

AUBURN WOMEN ENTER THE PUBLIC SPHERE IN 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY by Karen Board Moran  
Created for "Opening Your Classroom Window to 19<sup>th</sup> Century America" 27 May 1999  
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**Where do the citizens of Auburn fit into the Woman's Rights Movement?**

About 20 Auburn women join the anti-suffragists in 1915.

From 1874-1877 Mrs. Mary J. Rich was the first woman to serve on the Auburn School Committee.

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for History and Social Science

Core Knowledge: 6. The Advent of Modern America (1865 to 1920)

- g. Populists
- i. Progressivism

7. The United States and Two World Wars (1914 to 1945)

- c. Campaign for women's suffrage

Standards: History Strand:

- 1) Chronology and Cause
- 2) Historical Understanding
- 3) Research, Evidence, and Point of View

Geography Strand:

- 9) Effects of Geography

Civics and Government Strand:

- 16) Authority, Responsibility, and Power
- 18) Principles and Practices of American Government
- 19) Citizenship

The Reconstruction Amendments (13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>) to the United States Constitution re-energized the Woman's Rights Movement after the Civil War. Massachusetts was a center of this reform activity as America celebrated its centennial.

Worcester had been the site of the First National Woman's Rights Convention in 1850, organized by area women Lucy Stone and Abby Kelley Foster. This convention moved the ideas launched at the 1848 convention in the "Declaration of Sentiments" onto the national stage. This convention was pivotal to the movement because it:

- Organized the effort by forming a central committee who would "hold meetings, correspond, gather information, raise funds and guide public opinion to co-sovereignty with man."
- Claimed the right to suffrage "without distinction of sex or color."  
(Visit website for more information about this pre war event)

Most 19<sup>th</sup> century Americans were comfortable with women dealing with matters of child rearing, education, and benevolence. Home and church were the acceptable spheres or places for female activities. Suffrage would give women the power to elect their own representatives in our democratic government.

- What would women have to do to move into the public arena?
- Would that arena include the right of women to vote in all elections?
- How did the citizens of Auburn feel about this move to greater democracy?

Students should be encouraged to find evidence and analyze the democratic process:

- What evidence do you find about the power of petition?
- Why do most groups organize and become headquartered in Boston?
- How does one amend the Constitution?
- How were the three branches involved in this Progressive Reform?

Begin your exploration with this TIMELINE to discover how the movement touched Auburn citizens:

- 1873 Abby Kelley and her husband, Stephen Symonds Foster, refuse to pay taxes on their farm, claiming taxation without representation. Their home is sold by the state but later bought by friends who returned it to the couple.
- 1874 **Mrs. Mary J. Rich** is first woman elected to Auburn School Committee and serves until 1877.
- Supreme Court rules against a woman's right to vote based on the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment in *Minor v. Happersett*.
- 1876 July 4<sup>th</sup> protest at the official Centennial celebration in Philadelphia led by Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage. They said they risked arrest "for the daughters of 1976," so they would know that "their mothers of 1876 had thus asserted their equality of rights, and thus impeached the government of today for its injustice towards women." **FIND REACTION IN PAPER**
- 1878 Susan B. Anthony Amendment for woman's suffrage introduced in Senate.
- 1879 Massachusetts school suffrage is passed allowing women to vote for local school committee members. **FIND TURNOUT AT TOWN HALL**
- 1881 National Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) endorses "the ballot for woman as a weapon for the protection of the home." Julia Bancroft was president in Auburn. **FIND YEAR**
- 1882 **First informal anti-suffrage organization in U.S. formed in Cambridge.**
- 1884 **Mrs. Annie M. Howe** becomes Auburn's postmistress in their home near the railroad station after death of her husband Alvin 6/28. She serves 28 years.
- 1886 Worcester Woman Suffrage league is organized 10/4 by men and women, many of whom attended the 1850 First National Woman's Rights Convention.
- 1890 AWSA and NWSA merge to focus on ballot, becoming the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) led by President Elizabeth Cady Stanton, author of the "Declaration of Sentiments."
- **The earliest anti-suffrage publication, *The Remonstrance*, is published in Boston until 1920.**
- 1892 Woman's Day at New England Fair considered the most successful meeting for suffrage since the convention held in Brinley Hall in 1850, according to Nutt's *History of Worcester and Its People*.
- 1895 First National Conference of Colored Women is held under the leadership of Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, a founder of the black women's New Era Club.
- **Man Suffrage Association is founded in Boston to help defeat state referendum on woman's suffrage.**
  - **All female Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women is organized in Boston and later becomes the Woman's Anti-Suffrage Association.**
- 1903 **(If time do Scene 7 from Lucy Stone Play at a more or less "annual" hearing before the Massachusetts Committee on Constitutional Amendments at State House on House Resolution No. 325 to give women the right to vote in all elections in 1903. Park, Maud Wood. Lucy Stone: A Chronicle Play. Boston: Walter H. Company, 1938. on LOC web site?)**
- 1906 National Grange endorsed woman suffrage. **How did the Auburn Grange members feel?** Auburn Grange, No. 60 P. of H. is organized July 2, 1874 with 23 charter members. By 1888-9 there are over 100 members. They planted maples on Common around 1885.

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- 1907 Massachusetts State Suffrage Association annual meeting held in Trinity Church, Worcester.
- 1910 **Soangetaha Club** meets at Auburn Library to share papers on different subjects about Auburn. About 25 women participate.
- 1912 **Men's Association against the Extension of Woman's Suffrage is founded in Boston.**
- Miss Juliet Porter of Worcester is "**listened to with much interest**" when she speaks to Soangetaha Club on "The Working Girl of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" on Wednesday, May 8. (Use map in [Historical Atlas of Massachusetts](#), p. 82 to find percent of women 14+ in the labor force in 1885.) 10-19% compared to 20-29% in Worcester and 30-39% in Grafton, Millbury and Sutton. U.S. average 28.1% and MA average 17.7%
  - Miss Ruth M. Grosvenor becomes Auburn postmistress 10/17. She serves 14 years. Marries Roswell C. Davis 10/16/19. Note: Her married name is Mrs. Ruth G. Davis. The initial now stands for her maiden name.
  - Worcester Equal Franchise Club is founded by 7 young women on 12/12
- 1913 Woman's Education Association of Boston loans a traveling exhibit on Venice to Auburn Library.
- 1914 Worcester Men's League for Equal Franchise is founded.  
Men will vote the next year on woman's suffrage referendum:  
**Should Massachusetts women be given the vote?**
- October parade for woman's suffrage in Boston with 12,000 marchers and 15,000 the next year. Worcester County women join them wearing white and suffrage yellow.
  - October 30 torch light march down Main Street to Mechanics Hall brings enthusiasm here. **FIND PHOTOS & NEWSPAPER COVERAGE IN WORC**
- 1915 **Over 400 delegates attend the Massachusetts Anti-Suffrage Convention in Springfield.**  
*The Anti-Suffrage Rose* is published by the MAS Association in Boston.
- Mrs. Chase and Mrs. Robert K Shaw of Worcester spoke in Auburn on suffrage along with Miss Louise Hamilton Murdock of Holden as part of the education campaign. (see bio:info)
  - **About 20 Auburn women join the anti-suffragists after meetings are held at the library with state organizer Miss Dorothy Godfrey of Boston and Mrs. Augustin H. Parker of Dover.**  
Use handout from Shute, Abby B. [Merriam Library Record Book, August 1911.](#)  
(manuscript at Auburn Pubic Library)  
**FIND RECORDS OF ANTI-SUFFRAGE ORGANIZATION**
  - Miss Arabella H. Tucker, a teacher in the Worcester State Normal School, speaks to joint meeting of **Enterprise League** and Soangetaha Club at Auburn Library on "Autumn Color" on October 15. **WHAT IS ENTERPRISE LEAGUE?**  
Use bio and obit. (4/1857-6/12/1936)  
Founder of Auburn Woman's Club in 1924 and lived at 164 Central Street.
- 1916 **College Anti-Suffrage league founded in Boston.**
- 1919 Alice Stone Blackwell speaks in Grafton.
- 1920 Women gain the vote on August 26 when Tennessee becomes the 36<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.  
**FIND TURNOUT AT TOWN HALL AND EVIDENCE OF TROLLEY TOUR PASSING THROUGH IN 1909.**  
(Use map in [Historical Atlas of Massachusetts](#), p. 88 to find the percent of voters supporting the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1919) 26-33% compared to Worcester's 34-39%  
(Use National Women's Hall of Fame web site  
<http://www.nara.gov/education/teaching/woman/>)

- 1922 Susan W. Fitzgerald of Boston and M. Sylvia Donaldson of Brockton are the first women representatives elected to the state House.
- 1925 Edith Nourse Rogers of Lowell is Massachusetts' first woman elected to U.S. House of Representatives

Bio info:

Mrs. Robert K. Shaw Worcester Equal Franchise Club president 1916-1918  
 Born Bertha Mower Brown in Porter's Mills, WI 12/27/1875 daughter of James Harding and Anna Sarah (Taft) Brown; also active in prison reform and Americanization committee with National Civic Federation;  
 Robert Kendall Shaw is librarian of Free Worcester Library m. 9/20/1902 in Eau Claire, WI per Nutt (III:175-6) and (II:499-503)

??Mrs. Charles Augustus Chase (Lydia's son?) m. 4/29/1863 b. Mary Theresa Clark of Boston (III: 10) Nutt, Charles. History of Worcester and Its People. NY: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1919.

**FIND FIRST AUBURN WOMEN ELECTED TO PUBLIC OFFICE ON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

One can follow their progress in the Reports of the Town Officers of the Town of Auburn, Mass for Year ending March 1, 1875. Worcester: Tyler and Seagrave, 1875. (bound from 1850 through 1900) and Report of the School Committee of the Town of Auburn for 1850-1851. Worcester: Tyler and Hamilton. **Stopped at 1904.**

1874-77 **Mrs. Mary J. Rich**

- d. 6/29/04 **Use obit.**
- no marriage in Vital Records so cannot find birth with maiden name
- In 1883 Valuation she's listed with house 300, barn 300, homestead 2 a 200-800 for taxes of \$11.20

1878 Mrs. Julia B. Bancroft teaches in District 6 school house (Sibley's) for the summer term (even though she's married!), but not in following years.

1879 **Alice Maria[h] Daniels** **FIND DEATH DATE (none) & OBIT; ALSO HUBBY**

- In 1883 Valuation she's listed with Nancy and Hannah Greene with house 800, homestead 2 ¼ a 200-1000 for taxes of \$14.
- Nancy could be daughter of Dr. Thomas and Mary Green, b 1/9/1794 who is 95 years old at this time. Do they live at 107 Central or 2 Church? Dr. Thomas Green's widow passed 107 to grandson, John Green Stone.
- Alice Maria m. Nathan Daniels 9/7/1846 **(Use Vital Records to find her)**
- Alice-Mariah daughter of Daniel and Elizabeth Green b. 3/2/1824 would be Hannah's sister

1880 **Louise M. Flint**

- No birth or marriages listed in VR **FIND DEATH DATE (none) & OBIT**
- Perhaps Mary Louisa Flint @ 193 Hurd?

1891-94 **Mrs. J. P. Eaton** **FIND OBITs**

- Is this Mrs. Joseph Pierce Eaton? (Carlotta P. index p. 31; Sarah H. 8/17/12 index p. 6; Charlotte E. 3/29/15 index p. 11?) Joseph in VR son of Thomas S. and Hannah: b. 11/7/1839 m. 3/23/1869 (index p. 2) d. 2/13/1925

1894-97 **Mrs. Mary Deborah Shute Stone** (8/26/1853-11/12/1928) **Use bio and obit.**

- Lives on Elm Street and m. William F. Stone 8/26/1878 **FIND HUBBY's OBIT**

1896 (or 5)-1920 **Mrs. Julia Frances Knowles Bancroft** (10/7/1847-9/15/1920)

- Use bio and obit. Note initial discrepancies. FIND HUBBY's OBIT**
- **Women hold 2 out of 3 positions on the school committee 1896-7**
  - In 1883 valuation she's listed with ½ Muzzy house 350, ½ Muzzy and Knight land 1/3 a 50-400 for taxes of \$5.60 @ 423 Pakachoag
  - m. Enoch Leroy Bancroft 11/10/1869 with 7 year old son, Henry Leroy

Rice, Franklin P., coll. Vital Records of the Town of Auburn, Massachusetts to the end of 1850. Worcester: Franklin P. Rice, 1900.

Index of Births, Deaths, and Marriages notebooks at Auburn Public Library.

**FIND FIRST WOMEN IN AUBURN GOVERNMENT BESIDES EDUCATION RELATED POSITIONS**

Works Progress Administration Project. A Historical Sketch of Auburn, Massachusetts.  
Auburn Centennial Committee, 1937.

1884 **Mrs. Annie M. Howe** becomes Auburn's postmistress 7/17 in their home near the railroad station after death of her husband Alvin 6/28. Married 12/9/1852. She serves 28 years. Anna E. (?) Howe dies 1/20/17.

1912 **Miss Ruth M. Grosvenor** becomes Auburn postmistress 10/17. She serves 14 years. Marries Roswell C. Davis 10/16/19. Note: Her married name is Mrs. Ruth G. Davis. The initial now stands for her maiden name.

1926 **Pearl M. Lovejoy** acting postmistress

1970 - 80s **Doris Hill** elected town clerk

first select woman?

1999 **Darleen F. Wood** first Auburn woman elected highway surveyor (second in state) President of R. J. Wood, a construction and property maintenance and management company founded by her father and clinical psychologist. b. 1969 Use Telegram & Gazette, 24 May 1999.

*Marjorie O'Neil 1st  
1973 one term  
Joan Cassidy 2nd  
(1982-1994) 4 terms*

FEMALE SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ANTEBELLUM AUBURN

Shute, Abby B. Library Record Book, Merriam Library, August, 1911.  
(manuscript at Auburn Public Library)

Reports on meeting of Soangetaha Club held on Central Street  
(25 women met to share papers on different subjects about Auburn)

"Auburn Select Schools." By Mrs. Ellen K. Bancroft (sometime after 10/21/1910)

For education beyond Common School students went to Select Schools. Boys and girls attended, but young men "were in the minority."

Rev. Enoch Pond taught "...sometimes 30-40 pupils gathered in the long kitchen chamber in Vestry of Congregational Church, now (1910?) the home of Mr. Joel H. Prouty.

Later, Jonathan Dana of Oxford taught in vestry, then located in the corner of old burying ground just opposite the old tavern.

IS VESTRY SMALL ROOM IN CHURCH OR IN PARSONAGE AS EXPLAINED ABOVE?

See Hannah Green file on her

MISS MARIA EDDY attended Mt. Holyoke seminary about 1846 **LOOK FOR POST 1850 VITALS**  
was "next to occupy the vestry as teacher. She was considered a brilliant teacher. Loving the work. Of the pupils, bright and full of life, I wish to speak of two or three as representatives. Miss Eddy afterward became the wife of Rev. Isaac N. Hobart, a Baptist clergyman. As an outgrowth of her school, a reading circle was formed for mutual improvement." **CHECK INDEX**  
Not in VR; Miss Martha Eddy listed as Stoneville instructor 7/11/1848 in Worcester Daily Spy article. Martha Clark Eddy daughter of James and Betsey b. 10/4/1817; Betsey Clark m. James 3/13/1817 per VR; neither in Oxford Eddy gen.

Miss Lucy Newton, afterwards Mrs. Loring, a girl of marked ability, who was satisfied with no surface knowledge, but delved in to the depth of things.

VR Lucy-Miles d Samuel A. and Mary W Newton b. 11/8/1834

Lived @ 785 Southbridge Street (built c. 1837)

?m. Willard Lovering 6/12/1854

DID SHE DONATE BERRIES TO ORPHANS' HOME in 1854?

Or sister Ella-Jane, 5 at time, or Caroline-Porter, 17 at time?

Or cousins Ellen, 16 at time, or Mary-Jane, 21 at time?

Miss Ellen Eddy, later Mrs. Philander Pond, who was gifted in the branches taught not only, but was a poet and prose writer as well.

VR Ellen-Augusta d Samuel and Rhoda Eddy b. 12/7/1833

m. 12/8/1868

Miss Sarah Knowlton, afterwards Mrs. Barrett (not in index), a gifted story-teller.

VR Sarah-Ann daughter of Swan and Sarah Eddy b 1/4/1832; mother is daughter of Samuel and Sarah Hart and is widow of Thomas Baird per Oxford Eddy gen. and VR m.4/14/1829

Or Sarah-Sophronia d Ashael and Sophronia b 9/19/36 at Oxford

Two pupils from another place Misses Nancy and Abbie Gates, who had relatives here, became one with us in all that we so richly enjoyed. At the close of this term many of the friends of the pupils were present to witness the proficiency made. In the evening we gave a reception with a 'feast of fat things'. You would probably call it a banquet. The writer of this paper, Mrs. Ellen K. Bancroft, seems to have attended these classes.

**WHAT WAS HER MAIDEN NAME?? Relative of Mrs. Julia Bancroft?**

**MISS LYDIA S. HOADLEY**, daughter of Rev. S. I. Hoadley, pastor at the time and afterwards daughter-in-law of Dr. Pond. Rev. Hoadley helped teach Latin classes.  
Monday morning Bible classes  
Not in VR

**1861 MISS MARY E. CRAIG** "...now Mrs. John P. French (2/20/1872), taught a school in the house which had, years before, been the old "Cary Tavern" and later the home of Deacon Benjamin Wiser (VR d 6/15/1858 at 78 years), who had a small store opposite. Later still and finally, Mr. Oscar Pond the present owner, recently removed the old house and built a beautiful home a few rods south of the old site."  
Not in VR

**1875 Mr. John W. Hicks**  
Yale graduate taught a school in the Town Hall under the old church  
Not in VR

VR is Rice, Franklin P. Vital Records of the Town of Auburn. (Formerly WARD), Massachusetts, to the end of the year 1850. Worcester, Massachusetts: Franklin P. Rice, 1900.

Town Reports from 1850 citation

Appointed to committee charged with establishing a public library, when the bequest of William Craig was accepted and matched by Town meeting in 1872.

Served on committee until she died.

Other early women on committee were Ellen K. Bancroft (in year ending March 1, 1875), Mrs. L. A. Metcalf (year ending March 1, 1877) and then Ellen Pond.

Librarian from 1875-1881. Paid \$5 per year to use her living room as the library. Her salary was \$40 per year.

Hartwell, John. "A View from the Hill," Auburn News. 17 March 1999.

**Dr. Thomas Green's house at 107 Central**

built in 1783 in Federal style (owned by Prouty family)

died of spotted fever epidemic of 1812 NOTE

younger half-brother invited to come to Auburn, but couldn't live with widow and daughters  
was 43 acre farm behind it where Joan lives now?

**Dr. Daniel Green's house at 2 Church with ¼ acre bought from Silas Wesson (Today Ryan family)**

Built by Silas Wesson, a young blacksmith from Grafton in 1801. He went into partnership with Thomas Drury, son of tavern's founder, and owner of much land about village. Built a plow factory just behind his house on land owned by Drury (now Town Hall lot). Forged shares and metal fittings, while the "plow-woods" were made at Tom Drury's saw mill at what is now Drury Square.

Younger brother Samuel was a cordwainer by trade (from French "cordouannier" meaning someone who worked with Cordovan leather)—shoemaker. In 1805 Silas sold Samuel half land and became neighbor at 6 Church Street with shoe shop next to plow factory.

Rev. Enoch Pond, 2<sup>nd</sup> minister, writer, editor and educator bought his place until he left in 1828.

His wife, Wealthy M., died in 1824 along with 4 little children at 30 years. HANNAH BORN YEAR BEFORE Find autobiography with memories of Ward

Rev. Miner G. Pratt (and wife Caroline) new neighbor until 1848, longest serving minister and Postmaster. 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter Caroline Elizabeth b. 1/8/34 (3<sup>rd</sup> oldest of 9 kids; 1<sup>st</sup> son died after 5 days) attended Leicester Academy in year ending August 14, 1850 in Classical Department. [VR and LA Record]

(Today Ericson family)

Dr. Daniel served as community doctor for 40 years plus

- Proponent of greater professionalism and formal scientific education for doctors in place of apprentice system
- 1816 elected fellow of Mass. Medical Association
- School Committeeman for nearly 30 years
- Served in numerous other capacities
- Leader in Temperance Movement
- Abolitionist
- Retired 1846

## **Auburn Research Sources**

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