

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony were all leaders of the early women's rights movement. Select one of these women and discuss her contribution to the movement and the difficulties she encountered.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born November 12, 1815, in Johnstown, New York. She was the fourth of six children. Later she would meet and marry Henry B. Stanton, a prominent abolitionist. Together they would have seven children. Although Elizabeth never went to college she was very learned in Greek and mathematics. During her life, Elizabeth was a very important person to the women's rights movement. This paper will present to you the difficulties she encountered and her major contributions.

Nothing is easy when you are trying to change the opinion of the world. In the nineteenth century it was only harder if you were a woman. Elizabeth Stanton not only faced opposition from the outside world but also from those closest to her. After her only brother died she tried to please her father by studying and doing the things that her brother had done. Her father's response was that he wished she had been a boy. Her high hope of working with her husband to abolish slavery was shattered when she was not allowed to enter into the conventions. She, as a woman, was told to keep silent and to do her work quietly. Who better than her husband, who champions the rights of black people, should understand and applaud her work. However, that was not the case. During the Seneca Falls convention that she had organized, her husband left town rather than witness her propose the idea of women's suffrage to the group. When she lectured she was often booed and hissed at. She suffered much at the hands of the media. The only support that she ever received was from her fellow suffragists. This did not stop her from continuing her work and becoming an integral part to the early women's rights movement.

With seven children and an entire household to manage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton somehow found time to help found the women's rights movement. Her contributions were considerable. After attending an abolitionist convention in London she decided to concentrate her work on the rights of women. Her first cause was that of Divorce. She believed that people ought to be able to obtain a divorce on any grounds. She also championed the married women's property act. Perhaps one of her greatest contribution she had was the Seneca Falls convention. There she helped draft the Declaration of Sentiments. This was a list of twelve items that were unfair to women. The twelfth, concerning women's right to vote, would probably have not been included if it was not for Elizabeth. She later published the Women's Bible in two volumes. These books refuted the idea that God had set man to rule over women.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton worked hard for a thankless task. She received opposition from every where, even the women whom she was championing. She never saw the results of the fire that she lit. There is no doubt that the women's rights movement would have started without her but it would probably not have started when it did. It would also have lacked some of its fire. Without Elizabeth Cady Stanton we might not have some of the rights that we enjoy today.

