

Through Women's Eyes

AN AMERICAN
HISTORY

WITH DOCUMENTS

FOURTH EDITION

Ellen Carol DuBois
Lynn Dumenil



HOW TO ANALYZE PRIMARY SOURCES

In their search for an improved understanding of the past, historians look for new evidence — written documents or visual artifacts. When they encounter a written or visual primary source, historians ask certain key questions. You should ask these questions too. Sometimes historians can't be certain about the answer, but they always ask the question.

Analyzing a written document

- Who wrote the document? Is it a specific person or someone whose identity you can merely infer from the context of the document (for example, a parent writing to a child, a traveler writing home)?
- When and where was it written?
- Why was the document written? Is there a clear purpose, or are multiple interpretations possible?
- Who was, or who might have been, its intended audience?
- What point of view does it reflect?
- What can the document tell us about the individual who produced it and the society from which he or she came?

Analyzing a visual source

- Who made the image or artifact, and how was it made?
- When and where was the image or artifact made?
- Who paid for or commissioned it? How can you tell?
- For what audience might it have been intended? Where might it have originally been displayed or used?
- What message or messages is it trying to convey?
- How could it be interpreted differently depending on who viewed or used it?
- What can this visual source tell us about the individual who produced it and the society from which he or she came?

Fourth Edition

THROUGH WOMEN'S EYES

An American History

WITH DOCUMENTS

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An American History
WITH DOCUMENTS

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OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE

Bedford/St. Martin's

A Macmillan Education Imprint

Boston • New York

For Norman, as always; for Arnie, finally

For Bedford/St. Martin's

Vice President, Editorial, Macmillan Higher Education

Humanities: Edwin Hill

Publisher for History: Michael Rosenberg

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Lombardo

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Cartography: Mapping Specialists, Ltd.

Photo Researcher: Naomi Kornhauser

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Photo Editor: Sheena Goldstein

Senior Art Director: Anna Palchik

Cover Design: John Callahan

Text Design and Composition: Cenveo Publisher Services

Printing and Binding: RR Donnelley and Sons

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Manufactured in the United States of America.

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f e d c b a

For information, write: Bedford/St. Martin's, 75 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617-399-4000)

ISBN 978-1-319-00312-8

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P R E F A C E
F O R I N S T R U C T O R S

Why This Book This Way

EACH NEW EDITION OF *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents* provides an opportunity to revisit and refine our vision for this textbook. Our original goal was to create a U.S. women's history that combined an inclusive and diverse narrative with primary-document and visual-source essays—a comprehensive resource to aid instructors and encourage student engagement and analysis. We have been thoroughly delighted that this docutext has resonated with instructors and students alike and were gratified to hear from one instructor that it “so benefits those of us in the teaching trenches.” Our belief that U.S. women's history is U.S. history and vice versa fueled our approach to this book, and we are pleased that it has proved an effective source for the classroom and has made *Through Women's Eyes* the number one choice for U.S. women's history. In this new edition, we have drawn upon scholarship published since the appearance of the third edition and have benefited tremendously from the insights of reviewers and adopters of *Through Women's Eyes*. Fresh primary sources, throughout both the narrative and the essays, extend the goal of the book to present women's history as both a compelling story and an ongoing exploration.

◆ APPROACH AND FORMAT

Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents challenges the separation of “women's history” from what students, in our experience, think of as “real history.” We treat all central developments of American history, always through women's eyes, so that students may experience the broad sweep of the nation's past from a new and illuminating perspective. *Through Women's Eyes* combines in-depth treatment of well-known aspects of the history of women, such as the experiences of Lowell mill girls and slave women, the cult of true womanhood, and the rise of feminism, with developments in U.S. history not usually considered from the perspective of women, including the conquest of the Americas, the role of women in war and the military, post-World War II anticommunism, the civil rights movement, and the increasingly visible role that women have played in recent politics. Our goal of **a full integration of women's history and U.S. history** is pragmatic as well as principled. We recognize that there may be some students who read *Through Women's Eyes* who have little background in U.S. history, and that they will be learning the nation's history as they follow women through it.

At the same time that we broaden the conception of women's and U.S. history, we offer **an inclusive view of the lives of American women and their historical experiences**. We continue to decenter the narrative from an emphasis on white

privileged women to bring ethnic and racial minorities and wage-earning women from the margins to the center of our story. In providing an integrated analysis of the rich variety of women that includes ethnic and racial diversity and class, immigrant status, geographical information, and sexual orientation differences, we have also explored the dynamics of relationships between women. Examples of sisterhood emerge from our pages, but so too do the hierarchical relations of class and race and other sources of tensions that erected barriers between women.

Just as many of our students hold preconceived notions of women's history as an intriguing adjunct to "real history," they often equate the historian's finished product with historical "truth." We remain determined to reveal **the relationship between secondary and original sources** to show history as a dynamic process of investigation and interpretation rather than a set body of facts and figures. To this end, we divide each of our chapters into narrative text and primary-source essays. Written sources range from diaries, letters, and memoirs to poems, newspaper accounts, and public testimony. Visual sources include artifacts, engravings, portraits, photographs, cartoons, and television screen shots. Instructors often tell us that these essays are their favorite aspect of the book. "The primary-source essays are an outstanding way for students to explore topics more in-depth," one instructor wrote, "and students really connect to the individual stories."

Together, the sources reveal to students the **wide variety of primary evidence** from which history is crafted. Our documentary and visual essays not only allow for focused treatment of many topics—for example, the experience of Native American women before and after European conquest, the higher education of women before 1900, women's use of cosmetics in the context of a commercialized beauty culture, women's roles in World War II, women's activism in the civil rights movement, and gender in the military—but also provide ample guidance for students to analyze historical documents thoughtfully. Each essay offers advice about evaluating the sources presented and poses questions for analysis intended to foster students' ability to think independently and critically. Substantive headnotes to the sources and plentiful cross-references between the narrative and the essays further encourage students to appreciate the relationship between historical sources and historical writing.

◆ FEATURES AND PEDAGOGY

We are proud as well of the pedagogical features we provide to help students enter into and absorb the text. Each chapter opens with a **thematic introduction** that starts with a particular person or moment in time chosen to pique students' interest and segues into a clear statement of the central issues and ideas of the chapter. An **illustrated chapter timeline** alerts students to the main events covered in the narrative and relates women's experience to U.S. history by visually linking key developments. At the close of each narrative section, an **analytic conclusion** revisits central themes and provides a bridge to the next chapter. New to this edition, we stress continuity between sets of documents dealing with the topics of women and war and women as activists—particularly

with respect to feminism — by providing questions for analysis that encourage students to consider change over time.

Beyond the visual sources presented in the essays, **100 historical images and 10 maps and graphs** extend and enliven the narrative, accompanied by **substantive captions** that relate the illustration to the text and help students unlock the image. Also animating the narrative while complementing the documentary essays are **27 primary-source excerpts, called Reading into the Past, drawn from classic texts** featuring women such as Anne Hutchinson, Catharine Beecher, Sojourner Truth, Margaret Sanger, and Ella Baker. At the end of each chapter, we provide **plentiful endnotes** and a **bibliography** that gives students a myriad of opportunities for reading and research beyond the boundaries of the textbook.

In addition, we open the book with an **Introduction for Students** that discusses the evolution of women's history as a field and the approach we took in capturing its exciting state today. An **extensive Appendix** includes not only tables and charts focused on U.S. women's experience over time but also the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions and annotated extracts of Supreme Court cases of major relevance to U.S. history "through women's eyes."

◆ NEW TO THIS EDITION

For this fourth edition, we have built on the strengths of the previous editions of *Through Women's Eyes*, while expanding the coverage of a number of topics and offering fresh document essays and illustrations. We have paid particular attention in this edition to the role of women in war and the military as well as the connections among feminist movements from the nineteenth century to the present. Recent developments in scholarship and reviewer requests prompted the addition of material on black women reformers; Nisei women during World War II; popular culture; environmentalism and ecofeminism; lesbian and transgender history; twentieth-century feminism; and women in contemporary politics. New Reading into the Past selections include writings from African Americans about the Great Migration and an unpublished excerpt from Margaret Sanger about birth control.

Of the 37 Primary Sources features, 7 are new. Two of the new essays mix written and visual primary sources. New essays include "Women's Rights Partnership: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the 1850s and 1860s," "Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*," "Black Women and Progressive-Era Reform," "Beauty Culture between the Wars," "Voices of 'Rosie the Riveter,'" "Gender and the Military," and "Facing the Future: Women's History in the Years to Come."

Charts and tables in the Appendix have been updated with the most recent statistics available. We have added the U.S. Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *United States v. Windsor*, which found part of the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional.

Finally, new to the fourth edition, students have the option to purchase a low-cost PDF e-book version of *Through Women's Eyes*. For a list of our publishing partners' sites, see macmillanhighered.com/ebookpartners.

◆ RESOURCES FOR INSTRUCTORS

Bedford/St. Martin's offers a wide variety of teaching resources for this book and for this course, including presentation materials, lecture strategies, and suggested in-class activities. All can be downloaded or ordered at macmillanhighered.com/duboisdumenil/catalog.

Instructor's Resource Manual. Both experienced and first-time instructors will find useful teaching suggestions for the U.S. women's history course in the *Instructor's Resource Manual*. The available resources include suggested assignments and sample term paper topics and in-class exams, as well as teaching tips, lecture strategies, recommended films and television shows, tips for teaching with visual sources, and test bank questions.

Maps and Images in PowerPoint and JPEG formats. Instructors can now access all of the maps from the book and selected images, some in color, from the visual essays.

Bedford Video Clips for U.S. Women's History. This new DVD contains 20 short digital movie files related to U.S. women's history in the twentieth century. From scenes of urban immigrant life, to women training for production during World War II, to the 1963 March on Washington, *Bedford Video Clips for U.S. Women's History* engages students and challenges them to think critically. All files are edited for brevity and easily integrated into electronic lectures or assignments. An accompanying guide provides each clip's historical context, ideas for use, and suggested questions.

◆ PACKAGE AND SAVE YOUR STUDENTS MONEY

For information on free packages and discounts up to 50%, visit macmillanhighered.com/duboisdumenil/catalog, or contact your local Bedford/St. Martin's sales representative.

NEW The Bedford Digital Collections for U.S. Women's History. Instructors looking for digital packaging options can package *Through Women's Eyes* with the Bedford Digital Collections, an online repository of discovery-oriented primary-source projects that they can easily customize and link to from their course management system or Web site. See macmillanhighered.com/launchpadsolo/bdcwomen/catalog for more information.

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A Pocket Guide to Writing in History. This portable and affordable reference tool by Mary Lynn Rampolla provides reading, writing, and research advice useful to students in all history courses. Concise yet comprehensive advice on approaching typical history assignments, developing critical reading skills, writing effective history papers, conducting research, using and documenting sources, and avoiding plagiarism — enhanced with practical tips and examples throughout — has made this slim reference a best-seller.

◆ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Textbooks are for learning, and writing this one has taught us a great deal. We have learned from each other and have enjoyed the richness of the collaborative process. But we have also benefited immensely from the opportunity to read and assess the works of literally hundreds of scholars whose research and insights have made this book possible.

We continue to be grateful to friends and colleagues who reviewed previous editions. For the fourth edition, we conducted a survey rather than a formal interview, and we thank all of the anonymous reviewers who weighed in through the survey instrument.

This fourth edition reflects the cumulative assistance we have received since we first began working on the book from numerous colleagues, former students, researchers, and archivists, who graciously answered phone and e-mail queries. For this volume specifically, we thank Tarah Demant, Deena Gonzalez, Ann D. Gordon, Diana Mara Henry, Gloria Orenstein, Pamela Stewart, Kevin Terraciano, and Mir Yarfitz. Katha Pollitt and Stephanie Coontz were especially helpful and generous in helping us publish selections from their recent writing. Thanks also to Sarah Pirpas-Kapit and Serena Zabin for help with the bibliography. Sharon Park provided exceptional research assistance for three of the document essays in this edition, not only finding rich material but also offering excellent analysis that shaped the interpretation of the essays.

We have a great deal of admiration for the people at Bedford/St. Martin's who worked so hard to bring all four editions of this book to fruition. We would specifically like to thank editorial director Edwin Hill, publisher Michael Rosenberg, director of development Jane Knetzger, senior executive editor William Lombardo, senior editor Heidi Hood, developmental editor Kathryn Abbott, executive marketing manager Sandra McGuire, and editorial assistants Arrin Kaplan and Lexi DeConti. Naomi Kornhauser and Sheena Goldstein researched and cleared images; Kalina Ingham supervised the clearance of text permissions; Jennifer Brett

Greenstein copyedited the manuscript; John C. Callahan designed the cover; and Christina Horn oversaw the production process.

We viewed the first edition of *Through Women's Eyes* as an exciting new departure, and the wide adoption and warm reception of reviewers and adopters have confirmed our aspirations. The revisions for this new, fourth edition benefited significantly from the comments of instructors who have used the textbook in their classes and who weighed in specifically on the primary-source essays. We continue to acknowledge the pioneering work of Mary Ritter Beard, *America through Women's Eyes* (1933), and also note that this book would not have been possible without the dynamic developments and extraordinary output in the field of U.S. women's history since Beard's book appeared. In 1933 Beard acknowledged that the "collection, editing, sifting and cataloguing of sources dealing with women's work and thought in the making of civilization" was ground as yet uncultivated.¹ We have been fortunate to reap a rich harvest from the scholarly literature of the last forty years, a literature that has allowed us to express the diversity of women's lives and to conceive of U.S. history from a gendered perspective.

Ellen Carol DuBois
Lynn Dumenil

1. Mary Ritter Beard, ed., *America through Women's Eyes* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 9.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

F O R S T U D E N T S

IN READING THIS TEXTBOOK, you will encounter a rich array of source materials and a narrative informed by a wealth of scholarship, so you may be surprised to learn that women's history is a comparatively new field. When Mary Ritter Beard, the founding mother of women's history in the United States, assembled *America Through Women's Eyes* in 1933, she argued that an accurate understanding of the nation's past required as much consideration of women's experience as of men's. But so limited were the sources available to her that she had no choice but to present the first women-centered American history as a spotty anthology of primary and secondary writings by a handful of women writers. Not until the 1970s, with the resurgence of feminism that you will read about in Chapter 11, did researchers start to give extensive attention to women's history. In that decade, history, along with other academic disciplines such as literature and sociology, underwent significant change as feminist scholars' desire to analyze as well as to protest women's unequal status fueled an extraordinary surge of investigation into women's experiences. Feminist theorists revived an obscure grammatical term, "gender," to distinguish the meaning that a particular society attaches to differences between men and women from "sex," or the unchanging biological differences between men and women. Because gender meaning varies over time and among societies, gender differences are both socially constructed and subject to change.

The concept of gender and the tools of history go together. If we are to move past the notion that what it means to be a woman never changes, we must look to the varying settings in which people assume female and male roles, with all their attendant expectations. Definitions of femininity and masculinity, family structures, what work is considered properly female or male, understandings of motherhood and of marriage, and women's involvement in public affairs all vary tremendously across time, are subject to large forces like economic development and warfare, and can themselves shape the direction of history. As historian Joan Scott forcefully argues, gender can be used as a tool of historical analysis, to explore not only how societies interpret differences between women and men but also how these distinctions can work to legitimize other hierarchical relations of power.¹

This textbook draws on the rich theoretical and historical work of the past forty years to present a synthesis of American women's experiences. We begin with a discussion of the many meanings of "America" and end with a set of essays that

1. Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1067.

examine the issues women face in the twenty-first century. In between we highlight both the broad patterns of change concerning women's political, economic, and family lives and the diversity of American women's experiences.

As its title suggests, however, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents* aims for more than an account of U.S. women's history. Beyond weaving together the wealth of scholarship available to U.S. women's historians, we seek to fulfill Mary Beard's vision of a text that covers the total range of the nation's history, placing women — their experiences, contributions, and observations — at the center. We examine major economic developments, such as the emergence of slavery as a labor system, the rise of factories in the early nineteenth century, the growth of an immigrant labor force, and the shift to corporate capitalism. We explore major political themes, from reform movements to political party realignments to the nation's many wars. We look at transformations in family and personal life, the rise of consumer and mass culture, the racial and ethnic heterogeneity of the nation's peoples, and shifting attitudes about sexuality. And we analyze international developments, beginning with the interrelationship of the Americas, Europe, and Africa in the Atlantic world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and ending with contemporary globalization. But as we do so, we analyze how women experienced these national developments and how they contributed to and shaped them.

◆ THE HISTORY OF WOMEN'S HISTORY: FROM SEPARATE SPHERES TO MULTICULTURALISM

When the field of U.S. women's history began to take off as a scholarly endeavor in the 1970s, one particular form of gender analysis was especially influential. The "separate spheres" paradigm, as historians termed it, focused on the nineteenth-century ideology that divided social life into two mutually exclusive arenas: the private world of home and family, identified with women, and the public world of business and politics, identified with men. In a second phase, as scholarship on women of color increased, the primacy of the separate spheres interpretation gave way to a more nuanced interpretation of the diversity of women's experiences.

Separate Spheres and the Nineteenth-Century Gender System

Women's historians of the 1970s found in the nineteenth-century system of separate spheres the roots of the gender distinctions of their own time. They observed that although ideas about separate spheres had been of enormous importance in the nineteenth century, these ideas had received little to no attention in historical accounts. The approach that women's historians took was to re-vision this nineteenth-century gender system through women's eyes. They found that, although women's lives were tightly constricted by assumptions about their proper place within the family, expectations of female moral influence and a common sense of womanhood allowed women collectively to achieve a surprising degree of social authority.

The separate spheres paradigm proved a valuable approach, but it hid as much as it yielded about women's lives. Early on, historian Gerda Lerner observed that it was no coincidence that the notion of women's exclusive domesticity flourished just as factories were opening up and young women were going to work in them.² Because adherence to the ideology of separate spheres helped to distinguish the social standing of middle-class women from their factory-working contemporaries, Lerner urged that class relations and the growth of the female labor force be taken into account in understanding the influence that such ideas held. Subsequent historians have observed that the idealization of women within the domestic sphere coincided exactly with the decline of the economic importance of family production relative to factory production; and that just as class inequality began to challenge the nation's democratic self-understanding, American society came to define itself in terms of the separate spheres of men and women.

Additional problems emerged in the reliance on the separate spheres paradigm as the dominant basis for nineteenth-century U.S. women's history. Historian Nancy Hewitt contends that whatever sense of female community developed among nineteenth-century women rarely crossed class or race lines. On the contrary, hierarchical relationships—slave to mistress, immigrant factory worker to moneyed consumer, nanny to professional woman—have been central to the intricate tapestry of the historical female experience in America.³ Even among the middle-class wives and mothers who did not work outside the home and whose family-based lives made them the central focus of separate spheres ideology, Linda Kerber urges historians not to confuse rhetoric with reality, ideological values with individual actions.⁴ The lasting contribution of the historical exploration of separate spheres ideology is the recognition of the vital impact of gender differentiation on American history; the challenge posed by its critics is to develop a more complex set of portraits of women who lived in, around, and against these notions. As it matures, the field of women's history is able to move from appreciating the centrality of gender systems to accommodating and exploring conflicts and inequalities among women.

Toward a More Inclusive Women's History: Race and Ethnicity

The field of U.S. women's history has struggled to come to terms with the structures of racial inequality so central to the American national experience. As Peggy Pascoe observes, modern scholars have learned to think about race and gender in similar ways, no longer treating either as unchanging biological essences around which history forms but as social constructions that change meaning and content

2. Gerda Lerner, "The Lady and the Mill Girl," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* 10 (1969): 5–15.

3. Nancy Hewitt, "Beyond the Search for Sisterhood: American Women's History in the 1990s," in Vicki Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois, eds., *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1–19.

4. Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (June 1988): 9–39.

over time and place.⁵ Building on a century-long scholarly tradition in African American history, black women scholars started in the 1980s to chart new territory as they explored the interactions between systems of racial and gender inequality. Analyzing the implications of the denial to late nineteenth-century black women of the privileges granted white women, Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham observes that “gender identity is inextricably linked to and even determined by racial identity.”⁶

Other scholars of color, especially Chicana feminists, advanced this thinking about racial hierarchy and its intersections with the structures of gender. They made it clear that the history of Chicanas could not be understood within the prevailing black-white model of racial interaction. The outlines of a multivocal narrative of U.S. women’s history that acknowledges women’s diversity in terms of race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation are advanced by *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women’s History*, coedited by Vicki Ruiz and one of the authors of this text, Ellen Carol DuBois. This anthology of pathbreaking research pays particular attention to the historical experiences of Western women, noting that “the confluence of many cultures and races in this region — Native American, Mexican, Asian, Black, and Anglo” — required “grappling with race” from a multicultural perspective.⁷ By using her own southwestern experience, Gloria Anzaldúa added the influential metaphor of “borderlands” to this approach to suggest that the division between different communities and personal identities is somewhat arbitrary and sometimes shifting.⁸ This new approach took the logic of the historical construction of gender, so important to the beginning of women’s history, and pushed it further by emphasizing an even greater fluidity of social positioning.

◆ APPROACHING HISTORY THROUGH WOMEN’S EYES

How then to bring together a historical narrative told from such diverse and at times conflicting viewpoints? All written histories rely on unifying themes to organize what is otherwise a chaotic assembly of facts, observations, incidents, and people. Traditionally, American history employed a framework of steady national progress, from the colonial revolt against England to modern times. Starting in the 1960s, the writing of American history emphasized an alternative story line of the struggles of workers, slaves, Indians, and (to some degree) women, to overcome enduring inequalities. Initially, women’s history emphasized the rise and fall of the system of separate gender spheres, the limits of which we suggest above. In

5. Peggy Pascoe, “Gender,” in Richard Wightman Fox and James Kloppenberg, eds., *A Companion to American Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 273.

6. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race,” *Signs* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 254.

7. Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz, eds., *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women’s History* (New York: Routledge, 1990), xii. This reader has three later editions (1994, 2000, 2008) that include substantially different articles.

8. Gloria Anzaldúa, *La Frontera/Borderlands: The New Mestiza* (1987; repr., San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999).

organizing *Through Women's Eyes*, we employ another framework, one that emphasizes three major themes that shaped the diversity of women's lives in American history — work, politics, and family and personal life.

Work and the Sexual Division of Labor

The theme of women's work reveals both stubborn continuities and dramatic changes. Women have always labored, always contributed to the productive capacity of their communities. Throughout American history, women's work has taken three basic forms — unpaid labor within the home, chattel slavery, and paid labor. The steady growth of paid labor, from the beginning of American industrialization in the 1830s to the present day (women now constitute essentially half of America's workforce), is one of the fundamental developments in this history. As the female labor force grew, its composition changed, by age, race, ethnicity, and class. By the mid-twentieth century, the working mother had taken over where once the working girl had predominated. We have also followed the repeated efforts of wage-earning women to organize collectively in order to counter the power of their employers, doing so sometimes in conjunction with male workers and sometimes on their own. Always a small percentage of union members compared to men, women exhibited unanticipated militancy and radicalism in their fight with employers over union recognition and fair wages and hours.

Most societies divide women's work from men's, and America has been no exception. Feminist scholars designate this gender distinction as the "sexual division of labor." Yet the content of the sexual division of labor varies from culture to culture, a point made beginning with the discussion of Native American communities in the precolonial and colonial eras and of African women's agricultural labor in their native lands. When women first began to take on paid labor in large numbers, they did so primarily as servants and seamstresses; the nature of their work thus generally followed the household sexual division of labor. The persistence of sex segregation in the workforce has had many sources of support: employers' desire to have a cheap, flexible supply of labor; male workers' control over better jobs and higher wages; and women's own assumptions about their proper place.

The division between male and female work continued, and with it the low wages and limited opportunities on the women's side of the line. This was true even as what counted as women's jobs began to expand, and teaching and secretarial labor, once securely on the male side of the line, crossed over to become "feminized" job categories. American feminism in the late twentieth century has been committed to eroding this long-standing principle that work should be divided into male and female categories. As historian Alice Kessler-Harris puts it, feminists "introduced the language of sex discrimination onto the national stage, casting a new light on seemingly natural patterns of accommodating sex difference."⁹

9. Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 245–46.

The degree to which the sexual division of labor has been substantially breached—whether it is half achieved or half undone—we leave to our readers, who are part of this process, to determine.

Gender and the Meaning of Politics

The theme of politics in women's historical experience presents a different sort of challenge, for it is the *exclusion* of women from formal politics that is the obvious development in U.S. women's history, at least until 1920 when the Nineteenth Amendment granting woman suffrage was ratified. While the story of women's campaign for the vote plays an important role in our historical account, we have not portrayed the suffrage movement as a monolithic effort. Rather, we have attended to the inequalities of class and race and the strategic and ideological conflicts that ran throughout the movement. We have also stressed the varying political contexts, ranging from Reconstruction in the 1860s to the Populist upsurge in the 1890s to Progressivism in the 1910s, within which women fought for their voting rights. Finally, we have traced the significance of voting in U.S. women's history after the right to it was formally secured, following women's efforts to find their place—as voters and as officeholders—in the American political system.

U.S. women's historians have gone beyond the drama surrounding the vote, its denial and its uses, to a more expansive sense of the political dimension of women's historical experience. Feminist scholars have forged a definition of politics that looks beyond the formal electoral arena to other sorts of collective efforts to change society, alter the distribution of power between groups, create and govern important institutions, and shape public policy. Women's historians have given concrete substance to this broad approach to female political involvement by investigating the tremendous social activism and civic engagement that thrived among women, especially through the long period during which they lacked formal political rights. "In order to bring together the history of women and politics," writes Paula Baker, "we need a more inclusive definition of politics . . . to include any action, formal or informal, taken to affect the course or behavior of government or the community."¹⁰

From this perspective, the importance of women in the realm of politics reaches back to the Iroquois women who elected chiefs and participated in decisions to go to war and the European women colonists who provided the crucial support necessary to sustain pre-Revolutionary boycotts against British goods in the struggle for national independence. Just a small sampling of this rich tradition of women's civic activity through the nineteenth century includes the thousands of New England women who before the Civil War signed petitions against slavery and Indian removal; the campaign begun by Ida B. Wells against the lynching of southern blacks; the ambitious late nineteenth-century national reform agenda of Frances Willard's Woman's Christian Temperance Union; and Jane Addams's

10. Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780–1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 622.

leadership in addressing problems of the urban immigrant poor and on behalf of international peace. “Women’s organizations pioneered in, accepted and polished modern methods of pressure-group politics,” observes historian Nancy Cott.¹¹

Indeed, this sort of extra-electoral political activism extended into the twentieth century, incorporating women’s challenges to the arms race of the post-World War II era and the civil rights leadership of women such as Ella Baker of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the 1950s and Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers union in the 1960s. This inclusive sense of what constitutes “politics” has not only enriched our understanding of women’s history but generated a more complex understanding of the nature of political power and process within U.S. history in general.

Given the theme of politics as one of the major frames for this book, what is the place of the politics of feminism in the tale we tell? There are many definitions of feminism, but perhaps the clearest is the tradition of organized social change by which women challenge gender inequality. The term “feminism” itself arose just as the woman suffrage movement was nearing victory, but the tradition to which it refers reaches back to the women’s rights movements of the nineteenth century. Historical research has unearthed a great deal of breadth and diversity in the many campaigns and protests through which women from different groups, in different times and places, dealing with different challenges, expressed their discontent with the social roles allotted to them and pursued their ambitions for wider options, more individual freedom, and greater social authority.

Feminism and women’s history are mutually informing. Feminism is one of the important subjects of women’s history, and history is one of feminism’s best tools. Knowing what the past has been for women, doing the scholarship that Anne Firor Scott calls “making the invisible woman visible,” is a necessary resource in pressing for further change.¹² But feminism is also a method by which historians examine the past in terms of women’s efforts to challenge, struggle, make change, and sometimes achieve progress. Like so many of the scholars on whom the authors of this text rely, we have worked from such a perspective, and the passion we have brought to this work has its roots in a feminist commitment to highlighting—and encouraging—women’s active social role and contribution to history. For us, however, a women’s history informed by feminism is not a simple exercise of celebration, but a continuing and critical examination of what we choose to examine in the past and the methods we use to do so.

The Role of Family and Personal Life

The third integrating category of *Through Women’s Eyes* is the theme of family and personal life. In contrast to the categories of labor and politics, which have been recognized in all narratives of the nation’s past, women’s historians took the lead in

11. Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of American Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 95.

12. Anne Firor Scott, “Making the Invisible Woman Visible: An Essay Review,” *Journal of Southern History* 38, no. 4 (November 1972): 629–38.

bringing family and personal life into the mainstream of American history. Indeed, one of the fundamental contributions of feminist scholarship has been to demonstrate that kinship and sexuality have been not static elements of human nature but elements with their own complex histories. We try to make this clear by discussing the variety of family patterns evident among Native Americans, immigrants, African Americans, white middle-class Americans, and other ethnic groups.

Over the span of American history, family life has gone from the very center of political power and economic production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to a privileged arena of emotional life in the early twenty-first century. As we write this introduction, family life—who can marry whom, what forms of sexuality should be tolerated, who should care for children and how—have become topics of intense public contest and political positioning. Thus concepts and experiences of family and sexual life, once viewed as the essence of women's separate sphere, are increasingly understood as a major connection between private concerns and public issues.

The histories of both motherhood and female sexuality reveal this connection. Motherhood not only has been central to women's individual family lives but also has served larger functions as well. Within slave communities, mothers taught their children how to survive within and fight against their servitude. Among middle-class women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, motherhood became an effective way to claim female public authority. In the 1950s, at the start of the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union, radical women subverted intense anti-Communist interrogations under the cloak of motherhood, thus trumping one of the decade's most dramatic themes with another. The social significance of motherhood has been used for conservative political purposes as well, with claims about the centrality of women's maternal role to social order providing the fuel of the antifeminist backlash of the 1970s and through it the emergence of a new political right wing.

When it comes to the subject of sexuality, historians have proved particularly innovative in learning to read through the euphemisms and silences that obscure women's sexual lives even more than men's. They have delved into documents left by guardians of sexual propriety about prostitutes and by lascivious masters about slave women, in order to imagine how the objects of these judgments themselves experienced these encounters. When historians set aside modern attitudes toward sexuality and reexamined the lives of seemingly prudish nineteenth-century middle-class women, they found, as Linda Gordon demonstrates, the origins of the American birth control movement and all the radical changes in women's lives that flowed from it.¹³ No longer content to portray the history of female sexuality as a simple move from repression to freedom, historians have examined the changing understandings of female sexuality and its shifting purposes in the twentieth century, as it played a major role in advancing new standards of consumerism, and in

13. Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America* (1976; repr., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

modernizing—though not necessarily making more egalitarian—relations between men and women.

Perhaps historians of women have been most creative in learning to look beyond the heterosexual relations that traditionally have defined sexuality to explore the intimate, romantic, and ambiguously sexual relations among women themselves. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg pioneered in demonstrating how common romantic friendships among women were in the nineteenth century, describing them as “an intriguing and almost alien form of human relation, [which] flourished in a different social structure and amidst different sexual norms.”¹⁴ Historical work on what has come to be called “homosociality” has deepened understandings of sexuality overall. Thus, as with the concepts of gender and race, women’s history has led us to view sexuality itself as socially constructed, not as biologically prescribed.

Sexuality has been an especially important site for historians to locate the intersections of race and gender. Middle-class white women’s historical prominence rested in considerable part on the contrast between their reputed sexual innocence and propriety and the supposedly disreputable (and titillating) sexuality of women of color on the margins, such as black slaves, so-called Indian squaws, and Asian prostitutes. This intersection between sexuality and race has also been investigated from the position of women who found themselves on the other side of the vice-virtue divide. As historian Paula Giddings argues, the rising up of recently freed African American women against their reputations as sexually available and that of African American men as sexually predatory helped to generate the creation of a black middle class and “a distinctive mix which underlined Black women’s activism for generations to come.”¹⁵

These and other discoveries in the field of U.S. women’s history have made this textbook possible. The rich body of scholarly literature developed over the past decades has also enabled us to achieve our goal of integrating women’s history into U.S. history, of showing how material once separated as “women’s history” contributes to a broader understanding of the nation’s history. In *America Through Women’s Eyes*, Mary Beard insisted that women be rendered not as the passive objects of men’s actions but as makers of history themselves; and that their history not be removed from the historical flow into a separate narrative but be understood as part and parcel of the full range of national experience. This has been our guiding principle in writing this textbook—and the reason we have titled it an American history “through women’s eyes.”

14. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual,” *Signs* 1 (1979): 1–29.

15. Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1984), 50.

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Fourth Edition

THROUGH WOMEN'S EYES

An American History

WITH DOCUMENTS

1

America
in the World

TO 1650

- 12,000 B.C.E.** Archaeological evidence indicates human habitation in the Americas
- 300 B.C.E.** Anasazi settle in the North American Southwest
- 600 C.E.** **Pueblo cultures emerge, establishing a matrilineal system**
- 1100–1400** Mississippian cultures develop
- 1444** First African slaves in Spain and Portugal
- c. 1450** Iroquois Confederacy formed
- 1479–1504** **Reign of Isabella of Castile**
- 1492–1504** Christopher Columbus's voyages
- c. 1502** **Malinche born**
- 1502** First African slaves in Caribbean
- 1513** Spanish explorers land in Florida, bringing disease
- 1517** Protestant Reformation begins
- 1519** Hernán Cortés arrives in Mexico
- 1519** **Malinche and nineteen other Indian women are presented to Cortés**
- 1520** First epidemics of Old World diseases occur in North America
- 1532** First recorded African slave shipment to Hispaniola
- 1533** **Princess Elizabeth born to Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII, king of England**
- 1534** Jacques Cartier's first voyage down the St. Lawrence
- 1540–1542** Vázquez de Coronado marches into Zuñi lands in New Mexico



PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES OFTEN refer to themselves as Americans and to their nation as America. From this perspective, “America” includes the places, peoples, and economic systems that eventually became the single national entity of the United States. But there are other meanings of “America” to consider. “America” is the name given to the entire hemisphere by the Europeans who accidentally encountered it in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. “America” is also the term that eventually devolved on the northern continent of that hemisphere; there many European empires vied for control before England prevailed. The indigenous peoples of North America had many names for themselves that translated as “men” or “the people,” but Europeans called them “Americans” or “American Indians.” Finally, colonists of European descent came to refer to themselves as Americans, to distinguish themselves from their Old World predecessors. Modern Americans have inherited all of these meanings of “America.”

To begin American history, more and more historians are looking beyond (or before) the English establishment of the thirteen Atlantic colonies. Using a multicultural lens, we can reconfigure early American history as the intersection of and conflict between several distinct histories—Native American, European, and African. In addition, each of these groups contained many different societies. With this

photos: top, Capilla Real, Granada, Spain/Bridgeman Images; middle, Universal History Archive/UIG/Bridgeman Images; bottom, Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire, UK/Bridgeman Images

approach, we can reach back before the traditional starting events, the first English settlements that proved to be permanent on the North American continent — Jamestown in 1607 and Plymouth in 1620 — to important and shaping processes in the 1500s. These include the developments among Native peoples; the impact of the initial sixteenth-century contact between Native peoples and Europeans, including disease, trade, and conquest; the powerful Spanish empire in the New World that preceded, inspired, and competed with the later-arriving English; the invention of transatlantic slavery and the plantation agriculture system that it served; and political, economic, and religious upheavals in Europe from the late Renaissance through the Protestant Reformation.

To view these beginnings of American history through women’s eyes requires creativity. Although our cherished national myths emphasize the family origins of seventeenth-century New England immigration, the first century of European incursions in the western hemisphere was overwhelmingly male. So was the introduction of African slaves to the Americas in the sixteenth century, because enslaved women were held back in Africa, where they were valued, even as enslaved men were worked to death in the Americas. But Native women and European and African men encountered each other, willingly and unwillingly, across a divide of massive cultural difference that has been described as “an epochal cross-roads of gender.”¹

For much of their national history, Americans have preferred to think of their country as exceptional, different from the other nations of the world, set apart by geography, democratic traditions, and Christian heritage. In our own age of airplanes and the Internet, in a thoroughly multicultural and multireligious society, faith in American exceptionalism and superiority seems outdated. America in the twenty-first century is situated thoroughly in a global system of culture, economics, power relations, and human migration.

But America was in and of the world in other periods as well. From the 1500s on, people, ideas, natural materials, and manufactured goods went back and forth between the Old World and the New, including the horse, an animal that dramatically changed the culture of Native peoples, and the maize plant, first developed in what is now Mexico, then imported to Europe to become an important staple crop. As one historian has put it, “America was international before it was national.”²

bottom photo: Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

1542 Bartolomé de Las Casas publishes account of the devastation of the Indies

1550–1600 Portuguese and Spanish sugar cultivation begun in Americas; first using indigenous slave labor, later using African slave labor

1558–1603 **Reign of Queen Elizabeth I**

1565 Spanish establish St. Augustine, Florida

c. 1581 **Birth of Nzinga, queen of Angola**

c. 1585–1587 Roanoke colony

1587 **Birth of Virginia Dare**

1595? **Pocahontas born**

1598 Spanish Franciscan friars come to New Mexico

1598 Acoma rebellion in New Mexico

c. 1600 Powhatan confederacy established

1607 Jamestown founded

1607 John Smith taken captive and adopted by Powhatans

1608 Samuel de Champlain founds Quebec

1614 **Pocahontas marries John Rolfe**

1616–1617 **Pocahontas travels to England; dies the next year**

1619 First record of Africans brought into British North America



◆ NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN

With at least two hundred languages spoken in North America on the eve of European conquest, the world of Native Americans defies simple generalization. Historians usually analyze Native Americans in the context of region and economic activities. Thus, in the Southwest lived agricultural peoples, the Pueblos. In California lived hunter-gatherers, for example, the Chumash; in the Northwest, the fishing Nootkas; and in the Great Plains, hunters such as the Crows, the Sioux, and the Blackfeet. In the Great Lakes region, groups such as the Ojibwas emphasized hunting. In the eastern woodlands, the Iroquois lived inland west of the Hudson River, and Algonquian-speaking peoples populated the Atlantic Coast from what is today Maine to the present Carolinas. Both the Iroquois and coastal Algonquians engaged in agriculture (see Map 1.1).

The diversity of Native peoples extended to their gender systems. Here, as in all of the history that went into creating America, this fundamental fact stands out: the divisions between the worlds of men and the worlds of women, the distinctions that we call gender, were omnipresent but infinitely varied. In horticultural societies, where people depended on corn and other crops, lineage was generally traced by matrilineal descent, or through the mother's line. In hunter-gatherer societies, lineage was often determined by patrilineal descent, that is, through the father's line. Women's experiences after marriage depended on whether they were expected to live among their husband's people (patrilocal marriage) or whether their husbands came to live with them (matrilocal). Indigenous women's daily work varied according to where they lived and what foodstuffs were available. For example, women planted and tended corn in both the Northeast and the Southwest, but southwestern women spent more time irrigating their crops. Women also had different degrees of status and autonomy in their societies. No matter what specific tasks were included, roles related to economic activities were a powerful determinant in Native women's lives.

Indigenous Peoples before 1492

Archaeological evidence indicates that at least fourteen thousand years ago (and probably much earlier), Native Americans migrated across a land bridge that once united Siberia and Alaska. Historians believe that by the fifteenth century, between 7 and 12 million people lived in the area that is now the United States. Although popular images of Native Americans depict them primarily as hunter-gatherers or nomadic hunters, a significant number engaged in farming, along with fishing or hunting. The Cahokia settlement in present-day Illinois, for instance, featured large cornfields around a residential and ceremonial center. In these agricultural communities, women fulfilled crucial roles in planting, harvesting, and processing food. Before the arrival of Europeans, some indigenous groups hunted bison on the Great Plains by using fires to stampede the animals over cliffs. It was not until Native groups living on the borders of the plains — like the Comanches, Arapahos, Cheyennes, and

♦ **Map 1.1** Native American Peoples, 1492

By the time of Columbus's arrival, Native American peoples populated the entire western hemisphere. Among those groups who practiced intensive agriculture, both men and women farmed. Among groups who practiced both hunting and agriculture, men were primarily the hunters while women did most of the farming. Among tribes engaged primarily in hunting, women hunted smaller game, gathered wild plant foods, and processed the meat and skins of the larger animals killed by men.



◆ **Effigy Bottle from Cahokia Mound (c. 1200–1400)**

The people of Cahokia were part of a large group whom historians call Mississippians, who lived in the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers' watersheds from roughly 1000 to 1730. Distinguished by the large earthen mounds they built for ceremonial, political, and residential purposes, they apparently had a highly stratified social structure and complex culture. Artifacts recovered from the mounds reveal a wide variety of artisanal crafts, including pottery and stonework, some of which may have been produced by women. This meticulously carved ceramic bottle in the shape of a nursing mother was presumably not for everyday use but for ritualistic or symbolic purposes; perhaps it was placed in a grave for use in the afterlife. What insight into Mississippian women's lives and into the larger meanings of motherhood in their culture does the image offer? *St. Louis Museum of Science & Natural History, Missouri, U.S./Photo © The Detroit Institute of Arts/Bridgeman Images.*

Sioux — had access to horses that significant numbers migrated to the Great Plains and became nomadic bison hunters. In all groups that emphasized hunting, men killed big game while women skinned the animals and prepared the meat.

Wherever they lived, indigenous Americans were not a static people, frozen in time waiting for Europeans to “discover” them. Historians have mapped out an amazing array of Indian trails that crisscrossed the continent. Trading in shells, furs, agricultural products, pottery, salt, copper, and slaves, communities of Native Americans had contact with and knowledge of many other groups with whom they shared the continent. Although trade was peaceful, Native Americans sometimes warred with one another over land and resources. This violence had special meaning for women since they and children were often taken captive and forcibly integrated into the societies of their captors. Both warfare and ecological pressures such as drought prompted significant migration, the merging of communities, and the rise and fall of powerful Indian nations. Although we have virtually no documents written by the women themselves, a cautious reading of European eyewitness accounts of the Native communities they encountered has provided historians with insights into Native American lives. (See Primary Sources: “European Images of Native American Women,” pp. 34–43.)

In many Indian nations, women had more power and sexual choices than most European women of their time did, albeit in the context of clear distinctions between the labor and responsibilities of men and women. In other words, in traditional Native societies, relations between the sexes were characterized simultaneously by difference and by a degree of equality. The following examination of two well-documented groups reveals the diverse lives of Native American women and their cultures.



◆ Huron Women

In 1615, Samuel de Champlain, French founder of Quebec City, lived for a time with the Hurons. He was both impressed and disturbed by Huron women's responsibilities. He wrote: "[They] till the soil, sow the Indian corn, fetch wood for the winter, strip the hemp and spin it, and with the thread make fishing-nets for catching fish, . . . have the labour of harvesting the corn, storing it, preparing food, and attending to the house." In contrast, the men "do nothing but hunt deer and other animals, fish, build lodges and go on the warpath."³ (Figure "E" is Champlain's depiction of a Huron warrior.) Champlain also drew Huron women in several of their roles. Figure "F" is an adult woman, holding a child in one hand and a stalk of corn in the other. Figure "G" is a young girl, both provocative and modest, dressed for a ritual dance. Figure "H," wrote Champlain, depicts "how the women pound the Indian corn." *Private Collection/Bridgeman Images.*

READING INTO THE PAST

Two Sisters and Acoma Origins

According to the Acoma Pueblo Indians' origin story, the first women in the world were two sisters, born underneath the ground and sent above by Tsichtinako (Thought Woman). She first taught them to plant corn, tend and harvest it, grind it for food, and use fire to cook it. What follows is an excerpt from one such story told in 1928 by residents of the Acoma and Santa Ana pueblos to anthropologist Matthew W. Stirling. Native peoples' oral traditions, recorded by ethnographers, have become the source of much knowledge of Native history. What are the advantages and disadvantages of oral traditions recorded by outsiders as a source of historical knowledge? Why do you suppose corn played such an important part in the way in which Pueblo people understand their origins?

Tsichtinako spoke to them, "Now is the time you are to go out. You are able to take your baskets with you. In them you will find pollen and sacred corn meal. When you reach the top, you will wait for the sun to come up and that direction will be called ha'nami [east]. With the pollen and the sacred corn meal you will pray to the Sun. You will thank the Sun for bringing you to light, ask for a long life and happiness, and for success in the purpose for which you were created." Tsichtinako then taught them the prayers and the creation song, which they were to sing. . . .

They now prayed to the Sun as they had been taught by Tsichtinako, and sang the creation song. Their eyes hurt for they were not accustomed to the strong light. For the first time they asked Tsichtinako why they were

The Pueblo Peoples

Perched on cliffs in present-day New Mexico and Colorado are the remains of prehistoric dwellings of the Native people called Anasazi, who settled in the area as early as 300 B.C.E. From their distinctive multistoried, mud-plastered buildings came the generic name "Pueblos," which the Spanish gave to Anasazi descendants such as the Zuñi, Hopi, Acoma, and similar peoples who were living in the American Southwest (New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah) by 1250 C.E. When the Spanish arrived in the region in the mid-sixteenth century, there were close to 250,000 Pueblo people living in more than one hundred towns and villages. The Pueblo peoples encompassed seven language groups, and undoubtedly customs and rituals varied from tribe to tribe, despite many points of similarity.

on earth and why they were created. Tsichtinako replied, “I did not make you. Your father, Uchtsiti, made you, and it is he who has made the world, the sun which you have seen, the sky, and many other things which you will see. But Uchtsiti says the world is not yet completed, not yet satisfactory, as he wants it. This is the reason he has made you. You will rule and bring to life the rest of the things he has given you in the baskets.” . . . Tsichtinako next said to them, “Now that you have your names, you will pray with your names and your clan names so that the Sun will know you and recognize you.” Tsichtinako asked Nautsiti which clan she wished to belong to. Nautsiti answered, “I wish to see the sun, that is the clan I will be.” The spirit told Nautsiti to ask Iatiku what clan she wanted. Iatiku thought for a long time but finally she noticed that she had the seed from which sacred meal was made in her basket and no other kind of seeds. She thought, “With this name I shall be very proud, for it has been chosen for nourishment and it is sacred.” So she said, “I will be Corn clan.” . . .

When they had completed their prayers to the sun, Tsichtinako said, “You have done everything well and now you are both to take up your baskets and you must look to the north, west, south, and east, for you are now to pray to the Earth to accept the things in the basket and to give them life. First you must pray to the north, at the same time lift up your baskets in that direction. You will then do the same to the west, then to the south and east.” They did as they were told and did it well. And Tsichtinako said to them, “From now on you will rule in every direction, north, west, south, and east.”

SOURCE: Matthew W. Stirling, *Origin Myth of Acoma and Other Records* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1942), 3–5.

Like many other Indian peoples, the Pueblos apparently experienced much social disruption in the years preceding conquest. The hostile incursions of more nomadic Apaches from the Great Plains into their region may have been one of the causes for significant Pueblo migration and change in the region during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

By the 1500s, the Pueblos were already practicing intensive agriculture, growing corn, squash, and beans. As in other societies, labor was divided by sex. Men traded goods and provided defense; they also tended the corn crop. Men collected and placed the timbers for the construction of their homes, but women plastered the walls. Women’s work centered on what went on within those walls, the “inside” of the community. They created pottery, made moccasins and blankets, and, most crucially, prepared the food. Grinding the dried corn was women’s work, a task that daughters and mothers shared. Women viewed their food production as vital to