DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 434 CE 051 068

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TITLE Women and Illiteracy in the United States: A Feminist View. Revised.
PUB DATE Aug 88
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; *Educational History; Educational Needs; *Females; *Illiteracy; *Literacy Education; Sex Bias; Sex Discrimination

ABSTRACT

Throughout history, American women have had less access to education than their male counterparts. Because of discrimination based on traditional ideas of inferiority and subjection, female adult literacy rates did not even approximate male rates until well into the 19th century. The first important steps to improve the status of women were taken in the 19th century, although ethnicity and wealth had an important impact on access to education and quality of literacy. The suffrage movement was particularly instrumental in focusing attention on the need for greater literacy education for women. It was not until the 20th century that the need to educate women for careers and professions was recognized. More recently, feminist literature has reflected the need for education of women that empowers or enables them to take charge of their own lives. Kathleen Rockhill views literacy as a way to gain power from men. Phyllis Safman cites social acculturation and sex role stereotyping, personal problems promoting a failure to complete high school, and institutional barriers to women in adult basic education programs as three main factors contributing to illiteracy among women today. (A 17-item bibliography is included.) (MN)

WOMEN AND ILLITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES:

A Feminist View

(Revised)
August 1988

by

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WOMEN AND ILLITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES:

A FEMINIST VIEW

A great many men and women in out country cannot read or write today. Many studies have attempted to identify this segment of our population, yet none has specifically addressed the role of gender in their investigations. Department of Education statistics indicate there are approximately six and one-half million more illiterate women than men in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 1980.) Unreliable and limited through statistical information may be, we know that history supports the theory that women have been discriminated against more than men in obtaining basic literacy education. Their lack of functional literacy skills has all too often limited their economic, social and political choices and prevented them from participating in a full life. Research in this rea concentrates on cumulative data with only superficial attention to illiteracy by sex (Hunter & Harman, 1979). Most studies evade the issue by citing gaps in pay based on sex, educational achievement, family and societal responsibilities, alienation and unemployment (Hunter & Harman, 1979). No study currently exists that is devoted to identifying the number of illiterate women in our country, where they can be found and what can be done for them.

This paper attempts to record the educational heritage of women in light of certain geographical and regional differences. It is hoped that by identifying the historical and sociological background that has led to greater illiteracy among women, significant steps may be taken to alleviate that situation so that women may share equally in the educational process and ultimately experience a better way of life.

WOMEN AND ILLITERACY IN THE UNITED STATES: A Feminist View

by

Barbara Salice

Women make-up the majority of illiterates both nationally and internationally. Their access to literacy instruction and basic education in general has not reached that of men. Women's main problems, whether they be in economics, health, education or government, stem from the lack of schooling which prevents them from substantially participating in the growth process. Women are still perceived in the caretaker role with domestic responsibilities limiting their part in the economic and social process. Men, by the very fact that they had greater access to formal education before women, seem pre-ordained to exercise control over them in every aspect of their lives. Only very recently has challenge been mounted to this traditionally accepted principle (and that has been almost exclusively in developed nations).

It has long been believed that men have greater access to education simply because they are men. Boys still represent a majority of students enrolled in school. Ruth Leger Sivard, Director of World Priorities, a non-profit research organization, and author of Women...A World Survey, summarizes the disparity between boys' and girls' education by noting that:

> *...in school enrollment...women suffer a decided handicap compared with men. The wide gap in literacy rates between men and women has not diminished significantly with the years. The estimated global differential in 1985 amounts to 10 percentage points: i.e., 78 percent of adult males are able to read and write compared with 68 percent of adult women, a discrepancy which means that in the world excluding China there are 130 million more women than men who are illiterate.*[1]

It would appear that access to education is a basic human right and yet, in many countries illiteracy is much more widespread among women than men. In the United States, England, and the Soviet Union, access to education is readily available and yet (countries in the free world viz.,) the United States and England shamelessly admit a rather astonishing illiteracy rate.

In the United States, research done by Harman and Hunter in 1979 clearly identifies 23 million functionally illiterate adults.[2] While clear concepts and definitions of "functional literacy" are non-existent, Harman and Hunter hold strongly to their findings. To them functional literacy can best be summarized as the skills necessary to conduct the ordinary business of everyday life.

Harman and Hunter's study is considered a major work in the area of adult illiteracy, and yet it is interesting that these authors only superficially address the problem of illiteracy among women in the U. S. when it has been found universally that women are more likely to be illiterate than men. For the most part, women have been grouped with men in reporting statistics and no special study has been devoted to their specific dilemma. Department of Education statistics maintain that there are six and one–half million more illiterate women than men in this country. When compared with the number of female high school graduates, however, considerable discrepancies present themselves. No study to date clearly identifies the number of illiterate women in the U.S.

Education is a key factor for social progress and thus dictates women's involvement in society just as much as men's. The social problems that afflict many nations are in reality women's problems: problems of child-raising, food production, health-care and education. It is for this reason that finding the solution to the dilemma of women's educational needs ought to be addressed. Traditional attitudes toward educating women need to be eliminated and replaced with more radical thinking on

how women fit into the social order. Women need to have equal access to education and opportunities to enhance their status. In this regard women can no longer remain illiterate. Illiteracy and lack of education will only contribute to a spiraling cycle of underdevelopment and a quality of life far below normal expectations. Education is the key to bridging the widening gap between the men's world and the women's world. Well informed and educated women will help create a better society.

It is the purpose of this paper to address this topic by:

1– examining the historical and sociological roots of literacy and women in the United States;

2– providing a review of the literature up to the present day as well as identify notable researchers in the field, and

3– suggest ways in which illiteracy among women in the U.S. can best be approached.

From early days, women have occupied a sheltered existence circumscribed by the home and family. Housewifery was the accepted vocation of women from primitive times and no thought was ever given to intellectual endeavors. Women were restricted to religious and household duties while men pursued loftier challenges. A few "learned ladies" were found among the well-to-do families of Europe where tutors were employed to instruct them at home. Many young girls were sent to a convent for their education. Only one aim predominated in educating women. That was preparation for marriage.

Much of what passed for education in the early colonial period of America was adapted from the French, German and English models. Most notably the religious influence permeated education in the early colonies. Indeed there were no intellectual efforts outside of the religious. Protestantism and the evangelical spirit embraced by the many sects that populated the U.S. took up the mission of teaching basic literacy for religious purposes exclusively. Literacy was, however, often limited to

catechetical recitation and memorization. Since it did not include any "new" reading matter, the quality of literacy at this time is highly questionable. Literacy was valued primarily for its spiritual and social ends and for little else. The deeply religious atmosphere that permeated the early colonies dictated the kinds of education and training needed to carry on work in the home. By its very nature, Puritanism taught that man's only purpose in life was to enhance God's glory and do God's will. Samuel Morison in The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England makes the pronouncement that "Puritanism was an enemy to genial glorification of the natural man with all of his instincts and appetites."[3]

Regarding who was to be taught, what they were to learn, and who was to teach, Puritanism was decidedly orthodox. The Puritan attitude toward the education of women was blatantly unfavorable. Women's study was limited to recitation of the Holy Scriptures, with no discussion, least it present a challenge to male authority. Few opportunities were provided for women to become literate. While their male counterparts were everywhere encouraged to pursue an education, no such support existed for women. With the rise of the public school system, male literacy had a remarkable increase. Illiteracy among women remained high as little attention was given to it, the prevailing belief still being that women's intelligence was decidedly inferior to that of men's. Whether it was due to a case of innate inferiority or lack of opportunities, no one questioned the necessity for formal schooling.

Everywhere women were discriminated against in becoming literate. A continuing battle ensued in which women fought to obtain equal educational opportunities outside the home. Their innate intelligence was consistently suppressed. By virtue of existing in a male Protestant society, women were not given the same opportunities for advancement as men. The deeply religious atmosphere coupled with imposed male leadership left women no room to develop their own

intellects. They were formidably repressed and restricted by the top layers of society, most of whom were men who set the standards of the community.

Women went about their responsibilities as homemakers with little conflict. While their home education revolved around spinning, sewing and general housework, this did not preclude the assumption that women could learn. As a matter of fact, it re-enforced it. Managing a home in colonial America, although not requiring reading and writing, did demand a great deal of industriousness, creativity and ingenuity which did not come from books or being literate.

Although the records concerning the educational history of Colonial New England are obscure, evidence does exist that schools were established early in this period. With the advent of free public schools, education became more accessible almost exclusively to males. There was, however, no obligation on the part of the parent to send their children to public school. Parents' only duty was to make sure their children learned to read and write. Many were still educated at home. "Dame" schools, which appeared in the 17th century, continued to exist alongside the public school providing instruction for girls and boys. The dame schools, while open to girls, essentially were established to teach fundamentals to young boys and prepare them for the town schools. While girls might be provided with an opportunity to learn the three R's, no provision was made for continuing their education except, of course, if the family was comfortable enough to hire a tutor or send them to select academies to become more "accomplished".

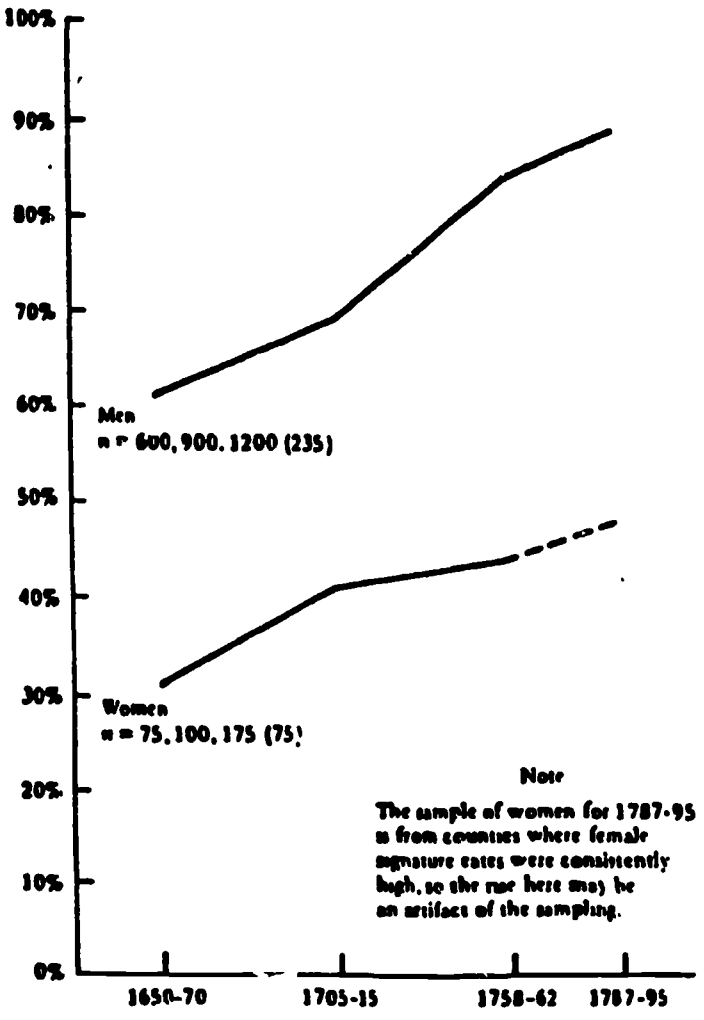
The place of girls in the town schools cannot be readily established. The records are vague and ambiguous as to the enrollment of women, and it appears that, not until the latter half of the 18th Century, was the admission of girls a generally accepted practice in the town schools. For almost two centuries, therefore, the battle continued in which women fought for equal educational opportunities.

Kenneth A. Lockridge, writing in Literacy in Colonial New England, asserts, however, that colonial New England provided a better climate for women's literacy than had prevailed among the first settlers.[4] Using as his measure the signatures among persons who left wills in colonial New England, Lockridge argues that these signatures do in fact parallel a level of overall literacy for that period. Lockridge maintains that persons signing their names were literate as opposed to those who made marks. Graph 1 aptly demonstrates this. Male signatures on wills increased dramatically from the colonial period to the close of the 18th Century. From 60% to almost 100%, men showed a steady increase in approaching universal literacy by the end of the 1700's. Women approached the 45% level during the same period, demonstrating a 15% increase from women who died before 1670. From there on, however, no significant rise in the number of women's signatures is apparent. With the onset of republicanism, education was proclaimed for all. It appeared, however, that "all" referred mainly to white, middle-class males. That women must be equally admitted to all plans for education was not a widely accepted idea. The more prevalent attitude was that girls did not need an education, especially in literacy and numeracy, and that it would be best not to pay for unnecessary schooling.

Many men continued to remain illiterate because of their social status. Those that did avail themselves of basic literacy education and schooling did so because they had more and constant reason to attend school than women. They were men with money who maintained high levels of literacy solely because of their wealth and occupation. Women, however, were not so fortunate. With both a low status and a legacy of discrimination based on traditional ideas of inferiority and subjection, women did not even approximate male literacy until well into the 19th Century.

There existed during this time a very definite correlation between wealth, occupation and literacy, so that with the attainment of more money and a better occupation, a higher probability of increased literacy was present. (See Graph 2). This

Signatures of women v. men over time

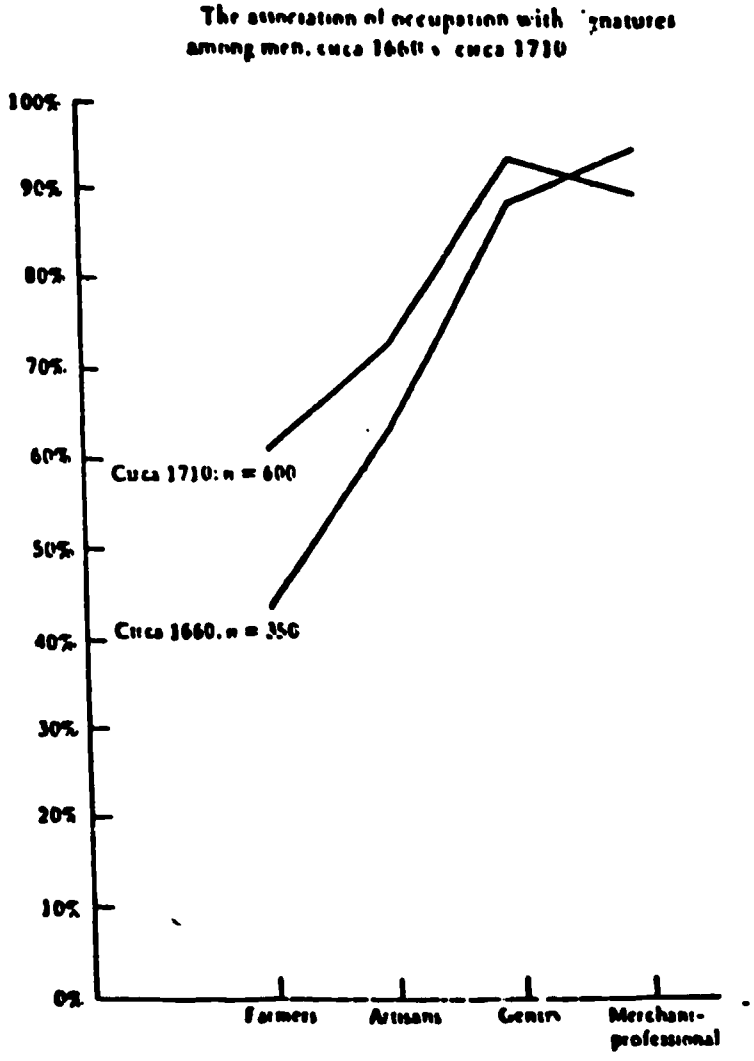


Source: Kenneth A. Lockridge, Literacy in Colonial New England: An Equiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West, (New York, 1974), p. 39.

phenomena, however, did not extend to many women. While there were a few women who, when no son was designated or if they were widowed, may have inherited a legacy destined for education, this was the exception and not the rule. Women generally had little money and almost no woman had an occupation. They continued to be discriminated against as women, while men of equal economic status still had greater access to literacy education simply because they were men.

There does exist evidence to the contrary, however, than some women were more literate than others. This is suggested by the fact that women, particularly in urban centers, were engaged in occupations outside the home. Elizabeth Dexter, writing in Colonial Women of Affairs, refers to these women as "she-merchants," women who were involved in occupations as merchants, shopkeepers, tavern owners, land managers, retailers and smugglers in Colonial America.[5] Dexter's study attempts to illustrate the independence and initiative that women exerted in Pre-revolutionary America. Citing information gathered from newspapers and diaries, this book provides many instances of women in various businesses and commercial enterprises. Dexter makes a strong case for women's literacy during this period by showing a relationship between their literacy and their ability to conduct business, keep books and records, and fashion programs and advertisements. This could very well be the situation, but no statistical evidence exists to determine the number of women so involved. Women entrepreneurs may have been quite small compared to the whole female population. Furthermore, those women who did run businesses or otherwise engage in some commercial activity often inherited their businesses from their husbands. Women generally married young and were expected to be supported by their husbands. In turn women worked alongside them and in the case of their death often continued to carry on the business. In many instances, circumstances necessitated their taking charge of family affairs.

Graph 2



[54]

urce: Kenneth A. Lockridge, Literacy in Colonial New England: An Equiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West, (New York, 1974), p. 54.

The intellectual atmosphere of the New England colonies nowhere approximated that which developed in the Middle and Southern colonies. The New England concern for education based on strong English tradition and fervent Puritanism far outpaced any educational ethos in the other colonies. Literacy was far less dynamic in the rest of colonial America, and illiteracy among both males and females was common and widespread in many areas.

In the Middle colonies, religion still played a most important role in the education of the colonist but with a different predisposition. Here, the stringency that characterized Puritan New England was replaced by a more liberal attitude toward education, particularly the education of women. The Quaker settlements of Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia and the Carolinas reflected strong traditions from Germany and Holland for equal education of both sexes. Here women were given more opportunities for education than their New England sisters. In the central colonies girls were permitted an elementary education but were still expected to perform their everyday domestic duties. The practical side of education, that is, spinning, baking or raising poultry, continued to be stressed equally for both boys and girls. Girls often left schools before boys due to family obligations, marriage or hardships, without learning to write. For this reason illiteracy continued to be higher among women than men.

Women did learn to read the Bible and other English texts but were never offered a secondary education. Many questions regarding further education cannot be answered since no reliable statistical data relating to women's entrance into secondary schools exists. Deeds and wills provide a measure of overall literacy but even at their best, these documents virtually exclude all women, as well as the landless. Few women are included in any of the statistical reports as the procedures for proper documentation were often poorly organized in the 17th Century and often represent a very uneven sample. What is known is that boys received far greater

opportunities for education than girls yet, nowhere else in the colonies did women have a better chance of getting an education than in the Middle colonies.

The atmosphere in the central colonies was dramatically different than what we have seen in New England and what we will next see in the South. Many more opportunities such as "adventure or special" schools existed for women in the Middle Colonies. These schools were the forerunners of the women's academies and seminaries. Many of these opportunities were restrictive, however. Only women who came from status families and who were well financed could attend. Once again, literacy was correlated with wealth and occupation, so more men than women could take advantage of schooling.

The South was by far even more conservative than Puritan New England. While both shared similar exposure to hardship and pioneer conditions, the situation of women varied profoundly with the degree of wealth. Daughters of the prosperous, aristocratic fathers were often tutored and taught to act the role of the fine lady, complete with overseeing servants and slaves. The thrust of southern education was primarily social, that is, to prepare women for their future sphere as homemakers. Women's education was designed primarily to satisfy men. Music, dancing, drawing, painting and ornamental needlework were all subjects to be mastered if a woman was to embellish her husband's standing.

> *Very little from books was thought necessary for a girl. She was trained to domestic matters, however, must learn the accomplishments of the day, to play upon the harpsichord or spinet, and to work impossible dragons and roses on canvas.*[6]

Men increasingly regarded women as economic assets or liabilities and with the emergence of large plantation women were often sought after for their dowries and inheritances. For the less fortunate, education was chiefly conducted through

apprenticeship, and philanthropic agencies which taught the barest of rudiments in reading and writing.

An interesting phenomena presents itself when we examine the following chart. In wills that were left in the period 1630-1700, it is noted that the mention of education appears in a mere 7 percent of total wills probated, yet, the largest majority, 10 percent, of wills mentioning education were to be found in Connecticut, a New England Colony. Here education was esteemed and testators appeared to better recognize the value of being literate. The incidence of education being mentioned in wills in New England is at least twice that of New York, a Middle Colony and not quite that much in Virginia, a Southern Colony. While the figures support the idea that nowhere was there undue attention to education in any of the wills, those that were left very often discriminated against the types of instruction that were to be dealt a son or a daughter. Sons were expected to have liberal educations including studying the classics, reading and writing, while daughters were still mostly confined to the learning of artistic and domestic matters.

What has been described so far is 17th century America where many men were illiterate as were almost all women. This was, however, a time when literacy was not a requirement to function in society. Most businesses and commercial transactions were carried on face-to-face and very few records were kept. The signing of one's name, although not a skill shared by the majority of the population, was indicative of some level of literacy, yet it cannot be known for sure what kinds of knowledge defined literacy at that time. Historians and scholars in the field still debate whether signing one's name or reading aloud was a measure of literacy in Colonial America. If we were, however, to have asked the reader to interpret what was read even at some low level, we might in fact have come up with a considerably different scenario. Were our forefathers capable of reading anything outside of their King James Bible and English texts? Were they able to interpret what they read? Was it necessary that they do so?

Table I

Concern for Education in American Wills, 1630-1700

	VIRGINIA	CONNECTICUT	NEW YORK	TOTAL
Mention of education	22	14	15	7%
No mention of education, direct or indirect	287	135	288	93%

Source: Kenneth A. Lockridge, Literacy in Colonial New England: An Equiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West. (New York, 1974), p. 106

Daniel P. Resnick and Lauren B. Resnick, writing in the Harvard Educational Review of May, 1970, bring a historical perspective to their examination over the then current crisis of reading achievement .[7] Using the Protestant-religious model of literacy development in the early history of our country, Resnick and Resnick explore the possibility presented by Lockridge that literacy was of little significance for the shaping of social and economic values in colonial New England. They maintain that had unfamiliar texts and information gleaned from those texts been presented to the early colonists, the illiteracy measurement would in fact have been greater. By exposure to only those kinds of familiar materials that were often memorized, the early male colonist appeared capable of functioning at a level of literacy suitable and acceptable to the time. Lockridge would in fact support this theory and add that "the gap between the literacy of the population and the functional demands of the society was not great."[8]

A century later, with the introduction of more and better means of print, life became more complicated and the need to be literate more essential. While universal male literacy was reached in the 18th Century, the functional demands of society at that time were greater and many men, particularly of low status, continued to be illiterate. The demand to become more literate in basic reading and writing increased especially with the onset of the American Revolution. The deluge of letters and pamphlets circulated by the Boston Committee of Correspondence indicated a spread of literacy that had not been witnessed before. The appeal for mass literacy, making it technically more feasible for men to be unified more quickly, would certainly support the idea of increased literacy in the 18th Century. Men should have been able to read and yet studies show that male literacy in the United States increased slowly, if at all. While attempts were made to unify all men in the country, especially to the cause of the revolution, it was still the more learned, the more literate who were heralding the call to arms through print. Many men in fact remained farther still from the skills

necessary to function in a revolutionary society. A few, wealthy landowners and merchants, continued to maintain the higher levels of literacy but the greater portion of the population remained marginally literate.

The situation for women in the 18th Century was even more bleak. It is doubtful that there was any gain in women's literacy during this century. Women made little progress educationally, and those that did were often from the more wealthy classes where merchant and landowner fathers were capable of affording tutors or tuition to small, private academies and seminaries. Nowhere was women's literacy attractive enough to eliminate the legacy of discrimination based on inferiority and economics. Mary Wollstonecraft, writing in London in 1792, attempted to dispel the myth of women's mental inferiority by advocating for women's rights to education. There was nothing comparable in the United States at this time and it was almost a century later before a break in tradition could begin to eliminate this fiction.

Progress in schooling for women began to improve slowly, decade by decade, into the 19th Century. By mid-19th Century common schools did not discriminate between boys' and girls' enrollment nor even the number of hours given to girls' instruction. Women became more exposed to newspapers, libraries and pamphlets that stressed the importance of learning to read. School attendance increased among females and literacy rates for women reached 50% by 1850. The Civil War in particular was a watershed for women in America. The shortage of manpower made increasing demands on females and forced them to undertake new activities and responsibilities. Education became more universal for women and, perhaps for the first time, girls from working-class homes were able to attend school. While the training still did not approach the intellectual level at the boys schools, women's education was not looked upon solely for the preparation of homemakers. Women had taken a longer time to get to the half-way mark reached two centuries earlier by their male counterparts.

During the 19th Century, the first important steps were taken to improve the status of women who had become increasingly dissatisfied with their role. Feminist movements spearheaded by Elizabeth C. Stanton and Susan B. Anthony brought attention to women's issues. It took a great deal of courage to attack traditional beliefs of women's inferiority and domesticity. The women who spearheaded this rebellion, however, were not ordinary in any sense of the word and did not represent the majority of women who were still confined to the home or a factory where they were underpaid, or not paid at all and exhaustively overworked. The early feminists did not come from these ranks. Again, the research points out that status, ethnicity and wealth had an important impact on education and that wealth was a particular determinant in the quality of literacy as well as of the achievement of basic literacy itself.

Lee Solton and Edward Stevens, writing in The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States, suggest that "the first quarter of the 19th Century in the United States witnessed the beginning of a shift from a religious-literacy framework for education to a nation building-literacy framework." [9] Taking its lead from Europe, education in the United States during the 19th Century emphasized greatly the creation of a new world build on individualism and independence. Pedagogy of 18th and 19th Century Europe was soon transported across the ocean to America. With it came new methods, hopes and aspirations for women and men. While the two frameworks, religious and civic, were not incompatible, for the first time women used this opportunity to break the stereotype imposed on them by their Puritan heritage and participate in the national interest.

Women began to take part in the business of nation-building by entering the professions or working outside the home. Options were finally becoming available, though limited at first. The introduction of the secondary school and the female college

further advanced women's status as well as the extension of the factory system of production.

The economic and social changes of the 19th Century demanded a more functional literacy. The shifting of a woman's sphere from home to outside work placed new demands on her. Life became more complex as this nation moved toward greater industrialization. There existed a revolution for women, the effects of which are still being felt today. The victories gained politically in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries are only shadows of the intellectual freedom women achieved at this time. Having been sprung from the drudgery of everyday housewifery and exposed to even the most inferior of educations, women began to push for equal educational opportunities.

This was a period of transition when women finally examined their situation and recognized that they needed an education just as much as men. Women's organizations, particularly the suffrage movement were strongly connected to the better education of women. Significant progress was made educationally by women's groups that fought for political, economic and social reform. The leadership of these groups greatly reflected the idea that women, educated, enlightened and determined were capable of achieving just as well as men. The suffrage movement with its emphasis on better education for women and men was greatly endorsed by such notable men as Benjamin Rush and Joseph Emerson who urged its necessity, "to improve the home and school influence on the morals of the next generation." 10

Finally it was recognized that what women did in the home was equally as important as what they did in the world. Womanhood and motherhood showed signs of equitable status. Intelligent, educated women became a necessity to the family structure and educational reform. Educational reforms, though significant in the 19th Century, showed great advancement in the 20th Century. Women entered law and medicine. They found places in business, industry, journalism and advanced

education. Their new-found education provided them with the zeal and confidence to challenge the accepted order of things. Women began to question their position in American society. From the late 18th Century to the present, women's education improved in large part because of the advantage served to society. Barbara Soloman, writing in 1985, maintains that women's education progressed due to the following reasons:

> *...Women's special role as mothers of male citizens offered the first powerful rationale for some education...(education) justified to religious leaders the function of women as schoolteachers...(and) the republican idea...gave philosophical recognition to the rights of individuals.*[11]

More recently, feminist literature has reflected the need for education of women that empowers or enables them to take charge of their own lives. Certain authors, notably Kathleen Rockhill of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto, Canada, have stated that literacy is gendered and that the "experience of men and women is different with respect to literacy...and constitutes men's power over women...this means that literacy is caught up in the denomination of women by men."[12]

Phyllis Safman of the University of Utah contends that addressing "illiteracy in general and among men in particular is a complex problem." In her paper "Illiterate Women: New Approaches for New Lives," (1986) she cites three main factors that contribute to illiteracy among women. They are: social acculturation and sex role stereotyping; personal problems which promote high school incompletion; and institutional barriers to women in ABE programs.[13] Safman calls for a more dynamic effort to empower women to contribute to the quality of their lives, the lives of their children and their communities.

What I have sought to record here is a story of the educational heritage of women founded in myths of inferiority and discrimination. I have attempted to

examine some common threads that influenced the lack of education and ultimately literacy levels of women in the past 250 years by pointing out the correlation between wealth and occupation, the nature and definition of literacy and the socio-political-economic impetus for education.

Through an understanding of history and sociology of women's education, I feel a new and stimulating hypothesis can be developed to explain the lack of educational opportunities that still exist today in some parts of our country where women still outnumber men in lack of literacy education. It is hoped that this research will not only identify pockets of major illiteracy among women but also provide the necessary criteria to eliminate that problem.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ruth Leger Sivard, Women...A World Survey, (Washington, D.C.: World Priorities, 1985), p. 19.

2. Carman St. John Hunter and David Harman, Adult literacy in the U.S.: A Report to the Ford Foundation, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 103.

3. Samuel Eliot Morison, The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England, (New York: New York University Press, 1956), p.10.

4. Kenneth A. Lockridge, Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974), p.38.

5. Elizabeth Dexter, Colonial Women of Affairs: A study of Women in Business and the Professions in America Before 1776, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924), p. 74.

6. Anne H. Wharton, Colonial Days and Dames, (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, Co., 1895), p. 94.

7. Daniel P. Resnick and Lauren B. Resnick, "The Nature of Literacy: An Historical Explanation," Harvard Educational Review, (1977) :43

8. Lockridge., op. cit., p. 37.

9. Lee Solton and Edward Stevens, Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States: A Socioeconomical Analysis to 1870, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 18.

10. Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States, New York: Octagon Books, 1980), Vol. II, p. 430.

11. Barbara M. Solomon, In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1985), p. xviii.

12. Kathleen Rockhill, "Literacy as Threat/Desire: Minimizing Women's Oppression." Paper presented at Comparative and International Educational Society Meetings, Toronto, Canada, March 13, 1986, p.2.

13. Phyllis C. Safman, "Illiterate Women: New Approaches for New Lives." Paper presented at National Audlt Education Conference, Washington, D.C. October 23, 1986, p.5.

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