

Second to None: A Documentary History of American Women. Volume 1, From the Sixteenth Century to 1865



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"Tis woman's strongest vindication for speaking that the world needs to hear her voice," wrote Anna Julia Cooper, a nineteenth-century African American abolitionist, teacher, and novelist. Argu-ing that the voices of women still need to be heard, the editors of this comprehensive collection have assembled a diverse selection of writings to illustrate the daily lives of ordinary and extraordinary women and the historical significance of their thoughts and deeds.

Here are women who are shapers of history, as well as its victims. In diaries, letters, speeches, songs, petitions, essays, photographs, and cartoons they describe, rejoice, exhort, complain, advertise, and joke, revealing women's role as community builders in every time and locale and registering their emergence into the public spheres of political, social, and economic life. The documents also demonstrate the value of gender analysis, for women's differences—in age, race, sexual orientation, class, geographical or ethnic origin, abilities or disabilities, and values—are shown to be as important as their commonalities.

Volume 1, which comprises 153 selections, opens with a Navajo origin myth and presents Native American, Hispanic, African, and Euro-American women from the sixteenth century through the Civil War. Both volumes include section introductions that set the historical stage and comment on the significance of the selections.

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