

# Museum of the WHITE MOUNTAINS

## PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY

### *TAKING THE LEAD: WOMEN OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS*

#### **Lesson Objectives:**

1. Students will gain an understanding of how place affects the roles and activities of people in the White Mountains.
2. Students will draw conclusions about the evolution of women's roles in the White Mountains based on the exhibit, *Taking the Lead: Women of the White Mountains*.

#### **Part I: Context**

*When hikers or climbers head into the mountains, one person takes the lead. The lead may change over the course of a climb as one person's expertise comes into the fore or another has a burst of energy that carries the group forward. The leader sets the pace, the tone, and the path for the climb. The mountains do not discriminate; they bring out the strength of will and body individuals bring to them.*

The historic battle for women's rights was not central to any one region, but to women everywhere. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, women's suffrage, of 1919 often comes to mind when people think of women's rights. However, this struggle took various forms, often based on locale. In the White Mountains, women struggled to become leaders of their environment and activities that the White Mountains are known for today, such as hiking.

#### **A. Primary Source: *Declaration of Sentiments***

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.<sup>4</sup>

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.<sup>5</sup>

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon the false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.<sup>6</sup>

He allows her in Church as well as State, but a subordinate position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation,—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Firmly relying upon the final triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration.

At the appointed hour the meeting convened. The minutes having been read, the resolutions of the day before

were read and taken up separately. Some, from their self-evident truth, elicited but little remark; others, after some criticism, much debate, and some slight alterations, were finally passed by a large majority.<sup>7</sup>

[At an evening session] Lucretia Mott offered and spoke to the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, for the overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions and commerce.

The Resolution was adopted.

***Report of the Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19th and 20th, 1848  
(Rochester, 1848).***

Prepared for the *Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 1, *In the School of Anti-Slavery, 1840 to 1866*, ed. Ann D. Gordon (New Brunswick, N.J., 1997). ©Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Source: The Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony Papers Project, Rutgers University

Retrieved from: <http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html>

**B. Primary Source Discussion Questions**

What is the main idea in the *Declaration of Sentiments*? In the document, highlight or underline details that support the main idea.

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Who is the intended audience of the Declaration? Explain your answer.

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This document was written in a manner that closely resembled the Declaration of Independence. Why would the authors choose to write it in this way? Select a piece of evidence from the text that supports your answer.

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These declarations largely relate to legislation. How else might women's daily lives be affected by the lack of rights and social standing?

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# Museum of the WHITE MOUNTAINS

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*TAKING THE LEAD: WOMEN OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS*

## Part II: Museum Visit

### A. Introduction

As you enter, you see the introduction to *Taking the Lead* on the left-hand wall. What does it mean to “take the lead? What women do you know that have taken the lead, either from your own life or in society? What have they done?

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Choose three photos from different points in the exhibit. Use the questions below as guides and record your observations in the charts.

- People: Who is in the picture? How are they dressed? What activities are they doing?
- Objects: What do they have? What objects are in the picture?
- Other Details: List other details in the photo

Photographs		
Photo title:		
Photo 1:	Photo 2	Photo 3
Title:	Title:	Title:
<p>What can you infer from the photos about the status of women during this period?</p>		

Looking at all three photos, what has changed over time? What do these changes suggest about the roles of women in society?

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Using a format similar to those in the *Declaration of Sentiments*, as seen in the example below, write a response to describing how women overcame the social barriers that they faced.

Example: *He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.*<sup>5</sup>

*She* \_\_\_\_\_

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### B. Artwork

As you move through the exhibit, examine the various artwork. Select three pieces of art from three different areas of the exhibit for close reading of the art. Collect 3-5 words that describe or relate to the artwork. After viewing and collecting words what themes run through the art? Come up with a descriptive hashtag to connect all of the artwork in the exhibit in a theme:

Artwork 1	Artwork 2	Artwork 3
Descriptive Words	Descriptive Words	Descriptive Words
Themes:		
How do your chosen words relate to the themes?		
Hashtag: #		
Explain how your themes relate to the main idea of the exhibit.		
How does place (location and geography) affect what people do?		

**C. Attire**

*It is impossible to talk about nineteenth-century women hiking and climbing in the White Mountains without discussing clothing.*

Look at women’s clothing throughout the exhibit. Why is it important to consider when discussing women hiking during the nineteenth-century?

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After examining the three outfits up close, summarize the change in women’s attire from the early 1800s through approximately 1915.

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What does the evolution in women’s hiking attire signal about women’s rights in society?

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**D. Audio**

Choose at least one audio segment to listen to.

Who did you choose? \_\_\_\_\_

Choose 1 detail that resonated with you? Why did it stand out?

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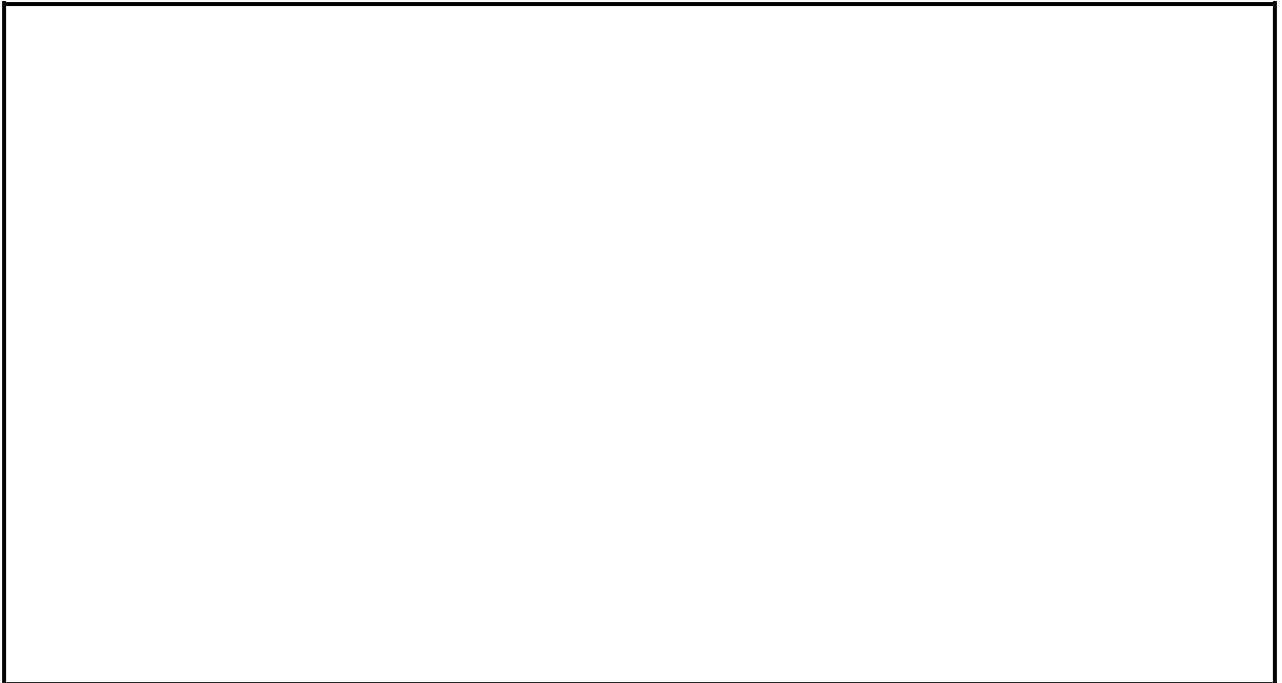
If you could ask her one question, what would it be?

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**E. Conclusion**

Write a poem that is 6-10 lines in length. Your poem must begin with, "I've been to..." and continue to demonstrate your takeaways from the exhibit, as well as an understanding of the historical context of the period. You may repeat, "I've been to" more than once, but it is only required at the beginning of the poem.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the student to write their poem. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the middle section.