



# Eighty Years and More (1815-1897): Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton

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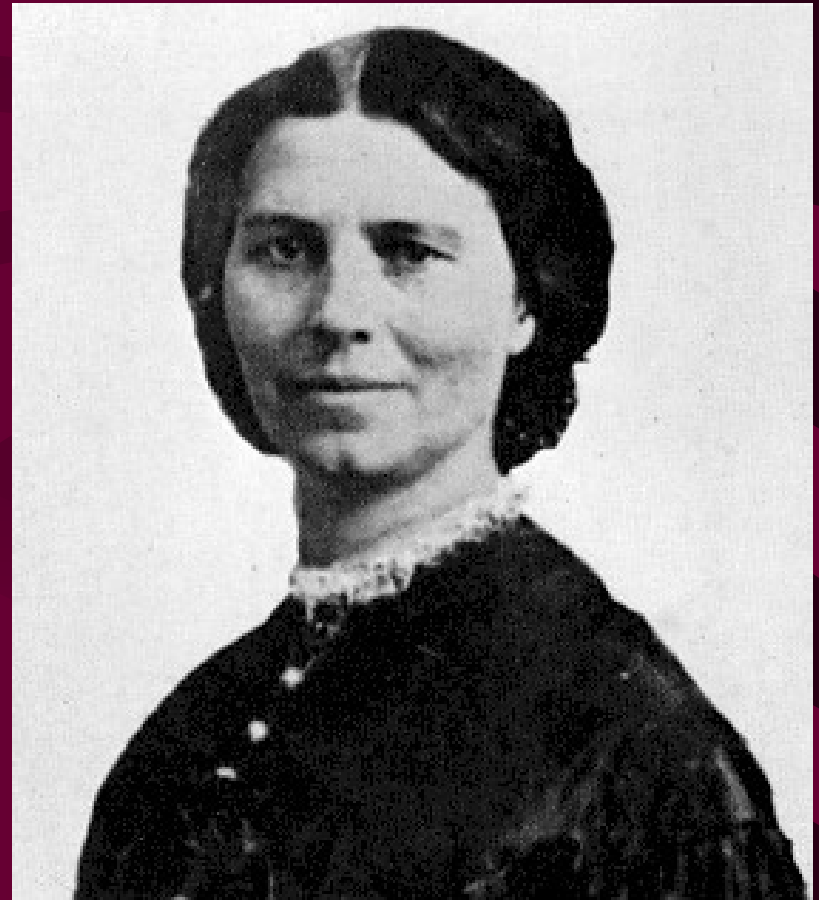


# Background Information

- A leader in the fight for women's rights
- Led the call for the Seneca Falls Convention along with Lucretia Mott on July 19-20, 1848, which is credited as the official launching of the organized women's rights movement in the United States
- Demanded suffrage and property rights for women as well as the right of women to divorce for good cause

# Background Information (Cont.)

- *Eighty Years and More* shows the beginnings of Stanton's commitment as a girl and as a young woman engaging in the struggle for women's rights
- This excerpt of her memoir is divided up into two sections: School Days and Girlhood



# An Overview of Stanton's Life

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXNQPB6bzT4>

# School Days

- When she was eleven, two events considerably changed Stanton's life: her only brother, who graduated from Union College, died of an illness, and her older sister, Tryphena, married a well educated man, Edward Bayard
- These events influenced Stanton's sentiment regarding the role of women in society

# School Days - Important Quotes

- Stanton's father always wished she was a boy and because of this, she wanted to study and be at the head of her class in order to impress her father
- “All that day and far into the night I pondered the problem of boyhood. I thought that the chief thing to be done in order to equal boys was to be learned and courageous” (Schultz, 2000, p. 212)

# School Days - Important Quotes

## (Cont.)

- “...when I discovered that a girl weighed less in the scale of being than a boy, and [my father] praised my determination to prove the contrary” (Schultz, 2000, p.212)
- While being educated at Johnstown Academy, Stanton enjoyed being in co-educational classes where she could compete intellectually and academically with boys her age and older. She was successful, winning several academic awards and honors

# School Days - Important Quotes

## (Cont.)

- “In our Scotch neighborhood many men still retained the old feudal ideas of women and property...The tears and complaints of the women who came to my father for legal advice touched my heart and early drew my attention to the injustice and cruelty of the laws” (Schultz, 2000, p. 214)
- Stanton’s father, a prominent attorney who served one term in the U.S. Congress and who later become a New York Court justice, enlightened Stanton as to why the laws were unjust and cruel towards women

# Girlhood

- This section of Stanton's memoir captures the spirit of her time period and of her schooling through her experiences as a maturing, fifteen-year-old girl
- During this time, Stanton's father, Daniel Cady, and brother-in-law, Edward Bayard, planted the early seeds that grew into Stanton's legal and social activism known to the world

## Girlhood (Cont.)

- Upon graduating from Johnstown academy, Stanton received her first tastes of sexual discrimination
- She watched with dismay as the young men graduating with her, many of whom she had surpassed academically, went on to Union College, which at the time only accepted men

# Girlhood - Important Quotes

- As a result, Stanton enrolled in Mrs. Willard's Seminary at Troy, a girls only boarding school
- “My own experience proves to me that it is a grave mistake to send boys and girls to separate institutions of learning, especially at most impressible age. The stimulus of sex promotes alike a healthy condition of the intellectual and the moral faculties and gives to both development they never can acquire alone” (Schultz, 2000, p. 217)

# Girlhood - Important Quotes (Cont.)

- “Nothing pleased me better than a long argument with [the students] on women’s equality, which I tried to prove by a diligent study of the books they read and the games they played. I confess that I did not study so much for a love of the truth or my own development, in these days, as to make those young men recognize my equality” (Schultz, 2000, p. 219)
- “He was of metaphysical turn of mind, and in the pursuit of truth was in no way trammelled by popular superstitions” (Schultz, 2000, p. 218)

# Discussion Questions

- How can Stanton's opinions regarding education be applied in the classroom today?
- Until relatively recently, educational institutions could discriminate against females, whether they were students, staff, or faculty. What was some legislation that removed sex discrimination against students and employees?

# Reference

- Schultz, F. (2000). *SOURCES: Notable selections in education*. New York: McGraw-Hill Dushkin.