

THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR:
HOUSEWIVES THAT WRITE

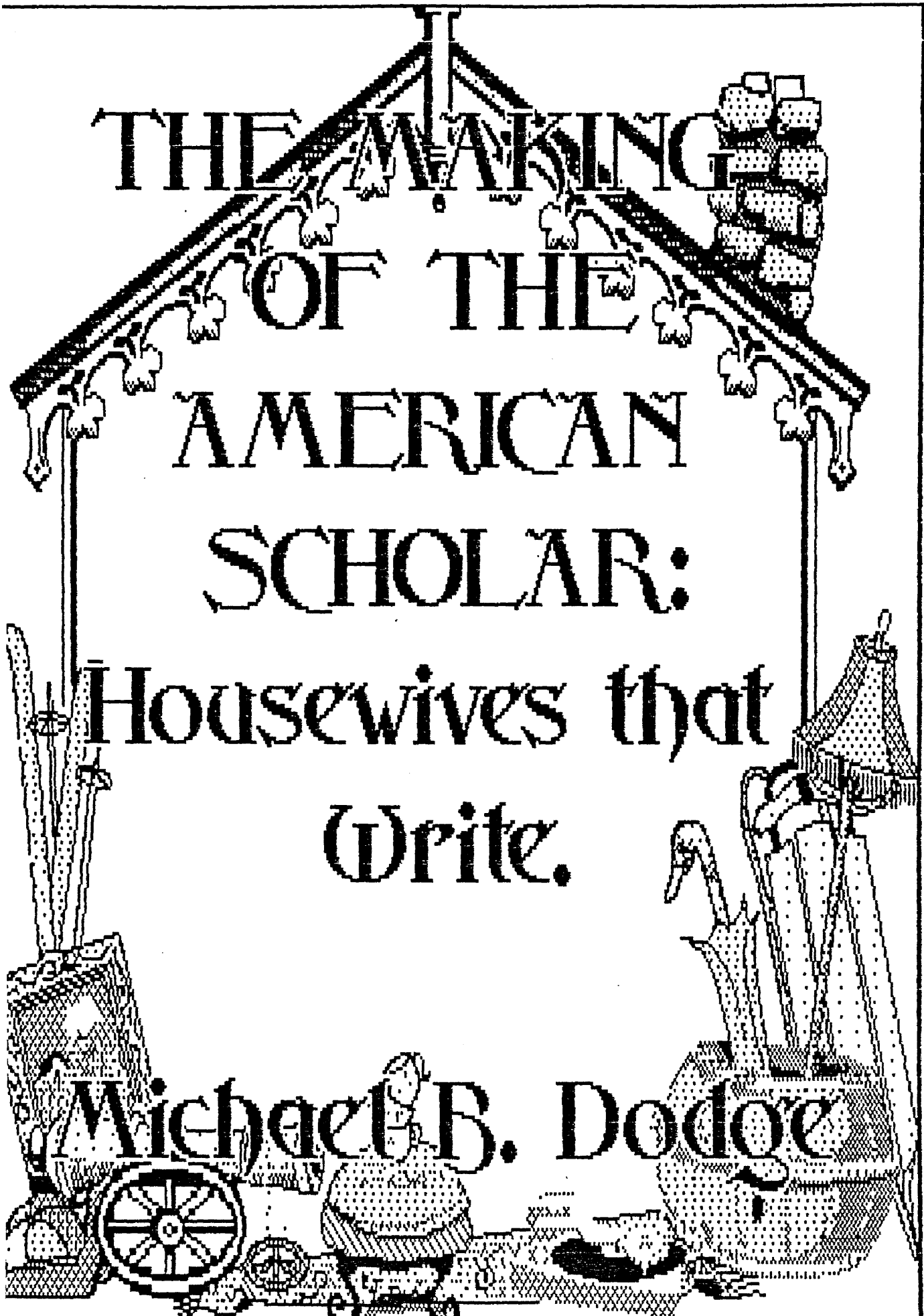
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Presented to the American Culture Faculty
at the University of Michigan-Flint
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Liberal Studies
in
American Culture

June 17, 1991

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Chapter 1

The Making of the American Scholar

In the United States it is often difficult to place labels on individuals or groups. The scholar, for instance, in America carries a much different connotation than in many other countries. To many the term scholar represents a learned person dedicated to academic study. But in the United States there is no single definition to the term "scholar," rather, Americans define the term more loosely than Europeans. Europe had a long standing academic and scholarly tradition, unlike the United States. As a result, America views the term scholar differently than Europeans. The American Scholar, thus, is unique for he/she has developed under much different circumstances. The American Scholar is a product of his/her environment, rather than a product of a classical tradition.

The United States has fostered a less formal definition of the term scholar. To many Americans, the scholar is not simply a bookworm. One possible explanation of the role of the scholar deals with the well-rounded individual. The well-rounded individual in America coordinates the use of informal and formal learned behaviors in order to be a "complete" person. The "complete" person must be diverse, able to handle many different situations. This "complete" person or scholar can only come about as a direct result of the joint process of informal/"hands-on" and formal education. Such a person is able to conform to many different situations. He/she must have the ability to learn

in the informal setting, and must have the desire to obtain knowledge from the constantly changing world. There is no doubt formal education is a basis for learning, however, the American Scholar is that person who can apply what he/she has learned. The scholar must use the hands as well as the mind. Application of what is learned is essential to the making of the American Scholar. For example, Henry David Thoreau states, in Walden,

I wished a boy to know something about the arts and sciences, for instance, I would not pursue the common course, which is merely to send him into the neighborhood of some professor, where anything is professed and practiced but the art of life;--to survey the world through a telescope or a microscope, and never with the natural eye; to study chemistry, and not to learn how his bread is made, or mechanics, and not learn how it is earned; to discover new satellites to Neptune, and not detect the motes in his eyes, or to what vagabond he is a satellite himself; or to be devoured by the monsters in a drop of vinegar. Which would have advanced the most at the end of a month,--the boy who had made his own jackknife from the ore which he had dug and smelted, reading as much as would be necessary for this--or the boy who had attended the lectures on metallurgy at the Institution in the meanwhile, and had received a Rogers penknife from his father? Which would be most likely to cut his fingers?...To my astonishment I was informed on leaving college that I had studied navigation!--why, if I had taken one turn down the harbor I should have known more about it. Even the poor student studies and is taught only political economy, while that economy of living which is synonymous with philosophy is not even sincerely professed in our colleges. The consequence is, that while he is reading Adam Smith, Ricardo and Say, he runs his father in debt irretrievable.(Thoreau-McMichael, et al pg. 725)

As Thoreau demonstrates in Walden, the person that does not apply what he/she has learned, has not seen the full

possibilities of the learning experience. The person we call an American scholar must first think, react, then put his/her beliefs into action, otherwise the acquired educational experience is of little use.

Formal education is definitely important to the formation of the American Scholar, but one must also realize that informal education can and most likely will enhance the learning experience. Many people throughout our history have received very little formal education and become very productive in our society. Henry J. Perkinson states in his book, Two Hundred Years of American Educational History,

Franklin had a scant two years of formal schooling in his entire life--a year in the Boston Latin school, and another under the tutelage of a scrivener, one Mr. George Brownell, who taught him to write, but failed to teach him arithmetic. The rest of his education Franklin secured on his own, including the basics: he taught himself to read (he reports he does not remember ever not being able to read); he taught himself foreign languages... (Perkinson page 6)

Although Benjamin Franklin had very little formal schooling, he was able to apply the principles he acquired through "hands-on" learning to his life and enhance his overall abilities. One cannot deny that all individuals are not as well informed and gifted as Franklin, however, one can see the correlation between that which is learned at the formal level and that which is acquired in the informal setting.

Another example of how Franklin was able to apply what he had learned in a practical sense can be seen when he acquired books for his own formal education.

One of the difficulties Franklin had encountered in his self-education was the securing of books. As a young boy, after having read all the books in his own father's library he began to purchase his own. He would buy a book, read it, sell it, and use the money to buy another book. When he reached the age of twelve his father apprenticed him to his older brother, a painter. This opened new opportunities to get books.(Perkinson page 8)

Franklin read a book and sold it to buy another. He was very well equipped to handle those situations where so-called bookworms would have failed. Instead of quitting when things got difficult, Franklin used all of his abilities(those he acquired informally) to find a way to purchase new books. Franklin again shows he is a scholar when he become an apprentice to a painter, where he used the situation as an opportunity to learn--making the most of the situation.

Franklin believed formal education was not the only way to be educated. He tried to disprove the myth that studying the classics was the only "real" education a student can receive. For example,

In the course of studies he proposed for the Academy, Franklin tried to explode the myth that the study of Latin classics constituted the only real education a school could offer. "As to their STUDIES, it would be well if they could be taught every Thing that is useful,

and every Thing that is ornamental: But Art is long, and their Time is short. It is therefore proposed that they learn those things that are more likely to be most useful and most ornamental, Regard being had to the several Professions for which they are intended. (Perkinson pages 10-11)

Franklin shows how when someone is trained for a specific program of study, he must then apply the learned information to his job. To do this, the student must take the formal book-learned information and then transfer it into the common and apply it. If an individual can apply the newly acquired information, he has made an attempt to join the informal "hands-on" experience with the formal learning experience--thus is on the road to becoming an American Scholar.

Unlike Horace Mann who once said "the common school is the greatest discovery ever made by man." (Perkinson page 59), Ralph Waldo Emerson believed formal education was not the only important element to a complete education. Emerson believed formal education was not enough, rather, he believed a person must apply what they have learned. Emerson shows his belief in a wide range of applied, "hands-on" educational techniques when he writes,

The difficulty is that we do not make a world of our own, but fall into institutions already made, and have to accommodate ourselves to them to be useful at all, and this accommodation is, I say, a loss of so much integrity and, of course, of so much power. (Perkins page 104)

Emerson goes on to say education must be useful and "hands-on" to be of any value to the learner. In Emerson's Nature, he states that nature itself can be a tool to teach. For example, "Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchers of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we through their eyes."

(Perkinson page 105) Emerson demonstrates how education simply for the sake of education is not good enough. A person needs to confront and interact with the world around him. For the American Scholar, all knowledge must go from the informal/"hands-on" to the formal and vice versa in order to be applied by the learner.

Emerson again shows the reader the need to be well versed in many learning techniques when he writes,

The scholar is the cause, not the effect. This happens when the scholar trusts himself, when he accepts the fact that he is not simply an observer, a reader, a participant: the scholar is Man; he is Man thinking. For the scholar, self trust is everything. He must be free, and he must be brave. The deafness, the stones-blind custom, the overgrown error--all exist only through the sufferance of the scholar. He--if he is free, if he is brave, if he has self-trust--can shatter and destroy all ignorance. It is wrong to think that the world was finished a long time ago... Only the ignorant adapts to the world: for the scholar, for the man thinking, "the firmament flows before him and takes its signet and form. (Perkinson pages 106-107)

The American Scholar must trust in him/herself and be brave when confronting new knowledge--may it be house work or

college work. The scholar must be brave, therefore he/she must be well versed in both formal and informal schooling. Formal learning is good, but misused it can be disastrous. As Emerson states in The American Scholar, "Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst."

(McMichael, et al page 475) In order for a person to survive in today's world, one must be diverse in the use of knowledge he/she has obtained. The American scholar is an individual that can be successful in any situation--from changing the baby's diaper to writing poetry.

Clearly "hands-on"/informal education is an essential part of the complete education of the American scholar. Learning from doing is very important, as Sarah Orne Jewett found true of her childhood. Sarah Orne Jewett was "...a sickly child, and her formal schooling was irregular. She compensated by reading widely in her father's substantial library..." (McMichael, et al page 1066) Jewett, like many scholars, was able to apply her knowledge obtained from her desire to learn in the informal setting to her life. Informal education plays an important role in the development of the American scholar. This "hands-on" vision of education helps the scholar perceive the world around them in a new way. The scholar is no longer dependent on others--he/she is brave--willing to tackle any new situation. As Jewett states, "The best of my education was received in my father's buggy and places to which it carried

me."(McMichael, et al page 1066) For Jewett, education did not only take place at school, rather, learning at home was also very important to her.

Booker T. Washington is an excellent example of a person who applied his informal/"hands-on" education to the "real" world.

The doctrine of success through merit now became an integral part of his life and thought. At Hampton, he later wrote, "I found an opportunity for class-room education and for practical training industrial life, opportunity to thrift, economy, and push. Amid Christian influences I was surrounded by an atmosphere of business, and a spirit of self-help that seemed to awaken every faculty in me and caused me for the first time to realize what it means to be a man instead of a piece of property."(Perkinson page 178)

Washington shows how the American Scholar is able to use formal and informal/"hands-on" education as a tool to better understand society. What Washington learned at home from his parents and that which he learned in the classroom together made him a great man--an American Scholar.

It is well to say informal/"hands-on" educational experiences are essential to the making of the American Scholar, however, from where does such an education come? The answer is not always clear, however, "hands-on" learning is often obtained primarily at home--with the family. Joel Spring states in, The American School 1642-1985, "The household remained the single most important fundamental unit of social organization in the eighteenth-century

colonies and, for the vast majority of Americans, the decisive agency of deliberate cultural transmission." (Spring pages 22-23) Informal/"hands-on" education obtained in the home is essential to the formation of the American Scholar in that it helps in making the individual well-rounded and complete. The problem is that even early on, parents have been lacking in their teaching of informal information at home, as made evident by the statement of George Kneller in, Foundations of Education. Kneller states that in the early nineteenth century "...the family was expected to carry the greatest educational burden. Within a short time, however, it became clear that parents would not or could not be depended on to do their duty..." (Kneller page 5) Many parents today lack even the desire to teach their children simple tasks such as cooking, planting, and general maintenance. David Tyack states in, Turning Points in American Educational History, "What the family has left undone by the way of informal education in the local community most often completed...We must, if we wish to obtain diversity, teach at home, learn at home, apply what we learn at home, and merge that of the formal school education of years ago. (Tyack page 7) We must regain the desire to teach our children informally at home, for formal education is not enough.

Chapter 2

The Scholar Close to Home: Housewives that Write

Once we have decided upon the fact that the American Scholar does exist, who then fulfills the criteria to be given such a title? Who in America today best represents the ideals that come with the title of American Scholar? As pointed out earlier, one must remember that America has many definitions of the term scholar. One possible definition deals with the belief that "hands-on"/informal education is the key to the development of the American Scholar. Many individuals claim to deserve the title of American Scholar, however, scholarly praise is not easily given. So why do we continue to look so long and hard for scholars to give titles to when the American Scholar is so close to home. Perhaps the American Scholar is very close to home indeed--the American housewife that writes. No more worthy a group can be found to best represent the ideals of the American Scholar than the American housewife that attempts to write (be it poetry or prose). The American housewife represents all that is essential to being an American Scholar. Women such as Anne Bradstreet, Marguerite Lofft De Angeli, Shirley Jackson, and Tillie Olsen are excellent examples of the housewife scholar. Bradstreet, De Angeli, Jackson, and Olsen all have one major element in common which links them to this claim of American Scholar housewife, that being the ability to balance private life (the home and domestic life) with the public life (the career and job fields). Although Bradstreet, De Angeli,

Jackson, and Olsen all come from different time periods, economic backgrounds, and social situations, they all maintain the desire to write while at the same time maintaining their households. Bradstreet, De Angeli, Jackson, and Olsen encompass a wide range of characteristics which make up the American Scholar. The scholar housewife comes from a wide range of backgrounds and Bradstreet, De Angeli, Jackson, and Olsen portray such diversity.

The housewife is constantly confronted with new and changing situations. She is constantly able to seek out new knowledge. The housewife's job consists of the interaction between informal teaching and learning and "hands-on" education. The housewife that writes is a doer not a watcher, she has the scholarly desire to learn. Probably the most important trait a housewife that writes possesses is the ability to balance the needs of the family with the need and desire to write and learn.

The American housewife that writes embodies a sense of responsibility to her family and to her writing career. But what is really meant by the term housewife? The term housewife has many meanings for us today, however, many are derogatory. It is for reasons of clarification that one must define the term housewife more clearly. The term housewife simply speaks to a woman's time spent at home doing domestic activities. Whether it is caring for the children, cleaning house, doing laundry, or maintaining the

household expense account, it really makes no difference, the term housewife could apply. The term housewife in no way has to be connected to marriage to a member of the opposite sex, rather, it could be a marriage of sorts to one's private responsibilities--a tie to the household because of children or family members. It is a must to understand, however, that the term housewife should not be used derogatorily. Instead, the term should be used to represent a group of women who for one reason or another have been put in a position to maintain the household on a full or part-time basis. The American housewife can be represented by extremes, from working mother to full time homemaker. Any women that has responsibilities to the private life of maintaining the home can be characterized as a housewife. The term housewife really is a state of mind. The term represents a wide range of women with a wide range of situations. The term housewife represents the desire on the part of the woman to maintain the household. The scholarly housewife is a combination of woman who desires to continue learning(the public) through her career, educational advances, writings, letters or otherwise, and wants to care for her home(the private). What makes the American housewife a scholar is the ability to balance the public life with the private life to a positive end. The Scholarly housewife gains a feeling of fulfillment from both the public and the private. The ability to excel at both facets of her life as a housewife and a writer, raise her to

the level of the American Scholar. It is important to understand that housewives that write view themselves as both housewives and writers as stated in American Writers, "Josephine Johnson...moved to Cincinnati to continue her career as "writer and housewife."(Unger pages 1700-1701) In order to be considered a scholar, one must have the confidence to say she is both. It is clear that pride exists in housewives that write--a pride in both sides of her career. They are proud to be mothers and housewives and they are proud to be writers. The two harmoniously live together in the eyes of the housewife scholar. Scholarly housewives must play a dual role--housewife and writer.

Letter writing plays an important role in the development of the scholar housewife. It is essential to understand that many housewives used letter writing as a way of expressing themselves, both politically and socially. Many times society would not allow women to write or speak out publicly on political or social issues. Letter writing was the way in which housewives could express their opinion on issues and concerns of the day. Social constraints could control the public press, but only the housewife could control her letter writing. Abigail Adams, for example, chose letter writing as an alternative to social sanctions against the housewives' participation in social and political decision making. She continued to write as a vent for her frustration over her social position. Throughout

her life, Adams made many an eloquent argument of her station in life. Because of such women as Adams we must appreciate the written letter as a valuable tool to understanding the housewife scholar. Through letter writing we see the essence of political and social arguments of housewives. Writing is important to the development of the American Scholar. Writing letters allows for self-expression, which in turn, leads to a desire to learn. The desire to learn, coupled with the responsibilities of maintaining the home, is what helps to formulate the American Scholar--the housewife that writes.

The ability of the housewife to write while trying to maintain the full-time job of running a household is amazing. Not only does the housewife that writes have to meet the needs of her family, but she also must meet her intellectual need to write. The desire of the housewife to write is essential to the forming of the American Housewife Scholar. Daily tasks that many take for granted have a huge effect on the housewife's ability to write. For the housewife, time to sit down and write is not easily found. Yet, for some reason many housewives do find the time to write. The ability to fit the scholarly desire to write into the busy schedule of the housewife is a key factor in the making of the American Scholar Housewife. Finding time to write is a critical problem for the housewife scholar,

however, scholar housewife Shirley Jackson found the time as Jenemaja Friedman states in her book, Shirley Jackson,

During this same year, the Hymans added another daughter to their family when Sarah(Sally) was born. Somehow, despite duties she could not ignore--some housework, the care of the children, the cooking of meals, and the chauffeuring chores-- Miss Jackson kept regular writing hours. When the children were small, the stolen hours were in the evening; when they were older, she chose the morning while they were at school.(Friedman pages 27-28)

One can only imagine how tough it would be to write under the pressure a family carries, and it is for this reason housewives that write are so special. The American housewife's dedication to their families and their writing careers is what truly makes these women American Scholars.

ANNE BRADSTREET



From a drawing by E. C. Garrett
ANNE BRADSTREET
an imaginary portrait

Anne Bradstreet was born in 1612 and died in 1672. Anne Bradstreet was a great American poet in a time when women writers received very little appreciation. Bradstreet wrote poetry as a way to express her love for her family and

God. As a housewife and mother of eight children, Bradstreet managed the dual role of housewife and writer. "She became a dutiful housewife, raised eight children, and, in the midst of her household tasks, stole time to read and write poetry." (McMichael et al page 59) While a strong personage, she maintained her household duties and was able to produce a large body of poetry. Anne Bradstreet is the epitome of the housewife that writes--she is the best of the best--she is American's greatest example of a scholarly housewife.

The genius of Bradstreet is that she wrote about the common experiences of her daily life. It is amazing to see that Anne Bradstreet wrote poetry while at the same time she cared for a house full of eight children and a husband. She showed her dedication to her family and her writing--always keeping her desire to learn new things. She represents the "complete" individual--combining informal/ "hands-on" education with formal book learning. John Harvard Ellis states in The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse, "Her poems make it evident that she had been a faithful student of history, an assiduous reader, and a keen observer of nature and of what was transpiring both at home and abroad." (Cowell et al pages 26-27) Moses Coit Tyler said it best of Bradstreet in his work entitled A History of American Literature: 1607-1765.

"It will not be difficult for the reader to believe that the examples of early American verse that have now been laid before him, were the productions of persons whom it is a charity to call amateurs in the art of poetry. There was, however, belonging to this primal literary period, one poet who, in some worth sense, found in poetry a vocation. The first professional poet of New England was a woman."(Cowell et al page 29)

Anne Bradstreet the housewife is Anne Bradstreet the poet--America's greatest scholar and a housewife that wrote.

MARGUERITE LOFFT DE ANGELI



MARGUERITE DE ANGELI

Marguerite Lofft de Angeli, a Lapeer, Michigan native was born March 14, 1889. Not only was de Angeli able to write, but she was also able to maintain her household as a housewife. Many of her writings stem from her daily interaction with her family. As Copper-Toed Boots, she depicts everyday activities as being important. In

Copper-Toed Boots, the following scene occurs. "Yes, Ma," said Shad putting the tin basin in the wooden sink, and beginning to pump. Pa had just had the cistern rain water pumped in that spring. Shad thought how much carrying of water is saved. He could smell the delicious odor of the potatoes, and hear their gentle sissing in the iron pan."(De Angeli page 1) As a writer de Angeli was able to keep the reader's attention with common and ordinary events. Her use of concrete details make the common very uncommon.

De Angeli portrays domestic life from the viewpoint of the housewife. It is interesting to see De Angeli's domestic scenes, for they are simple in nature, yet very warm moments. For example,

There had been no evening service for these last two Sundays, so no one had to hurry. There were hot biscuits to go with the warmed-over potatoes. There was wild honey, too, and some of Ma's preserves for dessert. Cousin Lija took out a small package from his pocket, and sprinkled a pinch of something on the potatoes. Shad knew what it was. It was red pepper.

Ma said, "Lija Hough! Do you still put that awful stuff on everything you eat? It's enough to kill you!"

Cousin Lija chuckled again. "Nothing like it, Maggie! Nothing like it! A sprinkle of this in my victuals, and a little in the soles of my shoes, keeps the ague away, and makes things tasty. Nothing like it, Maggie!"(De Angeli Boots)

De Angeli's concentration on the small details of domestic life are enjoyable and fulfilling to the reader.

Another example of De Angeli's magnification of the common and ordinary can be seen in the book, The Door in the Wall. De Angeli is able to capture the common experience and show its beauty and significance. For example,

When the midnight office was said in the church, the whole household trooped back to the Hall, where tables were spread for the fast. Platters were heaped with food and carried in by pages and esquires. A giant boar's head came first in order, then pasties and whole suckling pigs, pigeons and geese roasted with feathers on. The meats were followed by flaming puddings and bowls of wassail, chestnuts, and apples. (De Angeli Wall page 121)

De Angeli's descriptive writing style is excellent. She allows the reader the opportunity to experience something they most likely would never experience on their own.

Ironically, De Angeli got most of her ideas for her writing from her own family get togethers. Most of De Angeli's Book entitled Copper-Toed Boots, was a direct product of her own life in Lapeer, Michigan as a child. The basis for much of the story came from De Angeli's memories of her childhood. Huge family gatherings were common and she enjoyed them very much. De Angeli states for example, "large family gatherings at which there might be as many as forty-five people, excellent food, and laughter" were common around her house. The family was very important to De Angeli, and thus when she writes the family plays an important role in her stories.

Another important element of De Angeli's stories was the emphasis she places on the role of the mother to the family. Over and over again in Copper-Toed Boots she portrays the mother as being very wise and important to her son's life. For example, when Shad goes swimming after being told not to he tries to hide what he has done by trading coats with his friend. Ma being wise as she is quickly picks up on the fact that Shad is wearing a different coat. Instead of yelling, Ma tells her son he has done something practical since the coat did not fit anyway.

"Think your Ma will know?" asked Ash as he put on his vest.

"How could she if I don't tell her?" said Shad. "Say let's trade coats."

Ash looked down at the missing button on his vest. "Done!"...

Shade was wearing a coat and vest that had been handed down from Ma's younger brother. It was still too large for him. They made the trade. Shad's coat fit Ash's stocky body perfectly, and Shad was proud as Punch of Ash's coat and vest. They went home to supper.

When Shad had fed the chickens and emptied the waste water from under the sink, Ma gave him a second look.

"What in the world have you got on?" she said. "Come here to the light."

Shad stood as much in the shadow as he dared.

"Ash and I made a trade," he said.

Ma took hold of the coat, and looked at the material. "H'mm?" she said "Well, I guess your coat fits Ash better than it did you, you made a good trade." (De Angeli Boots)

De Angeli shows the reader the importance of the mother in the household and how wise and practical she is. Ma does not lecture Shad about the trade, rather she finds the positive in every event.

Marguerite de Angeli typifies the American Scholar Housewife. De Angeli had a desire to write while at the same time maintained her household. She was able to overcome many diverse situations and maintain her writing. As De Angeli states in Kunitz and Haycraft's , Junior Book of Authors,

One child was never happy unless near me in the studio. He would stand at the foot of the stairs and call incessantly until he was brought upstairs and put into his pen. Quiet reigned for the few moments it took me to get back to work, then miserable wails began again. When I put the pen around myself and the easel and let the child have the studio in which to roam, all was peace once more. (Kunitz and Haycraft page 97)

De Angeli seemed to excel under the adverse situations of the household. She clearly was able to meet the needs of her writing career as well as the needs of her family. De Angeli balanced the rigorous job of the housewife with that of a writer of children's books. She was a housewife that had a "lifetime devotion to literature for children." (Mainiero page 481)

SHIRLEY JACKSON



Shirley Jackson was born December 14, 1919 in San Francisco, California and she died August 8, 1965 in Bennington, Vermont. (Unger page 1668) Like De Angeli, Jackson had a good marriage that benefited her writing career. She was a very productive writer, mother, and housewife. "Their marriage was happy and productive; they reared four children and carried on independent but mutually stimulating careers. Jackson produced all her major work

during this marriage while bearing and caring for the children and taking responsibility for the house and their frequent entertaining." (Unger page 1669) Jackson's dedication to her dual role as housewife and writer is what makes her an American Scholar.

Shirley Jackson's style of writing catches the reader off guard. Her most celebrated work, The Lottery, published in 1949, leaves the reader in suspense. The interaction between husband and wife is striking to the reader as one character, Mrs. Tessie Hutchinson receives a paper with the symbolic black "dot". On seeing this mark, Mrs. Hutchinson realizes she will be stoned to death as her husband is forced to look on.

"Tessie," Mr. Summers said, and his voice was hushed. "Show us her paper, Bill." Bill Hutchinson went over to his wife and forced the slip of paper out of her hand. It has a black spot on it, the black spot Mr. Summers had made the night before with the heavy pencil in the coal-company office. Bill Hutchinson held it up, and there was a stir in the crowd.

"All right, folks," Mr. Summers said. "Let's finish quickly." Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use stones. The pile of stones the boys had made earlier was ready; there were stones on the ground with the blowing scraps of paper that had come out of the box. Mrs. Delacroix selected a stone so large she had to pick it up with both hands and turned to Mrs. Dunbar. "Come on," she said "Hurry up."

Mrs. Dunbar had small stones in both hands, and she said, gasping for breath, "I can't run at all. You'll have to go ahead and I'll catch up with you."

The children had stones already, and someone

gave little Davy Hutchinson a few pebbles.

Tessie Hutchinson was in the center of a cleared space by now, and she held her hands out desperately as the villagers moved in on her. "It isn't fair," she said. A stone hit her on the side of the head. (Jackson page 301)

Jackson's concern with the darker side human life is what makes her writing unique.

Shirley Jackson excelled as a writer and a housewife. All of her finest works were published while she was a housewife and a mother. She had four children to care for while maintaining her household. She was able to be productive in her dual role as housewife and writer, and for this reason she is truly an American Scholar.

TILLIE OLSEN



Tillie Olsen was born January 14, 1913 in Omaha, Nebraska. (Mainiero page 303) Tillie Olsen, mother of four daughters, found the life of the housewife/writer very difficult at times. "Married in 1936 to a printer and union man, Olsen put aside her writing as she assumed the responsibilities of wife, mother of four daughters, and wage

earner. Writing again in the 1950's." (Mainiero page 303)

Tillie Olsen, like many housewives that write, was constantly confronted with the problems and tribulations of the daily caring for her family. Unlike many housewives, Tillie Olsen never lost the intellectual desire to write. Even when times were tough in her household, she never abandoned her desire to acquire knowledge and to write. Tillie Olsen represents the diversity of the housewife in America.

Early on in life Tillie Olsen found it necessary to write things down. As early as her teen years she could be found writing in her journal, reflecting upon life and issues of the day. Olsen shows a concern over the direction of women's roles in society even in her teenage years. As Tillie Olsen writes in Elaine Neil Orr's book entitled, Tillie Olsen,

Have been reading Nietzsche and Modern Quarterly. I must write out, clearly and concisely, my ideas on things. I vacillate so easily. And I am so-so sloppy in my mental thinking. What are my true opinions, for instance, on socialism, what life should be, the future of literature, true art, the relations between the sexes, where are we going... Yes I must write out... (Orr page 29)

Olsen's writing is constantly concerned with the future of society. She questions the role of women and the future of the same. One constant element Olsen maintains throughout her life is the desire to put words down on paper. Writing

is Olsen's refuge, her way to understand society, a way she finds answers to life's questions.

After the birth of her four children, Olsen began to feel there was a void in her life. She had a desire to write again. The problem was how to find the time to write. With children to feed and support Olsen was forced to work long and hard hours. How was time for writing to come about? In her book Silences, Olsen writes of her early married years when she searched for time to write. For example,

In the twenty years I bore and reared my children, the simplest circumstances for creation did not exist. Nevertheless writing, the hope of it, was "the air I breathed, so long as I shall breath at all." In that hope, there was conscious storing, snatched reading, beginnings of writing, and always "the secret rootlets of reconnaissance."

When the youngest of our four was in school , the beginnings struggled toward endings...

Bliss of movement. A full extended family life; the world of my job (transcriber in a dairy-equipment company); and the writing, which I was somehow able to carry around with me through work, through home. Time on the bus...the stolen moments at work...deep night hours...(Orr page 33)

Olsen's desire to work, coupled with her steadfast maintaining of her household make her an American Scholar. It is remarkable that Olsen was able to maintain a desire to write under such difficult times.

Olsen portrays the housewife in her stories as being on their feet, thinking women. Her characters are strong,

dignified women who are capable of indepth analyzing of problems. In I Stand Here Ironing, she writes, "Let her be. So all that is in her will not bloom--but in how many does it? There is still enough left to live by. Only help her to know--help make it so there is cause for her to know--that she is more than this dress on the ironing board, helpless before the iron." (Olsen page 12) Tillie Olsen shows the reader the problem solving abilities housewives possess.

Olsen adds powerful images to her writing of the domestic scene, allowing the reader to experience the daily lives of her characters. In Tell Me a Riddle, Olsen shows how the job of the housewife is not as easy as some people assume. She shatters the stereotype that being a housewife is easy or uneventful.

Now they put a baby in her lap. Do not ask me, she would have liked to beg. Enough the worn face of Vivi, the remembered grandchildren. I cannot, cannot...Cannot what? Unnatural grandmother, not able to make herself embrace a baby.

She lay there in bed of the two little girls, her hearing aid turned full, listening to the sound of the children going to sleep, the baby's fretful crying and hushing, the clatter of dishes being washed and put away. They thought she slept. Still she rode on.

It was not that she had not loved her babies, her children. The love--the passion of tending--had risen with the need like a torrent; and like a torrent drowned and immolated all else. But when the need was done--oh the power that was lost in the painful damming back and drying up of what still surged, but had nowhere to go. Only the thin pulsing left that could not quiet, suffering over lives one felt, but could no longer hold nor help.

Olsen's women characters are thinkers. They embrace life and fight against that which many say they can not control. They are strong, fighters to the end.

Olsen also writes of class struggle. She often times allows the reader to feel the frustration of the poor person through her writing. In her first published poem, "I Want You Women Up North to Know," Olsen tries to amplify her views on the plight of the southern laborer. For example,

i want you women up north to know
how those dainty children's dresses you buy
at macy's, wannamakers, gimbel's, marchall
fields,
are dyed in blood, are stitched in wasting flesh,
down in San Antonio, "where sunshine spends the
winter."
I want you women up north to see
the obsequious smile, the salesladies trill
"exquisite work, madame, exquisite pleats"
vanish into a bloated face, ordering more dresses,
gouging the wages down,
dissolve into maria, ambrosia, catalina,
stitching these dresses from dawn to night,
in blood, in wasting flesh. (Orr page 45)

Olsen's ability to capture the reader's attention makes the poem meaningful. Not only does she allow the reader to see the social significance of her writing, but rather, she also allows the reader to see the faces of the distressed workers in the factory. Olsen tries to give meaning to her subject rather than to depict social conditions in a romanticized fashion.

Education is a joint process of informal and formal education. Formal education alone, however, is not enough to make a student marketable in today's society. Informal teaching is necessary in order to develop the well-rounded individual. Students must have "hands-on"/informal learning and teaching in order to become complete. An education is of no use if one does not apply to life what is learned. The thinking person is a product of both informal and formal education. Those who have access to both forms of education have a clear advantage over those who do not. The "complete" person uses informal/"hands-on" information as a primary influence in his/her life. John Hersey states in The Writer's Craft that William Burroughs "worked at various unusual jobs, that is for a Harvard man: for example, as a detective, a bartender, an exterminator of roaches and rats." (Hersey page 299) The American Scholar is able to handle adverse situations--knowing he/she has the basic survival skills which are taught at the informal level. As in the case of Burroughs, the scholar learns a great deal from the so-called "common jobs", and for his/her dedication he/she is a more well-rounded and complete individual--an American Scholar.

The best example America has to offer of an American Scholar can be found very close to home. The housewife that writes is our American Scholar. Nowhere else can one find a group of individuals who are able to maintain and be

productive in a dual role. Housewives have the ability to use "hands-on" experiences to make themselves better writers. The ability of the housewife to use her hands and her mind make her the epitome of the well-rounded individual. Since the housewife is constantly confronted with a changing world in her daily job as housewife, she is better suited to be an intellectual leader. The housewife that writes is constantly seeking new and exciting knowledge--never stagnating. She desires the intellectual satisfaction that comes from writing. No other group of people deserve the respect and admiration of others than housewives that write, for through all their daily trials at home they have shown us their strengths as writers--for this we must call them American Scholars. Yes, the American Scholar can be found very close to home--in our very own neighborhoods--the American housewife that writes.

Chapter 3

Scholars of Independence: Housewives of the American Revolution

Women of the American Revolutionary period were clearly effected by the conditions caused by the outbreak of war with England. Each new day brought about changes from which the colonial housewife was forced to react. The ironic point, however, is for all their scholarly work, many housewives that wrote went without recognition. Women such as Abigail Adams, Sarah Franklin Bache, Jane Franklin Mecom, Mercy Otis Warren, and Phillis Wheatley represented the typical struggle of the housewife trying to write during the American Revolutionary Period. Adams, Bache, Mecom, Warren, and Wheatley searched for recognition in a society that would not listen. The one element which ties these women together is their desire to overcome the social conditions and constraints of the time. Many other women would have given up, but Adams, Bache, Mecom, Warren, and Wheatley would not yield to society's will. The struggle women writers and thinkers faced during the American Revolutionary War can be seen when one looks at the lives of Adams, Bache, Mecom, Warren, and Wheatley. Though they came from different backgrounds, from Adams to Wheatley, they held onto a desire to learn and write in a time when participation by women was not looked on favorably by society. The lack of recognition women like Adams, Bache, Mecom, Warren, and Wheatley received did not slow these women down, rather, these women of the American Revolution responded to the needs of their families and country. They voiced their political and social views about the

war--trying desperately to have an impact. The endless struggle scholar housewives faced served to hold these women together with a common thread each could share. The average person would have given up, yet these lady patriots reacted to the diversity in a positive nature. Not only did these women react to the pressures of the war, but they also had to step up their responsibilities at home since they had lost the support of their husbands who were preoccupied with the war effort. As Linda K. Kerber states in, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America.

The men of the Revolution assumed that the war was theirs to make. There was no formal political context in which women might be consulted or might develop their collective judgment. But the war itself did speed the integration of women into the civil polity... her services in a largely guerrilla war were much sought after--as a provider of essential services for troops, as a civilian source of food and shelter, as a contributor of funds and supplies, as a spy.

As the war developed, women found their abilities were needed to beat the enemy. Women did what ever was needed to help the war effort, as a result, women began to find their role in society was much more important then they had been led to believe prior. It was a time of great growth for the housewife as she began to seek a public identity, a social place where her efforts would be accepted and recognized.

Women were challenged to commit themselves politically and then to justify their allegiance. The war raised once again the old question of whether a woman could be a patriot...(Kerber

The American Revolution had a great effect on the housewife. Through the war, women were able to prove they were capable of maintaining order at home, while the husband was away. Although few people listened, it nonetheless was a start to a road of recognition. The war also proved that women could be politically outspoken---writing, writing, writing about issues of their concern.

The women of the Revolution soon found there was a need for their skills and there was a need for them to react to the war. They could not stay neutral, for the nature of society and its pressures were too much. They either had to call themselves patriots or loyalists. The effects of the war became obvious to these women. Their roles were ever growing with the absence of their husbands away at war. Many times the women were effected more by the war than the men simply because they received increased responsibilities. Yes, the men did have to fight on the battle field, but they didn't have to worry about the upkeep of the homestead, the caring of the children, or whether their spouse was dead or alive. Also these women had to step up their roles as providers for the army with food, supplies, and lodging for soldiers. All of these factors were a great burden on the women of the American Revolution. As a direct result of the conditions of the Revolution, women that could use their

"pen" were in a position to voice an opinion. These opinions were not always looked upon positively by the society. Many housewives that wrote confronted resistance from the communities that did not like women challenging the roles of society, feeling women were stepping out of their place. The society of the American Revolution looked down on women who tried to challenge authority--especially if they were housewives. Ironically these very same men that were upset over the women challenging authority were doing the very same thing against the king of England. Nevertheless, women received minimal recognition for their views and writing. What was important to the people was what side you were on--the loyalists or the patriots.

During wartime this assumption caught women in a double bind: women left at home while their husbands fought for the loyalists were often ostracized by their communities and forced into exile without being asked their own political opinions.(Kerber page 9)

What frustrated many women was the fact that they were not allowed a political view. It was assumed that their views were the same as the husband's, thus if the husband was a loyalist, then too the wife must be as well. The problem is, however, women were fastly being thrown into positions of power with the absence of their husbands and there could be no turning back. By war's end many women forced their way into the political scene through their writing--but it seemed too little too late, for with the return of the men from war also came the pressure for the women to return to

their role as housewife and housewife only. This didn't settle well with many housewives that wrote. They felt the scholarly desire to continue their work as writers. They found nothing wrong with writing, in fact they felt it was a natural process--housewife and writing. The housewife that wrote was now in a position to be heard. They wanted to voice their opinions. The housewife that wrote finally had the confidence to feel she had something to say.

The Revolutionary housewife that writes was not only intelligent, she also was politically active in the sense at a minimum she understood politics. She many times participated in political conversations at parties or get togethers. For example,

The best-known organized political action by American women is the campaign of the female patriots of Philadelphia to collect funds for Washington's troops. Organized and led by Esther DeBerdt Reed (in her role as wife of the president of Pennsylvania) and Benjamin Franklin's daughter, Sarah Franklin Bache, the campaign gained much publicity because its leadership included "the best ladies" of the patriot side...Collecting contributions door-to-door implied confrontation: "Of all absurdities," the loyalist Anna Rawle wrote to Rebecca Rawle Shoemaker, "the ladies going about for money exceeded everything; they were so extremely importunate that people were obliged to give them something to get rid of them." (Kerber pages 99 & 102)

The politically motivated housewives were very active and often got their way. They seldom took "no" for an answer. This type of attitude is what set the tradition of the

housewife that wrote. Once the housewife that writes tastes success with her pen she can never go back to mere servitude--for now she values her own opinion and her opinion could change society.

ABIGAIL ADAMS



*Abigail Adams (Portrait by Ralph Earl)
Courtesy, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown*

Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams, was born November 11, 1744. She died October 28, 1818. From the very beginning of her marriage to John Adams, Abigail Adams was forced to take a back seat to her husband's political career. She took on the huge responsibility of running the household when John traveled, often leaving their home for weeks and months at a time. This lack of support from her husband frustrated Adams. It forced her to take on the entire load of the household, from taking care of the children to caring for the financial dealings of the family. For example, Paul Engle states in his book entitled, Women

in the American Revolution, "John had left early in January, and Adams stayed to follow the course of the war and worry by herself." (Engle page 258) Adams was very frustrated over the fact she could do nothing to help her husband. The constant pressure of worrying over whether her husband was dead or alive also frustrated Adams, yet she continued her scholarly desires and kept up her letter writing.

Adams was a prolific writer of letters, corresponding heavily throughout the American Revolution. Letter writing seemed to comfort Adams in the absence of her husband. They do more for present day readers, do these letters, as they give keen insight into Abigail Adams's frustration and pain. Adams, a brilliant person, was quite frankly, frustrated with the state of her existence--she wanted more out of life. But more than this, she wanted to be with her husband, which she saw little of during most of her married life. She hated the insecure feeling of not knowing when or if her husband would return. She shows her frustration when she writes,

...the agitation and distress I was thrown into by receiving a letter in his handwriting, franked by him. It seemed almost impossible that the human mind could take in, in so small a space of time, so many ideas as rushed upon mine in the space of a moment. I cannot describe to you what I felt. The sickness or death of the dearest of friends, with ten thousand horrors, seized my imagination. I took up the letter, then laid it down, then gave it out of my

hand unable to open it, then collected resolution enough to unseal it but dared not read it; began at the bottom--read a line--then attempted to begin it, but could not.(Engle page 259)

The many days and nights Adams spent alone helped to build her character. She began to become more and more politically involved and thus began the long road to becoming an American Scholar.

Fear over invasion by the British was a central concern of Abigail Adams. Many other people shared this fear. As Adams states, "All Boston was in confusion packing up and carting out of town household furniture, military stores, goods, etc...O human nature! or rather, O inhuman nature! what art thou?...though pretty weak, I set about packing my things, and on Saturday removed a load."(Engle page 260) Even though the conflict did not come, Adams's descriptive account of the incident was excellent. In this it exemplifies Adams's thought provoking prose.

Adams's talents did not go unnoticed by everyone. Her husband, John Adams, often noted how loyal and devoted Abigail was to him. He often complemented her on her household management skills. For example,

Abigail's steadfastness in the midst of the war led John to think about the support wives gave to leaders of nations. In subtle appreciation, he told Abigail that great men would not be so were it not for the women who helped them. "Upon examining the biography of illustrious men," he told Abigail, "you will generally find some

female about them, in the relation of mother
or wife or sister" who encouraged them.
(Engle page 261)

Though complimented by her husband, Adams still faced the arduous chore of caring for the children and her household. The stress of running the family farm was immense; as a result, she became even more frustrated with her position in life. Throughout the war the separation from her husband concerned her. Adams worried since there was "tremendous inflation during the war and many necessities were difficult to get at any price." (Engle page 269) Through all the frustration of the war and the separation from her husband, Abigail Adams continued to write.

SARAH FRANKLIN BACHE



*Sarah Franklin Bache (Portrait by John Hoppner)
Courtesy, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wolfe Fund, 1901*

Sarah Franklin Bache, daughter of Benjamin Franklin, died in 1808. During the American Revolution Sarah was an author and a relief worker. Sarah was an excellent organizer and was among the organizers led by Esther de Berdt Reed to raise money for General Washington's army..." (Engle 236) Along with her relief work, Sarah Franklin Bache also maintained her household, organized relief efforts for the troops, operated a nursery of eight children, and continued to write.

The American Revolution had a great effect on Sarah Franklin Bache. Time after time she proved how tough she was, taking on the rigors of life in stride.

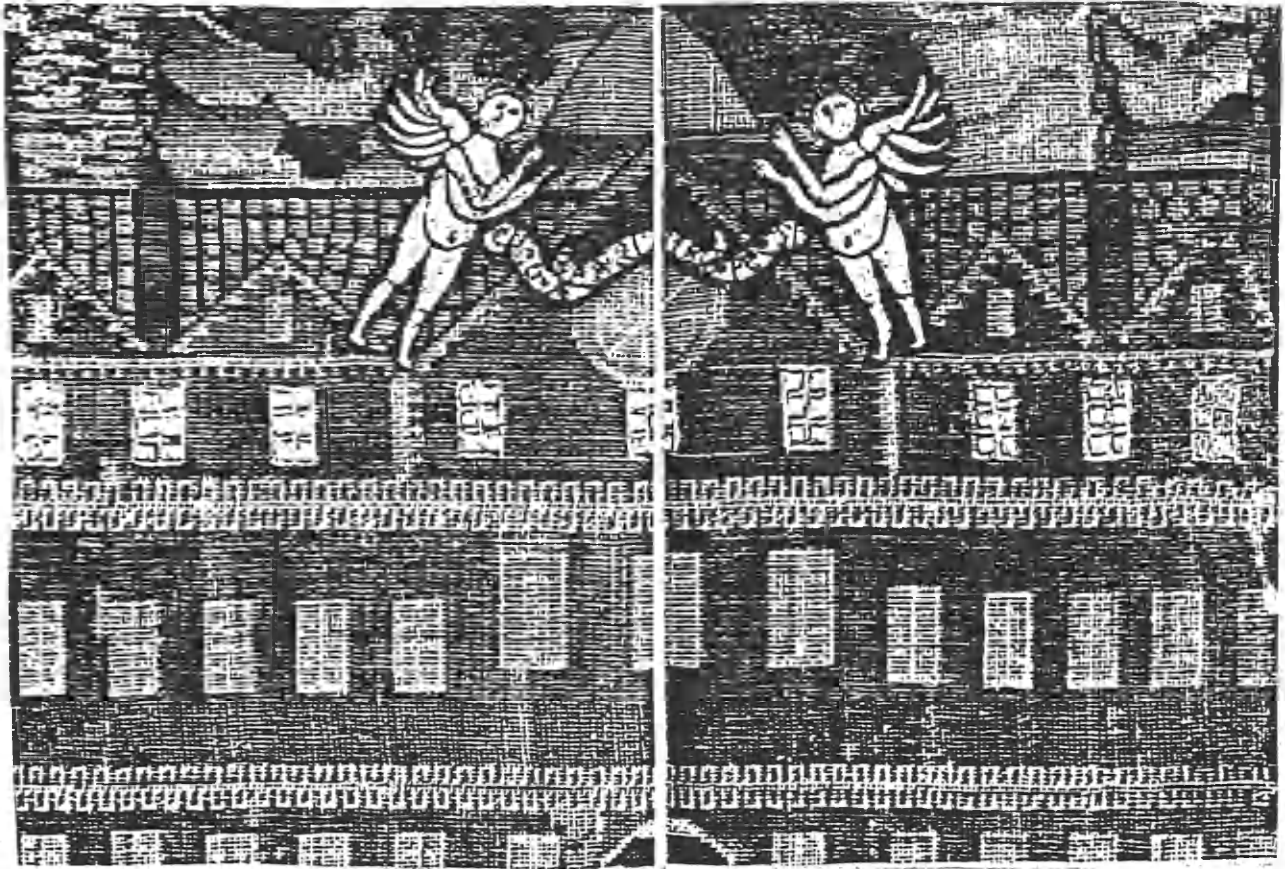
The Revolutionary War changed Sarah Bache's life in a variety of ways. Her husband was appointed postmaster general in 1776 and was often away from home and in danger of capture. In that same year, her father took her eldest son to France, where the child remained to be educated until 1785. Sarah was forced to move her household to avoid the thrust of British forces. When the British officers advanced through New Jersey in 1776, Sarah took refuge in Goshen, Chester County. Very far advanced in pregnancy, Sarah bore her second daughter in Goshen. Four days after childbirth, Sarah again gathered up her household and fled to Lower Dublin Township and then to Manheim, Pennsylvania. After all of this effort and the terror and exhaustion of giving birth in flight, Sarah resolved to stay with her family in Philadelphia next time the British advanced. (Engle page 240)

Sarah Franklin Bache was a great housewife, mother, and a woman of great wit. "One night, upon sitting up in bed, she spied a rat eating the candle on the mantel. She aroused her husband, who said sleepily, "My dear, there is no rat, it is conceit." "Very well, Mr. Bache, then it is conceit with four legs and a tail." As sleepy as he was, the poor man slew the rat, being no match for his wife's wit." (Engle page 243)

Sarah Franklin Bache was an amazing person. She was able to balance the stress of her household with the desire to write, while at the same time she was able to dedicate much time and effort to help other people. She is an

American Scholar--part of that impressive group of
housewives that write.

JANE FRANKLIN MECOM



Jane Franklin Mecom, sister of Benjamin Franklin, was born March 12, 1712, and died May 10, 1794. She was a housewife and mother of twelve children. Her views of the American Revolution give us great insight into the war.

Jane's life would be similar to that of her parents. She had too many children and experienced much personal tragedy--even abject poverty. As the Revolution approached and progressed, she would not become a great heroine or statesman's wife. She would, however, leave a sophisticated appreciation of the momentous questions of the era in her letters to her brother...Jane, therefore, must be seen as an important figure in America's struggle for independence, for through her life and letters we gain new perspectives on both the Revolution and the career of her

brilliant brother. (Engle page 72)

Through such housewives that write like Jane Franklin Mecom, one can learn a great deal about America's past. Jane Mecom embodies those qualities necessary to be considered a true American Scholar.

Mecom had many hold backs, yet she continued to write. Her correspondence with her brother, Ben Franklin helped her through many difficult times. Since Jane Mecom was the favorite of her brother, she often wrote for advise or to pass the time of day. The key to understanding Mecom's life can be found in her letters to Franklin. Writing, it seems, helped Mecom to over come her station in life. She often boarded family and close friends that were down on their luck, however, this took a toll on her emotionally. She needed a release. Letter writing was the answer to Mecom's domestic worries. Carl Van Doren writes in, The Letters of Benjamin Franklin and Jane Mecom,

As for Jane Mecom herself, she survives essentially, and no doubt she would have preferred this, in her correspondence with her brother. That was her one continuing happiness, her one pride and triumph. Never suspecting that what she wrote would ever be read by strangers, she poured out her heart, which was regulated by a clear steadfast mind. Line by line, year after year, she revealed her own character while she told her story. (Van Doren page 32)

It is amazing that Jane Mecom was able to continue writing with all of the troubles she had on her mind; from family

members staying with her to her own children passing away. Mecom had a lot on her mind, yet she continued to write.

Handicapped by domestic misfortunes as Franklin never was, Jane Mecom survived as he did, and rose above her circumstances as he did. If she had lived in circles anything like his she might have been influential and memorable in her own day, instead of waiting for a century and a half for the recognition due her. (Van Doren page 32)

Mecom's ability to balance the negative effects of her family life with a desire to write make her an American Scholar.

Mecom's use of graphic detail leaves the reader with an excellent picture of the event she is describing. Through such concrete detail one is allowed to gain insight into the Revolutionary War. An example of Mecom's use of details can be seen when she writes a letter to her brother from Boston. Boston had become a battlefield and Jane Mecom made ready to retreat like thousands of others. She writes,

...the storm would have arisen so high as for the General (Thomas Gage) to have sent out a party to creep out in the night and slaughter our dear brethren for endeavoring to defend our own property. But God appeared for us and drove them back with much greater loss than they are willing to own. Their countenances as well as confessions of many of them show they were mistaken in the people they had to deal with; but the distress it has occasioned is past my description. The horror the town was in when the battle approached within hearing, expecting they would proceed quite into town; the commotion the town was in after the battle ceased, by the parties coming in bringing their wounded men, caused such an agitation I believe none had

much sleep...(Engle page 84)

Jane Franklin Mecom was a good mother and housewife, but she could also write--and write well. She shows the perseverance a housewife must have if she wants to write. She was an American Scholar.

MERCY OTIS WARREN



*Mercy Otis Warren (Portrait by John Singleton Copley)
Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*

Mercy Otis Warren was born September 25, 1728. She died October 19, 1814. Mercy Warren was one of America's best early woman writers. She published a three-volume set entitled History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution in 1805. Despite the quality of her writing, she received little recognition. The fact is, however, she was writing in a male-dominated society. Her writing as good as it was was unjustly treated. Her writing can no longer be overlooked--it is excellent. As Paul Engle states in, Women in the American Revolution, for example,

But by far the most interesting fact regarding this history is that it is written by a woman. The author, Mercy Otis Warren, was one of Massachusetts's best known writers throughout the revolutionary period. As a woman in a decidedly male-dominated intellectual world, her achievements are overwhelming. Though there have been recurrent attempts to revive this great person's reputation, it is surprising that she is not better known in our own day. (Engle page 45)

Mercy Warren's writing is a valuable tool to us today, for her insight into the history of the American Revolution is keen. As Alice Brown states in Women of Colonial and Revolutionary Times: Mercy Warren, "...she lived through the first irritation precluding wrath "from the one we love," to defection, victory, and peace. In time, in feeling and influence, her life kept pace, step for step, with the growth of a nation."(Brown page 1)

Like many other housewives that wrote, Warren wanted more out of life. For example, "Mercy Otis learned, like all proper maidens, the arts that go to the making of good housewives; yet I cannot believe that they wholly appealed to her."(Brown page 23) Mercy was meant for bigger and better things, however, she worked hard at being a good mother and housewife--never letting her desire to write die.

Warren was a mother of five children. It is difficult to imagine the stress she felt over taking care of her family and maintaining time to write. But for all her frustration and pain, she managed to sneak in time to do her scholarly work--publishing plays and histories. Her job in

many senses was more difficult than her husband's, for she had to stay behind to care for the family and worry about the fate of her husband away at war. "While the men of the Colonies were risking life and fortune in the building of a nation, the women were bearing as uncomplainingly the great burden of patience."(Brown page 100) Through all the tests of the war, Mercy persevered and continued to write.

Mercy Otis Warren was also known for her wit. She often wrote satirical poems in response to some political action which upset her. In her poem entitled, To the Hon. J. Winthrop, Esq. Who, on the American Determination, in 1774, to suspend all Commerce with Britain, (except for the real Necessaries of life) requested a poetical List of the Articles the Ladies might comprise under that Head,

But what's the anguish of whole towns in tears,
Or trembling cities groaning out their fears?
The state may totter on proud ruin's brink,
The sword be brandish'd or the bark may sink;
Yet shall Clarissa check her wanton pride,
And lay her female ornaments aside?
Quit all the shining pomp, the gay parade,
The costly trappings that adorn the maid?
What! all the aid of foreign looms refuse!
(As beds of tulips strip'd of richest hues,
Or the sweet bloom that's nip'd by sudden frost,
Clarissa reigns no more a favorite toast.)
For what is virtue, or the winning grace,
Of soft good humor, playing round the face;
Or what those modest antiquated charms,
That lur'd a Brutus to a Porcia's arms;
Or all the hidden beauties of the mind,
Compar'd with gauze, tassels well combin'd?
(Warren-Brown pages 109-110)

Warren's wit is impressive in that she recognizes that people act foolishly. Mercy Otis Warren told it like it

was--never trying to tip toe around a subject. With Mercy Warren, what her "heart thinks her tongue speaks." (Brown page 153)

Although Mercy Otis Warren's work went unnoticed for the most part by the people of her time, she was still a fine writer. Her play The Motley Assembly published in 1779, was perhaps the first American play with an all american cast of characters. (Engle page 62) Her works are very impressive and as far as her husband was concerned she was considered an intellectual. "Mercy and Abigail were privy to the ongoing discussion of politics, since both of them were considered intellectuals by their husbands and their close circle of friends." (Engle page 55)

Mercy Otis Warren was a marvelous writer, housewife, and mother, but what is her greatest feat is that she could do all three at the same time. As Colton Strom states in the forward of Warren's The Group, "Mercy Warren, being an eighteenth century lady, would not speak out at public meetings, nor join riots, nor fight in the lines. However, she could write--and write she did, with a pen that endeared her to John Adams, Joseph Warren, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and the rest of their coterie." (Warren-Forward of The Group) Warren was a great writer, patriot, and housewife.

PHILLIS WHEATLEY



Phillis Wheatley, an ex-slave, was probably born around 1763. (dates questionable due to the fact she was a slave brought to America) She died December 5, 1784. Phillis Wheatley was a fine poet in a time when women received very little attention for her writing. The astonishing thing is that Wheatley was a slave, a housewife, and a mother. She continued to write through all the diversity. "The Wheatleys, of course, were the first to be astonished. Mrs. Wheatley was looking only for a young slave to help her in her advancing years when she and her husband visited the

Boston docks that day in 1761...What the Wheatleys discovered was a poet." (Engle page 94) The odds of Phillis ever becoming a poet were greatly against her. She was black and blacks received little if any recognition for their work. Phillis was lucky enough to have slave owners that treated her like a daughter and sent her to school. She learned to read and write and her poetry seemed to come naturally.

Wheatley was read by many people of her time. She was able to make gains and receive some recognition. As a result, her identity as a slave many times went unnoticed. George Washington, for example was very impressed with Wheatley's work.

It is likely that at first the general didn't even know of Phillis's reputation as a slave poet, for he referred to her as "Mrs. or Miss Phillis Wheatley" to his secretary. If he knew she were a slave, he, a slaveholder himself, would never have experienced the polite confusion over whether Phillis was a "Mrs. or Miss".(Engle page 103)

Phillis Wheatley had everything against her. she was black, she was a slave, she was a women, she was a mother, and she was a housewife, yet she never lost the desire to write. Sadly Phillis Wheatley's life ended without her receiving all the recognition she deserved. She lost her children and her marriage, and died a poor woman. "It is not known by whom she was mourned. Her husband was in debtor's jail, and her three children were all dead...She

died in abject poverty..."(Engle page 93) She stands remembered, however, for she is an American Scholar.

The effects of the American Revolution on women can be seen through the writing of colonial housewives. The struggle to maintain the household while their husbands were away at war was extremely difficult on these women. The daily task of caring for the children and worrying for loved ones off at war would stop most people from the continued desire to write. These bold women, however, never stopped their writing, and in doing so they set a tradition for housewives of the future.

War is hard on all of society, in some way or another, and it would have been easy for these housewives to give up their writing careers, but this did not happen. These women of the American Revolution continued to express their views through their writing. Many of these women died without receiving the recognition they deserved. For example, John C. Shields state in The Collected Works of Phillis Wheatley, "Phillis Wheatley, formerly renowned internationally for the products of her pen, dies in poverty, largely forgotten." (Shields page 339)

Housewives, writers, and mothers were these great women--their role as the great stabilizers of society have been unjustly forgotten. The facts are that these women were not only strong, they were also patriots and community leaders with their pens. The women of the American Revolution's ability to produce scholarly works while under immense pressures of the household, makes these women worthy

of our praise. These women of the American Revolution were not only great, they are American Scholars--the housewife that writes.

Chapter 4

Political Thought of the American Housewife: Women of the Seneca Falls Convention-1848

The American housewife has long been overlooked for intellectual ability and political insight. Looking back to the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, we get a glimpse of women willing to stand up for what they believed. Their struggle to achieve the right to vote was long and hard, but when their task was completed, they had made an imprint on the future of American society. Society could not longer overlook the desire of women to make a difference.

Woman Suffrage for the American housewife seemed to be an endless battle. In the mid-nineteenth century, such noble women as Mary Anthony, Amelia Jenks Bloomer, Lucretia Coffin Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton exemplified the new era of women who were willing to stand and be heard. These housewives were able to use the political circumstances of the time to their benefit. Time and time again these women were called upon to change a society which had no desire to give women equality in any form, especially the vote. The women of Seneca Falls were able to use their superior abilities to influence social trends. As these suffragists continued their crusade to free women from the plight of their social condition, they were often times forced to personal sacrifice in order to gain a political voice in America. "While man enjoys all the rights, he preaches all the duties to a woman." (Stanton-Gurko page 1) Housewives could no longer accept a subordinate role in society,

especially since they were not even allowed the most basic democratic privilege--the vote.

This type of political muting dates back to Abigail Adams who longed for the rights and privileges of men of her time. Adams, like many other women of her time, wanted to be heard. She refused to accept the conditions of society as they pertained to equal rights. Adams's attitude is very representative of the women of Seneca Falls, when she states in a letter to her husband in 1776, "I cannot say that I think you are very generous to the ladies; for, whilst you are proclaiming peace and good-will to men, emancipating all nations, you insist upon retaining an absolute power over wives." (Gurko page 21) Although Abigail lived in a very structured social era, she stood up to her husband. She let John Adams know she would not back down on her feelings of being politically and socially ignored, rather, she accepts her role only in the most basic conditional sense. She realized society was not ready for her talents. Frustrated, she writes letter upon letter to her husband informing him of her continued intellect. Her desire to prove herself was never yielding. In the case of Anthony, Bloomer, Mott, and Stanton, society had loosened its grip on women enough that they could begin to exert a political voice.

The convention held in Seneca Falls in 1848 was much more than a conference to discuss the right of women to vote. It was a "convention of hope" for the future. Never

before had so many women been so willing to voice their political views, and willing to pay the social consequences for their actions. The convention represented an opportunity for women to stand in unison against old biases and stereotypes such as when Jefferson stated, "The tender breasts of ladies were not formed for political convulsion." (Gurko page 21) Statements such as the one by Jefferson must have upset many women of his time, however, what were they to do? Their voices were never heard. But the housewives of Seneca Falls could see beyond such bigoted jargon, looking for the future as their motivating force. The future and what it had in store for women was the key to their existence.

Prior to Seneca Falls, women were, for all practical reasons, politically dead in the sense their views were seldom heard. Unfortunately, the housewife's only vent were letters and conversations with other women. Letter writing and interacting with other women gave the housewife hope in a society that dealt them a rotten hand.

Probably one of the most disheartening factors which spurred the importance of the Seneca Falls Convention was the events of the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in the summer of 1840. It wasn't so much what was said in London as what was done on the convention floor. Lucretia Coffin Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who were both very active in abolitionist activities in the United States, felt

they were making leeway politically and socially by being delegates to the convention. As delegates, they expected to voice their opinions and be an active part of the convention. What happened to Mott and Stanton, however, was quite the opposite. Mott and Stanton, as well as other women delegates were not allowed to be seated on the convention floor with male delegates. As Eleanor Flexner states in Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States,

Although it grew naturally out of the unsatisfactory position of women in a changing world and the work of the pioneers during the preceding thirty years, the seed of the convention was actually planted in the summer of 1840.

The role of the woman would be challenged forever as a result of the Anti-Slavery Convention. The feeling of betrayal at the convention by men would motivate women to seek a new identity--a new role in society.

A World Anti-Slavery Convention in London was attended by an American delegation which included a number of women; but despite the strong objections of some of the American leaders, the convention ruled, after a hot debate, that only men delegates should be seated. Among the women compelled to sit passively in the galleries during the ensuing ten days were Lucretia Mott and the young wife of an abolitionist leader, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. (Flexner page 71)

Once again women had been forced into an insubordinate role in politics. They felt betrayed and hurt by the events of the convention. Once again their political voice was muted.

This betrayal was hard felt because men had been working side by side with women for a common cause, and the trust had been abruptly severed. The betrayal at the London Convention would pave the way to Seneca Falls, New York.

For far too long women had begged to have their voice heard, now they were going to force people to listen. The Woman Suffrage Movement was an attempt to combat the effects of inequality at the most basic level so every women including housewives could take part. No longer could women depend on men to rally support for their cause, rather, women had to begin to develop their own societies and organizations. One thing the London Anti-Slavery Convention taught the Seneca Falls women was the fact that women could easily be betrayed by men at crucial points in the movement. Women had to have a movement where they could exert their point of view, but at the same time not be solely dependent upon men for its legitimization. In order for the Seneca Falls convention to be a success, women needed to mobilize their forces through a well planned out and organized process, free from the influences of men. At Seneca Falls, women legitimated the movement by showing they not only could sustain their organization, but also by showing they were firm in their commitment to rise up and express their political views. Through abolitionist participation, women had proven they were steadfast in their beliefs, however, their work was overlooked by society. Seneca Falls was

different in that women organized themselves, depended on themselves, and only included men in the movement which they felt would benefit their cause. Unlike the London Convention, Seneca Falls would prove that women were in control of their own destiny. The failure to be recognized in London would only serve to mobilize women toward the Suffrage Movement. Housewives such as Mary Anthony, Amelia Jenks Bloomer, Lucretia Coffin Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton believed in their political and intellectual abilities before London, after London they were forced to prove themselves again to a society which stubbornly resisted change.

As Lucretia Mott states in Discourse,

We deny that the present position of woman is her true sphere of usefulness; nor will she attain to this sphere, until the disabilities and disadvantages, religious, civil, and social, which impede her progress, removed out of her way. These restrictions have enervated her mind and paralyzed her powers. While man assumes that the present is the original state designed for women; that the existing differences are not arbitrary² ...but grounded in nature, she will not make the necessary effort to obtain her just rights, lest it should subject her to the kind of scorn and contemptuous manner in which she has been spoken of. (Gurko page 47)

The restrictive past which Mott spoke of could only serve to hinder the development of the housewife in general. With the leadership of such housewives as Mott and others, the setbacks of the London Convention could be turned into a motivating factor for the future. Housewives were willing

to take charge of their own lives and take a chance at freedom.

Another demand of the intellectual housewife was to have society recognize the abuses of women over time. Housewives like Elizabeth Cady Stanton wanted society to understand the negative effects stereotypes had on perpetuating the condition of women, and on society in general. "To me there was no question so important as the emancipation of women from the dogmas of the past, political, religious, and social. It struck me as very remarkable that abolitionists, who felt so keenly the wrongs of the slave, should be so oblivious to the equal wrongs of their own mothers, wives, and sisters." (Stanton-Gurko page 56) Housewives fought for the right to be equal, but more than that, to be treated fairly. The misconceptions of the past were in the minds of the people of the present. If women were to gain political, social, and religious equality, then the myths of the past had to be destroyed.

Housewives had to believe in their own abilities. Years of being told their views on political and social questions didn't matter had a major effect on women. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton remembered, "The first event engraved on my memory was the birth of a sister when I was four years old...I heard so many friends remark, "What a pity it is she's a girl!"...I did not understand at that time that girls were considered an inferior order of beings." (Gurko

page 56) From birth the stereotypes began and women were made to feel inferior to males. It was a social conditioning agent--tell women they are dumb and have no political significance and maybe they will believe it. What is sad is that this may have become a self-fulfilling prophecy for many women. Seneca Falls and what it stood for was an attempt on the part of housewife to dispel these false myths.

Anthony, Bloomer, Mott, and Stanton in some way all knew the plight of women who worked at home. They carried on the daily activities of the house as well as striving for the ultimate political freedom--the vote. Equality for these women was not an abstract idea, rather, it was grass-rooted in the home. Recognition for their work at home and on the road had equal importance. Susan B. Anthony best speaks of the multi-faceted abilities of the housewife when she writes to Elizabeth Cady Stanton in, Eighty Years and More,

Oh, dear, dear! There is so much to say and I am so without constructive power to put it in symmetrical order. So, for the love of me and for the saving of the reputation of womanhood, I beg you, with one baby on your knee and another at your feet, and four boys whistling, buzzing, hallooing "Ma, Ma," set yourself about the work...During July, I want to speak certainly twice at Avon, Clifton, Sharon, and Ballston Springs, and Lake George. Now will you load my gun, leaving me to pull the trigger and let fly the power of the ball?
(Stanton-Eighty Years page V)

The strength of such a housewife as Stanton is a tribute to all women who tried to balance the life of housewife, mother, and political activist. These housewives were the driving force behind the Woman Suffrage Movement. Political recognition was no longer an abstract hope, but rather, a distinct possibility in the future. They were able to balance the rigors of home with their desire to attain a political voice. The dual-role of housewife and political activist is what made the housewives of Seneca Falls so special--American Scholars.

SENECA FALLS 1848:
The Politics of Equality.



MRS. STANTON AND MRS. BLOOMER
In the Reform Dress of the Early 1850's

The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 was extremely important to the future of the American housewife. Not only was the convention an open forum for the resolution of the question of Woman Suffrage, but also it was the turning point of political openness among housewives. During the early to mid-nineteenth century, women began to assert themselves in ways, which only years before, had been

considered taboo. Many housewives moved out of the "wings" of political debate and into the forefront on the issue of the role of women in society. Politically the women knew they had a voice, but the issue was how to get society to listen. The great struggle of the Woman Suffrage Movement in America and what it offered women was to be the backbone of a new found political thought. No longer could the role of the housewife be limited to maintaining the household. Woman had views on political events and they yearned to express these views. The vote was the key to opening the eyes of American society. Housewives hoped the convention would prove to America that women and men were equal. The dream, even today, is a long and hard struggle. Seneca Falls was an opportunity for housewives to see their opinions mattered and to voice those opinions. As Emily Collins states in Reminiscences,

I pined for that freedom of thought and action that was then denied to all womankind. I revolted in spirit against the customs of society and the laws of the State that crushed my aspirations and debarred me from the pursuit of almost every object worthy of an intelligent, rational mind...I read, with intense interest, everything that indicated an awakening of public or private thought to the idea that woman did not occupy her rightful position in the organization of society; and, when I read the lectures of Ernestine Rose and the writings of Margaret Fuller, and found that other women entertained the same thoughts that had been seething in my own brain, and realized that I stood not alone, how my heart bounded with joy! (Gurko page 82)

Housewives no longer felt totally alienated from the rest of society. They found that other housewives felt the same as they did. Seneca Falls offered women hope in a time of bleak despair, and gave them the confidence to know they could change societies' views.

The key to the success of the Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention was two fold. First, the convention was a time of social exchange between housewives and women in general. The convention was an attempt to focus not only on the issue of Woman Suffrage, but also on the identity of women and their role in the future of American society. Secondly, the convention was a time of political realization for the American housewife. Many housewives felt for the first time they had a right to a political voice in society and they could use this voice to initiate change. It is interesting to see how these housewives were willing to undergo extreme ridicule by society in order to gain political freedom. The convention was an attempt to link equality with man to equality of political freedom. Seneca Falls was an opportunity for women to work out possible solutions to problems by way of a social forum. Many women wanted to discuss the social, political, and religious conditions of women, and Seneca Falls gave some them that chance.

Housewives sought a political identity at Seneca Falls. They knew the only way to convince the critics of the Woman Suffrage Movement they were being mistreated by society was to resort to proving their case. By using the very documents and arguments that our country was based on, they could achieve their objectives. They tried to attack the hypocritical ideas associated with our democracy. Women began to ask "why they were given less rights than men in a society which was supposed to be based on democratic principles." Many women made reference to a feeling of being in bondage--this image echoes throughout the proceedings at Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. Such allusion to slavery and other unjust conditions of women was an attempt by housewives to show America how hypocritically we were. Without equality for all, our constitution was no more than hypocritical jargon. Although the argument made by women that they were being treated unfairly was a strong one, many still resolved themselves to a belief that women shouldn't have the right to political equality.

Women knew they would have to attack and argue the very same documents that America was so very proud of if they wanted any chance at political equality. Interestingly enough, the Seneca Falls convention was full of references to the past by both Suffragists and Anti-Suffragists alike. Elizabeth Cady Stanton refers to the past tradition when she read a Declaration of Independence of sorts for the Woman

Suffrage Movement entitled "The Declaration of Sentiments," at the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. Politically it was very important for housewives such as Mott and Stanton to declare their independence from "man"-kind. By using such a concept, Stanton is able to make a link between what our founding fathers said and how women were being excluded. Stanton's use of an image of independence leaves no room for debate if our society truly believed in the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. As Stanton states,

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

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

When Stanton speaks of "all men and women" being equal, she makes a significant political statement. In the course of American history, one sees the gender bias of even our most sacred political documents such as the Declaration of Independence. When the founding fathers talked of equality

they truly were talking of equality of men--not women. Stanton's simple re-wording in the Declaration of Sentiments is essential to understanding the argument that women too are entitled to recognition under the political and social system. Stanton goes on to attack other prejudices against women when she states,

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

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

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

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

He has made her, if married, in the eyes of the law, civilly dead.

Stanton's use of word "mankind" is significant since she tries to emphasize how American society is male-based, rather than people-based. Gender bias statements used by Stanton are important in that she is able to point to the hypocrisy of our system and the need for change. Stanton is also concerned with how society has molded women into irresponsible beings--puppets if you may, prisoners to the system that should protect women's rights. For example,

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

of her liberty, and to administer chastisement...
(Arno pages 5 & 6)

The connection between the Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Independence is very successful and useful. The leadership of the convention take a document which is very common and dear to the average American and makes an argument that society is hypocritical regarding women's rights. The hypocrisy is made clear throughout the entire Declaration of Sentiment document.

An important factor to consider when discussing the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention is the political significance of the speeches and speakers. The presentation of speeches at the convention did not merely express that society had a moral obligation to give women the right to vote, rather, these speakers sought political basis for their arguments by using the very same documents that are the basis for our government. The Women of the Seneca Falls Convention showed their political awareness, and they knew how to influence public opinion.

MARY ANTHONY



Susan and sister Mary, 1905

Mary Anthony, sister of Susan B. Anthony, was born in 1827. Because of her famous sister, Mary went pretty much unnoticed in her time for her work for Woman Suffrage. Her

work toward suffrage goes almost unknown, however, her contributions were many. Mary Anthony, a teacher by trade, often found time to get politically active in the Woman Suffrage Movement, while still maintaining her household responsibilities. Susan B. Anthony states in Alma Lutz's book, Susan B. Anthony: Rebel, Crusader, Humanitarian, "Returning home for her vacation in August, she found to her surprise that a second woman's rights convention had been held in Rochester in the Unitarian church, that her mother, her father, and her sister Mary, and many of their Quaker friends had not only attended, but had signed the Declaration of Sentiments..."(Lutz page 21) Mary Anthony was able to step out of the shadow of her sister and become active in the movement on her own.

Mary Anthony again shows her political activism when she and her sisters register to vote in Rochester, New York, in 1872. Mary Anthony not only registered, but voted in the ensuing election. "The voting inspectors were reluctant to let the women cast their ballots, since that might make the inspectors guilty of violating the law, but Susan Anthony promised to pay their expenses if they were charged with an illegality. The women then had the incredible experience of exercising the democratic right of all citizens to a voice in their government: they voted." (Gurko page 251)

Mary Anthony never married, still she exhibited the qualities of the scholarly housewife. In the role of the

American Scholar housewife, marriage is never the real issue, it is the ability of the women to maintain her desire to write while at the same time maintaining private matters at home. Mary Anthony was able to balance her life in such a way as to be considered an American Scholar. She maintained her household while her sister, Susan, was away. She felt the same frustrations housewives felt over worrying about the return of their husbands. In Mary Anthony's case it was worrying over the return of Susan. She also was forced to maintain the finances of the household, for Susan Anthony was a terrible manager of money. Mary Anthony was able to balance her role of housewife with her desire to make a political contribution to the Woman Suffrage Movement. Ironically, Susan Anthony often referred to Mary Anthony as "looking matrimonially wise." (Lutz page 58)

Mary Anthony maintained an immaculate household as well as her career. She often looked after Susan, for example, "The household was geared to the "bog" as they called the biography. Mary, supervising as usual, watched over their meals and the housework..."(Lutz page 281) Mary Anthony worked to maintain her household in much the same way a married woman may have. Mary Anthony's attention to detail were amazing considering she had to balance her career with the needs of her family. Mary Anthony truly was a housewife! She ran the household and helped out her sister whenever she could. The incredible fact is that she was

able to help further the career of her sister unselfishly throughout Susan B. Anthony's life. Mary Anthony's contributions to the Woman Suffrage Movement seem small in comparison to her sister's, however, her work is impressive because she had to work at home as well as on her career.

Mary Anthony continued to maintain her household even as Susan's career began to blossom. Many times Mary stepped in and cared for many family members at one time. She never stopped trying to achieve her own personal goals, while at the same time helping with the needs of her family. Mary Anthony's dual-role as housewife and political activist make her unique.

She wrote newspaper articles and did some public speaking. Her gently ironic style made her much sought after for the platforms of organizations in the Rochester area. In 1897 she began her famous Protests, which continued until 1907: whenever she paid her taxes, she sent along a note saying, "Paid under protest," with a paragraph or two of sharp comment. In one she discussed the "tyranny" of taxation without representation, which for women had remained unchanged since the rule of King George III. In another she objected to the extension of suffrage to Indian men who couldn't read or write English, thus making them politically superior to literate, educated women, and signed herself "Yours for the right to vote as well as for the privilege of being taxed." These Protest appeared in the newspapers and received wide publicity. (Gurko page 297)

Mary Anthony was a remarkably strong women. She was able to make a difference. With all the well-known women around

her, none so well known as her very own sister, Susan, Mary Anthony became a great woman among great women.

For all Mary Anthony did for her sister, Woman Suffrage, and housewives in general, her work still went without the praises of society. Perhaps they never realized they had a jewel among the other Woman Suffrage leaders. Maybe Anthony would have wanted it that way. Hard work and effort was all the gratification she needed. She was a very unselfish woman indeed. In fact Mary Anthony was a great pioneer in the area of Woman's Rights. Anthony was attended Woman's Rights conventions when Susan B. Anthony only joked about them. Mary Anthony was willing to take a political stand on the issue of Woman Suffrage. In fact, she really was the pioneer of her family for her belief in Woman's Rights.

Mary who had attended the woman's rights convention in Rochester in 1848 and signed the Declaration of Sentiments--"when I came home...I heard nothing but suffrage talk, and how lovely Lucretia Mott was, and how sweet Elizabeth Cady Stanton was." Susan had not thought much about woman's rights then and even made fun of it, "but sister Mary was a firm advocate." Even after Susan Anthony became active in the movement, one of her brother-in-laws said that she could preach woman's rights, but it took Mary to practice them. (Gurko page 297)

Mary Anthony was an active writer, public speaker, and Woman's Rights activist, all for which she gained very little recognition. But when it was all said and done, Mary

Anthony had done a lot for society. She was active politically in many areas, in a time when a woman's opinion was discounted. What made Mary Anthony so very important to the movement was that she understood the plight of the common housewife. Her dual role as housewife and political activist made her stand out in the development of rights for women in our society.

Mary Anthony was more than the sister of Susan B. Anthony, she was a pioneer in Woman Suffrage. For the most part, her life goes unnoticed, unjustly, in the history books. Very few students today will hear of this fine woman and what she did for the movement. However, the scholar that chooses to search for the truth behind the Woman's Rights Movement, will find the name of Mary Anthony. Lost in the shadow of her better known sister, Mary Anthony's contributions often are forgotten. Mary Anthony was a great woman, a woman of conviction, and woman of pride.

AMELIA JENKS BLOOMER



Amelia Jenks Bloomer was born in Homer, New York, May 27, 1818. She died December 30, 1894. (Mainiero page 179) Although Bloomer's contributions to the Woman Suffrage Movement differed from that of Mott and Stanton, she clearly had an effect on the condition of the housewife. She quite possibly was the most political of the three--having free license to write as she wished in her husband's newspaper. For example, "Her husband, a lawyer and editor of the Seneca Falls Courier, encouraged her to contribute articles on social, political, and moral subjects to his paper." (Mainiero page 179) Like Mott and Stanton, Bloomer too was

able to draw from her experiences as a political writer to produce works which had an influence on society.

Amelia Bloomer impressed many with her periodical entitled "The Lily" which "was the first newspaper owned, edited, and controlled by a woman and devoted solely to the interests of women." (Mainiero page 179) Bloomer's periodical was a way for her to express her views about social, political, and religious questions and issues. Although "The Lily" had a modest number of subscribers, it was nonetheless impressive in that it was printed in a time when women didn't own their own companies or publications.

Bloomer became a reformer, Woman's Suffragist, and an editor. But probably one of her biggest contributions to the Woman Suffrage Movement was the "Bloomer Costume." For six to eight years, Bloomer wore the "Bloomer Costume" which consisted of a short skirt with pantaloon legs. The significance of the outfit was not simply the design of the costume, rather, it was the social and political statement which the "bloomer" portrayed. While others talked of the need for equality and change, Bloomer actively tried to make a visual statement. Anyone wearing the "Bloomer Costume" could easily be associated with the movement. This was an important concept, as other woman suffragists had only the pen to do their talking, Bloomer had her pen and her "Bloomer Costume." The "costume" was not Amelia Bloomer's invention, nor was she the first to wear it, however, she

realized its political and social significance to the Woman Suffrage Movement. Bloomer was able to muster support for her "Bloomer Costume" through her writing in "The Lily," as Kathleen Barry states in her book, Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of a Singular Feminist,

In the June 1852 issue of The Lily, Amelia Bloomer described Stanton's appearance at the Rochester meeting...rich black satin dress, a plain waist after the prevailing style of ladies' dresses, full skirt falling six or eight inches below the knee, plain wide trousers of the same material, and black "congress", gaiters....From then on, Bloomer regularly promoted the new costume in her paper until the dress came to be known as "the Bloomer."(Barry page 68)

The "Bloomer" had become a non-verbal symbol of the Woman Suffrage Movement. The dress was the start of a silent social protest that we rarely saw during Bloomer's time. In this regard, she is truly unique. Whether the dress was effective in changing society was not important, what was important was the fact she initiated a new form of protest into the Woman Suffrage Movement.

The "Bloomer Costume", although having a relatively short life, was important to the movement in that it was symbolic of a political feeling that was going through the minds of many women of the time. Women began to feel they could wear what they wanted. Why should society dictate what was proper attire for women? The "Bloomer Costume"

allowed for a sort of freedom women had not seen before and they liked it.

The day did come, however, when the "Bloomer Costume" was abandoned by the leadership of the Woman Suffrage Movement. The dress had served its purpose and began to hinder the work of the woman suffragists since many men jeered and made fun of the "bloomers." Many wearers of the costume soon tired of listening to the verses that went like this:

"Hi-yo!
In sleet and snow,
Mrs. Bloomer's all the go.
Twenty tailors take the stitches,
Plenty o' wimmen wear the britches..."
(Dorr page 92)

The Bloomer crusade had ended, yet the effects of the costume on the movement were evident--"...a million dollars worth of free advertising...(Dorr page 93)

LUCRETIA COFFIN MOTT



Lucretia Coffin Mott was born on Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, January 3, 1793. She was the second of seven children. She was the mother of six children (one of which died at birth). (James et al Vol. II page 592) Mott's desire to fight for Woman Suffrage began at an early age.

"I grew up so thoroughly imbued with women's rights that it was the most important question of my life from a very early day."(James et al Vol.II page 592) It comes as no surprise to see the development of Mott into a Suffragist leader, for she had a very supportive father and husband. From the time she was born until the day she died, Lucretia Mott had the support of her father and husband. The family support Mott received would be a valuable asset to her later in her career.

Mott had a lot going for her when made the decision to push the issue of Woman Suffrage. For example, Miriam Gurko states in The Ladies of Seneca Falls: Birth of the Woman's Rights Movement,

...she had three things in her favor: she was born into a family of Quakers, her childhood would be spent on the island of Nantucket, and she had an unusual father who believed in educating girls. The Quakers were the one religious sect to grant women something close to equality with men. Women were allowed to speak freely at Quaker meetings and to become ministers, something unthinkable in almost any other religion.(Gurko page 50)

Because of Mott's background, she could feel more free to speak her mind about issues of politics and religion. She grew confident of her rights, learning much from endless Quaker meetings. She also learned to stand up for what she believed, a tradition frowned upon by many other groups of society. Mott's self-assurance, coupled with the support she received from her family gave her the confidence to

believe she could make a difference in the area of Woman Suffrage.

Mott's Nantucket upbringing also influenced her development as a leader in the Woman Suffrage Movement. "In the absence of their husbands, the Nantucket housewives not only managed all the family affairs, but often set up small businesses of their own." (Gurko page 52) Even Lucretia Mott's mother ran a small shop of her own. As a result of Mott's family heritage, she was able to nurture the confidence needed to express a political opposition to the suppression of women. After all, Mott had grown up in a Quaker village where she experienced "near" equality, it would be very difficult for her to accept anything less. Mott was not the type of housewife that would allow rights that she had growing up be taken away from her later.

Like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Coffin Mott had perfected her domestic skills, and like Stanton, she wanted more. "... she settled down to the arduous routine of a nineteenth-century housewife. Even for that period, when domestic skill was the most significant measure of success for a woman, she became an outstanding housekeeper and hostess, noted for her beautifully kept home and large-scale entertaining." (Gurko pages 52 & 53) Mott was able to balance the maintenance of her household with the desire to be politically active. She could never accept a life of mere servitude since she "...could mingle with the men and

have intelligent subjects of conversation." (Gurko page 52)
Mott could not retreat to a life of inequality. It would have made no sense at all for a woman to go backwards socially and politically. Mott felt an obligation to express her political voice on the subject of Woman Suffrage and she did.

Mott, like Stanton, used much of what men said about male superiority over women, against them. Mott's experience as a minister afforded her knowledge of the bible, history, and politics. Mott was able to use her knowledge to refute the claims of Anti-Suffragists using the very same documents they tried to use against her and the movement. She often referred to the same text her opponents used and pointed out how the passages had been misused. Mott stated in a speech delivered at a convention in Philadelphia in 1854.

The veneration of man has been misdirected, the pulpit has been prostituted, the Bible has been ill-used. It has been turned over and over as in every reform. The Temperance people have had to feel its supposed denunciations. Then the anti-slavery, and now this reform has met, and still continues to meet, passage after passage of the Bible, never intended to be used so. Instead of taking the truths of the Bible in corroboration of the right, the practice has been to turn over its pages to find examples and authority for the wrong, for the existing abuses of society. (Schneir pages 100 & 101)

Mott argues steadfastly that the Bible and other documents have been misused to benefit Anti-Suffragists point of view

on the condition and position of woman in society. Mott's training in her Quaker village had a great deal of impact on her ability to argue effectively against her opponents.

As time went by, Lucretia Mott's husband continued to support her cause. Other Suffragist leaders lacked such support from their husbands, as stated in Notable American Women, "James Mott shared all his wife's convictions, supported her in all her unpopular causes, and, by accompanying her on her speaking tours, lent her public appearances a respectability which other feminist lecturers lacked." (James et al Vol. II page 592) The support Mott received from her family, as well as from her husband, gave her the confidence to know she could effectively battle the forces of Anti-Suffrage. As Mott states in a dairy section of History of Woman Suffrage Volume I, "The exercise of women's talents in this line, as well as the general care which devolved upon them, in the absence of their husbands, tended to develop and strengthen them mentally and physically." (Stanton et al pages 407 & 408)

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON



Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born in Johnstown, New York on November 12, 1815. She was the fourth of six children. (James et al page 342) She died October 26, 1902. As a major leader of the Woman Suffrage Movement, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was able to be influential because of her vast

knowledge of the "common" as well as her keen ability to write. She was a housewife and a political writer. The multi-purpose nature of Stanton can be seen when she wrote in the preface to her book, Eighty Years
And More,

The story of my private life as the wife of an earnest reformer, as an enthusiastic house-keeper, proud of my skill in every department of domestic economy, and as the mother of seven children, may amuse and benefit the reader.

The incidents of my public career as a leader in the most momentous reform yet launched upon the world--the emancipation of woman--will be found in 'The History of Woman Suffrage.'
(Stanton-Eighty Years)

As a housewife, writer, and political activist, Stanton exemplifies scholarly traits--she was never one-dimensional, never gave up her scholarly desire, and kept on writing even under adverse conditions. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was truly an American Scholar.

Stanton would prove to be more valuable to the movement than other women leaders because she knew how to care for her children and household. She always had a connection with the common housewife. Yet, she also knew the importance of the Woman Suffrage Movement on the future role(s) of the American housewife. As Gail Parker states in the introduction to Stanton's book, Eighty Years and More, "Although Mrs. Stanton was eighty-four...she had not mellowed in her attitude toward the nuclear family. During the years of her immurement in Seneca Falls, Elizabeth

Stanton had become convinced that women could never develop their full potential as human beings in isolated households." (Stanton page viii) For Stanton, the Seneca Falls Convention was the starting point for bigger and better things. She realized that women had to have an intellectual desire to develop their minds. Being a housewife was a noble cause, however, it was not enough. One must built on their merits, for Stanton her merits were embedded in her ability to function both as a mother and a writer. The intellectual interests of the day were just as important to Stanton as her family--The two were equally important to her.

Stanton believed change came about very slowly. She realized that any social change was a victory. She began to tell her friends that even the little things were important. For example, she asked her friends to change the way in which they addressed letters to her. Edward James, et al state in Notable American Women Writers, "...she had asked her friends to direct their letters to "Elizabeth Cady Stanton" rather than to "Mrs. Henry B. Stanton," for she felt that a woman should not submerge her identity in marriage."(James et al page 343) To some this may have seemed petty, however, it was something for which she and all housewives could have control. She attempted to contribute to the movement in ways in which she could control first, then she could tackle other angles of

political and social problems with her speech writing ability. It was this link between the "common" experience and her public career that made Elizabeth Cady Stanton a successful leader of the Woman Suffrage Movement.

Stanton steadfastly defends the virtues of motherhood throughout her writing. She believed motherhood to be a noble profession worthy of much praise. For example, Stanton writes in Elizabeth Cady Stanton Volume I,

Though motherhood is the most important of all the professions--requiring more knowledge than any other department in human affairs--there was not attention given to preparation for this office. If we buy a plant of a horticulturist we ask him many questions as to its needs, whether it thrives best in sunshine or in shade, whether it needs much or little water, what degrees of heat or cold; but when we hold in our arms for the first time a being of infinite possibilities, in whose wisdom may rest the destiny of a nation, we take it for granted that the laws governing its life, health, and happiness are intuitively understood, that there is nothing new to be learned in regard to it. (Stanton pages 109 & 110)

Stanton believed society takes for granted that mothering is a natural process and that it comes easily to women.

Stanton believed being a good mother took years of practice. She believed motherhood was a learning experience that men chose to bestow on women--washing their hands of the entire affair. She also stressed that society doesn't give enough credit to those who attempt to raise children, and Stanton could speak from experience, as she raised her children and believed she learned a great deal from it.

Stanton took pride in her ability to care for children.

As she recollects,

One hot day, in the month of May, I entered a crowded car at Cedar Rapids, Ia., and took the only empty seat beside a gentlemen who seemed very nervous about a crying child. I was scarcely seated when he said:

"Mother, do you know anything about babies?"

"Oh, yes!" I said, smiling, "that is a department of knowledge on which I especially pride myself."

"Well," said he, "there is a child that has cried most of the time for the last twenty-four hours. What do you think ails it?"

Making a random supposition, I replied, "It probably needs a bath." (Stanton-Eighty Years pages 124-125)

Stanton had a very practical mothering instinct. To Stanton, motherhood was a simple process--the baby has certain needs and the mother fulfills those needs. Being a good mother takes a lot of common sense, and Stanton was always able to assert this notion with the raising of her own children. Stanton's appearance caused her to have many people ask her for her opinion on child rearing. Stanton shows her practical mothering instinct when she is asked if she will bathe a stranger's baby to quiet it down. For example,

He promptly rejoined, "If you will give it one, I will provide the necessary means."

I said, "I will first see if the child will come to me and if the mother is willing."

I found the mother only too glad to have a few minutes' rest, and the child too tired to care who took it. She gave me a suit of clean cloths throughout the gentleman spread his blanket

shawl on the seat securing the opposite one for me and the bathing appliances. Then he produced a towel, sponge, and an india-rubber bowl full of water, and I gave the child a generous drink and a thorough ablution. It stretched and seemed to enjoy every step of the proceeding, and, while I was brushing its golden curls as gently as I could, it fell asleep...The poor mother, too, was sound asleep, and the gentleman was very happy. (Stanton Eighty Years page 124 & 125)

Motherhood taught Stanton a discipline which she could use for running her entire life. To Stanton, motherhood was a good training period for women. The problem was, however, that many housewives were forced to an existence of child rearing and lost the desire to attain intellectual stimulation through writing letters or becoming politically active. When motherhood is held over the head of the housewife it can become disastrous, for it can become the very element which could keep women in political and social bondage. A balance of housewife and intellect are the key to the success of the women of Stanton's time.

Stanton's husband was often away from home and she was forced to care for the household. She stressed the importance of intellectual stimulation to the housewife. Being a housewife without any external stimulation was dreadful to Stanton. For example,

...Mr. Stanton was frequently from home, I had poor servants, and an increasing number of children. To keep a house and grounds in good order, purchase every article for daily use, keep the wardrobes of half a dozen human beings in proper trim, take a child to dentists, shoemakers, and different

schools, or find teachers at home...
(Stanton-Eighty Years page 145)

It is amazing that Stanton was able to maintain the care of her household and children as well as save enough time to write and plan political meetings. Elizabeth Cady Stanton clearly was a strong personage--able to balance her home life with her desire to fulfill her intellectual desires.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was by no means one dimensional. She maintained a high level of political knowledge, as she was constantly confronted by Anti-Suffragists. "In answering all the attacks, we were compelled to study canon and civil law, constitutions, Bibles, science, philosophy, and history, sacred and profane." (Stanton-Eighty Years page 152) Confrontations with Anti-Suffragists helped to strengthen Stanton's political knowledge. She could argue with the best of them, many times using the same documents first argued at her.

At an early age, she was taught the virtues of being politically aware. Eleanor Flexner writes in Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States, Elizabeth Stanton spent hours,

...crouched in a corner of her father's office, listening to the people who came to him with their legal problems. Many were wives and daughters of farmers; often the husband had disposed of their small property, or taken their earnings for drink, or, in the case of a separation, had the sole right to guardianship of the children. Judge Cady was kind,

and often dipped into his own pockets to help the women; but he reiterated patiently and endlessly that they had no legal redress, and his daughter was marked for life by that knowledge. (Flexner pages 72 & 73)

Early on in Stanton's life, she learned the virtues of being politically aware. She learned her station in life would be the same as those hundreds of women that passed through her father's office door. She realized she had to be politically aware of the system, which if allowed to go unchecked would have a significant impact on women's lives in the future. If she ever planned to fight the system and win, she knew she had know how the system worked.

Stanton expresses one of her political views when she states in an "Address to the Legislature of New York on Women, February 14, 1854,"

...Gentlemen, in republican America, in the nineteenth century, we, the daughters of the revolutionary heroes of '76, demand at your hands the redress of our grievances--a revision of your State Constitution--a new code of law. Permit us then, as briefly as possible, to call your attention to the legal disabilities under which we labor.

1st. Look at the position of women as woman. It is not enough for us that by your laws we are permitted to live and breathe, to claim the necessities of life from our legal protectors--to pay the penalty of our crimes; we demand the full recognition of all our rights as citizens of the Empire State. We are persons' native, free-born citizens; property-holders, tax payers; yet are we denied the exercise of our right to the elective franchise. (Stanton-Dubois pages 44 & 45)

Stanton's reference to America's glorious past is essential to her argument that America was hypocritical in its treatment of women. No one could deny the relevance of the topic of equality when she connected it with the documents we hold dear to our hearts. Stanton realized our nation was a nation dependent on the reverence of the past, and she tried to tie this past into her arguments. She often referred to the past to defend the need for reform of present and future. Stanton's argument expresses the idea that women have legal rights as free-born citizens of the United States. Once again, Stanton effectively links our nations past with the hypocrisy of the present--using her tactics as a quit effective political tool to sway public opinion.

The American housewife has been overlooked for centuries as having any political or intellectual insight. As is the case with most social and political situations, change comes with time. In the case of Mary Anthony, Amelia Jenks Bloomer, Lucretia Coffin Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, change over time was not enough--they wanted change quickly and justly. These women of the Seneca Falls Convention never adhered to the standard norms when it came to Woman Suffrage. They wanted to have their political voice heard, and could no longer be overlooked by society. As the days past after the Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, women began to realize change was possible. They could see a start for a better tomorrow.

The women of Seneca Falls brought about a sense of political awakening for the average housewife and they brought hope. As the political environment swelled, women were able to exert themselves toward the ultimate goal of woman suffrage--the vote. Women needed to voice their opinions about the plight of the American housewife. Personal sacrifice was essential in the fulfilling of the goals of the Woman Suffrage Movement, and many housewives were willing to fight. Though years of misery had kept women down, in bondage, the housewives of the Seneca Falls Convention began to look at what the future would have in store--freedom to vote, freedom for all.

Seneca Falls was much more than a convention on Women's Rights, it was a convention of hope. Housewives could no longer dwell on the past, they could only hope for the future. The Convention at Seneca Falls, New York gave many housewives the hope they needed. They could vent their frustrations of a society that seemed to turn away from equality, a society bent on the suppression and enslavement of housewives both legally and socially.

The political awakening that occurred among housewives during the 1850's at Seneca Falls, will long be remembered. Not only had women shown they had a political voice, but they also showed they were willing to fight to protect such rights. Modeling their movement after the Declaration of Independence served to strengthen their argument and many new members were willing to pursue the goals of the movement. Unlike past generation housewives like Abigail Adams, housewives of the Seneca Falls era were not so willing to back down and accept the social injustices of the times. No longer would the American housewife accept a political back seat to her husband. A realization that anything was possible began to work its way into the Woman Suffrage Movement. The movement was no longer just words and speeches, rather, it became a movement of action. It went from a "please allow us" to a "give us" our rights movement. Housewives began to demand recognition. They would not be denied and labeled inferior to men.. Such

housewives as Mary Anthony, Amelia Bloomer, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Stanton were all vehicles behind the movement, for they took on the huge responsibilities of trying to maintain a household while at the same time trying to write and keep political engagements. This balance of housewife and political writer and activist make these women great--American Scholars. Elizabeth Cady Stanton probably sums up the role of the housewife on the movement best when she spoke at the International Council of Women in 1888. Stanton states,

We who like the children of Israel have been wandering in the wilderness of prejudice and ridicule for forty years feel a peculiar tenderness for the young women on whose shoulders we are about to leave our burdens....The younger women are starting with great advantages over us. They have the results our experience; they have superior opportunities for education; they will find a more enlightened public sentiment for discussion; they will have more courage to take the rights which belong to them....Thus far women have been the mere echoes of men. Our laws and constitutions, our creeds and codes, and the customs of social life are all of masculine origin.

The true woman is as yet a dream of the future. (Stanton-Schneir preface).

Chapter 5

The American
Scholar Housewife:
A dream
within a dream?

The American Scholar is a well-rounded individual who coordinates the use of informal and formal learned behaviors in order to excel as a "complete" person in society. The American Scholar is diverse--able to handle many different and changing situations. The American Scholar is a culmination of both formal and informal/hands-on education. In other words, the American Scholar is the individual who is able to learn from both the informal and formal settings. The American Scholar is constantly seeking knowledge in a world which is always changing.

The American Scholar thrives where both formal and informal education is available. The Scholar is that person which can apply what has been learned to his/her own life. To the American Scholar, the use of one's hands is just as important as using one's mind. They are a joint process. Application of what one has learned, both in the private setting as well as in the public, is essential to the making of the American Scholar. Application of knowledge is the key to the success of the Scholar. The person that does not apply what has been learned has not seen the full extent of the learning experience. Truly, the person we call an American Scholar must first think, then react, and then put his/her beliefs and views into action, otherwise, the acquisition of new knowledge is useless.

Throughout American History, one sees the development of education as a great socializing agent. In this role,

formal education has been unable to produce, solely on its own accord, an abundance of scholars. The key to understanding how the American Scholar is formed lies in the access one has to informal and formal education as a joint process. Education for the sake of education is not good enough. If the only goal of education is to socialize, we shall see few scholars. However, this has not been the case in our society. The emergence of the formal and informal educational experience has served to enhance the learning capabilities of the student. The joint process of informal and formal learning has developed many fine scholars, many which have gone unnoticed--most notably the housewife that writes.

The Scholar housewife is a key to America understanding itself. The American Scholar can no longer be limited to "great men." The Scholar must be diverse, willing to take new challenges. There are no limits to what the scholar can do. As Dorothee Soelle states in, Tillie Olsen and a Feminist Spiritual Vision,

A person who walks in only one direction, who receives only one gift, and who develops in a one-sided way cannot become a whole person. Remember the rainbow, the gift of fire, the gift of water, the gift of air, and the gift of earth. Remember the seven colors that, taken together, make up light. Remember the time after the flood; remember today and the beginning of new life. (Orr preface)

The Scholar housewife is not one dimensional, rather, she is diverse, able to utilize both formal and informal learning

situations. The scholar housewife has to be able to balance the private life with the public life. The housewife adapts to changing situations. The American housewife that writes is deserving of the title of American Scholar.

Many individuals claim to deserve the title of American Scholar, however, scholarly praise is not easily given. So why do we continue seek out individuals worthy of such praise when the answer is so close to home? The scholar housewife has, in many cases, gone unnoticed for her achievements. Ironically, no more worthy a group can be found that best represent the ideals of the American Scholar than the housewife that writes. Yet, we continue to search, even when the answer is so close to home, refusing to give scholar housewives the recognition they deserve.

Women such as Anne Bradstreet, Shirley Jackson, Tillie Olsen, Abigail Adams, Sarah Franklin Bache, Jane Franklin Mecom, Mercy Otis Warren, Phillis Wheatley, Mary Anthony, Amilia Jenks Bloomer, Lucretia Coffin Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are excellent examples of the scholar housewife. They represent all which is essential to be considered a scholar, yet they come from varied socio-economic and historical backgrounds. Why then are they all scholars? The one element they all have in common which links them to the claim of American Scholar housewife is the ability each has to balance private life with the public life. Bradstreet, Jackson, Olsen, Adams, Bache,

Mecom, Warren, Wheatley, Anthony, Bloomer, Mott, and Stanton all maintain a desire to write and learn while at the same time maintain their households.

The American Scholar housewife is diverse, able to work through daily adversity and still maintain a desire to write. The housewife is constantly confronted with new and changing situations, yet she still seeks knowledge. It is evident that the housewife's job consists of an interaction between informal and formal learning on a daily basis. The housewife that writes is a doer, not a watcher, she strives for intellectual fulfillment. Most of all, the Scholar housewife is always changing, always seeking, always thinking, and always learning. As Walt Whitman once said in, Song of Myself, "All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses." (McMichael Page 918)

The future of the American Scholar housewife that writes is unknown, however, society will surely effect the direction of the housewife's future. There is a growing sense that the housewife that writes is a dying breed. Sadly, the housewife that writes may face even a less favorable reception from society, as her time will be delegated more and more to working outside of the home, and less to writing. The housewife will most surely be given the task of taking even more responsibility for the family, her career, and her scholarly desire to continue to write and learn. The immense pressure society puts on the

housewife that writes will effect many future writers, however, the extent to which the housewife scholar will survive will depend on two factors: The ability to accelerate her desire to write and seek knowledge, and when and if society will legitimate the housewives' existence in the home. Clearly, throughout history the housewife that writes has had to battle the effects of social sanctions and social influences, and she has survived. The painful plight of the housewife has served to strengthen the scholar housewife's desire to continue to write, speak out on social, political, and religious issues, and to try to change her station in life. The very desire of the housewife scholar to pursue recognition may be the key to her survival in a society which is still unable to come to grip with the concept of equality. One can only hope intellectualism will counter the effects of social sanctions and materialism, and the housewife that writes will continue to strive for scholarly praise.

The housewife cannot look back, only forward, for looking back only clouds the memory of what could be. As Harriette Arnow states in The Dollmaker, "What was the good of trying to keep your own if when they grow up their days were like your own?" (Dorr page 39) As Arnow states, why fight for something if at the end of the battle things are the same as they were at the beginning. The housewife has to be ready to accept a new an changing society, as the

role women changes, thus too will the role of the scholar housewife. The future has a lot to offer the scholar housewife. The key to the existence of the scholar housewife is her desire to maintain her household as well as her desire to write. In this regard, the housewife can not stagnate, for future generations will be looking to the housewife for guidance, and she must be ready to grow. If she is able to accept what society says she must, then she has produced nothing new, rather she has maintained the status que. If, on the other hand, she takes on society with a new vision of the role of women scholar housewives, then she has contributed significantly. The role of the scholar housewife will be to make life better for those who will come after her, for she can never turn back to the way it was in the past.

Society has refused to understand the plight of the housewife and women in general. It is for this reason that one sees the necessity of further learning in the area of Women's studies. Many classrooms of today go unaware of the historical achievements of women. Many students will never learn the meaning of such basic historical events as Woman Suffrage or the Seneca Falls Convention. Students in many American schools are not receiving the entire history of our nation, rather, they are being taught of "great men." Women studies are essential to our understanding of our nation, as we begin to see how important the woman's role is in the

making of America. Civilization as we know it today could not exist without women, yet they rarely receive print in our textbooks. Like many minority groups, women have been portrayed as appendages to the history of the United States. The only way we can understand America is to understand what makes us unique. America is not simply the study of "great white men." America is a culmination of men and women alike, of all racial descriptions.

The American Scholar housewife is deserving of our praise, for she represents many essential elements of that which is America. Is the housewife's desire to seek recognition only a dream? Edgar Allan Poe's, A Dream Within A Dream, says it best of the future of the American housewife Scholar.

Take this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow--
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less gone?
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand--
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep--while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is all that we see or seem

But a dream within a dream?
(McMichael pages 383-384)

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