

Celebrating Women's History 2001

Reclaiming the Past in Order to Rewrite the Future



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SEATTLE EDUCATION FUND**

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This month we again celebrate women's history and National Women's History Month.

The vast majority of people of our time are unaware of the great contributions made by women in the past. The contributions of women are woven deep into the fabric of American life and ought to be recorded as such. It is impossible to ascertain just how much history has been lost because it pertained to women and had therefore been deemed unimportant. Time and again women thought they were trailblazing new paths only to learn that there had been women before us upon whose experiences we could have built superhighways.

Our goal is a simple one: to write women back into history; to create an awareness of the contributions and accomplishments of women in every phase of our American way of life. Our amazing foremothers dared to succeed, dared to question when the prevailing prejudiced notion was that women should neither dare, nor succeed, nor question. And we must continue to tell their stories, for the confidence-robbers of old have not gone away.

If all we know is a womanless history, we might get the erroneous idea that only women of today are capable of great accomplishments. All the attributes we prize today are not unique to an era, any more than they are to a gender. The study of the accomplishments of women not only corrects the historical record but negates the centuries-old notion that women were inferior for "good reasons." Girls need to know this; so do boys. In his introduction to *Not for Ourselves Alone* by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns, Paul Barnes expresses the belief very well when he says: "I grew more and more convinced that had this history been well known, had every eighth-grade textbook had a chapter on the 1848 Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention and another on Stanton and Anthony's work for woman suffrage, my mother and my sisters might have been aware that other women had been asking for more choices in their lives, for more equality with men, for a change in the restrictive social rules by which they lived, might have recognized some kindred spirits and taken on Stanton and Anthony as their role models, their heroines."

This year we highlight writings that cover a span of over 125 years. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *Solitude of Self* was written near the end of her long, active life. The surprising views of George Middleton's *What Feminism Means to Me* express an insight on the broad ramifications of feminism that could sound like cutting-edge philosophy in the 21st century. And, finally, we present two couples' attempts to form egalitarian relationships within marriage. One was written in West Brookfield, Massachusetts in 1855; the other, in Seattle in 1972.

The committee has made no attempt to edit the documents that were used. The wording, the sentence and paragraph structures, and the spelling are from the original texts. Consequently, some of the writing may seem archaic and strange.



The Solitude of Self

Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) was the eighth child born to an family in New York State. Her father was a lawyer, politician, and judge. Her mother was the daughter of an American Revolutionary officer and a member of a wealthy prominent family in New York State. Elizabeth received a superior education at home, at the Johnstown Academy, and at Emma Willard's Troy Female Seminary, from which she graduated in 1832. From her teenage years she was permitted to observe her father's law practice. She remembered when he explained to married women the details of laws that deprived them of their property and of their children. She returned home from school to become involved in the abolitionist movement with members of her extended family. Through this, she met Henry Stanton, a prominent abolitionist and liberal journalist ten years older than she. From the first he indicated his ability to be supportive of an unconventional wife when he agreed to omit the word "obey" from their wedding ceremony and agreed when she insisted on the continued use of her maiden name.

The Stantons spent their honeymoon traveling to London for the World Anti-Slavery Conference where another milestone occurred in Elizabeth's life. All of the women, including Quaker leader Lucretia Mott, were banished from the convention

because of their gender. This proved a learning experience for the young Stanton for instead of listening to the men's speeches in the meeting, she spent her days in London parks walking with the older Mott. From Mott she learned that a life dedicated to revolutionary change could also include personal happiness. The two women resolved that they would follow up on their discussions when they returned to America, but eight years passed before this was possible. After returning home, the Stantons spent some years in Johnstown and Boston, Massachusetts and finally settled in Seneca Falls, New York. Stanton spoke frequently on the subject of women's rights and circulated petitions that helped secure in March 1848 passage by the New York legislature of a bill granting property rights to married women.

In July 1848 Stanton and Mott met again and together with three other women issued a call for a women's rights convention to meet in Seneca Falls on July 19 and 20. At the meeting, Stanton introduced her Declaration of Sentiments, modeled on the Declaration of Independence, that detailed the inferior political and legal status of women and that, in stating very specific reforms, including female enfranchisement, effectively launched the women's rights movement in the United States. From 1851 she worked closely with Susan B. Anthony and for the next 50 years planned campaigns, spoke before legislative bodies, and addressed gatherings in conventions and in the streets. Together these two women formed one of the most remarkable working relationships and friendships in American history—recognizing from the first their complementary strengths that enabled them to accomplish more than would have been possible working alone. Stanton was the better orator and writer and Anthony was the better organizer and tactician. As the two women described their relationship in the writing of the first three volumes of *History of Woman Suffrage* 30 years later, Elizabeth fashioned the thunderbolts and Susan threw them.

Seneca Falls became the center of the women's movement in the years before the Civil War for no other reason than that it was the home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In the 17 years between 1842 and 1859, Stanton had seven children. This influenced everything she did, for she was either pregnant or nursing or both during the formative years of the women's movement. Consequently, leaders in the movement had to go to Seneca Falls to converse with her. Susan Anthony spent so much time at the Stanton's home during this time that the children called her "Aunt Susan."

In 1854 Stanton received an unprecedented invitation to address the New York legislature. Her speech finally bore results six years later in 1860 with new legislation granting married women rights to their wages and to equal guardianship of their children. She scandalized her most ardent supporters in suggesting that drunkenness be made sufficient cause for divorce. Liberalized divorce laws and equal educational opportunities for girls and women remained among her principal issues. In 1878 Stanton drafted a federal suffrage amendment that was introduced in every Congress thereafter until substantially the same language was adopted in 1919. Following her resignation as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1892, she published *The Woman's Bible* in two volumes in 1895-1898 and an autobiography, *Eighty Years and More*, in 1898. She died in New York City in 1902.

Stanton delivered the following speech "*The Solitude of Self*" at the convention at which she resigned the presidency of the National American Woman Suffrage Association on January 18, 1892. She also delivered it before the Judiciary Committees of the House and Senate. Anthony did not like the speech at first, but Stanton thought it "the best thing I have ever written" and it remains one of the most moving statements of feminism of any age. Stanton's advanced age (77 years) and her political isolation help to explain the speech's wearied tone, but her ultimate message was a triumphant one, a powerful defense of the feminist philosophy by which she had lived her life and made most of her political decisions.

The Solitude of Self Elizabeth Cady Stanton January 18, 1892

The point I wish plainly to bring before you on this occasion is the individuality of each human soul; our Protestant idea, the right of individual conscience and judgment; our republican idea, individual citizenship. In discussing the rights of woman, we are to consider, first, what belongs to her as an individual, in a world of her own, the arbiter of her own destiny, an imaginary Robinson Crusoe, with her woman, Friday, on a solitary island. Her rights under such

circumstances are to use all her faculties for her own safety and happiness.

Secondly, if we consider her as a citizen, as a member of a great nation, she must have the same rights as all other members, according to the fundamental principles of our Government.

Thirdly, viewed as a woman, an equal factor in civilization, her rights and duties are still the same—individual happiness and development.

Fourthly, it is only the incidental relations of life, such as mother, wife, sister, daughter, which may involve some special duties and training....

The strongest reason for giving woman all the opportunities for higher education, for the full development of her faculties, her forces of mind and body; for giving her the most enlarged freedom of thought and action; a complete emancipation from all forms of bondage, of custom, dependence, superstition; from all the crippling influences of fear—is the solitude and personal responsibility of her own individual life. The strongest reason why we ask for woman a voice in the government under which she lives; in the religion she is asked to believe; equality in social life, where she is the chief factor; a place in the trades and professions, where she may earn her bread, is because of her birthright to self-sovereignty; because, as an individual, she must rely on herself. No matter how much women prefer to lean, to be protected and supported, nor how much men desire to have them do so, they must make the voyage of life alone, and for safety in an emergency, they must know something of the laws of navigation. To guide our own craft, we must be captain, pilot, engineer; with chart and compass to stand at the wheel; to watch the winds and waves, and know when to take in the sail, and to read the signs in the firmament over all. It matters not whether the solitary voyager is man or woman; nature, having endowed them equally, leaves them to their own skill and judgment in the hour of danger, and, if not equal to the occasion, alike they perish.

To appreciate the importance of fitting every human soul for independent action, think for a moment of the immeasurable solitude of self. We come into the world alone, unlike all who have gone before us, we leave it alone, under circumstances peculiar to ourselves. No mortal ever has been, no mortal ever will be like the soul just launched on the sea of life. There can never again be just such a combination of prenatal influences; never again just such environments as make up the infancy, youth and manhood of this one. Nature never repeats herself, and the possibilities of one human soul will never be found in another. No one ever found two blades of ribbon grass alike, and no one will ever find two human beings alike. Seeing, then, what must be the infinite diversity in human character, we can in a measure appreciate the loss to a nation when any large class of the people is uneducated and underrepresented in government.

We ask for the complete development of every individual, first, for his own benefit and happiness.... We ask for complete individual development for the general good; for the consensus of the competent on the whole round of human interest, on all questions of national life; and here each man must bear his share of the general burden.

We ask no sympathy from others in the anxiety and agony of a broken friendship or shattered love. When death sunders our nearest ties, alone we sit in the shadow of our affliction. Alike amid the greatest triumphs and tragedies of life, we walk alone. On the divine heights of human attainment, eulogized and worshipped as a hero or saint, we stand alone. In ignorance, poverty and vice, as a pauper or criminal, alone we starve or steal; alone we suffer the sneers and rebuffs of our fellows; alone we are hunted and hounded through dark courts and alleys, in by-ways and high-ways; alone we stand in the judgment seat; alone in the prison cell we lament our crimes and misfortunes; alone we expiate them on the gallows. In hours like these we realize the awful solitude of individual life, its pains, its penalties, its responsibilities; hours in which the youngest and most helpless are thrown on their own resources for guidance and consolation. Seeing, then, that life must ever be a march and a battle, that each soldier must be equipped for his own protection, it is the height of cruelty to rob the individual of a single natural right.

To throw obstacles in the way of a complete education is like putting out the eyes; to deny the rights of property is like cutting off the hands. To refuse political equality is to rob the ostracized of all self-respect; of credit in the market place; of recompense in the world of work, of a voice in choosing those who make and administer the law, a choice in the jury before whom they are tried, and in the judge who decides their punishment. [Think of]...woman's position! Robbed of her natural rights, handicapped by law and custom at every turn, yet compelled to fight her own battles, and in the emergencies of life to fall back on herself for protection....

The young wife and mother, at the head of some establishment, with a kind husband to shield her from the adverse winds of life, with wealth, fortune and position, has a certain harbor of safety, secure against the ordinary ills of life. But to manage a household, have a desirable influence in society, keep her friends and the affections of her husband, train her children and servants well, she must have rare common sense, wisdom, diplomacy, and a knowledge of human nature. To do all this, she needs the cardinal virtues and the strong points of character that the most successful statesman possesses. An uneducated woman trained to dependence, with no resources in herself, must make a failure of any position in life. But society says women do not need a knowledge of the world, the liberal training that experience in public life must give, all the advantages of collegiate education; but when for the lack of all this, the woman's happiness is wrecked, alone she bears her humiliation; and the solitude of the weak and ignorant is indeed pitiable. In the wild chase for the prizes of life, they are ground to powder.

In age, when the pleasures of youth are passed, children grown up, married and gone, the hurry and bustle of life in a measure over, when the hands are weary of active service, when the old arm chair and the fireside are the chosen resorts,

then men and women alike must fall back on their own resources. If they cannot find companionship in books, if they have no interest in the vital questions of the hour, no interest in watching the consummation of reforms with which they might have been identified, they soon pass into their dotage. The more fully the faculties of the mind are developed and kept in use, the longer the period of vigor and active interest in all around us continues. If, from a life-long participation in public affairs, a woman feels responsible for the laws regulating our system of education, the discipline of our jails and prisons, the sanitary condition of our private homes, public buildings and thoroughfares, an interest in commerce, finance, our foreign relations, in any or all these questions, her solitude will at least be respectable, and she will not be driven to gossip or scandal for entertainment.

The chief reason for opening to every soul the doors to the whole round of human duties and pleasures is the individual development thus attained, the resources thus provided under all circumstances to mitigate the solitude that at times must come to everyone....In as much, then, as woman shares equally the joys and sorrows of time and eternity, is it not the height of presumption in man to propose to represent her at the ballot box and the throne of grace, to do her voting in the state, her praying in the church, and to assume the position of high priest at the family altar?

Nothing strengthens the judgment and quickens the conscience like individual responsibility. Nothing adds such dignity to character as the recognition of one's self-sovereignty; the right to an equal place, everywhere conceded—a place earned by personal merit, not an artificial attainment by inheritance, wealth, family and position. Conceding, then, that the responsibilities of life rest equally on man and woman, that their destiny is the same, they need the same preparation for time and eternity. The talk of sheltering woman from the fierce storms of life is the sheerest mockery, for they beat on her from every point of the compass, just as they do on man, and with more fatal results, for he has been trained to protect himself, to resist, and to conquer. Such are the facts in human experience, the responsibilities of individual sovereignty. Rich and poor, intelligent and ignorant, wise and foolish, virtuous and vicious, man and woman; it is ever the same, each soul must depend wholly on itself.

Whatever the theories may be of woman's dependence on man, in the supreme moments of her life, he cannot bear her burdens. Alone she goes to the gates of death, to give life to every man that is born into the world; no one can share her fears, no one can mitigate her pangs; and if her sorrow is greater than she can bear, alone she passes beyond the gates into the vast unknown.

So it ever must be in the conflicting scenes of life, in the long, weary march, each one walks alone. We may have many friends, love, kindness, sympathy and charity, to

smooth our pathway in everyday life, but in the tragedies and triumphs of human experience, each mortal stands alone.

But when all artificial trammels are removed, and women are recognized as individuals, responsible for their own environments, thoroughly educated for all positions in life they may be called to fill; with all the resources in themselves that liberal thought and broad culture can give; guided by their own conscience and judgment, trained to self-protection, by a healthy development of the muscular system, and skill in the use of weapons and defense; and stimulated to self-support by a knowledge of the business world and the pleasure that pecuniary independence must ever give; when women are trained in this way, they will in a measure be fitted for those hours of solitude that come alike to all, whether prepared or otherwise. As in our extremity we must depend on ourselves, the dictates of wisdom point to complete individual development.

In talking of education, how shallow the argument that each class must be educated for the special work it proposes to do, and that all those faculties not needed in this special work must lie dormant and utterly wither for want of use, when, perhaps, these will be the very faculties needed in life's greatest emergencies! Some say, "Where is the use of drilling girls in the languages, the sciences, in law, medicine, theology. As wives, mothers, housekeepers, cooks, they need a different curriculum from boys who are to fill all positions." The chief cooks in our great hotels and ocean steamers are men. In our large cities, men run the bakeries; they make our bread, cake and pies. They manage the laundries; they are now considered our best milliners and dressmakers. Because some men fill these departments of usefulness, shall we regulate the curriculum in Harvard and Yale to their present necessities? If not, why this talk in our best colleges of a curriculum for girls who are crowding into the trades and professions, teachers in all our public schools, rapidly filling many lucrative and honorable positions in life?

...Women are already the equals of men in the whole realm of thought, in art, science, literature and government.... The poetry and novels of the century are theirs, and they have touched the keynote of reform, in religion, politics and social life. They fill the editor's and professor's chair, plead at the bar of justice, walk the wards of the hospital, speak from the pulpit and the platform. Such is the type of womanhood that an enlightened public sentiment welcomes to-day, and such the triumph of the facts of life over the false theories of the past.

Is it, then, consistent to hold the developed woman of this day within the same narrow political limits of the dame with the spinning wheel and knitting needle occupied in the past? No, no! Machinery has taken the labors of woman as well as man on its tireless shoulders; the loom and the spinning wheel are but dreams of the past; the pen, the brush, the easel, the chisel, have taken their places, while the hopes

and ambitions of women are essentially changed.

We see reason sufficient in the outer conditions of human beings for individual liberty and development, but when we consider the self-dependence of every human soul, we see the need of courage, judgment and the exercise of every faculty of mind and body, strengthened and developed by use, in woman as well as man.

Whatever may be said of man's protecting power in ordinary conditions, amid all the terrible disasters by land and sea, in the supreme moments of danger, alone woman must ever meet the horrors of the situation. The Angel of Death even makes no royal pathway for her. Man's love and sympathy enter only into the sunshine of our lives. In that solemn solitude of self, that links us with the immeasurable and the eternal, each soul lives alone forever. A recent writer says: "I remember once, in crossing the Atlantic, to have gone upon the deck of the ship at midnight, when a dense black

cloud enveloped the sky, and the great deep was roaring madly under the lashes of demoniac winds. My feeling was not of danger or fear (which is a base surrender of the immortal soul) but of utter desolation and loneliness; a little speck of life shut in by a tremendous darkness...."

And yet, there is a solitude which each and every one of us has always carried with him, more inaccessible than the ice-cold mountains, more profound than the midnight sea; the solitude of self. Our inner being which we call ourselves, no eye nor touch of man or angel has ever pierced, it is more hidden than the caves of the gnome; the sacred adytum of the oracle; the hidden chamber of Eleusinian mystery, for to it only omniscience is permitted to enter.

Such is individual life. Who, I ask you, can take, dare take on himself the rights, the duties, the responsibilities of another human soul?



The Meaning of Feminism

One group of men and women, the Greenwich Village radicals, stands out in their efforts to combine a militant critique of women's subordinations with developing new types of living arrangements that would be based on equality. These writers and artists saw their support of feminism as part of a larger revolutionary struggle that occupied many activists in the early years of the 20th century prior to World War I. One of these was a playwright and movie director, George Middleton, who was an active campaigner for a broad feminist agenda. His plays portrayed strong female characters whose life situations called into question the socially accepted roles of being a wife and mother. He delivered the following speech at a feminist mass meeting in New York City on February 17, 1914. Note the copy of the handbill for the evening on page S-8 advertising the meeting at which Middleton spoke. Of the twelve speakers on the program that evening speaking on what feminism meant to them, half were men.

Middleton's broad ideas of feminism with all its social ramifications were embraced by Elizabeth Cady Stanton 50 years earlier and could have been expressed a half century later when the ideals of feminism were examined once again. Stanton would have agreed with him that woman suffrage was the "kindergarten of feminism"—the fundamental first step in removing political discrimination against women.

What Feminism Means to Me George Middleton February 17, 1914

Feminism means trouble: trouble means agitation: agitation means movement: movement means life: life means adjustment and readjustment: so does feminism. It is an attack upon social opinion wherever it discriminates in its attitude toward man and woman on the basis of sex. It asks primarily that man and woman be considered as human

beings. It recognizes that man and woman are made of the same soul stuff. It sees them respond to the same rhythm in music, the same beauty in verse and the same elemental emotions in life.

With us our human attributes we have in common. Whatever

difference in our human qualities there is, is individual. The variation is the same among men as it is among women. It is not however, a sex difference. Emotion and spirituality are bonds which men and women share in common. There are so-called masculine qualities in many women and much that is feminine in many men. The appellation, "maleness and femaleness" as applied to certain human characteristics, is purely arbitrary. We must recognize it has been environment not a biological necessity which in the past has differentiated the sexes in the certain channels. Basically men and women are human and from that standpoint, we face feminism. Feminism does not therefore, believe in the effeminization of life but in its humanization. It is not a woman's movement exclusively; it pays equal dividends to men as we shall see. It cannot achieve completion without the cooperation of men and women. It is not antagonism. It is mutuality. Feminism is not an assault on trousers. It does not seek to crinoline men. It asks a new change in the social garments of each. Feminism is therefore a state of mind and as a state of mind it faces many facts of life.

From one aspect feminism is an educational ideal. It asks that children be educated according to temperament and not according to sex. It asks a girl be educated for life and not for marriage alone.

In another aspect feminism is an economic attitude. It is opposed to parasitism in either male or female as a habit of thought. It asks equal opportunity to work. In England for example women can't practice law, neither can they in South Carolina. There have been these discriminations on the ground of sex all over the world. The brave struggle of women initiated by such leaders as Dr. Blackwell and Florence Nightingale aided by sympathetic help of men, are gradually breaking these restrictions down. With this equal opportunity to work and enter all professions, feminists demand equal pay for equal work. It asks that efficiency and not sex be the test of value. Feminism asserts that there can never be any equality in the laws of marriage and divorce no matter how equal it phrases toward sex, if the letter of the law is made solely by man and its spirit interpreted solely by man. Feminism is of course in favor of a freer divorce, without inequal social penalties.

Feminism seeks to change social opinion toward the sex relation; not to advocate license but to recognize liberty: not to encourage looseness but to dismiss the double standard of morality. It wishes to destroy that double standard between the sexes as between the classes.

Woman suffrage is the political aspect of feminism. It is the kindergarten of feminism. Many people who believe in woman suffrage do not believe in all of the aspects of feminism. But all feminists are equal suffragists. Feminism believes that both men and women should have some say in the laws under which both are governed. It does not wish to resort to the subterfuges of indirect influence to obtain the things in legislation which are as much woman's right as man's. It recognizes no limitation in civic expression on the ground of sex. It sees too, the need of the vote of woman so that the part of the human race which she represents shall have representation and not charity. Feminism is democratic in its essence and there can be no democracy in the government which denies the suffrage to half its citizens simply because they wear skirts. It sees that one woman in every five is in modern industry, that they are supporting themselves even in whole or in part. It asks that these women, and all others, have the same right as men to express their need and relation to the community. It sees a great horde of women capable and efficient, who should help man with his civic burdens. It wishes, however, to compel no woman to vote if she does not wish to, but it demands that those who do wish to vote shall not be discriminated against because they are women. Feminists do not think all things will be accomplished through the ballot, they do see the great value of Woman's Suffrage as the fundamental first step in removing the political discriminations against her. With this removed they feel they will better be able to remove the other discriminations.

Feminism is thus a protest against further sex specialization. It wishes the sickening emphasis of sex differences to be taken out of discussion. It wants the energies which are now being wasted in getting certain rights to be expended in the fruitful and useful utilization of those rights.

Feminism therefore, is a mood as well as a movement. It is a high ideal of mutual understanding between the sexes working amid prejudice and tradition. Its aim is greater freedom. Its ammunition is an appeal to common humanness. It is an awakening to the higher possibilities of life which lie in the changing social scheme.

Its spirit is expansive. It asks that each sex separately may be able to give to the other more comradeship, more freedom, more self-realization, more honesty, more justice and I believe more beauty.



In Search of an Egalitarian Marriage

For the mid-nineteenth century feminist, women's equality in the public sphere required transformation of relations between women and men in the private sphere. Women and men struggled to base marriage on more than the laws of the time that permitted wives no legal control over property, no income she brought to the marriage, no wages she earned during the marriage, and no education or custody of children of the marriage. A few marriages such as that of Abby Kelly to songwriter Stephen Foster, and Antoinette Brown to Samuel Blackwell, attempted to repudiate through negotiated agreements male privilege and advocated equality within the marriage.

In speaking of the marriages of **Samuel and Henry Blackwell**, we wish to insert a note about the amazing Blackwell family. The **Blackwell children** were all born in England. The nine surviving children, boys as well as girls, were brought up with a belief in women's rights in a large household that included their father's four unmarried sisters. The family emigrated to the United States in 1832, living in New York and eventually settling in the frontier of that day, Cincinnati, Ohio. **Elizabeth Blackwell** graduated at the head of her medical class at Geneva Medical College in 1849 and was the first woman in the modern world to earn a medical degree. Younger sister **Emily Blackwell** graduated from the medical college of Western Reserve in 1854 and after extensive study in Europe joined her sister in the struggle to establish the New York Infirmary for Women and Children. Brother **Samuel Blackwell** married **Antoinette Brown (Blackwell)** in 1856. Three years earlier, she had become the first woman minister ordained by a congregation of a recognized American denomination. Brown had done her undergraduate and theology studies at Oberlin College where her college classmate was **Lucy Stone**, who married **Henry Blackwell** in 1855. Stone and Blackwell had a daughter, **Alice Stone Blackwell**, who would become as influential a suffragist, feminist and social reformer as her famous parents. Together, this remarkable family was immensely influential in the United States during the era of the greatest social, political and legal progress for women in human history.

Perhaps the century's most famous egalitarian marriage was that of Lucy Stone (1818—1893) and Henry Brown Blackwell (1825-1909) in 1855. Blackwell courted Lucy Stone, who was appreciably older than he, persistently for two years before he was able to convince her that together they could create an equal partnership in marriage. His courtship letters written to Stone stand as eloquent testimony to the struggle to make feminism an active principle in an intimate relationship. He envisioned a role of the husband as equal nurturer. Lucy Stone retained her maiden name after her marriage and was known as Mrs. Stone. A dedicated feminist all his life and coeditor with Stone of the *Woman's Journal*, Blackwell offered powerful critiques of male privilege in marriage. In an 1874 editorial, he criticized the practice of giving women away in marriage and urged women to refuse to promise to obey as part of their vows (as Stone and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had refused).

It is important to note that the agreements or protests, as some were called, were not the same as the marriage settlements of the day or the pre-nuptial contracts of our time. Nor were they the same as the arrangement between Carrie Chapman and George Catt in 1900. A cautious and resistant Chapman insisted on a precondition for her marriage that she have free four months of every year to devote to the Woman Suffrage Movement. Her marriage was not exactly to be second in her priorities, but clearly, it also was not to interfere in her public and life's work.

These agreements were an attempt to establish a relationship of equal rights and responsibilities within the legal framework of marriage in spite of and in protest of the law which

recognized almost no legal and political rights to married women. Following is the protest read by Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell at their wedding with some excerpts of Blackwell's letters prior to their marriage. Also included is the legal contract between Harriett Cody and Harvey Sadis that was part of their marriage vows 117 years later in 1972.

Excerpts of letters written by Henry Blackwell to Lucy Stone prior to their wedding in May 1855

24 August 1853

I am glad you sympathize with my theory of equality in marriage. I knew you would do so of course but still it is satisfactory to hear you express it. But your lady friends

were not far out, when they said "no man would ever submit to such a marriage." In practice a minority I think might do so, but in theory scarcely any. The idea of a loving & protective superiority is ingrained in men. They do not thereby suppose any conscious oppression—but regard it as

a fixed fact that women do not & cannot desire absolute equality in the active affairs of life.

This summer, I have been travelling in a carriage with two business friends. Every day we discussed the anti-slavery & woman's rights. The former to a certain extent they could accept. But the whole woman's movement they could not swallow at all. My idea of marriage especially struck them as ludicrous & unnatural. Yet both are honest, intelligent & affectionate & will make excellent husbands....

Now I have felt for years the most imperious necessity for marriage. At times I think I must quit dreaming & get a wife. But when it comes to the point, I find that I cannot forego my ideal. Equality with me is a passion. I dislike equally to assume, or to endure authority. But the great difficulty in realizing a true marriage after you find the right person is that all the arrangements of Society are made for the average convenience—& fetter a woman with household cares & ties, while they impose on a man the whole burden of acquiring subsistence. I confess I see no hope of making the future of women as a sex what it should be, except by household association. So long as our present system of isolated families is maintained married women will be greatly precluded from public & professional pursuits. And indeed when I consider how degrading & unworthy all human pursuits not strictly scientific or literary are now, I do not feel any great anxiety to see many women undertake them....

You say in your letter that you never expect to give up lecturing & speaking but from death or old age. I certainly hope you never may, unless for some even wider sphere of action. As a writer if favorably situated, you might perhaps reach even more minds & in connexion with occasional public speaking be even more efficient. Such a position, with the ear of the public, is a grand one but somewhat difficult to attain. I hope to reach it some day through the medium of a widely circulated western newspaper. But surely you never did me the injustice to suppose that I could desire, under any circumstances, that you should withdraw yourself from public effort....

But for myself I don't see why, in order to do good, you should find it necessary to treat yourself a great deal worse than the Southerners treat their negroes, by depriving yourself of entrance into those personal relations which as you yourself acknowledge are a want of our nature & which I regard as a duty of our very organization. If this true idea of marriage cannot be realized, what is the use of having it? How can it be so eloquently preached as by living it out in practice....Your idea of the duty of sacrificing the lower to the higher I fully approve. But I think you estimate too low

the sacred law of the affections, which Theodore Parker places with reason above the intellectual faculties—yes—& above even the moral sense. I, at first, thought Parker erred in setting the affections above the sense of right & wrong, but on reflection, I agree with him.

...I don't wonder at your resolving never to marry. Situated as women are I think you are wise in omitting the relation altogether from your prospectus of life. But if in the mysterious Providence of God you ever find the right person, you will have to enlarge & vary your theory to greet the unexpected Advent. I do not ask you to assume that I, or anyone else, am that person, I only wish I might prove to be so.

3 January 1855

...I am sorry you should feel as though martyrdom would demand refraining from marriage rather than suffering the Law's injustice....Why Lucy dear—You even now occupy a position similar in kind & differing only in degree. The law now says—You are not fully a citizen—You shall not vote, shall not make laws, nor say who shall make them. You suffer this injustice for the same reason as you will the other. You cannot help it. “Ah, but I can avoid it in the one case and not in the other”—you will perhaps say. You can indeed avoid it in both cases but it costs too much.

...We have a right to be a law unto ourselves. Would it not be a slavish doctrine to preach that we ought to sentence ourselves to celibacy because men have enacted injustice into a statute. But Lucy dear I want to make a protest distinct and emphatic against the laws. I wish, as a husband, to renounce all the privileges which the law confers upon me, which are not strictly mutual & I intend to do so. Help me draw one up. When we marry, I will publicly state before our friends a brief enumeration of these usurpations & distinctly pledge myself to never avail myself of them under any circumstances. Surely such a marriage will not degrade you, dearest—Lucy, I wish I could take the position of the wife under the law & give you that of a husband. I would rather submit to the injustice a hundred times, than subject you to it.

13 February 1855

We will try to live so beautifully & so actively that every night we can compare notes together all by ourselves in one another's arms & say “we have not lived today in vain!” We will plan together, lay out our own work, help each other to do it & report progress every night.

The Marriage of Lucy Stone Under Protest read by Lucy Stone and Henry Brown Blackwell at their wedding in May 1855

While acknowledging our mutual affection by publicly assuming the relationship of husband and wife, yet in justice to ourselves and a great principle, we deem it a duty to declare that this act on our part implies no sanction of, nor promise of voluntary obedience to such of the present laws of marriage, as refuse to recognize the wife as an independent, rational being, while they confer upon the husband an injurious and unnatural superiority, investing him with legal powers which no honorable man would exercise, and which no man should possess. We protest especially against laws which give to the husband:

1. The custody of the wife's person.
2. The exclusive control and guardianship of their children.
3. The sole ownership and use of her personal real estate, unless previously settled upon, or placed in the hands of trustees, as in the case of minors, lunatics, and idiots.
4. The absolute right to the product of her industry.
5. Also against laws which give to the widower so much larger and more permanent an interest in the property of his deceased wife, than they give to the widow in that of the deceased husband.
6. Finally, against the whole system by which "the legal existence of the wife is suspended during marriage," so that in most States, she neither has a legal part in the choice of her residence, nor can she make a will, nor sue or be sued in her own name, nor inherit property.

We believe that personal independence and equal human rights can never be forfeited, except for crime; that marriage should be an equal and permanent partnership, and so recognized by law; that until it is so recognized, married partners should provide against the radical injustice of present laws, by every means in their power.

We believe that where domestic difficulties arise, no appeal should be made to legal tribunals under existing laws, but that all difficulties should be submitted to the equitable adjustment of arbitrators mutually chosen.

Thus reverencing law, we enter our protest against rules and customs which are unworthy of the name, since they violate justice, the essence of law.

(Signed), Henry B. Blackwell
Lucy Stone

Postscript: The following letter was sent by Rev. Thomas Wentworth Higginson sometime after he officiated at the ceremony for Stone and Blackwell.

It was my privilege to celebrate May day by officiating at a wedding in a farm-house among the hills of West Brookfield. The bridegroom was a man of tried worth, a leader in the Western Anti-Slavery Movement; and the bride was one whose fair name is known throughout the nation; one whose rare intellectual qualities are excelled by the private beauty of her heart and life.

I never perform the marriage ceremony without a renewed sense of the iniquity of our present system of laws in respect to marriage; a system by which "man and wife are one, and that one is the husband." It was with my hearty concurrence, therefore, that the following protest was read and signed, as a part of the nuptial ceremony; and I send it to you, that others may be induced to do likewise.

Rev. Thomas Wentworth Higginson

Marriage Contract of Harriett Mary Cody and Harvey Joseph Sadis

THIS CONTRACT is entered into this 24th day of November, 1972, by and between HARRIETT MARY CODY AND HARVEY JOSEPH SADIS, as the parties enter into a marriage relationship authorized by a Marriage License and by an Official of the State of Washington, County of King.

RECITALS OF FACT

1. HARRIETT MARY CODY is a woman 27 years of age, born on August 23, 1945, in Norfolk, Virginia, and the child of Hiram S. Cody, Jr. and Mary V. Cody.
2. HARVEY JOSEPH SADIS is a man 26 years of age, born

on April 12, 1946, in Seattle, Washington, and the child of Jean Sadis and Joseph Sadis.

3. HARRIETT and HARVEY are presently residing together in Seattle, Washington.

RECITALS OF INTENTION

HARRIETT and HARVEY desire to enter into a marriage relationship, duly solemnized under the laws of the State of Washington, the rights and obligations of which relationship differ from the traditional rights and obligations of married persons in the State of Washington which would

prevail in the absence of this CONTRACT. The parties have together drafted this MARRIAGE CONTRACT in order to define a marriage relationship sought by the parties which preserves and promotes their individual identities as a man and a woman contracting to live together for mutual benefit and growth.

HARRIETT and HARVEY are of sound mind and body, have a clear understanding of the terms of this CONTRACT and of the binding nature contained herein; they freely and in good faith choose to enter into this MARRIAGE CONTRACT and fully intend it to be legally binding upon themselves. NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of their affection and esteem for each other, and in consideration of the mutual promises herein expressed, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, HARRIETT and HARVEY agree as follows:

Article I. Names

HARRIETT and HARVEY affirm their individuality and equality in this relationship. The parties reject the concept of ownership implied in the adoption by the woman of the man's name; and they refuse to define themselves as husband and wife because of the possessory nature of these titles.

THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE to retain and use the given family names of each party: HARRIETT MARY CODY and HARVEY JOSEPH SADIS. The parties will employ the titles of address, MS CODY AND MR. SADIS, and will henceforth be known as PARTNERS in this relationship.

Article II. Relationships With Others

HARRIETT and HARVEY believe that their partnership will be enriched by the extent to which their respective needs can be met by relationships with others, rather than by a total dependence on each other to fulfill their needs. The parties have strong individual identities, with their own families, friends, careers, histories, and interests, and do not view themselves as an inseparable couple who do not exist apart from each other.

THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE to allow each other as much time with other friends individually as they spend with each other. The parties also agree that invitations extended to one of them will not be assumed to have automatically been extended to the other.

The parties freely acknowledge their insecurities about sexual relationships beyond the partnership.

THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE to maintain sexual fidelity to each other.

Article III. Religion

HARVEY freely admits the break with Jewish tradition represented by this CONTRACT with HARRIETT. But he fully intends to maintain the cultural and religious traditions of his Sephardic community insofar as possible. HARRIETT chooses not to embrace the Jewish religion.

THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE to respect their individual preferences with respect to religion and to make

no demands on each other to change such preferences.

THE PARTIES AGREE to continue the traditions associated with their respective religious holidays (Christmas, Hanukkah, Passover, Easter, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Thanksgiving) and to include each other in the celebrations thereof.

Article IV. Children

The joy and the commitment of the parties' relationship are not dependent on raising a family. HARRIETT and HARVEY will not be unfulfilled as individuals or as partners if they choose not to have children. At this time, the parties do not share a commitment to have children.

THE PARTIES AGREE that any children will be the result of choice, not chance, and THEREFORE the decision to have children will be mutual and deliberate. FURTHER, THE PARTIES AGREE that the responsibility for birth control will be shared. In the event of a pregnancy unwanted by either party, THE PARTIES AGREE to obtain an abortion of such pregnancy. A decision by one party to be sterilized will be supported emotionally and financially by the other.

Article V. Careers; Domicile

HARRIETT and HARVEY value the importance and integrity of their respective careers and acknowledge the demands that their jobs place on them as individuals and on their partnership. Commitment to their careers will sometimes place stress on the relationship. It has been the experience of the parties that insofar as their careers contribute to individual self-fulfillment, the careers strengthen the partnership.

THE PARTIES AGREE that, should a career opportunity arise for one of the parties in another city at any future time, the decision to move shall be mutual and based upon the following factors:

(a) The overall advantage gained by one of the parties in pursuing the new career opportunity shall be weighed against the disadvantages, economic and otherwise, incurred by the other;

(b) The amount of income from the new job shall not be controlling;

(c) Short-term separations as a result of such moves may be necessary.

HARVEY HEREBY WAIVES whatever right he may have to solely determine the legal domicile of the parties.

Article VI. Care and Use of Living Space

HARRIETT and HARVEY recognize the need for autonomy and equality within the home in terms of the use of available space and allocation of household tasks. The parties reject the concept that the responsibility for housework rests with the woman in a marriage relationship while the duties of home maintenance and repair rest with the man.

THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE to share equally in the performance of all household tasks, taking into consideration individual schedules and preferences. Periodic allocations of household tasks will be made, in which the

time involved in the performance of each party's tasks is equal.

THE PARTIES AGREE that decisions about the use of living space in the home shall be mutually made, regardless of the parties' relative financial interests in the ownership or rental of the home. Each party shall have an individual area within the home in equal amount, insofar as space is available.

Article VII. Property; Debts; Living Expenses

HARRIETT and HARVEY intend that the individual autonomy sought in the partnership shall be reflected in the ownership of existing and future-acquired property, in the characterization and control of income, and in the responsibility for living expenses.

THEREFORE, THE PARTIES AGREE that this Article of their MARRIAGE CONTRACT, in lieu of the community property laws of the State of Washington, shall govern their interests and obligations in all property acquired during their marriage, as follows:

A. Property

THE PARTIES HAVE MADE full disclosure to each other of all properties and assets presently owned by each of them, and of the income derived therefrom and from all other sources, and AGREE that each party shall have sole management, control, and disposition of the property which each would have owned as a single person, all as specifically described in EXHIBIT A, which is incorporated by reference and made a part of this CONTRACT.

THE PARTIES AGREE that the wages, salary, and other income (including loans) derived by one of the parties will be the separate property of such party and subject to the independent control and/or obligation of such party. In order to avoid the commingling of the separate assets, THE PARTIES AGREE to maintain separate bank accounts. At the present time, HARVEY's income consists of his salary as a full-time teacher with Seattle Public Schools; and HARRIETT's income is derived from her savings and government loans, while she is a full-time student at the University of Puget Sound School of Law in Tacoma.

Ownership of all future-acquired property, tangible and intangible, will be determined in accordance with the respective contributions of each party, even in the case of property which is jointly used. Annually, or sooner if required, THE PARTIES AGREE to amend future-acquired property and any changes in the ownership of property presently described in EXHIBIT A. The parties may, by mutual agreement, determine their respective interests in an item of property on a basis other than financial contribution, but such agreement shall not be effective until reduced to writing in EXHIBIT A to this CONTRACT. Gifts, bequests, or devises made to one of the parties will become the separate property of that party, while gifts made to both of the parties will be considered to be jointly owned.

THE PARTIES AGREE to name each other as full beneficiaries of any life insurance policies which they now own or may acquire in the future.

B. Debts

THE PARTIES AGREE that they shall not be obligated to the present or future-incurred debts of the other, including tuition and other educational expenses.

C. Living Expenses

THE PARTIES AGREE to share responsibility for the following expenses, which shall be called LIVING EXPENSES, in proportion to their respective incomes: (1) Mortgage payment or rent, (2) Utilities, (3) Home maintenance, (4) Food, (5) Shared entertainment, (6) Medical expenses. Other expenses shall be called PERSONAL EXPENSES and will be borne individually by the parties.

THE PARTIES RECOGNIZE that in the absence of income by one of the parties, resulting from unemployment or extended illness, LIVING EXPENSES may become the sole responsibility of the employed party; and in such a situation, the employed party will assume responsibility for the PERSONAL EXPENSES of the other, including but not limited to the following: (1) Insurance, (2) Transportation, (3) Clothing, (4) Miscellaneous personal items.

THE PARTIES AGREE that extended periods of time in which one or both of the parties will be totally without income will be mutually negotiated.

HARRIETT HEREBY WAIVES whatever right she may have to rely on HARVEY to provide the sole economic support for the family unit.

Article VII. Evaluation of the Partnership

HARRIETT AND HARVEY recognize the importance of change in their relationship and intend that this CONTRACT shall be a living document and a focus for periodic evaluations of the partnership.

THE PARTIES AGREE that either party can initiate a review of any article of the CONTRACT at any time for amendment to reflect changes in the relationship. THE PARTIES AGREE to honor such requests for review for negotiations and discussions at a mutually convenient time.

THE PARTIES AGREE that, in any event, there shall be an annual review of the provisions of the CONTRACT, including EXHIBIT A, on or about the anniversary date of the execution of the CONTRACT.

THE PARTIES AGREE that, in the case of unresolved conflicts between them over any provisions of the CONTRACT, they will seek mediation, professional or otherwise by a third party.

Article IX. Termination of the Contract

HARRIETT and HARVEY may by mutual consent terminate this CONTRACT and end the marriage relationship at any time.

FURTHERMORE, THE PARTIES AGREE that the breach of a material provision of this CONTRACT for a sustained period of time shall constitute "cruel treatment or personal indignities rendering life burdensome" and shall serve as a ground for termination of this CONTRACT, according to the divorce laws of the State of Washington, under RCW 26.08.020.

THE PARTIES AGREE that in the event of mutual consent to terminate this CONTRACT or breach thereof, neither party shall contest the application by the other party for a divorce decree or the entry of such decree in the county in which the parties are both residing at the time of such application.

In the event of termination of the CONTRACT and divorce of the parties, the provisions of this Article and Article VII of this CONTRACT, as amended, shall serve as the FINAL PROPERTY SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT between the parties. In such event, this CONTRACT is intended to effect a complete settlement of any and all claims that either party may have against the other, and a complete settlement of their respective rights as to alimony, property rights, homestead rights, inheritance rights, and all other rights of property otherwise arising out of their partnership.

At such time as there may be a child born of this partnership or adopted by the parties, THE PARTIES AGREE to amend this CONTRACT to make provisions for their respective rights and obligations in regard to the child in the event of termination of the CONTRACT (including provisions for support and education of the child).

Article X. Decision-Making

HARRIETT and HARVEY share a commitment to a process of negotiations and compromise which will strengthen their equality in the partnership. Decisions will be made with respect for individual needs. THE PARTIES HOPE to maintain such mutual decision-making so that the daily decisions affecting their lives will not become a struggle between the parties for power, authority, and dominance. THE PARTIES AGREE that such a process, while sometimes time-consuming and fatiguing, is a good investment in the future of their relationship and their continued esteem for each other.

Postscript: Twenty-eight years later, Harriett Cody and Harvey Sadis are still married. The contract appeared in MS. magazine shortly after the marriage and MS. did a follow-up five years later. The contract has been printed in textbooks for schools of sociology and law and in various periodicals. The contract enabled each to take risks professionally, to make career and job changes that otherwise may not have been possible. Harriett had her own law practice for 13 years that specialized in family law. She was elected to Superior Court in 1992. After serving two terms, she chose not to seek re-election last year and is now ready to make another career change. Harvey has remained an elementary school teacher. He left Seattle Public Schools to found and teach at Spruce Street School for 13 years. Currently, he teaches second grade in the Renton School District.

Thirteen years ago, Harriett and Harvey drew up a Child Contract prior to the adoption of a three-month-old baby girl. This contract stipulated that each would have separate time with her and determined the surname. They also agreed that this contract would remain private and would not be published. The girl's surname is Cody.

In an interview with Harriett, she believes that a primary benefit was that the contract set the foundations from the start for a model of negotiation of issues. The couple celebrated each anniversary with a review of the contract for the first 12 to 15 years. Now they gather as a family on New Year's. Together they analyze what they want to change, what to unload and what went well. Together they look ahead to the new year to set new goals, new accomplishments.



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