We can't be the women we were before: Mary Livermore and Chicago women in the American Civil War

1996

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"WE CAN'T BE THE WOMEN WE WERE BEFORE": MARY LIVERMORE AND CHICAGO WOMEN IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

by

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B.S. Andrews University, 1986

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of the American Civil War on Union women by focusing on Mary Ashton Rice Livermore and her associates in wartime aid societies in Chicago, Illinois. It argues that Livermore’s postwar lecture career epitomizes the new confidence that many benevolent women possessed after the Civil War. From contemporary newspaper accounts and letters it demonstrates that the conflagration broadened the scope of their activity, allowing many to hone their skills and expand their influence while remaining safely inside society’s accepted gender standards. Concluding that the war changed moderate white middle-class women’s lives, it then illustrates that some modifications proved permanent for many throughout the ensuing decade. This work draws from published sources, including Livermore’s autobiography and her account of the war, and manuscript collections containing correspondence, dated between 1850 and 1905, among advocates of women’s rights and their acquaintances.
TO MOM:
MARJORIE ANN DRISCOL

TO GRANDMA:
FLOSSIE MAE MORTON
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped see this project to fruition. Dr. Shirley Leckie has inspired, encouraged, and counseled me from start to finish. Her editing skills have smoothed many rough spots and have prompted me to separate my own thoughts and theories from those of my subject. Dr. Elmar Fetscher has patiently counseled me on correct English grammar and enriched my overall understanding of the period.

My family has cheered me along the way, supporting my interests. Beginning as early as my preschool years, my mother's love for writing fueled my dreams of becoming an author. About the same time, an observant grandmother foretold my academic "bent," long before I fully owned up to it. My three sisters have been friends through the years and have taught me a lot about women's concerns. And, taking pride in many of what he called my "big ideas," my dad has readily demonstrated that men's and women's lives will always be intertwined. Finally, investing more emotional support than anyone else, my husband, Daniel Engle, has encouraged me to persevere, frequently reminding me that worthwhile goals justify hard work. He has shared my growing love for history and taken the time to learn it along with me. I am indebted to many.
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Manuscript Collections

Boston Public Library, Boston, Massachusetts
  William Lloyd Garrison Collection .................................. WLG, BPL
  Kate Field Collection, Mary Livermore Papers .................... KF, BPL

Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois
  Myra Bradwell Collection ........................................... MB, CHS
  A. S. Hubbard Collection ........................................... ASH, CHS
  Abraham Lincoln Collection ....................................... AL, CHS
  Mary Livermore Collection ......................................... ML, CHS
  National Woman Suffrage Collection ............................... NWSA, CHS
  Photograph division ................................................ PD, CHS

Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, Connecticut
  Isabella Beecher Hooker Papers ..................................... IBH, HBSC

Huntington Library, San Marino, California
  Elizabeth Boynton Harbert Papers .................................. EBH, HL

Illinois State Historical Library
  Myra Colby Bradwell Papers ......................................... MCB, ISHL

Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
  Blackwell Family Papers ............................................. BFP, LC
  National Association of Woman Suffrage Papers ................... NAWSA, LC

Melrose Public Library, Melrose, Massachusetts
  assorted Mary Livermore artifacts, unnamed collection .......... MPL, ML

New York Public Library, New York, New York
  United States Sanitary Commission Records ....................... SCR, NYPL
Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois
  Fortnightly Collection, Kate Doggett Papers .................................. KD, NL
  Northwestern Sanitary Commission Papers ........................................ NWSC, NL

Princeton University Library, Princeton, New Jersey
  Livermore Papers .............................................................................. L, P

Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts
  Olympia Brown Papers ....................................................................... OB, SL
  Mary Livermore Papers ...................................................................... ML, SL
  Photograph division ........................................................................... PD, SL

Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College Library, Northampton, Massachusetts
  Ames Family Papers ........................................................................... AF, SSC
  Garrison Family Papers ...................................................................... GF, SSC
  Mary Livermore Biography Collection ............................................. MLB, SSC
  New England Hospital Records ......................................................... NEH, SSC
  Temperance Collection ....................................................................... T, SSC
  Smith College Archives, Lydia Kendall 1895 Individual file ............... LK, SCA

Frances E. Willard Memorial Library, Evanston, Illinois
  Temperance and Prohibition Papers .................................................. TPP, FEWL

Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin
  Fritz and Mathilda Anneke Papers .................................................... FMA, WHS
INTRODUCTION:
DOMESTICITY, WARTIME GENDER ROLES, AND WOMEN’S RIGHTS

Until recently, historians have largely viewed the American Civil War as a domain for men which inconvenienced women by asking them to sacrifice, at least temporarily, their husbands and sons to the battlefield. Even distinguished historians of women have treated the war as a period when wives and mothers found themselves forced to assume roles--such as earning wages to support their children--that they would have happily deferred to a male relative had one been present. Beyond the immediate sacrifices required of family members, many historians note that advocates of women’s rights put their social reform initiatives on hold, demonstrating respect for wartime exigencies.¹

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone and other antebellum advocates of woman’s rights did put their activism on hold for most of the war, but their National Woman’s Loyal League--designed to influence wartime politics by advocating a change in the purpose of the war from maintaining the union to freeing the slaves--is only a small portion of women’s wartime work.² In a very real sense, the American Civil War had a profound impact on American women by broadening the boundaries of acceptable domesticity and bringing more traditional women into the folds of the woman’s rights movement.³ It did not, of course, lead every woman from war relief into a career aimed at influencing societal gender standards.⁴
Instead, shifting wartime gender restrictions made it more comfortable for traditional women to speak out for their rights.

One who responded to the change was Mary Ashton Rice Livermore who wrote after the war that,

Peace had come at last, but during those days of hardship and struggle the ordinary tenor of woman's life had changed. She had developed potencies and possibilities of whose existence she had not been aware, and which surprised her, as it did those who witnessed her marvelous achievements. Although she chose not to use personal pronouns in the above statement, this passage describes the war's impact on her own life. The sentences that precede it are a first person account of her own path from the United States Sanitary Commission to the role of a professional lecturer during the last third of the century. Then, as if it were the only natural conclusion, she stated that all women found their postwar lives different.

Livermore thought her experiences mirrored that of most American women. She was not, she believed, an anomaly whose lecture career isolated her within a public world that left prewar gender restrictions undisturbed. While she recognized that she was one of only a few nineteenth century women who enjoyed such postwar prominence, the American Civil War taught her that a woman's expertise was vital in both the public (male) and private (female) spheres. Rather than being an aberration in an otherwise male sector, she believed she was one of many postwar women who contributed their feminine talents to the public domain where they brought a new perspective and thus a balance to the social order. Accordingly, a woman did not have to be a professional lecturer to improve her nation, she could simply participate
in public activities where her touch was needed. For example, the postwar Livermore believed temperance organizations, local elections, schools, and municipal services, all would profit from the discerning efforts women brought to them.

Mary’s views on the "woman question," as she and her fellow advocates of women’s rights referred to it, evolved. She began by obtaining nearly all the formal education open to her sex, then joined benevolent associations and wrote for publications. While some of these activities lay on the fringe of acceptable female behavior, none were so radical that she moved beyond socially approved gender standards for women. Indeed, her first decade as a wife had demonstrated her willingness to accept nearly all the traditional domestic ideals of the mid-nineteenth century.

By the time the Civil War began, Livermore had been volunteering for nearly two decades. For her, as for thousands of northern and southern women, joining war-relief groups seemed as natural as participating in church mission societies. She launched her wartime career along with many of the same ladies she had been associated with in Chicago’s antebellum women’s groups. Their existing networks simply shifted emphasis from family and community to the nation and its military. In this expanded role thousands provided supplies for "the boys in blue" and many more cared for their physical needs as nurses.

Nevertheless, northerners did so within parameters defined by nineteenth century society, finding only certain activities acceptable for women in a wartime setting. Most condemned those who became "camp followers," preying on the sexual desires
of "innocent" soldiers, while they also disparaged women who masqueraded as men on the battlefield. Some, however, reasoned that women tending to sick and wounded soldiers in military camps and hospitals were no different from mothers, sisters and daughters who nursed ailing family members, although a number of male physicians and military officers considered female nurses a nuisance. Benevolent elites expressed concern over the chaos of popular enthusiasm generated by thousands of patriotic females, but the nation was at war; and even skeptics had to admit that women's efforts could be beneficial. Thus, nearly everyone lauded the efforts of conventional women who joined war-relief societies, even though these often widened the scope of women's public activities.

"Bonnet Brigades," as wartime women's aid societies were soon dubbed, gave to many women a collective, and to some, an individual role in the war. Wartime ladies' groups adopting public roles had antebellum precedents. For decades, female associations had provided married ladies with a modicum of independence in the public world. Individual benevolent participants had gained important professional skills in the prewar years, which grew to fruition during the American Civil War. Additionally, the sheer volume of need created by the national conflagration brought even more women into benevolent activities. In a study of Civil War women Elizabeth Leonard explains, "Wars produce abrupt, conscious, and concentrated adjustments in the behaviors considered appropriate for men and women and allow for some crossing of gender lines otherwise considered inviolable."
Once having become part of the war effort, women applied their domestic and maternal skills in unusual ways. Some cared for male soldiers they had never met before. Besides nursing, they competently arranged hospital supplies and equipment, and often preparing large quantities of food for the patients. Mistrusting the bureaucratic military, women appointed themselves the "official" caretakers of the "boys in blue." They were, as they believed, naturally endowed with the compassion and organizational skills mothers used within their own families. Combining a role that even the most conservative victorian would have found proper for a woman--housekeeping--with a traditionally male bastion--the military--they created a comfortable niche for themselves, in the field of nursing for example, slightly beyond traditional gender boundaries.

Societal justification for women's involvement in war-relief organizations, alone however, would not have produced any significant postwar change in gender restrictions. If the war had been over in three months, as many first predicted, it would have wielded minimal long-term impact on women's roles. Instead, it raged for four years and cost the nation more lives than any prior war, exerting massive pressure on middle-class society's expectations for men and women.

Wartime benevolent activities widened the scope of domesticity to include national responsibilities and opened opportunities for talented, mostly middle-class, women to come to the public forefront. Individual female leaders in war-relief organizations gained the attentions of the public press and found respect in many households. Among these outstanding leaders was Mary Livermore, who would
never have become a full-fledged public woman without her wartime experiences. War gave her new opportunities while permitting her to adhere to society's accepted standards for feminine activity. By doing everything for the war effort she could without straying beyond respectability, she unconsciously initiated the evolutionary process that made her one of the first well-paid and well-accepted female lecturers in the nation.

Having launched into wartime relief efforts with little thought of where it would take her personally, Livermore discovered that the public sphere needed her domestic skills. Her ability to nurture, which she believed all mothers possessed instinctively, convinced her that women were best able to care for wounded and sick soldiers. Yet she quickly moved beyond bedside nursing, utilizing her considerable organizational skills to rise to the head of a soldiers' aid society. For someone with Livermore's talents and capacity to work, it was a short step from there to the regional war relief office. This larger arena, the Northwestern Sanitary Commission Office confronted her with tasks much wider in scope, but she easily adapted. As managers of the Chicago office she and her associate, Jane Hoge, became liaisons between the women's war relief organizations and the public male sphere—the Sanitary Commission elites. They moved with ease between the predominantly male domain of newspaper reporters and commission members and the world of female volunteers. Livermore and her associates proved the beneficiaries of wartime pressures that legitimized female voluntary contributions to the decidedly masculine entity of war.
When the Civil War was over they were still mothers, wives, and sisters, but they had earned new public respect. They had demonstrated their skills and had won the highest praise of both men and women, without abandoning ideals of domesticity. They had invested nearly every ounce of their being into the war effort and had "mustered out of it," feeling as feminine as they had at the beginning. And yet they were different. They had seen that being women did not automatically exclude their talents from the public sector. They had found a way to maintain their respectability, while successfully taking on roles formerly reserved for men. In the process, they fashioned their own version of war, even more heroic and self-sacrificing than anything previously proposed. Livermore wrote later,

It is easy to understand how men catch the contagion of war. . . . But for women to send forth their husbands sons, brothers, and lovers to the fearful chances of the battlefield . . . this involves exquisite suffering and calls for another kind of heroism.

Whether she succeeded in redefining heroism for others, Livermore "mustered out" of war with a renewed appreciation for women's skills and a stronger faith in their characters. She resumed a more usual domesticity with intentions of taking up where she had left off. Still, the war had taught her that women did not always enjoy the legal and societal rights they deserved and she could not continue without addressing these concerns.

Thus, she chose to take a stand for woman's rights and parlayed her wartime reputation as an effective platform speaker into postwar invitations to speak out on her new convictions about women. Eventually she became a noted professional lecturer. Although counseled to tone down her most radical ideas, she always presented a
womanly stage persona and often spoke on issues of special concern to women. By not denying her womanhood, she appealed to middle-class women who probably would have rejected a more radical woman’s rights advocate. 17

She preserved aspects of domesticity that helped legitimize her platform career and gave her the right to speak for white middle-class women. Her confidence unshaken, she dared to claim that the war had changed her own and other women’s lives. She was free to argue that she would never be the same again, because the changes she experienced only reinforced her sense of womanhood and deepened her commitment to her "calling"--advancing the status of women in the United States. From this vantage point of moderate activism, she urged the postwar world to corroborate her new confidence in women’s "potencies and possibilities."

Livermore’s personification of many contemporary gender mores enhanced her ability to convert other women to the cause of woman’s rights. During the 1860s within Chicago’s female world, she inspired others to join her cause and to work within their own sphere of influence. Thus, Mary’s story intersects with those of Jane Hoge, Myra Bradwell, Kate Doggett, Frances Willard, and Elizabeth Boynton Harbert. Her saga went on through this female network, passing the torch of woman’s rights to later generations.

In telling Livermore’s story, I have attempted to utilize current writing standards. For example, when it improved readability, I have corrected some punctuation and spelling in direct quotes. Whenever possible, however, I have attempted to allow my subjects to speak for themselves, by using their own words.
Most often that has meant opting to speak of "woman's rights" rather than "women's rights." While such phrases sound awkward to the modern reader, the terminology helped define their actions and sheds light on their legacy to us. Describing their cause in singular terms gave an individual women such as Livermore the confidence necessary to speak out for her rights and pass her courage on to others.

* * * * *

9
Notes


3. Nineteenth century women who sought to advance the status of their sex, never wrote or spoke of women's rights. They always referred to their cause as the "woman's rights" movement. Although there were notable exceptions among those advocating woman's rights, the average woman based her identity on her difference from men. She eagerly accepted the idea put forth by the Second Great Awakening that she was morally superior to any man. She also believed that her work within the home, which was called the "woman's sphere," was vital to the success of the republic. After all, she was the one who was primarily responsible for raising virtuous citizens. Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 197-206.

4. Exactly what brought some women from woman's sphere to woman's rights while others did not make the transition remains unidentified. Nancy Cott suggests that it was "a variation on or escape from the containment of conventional evangelical Protestantism ... [that] often led the way." Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 204. Mary Livermore's experience fits this theory.


7. The term, "Boys in Blue" was a favorite endearing term for the Civil War soldiers that union women like Livermore and Hoge used frequently. Hoge incorporated the phrase into the title for her account of the war. Jane Hoge, *The Boys in Blue: or Heroes of the "Rank and File"*, with an

8. While this study focuses almost exclusively on the North, some valuable studies of gender in the Civil War South are also available. A classic essay on the ideology created to guide southern women in wartime is written by Drew Gilpin Faust. Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War, eds. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, with a Foreword by James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 171-199.

9. A pioneering book on women in the Civil War is Mary Elizabeth Massey, Bonnet Brigades, the Impact of the Civil War Series, ed. Allan Nevins and the Civil War Centennial Commission, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), Women in the Civil War, the Bison Book edition, with an introduction by Jean V. Berlin, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994). Lori Ginzberg's more recent study of nineteenth century benevolent women illustrates that the professional standards women's groups had adopted earlier in the century proved highly useful in the broader-scoped wartime benevolence. This continuity with antebellum practices leads her to conclude the Civil War brought less change than the postwar rhetoric suggested. While she recognizes the big change in Livermore's life from prewar benevolence to postwar activism, Mary's complexity does not easily fit into Ginzberg's broad study of benevolent women. Lori D. Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 6, 176.

10. Lori Ginzberg uses the term "business of benevolence" to describe the benevolent professionalism that nineteenth century women began during the antebellum years and expanded during the Civil War. Ginzberg, Women and The Work of Benevolence, 142-3.


12. For a thought-provoking work on the role of upper middle class women in Civil War Hospitals see Kristie Ross's essay. Kristie Ross, "Refined Women as Union Nurses," Divided Houses, 97-133.

13. One of the first historians to study women in the Civil War, Ann Douglas Wood demonstrated that benevolent ladies justified their activism by declaring themselves military "housekeepers." This pathbreaking article on


15. Of her own discharge from the United States Sanitary Commission’s Northwestern Branch, Livermore wrote that she and Hoge had been "mustered out of the service. . ." Livermore, The Story of My Life, 478.

16. Mary A. Livermore, My Story of the War: a Woman’s Narrative for Four Years Personal Experience as a Nurse in the Union Army, and in Relief Work at Home, in Hospitals, Camps, and at the Front, During the War of the Rebellion, with Anecdotes, Pathetic Incidents, and Thrilling Reminiscences Portraying the Lights and Shadows of Hospital Life and The Sanitary Service of the War (Hartford, Connecticut: A.D. Worthington and Company, 1889), 110.

17. Elizabeth Leonard demonstrates that comparatively moderate female nurses were more successful in challenging gender restrictions than were their counterparts who tried to become physicians. Leonard, Yankee Women, xxiv.
CHAPTER 1

TRAINING FOR WOMANHOOD

If on December 19, 1820, a prescient sage had suggested to Zebiah Rice that her
newborn’s name would someday become a household word in homes across the
nation, she would have thought it a *highly* improbable dream. Born herself during the
waning years of the eighteenth century and inspired by republican ideals, this new
mother probably imagined that her daughter would become a patriotic wife who
would some day prepare young citizens for public life.¹

Although conservative according to later standards, such aspirations reflected
women’s newly legitimate claims to public influence. Older traditions sanctioning
patriarchy as the ideal familial power structure were giving way to less authoritarian
male roles. Land ownership, along with its corresponding power, declined and young
men began moving away from the agrarian lifestyle. Young women gained freedom
to choose their husbands and then preside over a household and children. Beyond
serving in a traditionally nurturing role, mothers now could use their own virtue to
mold the nation’s future citizens.²

In this setting Mary Ashton, Zebiah Rice’s child, began her life. She ultimately
ventured far beyond her mother’s aspirations to become an influential public figure,
so well-known that in 1905 a newspaper in her native Boston declared that
"America’s foremost woman" had died. Yet if she and a group of exceptional female associates ventured far beyond anyone’s expectations, she remained a complex mixture of her eighteenth century roots, and the "new woman" persona that evolved throughout her lifetime. Parental legacy, personality, education, luck, hard work, and new opportunities created a female very different from the ideal that had inspired women in 1820.

The most influential parental legacies Mary inherited originated in the New England way. Puritan settlers to the area handed down to following generations a healthy dose of doctrine that, although altered by time, proved influential in the nineteenth century. Individually, one’s ability to study scripture for oneself had become the foundation for teaching all, male and female, to learn to read. Collectively, although congregationalism had given way to a variety of Protestant churches, conservative denominations still clung to John Calvin’s doctrines, including predestination, or the idea that one’s salvation was determined even before one’s birth.

The oldest surviving child of a strict Calvinist father, Mary gained a religious education under Timothy Rice’s tutelage. In her childhood home, the family began and ended each day with worship, and her father insisted that his children submit themselves to a strong, puritanical dose of self-introspection each night to determine whether or not the day had been well-spent. Such practices left young Mary lying awake often until dawn, agonizing over her failures. Years later, as she recalled those early days, she wrote, "our home was eminently and severely religious."
Besides Mary’s imperfect assimilation of her father’s religious introspection, the family did not measure up to the Puritan’s strict patriarchal ideal. Timothy Rice undoubtedly regarded himself "the head of his house" and never hesitated to tell others that he was the divinely ordained family leader. He came close to achieving that position in Mary’s eyes, for she later described him the "prophet, priest and king" of her childhood. But he really never "reigned" supreme; as she explained later, "no man was so completely under the control of another than was he under that of my mother."

Exactly how well Mary remembered the subtle dynamics of her parents’ relationship, while writing her autobiography more than half a century later, is hard to document. But some clues indicate that Zebiah Vose Glover (Ashton) Rice gave her daughter a legacy of strength. Before marrying, she had drawn out her engagement for approximately six years during the War of 1812, insisting that her sailor beau renounce the sea before a wedding took place. After her eventual marriage, the name she gave her oldest surviving daughter hints at Zebiah’s influence on her husband. She selected Mary Ashton, in honor of her younger sister.

When their oldest daughter was about ten years old, Timothy Rice caught "western fever." Intrigued by rumors of lush fertile land in Michigan waiting for cultivation, his first task was to convince Zebiah that relocation would promote the family’s interests. She was unwilling to go as far as Michigan, and the two, like many New Englanders, compromised on western New York. With the family and household packed, they became pioneers and spent what Mary later called two
"desolate" years attempting to farm land that "was so sterile that the more one owned
of it the poorer one was." The episode was enough to cure Rice of his "fever,"
and he abandoned his farming attempts. Zebiah’s insistence on not going too far
made the return to Boston easier and cheaper, but Mary never indicated whether her
mother reminded him that the move had been his folly.

Furthermore, the tradition of strong-minded women in the family goes back at
least to Zebiah’s mother. A Bostonian by birth, Mary’s maternal grandmother
married a British sea captain but refused to leave her hometown. Although she had
no legal or traditional right to dictate their place of residence, he acquiesced to her
wishes. Thus her husband, Capt. Nathaniel Ashton, seemed to "hover" between his
beloved home country and Boston for the rest of his life.

In spite of such glimpses of female power, these were the more subtle parental
influences on Mary’s childhood. Not only did she look to her father for religious
instruction, her physical stature and talents more closely resembled his. She
described him as tall, large, and strong, "a kind of blond giant," whose physique she
inherited. She was tall for a woman of that era--over five feet six inches at the age
of 74--with chestnut brown wavy hair and grayish-blue eyes. From her father she
also gained the ability to talk fluently "with much power," and she flourished under
his interest in her education. Finally, she found inspiration in his patriotism.

Timothy Rice’s father and uncles had served in the American Revolutionary
War, and he had grown up cherishing tales of their bravery. As a young man he had
volunteered for the navy. During the conflict between Great Britain and the
United States over "impressment," he was taken from an American trading vessel, because the English mistakenly thought he had deserted one of their ships. Tales of his imprisonment and forced labor, culminating in a daring escape while the ship lay in Copenhagen's harbor, captivated his daughter and later inspired her own efforts in the Civil War.  

Besides thrilling Mary with stories of war, he encouraged her fondness for books by asking her to read aloud to the family and exclaiming with pride when she read smoothly without stumbling over any words. He also insisted that she attend as much school as possible, even though her tuition taxed a limited family budget. He did all this in spite of what his daughter later described as the "stupid and bigoted conservatism" of a society that resisted advances in women's education.

For example, Timothy Rice supported Mary's interest in studying Greek and Latin, defending her when she was accosted by critics. One Thanksgiving, some female relatives and friends castigated him for allowing his daughter to take private Latin lessons, but he stood firm. Then when his accusers voiced their real concern, "Do you think it will help her to be a better woman" he replied firmly, "I am very sure it will not hinder her."  

Zebiah Rice also found Mary's pursuit of learning excessive, admonishing her daughter that "no amount of . . . book-reading would atone for ignorance of domestic affairs." Furthermore a daughter who grew up "good for nothing" would have no prospects for marriage since no man would want to marry a "shiftless" woman,
however learned. 23 Once again, Timothy Rice rose to the young girl’s defense, assuring his wife that their daughter "will learn to sew when she must do it." 24

Yet, even though he presided over her education, had Mary not possessed a personal compulsion and hunger to learn everything possible, she would have grown into a very different woman. Father and daughter made a good intellectual team. Mary studied everything she could find and mastered writing under her father’s watchful eye. 25 The combination of parental support and personal ability and desire helped mold the type of public figure she eventually became.

Along with her father’s interest in erudition, Mary found comfort in her mother’s support for her sometimes unorthodox games. When the girl pretended to be a fervent preacher, her mother willingly played the audience’s part. Although public speaking was not an acceptable activity for women during the 1820s, Zebiah never discouraged Mary’s private pulpit displays nor objected when she created imaginary audiences from wood.

Timothy Rice’s reaction to Mary’s "sermons" illustrates how unusual this activity was for a nineteenth-century girl. After watching her speak extemporaneously in the woodshed one day, he mused, "If that girl were only a boy, I would educate her for the ministry, for she has it in her." 26

An aptitude for public speaking enabled the teenage Mary to turn from these childhood sermons and lecture before a classroom. At fifteen, she had completed a four-year course at a nearby seminary for women in half the usual time. Remaining at school, she split her efforts between teaching French, Latin, and Italian and
furthering her own studies. Within this world of half-adult responsibilities and half-student activities, Mary launched a long painful search for her own identity.

Although this search would not lead her into the woman’s rights movement for more than twenty years, at least two prominent women inspired the teenage Mary with their unusual capabilities. Harriet Martineau, the English writer and reformer, visited Boston in 1836. While Mary did not hear her presentation, news of her appearance at a local church inspired the fifteen-year-old to wonder was it proper for women to speak in public.

Mary’s first opportunity to hear a woman lecture in public came shortly after her seventeenth birthday. In February, 1838, the abolitionist Angelina Grimké addressed the Massachusetts legislature, presenting an anti-slavery petition signed by 20,000 women. Mary, who later claimed that she had been chafing under gender restrictions at the time, skipped school to join the crowd that had assembled for the occasion. The experience left her firmly convinced that women should be free to develop their own talents and potentialities as fully as possible.

In both these cases, Mary’s hometown contacts had brought her advantages unavailable elsewhere. Boston often functioned as a site for events important nationally, and foreign visitors, like Martineau, routinely included the New England town in their itineraries. Moreover, the city itself provided a home to many outstanding nineteenth-century Americans, including two that the young Mary encountered—Margaret Fuller, radical woman’s rights advocate, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, transcendentalist preacher. Also, William Lloyd Garrison, the radical
abolitionist editor and publisher of The Liberator, resided in the city and his presence there attracted Angelina and Sarah Grimké. Growing up in Boston during this era, Mary gained lasting impressions from these exceptional people.

A few months after Angelina Grimké spoke to the Massachusetts legislature, a pressing family problem arose, sapping all of Mary’s energies and threatening her very being. Her younger sister, Rachel, frail from birth, began suffering tremendous pain. While her anxious family watched, her life slipped away. Stricken with grief, the older sister agonized over a suffocating fear that Rachel had gone to eternal damnation following her death. This dreadful thought emanated from Mary’s interpretation of her father’s strict Calvinist theology, and she began searching for a more loving creed. Her striving, however, brought her no reassurance. Instead she increasingly began to realize that she held onto a belief system that inspired her with nothing except fear and disgust.

Neither of Mary’s attempts to deal with this painful questioning actually satisfied her. Both, however, taught her methods of dealing with problems. First, she found a way of meeting inadequacies that she would use throughout her life; she turned to further education. In this case, she decided that English interpretations of the Bible had contributed to her discomfort. Perhaps if she learned to read the New Testament in its original Greek she might find some answers. Armed with this skill, Mary searched the scriptures, uncovering evidence of "divine tenderness" that thrilled her, but her own interpretation failed to replace what she had been taught.
Mary's second attempt to deal with her insecurities came with her response to an invitation. Her teaching abilities earned her a job offer to tutor children on a Virginia plantation. Everything about the proposal appealed to the young woman. In addition to paying well, it would take her far away from the physical reminders of Rachel's tragic death.\(^{34}\)

Although Mary found the job appealing, her father "vehemently" opposed it.

A daughter should live at home with her father, and under his protection, obedient to his laws until she married and then she should live under her husband's roof and be subject to him.\(^{35}\)

This pronouncement seems to fly in the face of Timothy Rice's support for his daughter's scholarship. Having encouraged her quest for knowledge, he now balked when that education offered her the opportunity to leave his home and become a single teacher.

Acquiescing to his demands, Mary initially turned down the invitation. But when a second offer came back promising more compensation, she decided no one would stop her and quietly made plans to go. Discovering her intentions the day before her departure, her father refrained from forbidding the venture again but warned her that she was "running away from home like a boy."\(^{36}\) Predicting that she would find herself miserable in the South, he concluded that "as you make your bed, so you must lie."\(^{37}\)

Timothy Rice's prediction proved nearly accurate. Mary arrived in southern Virginia to find that her hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, headed an unhappy family. While Livermore delighted in the children's enthusiastic welcome, she instantly
disliked their mother, a woman of Scottish descent, and "instinctively" identified their father as "self-indulgent, hot tempered, imperious, and yet indolent." Her problems with the adults, especially Mrs. Henderson, probably stemmed from personality conflict and prejudice. She described the plantation mistress as "hard, exacting, cold, reticent, and unloved." As for Mr. Henderson, he seemed lazy, but not nearly as bad as other southern men, because he "practiced self-control to a greater extent." Later, however, when he allowed her to explore his well-stocked library, she praised him for his generosity.

While Mr. and Mrs. Henderson leaned toward atheism, they wanted their children to be Christians because they considered church membership socially useful. Such a view struck Mary as odd. Although she still struggled with her own frustrations over what God was like, she found no kindred spirit with those who believed there was no God.

Because the Hendersons had no interest in, nor qualifications for the task of training their children in Christianity, Mary found herself solely responsible for conducting evening and morning worships for the children. And since the nearest church was twenty-five miles away, she conducted Sunday School programs as well. While she refrained from saying so, Mary probably found her duties in religious instruction ironic in light of her own spiritual quest.

In addition to believing the religious ideas of her hosts were odd, Mary could neither understand nor enjoy plantation culture. Nothing in her Boston childhood prepared her to appreciate the rural South, dominated by huge plantations and a
handful of wealthy, elite, and politically powerful families. Accustomed to modest comfort, she was not at home in her new setting.

Even had she taken the time to explore objectively the values and beliefs of her hosts, Mary was destined to remain an outsider. She was hired by, but not a part of, the privileged class. Her own prejudices and beliefs prevented her assimilation into the slaveholder's society—a unique mixture of culture, politics, and religion founded on slavery. Thus, she felt little kinship with the white adults with whom she associated. She found the children and slaves, however, somewhat more appealing, but since they were not her peers she had no true intimates in the South.

Ultimately, Mary's sojourn in the region increased her aversion to slavery. Her commitment to abolitionism deepened when she stumbled upon an overseer disciplining an errant cooper. The slave, whose name was Matt, was begging for mercy because he had accidentally dropped a hot iron wheel, burning an overseer's arm. The man in charge refused to listen and ordered Matt whipped so violently that Mary heard the victim's "appalling shriek of torture." This episode left the yankee woman so distraught that she stayed in bed four days and almost returned to Boston. Later, after a household slave talked her into staying, she secretly met Matt in the slave quarters, offering him help if he would run away to freedom in the North. Although he refused, she felt relieved that she had acted upon her abolitionist convictions.

While Mary's antislavery sentiments deepened, she still exhibited racial prejudice. Bigotry and class consciousness were so deeply ingrained in her thinking
that she was unaware of them, and they persisted throughout her life. For example, during the visit to the slave quarters noted above, she also stopped by "Ole Betty’s nursery." Betty cared for fifty to sixty children, ranging in age from three months to ten years, a monumental chore under any circumstances. Rather than noting the gargantuan task this caretaker worked under--Mary herself had found teaching the six Henderson children a very demanding assignment--she characterized the nursery "as badly arranged, [and] as dirty and comfortless, as ignorance and incompetence could make it" (Italics added). Mary always placed her faith in the advantages of education, but the word "incompetence" implies a subtle questioning of "Ole Betty’s" capabilities, which could have been based on racial assumptions. On a broader scale, Mary’s outrage over seeing the children under Betty’s care, eating porridge from a wooden trough, probably reflected her fury that the plantation owners cared so little for the fate of their dependents, treating them more like animals than humans and entrusting them to uneducated slave labor.

Although she never came to grips with (and probably never acknowledged) her deepest prejudices, Mary’s southern sojourn marked her movement into adulthood. The decision to leave her parental home for an unknown southern plantation where she remained for three years, illustrates her growing emotional independence from her family of origin. During the summer of 1841, she returned home more experienced and independent but still seeking answers for her deepest personal questions.

That fall she began teaching in Duxbury, Massachusetts, approximately twenty-five miles south of Boston. Almost immediately after settling in, Mary subscribed
to the Liberator. Next she joined the Washingtonians—a total abstinence movement that began in 1840 when six inebriated men in a Maryland tavern signed pledges to substitute their camaraderie for drinking. One of America’s first popular temperance movements, it had swept quickly throughout New England where local societies applied the name to a variety of temperance activities. In Duxbury, for example, many adult citizens joined a Total Abstinence Society while they implemented a "Cold Water Army" for their children and youth. Mary’s ease in relating to young people and her writing abilities made her a natural asset to this "army."  

While abolition and temperance were her first independent forays into reform, her father’s influence is evident in these choices. He had been a "rigid temperance man" years before the highly social Washingtonian movement began. Mary remembered that, when she was still a young child, her teacher had been sending her to buy a daily dram of rum. Discovering this from his wife, Timothy Rice had sought out the errant school mistress, ordering her never to send his daughter on such errands again.

In her autobiography, Mary gives few clues to her father’s views on slavery, but he was inclined toward abolitionism as well. When Mary asked him, sometime around 1839, to subscribe to the Liberator and forward its copies to her, hostility toward abolitionists was widespread. This was especially true for such radicals as William Lloyd Garrison, who insisted on immediate freedom for all slaves. Had
Timothy Rice shared that animosity, he would not have mailed the journal to his daughter while she was living within a plantation household.

While establishing reform interests she would pursue for many years to come and launching a teaching career in Duxbury, Mary had not resolved her emotional crisis. Amidst the gaiety of Duxbury’s social life and her beloved teaching job, she endured melancholy spells of religious questioning. Her internal turmoil still raged.

One especially depressing mood came over Mary on Christmas Eve, about halfway through her three-year tenure in Duxbury. The three churches in that city, Methodist, Unitarian, and Universalist, were honoring the holiday with a much more liberal spirit than Mary had grown up with. Feeling uncomfortable celebrating Christmas, she had repeatedly turned down invitations to the festivities. Hoping to quiet her frustrations, she set out that night on a walk. As she passed by the Universalist church, the cheerful music beckoned to her so strongly that she overcame her Calvinist inhibitions and slipped inside.56

A tall, blond, young man rose to present the Yuletide message.57 At first Mary found herself mentally contradicting many things that he said, but in spite of her reservations, his description of a loving God appealed to her.58 For the first time in years, relief from her emotional turmoil seemed possible, but she had to become more certain.59

Lingering afterwards to introduce herself to the pastor, she asked to see his sermon notes. He promptly gave them to her, then offered to let her borrow from his own cherished library. This exchange was the beginning of a long friendship. The
saga that had begun with a desperate attempt to educate herself out of a religious crisis, culminated with Mary Ashton Rice’s conversion to Universalism and her marriage on May 6, 1845 to the friend she made that Christmas Eve, Rev. Daniel Parker Livermore.  

And so it was in Duxbury that Mary resolved the spiritual quest that had begun with her sister’s death. In the process of searching for answers, she met and married a man who would prove over the years a faithful friend and supporter. Much of the public woman Mary Ashton Rice Livermore eventually became was a result of years of collaboration with her husband, Daniel. Nonetheless, at the time of her marriage, Mary’s internal struggle to define herself remained unfinished.

* * * * *
Notes


2. Ibid., 32-36.

3. This is an inflated assessment of Mary Ashton Rice Livermore's achievements, but does give some indication of her prominence at the time of her death. "America's Foremost Woman" *Boston Evening Transcript*, 23 May 1905, 1.


8. Ibid., 62.

9. Ibid., 40.

10. Ibid., 106.

11. Ibid., 58.

12. Ibid., 105-06.

13. Ibid., 39.

14. Ibid.


16. Ibid.


18. Ibid.

19. Mary did not attend college. While individual women of her generation received a college education, Oberlin College in Ohio was the only coeducational institution in the country during the 1830s. Andrea Moore Kerr, *Lucy Stone: Speaking out for Equality* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press,
1992), 31. The first generation of women to graduate in large numbers from college would not come until the 1880s. Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 247.


21. Ibid., 79.

22. Ibid., 90.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 91.

25. Ibid., 108.

26. Ibid., 70.


28. Years later Mary wrote in a letter that she had been inspired by Martineau's visit, and that she was very sorry that she had never met Martineau. Mary Livermore to Mrs. [first name not given] Chapman, 2 May 1877, Manuscript in the Mary Ashton Rice Livermore Collection, Rare Books Department, used by courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library, Boston, Massachusetts. After a trip to England in 1878, where Mary spent a considerable amount of time in Martineau's home and talking with people who had known her, she put together a biographical speech on the author.


33. Ibid., 142.
34. Ibid., 143.

35. Ibid., 144.

36. Perhaps Timothy Rice was comparing his daughter's escapades with his own move away from home to join the navy. Livermore, *My Story of the War*, 87.

37. Ibid., 145.

38. Ibid., 159.

39. Ibid., 160.

40. Ibid., 159.

41. Ibid., 365.

42. Ibid., 161.

43. Participation in religious activities did take on more social importance in the rural antebellum South where church activities provided one of the few options for plantation families to interact with others outside their immediate family. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 44. Not only did Mary misunderstand this, her experience in the Henderson household afforded no opportunity for her to observe the role of a rural southern church community.

44. Ibid., 41-48.

45. Ibid., 214. For a complete account of this encounter see pp. 212-222.

46. Ibid., 231.

47. Aside from this visit to the slave's home, and a brief outburst later on, Mary decided that she could do nothing there, so silently avoided further conflict with her employers and hosts. Ibid., 356, 364.

48. In a conversation between the Hendersons and Mary, Mr. Henderson said of Matt, "he's one of the few servants whom an ability to read does not injure." Livermore, *The Story of My Life*, 227.

49. Ibid., 211, 229, 230.


53. Ibid., 85.

54. Ibid.


57. While she does not say so in this description of the man who would be her future husband, Mary must have seen some resemblance to her father, whom she described as tall and blond. Ibid., 39.

58. Ibid., 387-90.

59. Ibid., 391.

60. Riegel, "Livermore, Mary Ashton Rice," 411.
CHAPTER 2
PRIVATE WOMANHOOD

Universalism's message of a God offering unlimited love to humans met an emotional need of Mary's. Its refutation of Calvinism freed her from fearing she would not see her beloved sister Rachel again. Never again would she be tormented by the thought of endless punishment.¹ Accepting this creed was a decision she never regretted, but not all its consequences were good.

Universalism, at the opposite end of the religious spectrum from her childhood faith, proved much less inspiring to Mary's father, Timothy Rice. His oldest daughter had been a soul-mate to him in many ways. His love for education and books, his interest in temperance and abolitionism, his adherence to Calvinism, and his facility with words, all had found a corresponding sentiment in her. Now she had rejected his most cherished beliefs and he felt that defection deeply.² Augmenting his sense of loss, he believed he had lost her to eternal damnation.

The reaction of fellow church members only made Rice's loss more painful. Concluding that she had purposely spurned Christianity, they
contemplated deleting her name from membership in Boston’s First Baptist Church. Only the diplomatic skills of the pastor, who wisely encouraged Mary to join her old congregation on Communion Sundays, began the long, slow process of repairing the damaged relationships.

Of Mary’s former support network, only her mother, Zebiah Rice, saw in Daniel a valuable husband for her daughter. While she always held some sort of faith, she had never espoused her husband’s creed; rather it had been Mary and Timothy who had clung to the remnants of Puritanism. Thus, Zebiah saw Mary’s move toward Universalism not as a personal rebuke of her own efforts to educate her properly, but rather as a move closer to her beliefs.

Eventually the differences between the father and husband diminished and they came to accept each other. In her characteristically over-enthusiastic way, Mary wrote that the two finally became "the dearest of friends, the most sympathetic father and son, the most congenial companions, and each became the best helper of the other." 4

Contemporary assumptions about gender roles made Mary’s rebellion appear worse. While generations of New Englanders had viewed men as the spiritual and secular leaders of their households and communities, they had believed that women possessed a special affinity to religion. In subsequent generations as men became more involved with secular matters, a woman’s piety became the symbol of the family’s spiritual health. Mary had grown up
in an era that still expected male leadership but increasingly lauded women's godliness. Fellow church members, lovingly approving of the young Mary's serious commitment to religion had predicted she would become a dedicated missionary some day. Since Mary could not have fulfilled this dream on her own, however, most had expected her to become the wife of a Baptist whose ministry she could support.

For early 19th century women, marrying, with or without a father's blessing, was a mere rite of passage from the protection of a father's household to that of a husband's. The assumed "right order of things" kept the female always under the protection of some significant male. Historian Nancy Cott explains, "women faced an overwhelming irony: they were to choose their bondage." 5

Although fellow members of her congregation believed Mary had chosen poorly, she knew otherwise. Her marriage was a move toward finding herself that eventually would lead toward a public career. But such developments and personal transformations would prove to be lengthy and initially subtle.

Even though she joined a religion espousing a much more liberal theology than she had grown up with, Universalists still held conventional theories regarding women's roles. During the first twelve years of her marriage, Mary functioned as a traditional minister's wife, caring for a home and a growing family. Her three daughters arrived in 1848, 1851 and 1854, although the
oldest died shortly before her fifth birthday. This portion of her adult life was
the private phase, symbolized by the name she used, Mrs. D. P. Livermore.
Her autobiography reveals some of the traditional domestic concerns that
occupied her time, from learning to cook and sew to supporting her husband in
his ministry.

While not always enjoying the responsibilities of being a pastor's wife,
Mary apparently found them fulfilling overall. In part this stemmed from the
couple's willingness to meet each other's needs. In one unhappy situation the
Livermores received a donation party, where crowds showed up at their house
with gifts of food, then stayed and partied until late into the night. Before the
revelers had left they had created havoc in Mary's clean, neat, "nest."
Following that ordeal, Daniel allowed his wife to determine from that time on
which events would take place in their home.6

Another time Mary became the involuntary hostess of a visiting missionary
and his wife who had arrived unexpectedly. This time her horror at being
asked, with no advanced warning, to provide food and lodging for presumptive
guests was relieved by friends who, aware of her plight, brought food.7 At the
same time, Mary was considerate of her husband. When Daniel found himself
so busy that he could not complete his sermons without interruption, she took
action. As she later explained, "It was only because I stood guard at his study
door, and held back intruders, that my husband was able to command time to prepare his sermons for Sunday."

Yet even though she found this private life a rewarding experience, Mary often worked for pay. She extended her mothering role by bringing students into her home and maintained her writing skills, by authoring hymns, poems, and essays on religion or temperance for various journals and competitions. As she explained later, she was not "ambitious for a literary life, but [I] . . . desired to acquire the power of expression, so as to be able to write readily, correctly, and intelligently." Thus she deemed practice necessary. While not full time, these jobs won Mary some recognition and earned a little extra money for the family.

In spite of her occasional paid work, Mary would probably have remained the private Mrs. D.P. Livermore as long as her husband continued pastoring local congregations. Leading a parish within the explosive climate of the mid-nineteenth century, however, eventually became too much for the Livermores.

The first serious conflict arose over the sale of alcohol in Stafford, Connecticut. Daniel shared Mary's sympathies for temperance and supported a proposed "Maine Law" that would have prohibited the manufacture and sale of liquor in the state. Because of his strong support for the bill, according to Mary, his congregation, which had been the largest in town, shrank to a small group of dedicated women. The controversy proved so divisive that some
threatened to jail Daniel, the town’s primary advocate of prohibition. Mary claimed later that she was so afraid for his safety on election day that she insisted on accompanying him to the polling station. Holding such a politically volatile position conflicted with his pastoral responsibilities, and Daniel resigned from his pastorate after the referendum carried.11

Following the move from Stafford in 1851, the Livermores led parishes in Weymouth and Malden, Massachusetts.12 Their abolitionism soon made these positions uncomfortable. Mary’s autobiography captures some of the different levels of conflict during the 1850s in her description of their personal dilemma. Divisions went far beyond the local pastors who were sure to displease part of their congregation by any stand for or against slavery. The controversy split entire denominations. It also forced many politicians of Mary’s beloved home state into what she saw as compromising positions between Massachusetts’s commercial interests and its vocal abolitionist minority.13

In the midst of the national controversy over abolitionism, Daniel began looking to the West with renewed interest.14 He had harbored westward ambitions as early as 1846, one year after their marriage. But his dreams had been on hold, in part because his wife did not share his enthusiasm.15

Mary gave various reasons for her reluctance to move west. At first she feared being left alone in the East while he searched for property.16 Later she claimed that she had neither the training nor the talents to be a pioneer wife.17
Memories of her parent's unsuccessful foray into frontier life might also have been a strong motivating factor. Whatever her spoken reasoning, Mary saw little opportunity for herself in the West and was probably more at odds with her husband over this issue than any other during their marriage.

In spite of her hesitation, Daniel joined a group of anti-slavery missionaries in 1857, intent upon establishing a colony in "Bleeding Kansas," so named because of the violence already raging in the territory. The entire family set out with the vanguard of the group as it headed west. But Mary never made it to Kansas territory. Her youngest daughter, Marcia Elizabeth, called Lizzie by family members, became seriously ill. Daniel and Mary, still grieving over the death of their firstborn daughter, Mary Eliza, four years earlier, decided to leave Mary and the girls--Lizzie and her sister Etta (short for Henrietta)--in Chicago where they would have better access to physicians. Daniel commuted between Kansas and Chicago for a time, but when it became evident that Lizzie's illness would be a lengthy one, he gave up his frontier aspirations and began editing a Universalist journal from the growing Illinois city.

Notwithstanding her reluctance to move west, the family's relocation to Chicago proved a critical step in Mary's path toward a public career. During her sojourn in this city, she developed a more positive self-concept as she began the transformation from a traditional minister's wife, who vicariously
found public fulfillment in her husband’s success, to a public figure in her own right.21

Changes in the way that Mary saw herself can be illustrated in two letters she wrote to William Lloyd Garrison during the 1860s.22 In 1863 she asked him to exchange subscriptions to the Liberator for the New Covenant, the journal Daniel had assumed responsibility for when he settled in Chicago. Along with this request she referred to Daniel’s publication as "our paper," explaining parenthetically, "I am associated editorially with my husband," and signing the correspondence, "Mrs. D. P. Livermore."23 Six years later she wrote Garrison another letter appealing for his participation in a suffrage convention she personally was organizing. She signed this one "Mary A. Livermore."24

This transformation from finding her identity as Daniel’s wife to seeing herself as an individual gained strength in 1857 when the Livermores found themselves comparatively free from the demands and restrictions of leading a parish.25 After settling in Chicago, Mary’s husband concentrated on editing the New Covenant, a Universalist journal.26 Besides enjoying the reprieve from the expectations of church members, Mary’s interest in writing coincided with Daniel’s new occupation.

As Lizzie--the sick child who became the reason for their staying in Chicago--traveled the long road toward recuperation, Mary devoted more time
to benevolent activities. Her choice of causes demonstrated a considerable
interest in women and children. She helped found Chicago’s Home for Aged
Women and aided the city’s hospital for women and children and the Chicago
Home for the Friendless. 27

Mary served on the board of the Home for the Friendless, and during her
first meeting she met an unusually outspoken woman, Jane Hoge (pronounced
'Hodge'), who made a deep impression on her. Also attending this meeting
was a father hoping to regain custody of his two children. His wife had died
three years previously and the Home had taken charge of the children. This
arrangement had apparently suited him until the children became the recipients
of a bequest. Sensing the man’s motive, Hoge informed him that they would
not give him custody of his children without a court order. Mary watched with
amazement as the exasperated man cried, "Are there no men connected with
this institution?" Hoge responded to the outburst by holding the door open and
informing him: "Women are in authority in this house, sir, and they will excuse
your presence, now and forever!" 28

Although she was nearly a decade older, Jane Currie Blakie Hoge
established a friendship and partnership with Mary Livermore that lasted until
the former’s death in 1890. Mother of eight surviving children, she was the
wife of Abraham Hoge, a successful merchant who had moved to Chicago from
Philadelphia in the 1850s. Unlike Livermore, Hoge had never worked for pay,
but by the time the two met she had honed her administrative skills to a level of professional efficiency that no other woman matched in the city.  

Besides her voluntary work, Mary continued writing. She contributed regularly to Daniel’s journal and contracted with others to write articles. These responsibilities brought her and Daniel to the reporters’ section at the national Republican Convention in Chicago, 1860. While the nomination of Abraham Lincoln proved the historic event of the convention, Mary recalled it for another reason.

On the main convention floor, the marshal spied a lone woman, Mary, sitting among the many male reporters and delegates. He quickly commanded, in loud tones that filled the hall, that she withdraw her "profane womanhood from the sacred enclosure provided for men, and 'go up higher,' among the women." Mary’s account of this incident claims she meekly rose to leave, until loud objections from her husband and other male reporters won the ensuing dispute, and the marshal left her alone.

Mary may have stood by meekly—contemporary gender mores would have dictated such deference on her part. Still the marshal’s tirade against women on the floor could not have been so unusual in 1860, and Mary had expected to be the only female reporter at the Wigwam that day. (Anticipating being an anomaly, she had dressed in a black dress—as inconspicuously as was possible for a respectable nineteenth century woman in a crowd of male reporters.)
Mary knew she was confronting gender restrictions in bypassing the women’s gallery. But in order to do her job well she wanted to sit where she could hear every word and the women’s gallery lay out of ear shot in an age before microphones were invented.  

Whether meek or not, Mary delightedly sat back down when the argument was resolved in her favor.

From the floor of the Republican Convention the nation took an accelerated course toward disunion and the outbreak of war. As the new president moved to assemble and equip an army, following the firing on Fort Sumter in early 1861, women gathered throughout the Union to identify wartime needs and discuss how they personally could aid the cause. Many women were anxious to do their part in the Civil War, but few entering wartime benevolence sensed what it would mean to them personally. This was certainly true for Mary Livermore.

* * * * *
Notes


2. Ibid., 396.

3. Ibid., 395.


6. Ibid., 428-34.


8. Ibid., 409.


10. The bill was named for a similar one that had passed the Maine Legislature in 1851. Ibid., 434.

11. Ibid., 437-46.

12. Ibid., 447.

13. Ibid., 449-454.


18. Ibid., 98-106.


20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.

22. While Mary had been a subscriber to The Liberator for many years, her first encounter with Garrison in person probably came in 1861, when she--acting as a reporter--made an appointment with him shortly after the firing on Ft. Sumter. Livermore, My Story of the War, 98.


24. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to William Lloyd Garrison, Boston, 16 August 1869, WLG, BPL.

25. Some evidence indicates that Daniel filled some parish pastorate positions while in Chicago, but these were not his primary vocation. Riegel, "Mary A. Livermore", 411.

26. Daniel Livermore had held a mortgage on the New Covenant for some time. Their move to Chicago coincided with the previous editor's decision to sell and Daniel bought him out, taking over management of the periodical along with a publishing house and book store. Livermore, The Story of My Life, 456.


29. Ibid., 66.

30. Howe, 30. See also Livermore, My Story of the War, 550.

31. Ibid., 551.

32. Ibid. 550.

33. Woloch, 223-4.
CHAPTER 3
WOMEN IN AUTHORITY

One noteworthy group of approximately fifty women as well as a few men, met in New York City to discuss ideas for aiding the Union's cause. Partially inspired by Florence Nightingale's Crimean War effort, this gathering quickly defined national objectives. They envisioned a central organization that would impose efficiency, system and discipline upon wartime medicine.¹

Dr. Henry Bellows, a self-important Unitarian minister and reformer, took an early, prominent role in the effort.² He attended the first exploratory meeting on his own initiative, hoping to avert the impending disaster he believed would result from the action of overzealous volunteers. He emerged from this effort a leader of civilian war relief, yet, the women who called the meeting probably shared his concerns. It is unlikely he convinced them to assume totally new objectives.

Meeting at the New York Infirmary for Women and Children, founded by the country's first female physicians, Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell, the group had always been concerned with providing the army with proper medical care.³ Elizabeth, a personal acquaintance of Nightingale's, understandably recognized the value of government cooperation with military nurses. She and her female associates
worked with the domineering male reformer, believing his contacts would help them achieve their own goals. Together they circulated a request, signed by ninety-one respected ladies, for a mass meeting at Cooper Institute in order to discuss coordinating national wartime benevolence.\textsuperscript{4}

Thousands of patriotic women, responding to the appeal, attended this meeting, along with some reform-minded males.\textsuperscript{5} Since most women still considered it poor taste for a female to speak before mixed audiences, Bellows was chosen to preside. Participants finalized a plan for a national organization to recruit nurses and provide medical supplies to the armies, electing Bellows to take their ideas to President Lincoln, who, skeptical of the impact of meddling citizens—especially females—on military affairs, eventually authorized a version of the original design.\textsuperscript{6}

Organizers named the national variant of the New York Women’s Central Relief Association the United States Sanitary Commission. Within this centralized organization, the need for regional offices quickly became apparent.\textsuperscript{7} The massive amounts of food, clothing, and bandages could not be housed in one location. Furthermore, the commission’s organizers reasoned, an army on the move would need a flexible way to send medical supplies. And it would also need to establish offices across the nation from which to recruit nurses.

In Chicago some prominent men, local judges and business leaders, established a branch. With intentions of creating a regional office, these men began enlisting the cooperation of most local aid societies. War enthusiasm was at a high pitch in 1861, and the branch grew quickly, but its male executives soon discovered that these new
responsibilities took too much time away from their occupations. To their relief they found talented women eager to assist them.⁸

Initially Eliza Chappell Porter, teacher and wife of a Presbyterian minister who had come to frontier Chicago as a missionary in the 1830s, supervised the office’s daily activities with her husband.⁹ Sometime in 1862 she became a field agent for the Commission when her husband started working as an army chaplin. Mary Livermore and Jane Hoge then replaced the Porters at the branch headquarters.¹⁰

Positioned near the top of what would later be known as the Northwestern Sanitary Commission, Mary and Jane thrived. They became local celebrities, their work taking them from battlefronts to President Lincoln’s office. Without intending to, they expanded the scope of their work well beyond anything they had done before. Indeed, they found themselves within a public (traditionally male) sphere functioning as liaisons between male commission executives and societies of women organized to provide soldiers’ aid.

Having ventured a bit outside traditional feminine roles, Livermore felt the need to reassure others that her new position had not rendered her less womanly. She remembered later, "I was reluctant to enter upon the work of the Commission in an official capacity, for I saw that it would take . . . me altogether too much from my husband and children." But, she explained "I felt compelled to withdraw my objections and obey the call of my country."¹¹

Nevertheless, Mary delighted in her wartime responsibilities. Of course she experienced twinges of guilt for not staying home with her daughters and caring for
her household, but such pangs did not stop her from enjoying the personal growth her employment afforded her. One historian uses Mary to illustrate what she calls, "The aura of refined regret for past home life . . . heavily shot through on both sides with gleeful enjoyment of new duties and challenges."\textsuperscript{12}

Livermore's domestic life had not been so exclusively private for some time. For example, when news broke that Ft. Sumter had been fired upon, she was in Boston tending to her sick father. While performing her duties, however, she found time for reporting. Receiving news of the "war fever" in Chicago and knowing of Daniel's plans to declare his loyalty to the Union cause in the next issue of the New Covenant, Mary sought an appointment with the abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. With almost worshipful devotion, she queried the two on the impending conflict and was thrilled by their confident predictions that the upcoming war would abolish slavery.\textsuperscript{13} The next day Mary left Boston, having accomplished her private duties and public objectives.

After arriving home, Livermore first donated her skills to the Chicago Home for the Friendless and other benevolent groups. By early 1862 she and Hoge had become associated with the Chicago Sanitary Commission when an organization they headed merged with the larger one.\textsuperscript{14} Their first journey as Commission agents took them to St. Louis in early 1862, where injured men from the battles at the forts Henry and Donelson were taken for treatment.

As she entered the hospital for the first time, the "sickening odor of blood and healing wounds" almost overpowered Mary.\textsuperscript{15} Once inside she nearly fainted as she
watched the changing of one soldier's bandages. Someone led her outside to regain her composure. While she recovered, a surgeon counseled her that many people could not endure the military hospital experience, and if he were her, he would not try it again. After four aborted attempts, she finally focused on the suffering soldiers and overcame her repulsion. Later Mary triumphantly recalled "I afterwards spent weeks and weeks [in similar military hospitals] without a tremor of the nerves or a flutter of the pulse." 16

Livermore adapted so well to commission responsibilities that her previous domestic roles seemed distant, yet she wanted others to know that she had not forgotten her real identity. Her book on the war includes a chapter describing a typical busy day at the office, that clearly demonstrates the contrasts between her public and private roles. She began the day as any mother would begin--seeing her children off to school. But instead of going on to household chores, she caught the morning streetcar that took her to the Commission headquarters. There she worked with a constant stream of people, saw to repacking boxes of supplies in crowded work areas, and read countless letters. At the end of a day full of pressures she returned to her abode explaining,

It [home] is as if I had left the world for a time, to refresh myself in a suburb of heaven. And only by a mental effort do I shut out the scenes I have left, and drop back for a time into my normal life--the life of a wife, mother and housekeeper (italics added). 17

In other words, although she had enjoyed a manlike role for the day, she recognized that it had moved her away from the domesticity idealized by white middle-class America.
While Mary minimized the correspondence she was required to complete at home after her busy day was done, Hoge verified that Commission tasks intruded on her free time. She and Livermore were planning business trips to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Washington D.C., and New York. A few days before setting out on the journey, she wrote to Dr. Henry Bellows on Commission stationery. After informing him of their plans, she closed with a telling post-script: "Tis almost midnight--excuse this scrawl."  

Although sometimes harried and often exhausted, Mary and Jane found new self-confidence by reaching within to develop previously unknown strengths. In time, they even presumed to advise military officials. During the winter of 1863, the two were traveling by train to Washington D.C. Over the engine and wheel noises, they began hearing strange sounds, like those of an animal in distress. They asked a conductor to explain what they were hearing and he casually responded that there was a drunken soldier on the platform, then went on about his duties. The haunting wails continued, made more poignant against the heavy snow falling past the window. When the conductor reappeared, Hoge "accosted" him, insisting that the man needed help, drunk or not.  

The conductor refused to share their concern and the women decided to act. On a snowy platform, they found a soldier writhing with convulsions. Enlisting help from other passengers, they brought the sick man into their cabin to care for him. When the captain in charge of this convalescent soldier happened to come by, Jane indignantly lectured him about his negligence, saying "This is not the way, sir, to
treat the 'rank and file' of our Army, made up of the very flower of American young manhood. No wonder soldiers desert, if this is a specimen of the treatment accorded them. **21** The confrontation ended with the captain signing orders effective upon their arrival in the capital city, there the women would have full charge of this ailing soldier.

Such an encounter with a man of authority who was also a stranger, would have appeared unusually brash for women of earlier generations, but contemporary assumptions about women's unique strengths buoyed Hoge and Livermore to inform the captain of his errors. Believing women much better suited to care for the "boys in blue," especially if they were sick or wounded, they saw themselves as eminently qualified to nurture the soldiers because they were mothers. **22** Many other Americans, both male and female, found this oft-repeated argument highly credible during the Civil War. **23**

On other occasions Livermore used her womanhood to gain her objectives. In 1863, during a springtime trip along the Mississippi River, she met General Ulysses S. Grant. Her first encounter with him, at that time commander of the Union Department of the Tennessee, came when the Sanitary Commission entourage with which she was traveling called upon the general. **24** A short time later, she decided to go back to his office alone with a special request. **25** After consulting with physicians, she had compiled a list of soldiers who were so ill they needed to be discharged, but were detained by military regulations. She set out one morning, without alerting anyone about her errand, and made her way through swamps to the
headquarters. Guided by a helpful soldier and passing several checkpoints with letters of introduction, she finally walked around a screen to encounter a surprised U. S. Grant, who awkwardly offered her a place to sit. She politely refused but pressed for his assistance,

with the earnestness the women felt in these sad cases during the war, [I asked him] to give me the pleasure of returning these boys to the mothers, sisters, and wives, who would lighten with love the dark valley of death into which they were fast descending. 26

Livermore understood that she was presenting an unorthodox request to Grant, who had delegated such administrative responsibilities to a subordinate, but she thought her motherly concern for the "boys" would be sufficient to gain her objective. She probably decided a woman's individual appeal to the general would prove more productive than if she had enlisted a colleague to accompany her. Whatever her specific reasons, her gamble paid off, and she triumphantly arranged to take her "boys" home. 27

Apparently on the same trip, Livermore encountered a black antislavery lecturer from Chicago, Ford Douglas, whom she had known for some time. Douglas asked her to smuggle a black child, approximately six years old, home with her. In spite of "Black Laws" forbidding whites to bring Negroes into the state, Mary agreed to help. 28

Livermore accomplished this illegal task by boarding the train early and enlisting the aid of a friendly black porter. After she insisted the boy was too filthy to hide in the bunk she was going to use, he gave her a lower berth and arranged for the child to hide underneath. That night her charge snored so loudly she feared an inspector.
would detect her scheme, but the porter talked rapidly whenever the officials were within hearing distance and thus succeeded in drowning out the noise. Continuing to lie down the next morning and pretending to sleep, she overheard the porter explaining to irritated passengers that she was a nurse returning from the front and could not sit up to make room for more to use her bench because she was sick.29 His explanation worked, and the trip passed without incident. Contemporary gender expectations aided her in this effort; a male might not have been so fortunate. A man, sick or not, refusing to vacate his bed on a crowded train would not have been tolerated by passengers forced to stand.

Besides using their womanhood to help achieve their objectives, Livermore and Hoge’s prominent position within the wartime Sanitary Commission gave them an advantage in meeting personal goals. Mary reported on war news she received at work for her husband’s New Covenant.30 Jane Hoge attempted to use her position to gain favorable military appointments for her son. An exasperated but polite letter from President Lincoln reveals to what lengths she had gone,

I am sorry I failed in my former note to make myself understood by you. You send me a Commission, which is good as far as it goes; but it fills only one of the three conditions which I stated to you as being indispensable. . . Without them I should violate both law [sic], and an indispensable courtesy, to thrust your son, or any one else, upon any Major General’s staff. . . . If I were to undertake it, I probably could not, in less than a month, nor without a laborious correspondence, find the General entitled by law to have an additional staff officer with the rank of Major, and who is willing [to] take your son as the man. This your son must do then for himself--I hope I now make myself understood.31

Aside from personal agendas which did not always succeed, both Hoge and Livermore encountered societal gender restrictions. Wartime experiences opened
Mary’s eyes to gender restrictions that had never seemed too oppressive before. She
had for many years recognized the need for more equitable laws and better
educational opportunities for women. But she had assumed, even though her husband
disagreed, that the ballot was not necessary for such improvements. She explained,

During the war, and as the result of my own observations, I became aware
that a large portion of the nation’s work was badly done, or not done at all,
because woman was not recognized as a factor in the political world. . . .

I saw how women are degraded by disfranchisement, and in the eyes of
men, are lowered to the level of the pauper, the convict, the idiot, and the
lunatic, and are put in the same category with them, and with their own
infant children. 32

Her own degradation by disfranchisement became clear to Mary during the
summer of 1863 as she stood in a contractor’s office, attempting to draft a business
contract. 33 She and Jane stood listening to him, incredulously at first. When
realization dawned, Mary wrote later, it jolted her, "our individual names were not
worth the paper on which they were written." 34 Worse, this cold fact was the only
one that mattered in 1863.

Never mind that they were raising $80,000.00 for war relief, or that they were
uniting the city of Chicago with its hinterlands in the most successful fundraising
event since the war had begun two years earlier. 35 Not even a donated lumber
supply or their ample bank accounts convinced this man to construct the building they
needed. The only thing that mattered was that they were married women. Their
names and reputations carried no legal weight. They could make no contract without
their husbands’ endorsement.
There, in the contractor's office, according to her published account, Livermore vowed to adopt another cause at the war's end. She decided to begin the "work of making law and justice synonymous for women." Thirty years later, she remembered that this episode had awakened her to gender inequalities and had shocked her into action on behalf of woman's rights.

Ironically, although Hoge wrote her account of the war earlier than Livermore, she deemed the incident unnecessary to record for posterity. Not given to letting anyone intimidate her, she may have regarded it as beyond the scope of her book, which was dedicated to presenting a "photographic view" of the war's heroic men. Although she firmly believed in woman's rights, she never endorsed suffrage. Maintaining more traditional benevolent activities after the war, she felt less need than Livermore to explain her unconventional political stance in later years. Whatever her reasons, Hoge viewed the incident as one of many, rather than one that defined her later activism.

After all, Hoge and Livermore had been negotiating with that builder over a structure needed for the huge Northwestern Sanitary Fair they were organizing. To achieve their goals, they probably attained the signatures of their husbands. Legal gender restrictions that dictated what they could or could not sign did not keep these determined women from reaching their own goals.

Besides overseeing facilities needed to house the fair, Hoge and Livermore fulfilled numerous responsibilities. In the face of their male associate's skepticism, they became the fair organizers and publicity agents, recruiting volunteers and raising
contributions of all kinds. They solicited aid from near and far, asking women’s organizations in the surrounding communities to contribute. They also canvassed other large cities--Mary in Boston and Jane in Philadelphia, their respective hometowns--for support. At home they presided over ladies’ meetings, often chaired by Hoge.

Through all this activity, they found the local press invaluable. When the soldiers’ fair received contributions, they proudly announced the donation to readers of the Chicago Tribune. When they encountered a parsimonious individual, they withheld the name but reported enough detail so that any knowledgeable reader could guess who was guilty of not investing in the war. At the same time, they used the papers to assure Chicagoans that this fair would meet the highest ethical standards.

The fair succeeded beyond all expectations, raising over $80,000 when their male associates had laughed at their $25,000 goal. Its triumph electrified the Union and gave new life to Commission activities already being planned for cities across the North, including Boston and New York. One authority estimates that by the war’s end miscellaneous fairs had "netted half the total contributions to the Sanitary Commission." While making the Commission the best-financed wartime benevolent organization, these fairs attracted a wide range of contributors, from common country folk to prominent people such as Abraham Lincoln and the shipping magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt.

The overwhelming achievement of the Chicago fair gave Mary and her female associates a deep sense of pride they never forgot. She wrote later,
This first Sanitary fair, it must be remembered was an experiment, and was pre-eminently an enterprise of women, receiving no assistance from men in its early beginnings. The city of Chicago regarded it with indifference, and the gentlemen members of the Commission barely tolerated it. . . The great fairs that followed this were the work of men as well as of women, from their very incipiency--but this fair was the work of women.42

In one perspective Mary was right. She and her female associates came up with the idea and did most of the work, from presiding over organizational meetings to keeping the local press informed of their plans for the upcoming "Northwestern Ladies Fair."43 They even contacted women's groups active in Chicago's hinterlands where they successfully garnered support for their grand schemes.

Men played a part in the effort, however, Abraham Hoge and Daniel Parker Livermore, always supportive of their wives' endeavors, probably signed the contract for them. Eventually even the skeptical Sanitary Commission men joined the effort, and, ultimately, wealthy men contributed large gifts that proved crucial to the event's financial success.44

Though several men helped, the lady managers took all credit for the triumph after the fair was over. Livermore and Hoge, who received invitations to speak in distant cities, especially reaped the benefits of having done well. In early 1864, Mary responded to a request from a ladies' group in Dubuque, Iowa, embarking on what would prove to be an especially memorable trip. She arrived expecting to speak to a few women but found that nearly all of Iowa, as she put it, was waiting for her, including the governor and governor-elect. Immediately deciding that she could not speak to a "promiscuous" audience,--meaning, in the context of the day, a mixed one
that included both males and females--she quickly arranged for the governor-elect to present her talk. At the last minute, the governor-elect persuaded her to give the speech herself. Concluding her message an hour and fifteen minutes later, she enjoyed a thunderous applause from a crowd of 3,000.\textsuperscript{45}

Mary said she had expected to give her speech "sitting in a chair decorously before them, trying with all my might to keep my hands folded on my lap."\textsuperscript{46} These expectations appear unrealistic, since the original invitation clearly stated that the ladies intended to pack a hall that could hold three hundred people.\textsuperscript{47} Realistically she could not have expected to sit and speak before a group of that size, even if it had been an all-female audience. She may have exaggerated her reluctance to speak before a mixed audience in an attempt to meet proper nineteenth century gender codes. Or to put it more bluntly, Mary may have needed to legitimize her unusual behavior within the realm of societal restrictions on women.\textsuperscript{48}

Beginning with her Iowa speech, Livermore justified her behavior in a way that would prove useful throughout the 1860s. She assured herself that she was no public speaker, but someone who advocated a cause. Until the end of the war, she claimed she took the stage only to help the "boys in blue."\textsuperscript{49}

In addition to making speeches, benevolent activities on behalf of the war monopolized much of the women's time and talents. Less than two months after the first Northwestern Fair, Mary and Jane helped establish a local organization to aid soldier's families, that immediately began sewing bedding.\textsuperscript{50} They also maintained
regional responsibilities, and by the war's end directed four thousand aid societies along with several soldier's homes.\textsuperscript{51}

Besides doing whatever they could to aid soldiers and their families, the two took pains to see that the Northwestern Commission's office operated like an efficient business. At the suggestion of Dr. Henry Bellows they had become associate managers of the Commission sometime in 1863. Several women in local societies held this title. However, only women in the New York and Boston offices managed responsibilities that corresponded to the magnitude of those Hoge and Livermore carried in Chicago.\textsuperscript{52} The associate memberships had been conceptualized by national sanitary commissioners who decided that regional offices would be more effective if they were represented locally by men respected in their communities.\textsuperscript{53}

In the Chicago branch Hoge and Livermore soon took over the position, supervising the office's daily operations.\textsuperscript{54} A proud statement published in February, 1864 reveals how they wished their efforts to be regarded,

\begin{quote}
The North-Western Commission invite the most rigid scrutiny into their method of business, their receipts and expenditures, and inform the public that their books and rooms are always open to investigation. They are confident that the economical system and fidelity of their transactions will not suffer by comparison with those of any of our best business establishments.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

By carefully adhering to professional standards, Hoge and Livermore participated in a national movement toward conducting benevolent activities according to business principles rather than basing the efforts on spontaneous idealism.\textsuperscript{56} Antebellum women's organizations had begun moving away from idealism between 1840 and 1860, adopting male-defined institutional structures. Doing so had given married
ladies a measure of corporate legal autonomy that they had lacked individually, and these structures had helped to ensure a group’s success. By 1860 women had become accustomed to professional standards and actively helped to promote them. One authority explains it this way, "Civil War philanthropy aspired to more "masculine" ideals, as . . . benevolent women and men proposed that scientific rather than moral principles characterize social welfare."  

In the Northwestern Sanitary Commission office, Mary and Jane’s professionalism reassured skeptical potential donors who needed evidence that the regional office was efficiently meeting the soldiers’ needs. They constantly solicited contributions beyond the Chicago city limits, relying heavily on their organization’s credibility. Though the war aroused passions, regional offices still needed to encourage donations to the Commission. In part this involved convincing women’s organizations in remote locations that packages must first be shipped to Chicago before making their way to the army.  

Gaining the assistance of people in the immediate vicinity of Chicago proved easier, at least when it came to recruiting volunteers. Two of these were Myra and James Bradwell. They lived across the street from the Livermores and were committed to helping the soldiers, although both had many other demands on their time. As the war began, James was elected a Cook County judge, but he aided the Commission when time permitted. Besides caring for small children and supporting her husband’s career, Myra volunteered for wartime benevolent associations, including the local soldier’s aid society and the Sanitary Commission.
During the 1863 fair, Myra played table hostess for a huge fundraising dinner that the Commission women planned and implemented.\textsuperscript{60} Becoming more involved subsequently, she used her connections with Chicago's legal community to solicit aid for the war. In late 1864 she invited an attorney to a soldiers' picnic. A copy of her invitation is not extant, but his reply reveals how the city's businessmen benefitted from women's wartime benevolent efforts. He was, he wrote, "almost ashamed" that he could not attend, but went on to explain, "I am working with others in preparing and examining some amendments to the City Charter." But, he continued, "had I the time I would gladly sit in the sunshine brought to the soldier's Home by you and [your associates]."\textsuperscript{61}

Another Chicago couple who aided the cause were Kate and William Doggett. He was a wealthy boot and shoe manufacturer and she was an educator, herbalist, and translator.\textsuperscript{62} Representing many women who volunteered for the Commission but occupied less visible roles, she assisting in the fair of 1865.

After 1863 so many other northern cities implemented their own sanitary fairs, that the Chicago ladies waited more than a year to begin work on a second, "Grand Fair." The first official announcement appeared in the Chicago Tribune in October, 1864.\textsuperscript{63} It revealed that ladies from the Soldier's Home and Sanitary Commission had decided that another fair was feasible, and the two organizations would split its proceeds evenly. This fair, they optimistically predicted, would "eclipse all others that have heretofore been held in the Northwest."\textsuperscript{64}
Livermore and Hoge served on the Executive Committee and on numerous others, large and small. Judge Bradwell chaired the Arms and Trophies Committee, which consisted of twenty-eight male and five female members, including Kate Doggett. Myra, although not listed in the minutes as a member of this committee in February, 1865, put in many hours as the secretary and earned accolades for her work in the fair's official publication, *Voice of the Fair*.

Plans for the big event scheduled to last three weeks in June, 1865, went smoothly at first. The city of Chicago and its hinterlands knew from experience what the Commission could do, and this time organizers encountered fewer skeptics in their path. Even President Lincoln agreed to attend, as a bold headline happily informed the city on April 14. Citizens anticipated a grand event.

But then Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General U. S. Grant, and the war was over. In the midst of their peacetime celebrations, tales of President Lincoln's assassination sent Chicagoans, in Mary's words, "to the very depths of despair." Many felt numb, and many were griefstricken. "Never," she wrote, "was a month so crowded with the conflicting emotions of exultation and despair, as was the month of April, 1865." Despite their own grief, Livermore and Hoge could not drop their work to indulge in mourning; though the war's end followed by the President's death meant that they had lost the two biggest attractions to the fair, and some wondered if it should be canceled.

During an executive committee meeting convened three days after Lincoln's assassination, Jane clarified what the situation really was. She solemnly explained,
more for the benefit of the reporter who sat listening than for the committee members, that "the apparent close of the war did not obviate the necessity of aiding the soldiers with supplies. They were needed more than ever, and the treasury was exhausted." All agreed, and they charged a sub-committee to inform the public.

By the end of April, Hoge was also capitalizing on the emotion surrounding the President's death to build up support for the fair. Lincoln had been committed to attend the event, she noted, provided affairs of state did not interfere. Now that he was gone "she felt that the sad death of the great leader, instead of retarding the fair, would consecrate it, and cause all to be more earnest in their labors on behalf of the children of the lamented President--the whole Union army." Therefore, even though a national day of "fasting and humiliation" had been set for the first Thursday in June, one of the days of the fair, Hoge and the executive committee decided against postponement, compromising finally by keeping the doors closed until 2 p.m. on that day.

Thus the fair began on schedule with a "grand procession" that commenced at noon on Tuesday, May 30. A military escort led the way, with representatives from local organizations following. The parade culminated in a one-hundred gun salute. After the opening ceremonies, fairgoers split up to enjoy exhibits housed in several huge buildings. Attractions ranged from fancy dry goods and artwork for sale to a mammoth white ox named "General Grant" and a re-enactment of the battle between the Monitor and the Merrimac. A log cabin built by Abraham Lincoln was brought in from Macon County, Illinois and put on display. The presence of distinguished
visitors, like Gens. William Tecumseh Sherman and U. S. Grant, added to the excitement.\textsuperscript{75}

Appearances by revered military leaders and veterans, as well as numerous and crowded exhibitions, provided more things to see than one could absorb in a single visit. The event, lasting more than the scheduled three weeks, raised more than $280,000--three times the money collected by the first fair.\textsuperscript{76} Although it did not rival the millions raised by similar events in New York City and Boston, this was no small accomplishment for the only Sanitary fair held after the war's end.

Yet, when looking back at her wartime experiences, it was the 1863 fair that Livermore recalled with greatest pride. In her book on the war, she devoted a single paragraph to the second fair, using it to introduce a chapter about the last time she saw Lincoln alive, in early March, 1865.\textsuperscript{77} This chapter expresses an awed respect for the president and hints at a friendly conspiracy between the ladies of Chicago (some of whom were the personal friends of the First Lady) and Mary Todd Lincoln to secure a presidential appearance at the fair.\textsuperscript{78} But it gives no information on the event itself.

Perhaps if the President had lived through June of that year, Mary would have had more to say about the second fair, but she had other reasons to emphasize the 1863 event. It had been, as noted previously, a ladies' enterprise from the start. Livermore's idea initially found many women, but few men, willing to support it. The women pushed on in preparation, accusing the "business men" of Chicago of underestimating the importance and "immensity" of the planned event.\textsuperscript{79} But when
the last receipts were counted, the women basked in the knowledge that their efforts had been successful.

In contrast to the first fair, in which women predominated even at the highest levels of organization, Livermore and Hoge were the only female members on the second fair’s Executive Committee. Men chaired many meetings and sometimes added Livermore and Hoge to otherwise all-male committees as afterthoughts. No doubt the two women found gratification in seeing formerly skeptical men adopt their idea, but they also had to give up some authority to their new allies. The two apparently worked harmoniously in both settings, and neither Hoge nor Livermore left any record of having felt frustration that the Board of Lady managers had been supplanted. But Mary clearly revelled in the thought that the first experimental fair in 1863—which inspired imitations across the Union that ultimately raised millions for the war effort—had begun with a woman’s initiative.

Pride in women’s contributions to the Civil War stayed with Mary and Jane the rest of their lives. On a large scale, the unprecedented success of the various fairs represented their own achievements. Never imagining in 1860 that their wartime relief activities would take them so far beyond, they had moved comfortably into roles that ultimately put them in charge of the Northwestern Sanitary Commission’s office. The Civil War, dramatically expanding the breadth of their activities, had given them a national audience, confidence in directing large projects, and experience in working with men on a professional level. Both Mary and Jane were convinced that women had made the conduct of the war more efficient and more humane.
From that intellectual vantage point, Livermore and Hoge, and others as well, came to believe wholeheartedly that the postwar world must not be deprived of feminine expertise. 84

Since wartime experiences had worn Hoge out physically, her postwar activism would remain close to home. In Livermore's case, larger wartime responsibilities had brought her face to face with the seeming intractability of societal gender restrictions for the first time. This, in turn, had alerted her to the need for advancing women's interests. Remaining friends but going their separate ways, Mary and Jane would devote much of their postwar careers to what they perceived as the paramount issues facing women.

* * * * *
Notes


2. Historians differ over the extent of women’s involvement in the initial planning stages of the Sanitary Commission. George M. Fredrickson suggests the women were unsure of how to achieve their goals, so turned to a group of prominent men for guidance. George M. Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil Wars: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 98. Anne Firor Scott takes the opposite position, saying the male reformers intervened because they feared leaving the New York group to work alone in its quest to aid the army. Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in American History* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 63. These women were from New York’s elite families and were probably as concerned about unorganized wartime aid as their male counterparts were.


10. Ibid., 136.


13. Livermore, *My Story of the War*, 98-9. Presumably the Livermores published an account of Mary’s interview with Garrison and Phillips in mid-1861. This study did not locate a complete collection of the *New Covenant*. It seems likely that such a collection does not exist. The Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts, holds some copies, available on microfilm. Another


15. Ibid., 186.

16. Ibid., 188.

17. Ibid., 170.


21. This reference to soldiers deserting reflects the mood of the North during the early part of 1863 before the crucial victories in Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Ibid., 244.


23. For a discussion of why Civil War women found their claims to public roles more viable than in earlier times, see Glenna Matthews’ chapter "Northern Women and the Crisis of the Union." Ibid., 120-146.


25. Mary was not the only Sanitary Commission nurse to embark on an independent venture away from the commission’s hospital ship. Georgeanna Woolsey and Arabella Barlow set off to assess hospital conditions for themselves when Sanitary Commission officials made plans to evacuate the area and leave the medical needs to the military. Ross "Refined Women and Union Nurses," Divided Houses, 133.

26. Ibid., 317.

27. Ibid., 316-17.

28. Ibid., 351-53.

29. Ibid., 361-63.
30. War news must have been a frequent topic in the New Covenant. This search located several references to the Civil War, although most of the issues published between 1861 and 1865 were not available. Mary averred that her account of a typical day in the Sanitary Commission office, cited earlier in this chapter, first appeared in the New Covenant. Livermore, My Story of the War, 163. An example of the Sanitary Commission news that did appear in D.P. Livermore’s journal is "Received by the Sanitary Commission" New Covenant, (29 March 1862), 2.

31. Lincoln’s specific concerns are somewhat obscure here, but it seems clear that he thought complying with her request would be illegal and discourteous. Abraham Lincoln, Executive Mansion, Washington, to Mrs. A. H. Hoge, Chicago, 6 January 1863. Manuscript in the Abraham Lincoln Collection, CHS.


33. Ibid., 435-6.

34. Ibid., 436.

35. Firor Scott, Natural Allies, 61. Mary Livermore gives the estimate of $80,000 raised by the 1863 Fair in her account of the war. Livermore, My Story of the War, 455. Her friend and associate, Jane Hoge, who was the other woman negotiating with the builder wrote in her published account of the war that this Fair raised $100,000. Hoge, The Boys in Blue, 332-68.

36. Livermore, My Story of the War, 436.


41. Vanderbilt gave $100,000 to the New York fair and Lincoln gave a copy of his Gettysburg Address and his draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. Ibid.

42. Livermore, My Story of the War, 412-13.

44. For an example of the roles women played see "The Northwestern Ladies' Fair," Chicago Tribune, 5 October 1865, 4.

45. Livermore, My Story of the War, 601-7.

46. Ibid., 604. Keeping her hands folded while speaking seems to have been very important to Mary. An undated photograph of Mary Livermore, probably taken during the 1880s, shows her standing on the lecture platform, clad in a lace collar, cuffs and hat, with her hands folded. Ibid., 615.

47. Ibid., 602.

48. For a description of how the accusation of being unfeminine could bring fear to the most radical female reformer's heart, see Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence, 34.

49. Although she was besieged with requests to speak at women's conventions in the West, as late as May, 1867, Mary wrote in a private letter "I am not a public speaker." Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to Olympia Brown, Boston, 15 May 1867. Manuscript in the Olympia Brown Collection, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.


53. Hoge says that a woman volunteer proposed the Associate Managers positions during a Woman's Council held in Washington in November, 1862. Livermore and Hoge participated in that meeting, then returned to become the Chicago Associate Managers. Hoge, The Boys in Blue, 81. This seems highly probable, although J. S. Newberry talks of male associate members in Chicago as early as late 1861. He apparently used the titles loosely to describe the way individuals functioned. Newberry, U.S. Sanitary Commission, 219. Ginzberg gives a version of the beginning of Associate managers emphasizing women's leadership roles. Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence, 151-52. Whoever's idea the title was, there is no question that the Chicago branch began under male tutelage, but soon recognized that women's involvement was a necessity. Newberry, U.S. Sanitary Commission, 221.
54. Livermore and Hoge did not become full members of the Commission. Two men from Chicago, Judge Mark Skinner and E. B. McCagg, were appointed full members and attended the Commission’s sessions in Washington. Newberry, The U.S. Sanitary Commission, 220.


56. Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence, 133.

57. Ibid., 43.

58. Ibid., 134.

59. Chicago Legal News, 26 January 1864, 166.


64. Ibid.

65. "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the 1865 Fair." Manuscript in the Northwestern Sanitary Commission Collection, NL.


67. "N. W. Sanitary Fair, President Lincoln Coming." Chicago Tribune, 14 April, 1865.

68. Livermore, My Story of the War, 471.

69. Ibid.


73. Ibid.


76. For the totals raised by selected fairs throughout the nation see "The Great Soldier’s Fair," Chicago Tribune, 30 May 1865, 4. For the amount raised by Chicago’s second fair, see "The Fair," Chicago Tribune, 18 June 1865, 4.

77. Livermore, My Story of the War, 278-585.

78. Myra Bradwell and her husband were personal acquaintances of the Lincolns before the election of 1860. After the President’s death the Bradwell’s arranged a place for Mary to stay. More than ten years later Myra meddled in the Lincoln's personal affairs to get Mary Todd released from an insane asylum. Jane Friedman, America’s First Woman Lawyer: The Biography of Myra Bradwell (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1993), 51-67.


82. Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence, 133-36.

83. Ironically, subsequent historians have estimated that women’s participation in civilian support services actually prolonged the Civil War. Faust, "Confederate Women and Narratives of War," Divided Houses, 172.

CHAPTER 4
RIGHTING WRONGS

The postwar slump had come. Mary Livermore and her associates in war-relief returned to their homes and families and gained some deserved rest. Yet somehow they could not be the mothers and wives they had been before. Their newly developed skills for organization and public speaking seemed overblown for tending a home and family. As Mary Livermore explained it, "the ordinary tenure of woman's life had changed."1

Livermore again assumed some responsibilities for her husband's New Covenant and resumed the philanthropic work she had relinquished as wartime pressures had mounted.2 Of the other women, Jane Hoge added to her prewar benevolent activities; Myra Bradwell resumed her legal studies while continuing to work for the Soldier's Aid Society and teaching sewing skills to poor women; and Kate Doggett remained largely immersed in intellectual pursuits, teaching botany to upper-class Chicago women.3 For each one, however, a void had been created that could not be filled. Each woman, perceiving that some things in her world were amiss, began devising ways to put her talents to work, righting wrongs.

By the end of July, 1865, one month after the second fair closed, Livermore and Hoge terminated their association with the Commission.4 Undoubtedly, both

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regretted leaving their beloved jobs even though they were thankful the war had ended. Shortly thereafter, each launched a new career.

Mary, who had always loved writing, gave it more time. Since her name had appeared almost weekly in the Chicago Tribune after 1863, she had achieved a local celebrity status that gave her easier access to the postwar press. In addition to contributing work to local papers, she wrote frequently for her husband's journal and soon became its official associate editor.

Through the written word, Livermore subtly introduced many readers to the ideas of woman suffrage. During the war itself, Daniel had depended on news from the Sanitary Commission to help fill his journal. Subscribers to the New Covenant had grown accustomed to Mary's first-hand accounts of the war as she saw it, even though she had habitually used the editorial "we" in her articles. With the return of peace, she increasingly turned to the subject of woman's rights, advocating the opening of more colleges for women, urging repeal of unjust laws, and appealing for more employment opportunities for females. She even argued that women could serve well as ministers.

This last suggestion prompted a reader to inquire, in light of her views on women's pastoral abilities, why she herself had not entered the ministry. Her written reply cited two reasons. First, her "main business" was to be the "wife of a minister, for life" and that precluded her becoming a cleric herself. Second, she had no interest in dropping her current activities in order to pastor.
The first reason was appropriate for a minister's wife of the late nineteenth century. Editors of The Universalist, who copied this correspondence from the New Covenant in 1868, could not resist concluding that her support for her husband's career "is an admirable 'arrangement'." But her second reason was evasive; she did not specify what other work she preferred, leaving room for speculation. That work, of course, could have been her general wifely duties, which is what most of her readers probably assumed she meant. Privately Mary could have been thinking of the long trips that took her minister husband out of town, away from his editorial work. These absences allowed her to assume more responsibility over his journal, a task she welcomed and enjoyed. Being a minister, instead of a minister's wife, would have left Mary with less time for writing.

Besides, Mary Livermore did not need to become a certified clergy to gain access to pulpits. In 1867 a Baptist minister in Chicago invited her to speak on "Woman's Rights and Wrongs." Never even having heard a speech advocating woman suffrage, she knew, nonetheless, it was an opportunity she could not refuse. She accepted the invitation, and the minister, hoping to raise money with her speech, invited many Chicago residents to attend. After Livermore spoke to a large, sympathetic crowd, she was encouraged to implement a suffrage convention in their city. From that pulpit in a local Baptist church, she began what would, over twenty-five years, prove to be a distinguished and well-paying speaking career; she would deliver countless Sunday sermons and thousands of lectures across the country.
Mary came to view herself as a sort of minister for woman’s rights. This perspective gave her confidence. She explained in her autobiography, "Feeling that I had 'received a call' to this work... I was constrained to speak more freely and fully than had been customary." 13 Besides believing she was called, she hung onto the conviction that her cause was God’s. Years later, she wrote to Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, twenty years her junior and an up-and-coming woman’s rights advocate in Chicago, "The cause has, intrinsically, so much of God in it, that nothing hinders it." 14

This woman’s rights ministry would not come into focus until 1867, for Mary and her associates did not develop instantaneously into public women. The immediate postwar years proved a period of re-evaluation in their lives. Mary began devoting more time to her home and family. Lizzie, her youngest daughter, whose illness had kept the family in Chicago initially, still needed much care. Mary, who always placed her confidence in education’s power to transform, now tutored her child three hours a day in hopes it would cure her. 15

Attending mostly her home responsibilities, Livermore still found time to join Myra Bradwell and Jane Hoge, who had continued their association with the Soldier’s Aid Society. In 1867, the Society sponsored a third sanitary fair on behalf of veterans and their families. While smaller than the wartime events, it demonstrated the continuing hold war-inspired benevolent activity had on these women.

Aside from raising funds for soldier’s families, the postwar era presented Chicago women with a wide variety of benevolent activities. Many fell back on prewar
standards such as aiding those they termed "friendless" and caring for orphans. Others developed skills in new areas, and some even funneled their talents into lucrative careers.

Bradwell, resuming her legal studies, soon joined Mary in advocating reform for women via the printed word. Like her friend and colleague, she tapped into her husband’s career to begin her own. Later, she claimed that she had taken up law studies only to aid him. Yet her career eventually surpassed his, occupying him long after he had hung up his robes and retired his gavel.

Myra set out to reform the world in her own way. While being part of a network for woman’s rights advocates working with Mary Livermore and other suffragists, she chose a career that set her apart from these reformers. Beginning as a lone female legal expert in an otherwise male profession, she explained later, "I came to find out that a woman could accomplish as much labor in the same lines as a man and, therefore, as I said, I concluded to read law."  

While in the process of establishing a solid foundation for her legal career, Myra kept her reform agenda in the background. The first issue of her journal, the Chicago Legal News, greeted the world on October 3, 1868. As the editor and publisher she proposed that the publication would fill a void of legal news in the West. She proudly announced the journal would be "devoted to legal information, general news . . . and other matters useful to the practicing lawyer or man of business," proclaiming it to be a publication that would meet conventional legal needs.
From the first issue, Myra emphasized disseminating legal opinions and news as quickly as possible. A notice in Daniel Livermore’s publication hailing the arrival of the *Chicago Legal News* probably illustrates the popular reaction. It read, "The first number looks well, but is, of course, dry reading to all outside the legal profession." This critique, penned by Mary Livermore, implied that Bradwell’s reform objectives were inadequate and suggested that future issues should include discussions of specific laws as they applied to women.

Undaunted by her friend’s skepticism, Myra devoted much energy to reforming women’s legal status and often published opinions on cases involving women. Yet she couched her most radical reform initiatives within a conventionally focused journal. This combination assured her access to the latest legal news, which she made the backbone of her weekly publication. Myra’s ability to speak and act in accordance with traditional nineteenth century mores helped her take advantage of a ready audience that needed a more timely and efficient legal news source in the West. If she had initially given more emphasis to reform, the journal would not have achieved success so quickly.

After convincing the legal community that her primary objective was to leave the existing structure of their business world intact, she had only to prove herself as an able editor with ready access to legal expertise and information. This she accomplished by hiding her more radical reform ideas in the early issues of *Chicago Legal News*. Her first article advocating change urged cleaning up the local courthouse. Of course this public building was not considered part of a woman’s
sphere, but she proposed cleaning its windows and clearing out specific items of
stored furniture that employees had abandoned. Any respectable Victorian woman
might have made such suggestions, and, in case her readers overlooked this fact, she
subtly reminded them that she was the "judge’s wife." Utilizing a sense of what
society would accept from a woman, she skillfully established herself as a mainstream
thinker and created a popular trade journal.

Bradwell’s journalistic success probably encouraged Livermore to venture further
into writing for reform. She had, of course, written temperance pieces as early as her
stay in Duxbury, Massachusetts. But her friend’s burgeoning editorial business gave
her a practical demonstration that a periodical produced by a woman could find
readers, and she boldly decided to focus her own journal on women’s concerns.

Five months after the first issue of Chicago Legal News appeared, Mary began to
produce The Agitator. Maintaining high hopes, she envisioned this paper as a sister
to The Revolution, published by prominent suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and
Susan B. Anthony. Her introduction promised,

to discuss the "woman question" in all its bearings and aspects, to assist
woman in giving unlimited scope to the best and highest possibilities of her
nature—and to aid her in engrafting on custom, establishing in constitutions,
and enacting in laws, whatsoever relates to her welfare, that is just, right, and
true.

In comparison to Bradwell’s venture, Livermore did not begin with a large
professional network. True, within the city of Chicago both women were well known
and, prior to the appearance of either journal Mary had a wartime reputation as a
leader of women, while Myra was still known as Judge Bradwell’s pretty wife.
Yet being connected to the legal community through a supportive husband gave Myra access to a professional audience that needed the services and information packed into the Chicago Legal News. Mary, on the other hand, targeted the readers of the New Covenant, the religious journal she edited with her husband. While some of its readership supported woman’s rights, most did not.

Emerging from wartime benevolence inspired by women’s powerful potential, Livermore and some of her associates thus joined a small group of woman’s rights advocates. Existing suffragists welcomed the newcomers’ support. But in spite of growing postwar suffrage activity, the majority of American women, including Hoge, remained outside their ranks. The small numbers of women willing to advocate their right to vote presented a practical challenge to Livermore’s publication. Unlike Bradwell, who enjoyed a ready-made audience, Livermore had to convert readers to the cause of woman’s rights before her journal could achieve financial stability.

Postwar woman’s rights advocates encountered a great deal of resistance. Mary’s frustration over gender restrictions surfaced at a Massachusetts suffrage convention in 1869. As she explained to her listeners:

> Before the war women thought little of politics. A few only concerned themselves in the affairs of the nation, but the storm of the Civil War broke suddenly over the great mass. Then men asked us to do military duty, and we did it. . . . We grew to the stature of men. We cannot go back and be the women we were before (italics added).

This assertion that she and others could not completely resume earlier roles indicates three different concerns that confronted her at the war’s end. First, she had changed. She had traveled widely, had worked with a large number of prominent
people, and had adopted the woman suffrage cause. To leave all this behind and resume a more private existence would have bored her. Second, she felt the need to justify her transformation from a conventional wife to a public woman. She wanted others to know that, in spite of the new assertive stance she was taking, she was still a womanly woman. Third, Mary was reacting to popular assumptions that she should have gone back to the life she had lived before the war. Her wartime experiences had led her to conclude that a public world that was managed without women’s expertise would be "badly done."

Thus Livermore announced at this suffrage convention that she could not return to her own prewar standards for women. By doing so, she demonstrated another method that she and her reform associates had found useful—meetings with the converted. Such conventions gave women opportunities to act on their convictions, gaining the attention of the media and others as well. Recognizing the advantages of such activities, Mary and her friends organized the Illinois Woman Suffrage Association, (IWSA.) Succeeding in this effort proved no easy task, but Mary’s endeavor paid off in the end, helping to propel her into the ranks of the national suffragists.

Livermore organized the first suffrage association in Illinois after she gave that first postwar speech at the local Baptist church. Why she waited nearly two years to launch it is unclear since her wartime successes had left her far more confident of her abilities. Perhaps she simply procrastinated, or maybe she was working to enlist more supporters; her autobiography claims that there were many sympathetic people
at that first speech, but they may not have constituted as large a foundation as she wished.  

When the initial Illinois Woman Suffrage Association (IWSA) convention finally took place in early 1869, Mary had lined up a number of local and nationally prominent individuals to assist her. Myra Bradwell distributed a call for the assembly, and her husband James lent his legal and verbal skills to recruit lawyers to the cause. At the conference, locally prominent clergy, including Dr. Edward Beecher, son of Lyman Beecher, lent their support. National suffrage leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, along with the famed orator Anna Dickinson, spoke at the convention. Although a dispute among local woman’s rights advocates complicated her efforts, Mary orchestrated a successful event and revelled ever after in her leading role. "As far as I was concerned," she later recalled, "I was a pioneer in the reform."  

Not only did she inspire local suffragists with her ability to aid the cause, Mary’s enthusiasm and skills impressed Stanton and Anthony. Following the Illinois convention, their journal, The Revolution, complimented her:

Mrs. Livermore, the president of the Convention, discharged the duties of her office with great executive ability, grace and patience. The women of Chicago are fortunate in having her so wise and judicious a manager of their cause. She is a tall, dignified-looking woman, has a fine voice, pleasant address and in her force and dash is not unlike the proprietor [Susan B. Anthony] of The Revolution.  

A few weeks later, Livermore accompanied Stanton to a convention in Milwaukee. Stanton excitedly wrote of hearing Mary’s plans to begin a journal.
The men [who counseled Mary], still clinging to the pleasant illusions that everything emanating from woman should be mild, gentle, serene, suggested "The Lily," "The Rose Bud," "The New Era," "The Dawn of Day;" but Mrs. Livermore, always heroic and brave, now defiant and determined, having fully awoke to the power and dignity of the ballot, . . . declared that none of those names, however touching and beautiful, expressed what she intended the paper should be—nothing more or less than the twin sister of The Revolution, whose mission is to turn everything inside out, upside down, wrong side before. With such intentions, she thought The Agitator was the only name that fully matched.

By any standard, this was a sensational start for a late nineteenth century suffragist, but the harmony was shortlived. At the Illinois woman suffrage convention in February, Mary, Myra Bradwell, and Kate Doggett were appointed representatives to attend the American Equal Rights Association’s (AERA’s) convention in May. They arrived in New York to find that old tensions, unknown to them, had reached a crisis point and former allies were lining up on opposing sides.

Differences erupted over the Fifteenth Amendment. Stanton and Anthony had already taken a stand against it because it gave black males the right to vote, without giving it to women. They felt betrayed by their former abolitionist allies who supported this measure, telling women they must put their own agenda aside for the time being. Advocates of woman’s rights, who had already put their agitation on hold while they joined their nation in a war to free the slaves, felt heartsick that recognition for women’s patriotic wartime service had not translated into a heightened interest in the woman question. This time Stanton refused to comply.

Longtime abolitionists, accusing Stanton of racism, insisted she should not preside over the AERA convention. The critics did not muster enough opposition to oust her, but a contingent from New England walked out of the meeting. Stanton and
slaves than she was.\textsuperscript{48} But throughout the Civil War the Stanton-Anthony-Stone triangle had held together, with all three helping to establish the National Woman’s Loyal League, an organization designed to serve as a national conscience to remind politicians that women gave their sons and husbands to fight this war, in order to bring freedom to slaves. They had launched this initiative in the hope of indirectly aiding women’s causes through their patriotic endeavors.\textsuperscript{49} But this wartime alliance had crumbled during peacetime, fueled by Stanton and Anthony’s subsequent affiliation with George Francis Train, a rich and flamboyant political opportunist, who was a Democrat and virulently anti-Negro whereas the majority of former abolitionists remained firmly entrenched in the Republican party.\textsuperscript{50}

The widening rift among reformers, complicated by the close relationship between early woman’s rights advocates and abolitionists, left Stanton and Anthony needing new allies who had lesser ties with the anti-slavery faction.\textsuperscript{51} Prior to the May AERA meeting, they had set out on a trip west, which included attending the Chicago Convention of the Illinois Woman Suffrage Association. There they had hoped to enlist new allies who had not become woman suffragists via abolition. Among those they had actively courted were Mary Livermore and her friends who had come into the movement through the wartime Sanitary Commission.\textsuperscript{52} When the split culminated in two separate organizations in later 1869, Mary had good reason to feel manipulated and caught between the two factions.

Lucy Stone’s letters to Mary during this crucial time have not survived.\textsuperscript{53} Possibly she had decided to form a rival group before receiving Mary’s request for
reconciliation. Their correspondence may have crossed in the mail, because Lucy notified her of plans to found the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) sometime in August, 1869. But even if she had received the August 9 letter from Chicago before making the final decision, Stone probably would not have chosen reconciliation. Livermore's fervent plea for unity proved less potent than Lucy's personal concerns.

Because she was a former abolitionist, Stone believed it was better to acquiesce on the Fifteenth Amendment issue than to oppose giving black males the vote. In addition, her personal conflicts with Stanton and Anthony made rapprochement nearly impossible. Viewing Stanton as an embarrassment and troublemaker, Stone harbored grievances against the New York faction she never totally relinquished.54

Faced with a split, Mary changed her position quickly. A week after her August 9 letter asking Stone to reconcile, she wrote an urgent request to William Lloyd Garrison, explaining:

Our convention [another Chicago suffrage conference] comes off on the ninth and tenth of this next month, September. We have few eminent people in the West and none who carry such weight intellectually or morally as the New England leaders.55

Here Mary implied that Stanton and Anthony, who had been her choice of eminent speakers just months earlier, were now less desirable role models for the Chicago suffragists.

By August 24 Mary's criticisms were more open, and she now believed the New Englanders should compete for Western support. Writing to Stone, she explained, "New England has not made herself felt in the West, and N.Y. [New York, Stanton
and Anthony's home state] has, as I said before. I think Susan B. Anthony intends to be here and it does seem to me that some of you New Englanders should be." By this time her support for the A WSA faction was certain, as indicated by her offer to make The Agitator the voice of that organization. The journal could hail, she explained, from Boston and Chicago, and would go a long way toward rectifying what she saw as an imbalance between the two suffrage organizations in the West. Yet she had not reached this decision easily, and she apparently wanted Stone to understand that. She closed the lengthy letter with the plea, "Only come here--you and Mr. G[arrison].--and help morale. . . . I am all alone comparatively."  

Lucy Stone accepted Livermore's offer. The Woman's Journal, which had Chicago and Boston on its masthead for the first few months, became the conservative suffrage voice. While The Agitator had not always lived up to its radical nomenclature, the name change symbolized a settling down in Mary's suffrage reform tactics. Livermore had filled her journal with calls for the rights of women to any job and to earning good wages, while criticizing pressures on them to marry.  

The Woman's Journal, by contrast was, as one authority has noted, "well financed, respectable, and conservative in everything but its advocacy of woman suffrage."  

The Woman's Journal's financial footing probably attracted Mary to this merger. In her offer to Stone, she explained that, in the six months of her journal's existence, she had gained a circulation of 1500, with 800 to 900 paid subscribers. Compared to The Revolution, Stanton and Anthony's paper, she thought hers had done very well. This success did not free her from financial burdens, however. As she admitted,
"The paper, by advertisements and subscribers has paid for itself till within six weeks." Furthermore, she knew that Stanton and Anthony’s Revolution was in trouble (it soon went bankrupt) and she probably feared a similar fate for her own journal. In October, 1869, she wrote "I have been repelled by some of the idiosyncracies of our New York friends." She listed some of the ideological differences separating them, ranging from their stands on the Fifteenth Amendment to their philosophy on proper dress for women, then continued "and what is an equally potent hindrance to the cause, the fearful squandering of money at the New York headquarters." A month later Mary, still thinking of the financial situation of her paper, wrote to a fellow suffragist, "money is always acceptable--especially when one is publishing a paper that does not pay expenses."

Besides the conservative group’s finances, there were other factors that appealed to Mary. Soon after joining AWSA and becoming the managing editor of the Woman’s Journal, she moved back to Boston with her family. In spite of her twelve-year stint in Chicago, she had always remained attached to the city where she had grown up. Further she thought New Englanders intellectually and morally superior, confiding to William Lloyd Garrison, "We look to Massachusetts as the brain and conscience of the country." A few months later, in December 1869, these prejudices surfaced at a Worcester Woman Suffrage convention when a reporter said that Mary "could not quite rejoice at the action of Wyoming, [in giving women full suffrage rights] she had so hoped that Massachusetts would lead in this movement."
Along with her desire to be affiliated with Boston, Mary had gained a position on a list of potential speakers for the Boston Lyceum Lecture Bureau months earlier while still living in Chicago. Since she was an independent lecturer who simply advertised through James Redpath's network, she could have continued her relationship with the Bureau while remaining in the West. Yet the organization's Chicago branch was not established until late 1871, and her move to Boston in early 1870 facilitated her interaction with the agency. Thus in a very real sense, Livermore's return to Boston accelerated her entry into the public lecture circuit.

By now her female associates from wartime Chicago were following their own paths. Jane Hoge, from the Northwestern Sanitary Commission, went on to preside over other female organizations, believing these provided women the best opportunity for advancing their own interests and improving their world. In 1871, at the age of 60, she became president of the Women's Educational Association of Evanston, Illinois, an organization designed to improve the higher education opportunities available to young ladies.

Hoge, a new resident of that Chicago suburb, got involved with the effort after receiving an invitation from the Board of Trustees. That body had been organized three years earlier by women hoping to attract gifts from Eliza Garrett, a wealthy benefactor in Evanston. When it was evident no Garrett money would come their way, the lady trustees, along with the new college president and future temperance leader, Frances E. Willard, tapped into Hoge's reputation as a wartime fund raiser.
and elected her president of the association. Of her dynamic leadership, Willard later wrote,

I shall never forget the morning when this woman, one of the few truly great whom I have ever known, stood up in a meeting of ladies in the Evanston Presbyterian Church . . . and told us to preempt at once the coming fourth of July, the University campus, the Chicago Press, in the interest of "our little girls."

Inspired by Hoge's ability to persuade, which had been polished to near perfection during the Civil War, thirty-two-year-old Willard set to work on a gala event that included a parade and a speech by Gen. Arthur C. Ducat of the United States Army. The event was a success, attracting thousands of Chicagoans to Evanston, who arrived in specially decorated trains. During the day's festivities, a faculty member from Northwestern appealed for contributions, and founders of the college pledged the first $30,000. Then in a ceremony they laid the cornerstone for a new building. Years later, Willard proudly reminisced about the event "It was fittingly called" the Women's Fourth of July, "for no sound of cannon, cracker, or torpedo marred its quiet."

Kate Newell Doggett, who also emerged from the Civil War as a woman's rights advocate in Chicago, demonstrated her commitment to extending women's expertise around the world. In 1869 when her friend Mary Livermore needed prominent Chicago names to help bolster her new journal, The Agitator, Doggett lent her talents to the effort. Her name appeared on a contributor's list, along with that of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and others, printed on stationary Mary used to introduce her
journal to prospective subscribers. Kate shared her friend’s enthusiasm for righting the wrongs she found in the world around her.

Such interests took Doggett on a trip that commenced with a woman’s rights convention held in Paris, in September 1869. From there she travelled across Europe, writing frequent letters to be published in various journals and establishing transatlantic ties with European woman’s rights advocates. At this distance from the quarrels that erupted that year among American suffragists, she could continue her reform activity without wholly committing herself to one faction.

She had been at the AERA meeting in New York with Livermore and Bradwell but had left for Europe before Mary officially merged The Agitator with the Woman’s Journal. Precisely when she learned of the merger is unclear, but in February, 1870, she was still writing letters beginning with "Dear Agitator," although she had known of the rivalry between the two sides as early as November. From Berlin she wrote that, after "unprejudiced" consideration, she felt that The Agitator would be more appealing to Europeans than The Revolution. Europeans, according to her analysis, were only interested in industrial and educational sides of the woman question. Since these issues were not part of The Revolution’s focus, she thought they would not be interested in reading it.

Nevertheless, Doggett remained a frequent contributor to The Revolution and other women’s journals. In 1871 news of the Chicago Fire brought her home. Once there, she continued her efforts to expand women’s opportunities and soon began
organizing a new women's club that proved to be one of Chicago's most prestigious and enduring.

From such attempts at organizing women in clubs, advocating improvement of their educational opportunities, and speaking up--through the written and spoken word--for woman's rights, Mary Livermore and her Chicago associates created for themselves enjoyable and exceptional careers. Beyond their individual accomplishments, they remained convinced that it would be wrong to leave the world without making room for women to help preside over it permanently. Accordingly, they worked to convert younger women who would carry the cause into the future.

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Notes


2. Ibid., 479.


7. Ibid.


9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.


14. Mary A. Livermore, Burlington, Iowa, to Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, Chicago, 20 April 1876, EBH, HL.

15. Mary A. Livermore to Olympia Brown, 28 April 1868, Olympia Brown Papers, Manuscript Division, Schlesinger Library, Radcliff College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

17. Ibid.


20. Friedman states that Bradwell’s most important agenda was in achieving "a vast number of legal reforms." Jane Friedman, America’s First Woman Lawyer: The Biography of Myra Bradwell (Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1993), 29.

21. For an explanation of why many found Myra’s journal so much more appropriate than the contemporary woman’s rights publications, see Ibid., America’s First Woman Lawyer, 78-80.

22. For a more complete discussion of Myra’s hidden reform agenda and her public mainstream approach, see Ibid., 78.


24. Ibid.


27. Numerous contemporary references to Myra Bradwell describe her as the Judge’s pretty wife. For one example see Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Chicago Convention," The Revolution, 25 February 1869, 155.


29. Mary decried both the weak impact women had on the church as well as the lack of support for women’s activism within the Universalist church. "Another Candidate for the Ministry," The New Covenant, 2 September 1865, 2.

30. For an example of how suffragists talked of converting people to their cause, see Susan B. Anthony, Washington D.C., to Frances E. Willard, Chicago, 21 March 1890, Temperance and Prohibition Papers, Frances E. Willard Memorial Library, Evanston, Illinois.

32. For a definition and discussion of public women see Matthews, The Rise of Public Woman, 4-5.


34. Ibid., 481-82.

35. Ibid.


37. Livermore, The Story of My Life, 482.


42. Griffith, In Her Own Right, 136-37.

43. Ibid.

44. Mary Livermore, The Agitator, May 29, 1869, 4-5

45. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to Lucy Stone, Boston, 9 August 1869, Blackwell Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

46. Ibid. Why Livermore thought Anthony was so willing to compromise is hard to determine, but a letter Anthony wrote to a Wisconsin suffragist supported some reconciliation. Susan B. Anthony, New York, to Mathilde Anneke, Milwaukee, 8 November 1869, Fritz and Mathilde Anneke Papers, 1791-1884, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

47. Mary A. Livermore to Lucy Stone, 9 August 1869, BFP LC.


50. Ibid., 123, 130.

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51. Stanton hinted at their desire to find women interested in suffrage with fewer ties to abolitionists in a report of the February, 1869, Chicago Suffrage Convention. Speaking of Anna Dickinson’s address she wrote, "She was advertised [in the newspapers] to give 'Fair Play,' but the West is tired of the negro question, and she was besieged on all sides to speak on woman. . ." Elizabeth Cady Stanton The Revolution 18 March 1869, 162.

52. Ibid., 136.

53. These letters may have met the same fate of much of Mary’s correspondence. Mary had a tendency to destroy anything she did not want read by others. In the August 24 letter to Stone, she enclosed a note from a suffragist in St. Louis, urging "Please burn it when you have read it." Mary A. Livermore to Lucy Stone, 24 August 1869, BFP, LC.

54. Griffith, In Her Own Right, 138.

55. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to William Lloyd Garrison, Boston, 16 August 1869, WLG, BPL.

56. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to Lucy Stone, Boston, 24 August 1869. BFP, LC.

57. Ibid.


61. Mary A. Livermore to Lucy Stone, 24 August 1869, BFP, LC.

62. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to William Lloyd Garrison, Boston, 4 October 1869. WLG, BPL. Buechler has suggested that finances may have played a role in Mary’s decision. Buechler, The Transformation of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 88.


64. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to William Lloyd Garrison, Boston, 16 August 1869. WLG, BPL.


67. Ibid., 124.


69. "Evanston Female College," Evening Mail, 11 April 1871. Clipping included in scrapbook number 3, TPP, FEWL.

70. Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years, 201-02.

71. Willard graciously explained in her autobiography that Hoge had "never recovered from the rigors of her army work," and therefore did not have the energy, or time, to execute her brilliant plan. Ibid.


73. Ibid., 29-30.

74. Livermore either had too many for her own use or had no interest in using the leftovers, giving them to Doggett. In the early 1870s Kate used the partially blank pages as scratch paper on which she drafted papers for presentation. KD, NL.

75. Kate N. Doggett to The Agitator, February 1870, KD, NL.

76. Kate N. Doggett, Berlin, to Mary Livermore, Chicago, November 1869, KD, NL.
CHAPTER 5
PASSING ON THE TORCH

Mary Livermore’s ultimately successful career within a public world that her own mother had barely glimpsed, achieved far more than she could have imagined at nineteen heading to Old Virginia to become a teacher despite her father’s strenuous objections. Surprising twists of life, nevertheless, brought her to stand among the nation’s eminent women. Yet, the longer she worked for reform, the more she recognized that her cause was larger than any one person. This realization gradually convinced her, with increasing urgency as she grew older, that younger women should rise to carry on her vision.

Such a compulsion was not completely new to Mary, however, for she had always felt some urge to pass on her knowledge and experiences. She had spent almost her entire life sharing the fruits of her labors with others. Even before becoming a young teacher’s aid, she had been a child "preaching" to anybody or anything that would "listen." Over time her message changed. But as she and many of her associates became advocates for reform, they perceived more clearly that others had to be converted to the cause.

For the postwar Mary, this urgency meant selecting lecture topics that could persuade others to her views, especially those focusing on opportunities for the next
generation of women. In this effort, she found support from her longtime friends and allies. Her wartime associate, Jane Hoge, presided over postwar women's organizations, including one that strove to improve educational opportunities for girls and young ladies. Myra Bradwell lent her pen and legal influence to push through changes in laws that restricted women while she advocated improving their educational and career opportunities across the United States. Kate Doggett combined her love for learning with the era's organizational craze and created a female club in Chicago that gave women a safe and enjoyable forum for intellectual discussion and interaction.

Mary launched her lecture career with the young women of the country in mind. As she explained,

The Great Awakening of Women . . . was just then [during reconstruction] making itself felt. I realized that it was the young women of the country, rather than those of middle age, who would be most largely benefited by it, and who most need stimulating and instruction. They were our future; the civilization of the next half century would be shaped by them in large measure, and they needed help. . . .

Obviously she saw middle-aged people as less important. Ignoring her own conversion to woman's rights during her forties, she averred that, by the time people reached that age, they were likely to be set in their ways and unable to assume any new reform initiatives.

With dreams for the next generation in mind, she entitled her first and most popular speech, "What shall we do with our Daughters?" Among other things she advocated an equal, but "not necessarily the same," education for girls. She firmly believed that daughters needed as good an education as sons, but her reform vision
did not simply open men’s classrooms to women. While she lauded advances in the intellectual training for girls that had occurred since her own childhood days, she pointed out other areas of instruction that were woefully lacking, warning that the sexes were intertwined, destined to "rise or sink together." Thus the world would not be stabilized for progress until its future mothers enjoyed proper education.

Delivering this lecture in some form more than eight-hundred times, Mary expressed her confidence in women’s uniqueness, establishing common ground with the late nineteenth century world. She then interwove nonthreatening statements with more radical reform objectives, such as training girls for trades, professions and other paying occupations. Perhaps her most far reaching suggestion was to urge that women should have equal status with men. She made it palatable for conservative listeners, however, by asserting that daughters needed equality because they were to become the mothers, and therefore the educators, of future generations.

Furthermore, in addition to presenting her arguments for advancing women in non-threatening ways, Mary disarmed potential critics with another strategy. She presented as feminine, non-threatening an image as she could on the lecture platform. She dressed without too much show, choosing tasteful finery, like long white lace collars, cuffs, and small caps, or occasionally wearing a cameo over a touch of lace peeking out at the throat. A few pictures depict her with a fashionable, yet not too gaudy, set of spectacles pinned on her bosom. Complementing this image created by her clothing, she choose a restrained pose for the platform. She stood with hands demurely folded a few inches below her waistline, looking feminine, distant, and not
too assertive. Such a conservative facade went a long way toward making her reform message more acceptable to those who heard her speak.

A radical lecturer, especially one who was female, could not long support herself in a world that still accepted many prewar societal mores. On the eve of her speaking career, Mary’s manager, James Redpath, advised her to leave temperance and suffrage "alone and never talk of them publicly; never lecture in courses that are run by women; allow us always to make your engagements and fix the compensation, and in twenty years you shall be a rich woman." Although Livermore never abandoned temperance or suffrage, she usually separated her most radical reform initiatives from her official Lyceum lectures.

In molding her persona to contemporary standards, Mary gained more converts to her woman’s rights message. People listened to her when they would have spurned a female rejecting their gender mores; but upholding conservative standards was not a technique unique to Mary. Most of her associates in reform, including Jane Hoge and Frances Willard, thought it wise and more comfortable to stay within certain societal guidelines for women when trying to recruit others to their cause.

Although Jane Hoge apparently suffered for the rest of her life from physical problems acquired from wartime stress, she based her postwar career on the women’s network she had established before and during the war. Her skills and executive abilities made her membership in women’s circles a real asset to the organizations themselves, and toward the end of her life numerous females, including the more
prominent Frances Willard, sought her "motherly" advice. At a memorial service for Hoge in 1890, Willard recalled their first meeting in 1871,

Casting about for advisors... I went at once to her home, ... and asked the help of her experience, her bright mind, and her honored name. She responded to me as a mother might have done to a daughter beloved, ... From that hour until I left the University, Mrs. Hoge was at my service.

Hoge and Willard worked within a predominantly female voluntary world where cherished family relationships provided models for interaction and inspiration but did not preclude professional efficiency. This benevolent veteran's motherly interest made the younger woman feel comfortable asking for help and encouraged her to believe she could accomplish her business. From that meeting she went on to clear the first hurdle, raising contributions from the public arena while maintaining a womanly facade.

A year later in 1872, Hoge became the president of the Northwestern Presbyterian Women's Board of Foreign Missions, a position she held until 1885 when she stepped down because of growing deafness. After her death, another woman recognized her service to that organization:

How many young missionaries, just going out to their untried field, will remember for inspiration and courage through a lifetime, the warm motherly embrace, the tender look and the loving word of blessing and godspeed with which she seemed to put a part of herself into each trembling heart. ... Yet ever loyal to her convictions ... there was no weakness in her enthusiasm, no wavering in her gentleness, so that while she was beloved as a friend, she was admired and trusted as a leader, born to command.

In other words, Jane wrapped her assertive, more traditionally manlike behavior in a cushion of motherly love.
Many nineteenth century women found a similar combination a powerful tool for achieving results. Frances Willard moved on from her initial encounter with Hoge, eventually becoming one of the nation’s best-known and loved women. In 1874 she resigned her position in education and soon joined a new statewide temperance organization. Two years later she persuaded this group to support women’s right to vote. Expanding her career, she became the second president of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1879. Although many within this national organization had criticized her for her stance on suffrage, Willard induced the membership to endorse it in 1880, insisting that it was necessary for women to vote in order to protect their homes.

Using this argument, Frances Willard converted a huge number of women to suffrage. By the time she became its president, the WCTU had become the largest organization of American women, bigger by far than the two national suffrage organizations combined. Her ability to perceive American interests was key to her success in winning conservative women to her radical cause. She subtly exploited traditional perceptions of women’s proper role to argue that women needed voting privileges. She reasoned female (private) and male (public) interests were much more closely interwoven than the conventional ideology suggested, because items of national interest affected the home. Thus women, she argued, should have access to the ballot precisely because they were so interested in domestic issues. Rather than two exclusive male and female domains, their respective places were partially
overlapping sectors. Women’s input at the ballot box, therefore, was crucial to the proper functioning of their households as well as the nation.

While Frances Willard had the talent and national position to convert massive numbers of more conservative women to suffrage, a handful of exceptional women confined their efforts to the local level. Laura Hubbard, a young woman who had contributed articles to Daniel Livermore’s New Covenant as early as 1862, assumed the task of producing a journal advocating woman’s rights soon after Mary Livermore merged The Agitator into the Woman’s Journal and left the city. In late 1871 the older suffragist wrote to Hubbard, and congratulating her on her new venture, she closed with, "If I can do anything to help you in your new work, command me." 24

Mary Livermore and most of her associates leaned toward action with little time for deep thinking, except for Kate Doggett, another Chicago suffragist, who had an unusual intellectual bent. Shortly after the Civil War ended, this talented amateur botanist had become the first woman member of the Academy of Sciences. In 1869 she impressed Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who reported Doggett’s promotion of the arts and her efforts on behalf of the Chicago Historical Society, then glowingly described her weekly two-hour lectures on botany to "a coterie of elegant women." But unlike other women who came into suffrage by way of benevolent activities, Kate adopted the woman question after carefully analyzing it, and her reform activities encouraged women to do their own thinking.

By giving other Chicago women intellectually stimulating options, Doggett left herself open to frustration. While she was not the only reformer to encounter
resistance, most, including Mary Livermore, wrote overly optimistic descriptions of their activities. A letter sent to fellow woman’s rights advocate and editor of *The Balance*, Laura Hubbard, sometime in the early 1870s gives a rare glimpse into the opposition suffragists often encountered from other women.

I have too been hard at work getting a Woman’s Club started. (On your life no hint of this in *The Balance* for the ladies are nervously afraid of getting into the papers and some of them desperately distressed lest I am inveighing them into some woman’s rights scheme) . . .

In spite of such obstacles, Doggett persevered and founded the club in 1873, calling the "intellectual, literary, and artistic society" the Fortnightly. The club’s purpose reflected her interests. Occasionally she used its meetings to present her own papers, often focusing on some aspect of the woman question, notwithstanding the former suspicions of its members. For example one paper she presented in 1875 was entitled, "The Position of Women Under the Other Religious Systems and Under Our Own, as Indicated by the Sacred Books and Mythologies."

Nonetheless, since the organization catered to well-to-do ladies, membership brought prestige to the women involved. When a number of Fortnightly members, including Doggett, decided in 1876 to create a forum to expand their social activism, they established the Chicago Women’s Club. In order to suit a range of needs, this organization created a departmental system with divisions for home, education, philanthropy, and reform. The home department was designed for timid women who feared venturing away from the private sphere. On the other side of the spectrum, the reform department appealed to more adventurous women. This arrangement not only kept varying temperaments happy, but as one authority notes,
"the reform ideology of the club bridged the gap between homemakers and professional women, legitimized the latter’s public activities, and sanctioned conventional stereotypes of women’s nature."32

The Chicago Women’s Club’s departmental approach grew into "a vigorous program of municipal reform."33 From its beginning, it encompassed a large influential network that saw to Chicago’s "municipal housekeeping," tending to such matters as sanitation, building codes, and city beautification.34 In 1889 the organization supported Jane Addams and the founding of Hull House, thus fostering an attempt to unite upper-class women with their working class sisters around common concerns.35 Although her initial efforts had produced frustration, Doggett met the organizing need of many women, through her Chicago club. As a movement it expanded well beyond its founder’s original dreams.

This was, after all, an era in which becoming a clubwoman was intensely popular. Members revelled in "organized womanhood," for it gave them an effective communications network for improving themselves and the world in which they lived. While not always agreeing on the best tactics to achieve their desired reforms, they traded ideas formally and informally, and they collectively made their presence felt more powerfully in the public arena.36

Myra Bradwell, another woman who had joined Mary’s network of female associates involved in wartime Sanitary Commission work, used her unique position as the nation’s leading female legal authority to aid the cause of woman’s rights in her own way. After passing the state bar examination in 1869, she was denied
membership in the Illinois Bar Association. Her struggle against this injustice
triggered a legal saga that eventually carried her name and the cause of woman’s
rights into the nation’s highest court.

First Bradwell filed a brief with the Illinois Supreme court, arguing that being a
woman did not disqualify her from receiving a license to practice. The court replied
that it assumed (even though Myra and her husband James had personal friends on the
court) that she was married and therefore legally unable to represent clients.37
Bradwell filed a second brief, boldly stating that it was neither a crime nor a cause
for disqualification to be a married woman.38 Although the court agreed, it could
not, it claimed, refute God and Common Law which had always defined separate
roles for men and women.39 Turned down a second time, Myra notified her readers
that the court saw no room for women in the legal profession. But the issue went
deeper than excluding women from an occupation, and Bradwell gravely compared
her case to the landmark Scott v. Sanford decision, rendered sixteen years earlier.
She informed her readers that the two decisions were based on similar assumptions
and that, as the earlier case had destroyed the rights of blacks, hers "annihilated" the
legal rights of women.40

By the time the country’s highest court heard her case in 1873, Myra had helped
to draft an Illinois statute that opened any occupation, except the military, to
women.41 Shortly thereafter a protégée of Myra’s and collaborator on the statute
became the first female member of the Illinois Bar. Having helped rid the state of
legal restrictions against women in occupations, Bradwell could have simply reapplied
for bar membership. But she declined, convinced that victory in the nation’s highest court would give women access to occupations across the country. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court ruled against her that year. And yet, her unusual legal career prospered and, moreover, her defeat proved no impediment to her continuing reform efforts.

One of her overall reform initiatives was to open law schools to women. Progress in this area affected her own family. Her daughter Bessie earned a law degree from Northwestern’s Law School, Evanston, Illinois, and was admitted to the Illinois Bar. After Myra died in 1893, her daughter, with initial help from James Bradwell, replaced her mother as editor of the Chicago Legal News. Thanks to Myra’s reform, Bessie and many other women of the next generation enjoyed expanded opportunities in the practice of law.

Even though Myra Bradwell’s top priority was legal reform for women, she found time for other organizational affiliations. In 1877 she and Frances Willard became founding members of the Illinois Social Science Association, (ISSA), the first official state chapter of a national organization created to "suggest and develop plans for the advancement of industrial, intellectual, social, educational and philanthropic interest, to the end that we may help secure better homes, schools, churches, charities, and laws, and better service for humanity and God".

By participating in the ISSA, which quickly grew to 400 members and began publishing a journal after two months, Bradwell and Willard demonstrated their support for both scientific and reformist objectives as defined by Protestant middle
class values. Attempting to improve the industrialized society in which they lived, they helped spread female influence over matters they saw as slighted or ignored by existing male authorities. While the original constitution did not mention woman suffrage, such an initiative meshed well with the organization's stated objectives.

At the ISSA's second annual convention in 1878, Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, another founding member, led the organization into publicly advocating woman suffrage. Addressing its membership, she declared the power of "legislative enactment" was necessary before the organization could become truly effective. Furthermore, women's votes would ameliorate the wrongs that "spread ruin to right and proper government." 

Harbert's argument echoes a popular suffrage sentiment that a public world without a woman's touch was "badly done," an idea promoted by her early mentor, Mary Livermore. Born in Crawfordsville, Indiana, in 1843, Boynton (Harbert's maiden name) may have met Livermore shortly after publishing a book for young women in 1867. By April 1869 she had already contributed articles to The Agitator. Three weeks after its first issue appeared, she requested compensation for her upcoming trip to the May AERA meeting in New York.

Livermore wrote back, assuring her that the articles she had voluntarily submitted were of the same, or better, quality than those The Agitator was paying for. But the journal could not afford to reimburse her for her efforts. She wanted the younger woman to attend the meeting, but urged her to "devise some way to raise the needful means," asking "can't you lecture?"
Apparently Boynton took the suggestion to heart because she presented her first lecture that same year in Crawfordsville. In August Livermore wrote again, inviting her to attend a convention the following month in Chicago. Assuming this time that she would lecture she asked, "what will be your topic?" Then still concerned about finances she queried, "Will some of the papers pass you on the promise of your reporting the convention to them? We find our expenses are mounting up."

When 1869 proved turbulent for Livermore, she found encouragement in the younger woman's companionship, as the April and August letters indicate. Initially, Livermore invited Elizabeth to come for a visit, saying simply, "I am charmed with your articles." Three months after seeing each other at a Layfayette, Indiana, convention, her affection had deepened, "I long to see you--was very thankful for your articles--am always glad of your daughterly remembrance." A few weeks later Mary found it proper to give her protégée another job when she arrived in Chicago, "You are to go to Mrs. E.O.G. Willard's, 107 Throop St. I send our girls there hoping they may win over her husband. Try it, Lizzie dear!" After Mary relocated to Boston her letters contained further instructions:

    If Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe go to the Indiana State Woman Suffrage Association, go yourself. I shall charge Mrs. Howe to get at you. I charge you to get at her. . . She is the darlingest darling of all my women friends. And you must nestle in her heart, as you do in mine.

As close as the two women were in 1870, Elizabeth eventually went her own way. In October she married a Civil War veteran, William S. Harbert, from Evanston,
Illinois, and moved with him to Des Moines, Iowa. From this western vantage point in 1871 she published a second novel entitled, Out of Her Sphere, dealing with two nineteenth century girls who struggled with gender restrictions while growing up. Through this allegory, she argued that women could venture away from tradition without losing their womanliness.

Although Harbert had been an apprentice in the woman's rights movement under Livermore and agreed with her objectives, the two encountered differences. When Mary sided with the AWSA faction, she admonished Harbert not to "go off with N.Y. [New York] Branch of woman suffragists. Don’t commit yourself to them nor against them. Keep out of the quarrel. It would be unfortunate for you to break with New England for here are the elements of power."

Livermore’s concern that her protégée would choose the opposite side in the quarrel was almost prophetic. Harbert lived in the West and was geographically further away from the factions in Boston and New York, affording her more freedom to choose either side. Furthermore, she had written for The Revolution as often as she had for The Agitator in 1869 and had endeared herself to Stanton and Anthony as well as to Livermore.

While Harbert was increasingly drawn to the opposing side, Livermore’s speaking career removed her from the center of New England suffragist’s power, and she lost a portion of her influence with them. Correspondence between the two women demonstrates how the change in Mary’s career impacted Elizabeth. For example in 1872 Livermore responded to the younger woman’s request to publicize her latest
book in the *Woman's Journal* by sending her to Stone, "Write again to Lucy Stone, urgently, and *compel* a notice. You ought to have it." Lecture tours and the long months away from Boston had taken its toll on Livermore’s power within the organization. Consequently, even if Harbert had wanted to side with the AWSA, she was losing her direct connection to the Boston group.

On the other hand, Harbert maintained contact with the power center of the New York faction, Stanton and Anthony. By 1880 she and her family had been settled five years in Evanston, Illinois, her husband’s hometown. Elizabeth’s position in the presidency of the IWSA made her an important ally for the NWSA as they organized a national suffrage convention in Chicago that summer. She functioned as the local contact for the conference and oversaw such details as inviting area suffrage leaders, arranging for guest housing, and attending to transportation.

While unable to capitalize on it in the end, Livermore had recognized Harbert’s potential and encouraged it. In the same letter warning her against becoming too closely allied with the New York faction, Livermore had predicted, "You are to be *somebody* by and by, when your turn comes." The younger suffragist became a respected writer and journalist, a talented organizer, and an eloquent speaker. As Elizabeth matured and Mary’s career turned toward lecturing, the two no longer enjoyed a close relationship. Yet in terms of their impact on Illinois woman suffrage, Elizabeth Boynton Harbert became the "somebody" who took up the torch that Mary passed on to her associates when she left Chicago.
Yet Livermore never left reform behind when she relocated to Boston and never ceased searching for new converts to her cause. Maintaining her interest in temperance, she joined the Women's Christian Temperance Union, (WCTU), near the time of its founding in 1874. In Melrose, a community north of Boston where the Livermores settled soon after returning east, she became a leading spirit and often an active presence in the local chapter. For some time she served as that organization's one-person program committee, arranging for speakers and giving them detailed instructions on getting to and from the town.63

On the national WCTU level, she found herself at odds with that organization's first president, Annie Wittenmyer, a former Civil War nurse and Sanitary Commission worker from Iowa. Although the two probably experienced personality clashes, this friction between them apparently arose from Livermore's stance on suffrage. In 1876, Mary attended an international temperance convention in Philadelphia but was not allowed to speak, according to Willard, "because of her progressive views upon the woman question."64

Nevertheless she served as one of the most prominent temperance speakers for many years.65 In addition, she eventually worked closely with Willard, who as Wittenmyer's successor, was more beloved. The two women met through their common friend, Jane Hoge, when she had enlisted her longtime friend and ally to help in the July, 1871, fundraising effort for Willard's school. Mary had probably arranged for Willard's national debut at the first national Woman's Congress, a general organization created by women hoping to disassociate themselves from
scandals that threatened the women’s movement in 1873. That year Victoria Woodhull’s advocacy of free love had sent women in both factions scrambling to distance themselves from the resulting uproar. At that New York meeting, Mary had emerged as the first president, and Frances had presented a paper. The resulting friendship between the two women led to their collaboration as reformers.

Not only did Willard and Livermore share interests in temperance and suffrage, both sought to inspire posterity with stories of outstanding nineteenth century women. They cooperated on a work entitled, A Woman of the Century. It is a collection of more than 1,400 biographical sketches of women the two editors saw as exemplary. During Christmas, 1892, just before its publication, they signed a preface declaring "the Nineteenth Century is woman’s century." Their book, they explained, focused on worthy women of all walks of life, whether famous or not and, represented the "vast outlook and the marvelous promise of the twentieth century."

Sometimes collaborating and at other times striking out on their own, Mary Livermore and her associates in the world of woman’s rights advocates worked to improve women’s opportunities for education and employment and with their legal status. They also sought to empower them politically. Becoming a collective force in their nation, they brought about substantial social change for coming generations of women. Rooted in tradition, but products of the nineteenth century and optimistically looking forward to a new one, they created an inspirational legacy for the generation that finally gained suffrage.
In 1893 Mary Livermore, now in her early seventies, predicted in a birthday note to her friend Lucy Stone,

If [William] Gladstone at eighty-three years of age could say, "I represent the youth and hope of England, and her advancement along ideal paths," I am sure you and I, and all the other "old girls" of the suffrage reform, can use similar language to America. We do represent the future, and although we shall "die without the sight," our rewards are coming in the future. So in the words of the "boys of 1863,"

"We’ll sing along the broken line,

Close-up the ranks ahead,

And give our banner to the breeze

For Victory’s in View!"71

* * * * *
Notes


2. Livermore, The Story of My Life, 84.

3. Ibid., 491.

4. Ibid., 492.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 620.

7. Mary never used notes on the platform, and this speech changed over time. A version of "What Shall We do with Our Daughters?" is in her autobiography. Ibid., 615-29.

8. Ibid., 492.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 615.

11. In the 1830s Angelina Grimké was criticized for using too many gestures while she lectured, "it was much more dignified for a woman to stand motionless while speaking." Lerner, The Grimké Sisters of South Carolina, 155. Photographs of Mary Livermore are scattered among various collections of Livermore letters. The largest number of them are part of the Mary Livermore folder, Photograph Division, SL, RC. A photograph of Mary standing with folded hands on the lecture platform, in a similar pose to that shown in her autobiography, is in the Mary Livermore folder, Prints and Photographs Department, CHS.

12. For example, Lucy Stone used an exterior of womanliness to hide her masculine, more radical activities. Kerr, Lucy Stone, 206.

13. Lori Ginzberg wrote that "the boundaries of propriety were never so universally understood as when more radical women confronted them." Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence, 40. For example, Susan B. Anthony advocated radical ideas and spent her life struggling to fund her crusade. See Kathleen Barry, Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of a Singular Feminist (New York: New York University Press, 1988).
14. Livermore, *The Story of my Life*, 494-5. While Mary quickly follows this quote of Redpath's in her autobiography with the statement that she refused to abandon her reform initiatives, she wrote in the same book, that she had kept her "hobbies" away from the lecture platform, unless she had been specifically invited to speak on them. Ibid., 583.

15. For a representative comment on Hoge's postwar health, see Willard, *Glimpses of Fifty Years*, 201. On the woman's network that Hoge uses to create her postwar career see Firor Scott, *Natural Allies*, 74-5.


18. Ibid., 78-9.


24. Mary Livermore, Boston, to Laura Hubbard, Chicago, 17 December 1871. A.S. Hubbard Collection, CHS.


27. Kate Newell Doggett, Chicago, to Laura Hubbard, Chicago, n. d. ASH, CHS.


29. Lecture delivered 26 November 1875. KD, NL.

30. For an example of the many references to the "elite" Fortnightly, see McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige*, 45.


32. Ibid., 126.


36. Ibid., 180.

37. *Chicago Legal News*, 5 February 1870, 1. Various correspondence between Myra and other legal figures includes letters from members of the Illinois Supreme Court. For an example see a letter written just two months before Myra sat for the bar exam by Justice Sydney Breese. Sydney Breese, Carlyle, Illinois to Mrs. J. B. Bradwell, 14 June 1869. MCB, ISHL.


39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.


42. Another female who benefitted from Myra’s crusade to open law schools to women was Hattie Barton, who was a friend of Bessie’s in law school and later married Thomas Bradwell, Bessie’s brother. "All Dabble in the Law," *Chicago Tribune*, 12 May 1889, 26.


44. Ibid., 122-23.

45. Ibid., 124.

47. Livermore, The Story of My Life, 480.


49. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to Elizabeth Boynton, Crawfordsville, Indiana, 4 April 1869. EBH, HL.

50. Willard and Livermore, A Woman of a Century, 357.

51. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to Elizabeth Boynton, Crawfordsville, Indiana, 14 August 1869, EBH, HL.

52. Ibid.

53. Mary A. Livermore to Elizabeth Boynton, 4 April 1869, EBH HL.

54. Mary Livermore to Elizabeth Boynton, 14 August 1869, EBH HL.

55. Mary A. Livermore, Chicago, to Elizabeth Boynton, Crawfordsville, Indiana, 3 September 1869, EBH, HL.

56. Mary A. Livermore, Boston, to Elizabeth Boynton, Crawfordsville, Indiana, 9 May 1870, EBH, HL.

57. "Family Life of Elizabeth Boynton Harbert," EBH HL.


59. Mary Livermore to Elizabeth Boynton, 9 May 1870, EBH HL.

60. Mary A. Livermore, Pittsburgh, to Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, Des Moines, 23 March 1872, EBH HL.

61. National Woman Suffrage Association Collection, CHS.

62. Mary Livermore to Elizabeth Boynton, 9 May 1870, EBH HL.

63. For an example of many letters Livermore wrote enlisting speakers for the Melrose WCTU see Mary A. Livermore, Bellows Falls, Ct. to William Lloyd

65. This research revealed no extant letters between Livermore and Wittenmyer, but a letter from Willard (who also did not always get along with the president) is revealing, "Beg your pardon my dear, but Mary Livermore is one of the best presiding officers in this country." Willard, Springfield, Ohio, to Wittenmyer, 27 May 1876, TPP, FEWL.


69. Ibid.

70. The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution which gave women the right to vote was ratified in 1920, fifteen years after Livermore died.

71. Mary A. Livermore, Melrose, to Lucy Stone, Boston, 13 August 1893, BFP LC.
EPILOGUE
BEYOND WAR

It would be difficult to thoughtfully contrast the antebellum Mary Ashton Rice Livermore with the person she became during the postwar years and not recognize that the American Civil War was one of the defining aspects of her life. Like many other women, she commenced her wartime activities, believing that her domestic abilities gave her something to invest on behalf of the Union’s cause and discovered, in the process of aiding the war effort, that the public sector benefited from women’s direct involvement. Ever after she could not be the woman she had been before.

Having documented her wartime metamorphosis from a private to a public woman, we must also recognize Livermore’s complexity. As she became a public figure, her constant reliance on middle-class womanhood gave her an aura of conservatism that still clings to her image. Nevertheless, the individual behind the feminine facade defied some conventional ideas in a lifelong search for something better.

Perhaps Mary made a conscious decision to present herself to the public as a womanly woman, knowing that a female who denied her womanhood would find fewer serious converts to her cause. On the other hand, she might have chosen the
path of least resistance, without analyzing why she found it easier not to abandon most societal gender standards. Whatever the case, she left no record of this decision, and hindsight cannot read her mind. The reality probably lies somewhere between the two extremes.

When Livermore did express her reasoning for taking specific stands, she revealed more than one motivation. Sometimes she argued for expediency, declaring that society would not be properly balanced until women gained their rights. But she also occasionally claimed that justice demanded that women be given rights that were inherently theirs. With no apparent discomfort over contradictory stances, she strategically determined which argument to use based on the situation at hand.

Besides demonstrating a complex intellect that could adapt to disparate demands, Mary experimented with different causes and ideologies throughout her long life. Of course, her interest in temperance never ceased, but the organizations with which she allied herself changed with the years. The unconventional Washingtonian fad of the early 1840s died as quickly as it had sprung up. After her marriage, she supported her husband’s involvement in prohibition politics and wrote for temperance papers. From 1873 until her death in 1905, she played an active role in the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, apparently comfortable with Frances Willard’s conservative "Yours for Home Protection" theme that brought traditional women into the organization by the thousands.

Marriage to Daniel Parker Livermore stabilized the sometimes unsettled Mary and provided her with a basis for growth and change. This relationship made an
impression on her life that cannot be overestimated. Without Daniel Parker there would have been no Mary A. Livermore, the public speaker and woman's rights advocate. He supported women's right to vote earlier than his wife. Their unusually happy marriage progressed from the early years where he was the dominant partner, supported by Mary, to the latter period when he encouraged and helped manage his famous wife's career. He helped her overcome her early depression over life's deep questions and made her personal search a happy one.

Nevertheless, Livermore explored different ideologies. Beginning in the 1860s she began considering socializing domestic work. Understandably, she had little time to devote to housekeeping chores during the American Civil War. She solved her immediate problems by hiring a cook and a governess to care for her children. But apparently disliking many chores ascribed to mothers and wives by society, she began advocating cooperative housekeeping. After the war, she continued searching for more efficient ways to handle household duties, and throughout her life she preferred public activities to domestic chores. She and many nineteenth century women enjoyed involvement in community affairs, reform and municipal housekeeping.

Mary also maintained an intermittent search for religious insight. While Daniel was alive, Mary apparently found Universalism sufficient, although she became a member of the American Psychical Society. When she wrote of her father's grim religion and described her own struggle to find something better, she led her readers to believe she had settled her questions. In 1899 she penned, "In later years I have been compelled to so wide and thorough a study of the great subject of religion that I
have gained a nobler comprehension of God, life, and human destiny than I was ever
taught."

And yet, the trauma of Daniel Livermore’s death in July of that year prompted
the grieving widow to renew her search. In August she delved deeper into
spiritualism, hoping to establish contact with her lifelong companion. In a letter to a
mentor, she explained that "[I hoped] every doubt lingering in my mind would be
swept away." By late 1900 she was convinced that she had received a message from
her beloved Daniel.

Mary ended her life in 1905 much as she had begun it—searching for answers to
life’s meaning. From such a perspective, it might be tempting to conclude that
Livermore never found the ultimate fulfillment she sought. Nevertheless, she had
grown over the years, changing from a somewhat pessimistic individual to one who
ended her life as an optimist.

Livermore’s lifelong inquiry encouraged her to advocate women’s rights, and her
talents helped propel her into a public role. Although she died fifteen years before
the United States Constitution gave women the right to vote, she could rejoice over
signs that the cause of woman’s rights was advancing. Fifteen years earlier in 1890
nineteen states had given women a limited form of suffrage. Moreover, female
students dominated the nation’s high school populations and a majority of American
colleges now accepted women. Finally, through the efforts of Susan B. Anthony and
other key women’s advocates, the two wings of the American suffrage movement
were unified once more, becoming the National American Woman Suffrage Association.
And so Mary Ashton Rice Livermore died, at the age of eight-five, in the twentieth century—a very different world from the one into which she had been born. She had devoted her life to advocating change and although not all her reforms had been realized, the dying reformer knew her granddaughters and their contemporaries would enjoy the prizes she and her associates had worked so hard to obtain.

* * * * *
Notes

1. Aileen Kraditor outlines two different arguments used by woman's rights advocates. Before 1900 they advocated rights for women as individuals because it was the just thing to do. Afterwards, according to her theory activists switched to expediency, averring that women's uniqueness made equal rights necessary to the smooth functioning of society and government. Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.) Steven Buechler illustrates, using Livermore as an example, that women's rights advocates mixed these arguments. Buechler, The Transformation of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 67.


3. This study identified few references to her wartime cooperative housekeeping efforts. While she certainly began thinking about the conflicts between her household responsibilities and her employment during the war, the majority of her efforts to promote cooperative housekeeping seemed to occur in the postwar years. For an analysis of Livermore's advocacy of cooperative housekeeping, see Delores Hayden, The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981), 116-31.

4. Riegel, "Livermore, Mary Ashton Rice," 413.

5. Livermore, The Story of My Life, 64.

6. Mary A. Livermore to Lilian Whiting, 8 August 1899, KF BPL.

7. Mary A. Livermore to Lilian Whiting, 11 Dec. 1900. KF BPL.

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Anthony, determined not to be relegated to second place, maintained that a more specific organization for woman suffrage was necessary. Under the guise of a social gathering—to which abolitionist sympathizers were not invited—Stanton and Anthony established the National Woman Suffrage Association, (NWSA), with membership open only to women.43

In her editorial correspondence with The Agitator, Mary agreed that their mistake had been in expecting a multipurpose organization such as the AERA to make woman suffrage a top priority. She carefully presented both factions in their most favorable light, sympathizing with those who supported the amendment but diplomatically referring to the leader of the NWSA as "our noble Mrs. Stanton."44

Privately, Mary was deeply hurt. In August, 1869, she wrote of her feelings to Lucy Stone, "I would never endure another such meeting as that last New York meeting was," adding that she had not resolved it yet.45 By now, her heart was with the New Englanders who had supported the Fifteenth Amendment, but nonetheless she urged Stone to reconcile with the NWSA faction. "Susan [B. Anthony] would be willing to make great concessions to effect a cooperation of all the forces."46 As Mary poured out her concerns in this letter, a truly national suffrage group—including all suffragists—seemed crucial. She informed Stone that if any competing organization arose, she would feel compelled to remain outside.47

Lucy Stone was unwilling to follow Mary’s advice. Differences between herself and the New York faction, Anthony and Stanton’s group, had been evident for years. As early as the late 1850s Stanton had noted that Stone was more sympathetic toward