanimously in favor of

¹⁸⁹ Robert Brewster Stanton, Henry's nephew, referred to Henry at this time as "a radical of the radicals." Robert's father, Robert Lodowick Stanton, was decidedly less radical and would be one of the founders of the Lane Colonization Society. Robert Brewster Stanton, "Notes from My Note Books."

¹⁹⁰ Weld was offered an agency position with the American Antislavery Society early in 1834, but he declined writing that he could do more in his current situation at Lane. In this same letter, Weld asks Wright to use the excess funds sent by Stanton to pay Weld's deficit dues, nothing that it was "Brother Stanton's request." Theodore Weld to Elizur Wright, January 24, 1834, Abolitionist Collection, 1834-1884, Manuscripts and Rare Books Department, Swen Library, College of William and Mary.

¹⁹¹ H. B. Stanton, "Anti-Slavery in the Great Valley," March 10, 1834 as printed in the *American Anti-Slavery Reporter*, April 1834, p. 52.

¹⁹² Ibid.

immediate abolition.¹⁹³ Nine days later, nearly the same majority denounced colonization as being un-Christian.

Although he was already firmly behind the abolitionist cause, the Lane debates had a profound impact on Henry Stanton. He was selected to write the official account of the debates for the antislavery newspapers, and he noted in his article that the experience of the Lane debates had convinced him that “prejudice is vincible, that colonization is vulnerable, and that immediate emancipation is not only right, and practicable, but is “expedient.”¹⁹⁴ However, Henry’s idealistic interpretation of the ease with which the former slave holding students were converted to immediate abolitionists, also convinced him of the value of moral suasion, and he felt certain that southerners could be “trained and educated” and be “reached and influenced by facts and arguments, as easily as any other class of our citizens.” Stanton concluded his lengthy article noting simply “this evening we formed an Anti-Slavery Society.”¹⁹⁵

The objectives of the Lane Seminary Antislavery Society reflected the influence of the students’ first hand accounts of slavery, combined with an understanding of the prejudices they witnessed against the free blacks of Cincinnati. Further, their goals illustrated a radical position of social and political equality of the races that was not only radical in 1834, but arguably a century later:

Immediate emancipation of the whole colored race, within the United States; the emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the master, the emancipation of the free colored man from the oppression of public sentiment, and the elevation of both to an intellectual, moral, and political equality with the whites.

¹⁹³ Ibid. According to Henry Stanton’s account, “four or five students excused themselves from voting at all on the ground that they had not made up their opinion.”

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

The formation of the Lane antislavery society was only the beginning of the students' reform efforts. The students increased their work in Cincinnati, and one student, Augustus Wattles, opened a school at a black church in the city, and so many students enrolled that Wattles was forced to stagger his teaching schedule to accommodate everyone. Within a few months, Wattles received funding from Arthur Tappan to employ several women to help teach, and by the summer of 1834, Wattles was running four schools with a combined enrollment of two hundred students.¹⁹⁶ Throughout the spring, Henry Stanton wrote lengthy articles publicizing the activities of the Lane students, their collective experiences with slavery, and denouncing colonization.¹⁹⁷

Likely due to his leadership within the Lane antislavery movement and his background in reform organizations in Rochester, Henry Stanton and fellow seminary student, James A. Thome, were invited to attend the first anniversary meeting of the American Antislavery Society held in New York City in May 1834. Although this was Henry Stanton's first such meeting, it was his speech in support of a resolution he proposed during the extended session that dominated the press coverage of the meeting. Stanton's resolution reiterated the commitment of the Lane Seminary Antislavery Society, and called upon the AAS to remember its "fundamental principle" that "prejudice is vincible." "Mr. Chairman," Stanton continued, "is not the power of this city [New York City] decidedly in favor of colonization? And is there not likewise in this

¹⁹⁶ The *American Antislavery Reporter*, May 1834 pp. 76-77; the *Liberator*, April 12, 1834 and Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 89.

¹⁹⁷ For example, see *American Antislavery Reporter*, April 1, 1834; the *Liberator*, March 29, May 3 and May 24, 1834 and *New York Evangelist* (reprints of articles found in the *Liberator*).

same city a cruel public sentiment against the colored people? Can you separate the one from the other?”¹⁹⁸

Stanton and Thome were also delegates at the formal business meeting of the AAS on May 6, and this meeting was attended by nearly all of the leaders of the American antislavery movement such as William Lloyd Garrison, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, Elizur Wright, Jr., William Goodell, Samuel J. May, Charles Stuart, and the Rev. Joshua Leavitt. Henry Stanton was appointed to a committee, along with Garrison, Robert Purvis and others to suggest appointments for AAS officers to serve the following year. In addition, Stanton was tapped for a committee comprised of only Lewis Tappan, Amos Phelps and one other member to compose a set of questions to be answered in speeches by a former emigrant to Liberia who had decided to return to the United States. Henry Stanton and Theodore Weld were also appointed managers of the AAS for the upcoming year.¹⁹⁹ Thus, although a young man in age and relatively new to the cause, Henry Stanton’s talents as an organizer, writer and orator were quickly recognized by the cadre of the early leaders of the abolition movement.

It was also on this trip to New York City, as a representative from Lane, that Henry Stanton would meet many of the reformers that he and his future wife would work with in the decades to come. Stopping in Philadelphia for the night on his return to Cincinnati, Henry and James Thome were guests of black abolitionist James Forten. While staying at the Forten home, Henry spent an evening with Quaker reformers James and Lucretia Mott, and abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and the Rev. Amos A. Phelps. Mott noted in a letter written shortly

¹⁹⁸ *New York Evangelist*, May 17, 1834. See also, the *Liberator* of the same date.

¹⁹⁹ *First Annual Report of the American Anti Slavery Society*. New York: Dorr & Butterfield, 1834 esp. pp. 34-36.

after meeting Stanton that she was “highly interested in [his] relation of circumstances,” and she noted, “the cause is certainly making rapid progress.”²⁰⁰

When Henry Stanton returned to Lane from New York, he did so as a radical abolitionist, unafraid of the potential personal costs of his stance on black equality and antislavery and willing to face public scorn and arrest to eradicate slavery and remove racial prejudice. According to the late life recollections of fellow Lane student, Huntington Lyman, Stanton and Weld used Lyman’s horse to bring escaped slaves from bondage in Kentucky to the free soil of Cincinnati. Lyman noted, “My horse was hard used.”²⁰¹

After returning to Lane in early July, Weld dispatched Henry to Lexington, Kentucky to collect an original anti-colonization manuscript recently written by James G. Birney and to update Birney on the state of abolition. Birney, a respected southern gentleman and former slaveowner, was a particularly important convert to the antislavery cause. He first became acquainted with Theodore Weld when Weld toured the south before enrolling at Lane. Within a short time, Birney emancipated his slaves and moved to Kentucky. It was hoped that Birney’s influence might induce other wealthy slaveowners in the south to follow suit.²⁰² Writing to Birney in advance of Henry’s visit, Weld noted that Henry possessed “most fully my confidence in every respect...no man among us has pondered the whole subject of slavery and Colonization more wisely, thoroughly, prayerfully or with deeper sympathy or operated with more energy,

²⁰⁰ Lucretia Mott to James Miller McKim, May 8, 1834 in Palmer, ed. *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*, pp. 25-27.

²⁰¹ Huntington Lyman to Theodore D. Weld, November 16, 1891, Weld-Grimké Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan, Box 17. Quoted in Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 90.

²⁰² See Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 46.

prudence and success.”²⁰³ Later that summer, Lane Students utilized the seminary’s printing press to publish over 8,000 copies of James G. Birney’s critique of colonization.

The publication of Birney’s *Letter on Colonization* and other visible antislavery activities carried out by the students soon provoked a scathing editorial by James Hall in a local newspaper, the *Western Monthly Magazine*, questioning whether or not the students’ attentions should be more on their studies, and less on issues “calculated to disturb its harmony.” The paper further charged that slavery was too complex of an issue “to be made the theme of sophomoric declamation by young gentlemen at school, dreaming themselves into full-grown patriots.”²⁰⁴ However, the Lane students were far from sophomoric daydreamers, a fact they would soon prove.

Theodore Weld responded to Hall’s editorial by asking questions of his own in the competing *Cincinnati Journal*, “should not theological students investigate and discuss the sin of slavery?” and further, “Is it not the business of theological seminaries to educate the heart as well as the head?” The citizens of Cincinnati, who had not previously been alarmed at the known activities of the seminary students, began to complain to the Lane trustees.²⁰⁵ Soon after the publication of Weld’s article, the community was increasingly alarmed about the students’ treatment of Cincinnati’s black population as equals. It was this “commixture of blacks and

²⁰³ Theodore Weld to James G. Birney, July 14, 1834 in Dwight L. Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)* New York: D-Appleton-Century Company, 1938, p. 1:127.

²⁰⁴ [James Hall], “Education and Slavery,” *Western Monthly Magazine*, 2, May 1834. Quoted in Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 91.

²⁰⁵ Weld’s response is printed in its entirety in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, pp. 1:136-46. See also, Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, pp. 91-92.

whites” that proved to incite a “repellency of feeling in truly christian minds.” By the end of June, Lane’s Board of Trustees began receiving requests that the students’ activities needed curtailment.²⁰⁶

What was at issue throughout the Lane debates and in the months that followed was that the students’ interpretation of scripture and their belief that education would eradicate racial prejudice led them to hold a view of racial equality that arguably was advanced even a century later. As they carried their missionary zeal from the Walnut Hills into Cincinnati’s black neighborhoods, their efforts took on a purpose far beyond Biblical instruction as the students’ abolition efforts became more and more directed toward ameliorating poverty and illiteracy, while raising the social status of Cincinnati’s black population. What began with the establishment of Sunday schools quickly became increasingly familiar association with blacks, many of whom were likely fugitive slaves. As the faculty report of 1834 noted, “the doctrine of social intercourse according to character, irrespective of color, was strenuously advocated” by the students.²⁰⁷ Lane’s Board of Directors did not initially respond to the students’ open fraternization with Cincinnati’s free black population, and did so only after the citizens of Cincinnati became increasingly uncomfortable with the behavior of the students. Lane students were seen escorting black women, staying with black families in Cincinnati, and even going so

²⁰⁶ Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, pp. 92-93.

²⁰⁷ *Fifth Annual Report of the Trustees of the Cincinnati Lane Seminary: together with the Laws of the Institution and a Catalogue of the Officers and Students, November, 1834.* (Cincinnati: Corey & Fairbank, 1834) p. 36.

far as to bring a black woman to church and seat her next to one of the city's "prominent white ladies."²⁰⁸

Despite his best efforts, the Rev. Lyman Beecher was unable to convince the student body to be more discreet in their associations. He was not initially opposed to abolition or to the students' work as teachers in black neighborhoods. However, Beecher's advice did not move the more radical students to stop their work. The small group of moderate students, however, heeded Beecher's advice and, on July 7, formed a colonization society at Lane just as the term was ending for the year.²⁰⁹

Throughout the summer of 1834, many students, including Henry Stanton stayed in residence at Lane. In early September, word leaked to the Board of Trustees that Weld intended to print another abolitionist missive from James G. Birney. This time, the trustees acted swiftly and decisively by announcing that on September 13, the seminary would be closed for the rest of the summer term. Further board meetings took still more extreme action in an attempt to halt the behavior of the new radical abolitionist student population: the trustees amended the Lane constitution to require students to have permission to debate, permission to organize clubs or societies, and they announced the suspension of the Lane Antislavery Society.²¹⁰

Undoubtedly, believing he was the lynchpin of the activities, the administration was hoping to force Theodore Weld to leave the seminary. However, in a letter to Birney, Weld noted that his friend on the board believed that it was also likely that Henry Stanton and James

²⁰⁸ Quoted in Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 92.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 94.

²¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 126-29.

Thome would also be expelled.²¹¹ Weld wryly remarked, “we shall not die of broken hearts if that takes place.” However, Henry had written earlier that if the antislavery society was disbanded, the students would “take a dismissal from the Seminary” and then “we shall spread the whole matter before the public, & I trust tell a story that will make some ears tingle.”²¹²

The new term began a month later on October 15 with nearly fifty continuing students and close to twenty new students in attendance. A student delegation asked for a full explanation of the new rules and then asked if the students could discuss the changes among themselves. When the faculty refused, the students once again requested permission to speak to each other, but the faculty remained unyielding. Finally, a student suggested that all of the students should decide individually and collectively whether or not they wanted to remain at the seminary. By the time the meeting was over, nearly half of the new students refused to enter at all, and thirty-nine of the forty-six continuing students requested dismissals.²¹³

After their exodus from Lane, many of the students returned to their homes, while still others such as Henry Stanton became evermore devoted to the abolitionist cause. Stanton’s importance and leadership in the Lane Rebellion was rewarded and recognized in the official statement of the group. The printed record of his speech would be the first of many published speeches in his long career as an orator.²¹⁴ The rebellion was successful in that only a handful of

²¹¹ Theodore Weld to James G. Birney, October 6, 1834. Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, pp. 1:132-40.

²¹² Henry B. Stanton to James A. Thome, September 11, 1834. Quoted in Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 129.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.

²¹⁴ Henry Stanton’s speech at Lane was already in print by the time he left the Seminary. See classified in *Liberator*, June 14, 1834, p. 95.

the seceding students returned to the seminary at the beginning of the next semester. One of the four was Henry's younger brother, Robert. Robert Stanton, who was four years younger than Henry, took a different path. While Henry and the other "Rebels" were organizing their antislavery activities, Robert was helping to organize the reviled colonization society at Lane and was one of only six of the original students to return to Lane following the rebellion.²¹⁵ Thus, while Henry provided financial and educational support to his brothers, when he left Lane, he left alone.

Although deeply involved in the antislavery cause, when Henry Stanton left Lane Seminary in the fall of 1834, he still planned to continue his training for the ministry. Like many of his fellow students, the time they spent at Lane had forged an impenetrable link between the ministry and their antislavery work, and the abolition of slavery had become a thoroughly moral question.²¹⁶ Together with eleven of his former classmates, Henry moved to the nearby village of Cumminsville where the group of former Lane Rebels formed a new seminary located in a building donated by a local businessman, James C. Ludlow and supported by the financial assistance of Arthur Tappan.²¹⁷ While the students hoped to continue in their preparation for the

²¹⁵ After completing his education, Robert became an ordained Presbyterian minister, spent many years living in the South, and eventually became a somewhat close friend of Lincoln during the war years. Minutes of Lane Colonization Society printed in the *New York Observer and Chronicle*, July 26, 1834. For Stanton and Lincoln see Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p.234 and 50-51. For Robert's return to Lane, see Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 199.

²¹⁶ Lane president and headmaster, Lyman Beecher (father of Henry Ward and Harriet Beecher Stowe) was seen by the "Rebels" as failing in his evangelistic duties by his refusal to support the students' antislavery work. For the students, antislavery was seen as the "natural result" their revival ministry training. Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 137.

²¹⁷ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 52. Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*, p. 132.

ministry, only two teachers were available.²¹⁸ The Cumminsville students were advanced enough to begin their own teaching and by December 15, 1834, Henry had “take[n] hold well” of his teaching duties and lectured in area churches, including two black congregations. Stanton also taught the Sunday school classes at these local churches.²¹⁹ Henry’s organizational involvement in antislavery, however, soon called him east and the following year, he became the secretary of the AAS, sitting on the Executive Board and actively recruiting the so-called “seventy” antislavery agents together with Theodore Weld, John Greenleaf Whittier and Elizur Wright.²²⁰

²¹⁸ A local physician and soon to be abolitionist editor, Gamaliel Bailey, lectured weekly on physiology. George Whipple lectured on Biblical languages and theology. See Lesick, *The Lane Rebels: Evangelicalism and Antislavery in Antebellum America*.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 132. and S. Wells to Theodore Weld, December 15, 1834 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, pp. 178-79.

²²⁰ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 48.

Chapter Three: In-Laws and Outliers

When he left Rochester in the spring of 1832 to pursue a career in the ministry, Henry Stanton not only left behind his political aspirations, but also his mother, sisters Susan Baldwin and Frances Avery, brothers-in-law Samuel Baldwin and George Avery, and his uncle Henry Brewster. As we have seen, Henry's mother, Susanna Brewster Stanton, was a woman ahead of her time. By 1832, Susanna had already raised her six children nearly by herself, legally divorced her abusive and absent husband, and stood up to church authorities – despite her strong religious faith – by boldly asserting her own right to decide for herself what constituted grounds for divorce, on both civil and religious grounds. When Susanna Stanton moved west to New York in the 1820s, she initially settled just outside of the growing city of Rochester with her brother, Henry Brewster in the small town of Riga. There, she also joined her eldest daughter, Susan, who had left Connecticut the year before her mother. A year after her arrival in New York, Susan married the son of one of the town of Riga's founders and close friend of her uncle, Samuel Cutler Baldwin. Like the rest of her family, Susan Stanton Baldwin also married into a family of active reformers.²²¹

Henry Stanton's brother-in-law, George Anson Avery, was also an early political, social and religious reformer. Arriving in Rochester from Connecticut in 1818 at the age of 15, Avery

²²¹ Susan Stanton, daughter of Susanna Brewster and Joseph Stanton requested and received a dismission from the First Church Griswold on October 13, 1822 (*Records of the First Congregational Church of Griswold*, Vol. 2) and married Samuel C. Baldwin in Riga, NY on December 13, 1823. *Rochester Telegraph*, December 30, 1823. Baldwin served with Henry Stanton on the corresponding committee at the Monroe County Republican meeting of those “friendly to the present National Administration” in May 1828. *Rochester Album*, May 27, 1828. No other joint reform work is known. The Baldwin family, both Samuel and Samuel Cutler, often attended local and state antislavery meetings and Samuel Sr. signed the town's antislavery petition in 1838. “Slavery in the District of Columbia, February 14, 1838.” National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the 25th Congress, Folder 20, Tray 7, HR25A-H1.8.

was one of the first Sunday school teachers at Rochester's First Presbyterian Church.²²² During the next decade, Avery began studying medicine and spent four years in Virginia training under a surgeon. Years later when he was an abolitionist, Avery wrote of his observations of the horrific practices of southern slaveholders during his years of medical training. He recalled that it was commonplace for a slaveowner to turn over their sick slaves to a physician who was responsible for both the slaves' board and care. If the patient recovered, the physician would be paid handsomely; if not, no compensation was given. Avery also witnessed the unquestioned and extra-legal medical experimentation performed by physicians on the sick slaves if the doctor possessed any "interest, caprice, or professional curiosity."²²³ Although it is unknown precisely why Avery abandoned his medical training and returned to Rochester, the brutality he witnessed in Virginia was most certainly a factor. By 1828, George Avery was working for the reelection of John Quincy Adams when he met the young Henry Stanton as the two were serving on the standing committee of the Monroe County "Democratick [sic] Republicans."²²⁴ Stanton and

²²² Records of the First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NY. Typed transcript, Local History and Special Collections, Rochester Public Library. Birth year from Mt. Hope Cemetery Records, Rochester, New York.

²²³ Theodore Dwight Weld, *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839, p. 44-45. Avery not only witnessed the mistreatment of the sick, but the violence of the southern society: "I knew a young man who had been out hunting, and returning with some of his friends, seeing a negro man in the road, at a little distance, deliberately drew up his rifle, and shot him dead. This was done without the slightest provocation or a word passing. This young man passed through the *form* of a trial, and, although it was not even *pretended* by his counsel that he was not guilty of the act, deliberately and wantonly perpetrated, he was acquitted. It was urged by his counsel, that he was a young man, (about 20 years of age,) had no *malicious* intention, his mother was a widow, &c, &c." Ibid., p. 172. Emphasis as printed. See also William Goodell, *The American Slave Code in Theory and Practice* New York: American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1853, pp. 148, 216.

²²⁴ *Rochester Album*, n.d., circa February 5, 1828.

Avery continued to work together throughout the 1828 campaign, and they were both delegates two years later at the Young Men's Anti-Masonic State Convention held in Utica, New York.²²⁵

During the revival winter of 1830/31, George Avery was baptized at the First Presbyterian Church of Rochester the same month he married Henry Stanton's sister, Frances Mehitabel.²²⁶ Two of George Avery's brothers also enrolled at Lane Seminary with the Stantons, but George stayed in Rochester to run his grocery and mill businesses. Although he was a successful merchant by trade, throughout his lifetime, Avery did not hide his reform activities from the public eye for the sake of his business.

By 1833 and likely because of the reform impulse awakened during the Finney revivals of the Revival Winter, Henry's mother, Susanna, became active in the primary women's benevolent organization in Rochester, and that same year, Susanna was nominated as a directoress of the Rochester Female Charitable Institute. Founded in 1822, at the time of Susanna's membership, the organization was raising money to fund a school for Rochester's poor and orphaned children. That same year, Henry's sister, Frances Avery, served on the school committee – a post she would hold until 1845.²²⁷

²²⁵ Lyons [New York] *Republican*, n.d.

²²⁶ Avery's baptism is recorded in the Records of the First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, NY. Typed transcript, Local History and Special Collections, Rochester Public Library. For the Stanton-Avery marriage, see the *Rochester Republican*, February 1, 1831.

²²⁷ "Records of the Rochester Female Charitable Society," Special Collections, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester. Susanna also served on the board in 1836 and both Susanna and Frances paid dues from their joining the organization in 1833 until the 1840s. In her monograph about the early years of Rochester's benevolent women, Nancy Hewitt did not mention Susanna Stanton's work in charitable and antislavery associations, likely because she did not recognize the connection between Susanna and Henry or between Susanna and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Frances M. Avery, Henry's sister, is only mentioned in passing. Nancy A. Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York 1822-1872* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

In the months immediately following Henry Stanton's attendance at the first annual meeting of the American Antislavery Society in New York City in May 1834, his exact whereabouts are unknown. According to Theodore Weld, Stanton and Thome returned to the seminary on July 7, indicating that Henry spent two months elsewhere.²²⁸ Although the historical record is silent, the sudden involvement of Henry's Rochester family in antislavery efforts provides some interesting clues as to his whereabouts. While the extended Stanton family's work in charitable causes were well established in the early 1830s, beginning in July 1834, Henry's Rochester family were all converted to the abolitionist cause, suggesting that Henry visited the area on his return to Lane Seminary following the end of the AAS Annual Meeting and abolitionized his family.

On July 4, 1834, a convention was held in the Rochester Methodist Episcopal church to organize a county antislavery society. The male-only meeting began with the holiday's customary reading of the Declaration of Independence, followed by a reading of the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Antislavery Society written the year before. A resolution calling slavery a "national sin" was then debated, and the motion calling for the immediate abolition of

Despite her modest financial circumstances, Susanna also supported the "Valley of the Mississippi Fund" with a \$3.00 donation in 1830. *American Sunday School Magazine*, October 1, 1830, page 320. This fund was suggested and organized by Arthur Tappan in May 1830 to establish Sunday schools throughout Ohio, Michigan, Louisiana and Mississippi, *ibid.*, p. 283. Susanna's continued support for religious programs illustrates her continuing commitment to religion and the important role it played in her life, and further confirms that despite her piety and the important role religion played in her life, her own belief in her personal rights in 1823 were still more important than her church membership.

²²⁸ Theodore Weld to James G. Birney, July 8, 1834 in Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, p. 124.

slavery was passed unanimously. Henry's brother-in-law, George A. Avery was appointed a Vice President of Rochester's Third Ward.²²⁹

Although Susanna was already active in charitable reform in Rochester, at the age of 53, Susanna Brewster Stanton became an abolitionist. Despite the fact that immediate abolitionists were a decided minority of the population, by the summer of 1834, Susanna took the same radical position on the slavery question as her son Henry, and despite her younger son Robert's involvement with colonization. In August of that year, Susanna made a donation to the American Antislavery Society in her own name, as did her daughter, Frances, and son-in-law, George Avery.²³⁰ By that time, and likely because of his friendship with Henry, Susanna was already well acquainted with Theodore Weld, and Weld gave Susanna a copy of a letter he had written earlier that year to British reformer, W. W. Bird.²³¹

Susanna's interest and work for the abolitionist cause did not end with her donation to the AAS. The following year, she joined other leading female reformers in Rochester to form the Ladies Anti-Slavery Society of Rochester.²³² The new society was an auxiliary to the AAS, and

²²⁹ [Buffalo, New York] *Literary Inquirer*, July 23, 1834.

²³⁰ Receipts of the American Antislavery Society as printed in the *American Anti-Slavery Reporter*, August 30, 1834, p. 128. Susanna and Frances (listed as Mrs. G. A. Avery) each made a \$5.00 donation in their own names. The more prosperous George Avery sent \$25.00.

²³¹ This letter was eventually given to her daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Elizabeth mentioned the letter being in her possession in an [1850] letter to Weld. Elizabeth's mention of Susanna in this letter is the only time she referenced her mother-in-law in surviving correspondence. See Ann D. Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, vol. I New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997, p. 1:173.

²³² The society's Constitution and listing of Officers and Managers was published in the *Rochester Daily Democrat* on September 24, 1835. A handwritten copy of the Constitution and a list of five signatures survives in the Porter Collection at the University of Rochester, Rush Rees Library, Special Collections in Box 14, Folder 3. These handwritten notes do not include

their constitution stated that the group's fundamental principle was that "slave-holding is a sin, and that immediate emancipation without the condition of expatriation is the duty of the master and the right of the slave."²³³ At the inaugural meeting, Susanna Stanton was selected as one of three "Directresses" and she served with other local reformers such as Susan (Mrs. Samuel D.) Porter.²³⁴

The following year, in early 1836, George and Francis Avery and Susanna Stanton left the First Presbyterian Church to form a new congregation, the Bethel Free Church, with 36 other likeminded reformers including Samuel and Susan Porter.²³⁵ This breakaway church was deemed a necessity by the founders due to the "present circumstances of Rochester," but the group's strong ties to antislavery and temperance reform was at the heart of the split from the

the names of all of the officers or managers, but the Constitution, as printed in the *Rochester Daily Democrat* is the same. Despite Nancy Hewitt's detailed research into kinship in Rochester's benevolent and reform circles, it would appear that she did not seriously attempt to identify Susanna Stanton or Frances Avery. Further, Hewitt does not rectify the handwritten and published listings of officers, and she incorrectly identifies the third directress as Mrs. Selah Mathews and not Susanna Stanton. Mrs. Mathews served as the first Secretary of the group. Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York 1822-1872*, p. 83.

²³³ Constitution of the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society as printed in the *Rochester Daily Democrat*, September 24, 1835.

²³⁴ List of Officers of the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society as printed in the *Rochester Daily Democrat*, September 24, 1835. Samuel D. Porter was active in the local Liberty Party efforts and the Porter home was an active stop on the Underground Railroad. Unfortunately, no substantial records of this early women's antislavery group survive.

²³⁵ Although the official records of the Bethel Free Church note that it was formally established in August 1836, Theodore Weld wrote in April that he lectured there, indicating the congregation had left their other churches but had not yet drawn up their official documents. See Weld to Lewis Tappan, April 5, 1836 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. 1:288.

mainstream First Presbyterian Church. The group declared their new congregation would be “Open for discussion on all subjects of morals, etc., such as Temperance, Slavery, etc.”²³⁶

The Bethel Free Church was also organized on missionary principles, and their initial missions were focused on those close to their meeting place. Following the Sunday prayer meeting, church members walked to the nearby Erie Canal to distribute Bibles, religious tracts and reform literature to the transient boatmen manning the canal barges. The Bethel Free Church also offered a Sabbath School, and George Avery was both a teacher and Assistant Superintendent from the school’s opening through 1845. The Bethel Free Sabbath School offered pupils more than just instruction on the scriptures; in 1841, former Liberty Party presidential nominee, James G. Birney, was a guest speaker and the following year, Charles Finney spent nearly two months at the church.²³⁷

Possibly as early as 1831, Susanna Stanton lived with her daughter Frances and son-in-law George Avery in Rochester’s Third Ward.²³⁸ George Avery’s antislavery activities in many

²³⁶ Records of Bethel Free Church, Washington Street Church, Central Presbyterian Church and Central Presbyterian Church Sunday School, p. 1. Copied by Lois Badger, Rochester, NY, 1948. Local History Division, Rochester Central Library. Seventeen of the original 39 members of the Bethel Free Church were women. In 1842, the name of the church was changed to the Washington Street Church and a year later the congregation withdrew from the Presbytery to become an independent congregation. This change was short lived, as the congregation renewed ties with the Presbyterian a year later. This pattern of congregations breaking from Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist mainstream upstate New York churches continued throughout the 1840s as the antislavery issue continued to divide churchgoers. See Strong, *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy*, esp. pp. 91-115.

²³⁷ Ibid., pp. 236-239. The Bethel Free Church was an early example of the splits within the reform-minded congregations. In addition to Birney and Finney, abolitionist minister, the Reverend Charles M. Torrey was also a visiting lecturer. See also “The Semi-Centennial at the Central Church, Rochester,” *New York Evangelist*, January 13, 1887, p. 3.

²³⁸ Because the United States Federal Census does not include the names of all household members until 1850 (at which time Susanna resided with the Avery family), it is unknown where Susanna resided for many years between 1830 and 1850. Because of her involvement in

respects mirrored those of his brother-in-law, Henry Stanton. Avery was also converted by Finney, became an evangelical abolitionist, and although Avery pursued moral reform to end slavery at the onset and continued to advocate the strategy in his work in the Bethel Free Church, by 1839, Avery enlarged his reform tactics to include political abolition.²³⁹

The Avery-Stanton household continued to work for the antislavery cause throughout the remainder of the 1830s. After helping to form the Rochester Antislavery Society, George Avery continued to serve as the group's secretary, and he attended the May 1836 annual meeting of the American Antislavery Society where he was selected as a vice president of the proceedings.²⁴⁰

Rochester reform societies until 1838, her residence in the area is established. However, she is not listed in the 1840 census as a "Head of Household" and does not appear to be living with the Averys that year. In May 1836, Susanna asked for and was granted a dismissal from the First Presbyterian Church in Rochester "to any Cong. Church in Connecticut." "History of the First Presbyterian Church Rochester, N.Y." Rochester [NY] Public Library, Local History Division. Typed transcript by Mrs. Myrte Haynes from original records, p. 31 Dismissions. However, her request to leave the First Presbyterian Church was coincident with the Avery family's leave to form the Bethel Free Church, so perhaps her removal from Rochester was forestalled. In addition, Susanna paid dues and participated in the Rochester Female Charitable Society through 1837, and was living with the Averys during Charles Bennett Ray's visit in November 1838. If she did leave Rochester for Connecticut, it seems likely that she did so to care for her aging father, Simon Brewster, who died on August 16, 1841 at the age of 91. Church records in Griswold/Preston have no record of Susanna joining a congregation following her excommunication in 1824. Susanna first reappears as a head of household in the Rochester City Directory in 1845 (from records collected in 1844), and she maintained a separate household until 1849 (records collected from 1848) when she resided with the Averys until her death in 1853.

²³⁹ By July 1839, Avery was one of a handful of signers with Myron Holley (one of the most vocal abolitionists calling for the establishment of a third [antislavery] political party) on the distribution of antislavery materials to politicians, including Henry Clay. The correspondence clearly contains both a moral and political appeal. See for example the reprint from the *Rochester Freeman* as published in the *New York Evangelist*, August 10, 1839 and dated the month before.

²⁴⁰ Elizur Wright, ed. *Quarterly Anti-Slavery Magazine, Volume I*. New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1836, p. 95. This publication also notes that since its inception in December 1833, membership had grown from 44 members to 476 in two and one half years. Henry Stanton was also at this meeting, listed as a delegate from Ohio.

Avery also travelled to Utica in October 1835 to lend his efforts in the formation of the New York State Antislavery Society. This meeting was disrupted by a violent mob, forcing the group to reconvene some miles away in Peterboro, New York at the invitation of Gerrit Smith.²⁴¹ However, in addition to the family's participation in organizational abolition efforts, Avery's store, at 12 Buffalo Street (now Main St.) also provided shelter for freedom seekers as part of Rochester's underground railroad.²⁴²

In 1838, Charles Barrett Ray, co-owner and editor of the *Colored American* stopped in Rochester for five days on his way to New York City. Ray, a free black, who most likely had been visiting former slaves in Canada, preached Sunday services at one of Rochester's black churches and also offered a service at the Bethel Free Church. While Ray was in Rochester, he stayed at the Avery home and offered a glimpse into the family life there in the year before Henry and Elizabeth Cady's engagement:

My home while in this place, was with my highly esteemed friend, Geo. A. Avery, towards whom I cannot entertain too high respect. His house is as the Temple of God, where He is worshipped in the spirit – where the melody of the heart in hymns of praise is tuned, and the voice of prayer, in its pathetic and sincerest strain, mingle around his throne. The hours I spent here I regard as

²⁴¹ Defensor, *The Enemies of the Constitution Discovered or, an Inquiry into the Origin and Tendency of Popular Violence. Containing a Complete and Circumstantial Account of the Unlawful Proceedings at the City of Utica, October 21st, 1835; the Dispersion of the State Anti-Slavery Convention*. New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835, p. 181.

²⁴² Milton C. Sernett, *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002, p. 181. See also William J. Switala, *Underground Railroad in New Jersey and New York Mechanicsburg [Penn.]*: Stackpole Books, 2006, p. 116. Source notes for both of these monographs do not refer to the original source for Avery's participation; however, because George Avery is not a well known figure to modern scholars, his addition to the group of "safe houses" in the Rochester area was likely correct. The Department of the Interior's "Historic Resources Associated with the Freedom Trail in Central New York, 1820-1870" p. 41, (n.d., n.p.) contains the same information with the same unrelated source as Sernett.

among the most agreeable and gratifying of my life. – Here all are for God and humanity from the grandmother to the servant.²⁴³

The “grandmother,” Ray referred to was Henry Stanton’s mother, Susanna. It is also important to remember, that despite the very active abolition movement in Rochester, the community at large did not support social equality for blacks. By opening his home to an African American in 1838, Avery showed a similar spirit as his brother-in-law Henry and the other students at Lane had shown only four years earlier.

Henry Stanton’s uncle, Henry Brewster of nearby Riga, New York, was also converted to abolitionism at nearly the same time as the other members of the family. It is not known precisely when the elder Brewster first became involved in reform politics; however, by the time of the October 1835 gathering of New York abolitionists who met in Utica to form a state society, Henry Brewster was prominent enough in the movement to be selected to chair the proceedings. When the meeting was disrupted by an angry and violent group of local citizens, the abolitionists were forced to meet in secret, finally moving the gathering to Peterboro – the home of Elizabeth Cady’s first cousin, reformer Gerrit Smith. It was there that Henry Brewster was elected a Vice President of the newly formed New York State Anti-Slavery Society, and he served on executive committees with Smith, who had only recently converted from colonization to immediate abolition.

Henry Brewster, like many other members of Henry Stanton’s family, did not confine his reform efforts to abolition. He was also active in church, temperance and Sabbatarian reform movements throughout his life. Brewster’s early reform network included others who would later play an important role in the 1848 Seneca Falls and Rochester Women’s Rights Conventions. For example, in 1841, Brewster and Thomas McClintock, husband of Mary Ann

²⁴³ *The Colored American* [New York, NY], November 10, 1838.

and father of Elizabeth McClintock, called a meeting in Central New York to discuss “The True Christian Sabbath.” More than seven years before the Seneca Falls Convention, Brewster and McClintock invited all “lovers of truth, irrespective of party, sect or sex...[to meet] for the purpose of discussing” the topic at hand.²⁴⁴ These previously unexplored kinship ties between Henry Stanton’s family and the larger network of reformers in Western and Central New York illustrate an important component of the environment into which Elizabeth Cady was introduced when she married Henry in 1840.

Word of the Lane rebellion spread quickly throughout the reform community, and other revival-inspired seminaries in Ohio and New York State were eager to enroll the former Lane students. Throughout the remainder of 1834, Henry Stanton and a handful of the Lane rebels continued in their efforts to establish a seminary at Cumminsville, only six miles from Cincinnati. Former Lane faculty member, John Morgan, and the former Lane lecturer from Cincinnati, Gamaliel Bailey, joined them in Cumminsville, but the students relied on each other to proceed with their religious studies and utilized the help of Morgan and Bailey to continue their schools in Cincinnati’s African American neighborhoods.²⁴⁵ The students lived and worked in a large house owned by James Ludlow, the brother-in-law of young Cincinnati attorney, Salmon P. Chase. Chase was so moved by the antislavery efforts of the Lane students, that he convinced Ludlow to support the seminary at Cumminsville by providing the property for their use. Other support came from New York philanthropist, Arthur Tappan, who in addition to

²⁴⁴ *Liberator*, January 1, 1841

²⁴⁵ Bailey (1807-1859) was also converted to the abolitionist cause by the Lane debates, and spent the remainder of his life as an antislavery newspaper editor working first with James G. Birney on the *Philanthropist* and later as editor of the *National Era* [Washington, D. C.].

financially backing the new seminary, also offered to endow a professorship with a \$5,000 salary in order to entice a prominent minister to the seminary. However, before the students accepted Tappan's offer, a minister from another fledgling seminary located in the northern part of Ohio prompted a complete change of plans. Representing the new Oberlin Theological Seminary, John Shippherd, implored the former Lane rebels to enroll at Oberlin. The theological students at Cumminsville, including Henry Stanton, agreed to abandon their new seminary and attend Oberlin only on the condition that they be allowed to appoint the administration and faculty as well as to establish the rules governing the student body at the institution. Further, they insisted that Oberlin appoint Asa Mahan, former Lane trustee who left with the rebels, as President and that Theodore Weld and John Morgan be hired as faculty. It was, however, their last demand that nearly ended the negotiations: the students also insisted that black students were to be freely enrolled at Oberlin.²⁴⁶

Weld declined the professorship and suggested Charles Finney for the position, but Finney also refused. Shippard and Mahon then went to New York City to meet with Arthur Tappan hoping to secure both his financial backing and the weight of his position to perhaps nudge Finney to accept the professorship at Oberlin. Tappan saw in the new seminary the opportunity to provide an education for the former Lane students, free blacks and also the ideal situation in which to nurture a generation of abolitionist sentiment. Tappan secured sufficient financial backing from his wealthy friends, pledged a great deal himself, and then Tappan set to work on Finney. Henry Stanton also wrote an impassioned letter to Finney urging him to accept the position in the "impenitent West." Stanton insisted that without a strong foundation in "pure

²⁴⁶ Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse 1830-1844* New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1933, pp. 74-77. See also Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 52-53.

religion” brought about by powerful religious revivals conducted by the new crop of ministers under Finney’s tutelage, the region and ultimately the country would be “rushing to death, unresisted and almost unwarned.”²⁴⁷ Finney finally relented, and he arrived at Oberlin at the beginning of the spring semester in 1835.²⁴⁸

Despite his working to establish Oberlin Theological Seminary, Henry Stanton did not enroll in the spring semester. In fact, although he still considered himself to be a resident of Ohio throughout most of 1835 and 1836, the historical record indicates that he spent very little time there. Shortly after Finney arrived in Oberlin, Henry attended a gathering at Putnam, Ohio organized by Theodore Weld to form a state antislavery society. Following his departure from Lane, Weld was employed as an agent for the American Antislavery Society, and immediately prior to the meeting at Putnam, he delivered nearly forty antislavery addresses and established societies in villages and towns throughout Ohio.

Despite the sometimes violent reception Weld faced in the Ohio countryside, he eventually secured a suitable location in Putnam, a town close to the Indiana border in the northern part of the state, in which to organize a state society.²⁴⁹ Henry Stanton, representing

²⁴⁷ Henry B. Stanton to Charles Finney, January 10, 1835, Charles Finney Papers, Oberlin College. Quoted in Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 53-54.

²⁴⁸ Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse 1830-1844*, pp. 76-77.

²⁴⁹ Writing to Lewis Tappan a year later, Weld recalled some of the violence he faced in Ohio during this time. In the days leading up to the state society’s organization, the free blacks in the area of Putnam and Zanesville were also violently attacked. Weld reported, “Large numbers of poor Colored people were turned out of employ, men were prosecuted under the vandal laws of Ohio for employing them, and the four hundred Colored people in Zanesville and Putnam were greatly oppressed in continued apprehension and panic...One Colored person attended one of the [antislavery] lectures and was knocked down on the bridge going home.” It was in this hostile environment that the Ohio Antislavery Society was formed in April 1835. The area’s African American population was so intimidated by the events in the weeks prior to the meeting, that they dared not attend the convention. Theodore Weld to Lewis Tappan, March 9, 1836 in Barnes

Hamilton (Cincinnati) County, was chosen as a secretary of the meeting.²⁵⁰ The meeting attracted 150 delegates, and although rocks were thrown at the building by a small group outside, other than broken windows and shattered nerves, no further violence occurred. The delegates left Putnam after defining their principles in much the same language as the Lane rebels had done the year before. Henry was one of seven of the delegates sent to New York City to attend the American Antislavery Society's annual meeting in May, after which, he planned to join the twenty other former Lane students at Oberlin.²⁵¹

Although he had planned to be a minister, it is likely that Henry Stanton had not initially considered public speaking to be his vocation. His decision to enroll at Lane for ministerial training was prompted by his profound religiosity inspired by Charles Finney's revivals. Nevertheless, since his first speech at Lane in 1832, Stanton had been honing his speaking skills and had become quite expert at the persuasive talents required by an antislavery orator. This was already evident by the time Henry reached New York City to attend the AAS's annual meeting. Despite his youth and relative inexperience as compared to antislavery luminaries such as Garrison and Tappan, Henry was chosen as a secretary at the annual meeting and as a delegate from the AAS to the New England Antislavery Society's (NEAS) meeting later that month. An observer at the first session of the NEAS Convention noted, "H. B. Stanton, formerly of Lane Seminary, Ohio, presented a resolution...concerning the criminality of slaveholding by

and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, pp. 1:270-74.

²⁵⁰ *Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention, held at Putnam, on the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth of April, 1835*. Beaumont and Wallace [n.d., n.p.] Rare Books, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University. See also Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 54-55.

²⁵¹ *The Liberator*, May 16, 1835 and *Ibid.*, p. 56.

professing Christians. Mr. S, though young, displayed shining talents and a powerful mind.”

Another writer commented that Henry’s address “did honor to the speaker as an orator, and was honorable to him as a man.”²⁵²

Stanton’s success as an orator, organizer and his commitment to the antislavery cause was recognized by the Executive Board of the AAS, and they offered him a position as an official agent of the society shortly after the NEAS convention. Although Henry’s letters from this time did not survive, it seems clear that his devotion to abolition gave him both a practical way to incorporate his religious faith into ameliorating the suffering of slaves and the opportunity to once again participate in organizational reform – something that he had enjoyed and excelled in before entering the seminary. Henry accepted the offer from the Executive Board and became the tenth agent of the AAS.²⁵³

The agency system was at the heart of the recruitment strategy of the AAS. Agents were provided with a small stipend, usually about eight dollars a week, and lived their lives much like itinerant ministers. They were often assigned a geographic territory and would travel from town to village giving lectures and establishing town-level antislavery societies, established as auxiliaries to the state and national society. Agents were also responsible for the raising of funds to support the activities of the AAS and also sold and distributed antislavery pamphlets and books along the way. Agents usually remained in a town or village no more than a day or two and were expected to secure lodgings and meals with local abolitionist sympathizers as they travelled. Antislavery lectures required the agents to oftentimes spend five or six hours a day delivering address and answering questions in makeshift venues. In crowded or large gatherings,

²⁵² *The Liberator*, June 6, 1835.

²⁵³ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 60-61.

antislavery agents had to speak as loudly as possible in order to be heard, straining their vocal chords to the point that some agents required long periods of convalescence to continue. In addition to the physical demands of the position, agents were frequently the targets of violence, both threatened and real, by those opposing their cause.²⁵⁴

Soon after the closing of the NEAS meeting, Henry was assigned his first agency appointment in Rhode Island. When he arrived, the state had no organized local societies and establishing a strong antislavery network was seen as particularly important because of a pending anti-abolition bill in the state legislature. The proposed bill, the first attempted by any free state, sought to do what the congressional “gag rule” would do two years later in the House of Representatives: namely, the bill would stop the free discussion of antislavery petitions in the legislature. The Rhode Island legislature was also considering a set of resolutions passed in town meetings that would curtail the formation of antislavery societies and discourage free discussion of the issue of slavery.²⁵⁵

Stanton spent the last six months of 1835 organizing local societies and speaking before men, women, and “juvenile” antislavery groups.²⁵⁶ In a relatively short time, Henry Stanton

²⁵⁴ A young men’s antislavery group in New York City sought to raise a salary of \$800.00 for Weld in 1835. Elizur Wright to Weld, May 26, 1835. Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. 221. Weld suffered long periods of illness due to poor traveling conditions and continued vocal projections. See also Rice, “Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist”, pp. 61-62.

²⁵⁵ Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, December 18, 1835. Boston Public Library, Anti-Slavery Collection, Amos A. Phelps Papers. For the “gag rule” in the United States House of Representatives, see William Lee Miller, *Arguing About Slavery: John Quincy Adams and the Great Battle in the United States Congress* New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

²⁵⁶ For example, Henry was a frequent speaker as the Providence Female Juvenile Anti-Slavery Society was organizing, and the group noted in their first annual report that their “beloved friend [Henry B. Stanton]” provided both “good advice and encouragement.” *Liberator*, December 26, 1835.

became the face of the abolition movement in the state. In late 1835, a sixteen-year-old girl submitted a poem to the *Woonsocket Advocate* entitled, "Slavery." The moving stanzas ended with a reference to Henry: "And thou, noble man, in the cause persevere, Success may they labors attend, And Afric's poor sons yet thy name shall revere."²⁵⁷

Rhode Island was also an important objective for the abolitionists because it was already a favorite summer resort for wealthy, slaveholding southerners. The AAS hoped to have a strong presence in the popular tourist resort towns of Newport and Providence in time for the arrival of vacationing slaveholders. By December, Stanton felt that the Rhode Island abolitionists was ready to organize a state society, believing that the state meeting would attract enough participants for the "monster" to be "staggered" and at least one state to be "redeemed." In the month leading up to the meeting's call, Stanton and Charles Burleigh worked together to insure a strong representation at the meeting from the large cities such as Providence in order to create "a moral atmosphere so hot, that next summer [when the slaveholders returned to the area on vacation] it will melt or consume them."²⁵⁸

The state organizing convention was held in Providence from February 2-4, 1836 with nearly 500 delegates in attendance from all parts of the state.²⁵⁹ The meeting was closely timed

²⁵⁷ As reprinted in the *Liberator*, March 5, 1836. The editor of the *Woonsocket Advocate* noted that the "noble man" referred to was H. B. Stanton.

²⁵⁸ Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, December 18, 1835. Boston Public Library, Anti-Slavery Collection, Amos A. Phelps Papers. Stanton wrote to Phelps asking him to come to Rhode Island to help before the convention, offering to reciprocate in aiding Phelps' efforts in Connecticut. Phelps was unable to leave, but Charles Burleigh joined Henry in Rhode Island in January 1836 – the month before the state convention. See also Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 63-64.

²⁵⁹ Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, December 18, 1835. Boston Public Library, Anti-Slavery Collection, Amos A. Phelps Papers. The minutes of the meeting were recorded in

to precede the pending vote of the proposed gag laws by the legislature, and Stanton believed that were the representatives to “look their servants in the face when the pass laws to gag them,” the measure would stand a greater chance of defeat. Stanton’s political instincts proved correct, and the gag bills in the state legislature were defeated by the votes of two representatives from Providence.²⁶⁰

Following the successful establishment of a strong state society in Rhode Island, Stanton travelled to New York City to meet with the executive committee of the AAS to receive his next agency assignment. While there, Henry was a guest of Lewis Tappan, and on February 23, 1836, the two men attended a temperance lecture as part of a daylong series of such meetings to be “held throughout the civilised [sic] world.” The committee agreed that Stanton should join Amos Phelps in Connecticut to execute the same strategy there as he had done so successfully in Rhode Island. However, for reasons that remain unclear, Henry requested instead to consult with Weld in Utica, New York on the Bible arguments against slavery before venturing into Connecticut, and the board agreed.²⁶¹ Henry spent the evening at Tappan’s home, writing to

“Proceedings of the Rhode-Island Anti-slavery Convention.” Providence: H. H. Brown, 1836. Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University.

²⁶⁰ The two representatives from Providence were George Curtiss and Thomas W. Dorr. See William Goodell, *Slavery and Anti-Slavery; a History of the Great Struggle in Both Hemispheres; with a View of the Slavery Question in the United States*: William Harned, 1852; reprint, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968, p. 420.

²⁶¹ It would seem that Weld was unaware that Henry would soon be joining him, suggesting that it was at Henry’s request that he work with Weld on the Biblical arguments. Weld wrote to William Goodell (who replaced Henry in Rhode Island) asking, “where is our dear Stanton,” and urging Goodell to “not force” Stanton to stay in New England. Alvan Stewart and Theodore Weld to William Goodell, February 14, 1836. Special Collections & Archives, Hutchins Library, Berea College. It seems more likely that Henry, a former seminary student and Sunday school teacher, might have needed a rest or wanted to see Weld, rather than his needing a further course in Biblical education. In a letter to Phelps in early March, Stanton noted: “By spending a month in recruiting, sharpening my armour & replenishing my stock of ammunition, I shall be

Phelps the following day, and advising him that he would join him in Connecticut within two weeks.²⁶²

Henry arrived in Utica with abolitionist Charles Stuart, and the two joined Theodore Weld who was nearing completion of a three-week lecture tour in the area. Only a year before, an angry and violent mob in Utica had prevented the forming of the New York State Antislavery Society in their town, and forced the meeting to reconvene in Peterboro. Weld's lectures had attracted huge crowds, oftentimes "hundreds were compelled to go away" being unable to squeeze into the venues. Stanton estimated that six hundred new members of the Utica Antislavery Society were recruited, and double that amount of legal voters had signed a petition to Congress calling for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.²⁶³

Stanton and Weld traveled to Rochester where Weld gave a series of lectures and Henry nursed a serious "severe inflammation of the throat."²⁶⁴ Within a few weeks, Stanton was sufficiently recovered to begin lecturing in the neighboring county of Livingston. After lecturing in Mt. Morris and Moscow, his next assignment was in the small town of Fowlersville (now

able to accomplish vastly more in the succeeding 6 months than though I had continued to labor in the old harness without cessation. Stanton to Phelps, March 5, 1836, Boston Public Library, Anti-Slavery Collection, Amos A. Phelps Papers.

²⁶² Diary of Lewis Tappan, Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress. Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, February 24, 1836, Boston Public Library, Anti-Slavery Collection, Amos A. Phelps Papers. Henry mistakenly left his "memorandum book" at Tappan's home, writing him a week later to look out for it because it was "very important" to him. The book does not exist in any known repository. Tappan replied, in a letter to Weld on March 15 stating that the book was safe. Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. 1:277.

²⁶³ "Letter from H. B. Stanton, March 2, 1836" in the *Liberator*, March 12, 1836.

²⁶⁴ Henry Stanton to Amos Phelps, April 13, 1836. Boston Public Library, Anti-Slavery Convention, Amos A. Phelps Papers.

Fowlerville). On April 12, 1836, Stanton delivered a two-hour antislavery lecture at a Congregational meetinghouse that was attended largely by a “respectable audience,” and also by “some lewd fellows [who] were lurking about, partly intoxicated, swearing against abolition &c.” Following the lecture, he left the village and stayed at a friend’s house nearby. The following morning, the meetinghouse was burned to the ground by an arsonist.²⁶⁵ In the weeks following the destruction of the building, an investigative committee was formed and the cause of the fire was attributed to the work of an “incendiary.” Proslavery/anti-abolitionist sympathizers fired back, with editorials charging that the committee was not under oath when their testimony was given, and therefore they must have lied. For his part, Stanton wrote to Phelps that he “esteemed [the incendiary] next to murder,” and uncharacteristically added, “I should dislike to meet the man in the night who set fire to it.”²⁶⁶

Henry attended the May 10 annual meeting of the American Antislavery Society as a delegate from Ohio and likely made the trip with other delegates from the Rochester area, including his brother-in-law, George A. Avery.²⁶⁷ At the annual meeting, Stanton introduced a resolution illustrating how much the influence of his ministerial training was still informing his views on the abolition of slavery. Stanton called on “individual Christians and churches of all denominations” to demand their associations to pass resolutions condemning slavery as a sin, “we rely mainly for the removal of slavery upon the faithful testimony of the Christian Church

²⁶⁵ See *Rochester Republican*, April 26, 1836 and Henry Stanton to Amos Phelps, April 13, 1836. Boston Public Library, Anti-Slavery Convention, Amos A. Phelps Papers.

²⁶⁶ *Livingston Democrat* (Geneseo, NY), April 26, 1836, May 31, 1836 and Henry Stanton to Amos Phelps, April 13, 1836. Boston Public Library, Anti-Slavery Convention, Amos A. Phelps Papers.

²⁶⁷ *Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society*, New York: William S. Dorr, 1836, p. 22.

against it.”²⁶⁸ Clearly as of May 1836, political agitation was not one of Stanton’s considerations. However, this was soon to change following the passage of a resolution in the United States House of Representatives that same month requiring that all antislavery petitions be tabled. The so-called “gag rule” tied the issue of Constitutional civil liberties directly to the antislavery crusade, ultimately resulting in increased support of the abolition cause.²⁶⁹

As at the 1835 meeting, Stanton was selected as a delegate to attend the NEAS annual meeting the following month.²⁷⁰ Although Henry’s oratory skills were already well respected within the abolition community, his speeches at the 1836 NEAS annual meeting were particularly well received. Writing for the *Lynn [Massachusetts] Record*, the columnist commented on the speeches Henry gave at the meeting in even more glowing terms than usual:

Mr. Stanton is a young man, of very youthful and prepossessing appearance, of rare talents, and of surpassing eloquence...At times, every heart seemed melted with pity; at other times the fancy of the speaker would break forth and flash with wit, as chaste as it was cuttingly sarcastic and severe.²⁷¹

When the AAS’s Executive Committee reconvened in New York City in early July, Theodore Weld was in attendance. Writing in his diary, Lewis Tappan noted that he hadn’t seen Weld in nearly three years and he “rejoiced to once more converse with him.” The morning after

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 29.

²⁶⁹ Rice explores this idea further. Rice, “Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist”, pp. 80-90. See also Miller, *Arguing About Slavery: John Quincy Adams and the Great Battle in the United States Congress*, pp. 145-47. This linking of civil liberties (in this case the right of petition) brought many into the antislavery cause because the abolitionists were able to link the idea of the power of the Southern states to diminishing power of the Northern states. A similar situation occurred in the 1840s as notions of “free labor” ideology spread.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

²⁷¹ *Lynn Record*, n.d., reprinted in the *Liberator*, May 28, 1836.

the meeting, Weld and Stanton joined Tappan for breakfast, and they spent “some hours” chiefly discussing Henry’s possible appointment as Financial Agent of the AAS.²⁷² The executive committee approved Stanton’s appointment, and by the end of that month, Henry was officially a member of the Executive Committee.²⁷³

In his new position as Financial Agent, Henry’s main task was to solicit and collect funds for the AAS. The organization had matured sufficiently that the collection of funds, on a regular and pledged basis, was seen as “a matter of necessity.” Noting the amount of publications, newspapers, salaries and travelling expenses of agents, an editorial in the *Emancipator* commented, “a few individuals pay liberally, while the mass of abolitionists, individually, pay but little.”²⁷⁴ One of Stanton’s first meetings was held in Boston’s Congress Hall, where he spoke before a largely female audience. Although abolitionist Debra Weston thought he used the word “ladies” too much in his speech, Stanton’s position on women’s participation within the antislavery movement was very clear: “woman was in her appropriate sphere when laboring, talking, writing and praying in behalf of oppressed women.”²⁷⁵ Henry’s appeal to the women of Boston was “immediately responded to” with the pledge by more than fifty women in

²⁷² Diary of Lewis Tappan, July 6-8, 1836. Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress. Tappan also wrote that he exchanged watches with Weld, noting, “he wished him to have a better one than the one he wore three years ago.” Both timepieces were gifts of Tappan, the first valued at \$21.00 and the replacement at \$45.00.

²⁷³ Diary of Lewis Tappan, July 24, 1836. Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress. The announcement was also printed in the *Liberator* on August 13, 1836 and the *Emancipator* on August 25, 1836.

²⁷⁴ *Emancipator*, August 25, 1836.

²⁷⁵ Debora Weston to Caroline Weston, June 6, 1836. Weston Family Papers, Boston Public Library.

attendance, nearly half pledging lifetime membership in the society.²⁷⁶ All told, when he presented his first report to the Executive Committee, Stanton's collections during his first month as financial agent totaled nearly \$1,200.00.²⁷⁷ By the end of August 1836, Henry Stanton delivered 27 lectures and collected close to \$3,000.00.²⁷⁸ However, not everyone was happy with Stanton's fundraising. An editorial from a Washington, D.C. paper expressed concern that while the abolitionists "exhibit great tact," their appeals to children of the North were "dangerous" because the children, both male and female, might "be imbued with the views and principals of the abolitionists, and abolition, like a whirlwind, will sweep over the land. It will be too late to take precautions against it."²⁷⁹

The constant travelling, lecturing and brushes with violent proslavery mobs eventually took a toll on the usual amiable and resilient young man. After one of his lectures, Debora Weston noted that although Henry had to lecture again later that evening, "he is looking very poorly & sick & will have to give up for a long time, very soon. Mrs. Charles has to 'beat him up an egg' every now and then to keep him going."²⁸⁰ As financial agent, Stanton began spending increasing amounts of time in the Boston area, and he became quite the local celebrity. Young, charismatic and a bachelor, Stanton was often mentioned by the abolitionist Weston

²⁷⁶ *Liberator*, June 11, 1836.

²⁷⁷ *Liberator*, September 10, 1836.

²⁷⁸ *Emancipator*, September 15, 1836.

²⁷⁹ *United States Telegraph*, Washington, D. C., November 30, 1836.

²⁸⁰ Debora Weston to Caroline Weston, October 21, 1836, Boston Public Library, Weston Family Papers.

sisters in personal terms.²⁸¹ Debora Weston, writing to her sister Anne, related an incident demonstrating how Henry's busy schedule had taken a toll on his otherwise sunny disposition. Weston also related the first known incidence of what would become a recurrent sentiment throughout Henry's lifetime – his disdain for money:

I called at Maria's & found Henry Stanton... Those people who have Henry Stanton must be careful what they have in their room, for he searched every part of Maria's faithfully, making remarks as he went along... Just before he left began he to declare how little he cared for money. "I don't care that for it" said he throwing a pen which he was twirling in his hand with considerable violence on to the table. It flew over the table however & lighted close by Maria who fishing it up threw it back to him saying "And I don't care for that either." He was a good deal put down & did not know what to say. I record it as being the first time I ever saw him show the least embarrassment.²⁸²

Responding to the growth of the movement, in part a reaction to the increased membership as a result of the gag order, the Executive Committee of the AAS recognized the need for an increased full time presence in the New York headquarters. Theodore Weld was brought in from the field to assist Elizur Wright with the tremendous volume of secretarial duties and Joshua Leavitt, former editor of the *Evangelist*, took over the reins of the AAS's official newspaper, the *Emancipator*.²⁸³ However, even the addition of Weld and Leavitt did not solve the problem, and the Committee reassigned Henry as a corresponding secretary. Later that year,

²⁸¹ In their letters to each other, the sisters often mention how Henry looked and what he said during his visits to their homes. Anne Weston raised funds from a ladies society to purchase a new pair of moccasins for Henry, to which he replied, "both myself & the moccasins, shall be worn out in the cause of impartial righteousness." Henry Stanton to Anne W. Weston, [April 27, 1836], Boston Public Library, Weston Family Papers.

²⁸² Debora Weston to Anne W. Weston, n.d. [1836?] Boston Public Library, Weston Family Papers.

²⁸³ For a detailed discussion of the necessity for the restructuring, see Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 94.

James G. Birney and John Greenleaf Whittier rounded out the New York office staff that Wright called, “a dangerous clump of fanatics”.²⁸⁴

In early 1837, the AAS Executive Committee formulated a strategy designed to overturn the Congressional gag rule. The plan targeted state legislatures in an attempt to convince the bodies to exert pressure on their own members of Congress in order to overturn the resolution. Henry Stanton was selected as the first speaker and he gave a major address, spanning two days, before the Massachusetts Legislature in late February. The speech focused on two goals: first, to protest the gag rule and secondly, to present the antislavery arguments to end the slave trade and ban slavery in the nation’s capital. Although the speech would not reach the halls of Congress directly, the abolitionists wisely knew that the arguments they developed against the gag rule would not only reach sympathetic members of Congress, but also increase support for their cause within the general population.

Stanton’s arguments before the Massachusetts House were designed and presented to sway his audience in both legalistic and emotional terms. The address provided a lengthy historical discussion concerning the establishment of the District of Columbia, and he sought to prove that, in fact, Congress did have the authority to ban the “humiliating” practice arguing that since slavery was a creature of law, so too was antislavery.²⁸⁵ Ending slavery in the nation’s capital was seen as both a strategic and philosophical goal to Stanton and the abolitionist coalition. It was believed that if slavery and the slave trade could be ended there, the progression

²⁸⁴ Elizur Wright to his parents, July 20, 1837, Wright Papers, Library of Congress. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 95.

²⁸⁵ Henry B. Stanton, *Remarks of Henry B. Stanton in the Representatives Hall on the 23d and 24th of February, 1837, before the Committee of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, to Whom Was Referred Sundry Memorials on the Subject of Slavery* Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837, p. 12 and 29.

southward of the abolition cause could not be far behind. The largely evangelical bent of abolitionism in the 1830s was united with the beginnings of political pragmatism in the philosophical arguments outlined by Stanton:

[The existence of slavery in the District] brings into contempt our nation's boasted love of equal rights, justly exposes us to the charge of hypocrisy, paralyzes the power of our free principles, and cripples our moral efforts for the overthrow of oppression throughout the world...The citizens of this nation have deep responsibilities, as Christians, as citizens of the world.

These were powerful arguments in the wake of the democratic impulse that characterized the Age of Jackson, and as Stanton argued, “our cool blooded oppression” makes a mockery of our democratic principles and shows the nation to be a despotic one, rather than free society.²⁸⁶

Stanton's speech before the Massachusetts Legislature was very well received, and word of his success quickly spread within reform circles. William Lloyd Garrison, who was in attendance during Henry's speech told Angelina Grimké that Stanton “completely astonished the audience” the first afternoon of the meeting. By the following day as Henry was due to continue his address, “hundreds if not thousands” were turned away due to a lack of space in the cavernous Representative's Hall.²⁸⁷ The Massachusetts House overwhelmingly passed a resolution chastising the Congressional gag rule and affirming Congress' right to abolish slavery within the District of Columbia. Henry's speech was quickly printed in pamphlet form before

²⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 51-53.

²⁸⁷ Angelina Grimké, Sarah Grimké and Mrs. Theodore Dwight to Jane Smith, February 1837. Box 3, Weld-Grimké Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan. The Representative's Hall in Boston, the site of Henry Stanton's 1837 address, is located in the current Massachusetts State House, and the room is currently the meeting place of the State Senate. Thanks to the security guards at the State House who were kind enough to give me a private tour and allow me to stand at the podium during a visit to Boston.

being revised to include expanded historical details. The expanded edition went through at least seven printings and over three hundred thousand copies were eventually distributed.²⁸⁸

Attending the May annual meeting of the AAS as a delegate from Massachusetts, Henry arrived in New York City after a grueling month of travel throughout New England. During the month of April, Stanton delivered close to thirty lectures, often staying in one location no longer than an afternoon.²⁸⁹ Although the abolitionists still relied primarily on moral suasion to add to their ranks, some were considering political strategies as evidenced by the following resolution submitted by William Lloyd Garrison, speaking on behalf of the “committee on political action”:

As the sense of this society, that whilst abolitionists ought neither to organise a distinct political party, nor as abolitionists to attach themselves to any existing party, the people of all parties are solemnly bound, by the principles of our civil and religious institutions, to refuse to support any man for office who will not sustain the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, the right of petition, and the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia and the territories, and who will not oppose the introduction of any new slave state into the Union.²⁹⁰

Although the issue will soon contribute to the wresting of the AAS in two, at the May 1837 meeting, there were no women recorded in attendance, no protests that women did not attend, and, therefore, no mention of enrolling women as full delegates. In fact, only two months

²⁸⁸ Henry B. Stanton to “friend Dearborn,” Boston, April 27, 1837, author’s collection; and Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 49-50. Stanton’s printed speech also became part of the AAS’ pamphlet library and was sold at antislavery meetings.

²⁸⁹ “Movements of Mr. Stanton,” in the *Liberator*, April 28, 1837.

²⁹⁰ Also in attendance and selected as a Vice President was Henry’s uncle, Henry Brewster. In addition to Garrison’s participation in the resolution suggesting political action, he also proposed that abolitionists “entreat” their local representatives to vote “by the highest religious and political considerations” to vote against the admission of Texas as a slave state. See “Resolutions Adopted at the Last Anniversary,” *Philanthropist*, June 16, 1837 and *Fourth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society with the Speeches Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting Held in the City of New York on the 9th May, 1837*, New York: William S. Dorr, 1837, pp. 17, 19, 23 and 27.

earlier in March 1837, the nation's first national female antislavery meeting was held in New York City. The meeting was not held *because* of women's absence from the AAS' annual meeting, but as an independent gathering. In a published address, abolitionist Angelina Grimké called on the women of the North to organize antislavery societies, but more importantly she urged northern women include African American women in their reform societies as equal members, and she did so without questioning the status of women within the larger antislavery movement.²⁹¹

The year before, in 1836, Angelina Grimké was commissioned by the AAS as an agent, and she attended the convention of the Seventy (Weld's group of agents) later that year. When her name was initially placed before the agency commission, the committee was unsure about the appointment of the "employment of female itinerants in the cause of abolition," and the matter was then bumped up to the Executive Committee. After some debate, the committee approved Grimké's appointment noting simply, "it is expedient to appoint females."²⁹² This was certainly a radical decision by the AAS Executive Committee, not necessarily because they did not consider women's abilities as equal, but rather because of the physical hardships of the agency position and the ever-present threat of physical violence. The appointment of Angelina as an agent suggests that the Executive Committee believed that she would be able to handle

²⁹¹ Catherine H. Birney, *The Grimké Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimké the First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Women's Rights* New York: Lee and Shepard, 1885. See also, Carol Berkin, *Civil War Wives: The Lives and Times of Angelina Grimké Weld, Varina Howell Davis and Julia Dent Grant* New York: Vintage Books, 2009, p. 41.

²⁹² From "Minutes of the Agency Committee," American Anti-Slavery Society, July 13, 1836 as quoted in Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse 1830-1844*, p. 154.

potential problems, and it affirms the board's confidence in her abilities to handle the rigors of travel and the life of an itinerant speaker irrespective of her gender.²⁹³

Together with her sister, Sarah, Angelina began a difficult speaking tour in New York City that was met with some opposition from within abolitionist circles. However, by the spring of 1837, the sisters had been "tutored" by Weld in public speaking, and arranged a series of lectures in New England.²⁹⁴ Although they had not initially considered that they might be addressing "promiscuous audiences," meaning audiences comprised of both men and women, word of their powerful lectures attracted both men and women to their speaking engagements.²⁹⁵ Angelina seemed to adjust rather quickly to speaking before mixed audiences, writing at the end of her first week, "Nearly thirty men present, pretty easy to speak." The numbers soon increased, and by the end of July, her mixed audience numbered over one thousand.²⁹⁶

The controversy began in Amesbury, Massachusetts. During one of Angelina's lectures, two men challenged her claims about slavery and suggested that the three of them debate the topic at a future date. On July 17, according to historian Carol Berkin, the result was first public

²⁹³ Some question exists whether or not Angelina was, in fact, an official agent of the AAS. Barnes, who "discovered" the Weld-Grimké papers and was the historian that rescued Weld from historical obscurity, claimed that she was (see note above.) However, articles in the *Liberator* (for example, H. C. Wright's response to the Pastoral Letter, August 4, 1837) and individual correspondence seem to indicate that the arrangement was not a formal one and therefore not an issue that should have worried the AAS.

²⁹⁴ Sarah and Angelina Grimké attended the annual meeting of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, but the minutes do not record any mention of the sisters. Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*. p. 1:409.

²⁹⁵ Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse 1830-1844*, p. 155.

²⁹⁶ Birney, *The Grimké Sisters: Sarah and Angelina Grimké the First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Women's Rights*, p. 179.

debate between a man and a woman in the United States.²⁹⁷ This debate and the growing sensationalism around Angelina's lectures sparked the association of Congregational Ministers in Massachusetts to circulate a letter asking meeting houses to close their doors to speakers and issues of a controversial nature.

The effects of the "pastoral letter" were far reaching for women's rights. Issued coincident with the public letter storm between Angelina Grimké and Catherine Beecher, the strong support the sisters received from the abolition community helped enlist support for the Grimké sisters right to speak before mixed audiences, but also brought the issue of women's role in reform to the forefront as never before.

Although many New England abolitionists supported Angelina's continuing on in her lecture tour, some cautioned the sisters to avoid the controversy altogether. Theodore Weld, who was already romantically enamored with Angelina, found himself in an uncomfortable position. Wanting to be seen as supportive of the cause of a woman's right to speak, it is likely that he also hoped that Angelina would suspend her lecturing before men in order to quell any controversy within the larger antislavery movement. Weld wrote on August 15 that "woman in EVERY particular shares equally with man rights and responsibilities" but added, "I do most deeply regret that you have begun a series of articles in the Papers on the rights of women."²⁹⁸ John Greenleaf Whittier, writing the day before, expressed a similar sentiment.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Berkin, *Civil War Wives: The Lives and Times of Angelina Grimké Weld, Varina Howell Davis and Julia Dent Grant*, p. 49.

²⁹⁸ Theodore Weld to Sarah and Angelina Grimké, August 15, 1837 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. 1:425.

²⁹⁹ John Greenleaf Whittier to Sarah and Angelina Grimké, August 14, 1837 in *Ibid.*, pp. 1:423-24.

However, at the same time that both Whittier and Weld found themselves somewhat on the fence about the sisters' advocacy of women's rights, Henry Stanton's reaction was unequivocal. In an August 10, 1837, letter Angelina wrote that Henry was "sound on the subject of women's rights."³⁰⁰ Henry also encouraged the Grimké sisters to continue their public speaking in the face of condemnation from the conservative clergy, even offering to share the lecture platform with them during the controversy.³⁰¹ Henry Stanton's unconditional support of the sisters' right to speak in public was articulated before other abolitionists, including Angelina's future husband Theodore Weld and anti-slavery poet John Greenleaf Whittier, were willing to do so, and most importantly, before the Grimké sisters themselves were convinced that their speaking before mixed audiences was the proper course of action.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Angelina Grimké to Jane Smith, August 10, 1837 in Weld-Grimké Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan. Also quoted in Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 51. Also see Kathryn Kish Skylar, *Women's Rights Emerges from within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History with Documents* New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000, p. 50. After conversing with sisters Angelina and Sarah Grimké, Angelina noted that Henry "wants very much so to arrange some meeting, so that we and he may speak at it together. This would be an irretrievable commitment, but I doubt whether the time has fully come for such an anomaly in Massachusetts."

³⁰¹ Angelina Grimké continued, "He [Henry] went to the meeting with us in the evening, opened it with a precious prayer & sat with us in the pulpit." Angelina Grimké to Jane Smith, August 10, 1837, Weld-Grimké Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan. Also quoted in Skylar, *Women's Rights Emerges from within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History with Documents*, p. 124.

³⁰² Weld wrote to Angelina and Sarah Grimké on August 26, 1837 charging that by pushing the idea of women's rights they were "putting the cart before the horse," adding that "until human rights have gone ahead and broken the path," women's rights should wait. Whittier was more severe in his letter of August 14. Chiding the Grimkés for forgetting about the slave, Whittier charged that their efforts for women's rights were, instead, a "selfish crusade against some paltry grievance...of their own." Quoted in Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse 1830-1844*, p. 157.

Written 45 years after the event, the *History of Woman Suffrage* claimed Whittier had a very different reaction in 1837, and one that speaks to the issue of politics as being aligned with

women's rights, and not with Garrisonian non-resistance: "On reading the "Pastoral Letter," our Quaker poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, poured out his indignation on the New England clergy in thrilling denunciations. Mr. Whittier early saw that woman's only protection against religious and social tyranny could be found in political equality. In the midst of the fierce conflicts in the Anti-Slavery Conventions of 1839 and '40, on the woman question *per se*, Mr. Whittier remarked to Lucretia Mott, "Give woman the right to vote, and you end all these persecutions by reform and church organizations." Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 1: 83-84. Although historians never question Theodore Weld's bonafides on the women's rights question, Weld's insistence that Henry Stanton, Joshua Leavitt and Elizur Wright were of the same mind has been overlooked. At a reunion of abolitions in Boston after the Civil War, a speaker declared that among the New York Executive Committee of the AAS, only John Greenleaf Whittier had supported the cause of women's rights. In a rare break of silence, Weld rose and with "indignant eloquence" defended Henry and the others as proponents of women's rights. See Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. I:xxvi.

Chapter Four: How questions about women became the “woman question”

*“The history of the introduction of the ‘woman question’ into our [antislavery] meetings, may be told in a few sentences. It is said...to be a novelty, not contemplated originally by any one, neither by its present opposers, nor by its friends.”*³⁰³

Formation of the Massachusetts Abolition Society

“Sin For Me”

William Lloyd Garrison began publishing *The Liberator* on January 1, 1831 and by 1833, was already referred to in New York newspapers as “the notorious” for his calls for immediate uncompensated abolition. In May 1833, news of the Parliamentary debates over emancipation in the British Isles prompted Garrison to make his first visit overseas, where he hoped to secure the both the financial and moral endorsement of the British antislavery community to the cause of American immediatism.³⁰⁴ Garrison also planned to study British tactics, and during his five month stay, he met with antislavery luminaries such as George Thompson, William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson. In London, Garrison attended antislavery meetings and gave speeches denouncing colonization, eventually delivering addresses to large audiences in London’s Exeter Hall.³⁰⁵ By the time of Garrison’s overseas trip in 1833, the first abolition group formed in the United States, the New England Anti-Slavery Society, began organizing in opposition to the

³⁰³ *Formation of the Massachusetts Abolition Society*. No date/publication information, pg. 18 from Samuel May Anti-Slavery Collection, Cornell University.

³⁰⁴ Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*, p. 167.

³⁰⁵ Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison, the Story of His Life, Told by His Children*, IV vols., vol. I New York: The Century Co., 1885, pp. 348-80. See also Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*, pp. 151-65.

American Colonization Society, employing three agents and rapidly gaining auxiliaries.³⁰⁶ Still, no national, American immediatist society existed.

From the very beginning there were tensions between the abolitionists in the west and Garrison. Western abolitionists, including those in the far west of Ohio, while deeply moved by Garrison's writings, were often leery of the effects of the firestorm created by the sensationalized literary style of Garrison's *Liberator*.³⁰⁷ As early as 1830, the wealthy New York City merchants Arthur and Lewis Tappan added abolition to their roster of benevolent works. However, after the Nat Turner rebellion in August 1831, the *Liberator* began to be seen increasingly as an incendiary force, rather than as a statement of the reformers' evangelical linkage between antislavery and the repudiation of sin.³⁰⁸ Even at this early time of their collaboration, the Tappans began to see that abolition's association with Garrisonian radicalism might wreck havoc on their larger benevolent agenda.

Although major organizers within the growing abolition movement had planned to meet in May – the month that other benevolent groups held their annual meetings—in order to formalize a national antislavery society, at Garrison's insistence, the meeting took place several months earlier. On December 4, 1833, sixty-three delegates from ten states met behind a guarded door in Philadelphia to form the American Anti-Slavery Society. Those present included John Greenleaf Whittier, James and Lucretia Mott, and a young Massachusetts

³⁰⁶ Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*, p. 170.

³⁰⁷ See Lawrence B. Goodheart, *Abolitionist, Actuary, Atheist: Elizur Wright and the Reform Impulse* Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1990, esp. pp. 40-44. and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery* Cincinnati, Ohio: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1969, pp. 85-89.

³⁰⁸ Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery*, p. 89.

clergyman, Amos Phelps.³⁰⁹ Garrison headed the committee that prepared the new society's Constitution and Declaration of Sentiments, which stated in part:

We also maintain, that there are at the present time, the highest obligations seating upon the PEOPLE of the free-States, to remove slavery by moral and *political* action, as prescribed in the Constitution of the U.S.³¹⁰

During the debates and emendations of the society's founding documents, Lucretia Mott offered stylistic suggestions that were readily adopted. A young abolitionist later remarked that this was the first time he had heard a woman speak in a public meeting, and although Mott attended solely as a "listener and spectator" along with three other women, she later noted that it did not occur to any of them "that there would be a propriety in our signing the document."³¹¹ By the end of the 1830s, Mott and the majority of women within the antislavery ranks would no longer view themselves as "listeners and spectators," but rather, as full and equal participants with men in the antislavery cause.

Although the serious tensions within the AAS would not surface for two more years, the origin of the schism within the American abolitionist ranks can be dated to Garrison's conversion by John Humphrey Noyes in July 1837 to the doctrine of perfectionism or non-resistance. Noyes, a conservative minister who would later found the utopian Oneida community in 1848, counseled Garrison that mankind should "abandon human government and nominate Jesus Christ

³⁰⁹ Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*, p. 172-74.

³¹⁰ Declaration of Sentiments, American Anti-Slavery Society as reprinted in the *Emancipator*, May 2, 1839.

³¹¹ Anna David Hallowell, ed. *James and Lucretia Mott. Life and Letters*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1884, pp. 111-15. The other women who attended were: Lydia White, Esther Moore and Sydney Ann Lewis.

for the Presidency, not only of the United States, but of the world.”³¹² Garrison was also profoundly influenced and encouraged in Noyes’ millennialism by fellow immediatist, Henry C. Wright. The result was a lengthy article in the pages of the *Liberator*, declaring Garrison’s allegiance to non-resistance, “we are not political partisans...we are guided by no human authority,” and further, “the governments of this world...are all Anti-Christ.”³¹³

Many of Garrison’s friends and coagitators in the antislavery movement were no doubt shocked and surprised at his complete disavowal of political participation and political action. As we have already seen, at the AAS’ annual meeting held only two month’s before Garrison’s conversion by Noyes to non-resistance, Garrison served on the AAS’ “committee on political action” and supported the Declaration of Sentiment’s resolution supporting political means to end slavery. It follows from Garrison’s no human government principle that ritual and hierarchy within the church was also unchristian, a position that additionally angered Phelps, Torrey and the other clergy within the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.

Within months of Garrison’s conversion to non-resistance, many began to express concern that Garrison’s enthusiastic and visible promotion of non-resistance would harm the antislavery cause. The timing of Garrison’s conversion occurred at nearly the same moment that the public outcry over the Grimké sisters lectures reached a fevered pitch, making it far more difficult to understand the individual effects of these two controversies by later historians. However, it is possible to establish which abolitionists chose to support the Grimké sisters’ right

³¹² Quoted in Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery*, p. 225.

³¹³ See Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, IV vols., vol. II 1835-1840 New York: The Century Co., 1885, pp. 145 and 90-204.

to speak, while condemning the changes in Garrison by examining the correspondence from the summer and fall months of 1837.

We have already seen that many of the abolitionists who did not convert to non-resistance, Stanton, Wright, Whittier and Weld supported the continuation of the Grimké sisters' lecture tour. However, many of these same men expressed sincere concern for the abolitionist cause because of Garrison's actions. For example, in the same letter expressing support for "the rights of women," John Greenleaf Whittier explained the crux of the problem of Garrisonian non-resistance being comingled with the antislavery cause:

Our good friend, H. C. Wright [another proponent of non-resistance, AAS agent, and an intimate of Garrison] with the best intentions in the world, is doing great injury by a different course. He is making the anti-slavery party responsible in a great degree for his...startling opinions. I do not censure him for them, although I cannot subscribe to them in all their length and breadth. But let him keep them distinct from the cause of emancipation. This is his duty. Those who subscribe money to the Anti-Slavery Society do it in the belief that it will be spent in the propagation, not of Quakerism or Presbyterianism, but of the doctrines of Immediate Emancipation...[to combine these doctrines] is a fraud upon the patrons of the cause.³¹⁴

Whittier took a similar position on the changes in Garrison's *Liberator*, writing that the paper's prospectus promised readers an anti-slavery newspaper, and subscribers paid for the paper on those grounds. By filling the pages of the paper with "no governmentism," Garrison "defrauds his subscribers".³¹⁵ Throughout the remainder of 1837 and the following year, as serious calls for political agitation became a groundswell, Garrison's refusal to separate his own personal beliefs from the cause of antislavery set the stage for a very public breach.

³¹⁴ John Greenleaf Whittier to Sarah and Angelina Grimké, August 14, 1837. Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, pp. 1:423-24. Later in this letter, Whittier, while supporting the speaking tour, asks the Grimké sisters to tone down their writings about women's rights so as to not "divert your attention from the great and holy purpose of your souls."

³¹⁵ Ibid.

When the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society met in January 1839, it was all out warfare. Henry Stanton, Elizur Wright, Joshua Leavitt and James Birney feared that the AAS would become either a Garrisonian non-resistant Society or one burdened with additional reforms such as Sabbatarianism or women's rights. The coalition of anti-Garrisonians was comprised of those who were united in favor of political action and therefore, against Garrison's anticlericalism and non-resistance, but they also held diverse views on the role of the churches and, importantly, the equal participation of women in the abolition movement.

The meeting opened on January 23, 1839 and was likely the most contentious the group had seen.³¹⁶ To begin with, both Garrison and his opponents were expecting a showdown over political action and the right of women to vote at the meeting. At the last meeting of the New England Antislavery Society, held the previous May, several prominent clergymen, including Amos A. Phelps and Charles Torrey, resigned amidst great debate over women's participation within the Society.³¹⁷ However, it is important to realize that the leadership of the AAS

³¹⁶ "Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Mass. Anti-Slavery Society", Boston, January 24-26, 1839.

³¹⁷ The meeting of the New England Antislavery Society convened in Boston on May 30, 1838. Merrill and Rucharnes, eds., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Volume II: A House Dividing against Itself, 1836-1840*, p. 367n5. The motion allowing "all persons present...whether men or women" be allowed to participate was adopted "without opposition" according the annual report of the MAS. "Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Mass. Anti-Slavery Society", p. 32. However, an official protest was launched by Amos Phelps, Charles Torrey and five other members of the clergy charging that the New England Society had "connec[ed]...a subject foreign to it" and that such connections were "injurious as a precedent for connecting with it [the NEAS] with other irrelevant topics." While the MAS Annual Report called the women's participation "somewhat novel," the Board of Managers disagreed that it was injurious to the cause. "Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Mass. Anti-Slavery Society", p. 32. Phelps resigned his position as an agent for the MAS and the board selected Stanton to replace him. However, despite the "strong hopes" of the Board, Stanton declined the position in favor of his duties on the AAS Executive Committee. "Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Mass. Anti-Slavery Society", p. 16.

Executive Board was agitating for control of the Society, but for different reasons than many of the clergymen such as Phelps and Torrey. Although the official published accounts of the meeting are rather banal, letters and reminiscences of those present convey at least some of the drama that unfolded. The showdown began early in the proceedings, as Stanton rose to speak on a proposed new weekly paper for the MAS, and was interrupted by a request that he yield the floor to allow a paper to be read. Stanton deferred, not knowing that the paper was a motion to restrict all speakers to 15 minutes each; thus lengthy debate was halted before the issue of political action had been broached.³¹⁸

As we have seen, Stanton and the other more pragmatic members of the AAS were increasingly intolerant of Garrison's philosophical insistence of non-resistance.³¹⁹ By early 1839, Henry had become completely alienated from Garrison and his followers:

His [Stanton's] conduct throughout has been very reprehensible, and greatly has he injured himself in the eyes of the best friends of our cause. His political hobby has well-nigh ruined him, and put an end to all harmonious action in Massachusetts. My soul is filled with grief on his account. Dearly have I loved him in time past, and great have been my expectations in regard to his future career. But I fear he had made up his mind to be a man of "one idea"—for he seems to be determined to look in one direction, and with a short-sided vision.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney in Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, p. 482.

³¹⁹ As shown above, Garrison's behavior over the issue of political action was inconsistent—a fact ignored by many of his followers during the schism and many historians since. As early as 1834, Garrison had urged *Liberator* readers to "vote for the immediate abolition of slavery." He had also supported Congressional candidates favorable to his cause and had advocated a resolution at the 1838 New England Anti-Slavery Society meeting that claimed that it was the "duty" of abolitionists to vote. Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 165-67.

³²⁰ Garrison to George W. Bensen, March 26, 1939. Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, p. 285.

The “one idea” that Garrison was referring to, was the abolition of slavery, and Henry’s advocacy of using political means to achieve it. Garrison, however, was increasingly determined to achieving a multiplicity of reforms, one of which was the abolition of politics.³²¹

Much of the debate concerning political action centered around a motion declaring it “the duty of abolitionists to go to the polls & there remember the slave.”³²² As we will see, much of the discourse concerning political agitation during 1839 and 1840 was centered around the contention that voting was a “duty,” rather than an option for abolitionists. Political proponents were eager to show the gathering that Garrison, and those who did not support the resolution, were not doing all they could for the slave. During the debate, Garrison asked the crowd, “Am I recreant to the cause? Who believes it?” “No! No!” was the response. Finally, a frustrated Stanton sought clarification, “Mr. Garrison, do you or do you not believe it a sin to go to the polls?” “Sin for me” was Garrison’s response.³²³ The motion resolving voting to be a “duty” was soundly defeated and its supporters “well nigh mobbed down by the non-resistants.”³²⁴

³²¹ Maria Weston Chapman, *Right and Wrong in Massachusetts* Boston: Dow and Jackson, 1839, pp. 102-04.

³²² Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, January 26, 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. The importance surrounding the “duty” of abolitionists was raised as early as the New England Antislavery Society’s 1838 meeting. A group of resolutions were passed nearly unanimously including, “Resolved, That in the opinion of this Convention, it is the solemn and imperative DUTY of every abolitionist in the land, to employ his political influence...it is an IMPORTANT DUTY, demanded of us by the slave, TO GO TO THE POLLS IN ALL CASES, AND VOTE.” Reprinted from the 1838 report in the *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, March 26, 1840 (emphasis as printed.)

³²³ Chapman, *Right and Wrong in Massachusetts*, pp. 102-04. See also Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, p. 273.

³²⁴ Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney in Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, p. 481.

Garrison then proposed a much milder substitute resolution, which was adopted by a large majority:

Resolved, That those abolitionists, who feel themselves called upon, by a sense of duty, to go to the polls, and yet purposely absent themselves from the polls whenever an opportunity is presented to vote for a friend of the slave—or who, when there, follow their party predilections to the abandonment of their abolition principles—are recreant to their high professions, and unworthy of the name they assume.³²⁵

Writing to Birney and Wright at the end of the Convention, Stanton pronounced the proceedings a “genuine non-resistant revolution,” adding that the MAS had hauled down its flag and run up the crazy banner of the “non-government heresy.”³²⁶ Stanton’s choice of evocative language offers a window into just how emotional and serious the divisions were between Garrison and the politically minded reformers.

Although Stanton, Leavitt and Wright had supported Garrison’s position on women’s participation generally and the Grimké sisters’ public speaking efforts more particularly, they could not countenance Garrison’s non-resistance advocacy. Believing political action their only remaining recourse as their petitions to Congress were impotent, the Executive Committee noted Garrison’s disavowal of not only an important tactic in their efforts, but saw non-resistance as incompatible with the Constitution of the AAS.³²⁷ Additionally, the anti-Garrisonians believed

³²⁵ "Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Mass. Anti-Slavery Society", p. iv.

³²⁶ Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, January 26, 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. See also Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney in — — —, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, pp. 481-83.

³²⁷ All antislavery petitions sent to Congress were immediately tabled from May 1836 (24th Congress) to December 1844 (28th Congress). The so-called “gag rule” was vehemently opposed by John Quincy Adams. See Miller, *Arguing About Slavery: John Quincy Adams and the Great Battle in the United States Congress*.

that non-resistance was harming the cause of antislavery. Critics both North and South already accused abolitionists of fanaticism, and Garrison's high visibility as editor of the *Liberator* and prominence in the movement might also taint the entire cause.³²⁸ Although Stanton had come to the floor at the MAS meeting with a folder containing back issues of the *Liberator* advocating both the questioning of political candidates and Garrison's endorsement of voting, Garrison would not acknowledge the inconsistency.³²⁹ Further, Garrison's new stance on "no human government" was so abhorrent to those outside the non-resistant circle that it forced those in favor of political agitation to form a coalition in opposition to him with other disgruntled members such as Phelps and Torrey who were also anti-women's participation. "The split is wide, and can never be closed up," Stanton wrote Birney following the MAS Convention, "Our cause in this State is ruined unless we can separate [sic] the A. S. Society from everything which does not belong to it...But, I wish our friends distinctly to understand, that Garrisonism and Abolitionism in this State, are contending for the mastery."³³⁰

Another concern of both the Executive Committee and many of the Massachusetts abolitionists was Garrison's the *Liberator*. Although the *Liberator* was not an official organ of any antislavery society, it had been perceived as a semi official weekly for some time. As Garrison became more committed to non-resistance, more and more of the *Liberator* was

³²⁸ For a thorough discussion of this fear, see Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 149. See also Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840* Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1987. concerning the solidification of proslavery arguments in response to Garrison and the increasing visibility of the abolitionists in the North.

³²⁹ Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney in Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, p. 482. See also Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, January 26, 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

³³⁰ Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney in *Ibid.*, pp. 481-83.

devoted to his new cause. By the end of 1838, subscriptions to the paper had declined, prompting Garrison to author editorial columns reassuring free black subscribers that “their cause was not to be abandoned.”³³¹ Similarly, subscribers charged that the paper was peppered with articles that were “irrelevant” and “mischievous” to the cause of antislavery.³³² In January 1839, prior to the Annual Meeting of the MAS, members of the AAS Executive Committee, together with anti-Garrisonian Massachusetts abolitionists agreed to publish a new paper as the official organ of the MAS and Stanton began recruiting Elizur Wright as its editor.³³³

Securing Wright was an important step to insure the success of the new paper, and although he negotiated a salary above Garrison and Whittier, Stanton was confident that the prestige and legitimacy of the new Massachusetts Abolition Society would be greatly enhanced with Wright as editor.³³⁴ By the end of January, the still unnamed new paper, “devoted to Political Action” boasted 2,200 subscribers.³³⁵ When the first issue of the *Massachusetts*

³³¹ Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, p. 238.

³³² *Ibid.*, p. 239.

³³³ Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright. January 26, 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. Wright would edit the paper for just under a year.

³³⁴ Garrison’s salary was \$1,200, while Whittier received only \$1,000 for editing the *Pennsylvania Freeman*. Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, April 11, 1839. Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps [n.d, n.p.] [January 1839]. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. Two years later, in 1841, Lydia Maria Child became the editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the new paper of the AAS, at a salary of \$1,000 per year and on par with Whittier. Alma Lutz, *Crusade for Freedom: Women of the Antislavery Movement* Boston: Beacon Press, 1968, p. 176.

³³⁵ *Friend of Man*, Utica, New York. February 6, 1839. Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, February 4, 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. Wright agreed to edit the paper, but his appointment was to remain secret until after the May Annual Meeting of the AAS. In the meantime, Wright was to supply columns that would supplement those of Stanton and the editorial board.

Abolitionist was published on February 7, its masthead left little doubt as to the editorial direction the paper would take, “Supremacy of the Laws,” in stark contrast to the no-government stance of Garrison’s *Liberator*.³³⁶ The editorial board was careful to refrain from articles attacking Garrison and non-resistance in order to avoid having to publish Garrisonian replies. “Ours is not a free discussionist, but an Abolitionist journal,” noted Stanton.³³⁷

By the time of the Annual Meeting of the AAS, the division between the political coalition and Garrison had developed into a contest over the future of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Opening on May 7 in New York City, one of the first questions put to a vote concerned the roll of delegates. Originally proposed as a listing of “men, duly appointed,” a substitution was quickly proposed inserting the word “persons” in place of “men.” The substitute motion was carried by “a large majority;” however, the following morning, the resolution was brought up for reconsideration. Lewis Tappan asked that the “yeas” and “nays” be tallied, prompting a revision to the previously passed resolution. In the end, the simple statement that all persons, “male and female” were to be enrolled members of the AAS was passed 180 to 140.³³⁸ Notably, the political abolitionists such as Gerrit Smith, Alvan Stewart, and Joshua Leavitt voted in favor of the motion, while James Birney, Lewis Tappan and two women from Massachusetts voted

³³⁶ Rice, “Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist”, p. 160.

³³⁷ Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright. February 9, 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

³³⁸ *Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, with the Speeches Delivered at the Anniversary Meeting Held in the City of New York, on the 7th of May, 1839*, New York: William S. Dorr, 1839; reprint, New York: Kraus Reprint Co: 1972, pp. 28-29.

against it.³³⁹ Neither Henry Stanton nor Elizur Wright's votes were recorded. Immediately following the official roll, a protest was launched against women's voting by Lewis Tappan and Charles Torrey followed by Phelps who offered a resolution stating that although women were on the roll, it was not to be understood that they were entitled to "sit, speak, vote, hold office, and exercise the same rights of membership as persons of the other sex."³⁴⁰ The motion did not pass, allowing women equal voting rights at the meeting.³⁴¹

Following other organizational matters, the issue of political agitation came up for debate. Several resolutions were introduced, nearly all centering on the language of "duty" versus "conscience" of abolitionists. When the modified resolution was put to the vote, it was narrowly adopted 84 to 77.³⁴² Not surprisingly, the Garrisonians voted against the measure, while Leavitt, Birney and Stewart supported it. However, the meeting's resolutions concerning political action were somewhat ambiguous. Although the motion stating that it was the "duty" of abolitionists to vote passed, a related resolution impugning non-voters for not doing all they could, did not.

Immediately following the vote tally, James Birney introduced a motion signed by 123 members protesting women's voting rights within the AAS. Citing a variety of arguments against the women's participation, the document charged that the move violated the Constitution of the AAS, but noted that:

³³⁹ Ibid., pp. 28-30. It is likely that other women voted. Most of the names were recorded as initials only. Others of note: James McCune Smith, voted no, while Waterloo, NY resident, and husband of future Seneca Falls Convention organizer, Richard P. Hunt voted yes.

³⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid., pp. 42-43.

how much and how conscientiously soever we might differ in respect to the abstract question of the rights of women and the propriety of their action in large deliberative bodies...we are persuaded that the principle which is, at this meeting, for the first time, assumed as aforesaid, its well fitted to bring unnecessary reproach and embarrassment to the cause of the enslaved.³⁴³

Both Birney and Lewis Tappan signed the protest; however, notably Stanton, Smith, Leavitt, Whittier, Wright and Stewart did not. Although the resolution compelling abolitionists to vote had failed, due in large part to the addition of the women's votes, only those who formed the conservative wing of the political abolitionists, largely comprised of the clergy, endorsed Birney's protest.³⁴⁴

The *Emancipator* later presented the arguments advanced on both sides of the "woman question," noting that the Convention spent three sessions debating women's participation, an issue "quite foreign to Anti-Slavery."³⁴⁵ This sentiment was echoed by John Greenleaf Whittier: "we are not able to see that the American Anti-Slavery society has, constitutionally, any thing more to do with the 'appropriate spheres' of women, than it has with the 'concentric spheres' of Capt. Symmes' theory."³⁴⁶ Whittier also noted that women's participation was often referred to as a "Quaker Measure," but he contended that the Friends, "in all business matters, the men and women hold separate meetings."³⁴⁷ Although as we have seen the "woman question" was

³⁴³ Ibid., p. 45. See also, the *Emancipator*, May 23, 1839, p. 14.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ *Emancipator*, May 23, 1839, p. 14.

³⁴⁶ Captain Symmes' theory held that the earth was hollow and provided one could find the "hole," thought to be in Antarctica, the earth's interior could be inhabited. See *Symmes' Theory of Concentric Spheres*, By a Citizen of the United States (Cincinnati: Morgan, Lodge and Fisher, 1826)

³⁴⁷ *Friend of Man*, Utica, New York, May 29, 1839.

broached at the New England and Massachusetts State societies, the 1839 AAS Annual Meeting was the first national gathering at which the issue had arisen.³⁴⁸

It is important to realize what the votes of women delegates represented, both philosophically and practically. Conservative clerical abolitionists such as Phelps and Torrey, were likely opposed to women's participation as being "unnatural." However, the majority of the political abolitionists believed that they were fighting for the continued survival of the abolition movement and expressed genuine concern that Garrison was attaching other reform efforts to abolition, thereby diluting their efforts on behalf of the slaves. As Stanton explained in early April, "the combat deepens here, & the breach widens. Garrison will destroy the A. S. Society rather than fail in making it subservient to his ends. Mark me in this, & see if I am not a true prophet."³⁴⁹ Thus for abolitionists such as Henry Stanton, Garrison's non-resistance and his failure to adopt resolutions supporting political action were at the root of the divide.

By the end of May, Phelps and Torrey had formed a new society in Massachusetts. Originally called the Massachusetts State Anti-Slavery Society, the name was later changed to the Massachusetts Abolition Society. The group resolved to seek "equal religious, civil and political rights" for blacks and the new society began enrolling auxiliary societies almost immediately.³⁵⁰ Although the MAS had been the official state auxiliary of the AAS, because the

³⁴⁸ See *Emancipator*, May 30, 1839.

³⁴⁹ Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, April 2, 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁵⁰ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp.170-71.

AAS Executive Board was controlled by political abolitionists, the new society was also recognized and thus providing the new group with the legitimacy of the AAS.³⁵¹

Following the May annual meeting of the AAS, and coincident with the forming of the Massachusetts Abolition Society, another national convention was called to begin on July 31 in Albany, New York. The call noted explicitly that the sole object of the convention was to discuss measures “especially those which relate to the proper exercise of the right of suffrage by citizens of the free states. All questions and matters foreign to this object will be cautiously avoided in deliberations of the occasion.”³⁵² John Scoble, one of the founders of the newly formed British and Foreign Antislavery Society, toured the United States in the summer of 1839, having recently completed his second visit to the British West Indies, and attended the AAS Convention in Albany where he delivered an address on the last day of the gathering..³⁵³

At the Albany Convention, the political abolitionists held a decided majority of members, and as mentioned above, the carefully worded call that “freemen” attend, helped forestall much of the debate over women’s participation. Almost immediately, Garrison protested and sought to question the meaning of the word “freemen,” but was overruled at every juncture on the grounds that the call had been made to discuss political questions and such questions were out of order.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, June 18, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. See also Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, p. 306. Phelps resigned his post on the Board of Managers of the MAS on April 30, 1839. Phelps to F. C. Jackson, April 30, 1839, typed copy in Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁵² Calls were usually printed in all antislavery publications. See *Friend of Man*, Utica, New York, May 29, 1839.

³⁵³ *Emancipator*, October 22, 1839.

³⁵⁴ *Emancipator*, August 15, 1839.

Without the women's votes tipping the balance toward Garrisonian non-resistance, the political resolutions were readily endorsed. In stark contrast to the meetings held earlier that year, the Albany Convention was able to accomplish a large body of resolutions, ultimately joining in consensus that the time had arrived for abolitionists to no longer neglect their cause at the ballot box: "A five-sixths abolitionist was a pro-slavery man," concluded a delegate following the debates.³⁵⁵

Garrison was the final speaker of the Albany Convention, noting that he did not "think it consistent or proper for non-resistants to discuss their views in an abolitionist convention, and therefore it was that he had remained silent, as had others who agreed with him in sentiment—when the question of coercing the consciences of those who could not vote—had been mooted."³⁵⁶ However, the meeting was likely overtly hostile to Garrison and the non-resistants. In a biography of their father, written nearly fifty years after the Cleveland meeting, Garrison's sons recalled, "Orange Scott made furious thrusts, 'accompanied by a peculiarly appropriate expression of face,' at Mr. Garrison, who bore it like a Christian." Scott, a clergyman, was arguing that he "doubted God would pardon a man's soul for omitting to vote for the slave."³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ Orange Scott of Albany. *Emancipator*, August 15, 1839. Although beyond the scope of this paper, the convention did not yet resolve whether or not a dedicated political party was desirable. The debates at this convention are especially fruitful to studies of the development of political thought among abolitionists.

³⁵⁶ *Emancipator*, August, 15, 1839.

³⁵⁷ Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, p. 309.

Elizabeth Cady met Henry Stanton in early October 1839 while both were guests of her first cousin, Gerrit Smith.³⁵⁸ Henry was giving a series of antislavery lectures in and around Madison County and Smith's Peterboro home became his headquarters.³⁵⁹ Guests at the Smith's, including Elizabeth, would daily head off in two carriages to attend Henry's meetings.³⁶⁰ However, Elizabeth would write nearly 50 years later, that at the time of their meeting she believed that Henry was already engaged to Jane Stewart, the daughter of abolitionist Alvan Stewart.³⁶¹ At the antislavery meetings, Elizabeth listened "spellbound" to Henry's oratory as he

³⁵⁸ See Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 22, 1840. Henry writes, "Lizzie & I often speak of the time we met at Peterboro last October, and I assure you are very thankful to that Providence which brought us together." Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

³⁵⁹ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 60. See also Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 18.

³⁶⁰ Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, pp. 18-19.

³⁶¹ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 58. Elizabeth writes, "He [Henry] had come over from Utica with Alvin [sic] Stewart's beautiful daughter, to whom report said he was engaged; but, as she soon after married Luther R. Marsh, there was a mistake somewhere." Jane's marriage, however, did not take place until September 15, 1845 so it is quite possible that the "report" was correct or that Henry and Jane were informally courting. No contemporary correspondence survives to confirm or refute a relationship between Henry and Jane. For Stewart/Marsh wedding, see Johnson, Rossiter, ed. *Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans. Volumes I-X*. Boston, MA: The Biographical Society, 1904. See also Elizabeth Cady to Elizabeth Smith, September 11, 1839. Elizabeth had been staying with the Stewarts in Utica and arrived in Peterboro with Alvan Stewart, Jr. Henry was also in Utica at the same time attending the New York State Anti-Slavery Society's Annual Meeting (September 18-20, 1839). See *The Emancipator*, Sept. 19, 1839 and *The Liberator*, Oct. 4, 1839. Interestingly, Henry wrote to Elizabeth on January 1, 1840 and relayed a story to her of a meeting with a friend of Jane Stewart. Jane had asked that Henry deliver "her love" to a "Miss Webb," however, Henry mistakenly told Miss Webb that "Elizabeth sent her love." Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p.2. When Elizabeth wrote to her cousin Ann (Nancy) Smith on March 4, 1840 telling her of her broken engagement to Henry, Elizabeth mentions that she recently met with Jane Stewart in Utica. — — —, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 4-5.

moved the audience “first to laughter and then to tears,” and would later recount her enjoyment of their long conversations that were “much more free and easy in our manners than we would otherwise have been,” presumably due to Henry’s impending engagement.³⁶² Nevertheless, family legend recounts that Henry and Elizabeth set off on horseback one beautiful Indian summer morning and the two were absent for “a long time”.³⁶³ Elizabeth remembered in her autobiography:

As we were returning home we stopped often to admire the scenery and, perchance each other. When walking slowly through a beautiful grove, he laid his hand on the horn of the saddle and, to my surprise, made one of those charming revelations of human feeling which brave knights have always found eloquent words to utter, and to which fair ladies have always listened with mingled emotions of pleasure and astonishment.³⁶⁴

However, in an undated, unpublished verse written about Henry, Elizabeth hints that perhaps she was not simply a passive recipient of Henry’s declaration of love:

But I went on from book to book
And at last a prize I took
I was glad to do something you did not dare
But I’d given my prize for your brown curly hair³⁶⁵

They returned to Smith’s house “radiant” and announced that they had decided to marry.³⁶⁶

Their attraction was likely profound and immediate as they were engaged by October 20, when

³⁶² Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 19. Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 58.

³⁶³ Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 19.

³⁶⁴ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp. 59-60.

³⁶⁵ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, No date. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress. Emphasis is mine.

³⁶⁶ Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 19.

Henry left to address the special meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Cleveland, Ohio.³⁶⁷

However, we learn from her own writings that Elizabeth soon realized that her engagement would not be readily accepted by her family, explaining her lingering at Peterboro for weeks in order to “prolong the dream of happiness” and to delay opposition to her plans she “feared to meet.”³⁶⁸ Although Gerrit Smith was fond of Henry and respected his leadership within the emerging political arm of the abolition movement, he too worried that Daniel Cady would never approve of his daughter’s marriage to an abolitionist, nor to a man with limited resources and questionable employment prospects.³⁶⁹ Smith thought it advisable that Elizabeth notify her family by letter and allow him to act as a buffer between Elizabeth and her father. However, Daniel Cady could not be so easily manipulated and withheld the fury of his displeasure until he was able to interrogate Elizabeth in person.

At the October meeting of the AAS in Cleveland, women were enrolled as full participants on the motion of Henry Stanton, without discussion.³⁷⁰ A motion adopted by the Cleveland Convention, introduced by Stanton, exemplifies how far removed from the Garrisonian non-resistants the majority of the AAS membership had come since the April meeting: “Slavery is the creature of law, and can be entirely abolished only by the repeal of those laws which create and

³⁶⁷ *The Emancipator*, September 19, 1839 and November 7, 1839.

³⁶⁸ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 61.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. Elizabeth’s sisters, Tryphena and Harriet had married two of Judge Cady’s law clerks.

³⁷⁰ Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, p. 314. notes that the motion was introduced by Stanton that all “persons” be enrolled. Newspapers report the motion, but not who proposed it.

sustain it; and...these laws can be repealed only by means of political action at the ballot-box.”³⁷¹

By October, the political abolitionists had gone beyond the idea of voting and had begun to seriously debate the idea of a third political party. Myron Holley of Rochester, New York introduced a motion calling for independent nominations, but it was tabled at the Cleveland Convention.³⁷² During the Cleveland meeting, a summary of the British movement was presented, noting, “political action [by the British] was by no means overlooked.”³⁷³

On the one hand, many of these men, including Stanton, Leavitt and Wright had supported women’s participation, while on the other, because Garrison had become so identified with his support of women’s rights, for them to endorse that position might also have expanded Garrison’s influence. In fact, at the end of 1839, Stanton wrote to Wright that he would not have split with the MAS over the “woman question” and that he “never would.” “I think they [are] right,” Stanton concluded, but he added that it was Garrison that had made the issue a point of contention.³⁷⁴

It should also be noted that many of the resolutions on political participation were adopted or defeated by very narrow margins, making every vote critical. With the exception of Phelps, Torrey and the conservative clergy, the political abolitionists had not broken with Garrison over the issue of women *per se*. Rather, they had soundly rejected Garrison’s non-resistance and his anti-political stance. As the women delegates were more likely to vote with Garrison, in

³⁷¹ *Emancipator*, November 14, 1839.

³⁷² *Emancipator*, November 14, 1839. See also Elizur Wright, *Myron Holley; What He Did for Liberty and True Religion* Boston: The Author, 1882, pp. 254-55.

³⁷³ *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, November 7, 1839, p. 150.

³⁷⁴ Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, no date, likely end December 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

large part because many were also non-resistants, the issue of the women's votes was also seen as vitally important because these votes enlarged Garrison's advantage in voting against political resolutions.³⁷⁵ This is further evinced by the proceedings of the Albany and Cleveland Conventions. The Albany Convention was called following the defeat of the political abolitionists at the AAS Annual Meeting. To insure that political questions would be the only topic of discussion, the Executive Committee carefully worded the call for the convention, in an attempt to discuss what they were unable to do at the AAS meeting in May. The call asked for "freemen" to attend to discuss political action.³⁷⁶ By wording the announcement in this way, the political abolitionists hoped to reduce Garrison's control by preventing an important coalition from attending the meeting and voting against the political resolutions. Similarly, the Cleveland convention was geographically prohibitive for many of the Garrisonians from Massachusetts to attend, and women's participation was welcomed at the meeting. Thus, when the women's votes would not prevent the passage of political resolutions, their participation was not questioned, illustrating further that they were not excluded because they were women, but because they were Garrisonians. Additionally, because women's votes held sway in early 1839, and because they were a group that offered a potential means of exclusion, women as a voting bloc were a logical target for those seeking to wrest control of the AAS from Garrison. It is likely that had the women delegates been in favor of political agitation, the "woman question" would not have arisen at all (with the possible exception of the Massachusetts clergy.)

³⁷⁵ As would be the case in Seneca Falls in 1848, the majority of the pro-Garrisonian women in 1839 and all the female delegates to London were Quakers with the exception of Mary Grew.

³⁷⁶ *Friend of Man*, Utica, New York, May 29, 1839.

The single, overriding issue that united the vast array of members of the “New Organization” was their belief in political agitation and their desire to keep Garrison’s “no-government heresy” out of the abolition movement. It was under these circumstances that the conservative clerics and the political abolitionists were able to form a coalition to keep the movement going forward.³⁷⁷ Stanton and Wright acknowledged their disagreement with some of the policies of the Massachusetts clerics, but were also aware of the effects the dispute was having upon Garrison and the non-resistant cause. “Garrison dreads most dreadfully to have heavy hands laid on to his sore spots—his arrogance, his incarnationism, his infallibility &c” wrote Stanton, “such letters [in the *Liberator*] as Phelps, St. Clair, & Torrey’s produce some evil with the good.”³⁷⁸

By December 1839, the situation between Garrison and the political abolitionists had grown increasingly ugly and vindictive. Responding to an editorial in the *Massachusetts Abolitionist* calling Garrison a “voter,” Garrison responded in the pages of the *Liberator* that he was not a voter, being “restrained from being one...by his views of the abstract question of the rightfulness of human governments!” Garrison then continued by reminding Wright that while the law allowed him to vote, the law also “might allow him to be a slaveholder.”³⁷⁹ In a lengthy

³⁷⁷ While it is true that Stanton, Wright, Smith and Leavitt were not likely to form women’s rights societies, they had and would continue to hold progressive ideas on the role of women and women’s rights/suffrage in the years to come.

³⁷⁸ Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, February 11, 1839. Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. For their part, Tappan and Phelps felt that the Garrisonians were taking the Society down the path of atheism in addition to their discomfort with women’s participation. Annie Heloise Abel and Frank J. Klingberg, eds., *A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1858: Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society* Lancaster, PA: Lancaster Press, 1927, p. 50.

³⁷⁹ *Liberator*, December 6, 1839, p. 195.

editorial in the *Emancipator*, Leavitt argued that had Garrison undertaken to form a third party in 1833 when he called for support for Amasa Walker for Congress in Boston, it would have both “saved the abolition cause from the countless mortifications which have been inflicted by the political inconsistencies of its supporters” and brought about the downfall of the “Slavocracy” many years before it would someday be accomplished.³⁸⁰

Henry made his first visit to Johnstown to meet Elizabeth’s family in early December. Although Elizabeth was happy to see him, the rest of the family reacted “cooly.” Following his visit to the Cady household, Henry spent two nights with Gerrit Smith in Peterboro, likely in part, for personal advice and a sympathetic ear following his icy reception at Johnstown.³⁸¹ “The idea of marrying Elizabeth to an abolitionist is very painful to Mr. Cady,” Smith wrote to his wife shortly after Henry departed for New York City.³⁸² A few days later, Daniel Cady wrote to Smith, confirming Henry’s fears:

I understand that he [Henry] has no trade or profession that he is not now and never has been in any regular business and if so—and he willing to marry—he cannot in my judgment be overstocked with prudence—or feel much solicitude for her whom he seeks to marry---...I understand Mr. Stanton now has some employment in an Abolition society which yields him a living---...Mr. Stanton’s [sic] present business cannot be regarded as a business for life-- If the object of the Abolitionists be soon accomplished he must be thrown out of business—and if success does not soon crown their efforts—the rank and file will not much longer consent to pay salaries—³⁸³

³⁸⁰ *Emancipator*, December 26, 1839

³⁸¹ Gerrit Smith to Ann Smith, December 11, 1839. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

³⁸² Gerrit Smith to Ann Smith, December 11, 1839. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library. The letter does not mention any antislavery business and Peterboro is geographically west of Johnstown, while New York City is east.

³⁸³ Daniel Cady to Gerrit Smith, December 14, 1839, Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

On Christmas Day 1839, Henry confided to Smith that he felt “intense solicitude” as to the situation with Elizabeth and her family’s displeasure. Noting that the “adverse influences” and the “pains taken to prejudice” Elizabeth against him by her relatives had begun to show results. “My first visit to your house may be productive of great happiness or great misery to me,” Henry reflected to Smith.³⁸⁴

Henry Stanton remained on cordial terms with Lucretia Mott, despite the growing tension between Garrison and the political agitators. By 1839, Mott was a respected reformer and a devout follower of Garrison; however, at the end of December, Stanton gave several speeches in Philadelphia and dined with the Motts during his stay. Mott seemed unaware of the deep divides in the ideological debates over the issue of political participation, noting only that Stanton “bore very well an allusion to their wrong-doings in New York & Mass,” and expressed the hope that these groups would soon see “the error of their ways.”³⁸⁵

On January 1, 1840, Henry penned a letter to Elizabeth reassuring her of his devoted love and promising to render that year and “all future years” as happy ones.³⁸⁶ Three days later, Henry again wrote, and although the letter was addressed to Elizabeth, it appears to be a thinly

³⁸⁴ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 25, 1839. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library. The entire Smith family seems to have been sympathetic to Henry and Elizabeth’s situation. Writing to her daughter Elizabeth Smith in a letter that would be hand delivered by Henry, Ann Smith noted, “I am sure you will be glad to see him [Henry].” Ann Smith to Elizabeth Smith, December 20-21, 1839. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

³⁸⁵ Lucretia Mott to James Miller McKim, December 29, 1839. Palmer, ed. *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*, p. 69.

³⁸⁶ Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady, January 1, 1840 in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 1-3.

veiled attempt to allay the concerns expressed by Judge Cady in his letter to Gerrit Smith two weeks before. Henry wrote that he had existed solely on his own resources since the age of thirteen, having “never received a dollar’s gratuitous aid from anyone...because I knew it would relax my perseverance and detract from my self-reliance.” Expressing a similar sentiment to that which he did in Maria Chapman’s parlor in 1836, and although Henry was attempting to convince the wealthy Daniel Cady that he could provide for Elizabeth, he also stated that he “never made the getting of money for its own sake an object.”³⁸⁷ Thus, although Henry felt compelled to attempt to alleviate some of Cady’s fears, he had no intention of abandoning the cause of abolition for a more lucrative career.

On April 1, 1840, pursuant to a call by the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, a special meeting to discuss the question of independent abolition political nominations was arranged. Dubbed the “April Fool’s Convention” by Garrison, the motion of Myron Holley calling for presidential and vice presidential nominations, first introduced at the Cleveland Convention, was finally taken off the table. Attending the Convention were nearly all the political agitators from the AAS: Wright, Leavitt, Stewart, William Goodell, and Beriah Green. John G. Whittier and Gerrit Smith did not attend, citing ill health, but sent letters to be read before the assembly. Also absent was Henry Stanton. On April 2, following “a kind and full discussion” James G. Birney was nominated for President and Thomas Earle (from Pennsylvania) Vice President.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁷ Stanton and Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, pp. 4-5.

³⁸⁸ *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, April 9, 1840. See also the *Emancipator* of the same date.

Although Stanton had cautioned against the independent nominations in October 1839, by April 1840, he was firmly behind them. After years of working toward political agitation, Stanton missed the Albany Convention and enjoying the culminations of his efforts firsthand, due to an affair of the heart.³⁸⁹ By March 4, following months of “anxiety and bewilderment,” and while in the company of her eldest and most severe sister Tryphena Bayard, Elizabeth, finally capitulated to her father’s wishes and broke her engagement to Henry.³⁹⁰ As Henry was in New York City, it is probable that Elizabeth informed him of her decision by letter. Although the letter is lost, Henry was aware in late February that he had cause for concern. In a letter to Gerrit Smith, perhaps written before he received Elizabeth’s letter, Henry noted that Elizabeth was soon traveling to Seneca Falls for an extended stay with the Bayards. “I dread the influence of Mr. Bayard upon her,” wrote Henry, “She has been too much under the influence of such people.”³⁹¹ Historians have often attributed Henry’s “dread” as referring to an alleged romance between Elizabeth and Edward Bayard, her brother-in-law.³⁹² However, from Elizabeth’s later correspondence another interpretation emerges. Writing of her observations of a French delegate, François Guizot, at the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London the following

³⁸⁹ For Daniel Cady’s opposition to the marriage, see Gerrit Smith to Ann Smith, December 12, 1839 and Daniel Cady to Gerrit Smith, December 14, 1839. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library. For the end of the engagement, see Elizabeth Cady to Ann Smith, March 4, 1840 Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 4-6.

³⁹⁰ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 71.

³⁹¹ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, February 27, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

³⁹² See for example, Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, pp. 23-24 and 31. The story was first reported by Lutz in 1940. Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, pp. 16-19.

year, Elizabeth noted that “her brother [in-law] used to get his strongest arguments against immediate abolition” from Guizot’s works, suggesting that the influence Henry was concerned about stemmed not from a rival suitor, but because the Bayards, like the Cadys, were anti-abolitionists.³⁹³

Henry was not only worried about his own happiness, but to him, the direction of Elizabeth’s future was also at stake. Well aware of the influence that her father and Edward Bayard exerted, and knowing they were both anti-abolitionists, Henry worried that Elizabeth might “pervert her fine powers” by “wasting them in the giddy whirl of fashionable follies,” away from reform and toward the social trappings of her sisters.³⁹⁴ Henry continued to support Elizabeth’s intellectual and moral development, writing to Smith, “I have imparted to her good advice on such topics as I thought would do her good, & she receives it kindly... She sees her error, thanks me kindly for my admonition, & says she will improve by it.”³⁹⁵ Observing years before Elizabeth would become one of America’s greatest reformers, and the only one to do so,

³⁹³ Elizabeth C. Stanton to Sarah M. and Angelina Grimké Weld, June 25, 1840. Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 11. Gordon notes that “her brother” probably refers to Bayard (who had been mentioned earlier in the same letter) as Elizabeth’s last surviving brother had died in 1826 and Guizot’s work was not published for two more years. — — —, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 15n17.

³⁹⁴ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, February 27, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

³⁹⁵ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, February 27, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

Henry wrote, “It pains me to see a person of so superior a mind & enlarged heart doing nothing for a ruined world’s salvation.”³⁹⁶

The break, however, was not entirely clean or of long duration. Writing to her cousin Ann Fitzhugh Smith (Gerrit’s wife) on March 4, 1840, Elizabeth lamented the “memories... [that] bind me to the dear ones who shared these joys with me, cast a spell that cannot soon be broken.”³⁹⁷ The “spell” was not broken for long. Although no correspondence from Elizabeth exists between this letter and June 25 after they were already married, Henry’s correspondence indicates that the engagement was renewed within a month.³⁹⁸ By April 1, Henry and Elizabeth were planning their marriage and honeymoon (where Henry would attend the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention) and these plans superseded Henry’s attendance at the very important Albany AAS Convention, which began that same day. This was the first, and only important antislavery meeting Stanton missed between 1834 and 1840.

In a confidential letter to Gerrit Smith, Henry explained his absence from the Albany Convention writing, “I remained at home to arrange certain matters which had unexpectedly overtaken me, & which could not be postponed.”³⁹⁹ Stanton went on to explain that he wished to visit the Smiths on May 2, noting that he, together with a “dear friend” may come “in chains.” Displaying Henry’s sense of humor, and in abolitionist rhetoric he continued, “as much as you

³⁹⁶ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, February 27, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

³⁹⁷ Quoted in Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 21.

³⁹⁸ See Editorial note in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 8.

³⁹⁹ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, April 17, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

abhor thralldom, we shall totally dissent from any proposition of emancipation, immediate or gradual.”⁴⁰⁰

Henry also sent an urgent request to Theodore Weld for his back pay in the first days of April, that was so pressing Weld could “not go to bed” although it was nearly 11:00 pm until he had sent Henry’s request along to Lewis Tappan to secure the funds.⁴⁰¹ While Weld was not at liberty to disclose to Tappan the reason behind Stanton’s need of cash, he was explicit about when Henry needed the funds, stating that it “cannot wait after the first of May,” and further, he assured Tappan that Henry was undergoing “the most perplexing and painful [extremity] of his life.”⁴⁰²

While Elizabeth may have worn down her father’s opposition, surviving correspondence strongly suggests that the couple had planned to wed with or without Judge Cady’s permission, and might even have planned to elope. On April 7, 1840, Henry confided to friend and fellow abolitionist Amos Phelps the reason why he needed to collect his back salary:

I suppose I shall be married in about a month & that the lady will go with me to England. Altho the affair has been some months negociating [sic] yet is it only a week past that has settled it that I must take a traveling companion with me. I cannot now tell you the lady’s name, nor much about her only that she is every way worthy of me, yea, far too worthy – is from a high family which is wealthy. But, parents, brothers, & sisters &c, &c have violently opposed the match, chiefly because I am an abolitionist. Her father disinherits her, & cuts her off penniless...you may judge of her character when I tell you she has cut loose from

⁴⁰⁰ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, April 17, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

⁴⁰¹ Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. 2:828. Weld’s letter is dated April 10, 1840 and within the document, Weld mentions that he attempted to make Stanton’s request in person to Tappan “last Monday” (April 6) but Tappan was not at his office. Weld likely received word from Henry shortly before the 6th of April. Henry’s letter to Weld did not survive.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

one of the most aristocratic families in the State, given up her fortune & wedded her soul to the A. S. [antislavery] cause at the call of duty. She is a lady of high mental accomplishments, pious, a strong abolitionist. Well, the responsibility is upon me, was thrown on me unexpectedly – for, we had made arrangements not to be married till my return.⁴⁰³

According to Henry, the urgency of their wedding date was due to the fact that Elizabeth did not want to be “left behind in the hands of her opposing friends” and that she thought it best to be in Europe “until the storm blew over while she is absent,” further suggesting that the couple may have planned to wed, if necessary, without Daniel Cady’s permission.⁴⁰⁴ Elizabeth later nostalgically remembered that they “did not wish the ocean to roll between” them.⁴⁰⁵

The wedding date was eventually set for Thursday, April 30 in Johnstown. However, Henry was traveling from New York City, up the Hudson River and was delayed at the sandbar known as “Marcy’s Overslaugh” located a few miles south of Albany.⁴⁰⁶ Despite the warnings of the back luck to follow should they marry on Friday, Elizabeth, who wore a “simple white

⁴⁰³ Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, April 7, 1840. Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

⁴⁰⁴ Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, April 7, 1840. Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library. Portions of this letter are also quoted in Griffith, but Griffith assumed the letter’s date was April 17 due to a later pencil notation of that date. The letter’s postmark shows the 7th, and Stanton also wrote to Phelps on the 11th and referenced items within this letter. Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, pp. 32-33; Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 71.

⁴⁰⁵ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 71.

⁴⁰⁶ The so-called “Marcy’s Overslaugh” was actually located on the farm of New York Governor, William Marcy and was located a few miles below Albany. This portion of the Hudson River, referred to as the North River, was notorious for being a location that “stranded boats for hours.” See Ibid., p. 71. See also Daniel Webster and Edward Everett, *The Works of Daniel Webster*, vol. II Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1851, p. 344. and Charles McCarthy, *The Antimasonic Party: A Study of Political Antimasonry in the United States, 1827-1840*, American Historical Association Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1903, p. 414.

evening dress” married Henry on Friday May 1, 1840. As a first step in their new life together, the couple omitted the word “obey” from the traditional marriage vows.⁴⁰⁷

Prior to the marriage, Elizabeth had often sought the approval by others—such as her father and eldest sister Tryphena—by seeking to show herself to be as vital as a male child or by attempting to prove her equal intelligence and usefulness. Her decision to marry Henry, over the objections of Judge Cady, signaled an important shift away from her desire to try to secure the affections of her father, and an increased reliance on her own assessments of Henry as a man she could both respect and trust. As biographer Alma Lutz explained, “her decision to marry Henry in spite of the opposition of her family had been a turning point in her mental life. From then on she had confidence in her ability to think things out for herself.”⁴⁰⁸ While Lutz credited the

⁴⁰⁷ Surprisingly Elizabeth’s biographer, Elisabeth Griffith credits the omission of ‘obey’ from the Stantons’ vows as possibly being Henry’s suggestion, and this is the more plausible explanation. In 1838, Henry, together with his brother-in-law George Avery and sister Frances Avery, attended the wedding of his close friend Theodore Weld and Angelina Grimké and they had also omitted this vow. Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 33. However, the Weld ceremony was unusual even among reformers as both felt they could not “bind themselves to any preconceived form of words,” prompting the couple to eschew traditional vows and speak only the words that the “Lord gave them at the moment.” Weld referred to the “unrighteous power vested in a husband by the laws of the United States over the person and property of his wife,” while Angelina promised to honor and love “with a pure heart fervently.” The couple also included a prayer for the end of slavery as part of their marriage ceremony. Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, pp. 678-79. The Weld’s marriage certificate survives in the Weld Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan, and was signed by those in attendance including Henry and the Averys.

Although historians have long noted the confusion surrounding the actual date of the Stanton’s marriage, it appears that the confusion resulted purely from Elizabeth’s autobiography. Elizabeth (or a printer’s error) stated the date as May 10, but Henry’s *Random Recollections* (all three editions) as well as newspaper accounts (*Liberator*, May 15, 1840; *Emancipator*, May 15, 1840 and the *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, June 4, 1840) are consistent with the May 1 date. The *Abolitionist* likely missed inserting the announcement in the previous issue as it mentions the “1st inst.”

⁴⁰⁸ Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 35.

marriage as instilling greater confidence in Elizabeth, the Stantons' daughter, Harriot, attached even greater significance to Henry's influence and the important role the marriage played in changing the course of her mother's life:

In casting up values and compensations, we must not forget she escaped the conservative atmosphere, the aristocratic surroundings in marrying Henry B. Stanton. Her own family never liked her going to Peterboro, they distrusted the "extreme" views of their nephew, Gerrit Smith. With my father she was free to build up with the Smiths the friendships that meant so much to her...As the wife of an abolitionist she came into intimate contact with Whittier, Garrison, Phillips, Lucretia Mott, etc. Her marriage got her out of an element not best for her growth, and into an element congenial with every element of her being.⁴⁰⁹

Thus from the beginning of her marriage, Henry and the experience of the marriage itself had proven to be a catalyst for Elizabeth's emerging sense of self and an important, positive influence on both her intellectual and practical development as a reformer.

⁴⁰⁹ Harriot Stanton Blatch to Alma Lutz, May 16, 1930 (typed transcript). Alma Lutz Collection, Vassar College.

Chapter Five: A Whole New World

The Annual Meeting of the American Antislavery Society was scheduled to begin May 12, 1840. However, by that time, many of the political abolitionists had already abandoned the old society and were busy organizing around the newly created Liberty Party and preparing to establish new auxiliaries to the new national organization, the American and Foreign Antislavery Society. In late February, Henry Stanton warned Gerrit Smith that the Garrisonians were planning a “violent effort to overthrow and displace the Executive Committee” fearing that “an attempt will be made to make the Anti-Slavery organization subservient to non-resistance.”⁴¹⁰ The tensions that had first surfaced in the early 1830s between the western abolitionists who controlled the AAS Executive Committee and the Garrisonians in Boston was continuing to divide the reformers, many of whom were still members of the AAS while at the same time, they were also building a competing organization.

The Stantons and James G. Birney sailed for the World’s Antislavery Convention in London the day before the annual meeting began.⁴¹¹ When the meeting opened, it was obviously a very different gathering from any of those held in the previous decade. Although this meeting is often pointed to as the last stand of those opposing women’s participation as equal members in the AAS, it is clear from the changes in the preceding year that by this time, the AAS was, as the political abolitionists argued, a Garrisonian non-resistance society and was no longer representative of the broad spectrum of abolitionists. In a letter to Lucretia Mott written just prior to the May meeting, Garrison still claimed not to understand the problem: “A most

⁴¹⁰ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, February 27, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

⁴¹¹ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 200.

afflicting change has come over the views and feelings of E. Wright, Jr., Leavitt, Goodell, Phelps, &c: especially in regard to myself personally, whom they seem now to hate and despise more than they once apparently loved and honored.”⁴¹²

Among the first order of business at the AAS’s annual meeting was the appointment of a new Business Committee. Abby Kelley was appointed along with Phelps and Lewis Tappan, who immediately lodged a protest of her appointment.⁴¹³ A vote was then taken and Kelley’s appointment was sustained, 557 to 451. Phelps and Tappan immediately asked to be excused from their appointment on the Committee.⁴¹⁴ Writing to his wife a few days later, Garrison was pleased with the outcome of the meeting and undoubtedly happy to be rid of the political abolitionists proclaiming, “We have made clean work of everything.”⁴¹⁵ Within the Annual

⁴¹² William L. Garrison to Lucretia Mott, April 28, 1840, Merrill and Rucharnes, eds., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Volume Ii: A House Dividing against Itself, 1836-1840*, p. 592. This letter and much of Garrison’s behavior during this time underscore the need for historians to be mindful of the personalities and character traits of the abolitionists. For example, this letter, written to Lucretia Mott, portrays a Garrison ignorant and innocent of the maneuvering and posturing that had been taking place between the Executive Committee and Garrison and his followers for the previous six months. Surely this letter was written in this fashion because Garrison was writing to Mott, a well respected and level-headed reformer, both out of respect to her standing and as an attempt by Garrison to show himself as an undeserved victim of the political abolitionists who used to “love[d] and honor[ed]” him. Aileen Kraditor, in her seminal work, wrongfully dismissed these issues as mere “personality conflicts” while accusing other historians such as Gilbert Barnes of missing the bigger picture because of them. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850*, p. 9.

⁴¹³ *Seventh Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society*, New York: William S. Dorr, 1840; reprint, Kraus, 1972, p. 9.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁴¹⁵ William L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, May 15, 1840. Merrill and Rucharnes, eds., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Volume Ii: A House Dividing against Itself, 1836-1840*, pp. 611.

Report for the year ending 1840, it was noted that the “separatists” (meaning Stanton, Wright, Birney, etc.) contended:

The same persons belonging to the Anti-Slavery ranks, who are contending for *what they call women’s rights*, the civil and political equality of women with men, deny the obligation of forming, supporting or yielding obedience to civil government, and refuse to affirm the duty of political action; and they *contrived to bring* to the late Annual Meeting [1839] a sufficient number of men and women to compose a majority of all the members present, to sustain their views and measures. Of the whole number present this year, four hundred and sixty-four were from the single State of Massachusetts, styling themselves “non-Resistants.”⁴¹⁶

Thus, although the formal rupture of the AAS can be dated from this meeting, and was incidentally prompted by the appointment of Abby Kelley to the Business Committee, the “woman issue” was neither the overarching point of contention, nor the main disagreement between those of the “New Organization” and the Garrisonians. As early as February 1841, the Executive Committee of the AFAS clarified their position on the founding of the organization and the break with the AAS writing: “The separation from the American A. S. Society took place in May, 1840. The *Woman* question, as it is called, was not the cause—it was only the occasion of it.”⁴¹⁷ It was, however, the linking of women’s rights with non-resistance by Garrison that pushed those who had previously supported women’s equal participation, such as Stanton, Leavitt, Whittier and Wright, away from the issue altogether for several years. The effects of this linkage by Garrison were far reaching: those with the awareness of the importance of political agitation and a reform strategy based on political participation, were the very reformers

⁴¹⁶ *Seventh Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society*, p. 67. Emphasis as printed.

⁴¹⁷ “Statement of the Executive Committee of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society,” *The Emancipator*, February 25, 1841. Emphasis as printed.

most able and most receptive to likely to endorse women's rights agitation at the legislative level, but were instead, repelled by the issue's close connection to Garrisonian non-resistance.

Following the 1840 AAS meeting, the "schismatics" openly pursued a new antislavery organization, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Birney and Stanton were appointed Secretaries *in absentia*, while Whittier, Gerrit Smith and Theodore Weld were appointed to the Executive Committee.⁴¹⁸ The name of the new organization was obviously selected to resemble that of the new British antislavery organization, the British and Foreign Antislavery Society, founded the previous year.⁴¹⁹ Securing the endorsement, both organizational and financial, of the transnational abolition community was of vital importance to the new group. James Birney, now a Presidential nominee, together with Henry Stanton and his new bride, Elizabeth Cady sailed for Britain aboard the Montreal on May 11, 1840. The two men, already well connected within British abolition circles would thus represent the new American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society while abroad.⁴²⁰

Garrison's Folly

*"It was the ironical fate of the Convention to stand rather as a landmark in the history of the woman question, than in that of abolition."*⁴²¹

⁴¹⁸ *Massachusetts Abolitionist*, May 28, 1840. Weld had not been lecturing or officially participating in many of these developments since his marriage to Angelina Grimké in 1838. However, he still regularly corresponded with his friends and associates.

⁴¹⁹ Formed in 1839. *Emancipator*, March 29, 1839.

⁴²⁰ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 200.

⁴²¹ Merrill and Rucharnes, eds., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Volume II: A House Dividing against Itself, 1836-1840*, p. 381.

The idea for a World's Anti-Slavery convention may have originated with Joshua Leavitt, political abolitionist and editor of the *Emancipator*.⁴²² The first call was issued by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFAS) in July 1839 and “earnestly invited the friends of every nation and of every clime” to attend.⁴²³ In August, the BFAS sent lengthy questionnaires concerning the specific nature and scope of slavery in the United States to the Executive Committee of the AAS as well as to the individual state societies.⁴²⁴ However, Joseph Sturge, the Convention's main organizer, was well acquainted with the problematic issues that were already brewing within the American movement, and he hoped that they would not cross the seas and disrupt the World's Convention.

⁴²² *Emancipator*, March 28, 1839.

⁴²³ *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and Held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840*, London: Johnston and Barrett, 1841, p. 8.

⁴²⁴ See Minutes of the Meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, August 30, 1839. Rhodes House Antislavery Papers, Oxford University. Included in this collection are the queries sent to the various slave-holding nations, including a separate query for Texas. Joseph Sturge visited the British Isles in 1837 and the account of his findings entitled, *The West Indies in 1837*, was widely read by American abolitionists and played an important part of Britain's final emancipation decree. Douglas H. Maynard, "The World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 47, no. 3 (Dec. 1960): p. 452. See also, Louis Filler, *Crusade against Slavery: Friends, Foes, and Reforms, 1820-1860* Algonac, MI: Reference Publications, Inc., 1986, p. 70. In addition to Sturge's visit, other abolitionists such as Harriet Martineau, Charles Stuart and John Scoble had spent extended periods of time in America. Maynard, "The World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840," p. 452. The ties were so close that Theodore Weld named his first son after Stuart. When the Welds were expecting their second child, Stuart wrote Theodore hoping that the second child, if a son, would be named “Theodore.” Implored Stuart, “I beg you, I require you, by our love to call your younger boy Theodore. I want our names to go together.” The Welds complied, naming their second son Theodore Grimké Weld. Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p.858.

Ties between American and British antislavery advocates were well established by 1839, and the groups forwarded important antislavery pamphlets across the Atlantic, corresponded frequently, and some even personally attended meetings on both continents. Word reached London in the contentious winter of 1839-1840 that some American societies planned to send women delegates to the London Convention, prompting a second call to be issued on February 15, 1840. This second call pointedly asked the American societies to forward the names of the “Gentlemen” who would be attending in an effort to communicate that they hoped to forestall any debates about women’s participation at the meeting well in advance of the convention’s opening session.⁴²⁵

However, as we have seen, many of the controversies within the American antislavery organizations were waged over control of the AAS and its future course of action, and both the New Organization and the Garrisonians sought to win the financial and moral endorsement of the British abolitionists. That Garrison was expecting a confrontation over the women delegates cannot be denied. During Garrison’s passage, he met fellow delegate George Bourne. Bourne, who was against women’s equal participation, reminded Garrison “no woman will be allowed a seat in the Convention. Such a thing...was never heard or thought of in any part of Europe.”⁴²⁶ Still, Garrison took comfort in knowing that he would not easily be “intimidated or put down,”

⁴²⁵ Henry Stanton wrote Gerrit Smith on the inside and back cover of the second call. Letter from Stanton to Smith dated April 17, 1840. Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library. See also Henry Stanton to Amos Phelps, letter also written on a copy of the February 15 call (n.d. [March 28, 1840]), Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

⁴²⁶ William L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, May 19, 1840. in Merrill and Rucharnes, eds., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Volume II: A House Dividing against Itself, 1836-1840*, p. 616.

and he added that it was probable that he would be “foiled in his purpose.”⁴²⁷ This exchange supports the argument posed by historian Donald Kennon: “Garrison knew that confrontation awaited him in London, and he welcomed it.”⁴²⁸ Nevertheless, from the above-mentioned correspondence written to Lucretia Mott expressing dismay and ignorance at the hostility of the political abolitionists, it is also somewhat disturbing to note that Garrison might not have been entirely honest with the women delegates about what they could expect in London, perhaps in part, because he did not fully accept within himself why the schism had occurred.

“Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers—Jews, Gentiles, Ishmaelites—Women, Non-Resistants, Warriors, and all—let them come— wrote Garrison in the *Liberator*, “all but those who refuse to associate for the slave’s redemption with others who do not agree with them as to the divinity of human politics, and the scriptural obligation to prevent woman from opening her mouth in an anti-slavery gathering,” he continued.⁴²⁹ Garrison thus publicly continued to explain the abolition rupture in terms of the “woman question,” rather than addressing the more relevant issue of political participation. In this way, Garrison hoped to attract sympathizers from the ranks of abolitionists, but this position also allowed him to continue as the movement’s presumed martyr and leader of the more morally pure, non-politically tarnished reformers.

Coverage of the London Convention in the *History of Woman Suffrage*, almost surely written by Elizabeth, demonstrates either a serious lack of understanding of the events of 1839 within the abolitionist ranks or a deliberate attempt to show the women delegates as victims of

⁴²⁷ William L. Garrison to Helen E. Garrison, May 19, 1840 in *Ibid*.

⁴²⁸ Kennon, "An Apple of Discord: The Woman Question at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840," p. 249.

⁴²⁹ *Liberator*. Quoted in Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, p. 352.

male oppression. Further, the narrative as explained by Elizabeth Cady Stanton supports the idea that Garrison was perhaps taking advantage of the women delegates' sincere interest in taking part in the World's Convention to advance his own agenda and leaving them in the dark as to what might await them once they reached London:

The call for that Convention [the World's Convention] invited delegates from all Anti-Slavery organizations. Accordingly several American societies saw fit to send women, as delegates, to represent them in that august assembly. But after going three thousand miles to attend a World's convention, it was discovered that women formed no part of the constituent elements of the moral world.⁴³⁰

But was this in fact the case? Were the women under the impression that they were to be received as delegates when they sailed for England? As stated above, the London Committee peppered the American antislavery community with a printed second call months in advance of the women's departure calling only for "gentlemen" to attend, and further, Garrison, Stanton and Lewis Tappan among others had been in correspondence with the London Committee in the interim period.⁴³¹ As Garrison noted, he was expecting a confrontation, but still, he persisted, perhaps without enlightening the women delegates as to what they might expect. Although Lucretia Mott's published correspondence on the eve of her departure for the London Convention includes letters written to prominent Garrisonian women such as Maria Weston

⁴³⁰ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 53.

⁴³¹ This call for "gentlemen only" had a broad enough circulation to have been used by Henry Stanton as letter-writing paper to at least two individuals, and Stanton was only one of those receiving copies. Sarah Grimké, writing in support of the women delegates in November, 1840, noted, "One thing is very clear I think, viz. that the Convention had no right to reject the female delegates...lest it could be proved that they were not persons – the 2nd call issued by the Committee to the contrary notwithstanding." Sarah Grimké to Elizabeth Pease, November 15, 1840. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library. The Rhodes House Anti-Slavery Papers contains correspondence from these named individuals during this time period. See too Abel and Klingberg, eds., *A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1858: Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society*.

Chapman, she does not indicate that she was aware, prior to her June 6 meeting with Joseph Sturge in London, that the presence of female delegates at the Convention would be a source of controversy.⁴³² This is also supported by Mott's diary, written during her trip to London. She makes no mention of the women's possible exclusion or even that she was expecting a confrontation of any sort prior to her notation of June 6, wherein Joseph Sturge appeals to the women to comply with the London Committee's request not to present their credentials.⁴³³

The day before the World's Convention was set to open, Garrisonian Wendell Phillips attended the meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.⁴³⁴ A letter, signed by Pennsylvania delegate Sarah Pugh protesting the exclusion of the women delegates was read into the minutes of the meeting. However, the Executive Committee of the BFAS remained unmoved and passed a resolution that the women delegates be sent visitors tickets.⁴³⁵

⁴³² Mott discusses the schism and Garrison's decision to attend the Annual Meeting of the AAS, even at "the risk of his not reaching London in time for the opening of the Convention;" however, she does not indicate that she was privy to the London Committee's call for "gentlemen" only. See Palmer, ed. *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*, p. 75.

⁴³³ Tolles, ed. *Slavery And "The Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840*, p. 22.

⁴³⁴ Minutes of the Meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, June 11, 1840. Rhodes House Antislavery Papers, Oxford University. Although James G. Birney was not listed as a visitor at this meeting, his vote is recorded as seconding the motion appointing Thomas Clarkson as President of the meeting.

⁴³⁵ Minutes of the Meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, June 11, 1840. Rhodes House Antislavery Papers, Oxford University, resolution 281. The protest by Sarah Pugh was also included in Lucretia Mott's diary; the text differs slightly, but not materially between the two. See Tolles, ed. *Slavery And "The Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840*, p. 28. A resolution from the same meeting added Henry Stanton's name to the roster of Secretaries of the Convention.

The following morning, when the Convention opened and immediately following the official appointments of the various officers of the Convention, Wendell Phillips rose with a resolution proposing a committee of five to prepare a list of “all persons” bearing credentials from an authorized antislavery society be included on the roster.⁴³⁶ Phillips was followed by Harvard Professor William Adam, another member of the Massachusetts delegation present at the BFAS meeting the day before. Significantly, although Adam was a Garrisonian and rose to support Phillips’ resolution, he stopped short of seconding the motion.⁴³⁷ Historian Donald Kennon argues that Adam’s failure to second the motion indicated that the Garrisonians were “simply trying to exploit the statement of their principles for tactical purposes.”⁴³⁸ Coupled with the fact that Phillips was fully aware of the London Committee’s decision from the previous day’s meeting, and with the knowledge that British social custom was decidedly conservative, it seems clear that Phillips’ resolution had little to do with the advocacy of women’s rights and more to do with furthering Garrison’s strategy, while also serving to further humiliate the women delegates sequestered behind the curtain.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁶ *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and Held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840*, p. 23.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 333. See also Kennon, "An Apple of Discord: The Woman Question at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840," p. 251. Kennon did not examine the Minutes of the Meeting and relied upon the Garrisonian controlled *National Anti-Slavery Standard* for his information.

⁴³⁸ Kennon, "An Apple of Discord: The Woman Question at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840," p. 251.

⁴³⁹ My criticism of Garrison’s actions during this period is based primarily on the nature of his public behavior and the very different tone he expressed in his private dealings and personal correspondence. I am not suggesting that Garrison’s support of women’s equal participation in the transatlantic antislavery movement was not motivated by a belief in gender equality, but rather, the motivation for his actions during this period coincided with, rather than informed, his behavior during the abolition rupture.

So if the motivation to continue the debate was not because Phillips had any realistic hope that the women delegates would be admitted, why did he propose the motion? By continuing to debate the fate of the women delegates, the Garrisonians hoped to engender the sympathy of delegates who might be unhappy with the London Committee's tight control of the World's Convention, and wrest at least some of the moral and financial backing of the influential British abolition community away from the rival American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

Speaking against the motion, James Birney argued that the question concerning women's participation was far from settled in America. Referring to the 1839 AAS meeting, Birney noted that the women's votes were counted when the question arose as to their own voting rights and that the vote was "swelled" by this fact.⁴⁴⁰ As the debates progressed, the argument rested on the question of whether or not the meeting was in fact a "World" Convention, giving the body of attendees the right of control or whether the use of the word "world" was used merely a rhetorical descriptive. The Garrisonians conceded that the women could be excluded had they attended an "English meeting," but they questioned whether or not a "*World's* Convention [could rightly be] measured by an English yardstick."⁴⁴¹ However, while the debate consumed the entire first day of the proceedings, the motion to enroll the women did not pass. In fact, during the debates, Wendell Phillips asserted that "the woman question" did not cause the split within the American ranks, but rather, it was the question of political agitation that provided the impetus

⁴⁴⁰ *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and Held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840*, p. 41.

⁴⁴¹ Wendell Phillips to the *Liberator*. Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, pp. 368-69. Emphasis as printed.

for the schism. By the time of the printing of the official proceedings, Phillips amended his statement, explaining that both issues caused the split.⁴⁴²

Henry Stanton's vote on the motion is unclear. While supportive of women's participation in the United States, Stanton was aware that British custom was far more conservative on the issue of women's rights. As the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society looked to be the group officially endorsed by the British Society, Stanton too was placed in an uncomfortable position. Although Elizabeth maintained in all of her written works on the subject that Henry gave a "very eloquent speech" in favor of Phillips' motion, there is no mention of such a speech in the printed proceedings.⁴⁴³ Interestingly, although they were on opposite sides of the split within the ranks of the abolitionist movement, Wendell Phillips and Garrison both contended that Henry Stanton voted for the women delegates, while Lucretia Mott's diary makes no reference to Stanton's vote.⁴⁴⁴ However, in a letter to Lewis Tappan, James Birney plainly states, "Mr. Stanton told me, he did not vote in favor of the admission of the women."⁴⁴⁵ Although Stanton was clearly aligned with the New Organization, the Garrisonian controlled *National Anti-Slavery Standard* wrote a lengthy editorial, reminding

⁴⁴² *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and Held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840*, p. 45.

⁴⁴³ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 79. See also Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, pp. 28-29. and Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, p. 1:61.

⁴⁴⁴ For Phillips, see "Mr. Stanton and the Woman Question," *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, October 22, 1840, p. 78. Garrison, see W. L. Garrison to Helen Garrison, June 29, 1840 in Garrison and Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison: The Story of His Life as Told by His Children*, pp. 381-84.

⁴⁴⁵ James G. Birney to Lewis Tappan, August 29, 1840 in Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, p. 2:596.

readers that Stanton had “always voted [in favor of women’s participation] so in the societies here.”⁴⁴⁶

Perhaps the later confusion over Stanton’s vote arose over the final motion of the Convention. Wendell Phillips rose once again to propose that a protest respecting the women delegates be added to the official convention proceedings.⁴⁴⁷ The motion was debated for a short time, and a motion to table the resolution was entered by Nathaniel Colver, a conservative member of the Massachusetts clergy. Lucretia Mott noted in her diary that “H. B. Stanton opposed Colver—plead for the right.”⁴⁴⁸ Stanton’s speech on this occasion is also not included in the official proceedings; however, it might explain the contradictory accounts of his vote on the earlier resolution. While voting to allow the women delegates would have put Stanton in precarious position of knowingly opposing the explicit wishes of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, speaking on behalf of allowing the protest to be recorded was not such a sharp break of sympathy with the BFAS.

Aftermath

“As Mrs. Mott and I walked home, arm in arm, commenting on the incidents of the day, we resolved to hold a convention as soon as we returned home, and form a society to advocate the rights of women.”

Elizabeth Cady Stanton⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁶ “Mr. Stanton and the Woman Question,” *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, October 22, 1840, p. 78.

⁴⁴⁷ *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and Held in London, from Friday, June 12th, to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840*, p. 563.

⁴⁴⁸ Tolles, ed. *Slavery And "The Woman Question": Lucretia Mott's Diary of Her Visit to Great Britain to Attend the World's Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840*, p. 44.

⁴⁴⁹ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp. 82-83.

Before leaving for London and only a few days after their marriage, the newlyweds stopped in New Jersey to visit Henry's longtime friends and co-agitators, sisters Sarah Grimké, and Angelina Grimké Weld and Angelina's husband, Theodore Weld.⁴⁵⁰ The sisters greatly impressed Elizabeth, and she them, and Elizabeth would continue to mention the Grimké's philosophies on the "woman question," throughout her European travels.⁴⁵¹ In perhaps her first letter to these eminent antislavery women, Elizabeth did not express any outrage at the treatment of the women delegates in London, benignly noting the question "caused some little discord," but adding dispassionately that a similar "difference of opinion" existed in America among male and female abolitionists.⁴⁵² Although Elizabeth Cady Stanton's later reminiscences would praise Garrison for his efforts on behalf of women's rights, her contemporary correspondence does not agree. In the same letter to the Grimkés, Stanton described her impression of Garrison after hearing him speak for the first time: "last evening he opened his mouth, & forth came, in my opinion, much folly."⁴⁵³

When Elizabeth and Henry Stanton returned to the United States after a seven-month European tour that included Britain, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and France, Elizabeth was well acquainted with this wide community of reformers. Reflecting her immersion in reform circles during the first months of her marriage to Henry, when the couple returned to the United States,

⁴⁵⁰ Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 34.

⁴⁵¹ See for example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth J. Neall, January 25, 1841 in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁵² Elizabeth C. Stanton to Sarah M. Grimké and Angelina Grimké Weld, June 25, 1840 in *Ibid.*, pp. 8-11.

⁴⁵³ Elizabeth C. Stanton to Sarah M. Grimké and Angelina Grimké Weld, June 25, 1840 in *Ibid.*

Elizabeth began signing her correspondence “Elizabeth Cady Stanton,” rather than the more traditional “Elizabeth C. Stanton” she would use while abroad.

There can be little doubt that the experience of the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention profoundly influenced the development of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s feminist consciousness. Further, it is largely through her retelling of the women’s exclusion from participation at the 1840 World’s Antislavery Convention that the incident has become an important part of the historical narrative of the women’s rights movement. However, it is important to remember that contestations over the women’s equal participation in the antislavery movement did not begin in London, but rather, in America in the year prior to the Convention, and that the issue became important primarily because of its tactical connection to the issue of political agitation.

Women had been present at the American antislavery society meetings at local, state and national levels while the issue of their participation was being discussed, and oftentimes, as in London, they had been forced to listen silently while men debated the issue; muted in their own defense. As we have seen, at some of these meetings, women freely and fully participated in the proceedings, while at others, they were only “visitors.” What is also important to remember when assessing and weighing the historical importance of the London Convention as it pertains to woman suffrage, however, is that Elizabeth Cady Stanton was not present during the American debates of 1839. As Stanton assumed the leadership of the American women’s rights movement, her narrative of its origins also became the foundational text, and her own awakening became inexorably tied to the movement’s genesis. Lucretia Mott’s diary contains no entry supporting Stanton’s claim that the two women decided to hold a women’s rights conference upon their return and fifteen years

later, Mott would need to remind Stanton why Garrison refused his seat at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention.⁴⁵⁴

While it is doubtful that Elizabeth Cady Stanton conceived of a women's rights convention in London, it is likely that the ideas that were presented to her by the many women she met awakened her own sense of outrage as to the conditions of women. Although she arrived in London with an abstract awareness provided by Henry of the rupture within the antislavery movement and of the events of the previous year, until the London Convention, Elizabeth Stanton had never witnessed the injustice firsthand. Although she would grow to find a deep sympathy with the rhetoric of the Garrisonians, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was never ideologically aligned with Garrisonian non-resistance and throughout her lifetime placed political rights and participation at the forefront of her reform agenda.

The Stantons arrived in Boston on December 21, 1840 after a rough and stormy seventeen-day voyage from Liverpool.⁴⁵⁵ By the first week of January 1841, they reached

⁴⁵⁴ Lucretia Mott to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, March 16, 1855 in Palmer, ed. *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*, p. 236. Mott, like Stanton, was not very accurate about remembering correct dates. This letter was written only a few years after the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, yet Mott was unable to remember whether it happened in 1847 or 1848. Mott continued, "Remember the first Convention originated with thee. When we were walking the streets of Boston together in 1841, to find Elizh. Moore's daughter, 'thou' asked if we could not have a Convention for Woman's Rights." This walk in Boston likely occurred after the Stantons moved to Boston.

⁴⁵⁵ Date from Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. I:20 n. 2. Although both Griffith and Gordon give identical citations, neither primary document sourced contains this information. Griffith claims that the couple spent the Christmas holiday with Elizabeth's sister, Harriet Eaton, but does not include a citation for this visit. Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 40.

Johnstown but were “quite undecided as to [their] future occupations & place of residence.”⁴⁵⁶

Much of the winter was spent visiting friends and family, including a weeklong visit to Rochester for Elizabeth to meet Henry’s family, perhaps for the first time.⁴⁵⁷ Writing to Elizabeth Smith shortly after the Stantons returned to Johnstown, Elizabeth noted that she “like[d] my friends there & I thought they liked me.”

In Henry’s family, Elizabeth and her nascent reformism found a welcome home. Unlike her own “queenly” mother, Susanna Stanton shared her new daughter-in-law’s commitment to antislavery, was an active reformer in her own right, and Susanna also offered Elizabeth a radically different model of motherhood from anything she experienced as a child or a young woman. Henry’s sister, Frances Avery, was already the mother of four children in 1841 and provided her new sister-in-law with an example of a woman combining the traditional role of woman as wife and mother with an active career in reform. The year before Henry and Elizabeth’s marriage, Frances gave birth to a baby girl on Elizabeth’s birthday. As a tribute to the close and warm relationship between Frances and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frances and George named their next daughter after their new sister-in-law.⁴⁵⁸ Although throughout her

⁴⁵⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth J. Neall, January 25 [1841] in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 18-20.

⁴⁵⁷ It is unknown whether or not Susanna and the Avery family were at the Cady-Stanton marriage the year before. See Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith, March 17, [1841] Elizabeth Cady Stanton papers, Library of Congress. In this letter, Elizabeth clearly mentions her visit to Rochester; however, because historians have ignored Henry’s family, the significance of this visit has not been previously noted.

⁴⁵⁸ Susan H. Avery was born on November 12, 1839. The couple’s next child, born in 1841 was named Elizabeth Cady Avery. The coincidences do not end there. The Averys also had a son, George Avery, born on Henry’s birthday, June 27, 1847. The couple’s youngest son, already deceased by that time, had been named after his uncle. By the time Elizabeth met the Averys,

young married life, Elizabeth had already met many male and female reformers, Henry's family offered something more: not only were the entire Stanton/Avery clan involved in the founding and running of antislavery and women's organizations, they were now part of Elizabeth's family and the connection between them was therefore potentially far more intimate and free than could be enjoyed with the league of reformers Elizabeth met through her marriage to Henry.⁴⁵⁹

Even though the Stantons were unsure of their future plans, Elizabeth remembered this time as a happy one. Now married and within the bosom of her family, Elizabeth was able to occupy her mind with new ideas and her hands with new chores. It was during this time that she learned to mend shirts and knit socks, and wrote gleefully to a friend that she had not "felt any of the loneliness" of which her friend complained.⁴⁶⁰ To compound her happiness, the Cady family, who were all initially opposed to Elizabeth's marriage, were now "much pleased" with Henry.⁴⁶¹

Frances Avery had given birth to four children and lost two of them as toddlers. Records of Mt. Hope Cemetery, Rochester, New York.

⁴⁵⁹ As we have seen, Gerrit Smith was the only member of Elizabeth's family of origin involved in reform. His wife, Ann (Nancy) Fitzhugh although sharing her husband's commitment to antislavery, was never an active reformer. In addition, despite her love and admiration for her first cousin, Smith was not a true contemporary of Elizabeth's and could not share in the issues confronting a new wife and mother in the way Frances Avery would. Elizabeth was also very close with Smith's daughter, Elizabeth, but in 1840, Elizabeth Smith was single and not yet a reformer in her own right.

⁴⁶⁰ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Neall, January 25, [1841] in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 19.

⁴⁶¹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith, March 17, [1841] Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

After a few months of deliberation, Henry began studying law under Elizabeth's father, "at Judge Cady's suggestion," although Elizabeth was "very desirous that he should do so."⁴⁶² However despite his father-in-law's disdain for abolitionists, Henry continued to be very involved in abolitionist political agitation through the newly formed Liberty Party while in Johnstown.⁴⁶³ Throughout 1841, Henry managed the Liberty Party's efforts for Fulton County while continuing to study law, and by mid-summer, he was making between two to five speeches per week.⁴⁶⁴

In early March 1841, both Henry and James Birney submitted their resignation as corresponding secretaries of the AFAS. One newspaper noted that Henry's health was the cause, however, his antislavery and temperance activities at the time suggest that he was devoting his time to other causes and interests and perhaps he wished to distance himself from the conservative nature of the AFAS.⁴⁶⁵ By the following year, Henry was rewarded for his antislavery efforts by being appointed to the Liberty Party's New York State Central Committee.⁴⁶⁶ On February 13, 1842 Henry left for Boston to attend the Massachusetts Liberty

⁴⁶² Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 35. Gerrit Smith to Theodore Weld, March 14, 1841. Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, pp. 2:862-64.

⁴⁶³ In 1840, the political abolitionists had formed an independent political party and ran a slate of candidates in national and local elections. The abolitionist third-party was later named, The Liberty Party.

⁴⁶⁴ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 243.

⁴⁶⁵ *The Emancipator*, March 11, 1841. Likely a contributing factor to Birney's resignation was his impending marriage to Gerrit Smith's sister, Elizabeth Fitzhugh, on March 25, 1841. The couple made Peterboro their home for several years. See Gerrit Smith to Theodore Weld, March 14, 1841 in Barnes and Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, p. II: 862.

⁴⁶⁶ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 244.

Party convention that would begin later that week.⁴⁶⁷ Before an audience of two thousand in Boston's Faneuil Hall, he delivered a speech that the *Emancipator and Free American* declared to be "one of the most powerful and eloquent addresses ever delivered in the Hall."⁴⁶⁸

In the fall of 1841, while midway through her first pregnancy and only eighteen months after her marriage to Henry, Elizabeth delivered her maiden speech before a gathering of one hundred women in Seneca Falls. Importantly, her speech concerned temperance, the same issue that had been the subject of Henry's speeches in the previous months thus demonstrating his important influence and example.⁴⁶⁹ Elizabeth wrote that she was "so eloquent in my appeals as to affect not only my audience but myself to tears."⁴⁷⁰ As we have seen, Henry Stanton began his social reform career in the temperance movement perhaps because of his first-hand experience with his own violent and absent father. Now that Elizabeth was also privy to the more personal

⁴⁶⁷ Quoted in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, 1:32n10. from the *Emancipator*, February 24 and March 4, 1842.

⁴⁶⁸ From *The Emancipator and Free American* (Boston, March 3, 1842) quoted in Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 244.

⁴⁶⁹ Lucretia Mott to Richard and Hannah Webb, February 25, 1842 in Palmer, ed. *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*, p. 111., notes, "she [Elizabeth Cady Stanton] has lately made her debut in public,--in a Temperance speech...she infused into her speech a homoeopathic dose of Womans Rights." See also Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 25. dated November 26, 1841. Henry Stanton noted in a letter to a fellow Liberty Party organizer dated September 3, 1841, that his lecture schedule included talks on both antislavery and temperance in Central New York. (Author's Collection)

⁴⁷⁰ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Neall, November 26 [1841] in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 25.

reasons for Henry's staunch advocacy for temperance, it is not surprising that this was the topic she first felt moved enough to speak about publically.

Although the Stantons shared a devotion to reform causes, even in the early days of their marriage the couple fostered an unusually high degree of independence of thought within the marriage, and one that was uncommon even within reform circles. Writing to friend Elizabeth Neall in late 1841, Elizabeth noted: "You do not know the extent to which I carry my rights. I do in truth think & act for myself deeming that I alone am responsible for the sayings & doings of E. C. S."⁴⁷¹ The independence Elizabeth asserted in this letter and in others like it have routinely been interpreted as a rebellion against the presumed iron hand of Henry Stanton, with his implied disapproval, rather than the more accurate and reasonable interpretation that this marriage offered Elizabeth fertile ground and a degree of public and private intellectual freedom and autonomy rarely seen in nineteenth century America.

While Elizabeth's first impressions of William Lloyd Garrison had mellowed into an appreciation for his devotion to principle by the end of 1841, during this period she had also developed a keen understanding of the issues that broke apart the antislavery movement. Previous works have either glossed over or minimized her sympathy with the political abolitionists and the Liberty Party in the antebellum period, and in doing so, obscured the connection between Elizabeth's early connection of political agitation and reform.

The Stantons welcomed their much-adored "first production," Daniel Cady Stanton, on March 2, 1842 while the couple was residing with Elizabeth's family in Johnstown. Both parents were overjoyed with their new son, making their frequent separations over the next few

⁴⁷¹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Neall, November 26 [1841] in *Ibid.*

months all the more difficult. By June, Henry was in Boston preparing for his examination to the state bar. While they were apart, Henry wrote gushingly to Elizabeth of his longing to be with her to “enjoy [her] smiles & kisses” and expressing concern for Elizabeth and baby “Neilly’s” health. Henry’s letters to Elizabeth show him to be a devoted husband, lover and father, but he also wrote to Elizabeth, in equal measure, of the political issues and reformers he encountered while away from home.⁴⁷²

As part of all previous works’ portraits of the Cady-Stanton marriage, Henry Stanton is depicted as an absent and negligent father. Most recently in Lori Ginzberg’s compact biography of Elizabeth, Ginzberg writes: “Henry was hardly around; he never did make it home for any of his children’s births. Indeed it is hard to conjure up much of a mental image of what Henry (“the peppy”) did at home, except make babies, but this he did with regularity.”⁴⁷³ Similarly, in another recent monograph, Chris Dixon examines several abolitionist families and concluded: “symptomatic of Henry Stanton’s disengagement from the domestic sphere were his absences from home during the births of all of his children.”⁴⁷⁴ Dixon’s source is Elisabeth Griffith’s 1984 biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton wherein Griffith plainly states, “Henry was not present for the births of any of his children.”⁴⁷⁵ Griffith’s “evidence” is then used by Dixon to bolster the depiction of Henry Stanton and the marriage as being an onerous and solitary burden that

⁴⁷² Henry Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, [June 23, 1842] Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁷³ Ginzberg did not provide a source for her vitriol against Henry. Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: An American Life*, p. 51.

⁴⁷⁴ Chris Dixon, *Perfecting the Family: Antislavery Marriages in Nineteenth-Century America* Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997, p. 90.

⁴⁷⁵ Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 80. Neither Dixon or Griffith offer much in the way of explaining where Henry was if he was not with Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was somehow forced to bear and suggesting that it was from within her own domestic life that her discord prompted a public rebellion in 1848. Ginzberg, Dixon, Griffith and others use Henry's presumed absence during the births of their children to suggest that not only did Elizabeth bear the burden of having seven children, but also that in an era when childbirth was an especially dangerous time for women, that Henry was not even concerned enough about her welfare to be at home.⁴⁷⁶

Nevertheless, despite the accepted narrative, was Henry really absent during all seven births? Elizabeth's surviving correspondence offers very little evidence one way or the other about Henry's whereabouts during her "confinements."⁴⁷⁷ Elizabeth does not mention Henry in any of the existent letters to her family or friends announcing the children's births, and in only one letter, does she mention the presence of anyone at all.⁴⁷⁸ Working both chronologically closer to the events and with access to Harriot Stanton Blatch's recollections, Alma Lutz stated that Henry was away at the births of Henry Jr. in 1843, Theodore in 1851 and Margaret in

⁴⁷⁶ On a research trip to our nation's capital, I visited the Sewall-Belmont house. During the tour, the docent emphatically claimed that Henry Stanton was not there for the birth of any of his children. While this is anecdotal, it shows the wide reach that this kind of "evidence" touches, and it speaks to the persistent theme of explaining the origins of the women's rights movement through the victimization of its founding mothers beyond politics and civil rights.

⁴⁷⁷ As Elizabeth's correspondence was culled during her own lifetime and by her children in the 1920s, what does survive are letters demonstrating her remarkable abilities to carry on her domestic duties until shortly before giving birth and her speedy recovery from childbirth.

⁴⁷⁸ Elizabeth mentions she was attended by only a nurse and one female friend during Margaret's birth in 1852. Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Lucretia Mott, October 22, 1852 in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 212-13. Lutz cites a letter to Elizabeth Smith Miller wherein Elizabeth states she was attended by the nurse and Amelia Willard. Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 81.

1852.⁴⁷⁹ Importantly, Lutz does not indicate where Henry was during the births of the other four children, yet subsequent accounts of Elizabeth's life have neither investigated where Henry was (if he was not in fact with Elizabeth) or explained how they have arrived at the conclusion that he was away from their home at such an important time. Instead, without supporting evidence, they conclude that Henry was absent at all seven births.

In part, these misinterpretations lie within the coalescence of two strands of prejudicial inference regarding Henry and the marriage itself: in the absence of positive evidence that Henry was present, it is assumed he was not; and secondly, because of the overall misperception that the marriage was troubled, Henry's role as a husband and father are by necessity viewed as unsupportive and detached, prompting Elizabeth's biographers to approach Henry as a husband, father and reformer with a presumption of disinterest and oftentimes, overt hostility.⁴⁸⁰

As Henry's legal studies drew to a close, he shifted all of his energy to securing a paid position in order to support his new family. On October 4, Henry was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar, and he soon rented an upper floor office in the same building as the firm of

⁴⁷⁹ Lutz states that in 1844 when Henry, Jr. was born Henry was "busy with his law practice" presumably in Boston (p. 39). In 1851 when Theodore was born, Henry was in Albany (p. 61) and in 1852 when Margaret was born, she includes a letter written by Elizabeth to Elizabeth Smith Miller stating Henry was in Syracuse. Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 81.

⁴⁸⁰ A further example of how the disparaging portrait of Henry Stanton pervades previous scholarship, even his writing to Elizabeth concerning political news is shown not as keeping her abreast of the latest happenings or as a sign that the marriage enjoyed intellectual harmony, but rather, Henry's inspiration, according to Griffith and others was due instead to Henry's presumed inflated sense of self-importance. Essentially, previous accounts of Henry's actions make him wrong, irrespective of what he does or does not do.

Fletcher & Sewall. The firm was one of the preeminent legal firms in Boston. Senior partner, the Hon. Richard Fletcher, returned to Boston in 1839 following a term in the 25th Congress, and Samuel E. Sewall was an old friend of Henry's and one of the founders of the New England Anti-Slavery Society.⁴⁸¹ Henry hoped to secure some of Fletcher & Sewall's overflow cases, and he stocked his new office with his brother-in-law's legal library.⁴⁸² Within a few months, Henry formed a law partnership with John A. Bolles, and the new firm was busy enough to hire another antislavery friend, Joel Prentiss Bishop, as their legal clerk.⁴⁸³

In addition to building up his legal practice, Henry Stanton continued his work for the Liberty Party. His speeches during this time highlighted the "aggressions of the slave power" and the "necessity of an independent political organization" as the best means of ending slavery. Henry's legal associates at this time were all members of the Whig Party, but Henry's addresses

⁴⁸¹ Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 37. note 1. Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 246-47. Fletcher (1788-1869) would also serve on the Massachusetts State Supreme Court (1848-1853) and Sewall (1799-1888) was an active reformer in the abolition and women's rights movements in Massachusetts. See *Boston Evening Transcript*, December 21, 1888, p. 3.

⁴⁸² By this time, Bayard had given up his legal practice to become a homeopath.

⁴⁸³ John A. Bolles became the Massachusetts Secretary of State the following year (1843-1844) and was the Naval Solicitor Judge Advocate of the Court of the Department of the Navy during the Civil War. The partnership lasted until 1845. See *Whig & Courier*, June 28, 1844 and *Bolles Family in America*. Henry W. Dutton & Son, Boston, 1865, p. 28 and Edward H. Redstone, Massachusetts State Librarian, to Alma Lutz, September 1, 1932, Alma Lutz Papers, Vassar College.

Henry's clerk, Joel Prentiss Bishop, passed the bar on April 9, 1844, and he went on to an illustrious legal career after his clerkship under Stanton and Bolles. Bishop became one of the nation's foremost legal scholars and the author of several legal texts garnering international attention. Bishop was also a former student at the Oneida Institute, and served as an agent for the New York State Anti-Slavery Society during the 1830s. See *The Virginia Law Register*, Vol. 7, No. 8 (December 1901) pp. 591.

continued to stress the importance of the abolitionists continuing to maintain their independence from the major political parties.⁴⁸⁴ By the end of 1843, Stanton had orchestrated an entire reorganization of the Liberty Party in Massachusetts, including a redistribution of local autonomy at the county and district levels.⁴⁸⁵

While Henry's efforts were focused on attracting new votes to the Liberty Party, Garrisonian Abby Kelley was on a speaking tour of Western and Central New York attempting to reconsolidate the Garrisonian non-resistance support that had fallen apart in the wake of the antislavery movement's split. Kelley's lectures "mad[e] war on slavery, the church, civil government, and the Liberty Party," noted one observer from Canandaigua.⁴⁸⁶ Her speeches also attracted pro-slavery supporters hoping for the demise of the third party, and her attacks on the Liberty Party were not always well received. At a convention in Cazenovia, New York, Kelley received such a "rebuke" for her attacks that she toned down some of her rhetoric against Liberty in later speeches.⁴⁸⁷

Coincident with Abby Kelley's speaking tour, Lydia Marie Child was attacking the Liberty Party in the Garrisonian-controlled newspapers. In an article entitled, "Moral Influence," Child cautioned abolitionists that if they joined the Liberty ranks, they would destroy their moral influence. While on the surface this seems to be the standard non-resistant argument of 1839, by 1842, this rhetoric contained a much less morally pure element of vindictiveness with roots dating back to the 1839/40 schism. By taking aim at Liberty Party support, rather than simply

⁴⁸⁴ See *Emancipator and Free American*, November 3, November 10 and December 15, 1842.

⁴⁸⁵ Laurie, *Beyond Garrison: Antislavery and Social Reform*, pp. 58-59.

⁴⁸⁶ *Emancipator and Free American*, August 25, 1842, p. 67.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

arguing against voting, abolitionists with a Garrisonian allegiance who were still participants in the political system were more likely to continue to vote, but to vote for the Whig Party. In an open letter to Child, political abolitionist J. C. Jackson noted that Child's warnings about moral corruption were not extended to those abolitionists voting for Whig and Democratic candidates, thereby Child was attempting to take abolition votes away from Liberty and toward "pro-slavery Whigism." According to Jackson, the "true" abolitionists in New York fell into three groups: Liberty party men, non-voters and females. Jackson added that there were very few non-voters, and that the first and third groups "comprise the vast amount of healthful moral influence," while Child and those who "talk like her" were in no position to discuss moral influence at all.⁴⁸⁸

During the controversy of 1842 and despite her reconsidered appreciation of Garrison, Elizabeth was still firmly behind Liberty Party efforts. Writing to Elizabeth Pease early in the year, Elizabeth Stanton explained that the third party was "the most efficient way of calling forth & directing action," and adding, "Many of the Garrison party are in favour of political action, but not of the third party. [Liberty] gives a reality to antislavery principles which 'no voting' and scatteration cannot boast."⁴⁸⁹ In addition, by early 1842, it was clear that the disputes between the Garrisonians and political abolitionists had already profoundly influenced Elizabeth's own understanding of the importance of political participation and reform. Explaining her own position on the political question, Elizabeth wrote:

So long as we are to be governed by human laws, I should be unwilling to have the making & administering of those laws left entirely to the selfish &

⁴⁸⁸ *Emancipator and Free American*, January 13, 1842.

⁴⁸⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Pease, February 12, [1842] in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 30.

unprincipled part of the community, which would be the case should all our honest men, refuse to mingle in political affairs.⁴⁹⁰

Thus, although Elizabeth Cady Stanton respected and sympathized with Garrison and his followers on the issue of women's equality, from the beginning of her exposure to the inner sanctum of reform, she recognized and appreciated the importance of participation within the political process to effect change.

Elizabeth and Neil spent much of 1842 and 1843 in Albany where her father and the extended Cady clan were temporarily located while Daniel Cady helped establish two of his sons-in-law in a legal practice.⁴⁹¹ Henry was still based in Boston, but the couple travelled between Albany and Boston as much as possible. Although Elizabeth was free from domestic duties during this time, the Stanton family faced personal crises both in Albany and in Rochester. During the winter of 1842-1843, Neil was "very ill" for an extended period of time; Henry fell down a long flight of stairs in Boston, breaking his wrist in 5 or 6 places, and despite his limited financial resources, Henry had to send upwards of \$300.00 to George Avery in Rochester to cover some of Avery's bad debts.⁴⁹² However, by the summer of 1845, Henry's law practice was doing well and he was able to support his family in Boston and his mother in Rochester.⁴⁹³

The many separations the Stantons endured during the first two years of their marriage were likely more difficult for Henry than Elizabeth. While living in Johnstown and later in

⁴⁹⁰ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Pease, February 12, [1842] in *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴⁹¹ Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁹² Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney, Albany, April 19, 1843 in Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, II: 735.

⁴⁹³ Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney, August 11, 1845 in *Ibid.*, p. II:959.

Albany, Elizabeth enjoyed the help provided by her father's financial stability and larger household, and because of the work performed by the household servants, she was also free to learn and enjoy more domestic pursuits such as knitting and tending to the two boys.⁴⁹⁴

However, despite his full days and exhausting schedule, Henry longed to be with his wife and sons, "I am lonesome, cheerless, & homeless without you," he wrote to Elizabeth while they were apart.⁴⁹⁵

When the family was to be permanently settled in Boston, the Stantons at first rented rooms from a distant Livingston cousin, the Olmstead family in Chelsea. Shortly after the birth of the couple's second son, Henry in March, 1844, Daniel Cady gave his daughter and her husband a house in the same area, and the Stantons set up housekeeping in Boston in June of that year.⁴⁹⁶ For her part, Elizabeth was very taken with Boston, writing to a friend, "I am enjoying myself more than I ever did in any city." However, it wasn't the parties and social gatherings that prompted Elizabeth to consider the city her own "moral museum," but rather the wide array of reform meetings and lectures that were ubiquitous in this era.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁴ See for example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith, [1843], Typed transcript, Theodore Stanton Collection, Douglass Library, Rutgers University.

⁴⁹⁵ Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, March 30 [1844]. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹⁶ Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, pp. 43-44. See also Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith [1843], Typed Transcript in Theodore Stanton Collection, Douglass Library, Rutgers University, and Henry B Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, June 11 [1844], Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹⁷ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth J. Neall, February 3, 1843 in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 41. Neall was visiting the McClintocks at the time, and this letter was addressed to her there. Although Elizabeth spent "two winters" in the area, she makes no mention in her letter of any acquaintance with the Thomas McClintock or his family, as of this time, suggesting that she

Politically, Henry and the other Libertyites in Massachusetts saw their ranks grow considerably during the early 1840s. When the party began in 1840, Liberty voters in the state numbered close to 1,100 but only four years later, the Liberty gubernatorial vote was close to 10,000.⁴⁹⁸ Because of Henry's work in Massachusetts for the Liberty Party, in 1843 he was elected Chairman of the State Central Committee and he began almost immediately preparing a strong organization from the precinct level to insure a successful campaign during the presidential election cycle the following year.⁴⁹⁹

In the weeks before the national Liberty Party's nominating convention was to be held in Buffalo in August 1843, there were already some divisions within the party's ranks. Many were hoping for to nominate John Jay's son, Judge William Jay as their next presidential nominee. Despite the concern that Jay's commitment to Liberty principles required assurance, Jay's support in Ohio and New England was strong. Stanton agreed that Jay would be a good choice,

had not yet made the acquaintance of a family that will figure prominently in the early years of the women's rights movement.

Elizabeth later wrote in her autobiography that she spent much time during these years at the home of William Lloyd Garrison; however, she is not mentioned in any of Garrison's extensively printed letters from 1841-1849. Her complete absence from Garrison's voluminous correspondence speaks to claims made by earlier biographers that while she was attending a wide variety of lectures and meeting reformers from many different circles, Elizabeth's own participation during the Boston years was that of a spectator and not a leader. Further, her claims that she was "a frequent visitor at the home of William Lloyd Garrison," in her autobiography speaks more to Elizabeth's own desire to place herself squarely in the center of reformism during these years than it does to furthering the claims of those seeking to show her sympathy for Garrison and his followers and her distaste for political abolitionism. Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 128.

⁴⁹⁸ Table in Laurie, *Beyond Garrison: Antislavery and Social Reform*, p. 75. The Liberty vote totals are only available for the gubernatorial vote only. In 1840 they captured 0.8% of the total votes cast, but by 1844 the number had risen to 7.2%.

⁴⁹⁹ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 247-48.

provided that Jay could assure the convention of his convictions to Liberty “principle & feeling.” For his part, James G. Birney hoped to once again secure the presidential nomination, but not at the expense of party unity. Although Stanton considered himself “a Birney man,” he was anxious to maintain harmony at the convention and during the election cycle to follow. Liberty Party leaders hoped that successes at the state and local levels throughout the Northern states would translate into greater support on the national stage the following November.⁵⁰⁰

Although Birney successfully received his second nomination, the selection of his running mate Thomas Morris, suggests both a maturing of the party and the seeds of the national party’s softening of principle in favor of political expediency. Morris, a former Senator from Ohio, was a committed abolitionist, but he did not support black male suffrage. However, Morris’ views on this issue were largely ignored in favor of his national reputation and the hope that he would add voters to the Liberty ranks. Henry Stanton, together with Salmon P. Chase of Ohio and Alvan Stewart of New York wrote the party platform that included a call for all Liberty supporters to champion the removal of all inequalities of rights on the basis of race, but the final document stopped short of advocating universal black male suffrage.⁵⁰¹

Despite the encouraging results of the Massachusetts Liberty Party’s campaign efforts, overall, the Whigs were victorious in the old-Bay state. Stanton expected party support to increase by 50% in the closing months, but still, Liberty votes showed a respectable increase of 25%.⁵⁰² Rather than attributing the success of the Whig candidates to the efforts of their own

⁵⁰⁰ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, August 4, 1843. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵⁰¹ See Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 249-50. See also Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848*; *Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States*, pp. 41-43.

⁵⁰² Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 12, 1844. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

party, Stanton claimed their victory was aided by Garrison's efforts playing "desperately into the hands" of the Whig Party. By campaigning against Liberty, as the Garrisonian speakers had done for the past three years, many abolitionists had shied away from antislavery politics and cast their votes with the Whigs led by Henry Clay.⁵⁰³ To counter the effects of Garrisonian speakers, Stanton pushed himself to speaking nearly every evening and he oftentimes added daytime lectures in the eight weeks prior to the election.

In a show of support by local Liberty leaders and voters, and despite his "positively declin[ing] to accept," Henry was nominated for Congress in the Essex South district and received close to 1,500 votes.⁵⁰⁴ Although Henry had enjoyed cordial relations with his father-in-law following the couple's return from Europe, Daniel Cady had not changed his mind about abolition by the mid-1840s. In a letter to Gerrit Smith, Henry noted that Cady was most likely "greatly distressed" at the possibility of Henry's Congressional run, and he asked Smith to reassure Cady that he had not sought the Liberty nomination.⁵⁰⁵

As an attorney, Henry Stanton's cases often dealt with causes overlapping his efforts as a reformer. One such landmark case, *William Wilbar v. B. D. Williams and others* for an action of libel, involved the legal right of a temperance newspaper, the *Dew Drop*, to publically condemn a local saloonkeeper. Henry's arguments in defense of the writers and publisher of the *Dew Drop* were extensively reprinted by temperance groups because of the power of his arguments

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. Henry received 1,498 votes. See also Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 23, 1844. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵⁰⁵ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 23, 1844. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

for free speech and against the “man-killing business” of rum selling. Reports noted that Stanton “repeatedly drew tears from many persons in the Court House” as he related the “terrible effects” of alcohol upon the population.⁵⁰⁶ Stanton also defended a doctor charged with “unlawful intimacy” with “a pretty looking young woman named Mary Olive Drew.” The *Boston Daily Post* reported that the woman’s father, Cricket Smith, a local procurer of prostitutes who had caused the “ruin and fall of this intelligent looking girl,” was behind the charges. The doctor, G. E. Morrill of the local Thomsonian Infirmary, prescribed animal magnetism to the young woman, a subject that Elizabeth had studied only a few years before, and the doctor’s treatment “led to the intimacy charged.” The disposition of the case is unknown.⁵⁰⁷

The Stantons welcomed the birth of their third son on September 18, 1845. The exuberant father wrote to Gerrit Smith later that evening proudly exclaiming that the baby was “fat, stout & weighing about 9 pounds!” In addition to announcing the baby’s birth and to let Smith know that Elizabeth “had less pain” and “was now comfortable,” the brief letter also advised Smith that Elizabeth decided to name the baby after her illustrious cousin.⁵⁰⁸ Within a

⁵⁰⁶ Trial of B. W. Williams and Others, Editor and Printers of the Dew Drop, Taunton Mass., for an Alleged Libel Against William Wilbar, a Rumseller of Taunton, containing the libelous article entitled “A Dream,” The Evidence in the Case, The Argument of H. B. Stanton, Esq. and the Charge of His Honor, Judge Hubbard. Hack & King, Taunton, Mass., 1846.

⁵⁰⁷ *Boston Daily Post*, August 10, 1844. Thanks to Patricia Cline Cohen for this article. For Elizabeth’s study see Lucretia Mott to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, March 23, 1841 and editor’s note 9. Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 22-23.

⁵⁰⁸ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, Boston, September 18, 1845. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University. While it is impossible to know for certain why Elizabeth’s biographers have never cited this letter, it nonetheless calls into question the thoroughness of the research conducted by Stanton’s biographers. For example, Elisabeth Griffith frequently quotes from other letters between Smith and Henry Stanton, located in the same repository and from the same time period, but she overlooked this letter. Also, as stated above, there is no evidence to substantiate Henry’s absence at the birth of most of the couple’s children.

few months, Henry reported that the baby's weight had already doubled, and in a letter to Smith, the proud father jokingly wrote that if his namesake "will not make a great man, we shall change his name."⁵⁰⁹

Although the personal relationships between Garrisonian and political abolitionists had been strained and bloodied since 1839, an incident in Boston in 1846 stunned both groups and served as a reminder of the cause that drew them to the antislavery cause fifteen years earlier. In September of that year, a fugitive slave was marched through the streets of Boston on his way back into bondage in Louisiana, and the incident once again reunited, albeit briefly, those in both camps of the abolition cause.

His name was not recorded, but the young man managed to stowaway with a small supply of food on a ship headed to Boston, and was discovered shortly after the ship dropped anchor in the port. The ship's owners, fearing both the antislavery crowds and the local laws prohibiting the return of fugitive slaves, tried to conceal the man on board. The fugitive slave managed to escape, but was once again captured in front of onlookers in the streets of Boston. Before the citizens and the magistrates were able to act, the ship and the man disappeared, presumably bringing the man back into slavery in Louisiana.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁹ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 18, 1845. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵¹⁰ "Address of the Committee Appointed By A Public Meeting, Held At Fanenil [sic] Hall, September 24, 1846, for the purposes of considering the recent case of Kidnapping From Our Soil, and of taking measures to prevent the recurrence of Similar Outrages." Boston, White & Potter, 1846.

Within a few days, a meeting was called in Faneuil Hall was attended by “an immense concourse” of people. The first speaker was the venerable John Quincy Adams who gave a brief opening address. That evening, a “Committee of Vigilance” was formed to protect against any future captures in the city, and the committee was funded by the collection of \$1,000.⁵¹¹ The Committee of Vigilance included men from both sides of the abolition chasm, including Henry Stanton, Wendell Phillips, and Samuel May. Although the group seemingly disappeared following the first meeting on September 30, 1846, the coming together of abolitionists from all parts of the spectrum was a hopeful sign of things to come in the movement and shows that perhaps the scars of the early part of the decade were beginning to heal.⁵¹²

⁵¹¹ Irving H. Bartlett, "Abolitionists, Fugitives and Imposters in Boston, 1846-1847," *The New England Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (Mar., 1982): p. 97.

⁵¹² The committee was also the forerunner of the Boston Vigilance Committee that became very active after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Ibid.

Chapter Six: The Vote, the Vote, the Mighty Vote

“The vote, the vote, the mighty vote,
Though once we used a humbler note,
And prayed our servants be just,
We tell them now, they must! they must!
The tyrant’s grapple, by our vote,
We’ll loosen them from our brother’s throat,
With Washington we here agree
The vote’s the weapon of the free.

Elizur Wright, “The Liberty Voter’s Song”⁵¹³

According to Liberty Party historian, Reinhard Johnson, throughout the 1840s, William Lloyd Garrison’s influence in the overall antislavery movement was rapidly declining. Arguably this began in the immediate aftermath of the rupture in 1840, when overall income of the now Garrisonian controlled American Antislavery Society dropped from over \$47,000 per year to just \$7,000. Subscriptions to the *Liberator* and the Garrisonian *National Anti-Slavery Standard* also saw similar drops in subscribers. Despite the precipitous drop in support for Garrison as a major force in the abolition movement, most of the historians of the antislavery movement have continued to portray Garrison as both the conscience of the abolitionists and the wing of the movement that would ultimately inform women’s rights efforts.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ Philip Green Wright and Elizabeth Q. Wright, *Elizur Wright: The Father of Life Insurance* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937, p. 100.

⁵¹⁴ The *Liberator*’s subscription base in 1837 was close to 1,400. Following the abolition schism, the paper immediately lost 500 subscribers, while close to 300 more were dropped from the rolls in 1840 for non-payment. Figures for the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the official publication of the post-schism AAS, also showed a similar pattern of falling support between

Also by the mid-1840s, many who still belonged to the AAS, were beginning to soften their initial disdain for the Liberty Party in the face of Garrison's extremist cries for disunion. Writing to Maria Chapman in 1845, Lucretia Mott exemplified this reconsideration as she explained to Chapman her own discouragement due to the actions of many of Garrison's agents writing, "I cannot join with the agents who have been among us in their condemnation of those of a different opinion. Nor am I prepared to say that the Third Party is not an instrumentality in the Anti-Slavery cause."⁵¹⁵

One of the issues that both the Garrisonians and the Libertyites agreed upon was their longstanding opposition to the annexation of Texas. When the Lone Star State joined the Union in December 1845, many both within and outside the political system saw it as a defeat of Liberty principles and as a failure of their political agitation efforts. However, in many respects, the discourse engendered by the party's labors against annexation would prove beneficial to political abolitionists as they sought to reinvigorate politically based reform before, during and after the Mexican American War.

As early as 1840, the Liberty Party charged that the federal government was subservient to the "Slave Power." When Henry Stanton wrote the call for the presidential nominating convention four years later, he developed this point still further and he claimed that the Slave Power was "controlling every department of the government—monopolizing the chief offices of the nation—shaping our Federal legislation—controlling our judiciary... [and] prescribing the

1844 and 1846, with subscriptions dropping from 3,500 to 1,400. Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848*; *Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States*, pp. 291, 94-95.

⁵¹⁵ Lucretia Mott to Maria W. Chapman, May 5, 1845. Unknown Repository. Letter transcribed from original image posted on eBay Live auction of the Henry E. Luhrs Collection, October 25, 2007.

character of our foreign relations.”⁵¹⁶ Stanton charged that both the Democrats and the Whigs were complacent in the “habitual scoffing at the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence,” and called on those from both major parties who opposed the slave power “to concentrate their influence, through the Ballot Box” by voting with the Liberty Party.⁵¹⁷ Thus although the Liberty Party conceded that the annexation of Texas “would not add a slave or a foot of slave territory in the world,” the discourse during the Texas debate allowed the third party to advance an appeal to a broader coalition of Northern voters sympathetic to the idea that the preservation and extension of slavery was trumping the very foundations of government at home and foreign policy abroad.⁵¹⁸

Despite the failure of the anti-Texas crusade, the debate nevertheless also briefly revealed to Henry Stanton the very real possibility of a defection by antislavery Whigs to a third, antislavery party, but he feared that unless the so-called “Conscience Whigs” formally broke with their national party, they would find themselves “borne along by the current to support a slaveholder or a slaveholders tool for the presidency in 1848.” Henry Stanton devoted the next three years to making sure that the momentum toward coalition of antislavery forces within the

⁵¹⁶ *Emancipator and Free American*, January 11, 1844. At this time, Henry Stanton was serving as Chairman of the Massachusetts State Committee. Stanton’s last point, referred most specifically to Texas. Eric Foner, while acknowledging Liberty’s use of the term, mentions it only in passing. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* New York: Oxford University Press, 1970; reprint, 1995, p. 92.

⁵¹⁷ *Emancipator and Free American*, January 11, 1844. See also, Rice, “Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist”, p. 250-52.

⁵¹⁸ *The Boston Daily Atlas*, October 29, 1844. Quote from a report of an address by Henry Stanton given on October 27, 1844. This is not to say that Stanton and the Liberty Party as a whole did not campaign vigorously against the annexation of Texas. An excellent summary of their work can be found in *Ibid.*, pp. 252-62.

two major political parties that was established during the Texas annexation debate would not be lost in 1848.⁵¹⁹

When hostilities with Mexico seemed certain, Stanton hoped that the bloodshed might lead to emancipation. “If anything could reconcile me to a war it would be the overthrow of our giant sin,” Henry explained to Gerrit Smith, adding that he believed the British would be brought into the conflict and would go on to occupy southern territory. The North, Henry wrote, would then “expel the invaders” if the South agreed to end slavery.⁵²⁰ However, when the fighting began, Stanton plainly blamed President Polk and his Slave Power administration for provoking the conflict “for the benefit of their darling institution.”⁵²¹

Some within the Whig Party, most especially a very vocal group of “Conscience Whigs” from Massachusetts were equally against the “immoral war.” Early in the hostilities an editorial in the antiwar *New York Tribune* charged that only “Whig Courage...could rescue the country from the Loco-Foco mismanagement” of a war the country was unprepared to fight.⁵²² As one of the architects of the Liberty Party’s strategy, the Mexican War and the antiwar sentiment expressed by many within the Whig Party both encouraged Stanton’s vision of a broader antislavery voting coalition and engendered fear that the crisis might cause many former Whigs

⁵¹⁹ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 18, 1845. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵²⁰ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 18, 1845. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵²¹ Editorial attributed to Henry Stanton in the *Emancipator*, February 24, 1847 quoted in Rice, “Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist”, p. 267.

⁵²² Michael F. Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 249.

to leave Liberty and return to the major party due to the seriousness of the war.⁵²³ However, despite the strong antiwar support expressed by many Massachusetts Whigs, the party failed to endorse an antiwar, antislavery resolution at their 1846 state convention, and it was then clear to Stanton that the Whig Party would not be the political organization to lead the next round of antislavery reform.⁵²⁴

In 1845, former Liberty Presidential candidate James G. Birney suggested to Lewis Tappan that while antislavery would always be the foundation of the Liberty Party, the time had come to “apply the principles of the Liberty Party” to a broader platform. Birney cautioned, “A party that does not take the whole of it—but seeks a particular object—will soon, in the strife of the other parties, become a lost party.”⁵²⁵ In 1845, this idea was still premature; however, by 1847 many Libertyites, including most notably Gerrit Smith, were calling for an expanded, multi-issue Liberty Party platform.⁵²⁶

Calling themselves the Liberty League, this new group held a three-day long convention in Macedon, New York in June 1847 to formulate their splinter group. The platform assumed the controversial position that the Constitution of the United States held that slavery was both “illegal and unconstitutional” and offered the South a choice: abolish slavery or “peacefully,

⁵²³ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 268.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p. 269. The Whigs further disappointed Stanton and the other antislavery politicians by their failure to embrace the Wilmot Proviso. Introduced in 1846 by Pennsylvania Democrat David Wilmot, the resolution called for the exclusion of slavery from any territory acquired from Mexico.

⁵²⁵ James G. Birney to Lewis Tappan, September 12, 1845. Dumond, ed. *Letters of James Gillespie Birney (1831-1857)*, pp. 2:970-71.

⁵²⁶ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 271.

withdraw from the Union.”⁵²⁷ As “moral and accountable beings,” the group asserted that no one cause, even antislavery, should be deemed the “greatest...moral evil” and pursued as though it were the nation’s only problem.⁵²⁸ The platform dismissed the “boasted potency” of a party of “one idea,” and explained the existence of civil government and the authority of such a government’s powers as emanating from God. Before the group adjourned, they nominated Gerrit Smith as their presidential nominee well in advance of the November 1848 contest.⁵²⁹

For his part, Henry Stanton stood squarely against the group he called the “Macedonians,” and many other veterans of the 1840 schism within the American Antislavery Society joined him in his condemnation of the splinter group.⁵³⁰ However, throughout much of

⁵²⁷ “Address of the Macedon Convention by William Goodell; and Letters of Gerrit Smith.” Albany: S. W. Green, 1847, p. 3.

⁵²⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

⁵²⁹ Ibid., pp. 6-7. As we have seen earlier in the contestations between the political and Garrisonian abolitionists, historical analysis of the Liberty League has both lauded its moral high ground and anointed it as the party of the “radicals.” Recent scholars of the abolition and social reform movements pin the designation of “radical” on very few (and usually apolitical) individuals and movements as though the term was a trophy of moral purity and glorification. As argued in Chapter 4, in many ways this corresponds with an obvious distaste by many historians of the antebellum period for those engaging within the political system (who are seen as being opportunists or not as devoted to the cause) or those advocating secular-based reforms. As has been the case with historical treatment of the Garrisonians following the split within the AAS, Gerrit Smith is usually depicted in most works by historians as one of the “untouchables.” This is not to minimize or besmirch Smith or his long record of philanthropy and devotion to reform causes; however, the historiographical exaltation of those like Garrison and Smith also tends to obscure the practical wisdom and contributions of the more pragmatic members of reform movements. Gerrit Smith’s most recent biographer is a case in point: “[The Liberty League] was the more radical wing of the Liberty Party, and it eventually became the Radical Abolition Party in the mid-1850s.” However, despite the author’s concession that Smith did not endorse the Free Soil Party, he nonetheless credits Smith with the “birth” of the Republican Party. Dann, *Practical Dreamer: Gerrit Smith and the Crusade for Social Reform*, pp. 327-28.

⁵³⁰ Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, August 6, 1847. American Historical Association, “Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1902. Sixth Report of

1847, the politically minded abolitionists were fracturing in many different directions. In addition to Gerrit Smith, Liberty League supporters included William Goodell, Elizur Wright and Frederick Douglass; some, for example Joshua Leavitt, were against enlarging the Liberty platform and were thereby against the League, but also refused to imagine an antislavery party that would submit to a position of anti-extension, rather than anti-slavery.⁵³¹

A month after the Liberty League was formed, Henry Stanton wrote to New Hampshire Senator, John P. Hale requesting a meeting to discuss Hale's potential candidacy for an 1848 presidential antislavery coalition ticket. Hale was not, nor had ever been a member of the Liberty Party, but to Stanton, Whittier and others, he seemed to embody the ideal traits to attract not only Liberty voters, but those antislavery voters in the two major political parties.⁵³² Even in his first letter to Hale, Stanton acknowledged that the odds of a coalition party securing the presidency in 1848 were slim; however, Stanton nevertheless believed that Hale's first candidacy would set the stage for broad support and a successful run in 1852.⁵³³ Hale's "interview" took place on July 24, 1847, and in addition to Henry Stanton, those in attendance included Joshua Leavitt, John G. Whittier, Amos Tuck and Lewis Tappan. The daylong meeting sufficiently

Historical Manuscripts Commission: With Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903).

⁵³¹ Hugh Davis, *Joshua Leavitt: Evangelical Abolitionist* Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1990, pp. 234-35 and 41. See also Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 271-72.

⁵³² Hale, a Democrat, was an outspoken critic of both the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War, contrary to the wishes of the state Democratic Party. Despite his bucking the party platform, he was elected to serve in the United States Senate in 1847. Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 274.

⁵³³ Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, July 6, 1847. John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord, NH.

satisfied the committee that Hale was “with the Liberty party in principles, measures & feeling.”⁵³⁴ Two days later, those in attendance at Hale’s interview officially asked permission to present his name as a candidate for President at the national Liberty convention in October.⁵³⁵

While Henry and the others were meeting with Hale, one of Gerrit Smith’s supporters was marshalling support for Smith’s nomination at the convention. Although Henry and Smith were undeniably personally close, Stanton confided to Salmon Chase that he would vote against Smith if his name came up at the convention. Henry was so sure that Hale was the right man at the right time, that in the months prior to the convention he decided to withhold support for any candidate other than Hale until after the two major parties put forth their nominees. Thus by the summer of 1847, Henry Stanton was firmly convinced that the future of political reform was pragmatic in nature and based in what he perceived as the distinct possibility of reaching a compromise with antislavery members of the Whig and Democratic Parties.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁴ Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, August 6, 1847. Association, "Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1902. Sixth Report of Historical Manuscripts Commission: With Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase."

⁵³⁵ Tappan, Leavitt, Stanton, Willey, Whittier and Cleveland to John P. Hale, July 26, 1847. John P. Hale Papers, Special Collections, Dartmouth College Library.

⁵³⁶ Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, August 6, 1847. Association, "Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1902. Sixth Report of Historical Manuscripts Commission: With Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase."

Coincident or as a result of the later culling of letters, the last surviving correspondence between Henry Stanton and Gerrit Smith was dated December 1845, and the gap lasted for several years. Throughout the years of the Stantons’ residence in Boston, Smith and Henry were in nearly constant communication making this lapse in their letters more intriguing and suggesting that perhaps the political feuds also took a toll on their friendship. Henry Stanton’s uncle, Henry Brewster, another close friend of Smith’s also felt that the Macedon Convention had weakened the Liberty Party’s influence. Henry Brewster to John P. Hale, March 17, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

The national Liberty Convention began on October 20, 1847 and was held in a large tent erected near the corner of Eagle and Ellicott Streets in Buffalo.⁵³⁷ While previous Liberty conventions were essentially harmonious meetings with little dissent, from the minutes it is clear that this meeting had more in common with the contentious AAS meetings of the late 1830s than previous Liberty gatherings. The entire first day, close to six hours of sessions, were taken up by debates concerning parliamentary voting procedures. Historian, Harry Rice, explains that three distinct schools of thought were contending for supremacy at the convention: one seeking for the immediate nomination of Hale and led by Stanton, Leavitt and Lewis Tappan; another, led by Salmon Chase were not against Hale's nomination, but wanted to forestall the nomination of any candidate until the following spring; and the third group composed of Gerrit Smith and his supporters who were hoping to steer the national platform close to that of the Liberty League.⁵³⁸

Stanton and Chase's coalition, groups with the most in common, were able to defeat Smith's motions of expanding the Liberty Party platform, and thus keeping the party committed to a one-idea philosophy. The question then remained, when to proceed with the nomination of candidates. Ultimately, Stanton, Leavitt and Tappan were able to convince a majority of the delegates that the nomination process should proceed immediately, and on the first informal ballot, Hale received just over one hundred votes to Smith's forty-four. Hale was then unanimously nominated, leaving the battered Liberty Leaguers to once again nominate Smith in yet another new party, the National Liberty Party.⁵³⁹ Henry Stanton's coalition at the convention

⁵³⁷ Today, this corner is home to four different parking lots, and not too far from the landmark Hotel Lafayette.

⁵³⁸ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 277-78.

⁵³⁹ *The Daily Courier* (Buffalo), October 22, 1847. See also, *Ibid.*, p. 279.

were able to win the day, and Stanton believed that in Hale, antislavery politicians at long last had a “leader” “radical” enough to “plant the standard of Liberty at Washington.”⁵⁴⁰

Henry Stanton attended the national Liberty Convention in October 1847 as a delegate from New York. Although by all surviving accounts, the Stantons enjoyed living at the center of reform in Boston, as early as 1843, Henry began to question whether or not they should stay in the city.⁵⁴¹ Previous works traditionally claim that the Stantons’ move from Boston to Seneca Falls, New York was due to Henry’s presumed political ambitions.⁵⁴² However, the historical record offers an entirely different set of circumstances. Shortly after his permanent move to Boston, Henry began suffering “severe” “pertinacious coughs,” a condition he attributed to the

⁵⁴⁰ Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, Seneca Falls, October 30, 1847. Hale-Chandler Papers, Dartmouth University.

⁵⁴¹ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 20, 1843. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵⁴² For example, Elisabeth Griffith writes, “After another unsuccessful electoral season, he began to search for a more hospitable district.” Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 46. However, once again, Griffith’s source for this claim mentions nothing of the kind. Sally McMillen explained the move as stemming from a “failure [by Henry] to achieve the financial or political success he desired.” Sallie G. McMillen, *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement* New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 83. Both McMillen and Judy Wellman attribute at least part of the reason for the move as being due to concerns about consumption because Henry’s mother had died of the disease. McMillen, *Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement*, p. 83. Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 164. However, Susanna Stanton was happily living, consumption free, in Rochester, New York for six years after the Stantons moved to Seneca Falls. Perhaps these last two errors were due to a misreading of a typed transcript in the Alma Lutz Collection at Vassar College. The transcript, dated August 1931 and entitled, “Blatch” says, in part: “The move of the Statnon [sic] family away from Boston was based on my father’s health. His mother died, I believe, of consumption, and he always had a delicate throat and chest. He was a chilly mortal, always feeling drafts, always putting on extra clothing.” Harriot Stanton Blatch was born three years after the death of her grandmother Stanton.

“east winds.”⁵⁴³ In the spring of 1844, his condition continued to deteriorate and his physicians were concerned about Henry’s chronic lung inflammation and they suggested he relocate to a healthier climate. Among other physicians, Henry consulted his brother-in-law, Edward Bayard, and Bayard too suggested that Henry leave the eastern seaboard as soon as possible. After discussing the matter privately, Henry wrote to Gerrit Smith seeking his advice about where the couple should move. In this letter, Henry outlined the qualities he was looking for in a new location: a healthy climate, a city in which to establish a legal practice, and a place possessing “a fine atmosphere on the subject of abolition.”⁵⁴⁴

Following his bouts of lung congestion in 1844, Henry found some symptom relief by restricting his public speaking efforts. However, given his commitment to antislavery political agitation, this was not a practical or a long term solution. Although he had expressed a desire to relocate in Central New York in 1844, Stanton’s sights were set on the region’s larger cities of Auburn, Syracuse or Utica, and not the smaller village of Seneca Falls.⁵⁴⁵ However, for reasons that are not recorded, on June 22, 1847, Daniel Cady transferred ownership of an investment property consisting of a house, outbuildings and two acres of land that he originally acquired on March 26, 1845 to his daughter, Elizabeth.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴³ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 20, 1843. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵⁴⁴ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 20, 1844. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵⁴⁵ Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 20, 1844. Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University.

⁵⁴⁶ Barbara A. Yocum, "The Stanton House Historic Structure Report, Women's Rights National Historical Park, Seneca Falls, New York," (Lowell, Mass.: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1998), pp. 15-16. See also: Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 48. As Griffith notes, technically until the passage of the Married Women’s Property Act the following year, the property legally belonged to Henry.

The Stantons' new home was unoccupied for several years, and according to Elizabeth it "needed many repairs." Elizabeth and the children left Boston and travelled to Johnstown with their many trunks in the company of Elizabeth's sister, Harriet Eaton. Elizabeth stayed in Johnstown for "a few days rest," and while she was there, Elizabeth spent an evening with the Rev. David Eyster and his wife, Rebecca.⁵⁴⁷ The following day, Elizabeth wrote to Rebecca with some additional thoughts concerning their conversation the previous evening.⁵⁴⁸ Much of the letter discusses Elizabeth's belief in the propriety and necessity of women, "particularly when public mention is made of her," being addressed by their first names and not taking their husband's full name. Stanton outlined the importance of one's own name, and she drew a moving parallel between the "nameless" slaves and women. "We are in truth slaves," Elizabeth explained, "You and I are not so socially because we have husbands who look upon us as equals.

⁵⁴⁷ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Rebecca R. Eyster, [1847? May? 1?], Typed transcript, Theodore Stanton Collection, Douglass Library, Rutgers University. Also, a shorter version of the letter appears in Stanton and Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, p. II: 15-16. Although the date of this letter and its original content cannot be known for certain because only the typescript remains, the content seems consistent with the historical record and the date is likely a close one. Rebecca Eyster (1810-1883) was the wife of David Eyster, (1801-1861). Eyster was the pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Johnstown from 1834-1855 when the family moved to Gettysburg and opened the Gettysburg Female Institute. The Eysters married in 1840, the same year as the Stantons. See Rev. J. C. Jensson, *American Lutheran Biographies* Milwaukee, Wis.: Franklin Book Store, 1890, pp. 208-11.

⁵⁴⁸ As the precise date of this letter is uncertain and because only the typed transcript survives, it's entirely possible that "last evening" was, alternatively, last month. Judith Wellman suggests that the letter is from the 1859-1860 period because of Elizabeth's concern with married women's use of their husband's names during this era. Perhaps Wellman overlooked Elizabeth Stanton's speech concerning this very issue at the Rochester Women's Rights Convention in 1848. Nevertheless, the most likely date of this letter is in the period between 1842 and 1850 as Elizabeth writes in the letter, "Two years ago I bound myself with some of my friends and together we resolved to devote our lives to the elevation of women." The earliest date would have been 1842, two years after the London Convention and the most likely end date, two years after the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. The precise date is not nearly as important as the sentiments conveyed.

But we are civilly dead.” Elizabeth continued by writing that she “had talked this matter over with my husband and he says it would be quite *outré* for us to appear in the papers with either titles or men’s names.” Thus on the eve of the Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth felt that her marriage to Henry was not one of “tyrant” and “slave” but, rather, that her husband believed her to be his equal.⁵⁴⁹

When Elizabeth reached her new home in Seneca Falls, she was armed with funds from her father, and after “a minute survey of the premises,” she began hiring a variety of contractors to ready her new home.⁵⁵⁰ The renovations took a month, and during that time, the couple’s children stayed with Elizabeth’s parents in Johnstown. Henry remained in Boston for a few months, but was in residence in Seneca Falls by October.⁵⁵¹

Having spent much of her life in a town similar in size to Seneca Falls, Elizabeth hoped that Henry would “be [as] happy & contented” in their new village as she would surely be. Already accustomed to upstate New York winters, Elizabeth found the climate “very delightful,” but she worried that Henry, who was dreading the change, would “long for the strong excitement

⁵⁴⁹ Although this letter is mentioned or quoted by Wellman (p. 168), McMillen (p. 143) and Griffith (p. 41), no author included Elizabeth’s very straightforward statement that she lived in an egalitarian marriage and only Griffith, in a footnote to her introduction, mentioned the second part of the letter quoted above.

⁵⁵⁰ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 144.

⁵⁵¹ In addition to tying up legal cases, Joshua Leavitt’s sudden departure in August as editor of the *Emancipator* after eight years forced Henry, Samuel E. Sewall and Joseph C. Lovejoy (brother of Owen) to keep the paper afloat. Henry Stanton served as the paper’s Washington correspondent. *Liberator*, March 10, 1848. See also Davis, *Joshua Leavitt: Evangelical Abolitionist*, p. 236. and *The National Era*, August 26, 1847, p. 2. Henry’s surviving letters from this time period are dated from Seneca Falls. cf. Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 165: “Elizabeth began a year of life as a single parent.”. Ann Gordon wrote that Henry stayed in Boston until December, but spent the month of October in Seneca Falls. Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 63-64, n. 3.

of a city life” and she hoped that he would have soon have time for rest.”⁵⁵² However, 1848 would bring little rest to either Henry or Elizabeth.

On February 8, Henry Stanton was admitted as an attorney and counselor of the United States Supreme Court, and throughout the early months of 1848, he spent quite a bit of time arguing cases both in Washington and in Boston.⁵⁵³ While he was in Washington, Henry met former president John Quincy Adams “by the fireplace in the rear of the Speaker’s chair” in the House of Representatives on “the chilly morning of February 21.” Stanton noted that when they shook hands, Adams “trembled with cold.” When the day’s session opened, Henry was seated at the “reporter’s desk,” and the location offered him a direct view of Adams’ chair at a distance of only 15-20 feet. The morning’s business included a special resolution by a representative from Tennessee extending thanks to several generals for their service in the Mexican War. The resolution required a suspension of House rules, and it was that motion that was taken up first. According to Stanton, when a voice vote was called, “the House was in perfect turmoil.” Anxious to see the former President’s response, Stanton kept Adams in his gaze. Moment’s later, amid all the shouting and chaos on the floor, Henry noticed Adams’ face become red, and his right hand move as if he were trying to grasp something. Soon Adams’ grasp became “convulsive” and Henry saw him lean toward the left as if he would soon fall from his seat.

⁵⁵² Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith Miller, [15? April 1847], in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 62-63. Anyone spending a winter in Central New York might question the “delightful climate.”

⁵⁵³ Supreme Court appointment announced printed in the *National Era*, February 17, 1848. For legal cases see, Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, January 9, 1848 and January 20, 1848, Hale-Chandler Papers, Dartmouth University.

Stanton realized amid the confusion and noise in the chamber that Adams' condition had not been noticed. He called out to a member of the House nearby to alert him to the ailing Adams. By that time, "he had sunk quite on the arm of his chair" before being discovered by several other members.⁵⁵⁴ "Old Man Eloquent" died two days later in the Speaker's Office, and his funeral was held the following day.

Henry left Washington en route to Seneca Falls with a stopover in Johnstown, and when he returned to New York State, he arrived to find a Democratic Party rife with the possibility of significant defection to the Liberty Party.⁵⁵⁵ As we have seen, by 1848 politics in New York State already had a long history of bitter partisanship and a fluidity of alliances and defections.⁵⁵⁶ However, by 1830, the Democratic Party was "united, intrenched [sic] in power, and seemingly invincible," as they were in control of nearly every state office and their political opponents were effectively silenced.⁵⁵⁷ By the end of the decade, and after bitter contestations over tax revenues and canal construction, the majority party began unraveling.⁵⁵⁸ Party unity also suffered from the financial crises engendered by the Panic of 1837, and the shortfall in state revenues was

⁵⁵⁴ Henry B. Stanton to the *Emancipator*, March 1, 1848 and reprinted in the *Liberator*, March 10, 1848. See also Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 284-85. Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 158-59.

⁵⁵⁵ Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, Johnstown, March 2, 1848. John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

⁵⁵⁶ See Chapter 2.

⁵⁵⁷ Herbert D. A. Donovan, *The Barnburners: A Study of the Internal Movements in the Political History of New York State and of the Resulting Changes in Political Affiliation, 1830-1852* New York: New York University Press, 1925, p. 7.

⁵⁵⁸ For a thorough discussion of the debates surrounding these two issues, see *Ibid.*, pp. 14-20.

exacerbated by the huge debts incurred from canal expansion.⁵⁵⁹ From 1843 forward, those Democrats supporting the state's "Stop and Tax law," effectively stopping the construction of new canals and restoring a direct tax became known as "Barnburners," while those opposed were known as "Hunkers."⁵⁶⁰

When the national Democratic Party met for their presidential nominating convention in Baltimore in April 1844, it was expected that they would re-nominate former president Martin Van Buren. However, Van Buren's public denunciation of the annexation of Texas caused him to lose support among Southern Democrats. Van Buren's enemies successfully restored a rule originally adopted in 1832 requiring two-thirds support of the delegates, making it nearly impossible for Van Buren to secure the nomination. When the voting began, Van Buren was first, followed by Lewis Cass of Michigan; however, with each ballot cast, Van Buren's support dwindled in favor of Cass. When it was clear to Van Buren's supporters that he would not be able to garner enough votes, Van Buren withdrew his nomination in favor of James K. Polk of Tennessee.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ During the administration of Whig Governor William Seward, the state debt skyrocketed due to the building programs. This then caused the credit rating of the state to plummet and bond prices to drop sharply. Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁶⁰ Although originally intended as a slight by their political enemies, the Barnburner name likely came from the story of a Dutch farmer who had burned down his barn in order to rid it of rats. As political historian, Herbert Donovan explains: "the implication being that the Barnburners were willing to destroy the public works and corporations to stop the abuses connected with them." Ibid. p. 32. The Hunker name likely derived from a pejorative depiction of the group as wanting to obtain a "hunk" of the spoils of office, but is popularly attributed, especially in light of the group's politics in the 1850s, to being those who wanted to "hunker down," thereby avoiding change. Ibid. p. 33.

⁵⁶¹ Donovan, *The Barnburners: A Study of the Internal Movements in the Political History of New York State and of the Resulting Changes in Political Affiliation, 1830-1852*, pp. 55-56. See also Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 287-88. Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 157-58.

The New York Barnburners were Van Buren's largest base of support at the 1844 convention, and they returned to New York embittered and resentful. In 1847, still carrying the memory of the "treachery" of 1844, the Barnburners hoped to avenge the defeat of Van Buren by securing control of the party. However, by 1848 the political landscape had changed as well. The annexation of Texas, the Wilmot Proviso and the Mexican War exposed the sectional divides not only within the Democratic Party, but also within the nation as a whole.

Van Buren's record as president would hardly seem to engender support amongst antislavery voters. His critics charged that he done nothing throughout his term to slow the power of the slave states, and further, his antics during the trial of the Amistad Africans coupled with his continuance of Andrew Jackson's policy toward Native Americans had seemingly permanently alienated him from the abolition ranks. His record notwithstanding, in 1847, Van Buren let it be known that he supported the Wilmot Proviso.⁵⁶² While some questioned the Van Buren's change of heart, his supporters explained that the former president had "ample leisure time to reflect" on the issues, and that Van Buren too was alarmed by the growth of the "Slave Power." In November 1847, and to further quell suspicions of any opportunistic posturing, Van Buren penned an open letter to a newspaper claiming, "I am not a candidate for the Presidency, nor for any other position, nor do I intend to be."⁵⁶³ However, the Barnburners had other plans.

Henry Stanton attended the state Democratic convention, held in Syracuse on September 29, 1847, and he witnessed the proceeding from the gallery. Even before the opening, the convention was a contentious one, as each faction within the party attempted to manipulate the

⁵⁶² Donovan, *The Barnburners: A Study of the Internal Movements in the Political History of New York State and of the Resulting Changes in Political Affiliation, 1830-1852*, p. 87.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

selection of delegates at the district and county level. When the group finally assembled, the Barnburners attempted to insert a resolution supporting the Wilmot Proviso into the platform, but were defeated 73 to 63. By the time the meeting adjourned, most of the Barnburners had already left in protest, effectively tearing the Democracy in two.⁵⁶⁴ As a delegate from Western New York explained, "If it was barnburnerism to stand up for the rights of free labor to the soil, he was a barnburner."⁵⁶⁵ Although a minority within the state organization, the Barnburners seemed to Stanton ready to engage in fusion politics.

Stanton's final confirmation came during the spring nominating conventions. Writing to John P. Hale's friend and supporter Amos Tuck in May, Stanton's political predictions were accurate. The Democrats, meeting in Baltimore, denied the credentials of the New York Barnburners, and eventually selected Lewis Cass as their nominee. Not to be outmaneuvered, the Barnburner delegation held a convention the following month in Utica and nominated Martin Van Buren.⁵⁶⁶ According to Henry Stanton, the Whig nominee, Zachary Taylor, "would disgust tens of thousands of Whigs in this state," making it fertile ground for a fusion candidate.⁵⁶⁷ Also

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 93-95. Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 159-61.

⁵⁶⁵ *Albany Argus*, October 17, 1847. Quoted in Donovan, *The Barnburners: A Study of the Internal Movements in the Political History of New York State and of the Resulting Changes in Political Affiliation, 1830-1852*, p. 94.

⁵⁶⁶ The selection of Van Buren was historic. This was the first instance of an ex-President being nominated for the office. There was also likely a hint of revenge against the 1844 slight in the selection of Van Buren. See Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 293-94. Donovan, *The Barnburners: A Study of the Internal Movements in the Political History of New York State and of the Resulting Changes in Political Affiliation, 1830-1852*, pp. 103-05. See also Henry B. Stanton to [Amos Tuck], May 13, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

⁵⁶⁷ Henry B. Stanton to [Amos Tuck], May 13, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

in June, at a Free Territory Convention in Ohio, Salmon Chase introduced a resolution calling for a convention of all those opposed to the extension of slavery, irrespective of party allegiance.

The Free Soil coalition selected Buffalo, New York for their convention on August 9.⁵⁶⁸

Quite understandably, Henry Stanton was encouraged and hopeful at the turn of events. By 1848, he had devoted the better part of fifteen years fighting slavery, and although he dared not hope that the fusion party might win the 1848 contest, he undoubtedly believed that the political efforts of the abolitionists had at long last begun to turn the tide among Northerners who had been agnostic about the issue only a few years before. The road had been full of twists, rancor, disappointments and compromise, but by the summer of 1848 Henry Stanton had every reason to believe that the country was on its way to finally delivering on the promises of the Declaration of Independence.⁵⁶⁹

However joyous the political news, Henry's sister, Frances Avery and her husband George had a tragic summer. On June 12, the Avery's three-year-old daughter, Anna R. Avery died of croup in Rochester.⁵⁷⁰ Throughout the 1840s, the Avery family suffered business and

⁵⁶⁸ Salmon P. Chase to J. L. Trowbridge, March 10, 1864, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. Quoted in Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 295.

⁵⁶⁹ Certainly Henry Stanton would have preferred the coalition to be in favor of immediate abolition. However, Stanton was also a pragmatist, and by 1848, experience had shown him that the Liberty Party was stalled, and the major parties were not open to such a drastic change. In an 1847 article in the *Emancipator*, Stanton outlined his philosophy going forward: if the abolition of slavery was the final goal, the spread of slavery must first be stopped. "Confine it to its own limits, restrict it to its own means, and it soon must perish." *Emancipator*, February 24, 1847, quoted in Ibid., p. 293.

⁵⁷⁰ Judy Wellman identified the Avery's daughter as Delia (sourced from a compiled genealogy). Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights*

personal losses. In 1843, Avery endorsed notes for creditors who failed to pay their obligations, and in 1845, he sustained heavy losses to his store and lost his mill in two separate fires. Despite their personal trials, the couple continued in their reform efforts. In 1841, George Avery was the Rochester Liberty Party mayoral candidate, and throughout the decade, Avery served on the Executive Committee of the Canada Missions – a group formed in 1841 to support escaped slaves who had crossed the border into Canada.⁵⁷¹

In late June, barely two weeks following the loss of their daughter Anna, Frances and her youngest child, George, visited Henry and Elizabeth in Seneca Falls. Although this is the only documented visit by Frances to the Stantons in Seneca Falls, because the Avery and Stanton families shared not only kinship but also pursued similar reform strategies, and lived only a short train ride apart, it is very unlikely that this was the only such visit. The timing of the visit was likely arranged to coincide with Henry's birthday on June 27, and her husband and Henry's mother, Susanna, might also have accompanied Frances. Little George Avery shared the same birthday as his uncle. Sadly, the occasion was not a joyous one. On his first birthday, George Avery died at the Stanton home in Seneca Falls of the same ailment that killed his sister fifteen days earlier.⁵⁷² The funeral was held the following day in Rochester. As Judy Wellman noted,

Convention, p. 170. Delia Avery was George Avery's niece (the daughter of his brother and Lane Seminary Student Courtland Avery) who died in 1851. Burial records at Mt. Hope Cemetery identify Frances and George's daughter as "Anna R. Avery," and her tombstone also reads "Anna Avery." The *Rochester Daily Democrat* also listed the child's name as Delia Anna Blackford [Avery] (6/14/1848).

⁵⁷¹ For Avery's financial losses, see *Rochester Daily Democrat*, January 22, 1845 and *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, November 26, 1845. Avery's Liberty run, see: *Rochester Daily Democrat*, February 10, 1841. The Canada Mission has escaped previous historical works. See *Liberator*, March 17, 1843 and June 19, 1846.

⁵⁷² Unfortunately, the only reason this visit by the Averys to the Stanton home was documented was because of the death of George Avery. Burial records of Mt. Hope Cemetery, Rochester,

the loss of two children within her family circle might well have been the reason Elizabeth decided to be photographed close to this time, tightly clutching her two eldest sons.

While many were referring to the new antislavery political movement as a distinct new entity, the Free Soil Party, newspaper editors were creative in describing the meetings, particularly before the August 9 meeting in Buffalo. In an announcement of a meeting held on July 27 in Canandaigua, New York, Frederick Douglass referred to the group as “A Meeting of the Opponents of Cass and Taylor.”⁵⁷³ Rochester free soilers organized themselves as a “Jeffersonian Free Soil League.”⁵⁷⁴ Still, whatever name an individual group selected, the message was the same, and throughout the summer months of 1848, Henry Stanton fanned the Free Soil fires whenever and wherever possible.

Close to home, Henry Stanton and neighbor Ansel Bascom called a meeting of the “Freemen” of Seneca Falls on June 15. Bascom, a former Whig, was a Seneca Falls lawyer and a delegate to the 1846 New York Constitution Convention.⁵⁷⁵ Bascom was the 1848 Free Soil

New York. *Rochester Daily Democrat*, June 28, 1848. Judy Wellman’s discovery of this visit prompted my initial research into Henry’s family. Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman’s Rights Convention*, p. 170. See also Martha Wright to Lucretia Mott, August 5, 1848, Garrison Papers, Smith College.

⁵⁷³ The *North Star* [Rochester, NY], July 21, 1848. Henry Stanton was the speaker at this large rally held at the Ontario County Courthouse.

⁵⁷⁴ *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, August 31, 1848.

⁵⁷⁵ Bascom (1802-1862) and his family lived at the Southeast corner of Ovid and East Bayard Streets in Seneca Falls, just down the road from the Stanton home. Elizabeth made Bascom’s acquaintance when she was readying her Seneca Falls home for the family. According to her autobiography, she “urged” Bascom to strike out the word “male” from the State Constitution’s provision for suffrage. Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 145. On a lighter note, Henry Stanton and Bascom had a watermelon-growing contest one summer. Henry won the wager, and invited Bascom to dinner. “At dessert the much-praised and long-cared-for melon was brought

nominee for the 31st Congressional District (Seneca Falls) running against his friend and former legal associate and Whig, Gary Sackett.⁵⁷⁶ The Seneca Falls Free Soilers met in the Wesleyan Chapel, the site of many reform meetings since it was built in 1843.

As we have seen, participation in the antislavery movement often divided church congregations. For example, Rochester's Bethel Free Church was started by a breakaway congregation from the Presbyterian Church by members seeking to include reform activities as part of the ministries. The Seneca Falls Wesleyan Methodist Church, known more commonly as the Wesleyan Chapel, was established by a small group of Liberty Party leaders in the village, and the chapel became the center of Liberty campaigning in Seneca Falls from its beginning.⁵⁷⁷

Despite the community's long history of antislavery political agitation, a convention of a different sort would immortalize the Wesleyan Chapel and the Village of Seneca Falls in the summer of 1848. It was there, on July 19 and 20, 1848 that Elizabeth Cady Stanton and a small group of Quaker women organized the first women's rights convention in the United States.

The Stantons' friend and co-agitator from Philadelphia, Lucretia Mott and her husband James spent the better part of the early summer of 1848 in New York State. Attending a very

in, and the host, knife in hand, was about to cut it open when it fell apart of itself. One of Erin's daughters...had never seen a watermelon, had kept the edible portion in the kitchen and had sent in to us the rind! General surprise was followed by as general a laugh, and [Henry] turning to his guest, asked: 'Bascom, why am I at this moment like that melon? We are equally crusty.'" Letter written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton to her son Theodore upon Henry's death in 1887. Quoted in Ann D. Gordon, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony*, vol. IV: When Clowns Make Laws for Queens, 1880-1887 2006, p. 543.

⁵⁷⁶ *Seneca Free Soil Union*, November 17, 1848 printed the county election results. Sackett won the seat. Vote totals: Sackett – 2,044 votes to Bascom's 1,597. The Hunker Democrat, Bigelow was last at 1,069 votes.

⁵⁷⁷ Strong, *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy*, pp. 129-30.

contentious meeting of the Friends, the Motts also visited prisoners in Auburn, the Seneca Reservation, and often made their temporary home with Mott's sister, Martha Wright in Auburn.⁵⁷⁸ Fellow Quaker, Jane Hunt from Waterloo, invited Mott and her sister to spend the afternoon of July 9 at her home. Also invited was the Hunt's neighbor, Mary Ann McClintock and Mott's friend, Elizabeth Cady Stanton.⁵⁷⁹ According to Stanton's late-life autobiography:

I poured out, that day, the torrent of my long-accumulating discontent, with such vehemence and indignation that I stirred myself, as well as the rest of the party, to do and dare anything. My discontent, according to Emerson, must have been healthy, for it moved us all to prompt action, and we decided, then and there, to call a "Woman's Rights Convention."⁵⁸⁰

According to both Stanton and Mott, they had discussed holding such a meeting years before, but this time, they moved quickly to take advantage of Mott's visit to the area.⁵⁸¹ That day, the group composed a meeting call, deciding to hold the convention only ten days later. The chosen site, the Wesleyan Chapel, was a logical one. As the center of reform agitation, it was one facility in the twin towns open to free discussion. The meeting call was first printed in the

⁵⁷⁸ Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, 180-84.

⁵⁷⁹ It is not known for certain whether or not Elizabeth had previously met Jane Hunt or Elizabeth McClintock. However, it seems possible as Elizabeth's sister, Tryphena, lived in Seneca Falls in the early 1840s and was close with the McClintocks. Elizabeth spent a great deal of time in Seneca Falls visiting her sister before moving to the village. Also, in an 1841 letter to Elizabeth J. Neall, Elizabeth wrote, "I had the pleasure of meeting several agreeable friends at Waterloo." Letter dated November 26, [1841]. Sydney Howard Gay Collection, Columbia University.

⁵⁸⁰ Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 148. Although this meeting has been written about extensively, Stanton's account is undoubtedly the most concise and likely the most accurate in explaining what happened at Jane Hunt's gathering, in large part because it is free of the embellishments and attachments of most of the later chroniclers of the event.

⁵⁸¹ Stanton wrote that this was discussed in London in 1840. However, Mott's diary contains no mention of this conversation, and she later remembered they discussed holding a woman's right meeting while in Boston in 1841. Ibid., pp. 82-83. Lucretia Mott to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, March 16, 1855. Palmer, ed. *Selected Letters of Lucretia Coffin Mott*, pp. 236.

Seneca County Courier on Tuesday, July 11, but was later picked up by the *Ovid Bee* and Frederick Douglass' *North Star* on July 14.⁵⁸²

Contemporary accounts of the events between July 9 and the opening of the convention on the 19th are few, and in some instances, are still being debated by scholars. However, the fact remains that no one in attendance at the Hunt home that afternoon had ever organized a reform convention. Lucretia Mott, already a well-respected and well-known speaker at many such meetings, had participated in many conventions but did not possess the organizational experience and further, she was not from the area. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, however, was the only woman in attendance that day with a close connection to a reformer who could help, her husband, Henry.

The similarities between the published call of the women's rights convention and the Free Soil convention the month before reflect more than the vernacular of the times. The Free Soil meeting call was addressed to "The Freemen of Seneca Falls;" while the Women's Rights Convention's minutes noted that "The Women of Seneca County, N.Y" called the meeting, rather than the individual organizers. Although the Free Soil meeting call also carried an extensive list of endorsees—close to 200 names were printed—no organizers' names were listed, and the message of both calls was the same: both meetings were seeking to represent themselves as part of the community at large, and not simply an aggrieved group within.⁵⁸³

Between the initial meeting on Sunday, July 9 and Friday, July 14, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote the first draft what would become known as the Declaration of Sentiments for

⁵⁸² Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 189.

⁵⁸³ *Seneca Fall Courier*, June 13, 1848 and July 11, 1848. The calls themselves were written in a similar format, both encouraging a broad coalition of attendees, and both seeking to discuss, rather than dictate the topic at hand. Of course, both meetings were also held in the same venue. Wellman expresses a similar idea in describing the Women's Rights call.

presentation and discussion at the meeting.⁵⁸⁴ Stanton's first draft did not survive, so it is impossible to know for certain how closely it resembled the final document. The historical consensus, however, acknowledges that Henry Stanton helped Elizabeth compile the list of grievances that survived the editing process.⁵⁸⁵ As was customary at reform conventions, a list of resolutions for debate and adoption was also prepared, again most likely originating, at least in draft form, at the Stanton household.

On Sunday, July 16, Elizabeth Stanton again travelled to Waterloo, this time to the McClintock's house to review the two documents and make any suggested "alterations and improvements."⁵⁸⁶ According to Stanton, "one of the circle" that afternoon "took up the Declaration of 1776...and it was at once decided to adopt the historic document, with some slight changes such as substituting 'all men' for 'King George.'"⁵⁸⁷ The Declaration of Sentiments, like the Declaration of Independence opened with a bold statement, but with one important difference: the Seneca Falls declaration asserted that "all men and women were created equal."⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁴ Dated from a letter from Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth McClintock, July 14. Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 69.

⁵⁸⁵ For example, see Phelps, ed. *Our Famous Women*, p. 613. Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 46. Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 193.

⁵⁸⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth McClintock, July 14. Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 69.

⁵⁸⁷ Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, p. I:68.

⁵⁸⁸ The complete Declaration, resolutions and minutes of the convention are printed in Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 75-88.

The Ninth Resolution

Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.⁵⁸⁹

While it is certain that the Seneca Falls Convention would have been a historically important event with or without the Ninth Resolution demanding woman's suffrage, it is equally clear that had this resolution not been conceived of and fought for by Elizabeth Cady Stanton both before and after the convention, the movement that began in Seneca Falls would have been an entirely different movement, if a movement at all, and it would have taken a decidedly different character. I am not suggesting that the convention would have been inconsequential or that a demand for woman suffrage would not have occurred at a later date. I am, however, arguing that what made the convention so significant, aside from it being the first in the nation, was the suffrage resolution.

The importance of the suffrage resolution can also be seen through the hotly contested debates within the historiography, beginning with Elizabeth Cady Stanton's own recollections. As historian Judith Wellman explained, "Stanton's account [of the Convention] has dominated historical narratives...Beginning in the 1880s, it functioned as a kind of origin story" that Wellman rightly argued provided a powerful rallying point for Elizabeth's supporters during the years of the women's rights schism.⁵⁹⁰ However, while Wellman sought to nuisance and expand

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 77. Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, p. I: 72.

⁵⁹⁰ Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 11.

Elizabeth's recollections of this important turning point in women's history, she too at times fell victim to the "mythical proportions" of Elizabeth's very real development as an agitator.⁵⁹¹

Beginning with the 1884 publication of a biographical chapter on Elizabeth in *Our Famous Women*, author Laura Curtis Bullard was the first to write about how Elizabeth's radical resolution of woman suffrage was received at home.⁵⁹² Bullard's account that Henry and Elizabeth worked together on the development of what became the Declaration of Sentiments would be accepted by Lutz in 1940 and later by Wellman.⁵⁹³ According to these accounts, all was fine until Henry realized that Elizabeth was going to include a resolution demanding woman suffrage. At that point, so the story goes, Henry charged that Elizabeth was going to turn the whole proceedings into a "farce" and he promptly left town on antislavery business. However, no one has ever explained where he went or why he may have had this reaction, if, in fact, he did.⁵⁹⁴ Lutz persisted in repeating Bullard's story, despite Harriot Stanton Blatch's questioning its truthfulness, "I did not know my father opposed the IX Resolution," Blatch pointedly wrote, "Have you authority for the statement?"⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.

⁵⁹² Phelps, ed. *Our Famous Women*, pp. 603-23.

⁵⁹³ Ibid., p. 613. Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 46. Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 193.

⁵⁹⁴ The only author to attempt to answer the question of Henry's whereabouts is Wellman. She cites an article from the *New York Tribune* on July 19, 1848 stating that Henry was speaking in Canandaigua, NY during the Women's Rights Convention. Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 277n30. However, Wellman's source refers, instead, to a speech Henry delivered on July 13 (the week before the convention) in Warsaw, Wyoming County, NY.

⁵⁹⁵ Harriot Stanton Blatch to Alma Lutz, [n.d.] Nyack, NY, Alma Lutz Collection, Vassar College. This letter was written to Lutz after Blatch received a draft of Lutz's manuscript. She

The traditional account also holds that Henry was not alone in his hostile reaction to the resolution. Lucretia Mott, a co-organizer of the convention was also against Elizabeth's proposing woman suffrage at the Seneca Falls Convention. Harriot Stanton Blatch contended that Mott "jumped on Mrs. Stanton's political demand, & tried to stamp out the one original idea, the demand for the vote."⁵⁹⁶ According to Bullard, Susan B. Anthony—still nearly three years away from her meeting with Elizabeth—thought the resolution "ridiculous."⁵⁹⁷ Although Judith Wellman agrees (again from Bullard) that Henry helped Elizabeth construct the resolutions pertaining to "laws bearing unjustly against women's property interests," she later contends that Henry was "thunderstruck," and "amazed at her daring," and that when he saw the proposed suffrage resolution, "he [Henry] was so disgusted with her obstinance, in fact, that he would not attend the convention."⁵⁹⁸ But is this reaction consistent with what we know about the Stantons' marriage, Henry Stanton's previous support for women's rights or his understanding of the importance of political agitation?

Although Wellman agrees that during the July 16 planning meeting the women reviewed reports from antislavery and temperance conventions as models and also acknowledged that even

also corrected Lutz on another matter concerning her father: "You say the Call of the Loyal League 'was definitely by Elizabeth.' I agree, but was not the idea of the League, my fathers?" In a letter dated July 4, 1931, Blatch asked Lutz if she had a copy of "my father's Random Recollections," perhaps fearing Lutz was ignoring her father's work as a reformer. Lutz's replies were not retained. Alma Lutz Papers, Vassar College.

⁵⁹⁶ Harriot Stanton Blatch to Alma Lutz, August 11, 1833, Alma Lutz Papers, Vassar College.

⁵⁹⁷ Interestingly, Bullard and Lutz include the exact same quote from Lucretia Mott. Phelps, ed. *Our Famous Women*, p. 614. Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, p. 46. For Susan B. Anthony, see Phelps, ed. *Our Famous Women*, p. 615.

⁵⁹⁸ Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention*, p. 192.

the title of their manifesto, *The Declaration of Sentiments*, was penned after the 1833 founding document of the American Antislavery Association of the same name, Wellman did not free herself entirely from the “founding myth” of Bullard, nor does she acknowledge Henry’s role in Elizabeth’s intellectual or strategic development.⁵⁹⁹ Lutz carries Bullard’s myth even further, while contradicting her own account:

With Henry’s help [Elizabeth] collected a list of eighteen legal grievances from the statute books to correspond with the eighteen listed by the signers of the original Declaration of Independence...She was planning a speech which would sum up all she had been thinking about women through the years. She drafted a resolution wholly her own. No one else had anything to do with it or knew anything about it. It was to come ninth on the list and it read: Resolved, That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure for themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.⁶⁰⁰

The History of Woman Suffrage recounts a similar sentiment, yet notably the “farce” of the call for women’s suffrage was not in reference to Henry’s reactions prior to the Convention, but rather, mentioned as a part of the debates occurring during the second day of the Convention noting, “Those who took part in the debate feared a demand for the right to vote would defeat others they deemed more rational, and make the whole movement ridiculous.”⁶⁰¹

Unfortunately, we may never know for certain whether or not the suffrage resolution was debated within the Stanton household. Elizabeth’s surviving correspondence during these pivotal ten days is silent, as is Henry’s. However, when considering the whole of Henry

⁵⁹⁹ The Constitution of the AAS also included a provision calling for abolitionists to use their votes and political means to end slavery. Because this was in the society’s constitution, it caused great debate following Garrison’s conversion to non-resistance. See Chapter 4.

⁶⁰⁰ Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, pp. 45, 46. Lutz claims that Elizabeth told no one, and yet also claims that Henry was against it.

⁶⁰¹ Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, p. 73.

Stanton's reform career, his known positions on women's equality and enfranchisement, and his long advocacy of suffrage as being the primary tool of reform in the decade before the Seneca Falls convention, it is possible to offer a substantive challenge to the prevailing narrative.

As we have seen, Henry Stanton's mother and sister were both active reformers long before he met Elizabeth. Unlike most men of his time, he was raised by a mother who asserted her rights, both civilly and against the clergy. Since the early years of his involvement in the antislavery movement, he had worked alongside female abolitionists and helped them establish antislavery societies throughout the North. Henry boldly and very publically supported the Grimké sisters' right to speak before mixed audiences, and he married without the customary promise that his wife would "obey" him. Finally, beginning in 1839, Henry Stanton had unceasingly used the power of suffrage and of electoral politics to end slavery. In short, there is nothing in Henry Stanton's background that would suggest he might have been opposed to woman suffrage and much to support a claim that he heartily endorsed it.

The prevailing narrative also claims that Henry Stanton was away from home much of the time, and it would thereby not have been out of character for him to have abruptly left town upon learning about the suffrage resolution. However, the historical record in the weeks and months surrounding the women's rights convention offer an entirely different picture. During the months of June, July and August 1848, Henry Stanton never ventured farther away from home than Buffalo, and that was only to attend the Free Soil Convention on August 9. Every speaking engagement or meeting he attended during these months were within a short train ride and certainly close enough to enable him to return home every evening. For example, on July 13, Henry addressed a Free Soil meeting in Warsaw, Wyoming County. The following day, July 14, he was in Varick, Seneca County. On the 15th, he was home in Seneca Falls. He was also

home on July 17, the day after the Declaration of Sentiments was finalized. His next known speaking engagement was July 27 in Canandaigua, and he was home on July 31.⁶⁰² The early weeks of August reveal a similar schedule: Henry spoke in nearby Penn Yan on August 1, Seneca Falls on the 3rd, Auburn on the 5th, Buffalo on August 9th for the Convention, but he was back in Seneca Falls before the 18th.⁶⁰³ Further, there is nothing in the historical record to suggest he was not at home on any of the days not mentioned in the press.

In addition to his known attendance at meetings, throughout July and early August, Henry was also working behind the scenes with the various groups attending the Buffalo Convention, necessitating not only his continued attention, but also his availability to receive and reply to correspondence in a timely manner. For example, on July 15, Henry wrote to Charles Sumner asking him to stop in Seneca County for a Free Soil rally on his way to Buffalo. Henry concluded his request, asking Sumner for “an immediate reply.”⁶⁰⁴ As this last-minute meeting would hinge on Sumner’s participation, it seems unlikely that Henry would leave town before receiving a reply. In another letter, written on July 17 from Seneca Falls, Henry stated that he

⁶⁰² For Warsaw see: *The National Era*, July 13, 1848 and July 27, 1848; the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, July 17, 19, 21 and 22, 1848; the *New York Tribune*, July 19, 1848. For Varick, see the *Buffalo Daily Courier*, July 20, 1848. For July 15, see Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, Seneca Falls, July 15, 1848, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, reel 6:257. For July 17: Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, July 17, 1848, Hale-Chandler Papers, Dartmouth University. For July 27: *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, July 22, 29, 1848. *New York Tribune*, August 1, 1848, *Seneca County Observer*, August 3, 1848, *National Era*, August 10, 1848. For July 31 and August 1 see, Henry B. Stanton to John Greenleaf Whittier, Seneca Falls, July 31, 1848 in John Albree, ed. *Whittier Correspondence from the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892* Salem, Mass.: Essex Book and Print Club, 1911, pp. 102-04.

⁶⁰³ For August 3, see *Seneca County Courier*, August 4, 1848. August 5, Martha Wright to Lucretia Mott, August 5, 1848, Garrison Papers, Smith College; August 15, *Seneca County Courier*, August 18, 1848.

⁶⁰⁴ Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, Seneca Falls, July 15, 1848. Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, 6:257.

was receiving “from six to a dozen letters daily” from those inquiring about the Buffalo Convention.⁶⁰⁵ In short, it is illogical to presume that Henry Stanton would have put aside a project of this magnitude to leave town, “thunderstruck” or otherwise.

The language used by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in crafting both the Ninth Resolution and the related passages in the Declaration of Sentiments also offer an intriguing window into Elizabeth’s thoughts about her own marriage in the years surrounding 1848. The Declaration of Sentiments charges: He has made her if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.” In a previously discussed, undated letter (attributed to 1847), Elizabeth wrote in very similar language: “We are in truth slaves. You and I are not so socially because we have husbands who look upon us as equals. But we are civilly dead.”⁶⁰⁶ Similarly, the Ninth Resolution’s emphasis on the word “duty” harkens back to Henry’s fights in 1838 and 1839 over the “duty” of abolitionists to go to the polls.

While it seems certain that Henry Stanton would have no reason to oppose the suffrage resolution, the fact remains that he most likely did not attend the Seneca Falls Convention.⁶⁰⁷ However, there is nothing to suggest that his absence was indicative of a lack of support of

⁶⁰⁵ Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, Seneca Falls, July 17, 1848. Hale-Chandler Papers, Dartmouth College.

⁶⁰⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Rebecca R. Eyster, [1847? May? 1?], Typed transcript, Theodore Stanton Collection, Douglass Library, Rutgers University. Also, a shorter version of the letter appears in Stanton and Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, p. II: 15-16.

⁶⁰⁷ It is possible that Henry attended the convention. The names of most of those in attendance, perhaps as many as three hundred over the course of the two-day convention, were not recorded. Only one hundred signatures were included in the printed report. For example, Henry’s lecture partner that summer, Ansel Bascom, attended the convention, but did not sign the Declaration. Bascom, however, participated in the debate and was therefore mentioned in the minutes, but his attendance would have gone otherwise unrecorded.

Elizabeth or her leadership in the new movement. Perhaps, as with the Stantons' neighbor, Ansel Bascom, who attended the convention and supported women's rights, but did not sign the Declaration of Sentiments, Henry was trying to avoid being publically associated with a controversial issue in the weeks before the Buffalo Convention.⁶⁰⁸ If one removes the unsubstantiated prejudicial inferences about Henry Stanton in the previously accepted narrative, it is even possible to credibly imagine that he arranged his schedule to be home during the convention to allow Elizabeth the freedom to attend the meetings without the children. In any event, rather than suggesting that Henry was not in favor of Elizabeth's suffrage resolution, the events of July and August 1848 reinforce the couple's shared commitment to reformism and serve to illustrate the fundamental influence of Henry's years of political agitation and practical tactics on Elizabeth's development as a reformer.

The Buffalo Convention

“In politics a man to be of any practical use to his country
or the world, must work with the multitudes.”

Frederick Douglass⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁸ See *Report of the Woman's Rights Convention Held at Seneca Falls, NY, July 19th and 20th, 1848*. (Rochester: John Dick, 1848) p. 6. See Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, pp. 809-10. for a list of signers. See Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, p. 144-45. for Bascom's political background and women's rights sentiment. It is also unknown whether or not Henry's sister and mother attended either the Seneca Falls or Rochester Conventions. The minutes of the Rochester convention only mention a handful of attendees by name, but over one hundred signed the Declaration. Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.

⁶⁰⁹ Quoted in Leslie Friedman Goldstein, "Morality & Prudence in the Statesmanship of Frederick Douglass: Radical as Reformer," *Polity* 16, no. 4 Summer (1984): p. 607.

Although the Barnburners, “Conscience” (antislavery) Whigs and Liberty Party members seemed to be in agreement that the Slave Power must be checked, how this coming together would work on a practical level was far from settled. Prior to the Buffalo Convention, Henry Stanton considered himself a Liberty man, supporting the candidacy of John P. Hale. However, after the Barnburner convention nominated Martin Van Buren, Stanton became increasingly concerned that it would be difficult for the three groups to agree on a candidate. On July 17, Henry explained to Hale that Van Buren’s nomination “will [be] pushed with zeal” by the Barnburners. The Whigs in New York were defecting to the cause in numbers as large as Massachusetts, but there was doubt that they could be reconciled to support Van Buren. Many Massachusetts Liberty men also expressed a growing concern that a true coalition would be impossible because they could never accept Van Buren. Lewis Tappan, on the other hand, distrusted both the Barnburners and the Conscience Whigs, and maintained that the Liberty Party had “nothing to gain by seeking an alliance with either” group.⁶¹⁰

At least a month before the opening of the Buffalo Convention, newspapers began speculating whether or not John P. Hale would step aside and resign his candidacy of the Liberty Party in order to allow for a fusion candidate at the convention.⁶¹¹ Stanton, too, sensed that were Hale’s candidacy pressed at the convention, the coalition might fall apart. Also on July 17, Stanton asked Hale whether or not he would be willing to step aside to preserve unity at the

⁶¹⁰ Lewis Tappan to John P. Hale, June 20, 1848. Hale-Chandler Papers, Dartmouth University. Tappan was particularly a concern at this time. Amos Tuck met with Tappan the same day that Tappan wrote to Hale, and Tuck’s very lengthy letter was riddled with Tappan’s fears. Amos Tuck to John P. Hale, June 21, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

⁶¹¹ Lewis Tappan to John P. Hale, July 3, 1848, Hale Chandler Papers, Dartmouth University.

Buffalo Convention.⁶¹² Hale agreed with Stanton and others that unity was more important than maintaining his position as the Liberty nominee, and he suggested that a committee comprised of Stanton, John G. Whittier, Amos Tuck, Samuel Lewis and Joshua Leavitt be authorized to “decide upon his duty as to withdrawing” at the Buffalo Convention.⁶¹³

Ten days before the Buffalo Convention, and because of his close contact with those in all camps of the coalition, Henry had already decided what his own priorities would be in Buffalo. Writing to his old friend, John G. Whittier, Henry very clearly explained why he planned to support Van Buren over Hale, if necessary, at the convention. Comparing the election of 1844 with the current contest, Stanton explained that “then the question was territorial extension; now it is slavery extension. Then the candidate was a slaveholder; now he is not.” According to Stanton, the abolitionists of 1848, unlike previous elections, were asked to join with those from all parties “rallying on independent ground” to challenge the Slave Power. To Stanton, the question at hand was a simple one; were the Liberty men willing to give up some of their “isms” to settle the question of “peaceful abolition or bloody revolution” once and for all? By voting for the nominee, whether Van Buren, Hale or another, Stanton asserted, “I do not give up any principle I ever held; and do not feel any danger of being lost hereafter.”⁶¹⁴

Henry’s position mirrored that of the candidate himself. Hale, already sensing potential problems in Buffalo between the Liberty men, cautioned Lewis Tappan, “Does not the present

⁶¹² Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, Seneca Falls, July 17, 1848. Hale-Chandler Papers, Dartmouth University. For a more detailed examination of the thoughts of others, including Tappan and Whittier, see Rice, “Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist”, pp. 295-99.

⁶¹³ Henry B. Stanton to John Greenleaf Whittier, Seneca Falls, July 31, 1848 in Albree, ed. *Whittier Correspondence from the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892*, pp. 102-04.

⁶¹⁴ Henry B. Stanton to John Greenleaf Whittier, Seneca Falls, July 31, 1848 in *Ibid*.

aspect of things present the question of duty in a somewhat different light from that in which it was to be viewed?" "Is it not better for us to enter into and endeavor to influence and guide [the choice of the convention] than to stand aloof and oppose," Hale continued.⁶¹⁵

When the Convention met on August 9, it was estimated that twenty thousand men and women were in attendance under a large tent erected in Lafayette Park in Buffalo's downtown.⁶¹⁶ Much of the important work, however, was conducted in closed-door sessions held in a small church nearby. These smaller meetings considered the platform, nominees and other questions before they were presented to the mass of attendees inside the tent. The group was comprised of an equal number of Whigs, Democrats and Liberty Party members, and the atmosphere was one of "enthusiasm and excitement."⁶¹⁷

Stanton was called to the podium by acclamation during the first morning session, and his remarks contained a strong call for unity against the Slave Power. Early that day, and behind the scenes, the Liberty men caucused and agreed to submit Hale's resignation provided the platform was agreeable to Liberty principles.⁶¹⁸ The stage was set for a harmonious selection of candidates.

⁶¹⁵ John P. Hale to Lewis Tappan, July 6, 1848. John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

⁶¹⁶ Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848; Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States*, p. 85. See also Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 300. For women attendees see [unknown] to John P. Hale, August 19, 1848. John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

⁶¹⁷ Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848; Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States*, p. 85. Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 300.

⁶¹⁸ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 301.

The platform of the new party was settled first. Although it was not as strong as previous Liberty Party platforms against slavery, antislavery was at its core. Those in attendance at the meetings, particularly the Whigs and Democrats, felt that the platform was decidedly Liberty in substance and they later refused to consider the Liberty candidate, Hale, for the Vice Presidential slot because they maintained, Liberty principles had so dominated the platform.⁶¹⁹

At the Conference Committee meeting, the wheels were set in motion for Van Buren's nomination. Salmon P. Chase withdrew the candidacy of the Ohio Whig, Judge John McLean, leaving only Hale and Van Buren in contention. Benjamin Butler, a prominent New York Barnburner, followed with a speech in support of Van Buren, including a promise that if elected, Van Buren would support a bill outlawing slavery in the nation's capital. A major objection by Liberty men thus removed, Stanton then presented Hale's letter offering to step aside in favor of the Convention's wishes. An informal ballot followed, and although many Liberty men continued to back Hale, it was clear that the New York Barnburner's support would carry the day for Van Buren.⁶²⁰ It was then decided by the Liberty men to send Joshua Leavitt to the convention's podium to propose the motion advancing Van Buren as the nominee.

Leavitt's address traced the history of the Liberty Party, moving many to tears and shouts of joy and ending with his own belief that "The Liberty Party is not dead but translated...we

⁶¹⁹ Reinhard O. Johnson, in comparing the 1848 and 1844 Liberty platforms, considers claims that Liberty did, in fact, control the platform "questionable." However, Stanton, Leavitt and other Liberty men at the Convention believed differently. See Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848; Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States*, p. 86. See also: Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., pp. 86-87. Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 305-06. and Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society. Henry Stanton voted for Van Buren on the informal ballot believing that "no one doubted he would be the nominee," and adding "I thought it wise that he should have a fair majority on the first trial."

have gained everything [by this movement], lost nothing.” He then moved that Martin Van Buren be unanimously nominated. The motion carried, and Whig Charles Francis Adams was selected as the Vice Presidential candidate.⁶²¹

Although the majority of Liberty men, with the exception of the remaining Liberty Leaguers, supported Van Buren in the election, not all were happy with the turn of events in Buffalo. Lewis Tappan, most notably, felt betrayed by both Leavitt and Stanton’s withdrawal of Hale’s candidacy. On September 25, 1848, Tappan wrote a scathing letter to his old friend and co-agitator calling his conduct at the meeting both dishonest and “injurious” to his [Stanton’s] reputation. No further correspondence between the two old friends survives.⁶²²

Despite the vigorous campaigning by Stanton and others, they were unable to deliver New York State’s electoral votes for Van Buren. There was also disappointment on a national level, as the Free Soil Party did not gain any electoral votes, although their vote totals in the free states were close to 15%. However, the campaign of 1848 brought the issue of slavery to a wider audience than ever before, and it exposed major rifts within the regional interests of the two major political parties.⁶²³ The fight was far from over.

⁶²¹ Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society. Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", pp. 305-06. Davis, *Joshua Leavitt: Evangelical Abolitionist*, pp. 247-66.

⁶²² Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848; Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States*, p. 88. Lewis Tappan to Henry B. Stanton, September 25, 1848, Lewis Tappan Letterbook, Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶²³ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 310. According to Reinhard O. Johnson, Van Buren came in second in Massachusetts, New York and Vermont. Wisconsin and Michigan totals were less, but close to 16% of the total electorate in those two states. Johnson, *The Liberty Party, 1840-1848; Antislavery Third-Party Politics in the United States*, pp. 89-90.

Epilogue: Beyond Seneca Falls

The events of 1848 caused Henry Stanton to question the effectiveness of third party politics, and he employed an entirely different strategy going forward. Believing that the so-called Free Democracy (Barnburners) of New York offered the best chance to swing one of the major parties toward an antislavery position, beginning in 1849, Henry allied with that party.

On November 6, 1849, Henry Stanton was elected to the New York State Senate from the 25th district, which included Seneca and Yates Counties as a Barnburner Democrat.⁶²⁴ A little over a month after the beginning of the Second Session of his term, on February 9, 1851 the couple's fourth son, Theodore was born with a dislocated collarbone.⁶²⁵ Although the baby's

⁶²⁴ See Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist" p. 45 and Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, Seneca Falls, November 8, 1849, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, 7:008.

⁶²⁵ For the date, see Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 178. note 1. Griffith mistakenly notes that he was born the following day. Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 66. Perhaps some of the confusion is due to Elizabeth's account of Daniel's (Neil) infancy. In her autobiography, Elizabeth devotes an entire chapter to "Motherhood," and within her recollections, describes her frustrations with baby nurses, doctors and parental advice manuals. Within this chapter, Elizabeth relates a story of her son's dislocated collarbone and the way in which she devised—against doctor's orders—her own form of bandages. Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*, pp. 108-27. This account flows from an earlier discussion of baby nurses, presumably from her experiences following Neil's birth, leading readers to assume that the two incidents referred to the same child. Complicating the matter, an incorrectly attributed date on a letter from Elizabeth to Henry published in the 1922 edition of Stanton's letters added to the confusion by placing the incident in 1842. Letter incorrectly dated March 16, 1842 published in Stanton and Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, p. 8. The correct date is February 24, 1851. Elizabeth's account in her autobiography does not mention Henry at all, and the baby's dislocated collarbone is attributed to Neil by both Lutz and Griffith. Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815-1902*, pp. 36-37. Griffith, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*, p. 69. However, had either biographer seriously engaged with Henry's letters to Elizabeth, they would have undoubtedly noticed a serious inconsistency with these accounts. Following the birth of their fourth son, Theodore Weld Stanton in 1851, there are several existent letters relating to Henry's concern about his son's dislocated collarbone. In an attempt to reassure Elizabeth, one letter pointedly

shoulder would heal quickly from Elizabeth's own doctoring, the other Stanton children were shaken by the ordeal and were concerned about the impact of the growing number of children on the small salary their father received. "Gat asked me what Father would do if he had six boys," wrote Elizabeth, "They seemed quite relieved when I told them I thought you could feed and clothe little Theodore."⁶²⁶

From available sources, it would appear that during his Senate term, Henry Stanton was not only a supporter of the women's rights efforts of his wife, but also an agitator in his own right. On February 14, 1851, Henry introduced two petitions in the Senate for the enfranchisement of women, one from Seneca Falls and the other from the neighboring town of Waterloo.⁶²⁷ Writing to Elizabeth the next day, Henry described the derision these petitions provoked upon their reception in the Senate, telling her that when presented, "two Senators tried to throw ridicule upon them."⁶²⁸ According to Henry's letter, one of the displeased Senators suggested the petitions be referred to the Committee on Federal Relations, while the other, wanted to assign them to an *ad hoc* Select Committee comprised only of Senator Stanton. However, such an arrangement was not acceptable to Henry who "pounced upon them and they

states, "I have often heard of the limbs of children being dislocated at birth & they are never thought serious." Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Albany, NY, February 20, 1851, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress. Had this been their second child with a dislocated collarbone, surely Henry would have reminded Elizabeth that Neil's bones had been successfully mended. As further evidence, in the incorrectly dated letter, Elizabeth mentions a character from a Dickens novel that was not published until 1846, making it impossible for the child in question to have been Neil who was born in 1842.

⁶²⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Henry B. Stanton, Seneca Falls, [February 27,] 1851. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York.

⁶²⁷ *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session*, p. 175.

⁶²⁸ Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Albany, February 15, 1851. Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

backed out.”⁶²⁹ The petitions were ultimately referred to the Senate committee of the Judiciary, where despite Henry’s efforts, they seemingly languished, as the committee’s report was not introduced during the Senate term.⁶³⁰ The suffrage petitions introduced by Henry did not originate with Elizabeth who had given birth only a few days before, but from other men or women in his constituency and illustrate Henry’s support of woman suffrage beyond the confines of his own household.⁶³¹ Although the petitions introduced by Henry did not result in a serious debate of the issue of women’s enfranchisement in the Senate during that session, because of Henry’s fight on the Senate floor, when the only other similar petition was presented a month later, its introduction was not met with the same hostilities that greeted Henry’s proposals. When the Hon. Asahel Stone from the 20th District introduced similar petitions from his constituents, because of the precedent set by Henry, Stone’s petitions were referred directly to the Judiciary Committee.⁶³²

Within two months, Henry was facing the biggest political crisis of his life. A bill proposed by the Whig majority in the Senate had forced dramatic action by Henry and the Barnburner Democrats. The measure, which had already passed in the Whig controlled Assembly, called for the State of New York to expend upwards of eight million dollars for

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session*, p. 175. Sadly, such petitions are no longer existent. A fire in 1911 at the State Capital in Albany destroyed nearly all historical government documents.

⁶³¹ It is possible that the petitions introduced by Sen. Stanton and one of those introduced by Sen. Stone were from men. *The Journal of the Senate* noted that they were from “inhabitants” of the district, while the second of Sen. Stone’s petitions were from “ladies.” Ibid., p. 331. Further, Henry’s letter does not indicate that he introduced “her” (Elizabeth’s) petitions, but rather “two petitions.”

⁶³² Ibid., p. 269 and p. 331.

expansion of the Erie Canal.⁶³³ As all appropriation bills required a three-fifths quorum for passage, on April 17, 1851 twelve of the elected members of the body resigned their seats in the Senate in order to stall a vote on the canal enlargement, among them was Henry Stanton.⁶³⁴ Special elections to fill the vacant seats were called for almost immediately, and set for May 27; while the Governor called for a special session of the Senate that would begin on June 10.⁶³⁵

Henry sat for reelection in a hotly contested district. The local Whig paper, *The Seneca County Courier*, referred to Henry as a “runaway” and “Jacobin” and charged him with neglecting the interests of his constituents while seeking to “obtain more notoriety and more pay.”⁶³⁶ Henry’s opponent, Josiah B. Williams, received help from an unexpected source – Elizabeth’s first-cousin and Henry’s old friend, Gerrit Smith.⁶³⁷ Smith was in favor of the canal enlargement project and agreed to make several speeches in Henry’s district for Williams. The announcement of Smith’s speeches did not fail to note the personal connection between Smith and Henry:

It is significant of the importance of the approaching contest that such a man as Gerrit Smith should feel it incumbent on him as a citizen of the State, having a deep and abiding interest in the stability of our Government, to take the field in

⁶³³ Ibid., p. 603. See also Stanton, *Random Recollections*, pp. 167-68.

⁶³⁴ *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session*, pp 600-02. On April 16, Henry had attempted to postpone the third and final reading of the canal bill, but the motion did not carry. The resignations occurred the following morning.

⁶³⁵ Ibid., pp. 607 and 11.

⁶³⁶ "One of the Renegades in a Fix," *Seneca County Courier*, May 15 1851. See also *Seneca County Courier*, May 22, 1851.

⁶³⁷ Daniel Cady was also against his son-in-law. Harriot Stanton Blatch and Alma Lutz, *Challenging Years: The Memoirs of Harriot Stanton Blatch* New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940, p. 35.

opposition to the re-election of Mr. Stanton, who is his intimate personal friend.—
He is actuated by considerations far above those of a private or personal nature.⁶³⁸

Compounding Henry's embarrassment, Elizabeth, not realizing the furor it would cause, attended one of Smith's speeches and walked out with her cousin, prompting the local newspapers to charge that Henry's "family and friends were against him, even his wife disapproving of his course."⁶³⁹

To make matters still worse, Elizabeth began accompanying Henry to his speaking engagements literally wearing her latest reform effort in plain sight. Elizabeth had recently donned the new "bloomer costume" which became a hot topic of press coverage on its own. Even some "good Democrats" said they could not vote for a candidate whose wife would wear such attire.⁶⁴⁰ Still, Elizabeth continued to appear with Henry at campaign speeches and events, in her bloomer outfit, prompting calls of "breeches" whenever she appeared and eventually her dress prompted a "chorus of street urchins" to recite this verse as she walked down the street:

Heigh! ho! the carrion crow,
Mrs. Stanton's all the go;
Twenty tailors take the stiches,
Mrs. Stanton wears the breeches.⁶⁴¹

Although Henry was fighting for his political future, he did not try to stop Elizabeth from pursuing her chosen course of reform, which at this time was focused on dress reform, even though it provided his political enemies with additional fodder with which to attack his already

⁶³⁸ *Seneca County Courier*, May, 15, 1851.

⁶³⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith Miller, Seneca Falls, June 4, 1851 in Stanton and Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, pp. 28-31.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

shaky candidacy. Elizabeth was firmly behind Henry's efforts writing, "I would sooner see every relative and friend I have on the face of the earth blown into thin air...than have had Henry mortified by a defeat in this election."⁶⁴²

Even the Stanton children understood the importance of the election. Six year old Gat Stanton, firmly behind his father, anxiously asked his mother who was bathing the newborn Theodore, "Mother, is the baby for or against father?"⁶⁴³ Although the final election results were not immediately available, in the end, Henry won by four votes, down from a comfortable majority of 800 in 1849.⁶⁴⁴ The other "runaways" did not fare as well. Of the six members standing for reelection from canal districts, only Henry was victorious.⁶⁴⁵ While Elizabeth was "rejoicing with her whole soul," Henry's former opponent, Josiah Williams, was preparing to contest the results.⁶⁴⁶ On June 28, the committee on privileges and elections met to decide whether or not the Williams case had merit.⁶⁴⁷ Williams claimed that a variety of fraudulent activities had given Henry the election: charges ranging from "illegal voting and improperly counting double votes given for said Stanton, and destroying legal votes for Josiah B. Williams,"

⁶⁴² Ibid., p. 29.

⁶⁴³ Blatch and Lutz, *Challenging Years: The Memoirs of Harriot Stanton Blatch*, p. 35.

⁶⁴⁴ Henry's *Random Recollections* states that he won by five votes. However, official state documentation lists four. See also, *Seneca County Courier*, June 5, 1851. Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 168. For the 1849 totals, see Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, Seneca Falls, November 8, 1849, Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, 7:008

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 167.

⁶⁴⁶ Stanton and Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*, p. 27.

⁶⁴⁷ -*Documents of the Senate of the State of New York, Seventy-Fourth Session*, 3 vols., vol. 3 Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851, Document No. 85. 15 pages.

were cited in the complaint.⁶⁴⁸ The complaint was eventually dropped, and the incident did not prevent Henry from taking his seat when the special session met. The canal bill passed during the special session on June 24, 1851.⁶⁴⁹ Although Henry enthusiastically believed that as a politician he could effect change, the financial needs of his family took precedence over his personal ambitions. Explaining his refusal to run for reelection that November, Henry simply stated that he “could not afford to be a member.”⁶⁵⁰

In the summer of 1853, Henry’s last surviving brother, Robert Lodowick Stanton, together with his wife Anna and son Robert visited the Stanton families in Seneca Falls and Rochester. Robert L. Stanton was an ordained Presbyterian minister, and he was serving as a pastor and a divinity instructor at Oakland College in Mississippi.⁶⁵¹ Although Robert’s son, also named Robert, was only six years old at the time of his visit to New York, the experiences he had on this trip left a lasting impression.

In Rochester, the young boy met his paternal grandmother, Susanna, for the first time. Robert recollected many years later in a family history he compiled for his children, that his grandmother was a “Grand dame.” She was “tall, dignified and commanding; strict to severity, earnest and of indomitable will, and yet at the same time, kind, sympathetic and affectionate.” Then in her 72nd year and within six months of her death, Robert recalled only one remark she

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., Document No. 85, page 4.

⁶⁴⁹ *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session*, p. 772. In the days before the bill’s final passage, Henry proposed a dozen amendments and changes (only one of which was accepted) to the bill in order to prevent what he saw as extensive State spending.

⁶⁵⁰ Stanton, *Random Recollections*, p. 170.

⁶⁵¹ — — —, “Notes from My Note Books.”

made during their visit. When the conversation turned to a discussion of nervous people, Susanna quipped, “thank God [I] was born before nerves were invented.”⁶⁵²

Susanna Brewster Stanton died on October 30, 1853 at the age of 72. Her funeral, held on November 1, took place at the home of her daughter Frances Avery. Although her death notice identified Susanna as the mother of H. B. and R. L. Stanton, no evidence has been located whether or not either Henry or Robert’s families attended her funeral.⁶⁵³

Generally speaking, the surviving correspondence within the Stanton family has undoubtedly been culled as the generations continued. Henry Stanton was a voluminous letter writer, often composing, and likely receiving over a dozen letters per week. To date, only about 350 of Henry Stanton’s letters have been located, and only a handful of those survive that were addressed to him. Although Elizabeth’s correspondence has fared much better, the editing and transcribing of her letters by her children after her death, particularly those dated during the antebellum period, are often an amalgamation of several letters, sometimes originally written to more than one correspondent, making it difficult to know for certain the nature of her relationships with her family. To add to the historians’ dilemma, Elizabeth’s awareness and advance protection of her historical reputation was likely her and her children’s greatest censor. Because of this, we will probably never know for certain exactly how much and in what ways the example set by Susanna Brewster Stanton of a woman of “indomitable will” asserting her rights impacted Elizabeth’s understanding of religious and civil rights for women and how much Susanna might have inspired in her daughter-in-law.

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ *Rochester Daily Democrat*, November 1, 1853, and *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, November 1, 1853. Mt. Hope Cemetery Records show Susanna’s cause of death as lung inflammation. During the summer of 1853, Susanna also sustained a fall that severely affected her right arm and hand.

However, it seems likely that Susanna and Elizabeth shared more than a passing acquaintance, particularly after Elizabeth moved from Boston to Seneca Falls in 1847. Rochester was a short train ride away from Seneca Falls, and it is highly doubtful that the two women – related by marriage and tied together by their reform activities – would not have had a great deal to talk about and share. Susanna had asserted her rights when Elizabeth was only a child of seven and she helped establish the Rochester Ladies Antislavery Society when Elizabeth was a young woman. By the time they met, Susanna had already braved the disapproval of her family and neighbors and accepted excommunication by the church elders because she believed it was her right to seek a divorce in an era when divorce was rare, rather than live as a *femme covert* to an abusive husband. While Susanna Brewster Stanton's example cannot provide an explanation for her daughter-in-law's work for women's rights or even her radical beliefs in divorce reform, it would be an equally grave error to conclude that Susanna's real life experiences were of no consequence as Elizabeth's reformism was developing.⁶⁵⁴

Henry and Elizabeth's family continued to grow during the 1850s with the births of two daughters; Margaret in 1852 and Harriot in 1856 and their fifth son and seventh child Robert in 1859.⁶⁵⁵ The children enjoyed an environment rich with intellectual stimulation as Harriot would later write that the "dining table was a platform for debate." Elizabeth served as the "arbitrator on moral and sociological issues," while Henry acted as "referee in political and historical disputes."⁶⁵⁶ Although married for nearly 18 years, on Valentine's Day, 1858, Henry wrote

⁶⁵⁴ The only surviving mention in Elizabeth's letters concerns a letter written by Theodore Weld in 1834 that Susanna gave to Elizabeth as a keepsake.

⁶⁵⁵ Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 608.

⁶⁵⁶ Blatch and Lutz, *Challenging Years: The Memoirs of Harriot Stanton Blatch*, pp. 35.

Elizabeth from Washington, DC, “I send you this my Valentine, in the form of the expression of my ardent attachment to you... you may look for me by Tuesday next. So, open wide your arms, for I shall rush into them with all the impulse which love and longing can inspire.”⁶⁵⁷

During the late 1850s, once again practicing law full time, Henry had spent much of his time in Washington, DC and Albany on legal business. However, he was still very much involved with the goings on in Seneca Falls. Writing to Elizabeth on a snowy evening in 1857, he asks her to remind their hired help to “tread the snow around the apple trees” and “to haul in the wood.”⁶⁵⁸ But the couple’s time apart was no doubt difficult for both of them. Pressured to buy tickets to a ball for a visiting dignitary while in Washington, Henry wrote to Elizabeth that “he could not bear to go without her,” so he sold the tickets to an associate. As the tickets were non-transferable and assigned to Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Stanton, Henry explained to Elizabeth, “I suppose that some dashing young belle at this present moment is being pointed out as the distinguished advocate of free suffrage for woman, from New York.”⁶⁵⁹

In the months leading up to the Presidential election of 1860, both Henry and Elizabeth actively campaigned for Lincoln and the new Republican Party. On September 10, representing the women of Seneca Falls, Elizabeth presented a banner to a local chapter of a young

⁶⁵⁷ Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Washington, DC, February 14, 1858, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶⁵⁸ Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Willards Hotel, Washington, DC, January 28, 1857, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶⁵⁹ Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Washington, DC, [February 17, 1859], Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Republican marching club called the “Wide Awakes.”⁶⁶⁰ At the presentation, Elizabeth gave a speech reminding the Wide Awakes that she was an abolitionist and that the group must not be contented to merely stop the spread of slavery, but to oppose its existence entirely.⁶⁶¹ The speech was well received and two weeks later, on September 24, the Wide Awakes held a drill at which Henry was in attendance. Later that evening, after Henry had returned home, the entire marching group, resplendent with lanterns and music, arrived at the Stanton home. Lamps were immediately lit, and the group marched through the gate in single file until their Captain yelled, “halt.” Henry, “doffing his hat, & bowing most gracefully, said, ‘Gentlemen Wide awakes— we welcome you to our home— You are here in honor of Mrs. Stanton, and she no doubt is ready to extend to you a hearty greeting—I have the pleasure of introducing you to Mrs. Stanton.’” The group called for “three cheers for Mrs. Stanton,” three more for “Mr. Stanton,” and three more for “the little Stantons.” After the marching corps had left, the Glee Club arrived and was invited in for dessert. When the household was finally silent, the family noticed that Theodore, then age nine, had somehow managed to join the first procession’s march. He later returned with a neighbor’s son and mother just before eleven that night.⁶⁶²

Henry left the following day for a “Republican Mass Meeting” in Amsterdam, New York and continued canvassing the state for Lincoln, sometimes delivering two major speeches per

⁶⁶⁰ The Wide Awakes were a young band of Republican supporters who carried lanterns during ritualized nighttime processions for their candidates, hence their name. See Gordon, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, p. 444.

⁶⁶¹ “Mrs. Stanton and The “Wide-Awakes”,” *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, October 10 1860.

⁶⁶² Susan B. Anthony to Henry B. Stanton, Jr. and Gerrit S. Stanton, Seneca Falls, September 27, 1860, in — — —, ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: In the School of Anti-Slavery 1840-1866*, pp. 441-44.

day.⁶⁶³ On October 1, Henry wrote to Elizabeth telling her to “work some [John Greenleaf] Whittier into your speech” to the Wide Awakes, and he would see that it was published in the *New York Tribune*. Eventually, at least four newspapers printed the speech. Embedded within both the middle of the handwritten, presumed original manuscript, as well as prominently at the end of the speech are several lines from Whittier’s *The Crisis*. Without the existence of this brief note from Henry, it is likely that any such direct help he offered to Elizabeth would be entirely absent from the historical record.⁶⁶⁴ From it we know that as late as twenty years into their marriage, and a full twelve years after Elizabeth called the first women’s rights convention, Henry still provided guidance and helped to promote not only Elizabeth, but also her causes.

Following Lincoln’s victory in 1860, Henry was rewarded with a political appointment as Deputy Collector of the Customs House in New York.⁶⁶⁵ The Stanton family left Seneca Falls and would spend most of their remaining years in the New York City area. Throughout the Civil War, Henry continued to speak and write for the enlistment of black troops and at the War’s end, he supported the Reconstruction amendments granting black suffrage. By 1870 and the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, Henry Stanton had spent 35 years working for a cause that had finally been won. He continued to editorialize for candidates and issues he supported as an editor for the *New York Sun* until his death in 1887.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶³ Ibid., p. 443 and Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 371.

⁶⁶⁴ No other works have discussed this letter or the revisions Elizabeth made to her speech as a result of Henry’s advice. No copy of her original speech survives.

⁶⁶⁵ Rice, "Henry B. Stanton as a Political Abolitionist", p. 384.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 405, 13-15.

Conclusion

After almost forty years of marriage, Elizabeth wrote to a friend, “A man’s love brings into a woman’s existence an inspiration, a completeness, a satisfaction that a mother’s cannot. A true conjugal union is the highest kind of human love,--divine, creative in the realm of thought as well as in the material world.”⁶⁶⁷ Elizabeth’s advice on the eve of her friend’s daughter’s wedding undoubtedly came from knowing rather than merely an intellectual understanding.

Throughout the first two decades of their marriage, Elizabeth learned from Henry how to practically organize and execute a reform agenda. From its first days, the marriage had brought her into the upper echelon of male and female reformers and high government officials with whom she would continue to work to advance the cause of women’s rights until her death in 1902. Elizabeth’s family by marriage provided her with examples and models of male and female reformism that were far more compatible with her life’s work than any member of her own family of origin, including the idealistic Gerrit Smith. Similarly, Henry’s advocacy of political action over Garrisonian moral suasion, profoundly influenced Elizabeth’s understanding and conviction that woman suffrage was the lynchpin of female equality.

Certainly the tactical examples and social mobility provided by the marriage alone would not be sufficient to explain the vision and intellect that Elizabeth would bring to the women’s rights movement. However, as Henry noted shortly after they met, had Elizabeth’s marital life

⁶⁶⁷ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Lillie Devereux Blake, Washington, DC, January 6, 1879, Theodore Stanton Collection, E. C. Stanton Papers, Douglass Library, Rutgers University.

not been supportive of her “superior mind,” it is equally plausible that she might not have emerged as “the American visionary thinker of the nineteenth century.”⁶⁶⁸

Henry Stanton devoted much of his life to achieving social and political equality for African American slaves, often at the expense of his health and his finances. His pragmatic strategies enlarged support for his cause, but often alienated him from former allies. By 1860, the political coalition Henry helped establish in the 1840s enjoyed broad support in the North, and resulted in the election of Abraham Lincoln. While his life as an agitator came to an end in the late 1860s, Elizabeth’s full time career as a reformer was just beginning. Although Henry Stanton oftentimes helped his wife pursue her own reform goals and shared in many of them, perhaps we can best understand Henry’s thoughts on women’s rights through Elizabeth’s words about her own life’s calling:

Two years ago, I bound myself with some of my friends and together we resolved to devote our lives to the elevation of woman. It is the branch of moral reform most dear to me. I feel deeply for the slave, the drunkard and the outcast, but deeper still for the unhappy woman.⁶⁶⁹

Thus, while for Henry Stanton abolition was the moral reform most “dear” to him, as we have seen, he too “felt deeply” for the drunkard and the unhappy woman.

Historian Ellen Carol DuBois argued that women in the antislavery movement “laid the groundwork for a feminist movement by articulating a set of demands for women’s rights and by acquiring the skills and self-confidence necessary to offer political leadership to other

⁶⁶⁸ Vivian Gornick, *The Solitude of Self: Thinking About Elizabeth Cady Stanton* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005, p. 9.

⁶⁶⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Rebecca R. Eyster, [1847? May? 1?]. Typed transcript, Theodore Stanton Collection, Douglass Library, Rutgers University.

women.”⁶⁷⁰ To this I would add, that the direct contributions of Henry Stanton and his family to women’s rights, coupled with the respect, guidance and support they provided Elizabeth and her reformism are so linked together, that we cannot truly appreciate or understand the origins of the American woman suffrage movement and of its leader, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, without them.

⁶⁷⁰ DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage the Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America 1848-1869*, p. 19.

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