

This sixty-page teacher's guide includes primary sources, lessons plans, background readings, discussion questions, exercises, assignments, and a lengthy resource section. Written by Ellen K. Rothman and Peter S. O'Connell, it focuses on the lives of two of Massachusetts' most famous female reformers. The complete curriculum is available online at <http://www.masshumanities.org/shwlp/curriculum/index.html>.

# Teaching Massachusetts History: Online Primary Sources and Curriculum

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**Introduction:** *Documents created by people who participated in or witnessed historical events tell us much about the past that sometimes even the best published textbooks cannot. Many students see history as a series of facts, dates, famous people and events. Through primary sources, students are confronted with two essential aspects of studying history. First, the broader record of historical events reflects many points of view, including the personal, social, political, and economic. Second, students bring to the sources their own biases, created by their own personal situations and the social environments in which they live. It is an awareness that helps in the interpretation of historical documents and sharpens analytical skills. By using primary sources, students participate in the process of history: seeking out evidence to support their interpretation and debating classmates and teachers about the interpretation of events.*

*There are a number of wonderful websites in Massachusetts for teachers wishing to enhance their curriculum. The range of resources includes online collections at Mass Humanities and the Massachusetts Historical Society.*

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## MASS HUMANITIES

Mass Humanities, formerly known as the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, funds a number of K-12 programs that may be of interest including oral history projects, exhibits, and lecture series.

Of particular note is a partnership between Mass Humanities and the State House Women's Leadership Project, founded in 1995, that produced a free curriculum packet called *Making the World Better: The Struggle for Equality in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America*. The 60-page teacher's guide was developed primarily for middle and high school students by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Tsongas Industrial History Center at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell. The packet focuses on two of the six State House women honorees: Lucy Stone (1818-1893) who was an abolitionist, suffrage leader, publisher, and editor of the *Woman's Journal*; and Sarah Parker Remond (1824-1894), an African American abolitionist who took the anti-slavery campaign to Great Britain.

The website (<http://www.masshumanities.org/shwlp/curriculum/index.html>) states that teaching about Stone and Remond allows teachers to address many of the learning standards recommended in state and national curriculum frameworks. *Making the World Better* engages students in exploring the struggle for equality and encourages young people to reflect on and participate in the process of making their own world a better place. The materials are organized into four sections; each one deals with a different stage in the process of making change. The teacher's guide consists of (1) information on the State House Women's Leadership Project and the six women it honors, (2) a selection of primary source documents transcribed and edited for use by middle school students, and (3) a Teacher's Guide with activities designed to make connections between their own lives and the lives of these "change agents." The guide also includes a list of resources (books, videos, and websites) that can aid in teaching about the struggle for equality.

One example of a primary source document provided by the *Making the World Better* curriculum project is Lucy Stone's Choice, 1855. In 1930, Lucy Stone's only child published a biography of her mother and recounted a story that took place after Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell were married. Lucy Stone, who at an 1894 Suffrage Convention was introduced as Lucy Stone Blackwell, declared, "If you insist upon introducing me in that way I shall not speak."<sup>1</sup> Stone believed that because a man would not legally take

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the National American Woman Suffrage Association*, 1894, page 85.

## DOCUMENT 2

**Lucy Stone's Choice, 1855**

*In 1930, Lucy Stone's only child, Alice Stone Blackwell, published a biography of her mother. In it, she recounted a story that took place when her mother was in her final year at Oberlin College.*

**S**ome time during a recitation, a quotation was made from Montaigne, "Women are more sunk by marriage than men." When Lucy asked why, the professor fidgeted, physically and mentally, offering several minor reasons; then he said emphatically: "Women lose their names, and become identified with the husband's family; the wife's family is not as readily traceable in history as her husband's; the law gives her property into her husband's keeping, and she is little known to the business world."

The fact of a woman's losing her name, and in some sense her personality, in this way, dwelt in [Lucy's] mind. This led to her determination never to take her husband's name, at whatever disadvantage to herself. Lucy looked upon the loss of a woman's name at marriage as a symbol of the loss of her individuality. Not believing in the thing, she would not have the symbol. With her it was a matter of principle.

She consulted several eminent lawyers, among them the Honorable Salmon P. Chase, who was afterwards Chief Justice of the United States. All of them assured her that there was no law requiring a wife to take her husband's name; it was only a custom. So, with her husband's full approval, she determined to remain Lucy Stone.<sup>1</sup>

*When Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell were married in 1855, they signed a document in which they protested the system by which "the legal existence of the wife is suspended in marriage." Lucy promised to "love and honor" Henry, but they agreed she would omit the word "obey" from her vows. In a further break from tradition, she did not take his name, continuing to sign herself "Lucy Stone (Only)." However, she still lost the legal rights she had enjoyed as a single woman. In a letter to her friend Susan B. Anthony, she described how her status changed when she married.*

**N**ow I occupy a legal position in which I can not even draw in my own name the money I have earned, or make any contract, but am rated with fools, minors and madmen, and can not sign a legal document, and even the right to my own name [is] questioned.<sup>2</sup>

**Lucy Stone's Choice, 1855, is an example of a primary source document provided by the *Making the World Better* curriculum project.**

Courtesy of Mass Humanities.

a woman's name, she should not take his. The lesson plans ask questions that challenge the students to analyze the documents and understand the historical context of the time period, for example: How did Lucy explain the unfairness of making women change their names?

Students are asked to interview someone in their life and ask them questions such as: Did you change your name when you got married? Why or why not? What factors affected your decision? Do you think you would make the same decision if you were getting married today? These types of activities allow students to bridge the past and the present.

## THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS), is an independent research library that collects, preserves, makes accessible, and communicates about manuscripts and other materials that promote the study of the history of Massachusetts and the nation. The Massachusetts Historical Society is committed to the principle that public knowledge of the nation's past is fundamental to its future. With that in mind, they have created an on-line collection of resources for scholars, the public, and educators in our nation's classrooms. This collection includes Massachusetts maps, digital collections of correspondence between John and Abigail Adams, diaries of John Quincy Adams, Thomas Jefferson documents, anti-slavery images, maps of the French and Indian War, special "Objects of the Month," and collections of on-line exhibitions.

Curricula created by teachers and the Massachusetts Historical Society's education staff are all based on historical manuscripts and primary sources from the MHS collections to explore key topics in American history. Elementary, middle, and high school social studies teachers can look to "*Primarily George*": *Documents on the Nation's First President from the Collection of the Nation's Oldest Historical Society* (<http://www.masshist.org/education/resources/george.php>). For fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade teachers, this curriculum, developed by the Education Department at the MHS, delves into the first president of the United States through a letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams in 1775, a letter from George Washington to his Secretary of War Benjamin Lincoln in 1782, and the Artemas Ward orderly book of 1775. Each primary source document is given historical context by a general overview of the event the document refers to and a transcription, along with framing questions and questions for further investigation.

5<sup>th</sup> June 1782

My dear Sir,

As I have ready  
 an Officer under the capitula-  
 tion of York Town for the purpose  
 of Retention, has desired  
 to receive a copy of  
 the prospect of doing this upon  
 the condition if it would be  
 sent forward of an un-  
 conditional promise. —

Knowing that this  
 matter has been a subject of  
 much conversation, I am with  
 you and let me know the opi-  
 nions of the most sensible of  
 those with whom you have  
 conversed. —

As soon as I have received  
 your answer, I will inform  
 you of my determination to settle  
 it. — The Army have advised  
 it — and the Country look for  
 it. — But how far it is justifi-  
 able for an Officer the grant  
 of a Capitulation, if there shall  
 be to be had, is the question?

Yours  
 G. Washington

**Letter from George Washington to his Secretary  
 of War Benjamin Lincoln in 1782**

Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society

Todd Wallingford, a teacher from Hudson High School, developed a high school level project for Social Studies and Civics called “John Adams’ Views on Citizenship: Lessons for Contemporary America” (<http://www.masshist.org/education/resources/wallingford.php>). It provides lessons in three parts: Documents, Contemporary Issues, and a Service Learning component. After a short introduction, a set of primary source documents follows. These have been culled from a variety of John Adams’ writings: his private and public letters, diaries, autobiography, essays, and books.



Additionally, there are a few points where other authors appear. Most documents are accompanied by questions that aim to help students focus on key points and make connections between the documents. Following three of the document sets are questions and activities that help students draw conclusions about particular issues and about John Adams' views.

After students examine the documents, they may benefit from a consideration of how Adams might have viewed contemporary issues that resonate with concepts that the documents raise. Links to news stories, editorials, and other sources are provided. Each collection contains questions and/or activities that help students weigh in on the issues from both a personal perspective and the perspective of John Adams. Finally, students and teachers might choose to reach outside their four walls to make history matter. A set of service learning ideas are provided.

To cite one example, in unit three: Lessons on the Rights and Responsibilities of Massachusetts Citizens, students analyze the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and compare it to the United States Constitution. Students are asked to choose ten Articles from the Declaration of Rights and list rights that the government must protect. They should consider what responsibilities citizens have that correspond with each right. To delve further into document, students are asked to research ways that both constitutions have been changed and how those changes reflect the attitudes and experiences of citizens.

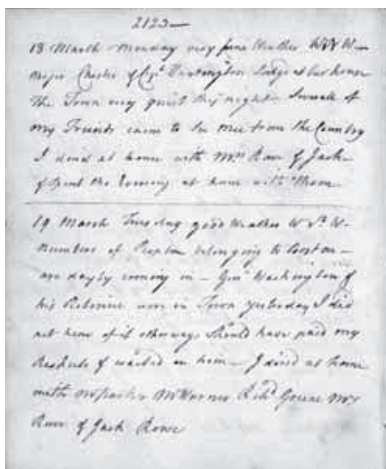
The contemporary piece of the curriculum challenges students to look at the 2003 Massachusetts Supreme Court document that expanded the right to marry to partners of the same sex. In that analysis, students are asked to examine newspaper articles from the *Boston Globe*. The service learning component suggests that students and teachers visually depict a Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities for Massachusetts Citizens; sponsor a public debate on the issue of gay marriage and other issues involving the rights of Massachusetts citizens; or teach lessons to younger students about the state constitution or John Adams' role in its creation.

A more comprehensive and contextual collection provided by MHS is entitled "Coming of the American Revolution." It includes primary sources and contextual essays arranged into fifteen topics relating to the events that led up to the American Revolution (<http://www.masshist.org/revolution>). This is a journey through this time period's historical documents, including a look at the goals and differing opinions of loyalists and revolutionists in 1776 through newspapers, official documents, and personal letters. It offers students a chance to "immerse yourself in the past and discover the fears, friction and turmoil that shaped these tumultuous times." The site

also includes biographical sketches of key historical figures and a detailed timeline.

In a section entitled “Washington Takes Command of the Continental Army,” there is an introduction and highlighted pull-outs that allow viewers to see the original document — in this case, excerpts from the diary of John Rowe, March 1776. There are high-resolution versions as well as transcriptions of the diary entries. Associated lesson plans include activities such as working in small groups and discussing the rights and responsibilities of Americans; summarizing political tactics used within documents; answering document-based questions; and holding a mock trial. For teachers who do not

know how the online lessons fit with their curriculum, there is a general lesson intended for college prep U.S. History students that guides teachers through using the website in order to create their specific lesson plans. This particular guide is based on diaries of the American Revolution. It has students imagine what it was like to live through the revolution and then write a journal based on the events in the American Revolution.



### Excerpts from the diary of John Rowe, March 1776

Courtesy of the Massachusetts  
Historical Society

**Making the World Better: The Struggle for Equality in 19th Century America:** [www.masshumanities.org/shwlp/curriculum/index.html](http://www.masshumanities.org/shwlp/curriculum/index.html)

**Mass. State House Women’s Leadership Project:** For profiles of all six women see: [www.masshumanities.org/shwlp/](http://www.masshumanities.org/shwlp/)

**“Primarily George”:** Documents on the Nation’s First President  
[www.masshist.org/education/resources/george.php](http://www.masshist.org/education/resources/george.php)

**John Adams’ Views on Citizenship: Lessons for Contemporary America**  
[www.masshist.org/education/resources/wallingford.php](http://www.masshist.org/education/resources/wallingford.php)

**Coming of the American Revolution:** [www.masshist.org/revolution](http://www.masshist.org/revolution)