

IN EDUCATION, in marriage, in religion, in everything, disappointment is the lot of woman. It shall be the business of my life to deepen that disappointment in every woman's heart until she bows down to it no longer.

— Speech to National Woman's Rights Convention, 1855

AND DO NOT TELL US
BEFORE WE ARE BORN EVEN,
THAT OUR PROVINCE IS TO
COOK DINNERS, DARN STOCKINGS
AND SEW BUTTONS.
WE WANT RIGHTS.



LUCY STONE

MY STRONGEST DESIRE through life has been to be educated. I found the most exquisite pleasure in reading, and as we had no library, I read every book which came in my way, and I longed for more. Again and again mother would endeavor to have us placed in some private school, but being colored we were refused.

— "A Colored Lady Lecturer," 1861

I THOUGHT OF THE GREAT INJUSTICE
PRACTICED UPON ME, AND
LONGED FOR SOME POWER TO HELP ME
CRUSH THOSE WHO THUS ROBBED ME
OF MY PERSONAL RIGHTS.



SARAH PARKER REMOND

About The State House Women's Leadership Project

The State House Women's Leadership Project grew out of State Senator Robert Wetmore's observation that the art collection on display in the Massachusetts State House was unrepresentative of the people of the Commonwealth. He noticed that the state's most important public building contained only a handful of female images. At his urging, in 1995 the State Senate established a Select Committee "to study the contribution of women to the government of the Commonwealth and to commemorate that contribution."

An Advisory Committee was formed and charged with choosing "a woman, who through her actions, has made a major contribution to the government of our commonwealth or who, through her actions, has represented a group of women who made such a contribution." The 26 members of this committee recommended that, rather than one woman, six individuals be honored in a work of art to be permanently installed in the State House.

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities was asked to implement the project. After raising private funds to match a \$120,000 state appropriation, the Foundation commissioned artists Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and Susan Sellers to create a new work of art for the State House. Entitled "Hear Us," the piece presents the words and images of six Massachusetts women:

- **DOROTHEA DIX (1802-1887)**, advocate for the mentally ill, Superintendent of Women Nurses for the Union Army
- **LUCY STONE (1818-1893)**, abolitionist, suffrage leader, publisher and editor of the *Woman's Journal*
- **SARAH PARKER REMOND (1824-1894)**, African-American abolitionist who took the anti-slavery campaign to Great Britain, physician
- **JOSEPHINE ST. PIERRE RUFFIN (1842-1924)**, suffragist, leader in national women's club movement, founder and editor of the *Woman's Era* newspaper, civil rights activist
- **MARY KENNEY O'SULLIVAN (1864-1943)**, trade unionist, settlement house worker, campaigner for the rights of women workers, factory inspector, pacifist
- **FLORENCE LUSCOMB (1887-1985)**, suffragist, labor organizer, candidate for public office, advocate for civil liberties, racial equality, and world peace

Written by Ellen K. Rothman and Peter O'Connell with help from Margaret Platt
Design: Higgins & Ross
Printer: Mercantile/Image Press, Worcester, MA
Thanks to Ellen Anstey for transcribing and formatting, Andrea Moore Kerr and Alice Collins for research assistance, and teachers Steve Bober, Cheryl Hall, Mike Miller, Sally Smith, Thea Tully, and Joseph Zaremba for their interest and advice.

Photographs courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard University (Dix—bMS Am 1838 (994), Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College (Stone), Peabody Essex Museum of Salem (Remond), Tulane University (Ruffin), Schlesinger Library on the History of Women, Radcliffe (O'Sullivan and Luscomb).

Copyright 1999 Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities

The graphic design of **Making the World Better** is based on HEAR US, by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and Susan Sellers. Installed in the Massachusetts State House in October 1999, HEAR US is composed of six marble panels, each with a bronze bust of an honoree and two quotations from her writings or speeches. The wall behind the panels is covered with a repeating pattern of six official documents chosen to represent the causes associated with each woman. The HEAR US wallpaper is also underprinted on the cover of the curriculum packet.

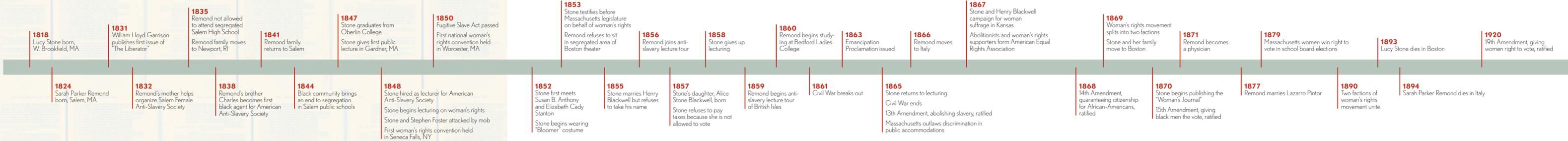
Massachusetts
Foundation for the
Humanities
Bringing Ideas to Life

MAKING THE WORLD BETTER: THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY IN 19TH CENTURY AMERICA

A curriculum packet produced in connection with the *State House Women's Leadership Project* and the installation of HEAR US, a new work of art honoring the contribution of women to public life in Massachusetts

Developed by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Tsongas Industrial History Center at the University of Massachusetts Lowell





Making the World Better

When Lucy Stone died in 1893, the last words she spoke to her daughter were, “Make the world better.” Like many other women whose accomplishments have gone largely unrecognized and unremembered, Lucy Stone and the other women honored by the *State House Women’s Leadership Project* devoted their lives to making the world better. Dorothea Dix changed forever the way the mentally ill were treated in the United States. Sarah Parker Remond, Lucy Stone and Josephine Ruffin fought to abolish slavery and to win equal rights for black Americans. Stone, Ruffin, Mary Kenney O’Sullivan and Florence Luscomb all worked to end the disenfranchisement of women. O’Sullivan and Luscomb struggled to improve conditions for women workers and to bring about world peace.

This packet focuses on two of the six State House honorees—Lucy Stone and Sarah Parker Remond. Teaching about Stone and Remond allows you to address many of the learning standards recommended in state and national curriculum frameworks.¹ Their life stories vividly illustrate how gender and race limited opportunity and how individuals worked to overcome, and eliminate, injustice. **Making the World Better** engages students in exploring the struggle for equality waged by these women and by countless other Americans and encourages young people to reflect on and participate in the process of making their own world a better place.

The curriculum packet is designed for maximum flexibility; you may use a few or all of the suggested activities and alter the order of the teaching sequence to suit your own needs. The materials are organized into four sections, each of which deals with a different stage in the process of making change. The packet comes in three parts:

- 1) The folder provides information on the *State House Women’s Leadership Project* and all six of the women it honors, as well as a Time Line for Lucy Stone and Sarah Parker Remond.
- 2) A selection of primary source documents, transcribed and edited for use by middle school students, illuminates the issues and choices faced by Stone and Remond.
- 3) A Teacher’s Guide suggests activities to help students make connections between their own lives and the lives of these and other “change agents.” The Guide also includes a list of resources—books, videos, websites, and other resources that can be used for teaching about the struggle for equality.

DOROTHEA LYNDE DIX was born on the Maine frontier when it was still part of Massachusetts. After an unhappy childhood, she left home at the age of 12 to live with relatives in Boston and Worcester. Although she had little formal schooling, she spent her teens and 20s teaching and writing books for young readers. In the 1830s, Dix became seriously interested in how the outcasts of society—criminals, the poor, and, especially, the insane—were treated. Most people who suffered from mental illness lived in harsh conditions at home, in prisons, or in poorhouses. She began by visiting every city and town in Massachusetts. In 1843, her powerful firsthand report was published and submitted to the legislature, which was persuaded to increase funding for the overcrowded Worcester State Asylum. As her investigative and lobbying skills grew, she took her crusade to other states, where she played a direct role in founding 32 mental hospitals. After serving a few, troubled years as Superintendent of Women Nurses for the Union Army, she returned to her work as “the voice of the mad.”

LUCY STONE was one of the very first Massachusetts women to earn a college degree, graduating in 1847 from Oberlin College in Ohio. She embarked almost immediately on a career as a public speaker—during the week, she lectured against slavery, on the weekends, for woman’s rights. Over the next few years, she earned a good living, and a national reputation, giving public lectures on the injustices faced by blacks and women. When she married reformer Henry Blackwell in 1855, Stone promised to love and honor her husband but refused to use the word “obey” or to take his name. After her marriage, Lucy Stone continued to lecture, drawing large and enthusiastic audiences. In 1857, she gave birth to her only child, Alice Stone Blackwell, and curtailed her lecturing. She was just returning to her career when the Civil War began. During the war, she worked for the Union cause; as victory neared, she supported ratification of the 14th and 15th Amendments, although she was bitterly disappointed that women were not given the vote along with black men. Stone’s allies Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton opposed ratification. The result was a bitter division in the woman suffrage movement, which lasted for more than 30 years. From her base in Boston, Lucy Stone founded the American Woman Suffrage Association, and, with the help of her husband and later her daughter, published the influential weekly paper the *Woman’s Journal*.

SARAH PARKER REMOND was the granddaughter of a free black man who fought in the Revolutionary War. Her parents owned a successful business in Salem. They placed great value on education, but racially segregated schools kept Sarah from getting the formal schooling she desperately desired. The Remonds were ardent abolitionists. Sarah’s older brother Charles Lenox Remond was the American Anti-Slavery Society’s first black lecturer. In 1856, she joined him on the anti-slavery circuit and quickly became one of the Society’s most persuasive lecturers. Two years later, she was invited to take the anti-slavery campaign to Great Britain. She sailed alone in September 1858 and spent the next few years lecturing to enthusiastic crowds throughout England, Scotland and Ireland, and raising large sums of money for the cause. Once the Civil War began, she worked to build support in Britain for the Union. After the war, she stayed in England, soliciting funds and clothing for the newly freed slaves. She combined lecturing with courses at the Bedford College for Ladies. In 1866, she left England for Italy, and at the age of 42, entered medical school. She became a doctor, married an Italian, and, as far as we know, never returned to the United States.

JOSEPHINE ST. PIERRE RUFFIN was born in Boston. The city’s public schools were segregated, so her parents sent her to Salem, where the black community had succeeded in desegregating the schools. At the age of 16, having completed a Boston finishing school and two years of private tutoring in New York, she married George Lewis Ruffin, a barber who would later graduate from Harvard Law School, hold elected office, and become the first black judge in the North. The Ruffins helped recruit soldiers for the Mass. 54th and 55th regiments, and, after the Civil War, were active supporters of many causes. Widowed in 1886, Josephine Ruffin started the *Woman’s Era*, the first paper published by and for African-American women. The paper urged its readers to become actively involved in issues such as suffrage and racial injustice. In 1893 Ruffin founded the New Era Club, one of the first black women’s clubs in the country. Two years later she called the first national meeting of black women, which took place in Boston. That same year, she desegregated the Massachusetts State Federation of Women’s Clubs and was elected to its Executive Board. She was a charter member of the Boston chapter of the NAACP and a co-founder of the League of Women for Community Service, which still exists today.

MARY KENNEY O’SULLIVAN, the daughter of Irish immigrants in Hannibal, Missouri, got her first factory job at 14. Angry about the low wages and poor working conditions endured by women workers, she became a trade unionist. From 1892-93, she was employed as the first woman organizer for the American Federation of Labor, organizing garment workers, printers, binders, carpet weavers and shoe workers. While in Boston in 1892, she met John O’Sullivan, a former seaman who was labor editor of the *Boston Globe*. They were married in 1894. With his help, she continued her career and remained active in the labor movement while raising three children. In 1902 she was widowed; a year later, she co-founded the National Women’s Trade Union League. As a leader of the WTUL, Mary O’Sullivan forged alliances between middle- and working-class women. A leader in Massachusetts reform circles, she focused her efforts on woman suffrage, housing for the poor, prohibition, and pacifism. However, her highest priority remained the advancement of working women. Frustrated with the male-dominated labor movement, she turned to legislative remedies. She lobbied for laws to protect women and children in the workplace; when they were passed in 1913, she was hired as a factory inspector for the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries. She retired at age 70 in 1934.

FLORENCE LUSCOMB moved from Lowell to Boston at the age of two. She was raised by her mother Hannah, an active supporter of woman suffrage, trade unionism, and other progressive causes. Graduating from MIT in 1909, Florence Luscomb was one of the first women to receive a degree in architecture; she practiced until WW I brought a halt to most building. Her true calling proved to be political activism. She held paid positions with the Boston Equal Suffrage Association, the Massachusetts Civic League, and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. She walked picket lines in support of striking workers and became an officer in the Boston local of the United Office and Professional Workers (CIO). She served on the boards of the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union and the Boston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Florence Luscomb ran for public office four times. In 1922, she lost her race for Boston City Council by less than one percent. She ran for Congress in 1936 and 1950; in 1952 she was the Progressive Party candidate for Governor. Her platform advocated economic justice, peace, and an end to the widespread infringement of civil liberties which followed WWII. A lifelong radical, she was living in a Cambridge cooperative at the age of 90.

¹Dorothea Dix is the only one of the six honorees to be mentioned by name in the Massachusetts History and Social Science Frameworks; like Stone and Remond, she was involved in the pre-Civil War reform movements recommended for inclusion in the eighth-grade curriculum. Josephine Ruffin and Mary Kenney O’Sullivan were active in the period the Massachusetts document calls “The Advent of Modern America.”