Getting to Yes - Launching the Movement

Born in Nantucket, Lucretia Mott attended a Quaker boarding school in Poughkeepsie, New York. Her Quaker principles led to her involvement in abolitionist circles. After marriage, she moved to Pennsylvania and helped found the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. She traveled to London to the World Anti-Slavery Convention, but found that only male delegates could participate. Relegated to the gallery, she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton who had accompanied her husband to the meeting. The two shared views on women’s rights and formed a lasting friendship.

Drafting of the Seneca Falls declarations fell to Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Mirroring the language in the Declaration of Independence, Stanton listed 19 abuses of power directed at women. A separate document recorded the 11 resolutions taken at Seneca Falls.

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A graduate of Troy Female Seminary, Elizabeth Cady, married Henry Stanton, an abolitionist lawyer, and lived in Boston until 1847. After giving birth to three children, the family moved to Seneca Falls, New York. There, she reconnected with Lucretia Mott who visited her in July 1848. The two decided to convene a meeting to discuss “the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of women.” A mere ten days later, 300 people, mostly from the surrounding areas, packed into the Methodist Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls.

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Another organizer of the National Woman’s Rights Convention in Worcester was Abby Kelley Foster. She grew up in Worcester and joined the Female Anti-Slavery Society at a young age. In her fiery speech at the convention, Foster reminded women of the plight of slaves, “Bloody feet, sisters, have worn smooth the path by which you come hither.”

“i was a woman before i was an abolitionist,” she reminded audiences. In 1850, Stone joined a small group calling for a national convention on women’s rights. In October, she addressed over 1000 people from 11 states who came to Worcester to attend the first National Woman’s Rights Convention. How many were from Berkshire County?

“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.” Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls