



Women's Rights Emerges within the Anti-Slavery Movement, 1830-1870: A Brief History with Documents (The Bedford Series in History and Culture)

By Kathryn Kish Sklar

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Combining documents with an interpretive essay, this book is the first to offer a much-needed guide to the emergence of the women's rights movement within the anti-slavery activism of the 1830s. A 60-page introductory essay traces the cause of women's rights from Angelina and Sarah Grimké's campaign against slavery through the development of a full-fledged women's rights movement in the 1840s and 1850s and the emergence of race as a divisive issue that finally split that movement in 1869. A rich collection of over 50 documents includes diary entries, letters, and speeches from the Grimkés, Maria Stewart, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Theodore Weld, Frances Harper, Sojourner Truth, and others, giving students immediate access to the world of abolitionists and women's right advocates and their passionate struggles for emancipation. Headnotes to the documents, 14 illustrations, a bibliography, questions to consider, a chronology, and an index are also included.

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Editorial Review

From Kirkus Reviews

A lively anthology tracing the emergence of the women's-rights movement in the US during the turbulent antebellum period. Sklar (History/SUNY Binghamton) provides a lengthy introductory essay tracing with vigor and clarity the manner in which, beginning in the 1830s, white and black women in the North began to become active in the abolitionist cause, inspired in many cases by the religious revivals sweeping the nation. While women in the movement at first focused their efforts upon emancipation, the intense criticism that greeted their activities gradually pushed some of them toward an advocacy of women's rights as well. They discovered that they first had to defend their right to speak at all in a society in which women were expected to restrict their activities to a purely domestic sphere. At the forefront in articulating women's right to speak and act on moral and political issues were Angelina and Sarah Grimke, the courageous daughters of a Southern slaveowner. During their influential speaking tour in 1837, the eloquent Grimkes asserted that they pleaded "not the cause of the slave only" but also "the cause of woman as a responsible moral being." Their lectures served both to stimulate support for the abolitionist cause and to encourage other women to begin speaking about rights and responsibilities. It also aroused discomfort among some male abolitionists, concerned that arguments over women's rights would diffuse moral outrage over slavery. There was, Sarah Grimke argued in a letter to a male colleague, no going back. "To close the doors now . . . would be a violation of our fundamental principle that man and woman are created equal and have the same duties and the same responsibilities as moral beings." The 54 pieces collected here trace the gradual development of ideas about women's rights, beginning with Angelina and Sarah, the growing tension that resulted, and the articulation of a separate women's-rights movement in the early 1840s. The concluding section traces the gradual separation of the women's movement from abolitionism in the 1850s. An essential work for anyone interested in the early days of abolitionism and the women's movement in North America. (15 illustrations, not seen) -- *Copyright © 2000 Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

"This book offers an excellent sense of the myriad issues related to race and gender that were central to the spread of abolitionism and the emergence of women's rights in ante bellum America. Highly accessible and eloquently presented, this volume incorporates both interpretive text and critical documents and thus provides a superb teaching tool for undergraduate classes."

About the Author

KATHRYN KISH SKLAR is Distinguished Professor of History at the State University of New York, Binghamton. Her writings focus on the history of women's participation in social movements, women's voluntary organizations, and American public culture. Her books include *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (1973) and *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900* (1995), both of which received the Berkshire Prize. She has received Ford, Rockefeller, Guggenheim, and Mellon Foundation Fellowships, as well as fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Center for Advanced Study in the Social and Behavioral Sciences.

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