**Fitzgerald**

**Readings - Reform Movements**

**The Abolition Movement**

The Abolition Movement called for the end of slavery. Calls to end slavery had existed since before the Revolutionary War, the movement became more organized and grew in the early 1800s. few in the North supported abolition when the movement started. Northern factory owners depended upon slave-produced cotton every bit as much as the Southern plantation owners. Northerners also feared what would happen when slaves were freed, thinking they would flood northern cities, competing for jobs and housing.

[William Lloyd Garrison](https://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h2764.html), Theodore Weld, and [Frederick Douglass](https://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h483.html) were well-known abolitionist leaders. Garrison began the aggressive demand for an end to slavery. In his anti-slavery newspaper *The Liberator*, Garrison demanded the immediate end of slavery and equal rights for everyone, regardless of race. Garrison and Theodore Weld formed the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Within five years, the society had 1,350 local chapters. The society held meetings and sponsored speakers who traveled throughout the North visiting the chapters and encouraging people to join the cause. Well known speakers included Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglas, former slaves who had escaped, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, who had been raised in South Carolina in a slave-holding family but fled to Pennsylvania as young women, and Garrison and Weld themselves. Angelina Grimke published a pamphlet titled An Appeal to the Christian women of the South and after marrying Theodore Weld published the book *Slavery As It Is*, in 1939. Frederick Douglas published his autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, in 1845, and began his own newspaper *The North Star* in 1846 *.*

The success of the abolition movement in the North, and the large amount of anti-slavery material that it printed and distributed, enraged the South. South Carolina declared that the abolitionists' actions were in direct violation of the Constitution's protection of the right to property. Southern states refused to deliver the material through the mail.

John Brown worked to start a war to end slavery ending in his hanging in 1859 for organizing a raid on a federal arsenal in an attempt to obtain weapons to arm the slaves and start a slave rebellion.

The Abolition Movement had split in 1840 over a dispute about whether women could take leadership roles in the organization, but abolitionists continued their fight to end slavery despite their lack of success for many decades until the Civil War and the 13th amendment achieved this result.

**The Underground Railroad**

The Underground Railroad was a network of people, African American as well as white, offering shelter and aid to escaped slaves from the South. It developed when several different secret organization that helped slaves merged together. It operated from the 1700s until the Civil War.

The Quakers were the first to actively help escaped slaves.  [George Washington](https://www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/george-washington) complained in 1786 that  [Quakers](http://www.history.com/topics/history-of-quakerism) had attempted to “liberate” one of his slaves. In the early 1800s, Quakers set up a network in Philadelphia that helped slaves on the run. At the same time, Quakers in [North Carolina](https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/north-carolina) began to create routes and shelters for escapees. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, a religion established by free African Americans in the North in 1816, also helped runaway slaves.

The earliest mention of the Underground Railroad came in 1831 when a slave escaped from [Kentucky](https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/kentucky) into [Ohio](https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/ohio) and his owner blamed an “underground railroad” for helping him. In 1839, a [Washington](https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/washington) newspaper reported an escaped slave had revealed, under torture, his plan to go north following an “underground railroad to Boston.” Vigilance Committees were established in New York City and Philadelphia in the 1830s to protect escaped slaves from bounty hunters. By the 1840s, the term Underground Railroad was being used.

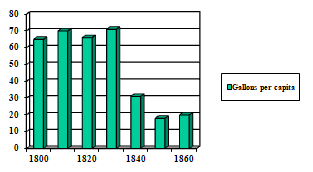
Most of the slaves helped by the Underground Railroad escaped from border states such as Kentucky, [Virginia](https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/virginia) and [Maryland](https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/maryland). In the deep South, people who captured escaped slaves were paid well and there were fewer hiding places for them. Fugitive slaves were typically on their own until they got to certain points farther north. People known as “conductors” guided the fugitive slaves. Hiding places included private homes, churches and schoolhouses. These were called “stations” or “safe houses.” The people operating them were called “stationmasters.” There were many well-used routes through Ohio and [Pennsylvania](https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/pennsylvania) leading into New England or through Detroit to Canada.

**The Second Great Awakening Begins Reforms**

A renewal of religious faith called the Second Great Awakening encouraged people to “choose salvation.” Preachers told Americans that the “road to God and heaven” was paved by “Good deeds.” So that if you created “heaven on Earth,” you will be ready to meet God after death. Preachers told people that “helping others is the way to heaven.” Americans across the country began to believe that they could act to make things better.

**The Temperance Movement**

Temperance is the moderation of your actions, thoughts, and feelings; it is self-control. In the reform movements, it refers to people moderating their consumption (or total abstinence) of alcohol. This was important issue because some workers spent most of their wages on alcohol, leaving their families without enough money to live on. As a result, many women joined in the temperance movement. Temperance also was supported by business owners because they needed workers who could keep schedules and run machines, which was impossible to do when drunk. Reformers believed that only temperate (sober) people could contribute to society.

 The goal of the reform movement was not to end the consumption of alcohol, but to get people to pledge to drink less. Reformers got people to sign a pledge stating they would drink only in moderation. The movement did reduce the consumption of alcohol, as is shown in the chart at l eft.

**Prison Reform**

Dorothea Dix volunteered to teach Sunday school at a local jail. She was appalled at the conditions of the prisoners. She saw inmates bound in chains and locked in cages, children accused of minor thefts were jailed with adult criminals, and people who owed money, many owing less than $20, who were jailed until they paid their bills, sometimes they stayed there for years! Her biggest shock was how the mentally ill were treated. Those judged “insane” were locked away in dirty, crowded prison cells and were whipped if they misbehaved. Dix thought insanity should be treated as a disease, not a crime, but mental hospital were only available for those who could afford it.

Dix spent two years visiting prisons to gather information, and then she presented her findings to the Massachusetts legislature. Shocked by her report, lawmakers made many changes over the next few years. They created public asylums for the mentally ill, stopped putting debtors in prisons, created juvenile courts and prisons, and outlawed cruel punishments, such as branding people with irons. After that many other states asked Mrs. Dix to come to their states to help then reexamine their prisons.

**Education Reform**

Before this era, most children lived on farms and received no education at all. Those who did go to school were only there maybe 10 weeks of the year and were taught by teachers with limited education getting VERY little pay. As more and more families moved to cities, children were left alone to “roam the streets” while the parents worked in factories. Reformers believed that education would help these children escape poverty and become “good citizens”

In Massachusetts, Horace Mann spoke out on the need for public schools. He is famous for saying, “Education…is a great equalizer of the conditions of men…" Citizens began to pay taxes to build better schools, pay higher teacher salaries, and create teacher education schools. Following Massachusetts's lead, most states in the North and West established schools. White children, especially boys, attended free public schools. Most high schools and colleges still did not accept girls. States passed laws forbidding black students in the schools . In the South, few girls and NO blacks attended school. Public school, open to everyone did not appear in the South until after the Civil War.

**Women’s Movement**

Women abolitionists were in a strange position trying to convince lawmakers to make slavery illegal when they could not vote or hold office. Women worked to raise money for the movement, yet their own money and property were controlled by their fathers and husbands. Women spoke out against the mistreatment of slaves, yet their husbands could “discipline” them whenever they wanted.

Two female abolitionists Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton led an early call for women’s rights when they organized the Seneca falls Convention. In July 1848, almost 300 men and women attended the convention in Seneca Falls, New York. The convention produced The Declaration of Sentiment which used the wording of the Declaration of Independence to state their own rights. The women changed the very famous line in the Declaration to state “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men **and women** are created equal . . . .” Just as The Declaration of Independence listed the king's acts of tyranny over the colonists, The Declaration of Sentiments listed acts of tyranny by men over women. Some of the complaints were that

* “Man did not let women vote.”
* “He did not give her property rights, even to her own wages. ”
* "He did not allow her to practice professions like medicine and law.”

At the Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wanted to demand the right to vote. Many women, even good friend Lucretia Mott said this step was “too big.” She believed, "We must go slowly!” But Stanton received powerful support from two other members of the convention, Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison. Douglas stated, “Everyone who believed that black men should have the right to vote, must also favor giving black women the right.”

After the meeting, the women and their supporters returned to their efforts to end slavery. But slowly, women’s rights made progress. New York gave women control of their finances. Massachusetts passed better divorce laws. Some colleges began to accept women students. But the Constitution was not amended to allow women to vote until 1921, 73 years after Seneca Falls.