

SUSAN B. ANTHONY, SIOUX CITY, AND THE REALITY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

BY RUSSELL GIFFORD

Summary:

In 1871 and 1877, Susan B. Anthony spoke in the frontier town of Sioux City, Iowa. What brought her there, and what was her message? This paper speaks of Anthony's actual visits to Sioux City, Sioux City's reactions to her, and Sioux City's impact on her later speeches. It also considers the merits of speaking as a method of promoting social change and notes possible similarities with today.

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On the last day of May 1871, Susan Anthony boarded a train in Rochester, New York with the eventual target of reaching California. It was the first time she would travel to the western shores to lecture, but she and Elizabeth Cady Stanton decided they should bring the suffrage message to the states on the Pacific coast. It would be a taxing journey, but both Anthony and Stanton agreed it was necessary. Why?

As the political battles over citizen and voting rights flared following the end of the War of Rebellion, Anthony and Stanton increased their efforts to secure women the right to vote. Their newspaper, *The Revolution*, carried their thoughts to readers, much as the many anti-slavery papers spread the abolitionist arguments to the country before the war started. By the end of the war, though, Anthony and Stanton had gained fame pushing legislators to hear women's issues – though the lawmakers generally turned them away. But turned aside, they became better known for their speeches at conventions and other events. Eventually, they coopted the method of the lyceum circuit of lectures that had gained popularity in the northeastern states in the 1850s, and again flourished after the war. Anthony and Stanton began creating their own gatherings by booking space in lecture halls and inviting listeners to hear these famous agitators. Their fame grew and they spread beyond the former Lyceum circuit to reach cities the circuit had never touched.

Their reliance on lectures reflected what they had learned in the fight for women's equality. The unifying factor of female support for suffrage was their level of education. As women became educated and reached for jobs beyond household duties, they realized the limits of the sphere to which all women were constrained.

Their own histories spoke to the same:

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, like Abigail Adams before her, was formally educated by her father. Stanton became outraged when she studied law in her father's office and became better at it than either of her brothers – but could not practice as a lawyer, though they could.

Susan Anthony's situation provided a template for many women's experiences. Her education began early. She learned to read at the age of three, and her parents fed her constant need for new materials and books. Their home in Rochester, New York served as a meeting place for anti-slavery activists, including Frederick Douglass, and she soaked up knowledge by listening to visitors discussing and debating the issues of the day, which formed her skills in logical thought process. At 15 she became a teacher, and an organizer of one of the earliest New York temperance groups. Living in the 'free soil' region of upstate New York in the 1840s and 1850s, she incubated in the constant stories of escaping slaves streaming through the region, and lent her skills to the booming abolitionist efforts, whose newspapers were powered by the leading thinkers of the day. But Anthony became coldly furious when she found a male teacher working beside her was paid \$10, to her \$2.50. The responses, that he would be the 'breadwinner' and 'support a family' meant little to her, because, if a woman married, she could no longer teach, thus, no woman could ever be considered a 'breadwinner.'

Further fuel to feed her internal anger came from knowing when a woman married, her property became her husband's property. Nor could she sign any legal agreements – only her husband could. Anthony knew that if a married woman could not decide her own future, she could not marry. Like Stanton, she resolved to change the laws.

A mutual friend to both, Amelia Bloomer was also creating waves by daring to state that women had the right to choose the type of clothing they wore. Her advocacy of pants-like garments for women – pantaloons - still conformed to tradition by being worn under skirts but would allow skirts to be less flouncy and thus give women more freedom of movement than corsets. These pants became derisively known as 'bloomers.' The name would stick and become a part of history.

As would happen many times in America, style overcomes issues. The idea of women being free to choose the clothes they wear dominated the minds of people, completely burying any discussion of issues of women's rights.

Amelia Bloomer's added contribution to history is her introduction of Stanton to Anthony, a year after Stanton's successful co-creation of the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention. Together, Stanton's legal acumen and Anthony's strategic public demonstrations would power the women's rights movement for five decades.

Each had the ability to create logical yet moving arguments that kept attention on the unfair nature of confining women to a protected, and limiting, status. Anthony's work moved some states toward positive actions in women's rights as early as the 1850s. New York became the first state to allow women to maintain ownership of their property

after marriage. One judge advocated that the Constitution should be amended to include women on equal grounds with men.

Of course, it is a reality of history that war stops all voluntary social change. The Civil War – then known as the War of Rebellion – would be no different. These 'outrageous' laws allowing women some rights would be rolled back in 1862 as the reactionaries pushed back. But the war, as in all wars, would create forces of its own that would require change. The millions of now freed slaves, and the question of their new position in America would be a huge factor in the post-Civil War world.

Changes in the Postbellum Era and the Split in the Women's Suffrage Movement

With the successful quashing of the War of Rebellion, the idea of granting of citizenship and the vote to former slaves - Freedmen - gained momentum. This smashed the presidency of Andrew Johnson, whose determined efforts revolved around maintaining the longtime barriers between the races.¹ Congress overrode Johnson's veto of a Civil Rights act – the first time a Presidential veto had been overturned. They would do so again, and eventually, the House would impeach Johnson, though they would fail to convince the Senate to remove him.²

The 1868 elections placed Grant into the presidency, who joined with the self-proclaimed 'Radical' Republicans in the Senate and House committed to protecting the newly freed slaves. This result clearly demonstrated the public disapproval of now former President Johnson's efforts to maintain Freedmen as a lesser class. Astute activists like Anthony and Stanton recognized the wall defining citizenship at the federal level would be too low to hold back the floodtide of opinion, and that the Congress would push for an amendment to specifically give Freeman the right to vote. Anthony and Stanton intended to see women ride the same wave and pass over that forbidding obstacle with the former slaves.

But the split came quickly. First were the fears of political backers in Congress, who questioned their ability to pass an amendment with women also in the mix. There is some evidence they questioned if women would vote for the Republican party, which was no small issue, since the former secessionist states would soon be included in the voting. There was no question that the freed slaves would favor the Republicans, and thus the northern viewpoint on the war and the status of the returning states. But would women?

When long time abolitionist allies like Fredrick Douglass agreed to remove women from the 14th amendment, which outlawed depriving any citizen of equal protection regardless of race, Anthony and Stanton bristled. "If that word 'male' be inserted, it will take us a century at least to get it out," wrote Stanton to Anthony.

¹ Using 'race as it was understood in the 19th century. Today we realize while there are different colorations, there is only one race of humans.

² While Johnson may have deserved impeachment for his actions, he did not deserve it on the charges brought against him – his dismissal of a cabinet member over the express wishes of Congress.

Shorn of women, the 14th amendment passed in 1868, but the result fell short of everyone's expectations. While it did grant Freedmen citizenship, and equal protection, it did not guarantee the vote. As women could attest, citizenship did *not* give someone the right to vote, at least not as it was understood in 1868. A new amendment, specifically outlining voting rights, would be required.

Anthony and Stanton redoubled their efforts for the coming battle, with speeches and their newly minted newspaper, *The Revolution*. "Men, their rights, and nothing more. Women, their rights, and nothing less," proclaimed the masthead to all readers.

Congressional allies, though, remained doubtful of their ability to convince the Senate and House that both former slaves and women should be given the franchise to vote. Douglass, mindful that with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, black men had been hunted, tortured, shot, and lynched to intimidate them and stop them from exercising their citizenship, commented that "I do not see how anyone can argue that it is as imperative to give women the vote before men." He assured all that the Freedmen would work to get women the vote later.

Anthony, perhaps a better reader of political realities, resented what she perceived as a sell out. She doubted newly elected blacks would have sufficient clout to keep their promise. But her retort burned: "If it is a question, give the right to vote to the more intelligent first" and echoed Douglass' assurance that women would ensure the passage for freed slaves afterward.

Further intemperate statements by Anthony smashed friendships and sowed the seeds of separation. But her accurate assessment of the issue of clout proved correct. The tide would soon ebb. She knew that Republicans *must* pass a law allowing former slaves to vote. With the increased population in the South now that the 'three-fifths' clause was voided, there would be additional House seats for the South in the House of Representatives. Those seats would be filled by Southern whites who had likely supported slavery and secession if only whites in the South voted.

Clearly, these former slaves could be expected to vote Republican, and thus, Freedmen would assuredly get the vote. Anthony and Stanton knew this brief moment in time was their chance to get women added to the voting rolls. They escalated the pressure on their allies in Congress for women's voting rights. Their logic was irrefutable. Knowing that if women failed now, when the President and most of the Republicans in Congress were committed to extending these rights to Freedmen, justice for women would not happen in the foreseeable future.

None of this logic made their pressure less irritating to their allies.

Anthony recognized the high stakes, and her invectives and condescending – some say race baiting – statements aimed at Douglass and Congressional allies mar her record. But to paraphrase John Adams, another dedicated battler known for his sharp retorts to opponents, revolutionaries do not change the world if they are afraid to hurt people's

feelings. Anthony certainly qualifies as a revolutionary, and she repeatedly stormed the barricades to carry the day.

Their efforts fell short, however. The 15th Amendment sent from Congress to the state legislatures for approval only addressed voting rights for former male slaves.

If their opponents thought Anthony and Stanton would quit, they did not know these women. Stanton urged that women should loudly oppose the amendment using the very logic of America's founding fathers: women were not represented; thus, such a law could not be considered binding on the women it sought to control. Men have no right to pass a law defining women's rights.

Stanton's argument was more to the point than Anthony's biting remarks over who was more qualified, educated women or former slaves, but it, too, wounded feelings that would sunder long standing bonds of friendship. This time, however, those friendships were within their own equal rights association they had created.

Stanton and Anthony's new strategy required defeating the 15th amendment with the intention to get a better replacement. Fellow friend and Association member Lucy Stone's embrace of the 15th amendment as it stood led to the split in the women's suffrage efforts into rival suffrage groups in 1869.

The passage of the 15th amendment in 1870 was a success of former male slaves, following years of active effort by many groups. But it was a success paved by the efforts of abolition groups that had been organized in in no small part by women, who labored for decades to make this happen. As Anthony predicted, those same women were the ones held back from their goal of gaining women the vote when abandoned by their erstwhile allies.

That desertion would have consequences. When the new rival suffrage groups formed, Anthony and Stanton made their new group for women only. This split would last for decades.

Defining a New Path Forward

Lesser people might have been discouraged and quit, but not Anthony, and not Stanton. They redoubled their efforts, maintained the pressure, and demanded the stage. The revolution may not have come to pass, but these rebels would not stop demanding that people listen to their reasoning.

The split in the national organization now changed and sharpened the message. Rather than women's rights, it now became all about gaining the vote. Stanton and Anthony correctly realized that equality would only come with the vote, as it was local councils and judges that enforced the laws preventing women from owning property, holding various jobs, and punishing those outside the perceived social order of the day – 'outside the women's sphere,' to use the accepted thinking of the 19th century.

This new focus on the vote meant it was time to bring their message to all parts of the country. The new states, with the hard work of homesteading bringing recognition to the value of women's labors in the home and in the field, might change the dynamic. Wyoming in 1869 allowed women to vote in local elections! California, already a state before the war, was rapidly growing in population. The rest of the west coast north of California provided a home to many strong women. These women walked beside the wagons from the Missouri river to the new lands to homestead with their families and became hardened to suffering. Few men of the new lands would deny their women had inner reserves of strength, and all that had traveled with them knew the hardships they had faced on the trail, and in the new lands. It was a different dynamic in Oregon. Anthony regularly received letters asking her help in organizing the budding suffrage groups there.

The trip west now beckoned Anthony and Stanton because the railroads completed the transcontinental connection in 1869. Safe and swift transportation to California and the many states and territories beyond the Mississippi could now be achieved by rail, rather than the long, hard rides of a horse pulled coach. But despite the speed trains had brought to travel, and relative comfort compared to stagecoaches and wagons, neither woman thought the trips would be a lark. No one knew better than Anthony the struggles and stresses the long travel days would bring. Long, because each woman would speak at stops all along the trip, not just on the coast. They would travel separately part of the trip and lecture at locations known and unknown to them before meeting in Chicago, and then joining in Council Bluffs, Iowa to continue the long trip to the West by rail across the plains and the mountains.

The lectures partially funded the travel, but more importantly, they spread the reasoning of the women's movement. Lectures and talks brought Anthony's firm logic and Stanton's legal acumen to everyone, not only those that wanted to hear their argument. Their proposed appearance in a town would spark discussion. Newspapers would discuss the suffrage movement in the run up to the event, and letters of opinions pro and con would be printed. Local clubs and reading groups would engage more people.

Anthony and Stanton knew women were not united on the need for women's suffrage. While clearly a majority of men opposed women voting, many women also questioned a woman's need for the vote. These lectures, while generally addressing both sexes, would also speak specifically to women's concerns about changing the 'protected' status of women. It was vital that women hear the arguments, not only men.

All people – men and women, would hear of the events, and many would attend. Many more, however, would read of the discussions as newspapers would be filled with pro and con comments in the weeks that followed a speech by Anthony. Like today's social media, much of what would be printed in the letters to the editor following an Anthony speech would be of questionable accuracy, and mostly supporting the status quo. The articles rarely took on Anthony's logical statements, but her 'insult of local women' at

best. More often, the pundits commented derisively on her looks, and how her feelings were understandable, considering her 'failure' to be 'attractive to a man.'

But even at this level, Anthony's visit would keep the issue in the headlines and the small print for days or weeks, long after her polarizing personality had left the region for the next stop. It also led to more notice of national stories that referenced the women's movement appearing in the paper. Some weeks or a month later, someone, often a woman, would place a thoughtful letter engaging the points Anthony made in her speeches. Unlike the preceding stories, it would consider realities of being a woman in the working world, and why these issues might matter to women.

These were the realities that placed Susan B. Anthony on the railroad platform on that final day of May in 1871 to catch the 10 a.m. train. It would start a journey that would take months. She crossed the continent and explored territories that had never heard Anthony or Stanton speak. They would reach thousands of listeners.

The Journey Begins

Anthony's initial journey showed nothing about this trip would be easy. Originally intending a morning train for Erie, Pennsylvania, an urgent need for a dentist stopped that plan. Her dentures frequently caused her pain, but this time, more than she could stand. Bearing this pain daily, she rarely spoke of it, but it also accounts for her outward demeanor and thin smile that could be confused with a grimace.

The emergency dental appointment meant she departed the station almost 12 hours later, near 10 p.m. She thus arrived in Erie at 3 in the morning, where she was to change train lines. But her delay leaving meant a missed connection, and her train would not leave until mid-morning. In her notes, she states she "took to her bed until 8 a.m." Anthony returned to the station for a 10:30 a.m. train bound for Pittsburgh, arriving at 5 p.m. Again, a layover meant she had time for supper, sleep, and before arriving back at the depot to catch a 10 p.m. train, which deposited her at her destination – a small depot at 2:30 a.m. "Bed until 5 a.m., then carriage at 6 a.m." she notes in her diary. After a hard carriage ride with 'terrific dust' and the 'wind in our faces' she arrived in Brooksville, Pennsylvania on Friday, June 2. Was it worth it?

She sounded disappointed in her diary notes. The audience was "limited." A smallpox fear, "as well as the awful heat" made the turnout smaller. "Dreadfully tired," she wrote in her diary, "and terrific dust." She continues, "went straight to bed." The next day, after the carriage got them to the next event by 4 p.m. she would write that despite the "awful heat" she spoke to "pretty fair audience."

But all this was a side show. She was heading for California, and rail traffic meant she needed to get back to Erie to catch her train. She traversed the same roads back, this time leaving at 9 a.m. She noted in the carriage it was 'not so warm as yesterday' but that was the only good point. The next day, Saturday, she left the smaller depot at 7 in the morning and achieved Pittsburg by 11 a.m. - on schedule to catch her train

connection back to Erie, she thought. She sat for 2 hours at the station until someone finally informed her there was no Saturday train to Erie. The next one would leave at 11 a.m. on Sunday. "To bed – tired and disgusted that nobody should know the schedule."

This was only the earliest days for a long journey. It would be filled with days of bad connections, lost luggage, late arrivals, and early departures.

With a few speaking stops in Ohio and Indiana, she would reach Chicago on Jun 7th – one week since her Rochester departure. The Chicago meeting with the supporters of the new Cook County Women's Suffrage movement was joyous, but some things never change: Her trunks did not arrive. Elizabeth Stanton did arrive, however, and they spent the evening with supporters in celebration of this new Chicago chapter. She and Stanton both spoke and enjoyed the ice cream following – but Anthony had a train to catch. She would be speaking in Des Moines the next day. Anthony spends the weekend in the Iowa capitol, recuperating, and good news: her trunks finally catch up with her! But come Monday, the 12th, she catches a 4 p.m. train to Council Bluffs, Iowa, to meet with an old friend, who would host her during her time in this western Iowa community and rail hub. Amelia Bloomer, who had introduced Anthony to Stanton almost 20 years before, happily met a tired Susan Anthony at the train station at 11 p.m.,

Bloomer had relocated west in 1854 when her husband's job took him to the new state of Iowa. In 1871, Bloomer served as President of the Iowa Suffrage Association, and welcomed her old friend into her home. While there was much to discuss, Anthony had hoped to rest for the night. Her train to Sioux City would leave early. "Undertook to sleep," Anthony wrote.

This was not an unusual occurrence to stay with allies and friends. Single women were not always comfortable, or welcome in hotels, due to social norms of the day. Frequently, Anthony would sleep in the homes of locals who supported the cause. In other towns, there would be hotels, though generally, only if they were of a known quality. Beyond the problems of a noisy hotel, and social considerations, bedbugs were a common occurrence in this era. Only good hotels were trusted. However, with her schedule, and unbending train schedules, Anthony frequently found herself waiting for late-night trains or daybreak departures in the train stations overnight. Many travelers would excitedly write to friends or their diary to say they saw the famous Susan B. Anthony – asleep at the railroad station. At least once in Iowa, she stretched out on a dirty station floor to find respite.

This trip, the promise of a bed at Bloomer's home offered a bed rather than a hard wooden floor, but when Stanton arrives, it was "no use," Anthony tells us. The effervescent Stanton would wake the household in her delight of seeing Bloomer again, and wound up by her travels, Stanton would talk and putter about into the early morning hours!

Anthony's 5:50 a.m. train to Sioux City came with the dawn, and a tired Anthony would be on it.

Susan B and Sioux City

In 1871, Sioux City was a young town but one striving to become a major city. Only 15 years old, the town had long been a riverboat stop, but in 1868 joined the railroad line, and became the northern jump off point for riverboats heading north. By 1870, the levee on the river remained busy, the downtown bustled with retailers, as well as bars and breweries. The population had doubled to 7,500 in 10 years, not counting those passing through on the boats heading for the Indian lands and big sky county beyond. Sioux City was a frontier town on the move, with big some big houses and big money and big ideas.

Some houses were busier than others.

Anthony arrived in Sioux City a few minutes before noon on June 13. Her letters had stated she would arrive a day early to "look over" this "beautiful city", and to "learn more about the frontier. She was met by a welcoming group, despite her exhaustion, W.B. Wilkins and Charles Collins "took me around town to see and be social, I suppose." With the thermometer peaking at 98 degrees at her arrival, though, and her evident exhaustion, they postponed the tour until the next day, and delivered her to the Northwestern Hotel, where she "slept until teatime." Arising, she spent the evening in correspondence, writing letters to groups and contacts she would meet in the coming days.

At 9 a.m. the next morning, Wilkins returned with the carriage, and Anthony notes he took her "to see the bluffs" and the "grand" view from the burial area of the "Big Sioux Indian Chief." A post marked the burial spot of War Eagle in 1871, and the view of the confluence of the Big Sioux river and the Missouri river, with the panorama of northwest Iowa, the northeast corner of the new state of Nebraska, and the vast 'Dacotah' lands stretching to the north and west certainly allowed her to "look over" the territory! Wilkins took her across the bridge into what was then Indian lands, and then returned her to her hotel as the heat of the day arrived in the afternoon.

The Northwestern Hotel, at roughly Second and Douglas, was a bit over a block from the Academy of Music. The Academy opened in January of 1871 to bring the finer things to Sioux City. Located on the south side of 4th street, between Pierce and Douglas, it attracted stage plays, vocal artists, and speakers. On June 14, 1871, the Academy hosted Susan B. Anthony's talk, 'The Ballot and the Power.' She met with supporters and likely got a good night's sleep in Sioux City following the talk. But her lecture certainly roused the listeners, according to the newspaper reports.

In the Sioux City *Daily Times*:

"Miss Anthony's lecture was a decided success, judged either by the number and intelligence of those present or the able manner in which she discussed the salient points pertaining to woman suffrage. She displayed an ability, conciseness and force that must have carried conviction to every impartial listener . . . Her visit here has done more to advance the cause of woman suffrage than can now be fully appreciated. She has sown the germ of a movement which can not fail to

inoculate our people with a belief in the justice of her cause and the injustice of longer depriving the more intelligent, purer and consequently better portion of our inhabitants of that greatest of boons, the ballot."

Not all the papers agreed. Another Sioux City paper, according to Anthony, stated:

"Miss Anthony had insulted the respectable women of Sioux City and thus if she ever came there again she would be treated to a coat of tar and feathers."

Why the difference?

Anthony's lectures always used examples pulled from the newspapers of the time to make her points. She frequently commented about local events in her speeches. Sioux City provided an event that would gain a special place in Anthony's talks, and it clearly rankled some members of the community. That was fine with Anthony. She would feature it in her talks for some time to come.

While Sioux City had built the Academy to bring opportunities to local citizens, and James Booge's new meat packing plant would bring jobs and money to the community as well, there were other 'business opportunities' in the community. One such business had suffered a setback the night before her arrival and was the talk of the town on the morning of June 14. Anthony noted it in her speech. As she reported it later in one of her lectures beyond the Missouri river:

"In 1871 I went by invitation of a Lecture Bureau to speak at Sioux City, Iowa on my usual theme. On my arrival there in the morning I noticed a good deal of a stir and excitement and asked what it was about. I was told that the decent women of the town had during the night set fire to a house in which their husbands and brothers had domiciled a half dozen demimondes whom they had brought up from St. Louis. In my lecture that evening I made a point to this incident and described the terrible position of the wives who were forced by the laws and by consideration for their children to live with men whom they knew were faithless to their marriage vows, and spoke of this condition in which no self-respecting woman could live. The next morning's papers said that Miss Anthony had insulted the respectable women of Sioux City...."

'Demimonde' refers to a class of women on the fringes of respectable society supported by wealthy lovers.

This story became part of her lectures. She used it to clearly demonstrate the proposed spheres of men and women cannot be kept separate, as there is only one sphere, shared by both genders. The actions of one gender would impact the other. The idea that men were protecting women by placing them in a separate sphere was ridiculous. They were placing women there to limit women's ability to impact the actions men wanted to take.

To Anthony and Stanton, while they embraced the idea that men and women were different in reactions, emotions, and physiology, it was clearly not gender, but laws made by men to limit women prevented women from achieving equality.

As one of her speeches would note, "It is said women do not need the ballot for their protection because they are supported by men. Statistics show that there are 3,000,000 women in this nation supporting themselves."

Susan B and Sioux City, Six Year Later

Anthony would return to Sioux City six years later, in November of 1877. This time, additions to the rails sent her from Chicago to Leavenworth, Kansas, where her brother, Daniel Anthony published the Leavenworth newspaper. Though Daniel was popular – he served on the city council - his newspaper statements often placed him into punishing physical altercations. That did not stop him from speaking out, and the fights continued. Clearly, lack of fear is a family trait.

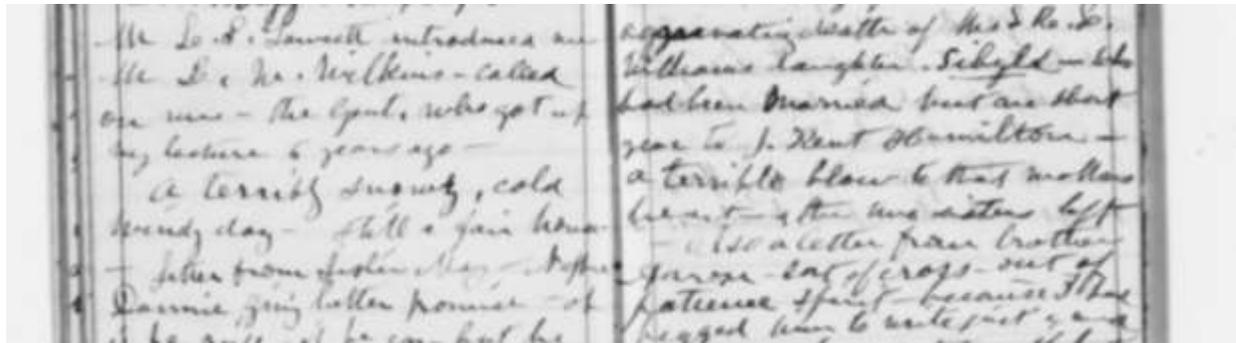
(Daniel Anthony would continue to push tough issues in Leavenworth and would get him shot in ambush. It looked to be a fatal wound, but Anthony rushed to Leavenworth and provided care that would see him through.)

But there were no fights in 1877. After her lecture in Leavenworth, Susan Anthony followed the new rails west for talks in Topeka and Lawrence before turning north to enter Nebraska. She would speak in Fairbury, Nebraska City, and on to Lincoln. After a reunion with Bloomer in Council Bluffs, and speaking there, she would return to Sioux City to speak at the "same Opera House" she noted.

No one showed with the previously promised coat of tar and feathers, fortunately. But like her earlier talk, this visit would again become a part of her lectures that year.

From her Diary:





In her diary (above) Anthony notes she had been in Sioux City six years before, and she mentions a legal case. Her comments in another talk, this time in Nebraska, she explains:

"Six years afterwards I was in the city of Sioux and happening to take up a paper the very first article struck was a complaint against one Mme. Shaw, for keeping a house of ill fame. That grand jury was out thirteen hours and a half and when they came in the verdict was no cause for complaint to bring in a bill of indictment. And this Mme. Shaw was the very woman whose house was burned down by the good wives of that city six years before. Women of Nebraska, do you think if those good wives had been on that grand jury that such a verdict of no cause could have been brought in?"

This would become a staple in Anthony's lectures, showing the importance of having women on juries. Sioux City provided an excellent example a decade later.

Sioux City Proves Anthony's Point?

Unfortunately, despite her two warnings, in 1871 and again in 1877, Anthony's point about allowing women on juries to improve the moral caliber of the jury pool was ignored or dismissed. A decade later in 1887, Sioux City would become famous for the moral failings of a jury!

The brutal murder of the crusading anti-liquor leader Rev. George Haddock in 1886 occurred at Third and Water Street in Sioux City, not far from where Anthony had spoken years before. When the trial to convict the killers of Rev. Haddock ended in a hung jury, because one man on the jury would not be bought, Sioux City became notorious. Newspapers across the country highlighted the re-trial. Derision was heaped upon Sioux City when the second jury found the accused not guilty. Many noted that the entire jury then gathered at a saloon – for a portrait with the defendant.

One headline would ask "Does God rule, or the Devil, in Sioux City?" Newspapers began highlighting the fact that in 1886, Sioux City had 11 public schools and 18 churches, but it also had 75 saloons, 2 breweries, and several licensed gambling houses. Perhaps that was not unheard of but considering the state of Iowa outlawed alcohol and was considered a 'dry' state, it did raise eyebrows. The stories became a national embarrassment to a city trying to attract investment dollars for buildings and businesses, projects and progress.

Would Sioux City have been spared this nationwide distain if Anthony's prescription of inclusion of women into jury pools been followed?

Looking Deeper into Anthony's Message

In Anthony's 1871 lecture, she said things that were all but unmentionable in that era. She stated she not only wanted women on juries, but on the police force! This brought a laugh from the audience - but the papers noted the change as she finished the explanation. "Unfortunate women are arrested and imprisoned every day. They are dragged to the station," where there are no women matrons on the police staff, she stated. "These prisoners are turned over to guards, and "the men are not of the highest morals."

By this point, the audiences had quickly sobered. Her finishing point met with quiet approval: "It is horrible to put women in prison where there are no good women to protect them." To punctuate her point, she noted the same is true for women locked into mental institutions.

While women in the Sioux City audience might never contemplate falling far enough to be arrested, the specter of women being institutionalized for 'hysteria' – an ailment that doctors only found in women – was all too common in those years. Many knew hysteria could be continuing to disagree with one's husband, or moody behavior, or – whatever the male judge said it meant.

Anthony then tackled another major issue always brought up as the reason the vote cannot be given to women:

"Now, about this everlasting objection that women cannot fight in defense of their country. At the constitutional convention of which Horace Greeley was a member and chairman of the committee on suffrage, at the close of Mrs. Stanton's address, Mr. Greeley arose and said, 'Miss Anthony, the ballot and the bullet go together. If you have the vote, are you ready to fight?' I said, 'Yes, Mr. Greeley, exactly as you fought in the late rebellion, at the point of a goose quill....'"

The audience's laughter showed their approval, and she had made her point. But a further response gratified her far more. A Reverend in attendance stated, 'he often heard lectures, but last night, he heard an argument.' Anthony took pride in that accolade which praised her logical thought process.

It was a preview of her speech a year later when she defended her actions during the famous trial in New York for illegally voting in the 1872 Presidential election:

"It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people - women as well as men. And it is a downright mockery to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of

liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government - the ballot."

She went on to say:

"Webster, Worcester, and Bouvier all define a citizen to be a person in the United States, entitled to vote and hold office.

"The only question left to be settled now is: Are women persons? And I hardly believe any of our opponents will have the hardihood to say they are not. Being persons, then, women are citizens; and no state has a right to make any law, or to enforce any old law, that shall abridge their privileges or immunities. Hence, every discrimination against women in the constitutions and laws of the several states is today null and void[.]"

There is a reason Susan B. Anthony became a literal icon in American history. Her logic echoed the forefathers, and defied lesser thinkers a place to hide. The judge in her 1873 trial found her guilty but she refused to pay the fine. The judge declined to order her arrest, which would have given her standing to appeal her case to the Supreme Court. It was a wise decision, as the Supreme Court would have clearly been forced to deny the words of the founders to decide against her – which they would have.³

Sioux City and Anthony in Later Years

These two lectures are the only cases of Anthony visiting Sioux City to speak. However, the *Sioux City Journal* noted in 1888 that Anthony passed through Sioux City again, this time on the way to lecture in Algona, Iowa. But the circumstances lead one to ask if she might have visited more often?

"SUSAN B. ANTHONY PASSES THROUGH SIOUX CITY: The noted female suffragist, Susan B. Anthony, was a Sioux City visitor while on her way to Algona to deliver a lecture. It was 11 years since the lady had been to Sioux City, delivering a lecture at that time on the same topic on which she yet speaks. While here she was the guest of her nephew F.M. Mosher, 215 Kansas St."

It is interesting to think of Anthony seeing Sioux City move from early frontier town in 1871 to a city on the move in 1888. Sioux City, likely four times the size it was in 1871, stood on the edge of its most expansive boom years, 1888 to 1893. The spark for that boom is often attributed to the expulsion of the less desirable liquor and gambling establishments following the humiliation of the embarrassing coverage of Rev. Haddock's death and those failed trials. The City's successes include many storied buildings and projects which arose in this time frame:

³ In 1873, when the Supreme Court finally took up the issue of women's rights, an all but unanimous Court held women 'are a delicate flower' and 'must be protected.' Women are unfit for work outside the 'domestic sphere.' In one judge's notes, "The paramount destiny and mission of woman are to fulfil the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator." **This would hold almost 100 years, until *Reed v. Reed*, 1971.**

- The Peavy Opera House debuted in December of 1887 – might her nephew arranged a tour for Anthony? The Peavy far outclassed the Academy of Music where Anthony, Twain and so many others had spoken.
- The Missouri River Railroad bridge opened in December of 1888, an important link to Nebraska for the railroads.
- The Sioux City Pontoon Bridge also opened for foot and wagon traffic. It connected Pearl Street to the tiny town of Stanton, Nebraska, on the Missouri's south bank – where much of the 'undesirable' businesses had fled. No doubt tolls paid the bills of the pontoon company.
- The famous Sioux City elevated railroad - only the third in the country – would tie Morningside to downtown. Sioux City Rapid Transit would be under construction from 1889 to 1891, with electric trolley cars taking people from the downtown businesses into the hills where the nicer homes still seen today were being built.
- The original structure to house the University of the Northwest would be built in Morningside in 1890, bringing higher education to the frontier. It is the beginnings of Morningside College.

While the Charles City Hall on Morningside campus still stands, other ephemeral buildings make a name for Sioux City at the end of the 19th century. The famous Corn Palaces would soon rise to promote the city's importance as a regional agricultural center.

Sioux City reflected the growing trend in the United States at that time – the growth of cities over rural areas. The Industrial Revolution meant factories, and required a workforce nearby, which created cities. With the explosive expansion of the major cities in America, Chicago, New York City and others depended on the increased output of agriculture in the form of grains and meats. Regional agriculture centers like Sioux City became important connections. As a trading hub for the farmers and a rail connection to the major cities, Sioux City shipped every kernel of increased output the farmers could provide. Booge's packing plants which sent only processed meat, not the entire cow, were a similar step forward, increasing the purchase and sale of local beef to be shipped to the cities. All this brought dividends and jobs to the growing town of Sioux City.

While the steamboat decreased in importance, industrialization in the form of factories manufacturing finished goods found root in places like Sioux City. This, too, impacted the women's movement.

When the farm was the major employer, the value of a worker was based on strength: how much could they carry, and how far? On farms, men would almost always win this competition, and women were consigned to the supporting roles of cooking and cleaning. But by 1890, with the rise of manufacturing, equally important was accuracy and endurance. While it started slowly, women began infiltrating the larger workforce, breaking out of the 'sphere' they were assigned by society. First, women gained the

clerking positions left by men moving to the industries. Later, they would move into the factories as well.

The changes would progress, and eventually the sphere would be shattered. But even at this late date, men fought back. Most unions denied women membership, and thus protection. Courts, too, denied women any rights, echoing the same thinking. Famous Supreme Court cases would declare women 'are a delicate flower' and 'must be protected.' Women are unfit for work outside the 'domestic sphere... The paramount destiny of women are to be wife and mother.' There were no dissenting votes.

In the end, there were no organizations that could 'help' women achieve equality. Only women, and their continuous effort to break this cycle, would be the answer. That would only happen when women heard the arguments made by women like Susan B. Anthony. This demonstrates the education factor that Anthony always embraced. Until women chose to ignore the demands of society and were willing to bear the discomforts society heaped on them for speaking out, women would remain limited and confined. Even as the Industrial Revolution allowed women into the workforce, the same lack of a ballot meant women's demands could be ignored. "The disfranchised must always do the work, accept the wages, occupy the position the enfranchised assign to them," Anthony thundered from the lectern. "The disfranchised are in the position of the pauper."

Susan B. Anthony chose to educate, to inform, to contend, to discomfort, and to demand. She accepted the discomforts her choices cost her. She would remain true to that cause her entire life. But did it matter?

Icons Remain

The corn palace days are long gone, and much has changed for Sioux City. But the Corn Palace remains an icon in Sioux City. The Corn Palaces gave Sioux City an identity in that era and drew crowds that included a sitting U.S. President, and thus gained some support for the needs and wants of their constituents.

All these years later, Anthony is also long gone. She, too, drew crowds, but she failed in getting women the right to vote. Nor did she see them achieve equality. So, what did Anthony achieve, considering many newspapers declared her persona non grata, an agitator, a troublemaker?

Sioux City's Political Equality Club, formed in the era of clubs when clubs were a woman's only outlet, was dedicated to achieving women's suffrage. One member recalled Anthony's visits brought them attention. The club would see gains in membership. "Susan B. Anthony was not enthusiastically received in Sioux City, but she was universally talked about." Everyone who wanted to see her could come, said Rose Taylor.

One could claim a Sioux City newspaper also showed they believed in equality— after all, they offered Anthony 'a coat of tar and feathers' – something previously only offered to men.

Yet, the newspapers also quoted the truth: "We have no doubt that she will have a large and appreciative audience. Those who ridicule the idea of women suffrage might be present and receive a little of the light and true freedom upon their benighted souls."

Anthony would never see the passage of the amendment she had worked so hard to achieve. But she lived long enough to notice that by 1900, she had become almost universally respected for her efforts, "and widely loved," as one supporter said looking back 50 years later.

That perspective is important. Today, almost 150 years since her first visit to Sioux City, we recognize the truth of her statement that "the woman of the future will far surpass the one of today. This will come from making the sexes co-equal." Her reasoning? "[W]hen women associate with men in serious matters... both will grow stronger, and the world's work will be better done."

Anthony's talks would circulate the name of Sioux City, but never to single it out for shame or derision. Her point showed clearly this was not a Sioux City problem, but a universal one. All cities and communities in America shared this weakness because they intentionally worked to hobble and segregate women to 'their sphere.' This 'sphere' so widely spoken of in social and legal passages was not designed to protect women, but to limit them. And it would.

The stories Anthony told in her speeches may today seem nonsensical, because they seem too ridiculous to believe. But older listeners know many of the same problems remained in force for women almost 50 years *after* the voting amendment passed. It was not until the social upheaval of the 1960s that many of the restrictive codes against females began to fall, a result of an attempt to undercut the 1964 Civil Rights Act by adding discrimination based on gender illegal.

The plan backfired, because unlike in 1869, in 1964 the allies of women did not flinch, and held the vote with gender still in the law. The 1964 Civil Rights Act became the engine to finally give the Courts the laws needed to begin opening jobs and so much more to women.

As predicted by Stanton, it had taken almost a century to overcome the use of gender in the 14th and 15th amendments.

But that it happened at all is due to the points Anthony had made repeatedly:

"The question with you, as men, is not whether you want your wives and daughters to vote, nor with you, as women, whether you yourselves want to vote; but whether you will help to put this power of the ballot into the hands of the ... wage-earning women, so that they may be able to compel politicians to legislate on their favor and employers to grant them justice."

While little changed when women got the vote in 1920, a later generation of woman availed themselves of the hard-earned right to vote to change the reality of their lives. Though the changes would be slow in coming, they did start, and each would buoy the

next change. It would be into the late 1970s before women would see massive changes on access to professional jobs, and increased equality but that was much as Anthony predicted.

Anthony's points should remind today's listeners that the issues of inequality were about men's ability to wield power over a group of people. Gender was the easy classification, much as color was the easy identification for slavery. Do we see similar issues we should be wary of today? Do our organizations promote us, or are they designed to limit us to socially acceptable behavior? What about people who speak out? Are they embraced, or shunned? Lauded, or lambasted?

How would social media react to Susan B. Anthony? How would Anthony react to social media?

One suspects today's Facebook would hold back Anthony in any way. Just as false stories circulated in newspapers in her day, holding Anthony up to ridicule, she manipulated the news features by scheduling talks in local towns and thus producing conversation on the issues. Once at the talk, and repeatedly in the newspapers. And considering the expense she and Stanton bore to own a newspaper to ensure their long form writing reached people, we can assume she would embrace the Facebook concept and publish daily if not more often. Just as she used the social media of the day – newspapers – very effectively, one assumes Facebook, Twitter, and others would see her posting to promote the cause.

A Guide, or an Impediment?

History also shows why change is so difficult. Any group that holds absolute power will always fight sharing that power. As Anthony proclaimed, the eventual power sharing by the sexes would improve the lives of both men and women. But only the demand for the vote, and the eventual use of the vote to elect lawmakers that owed their positions to women as well as men, would cause the exclusionary processes to change. Only when judges had laws and guidelines that demanded equality would these exclusionary practices be broken and finally remove one gender's rigid hold on power.

Yet as with slavery, this required a long and rigorous application of the vote. It required the powers commanded by the vote to erode the intentional use of classification as a method to demean those subject classes. The process created a gradual change, because outside of war or a major threat, societal approval is slow to change established practices. Anthony's efforts require generations to simply achieve the vote. It has required more generations to remove the old laws and practices. It is still not complete, which testifies to the weight exerted by the past.

The inertia of historical precedent outweighs everything, until the penalties cause far more personal pain than the changes.

Which is to say: No matter how much sense it makes to get out in front of change rather than being ground to dust by its eventual success, vested interests cannot seem to reach that conclusion until they are forced to do so.

Thus, change will only be achieved if there are people like Anthony, and Stanton, and others, willing to travel far and suffer verbal abuse, and physical discomfort, to make certain others will hear a differing point of view. The trip to the west coast did not create a ground swell of approval. Far from it – San Francisco was a very negative experience for Anthony. Anthony was largely dismissed by local critics, which was hardly a novel moment for her. However, she had never faced such crowds. Papers labeled her an agitator and printed unflattering photos akin to wanted posters. She made no headway and moved on up the coast. Oregon was also lukewarm, and her trip by steamer was a terrible passage. But Anthony never gave up. Her determination to continue to bring the message to the people, to practice continuous engagement and constructive protest, no matter how much effort it required, meant that gradually the weight of the opinions would shift in her lifetime. Her logic and her eloquence brought people to her side of the argument.

But we fail to consider the other reason that this moment in time resonates with us. The question of how the original opinions formed so deeply in those audiences that it would require decades and generations to overcome?

It is by continuous repetition of misinformation, to audiences of like-minded individuals. If no one argued against the idea that women and negroes were inferior, then the idea that 'protecting' them by using laws might seem acceptable. Once that is accepted, claiming the reason they need protected is because neither had the mental capacity to competently wield the vote might be credible. Yet then those same laws demanded education be off limits for both parties. How can that be considered right? Only because the experience of what happened repeatedly when people like Douglass, like Anthony, like Stanton, like countless others achieved when they were educated threatened the established social order. Then only continued dismissal, or actual intimidation could stem the tide.

Anthony, Stanton, Douglass, and countless others lived in the world that such a mindset had limited their rights. No one could confront that thinking without risking discomfort, or worse. But beatings and lynching would become the accepted social practice to keep Freedmen compliant, or to force them to flee. Some bitter irony is the main accusation that would cause the lynching of a black man was the rape of a white woman. Yet it is estimated that 20 black women were raped by white men for every accusation of rape against a black man. Thus we also see the 'use' of women as a tactic to achieve a social end – yet another bitter irony of the times.

Women faced intimidation, verbal abuse, social shunning, and in some cases, abuse from spouses to keep them in line. Does any of this sound familiar in our social discussions today? Does the effort to split groups by posing them as 'threats' to the

overall success of society? These are still accepted methods for defeating social change today, isn't it?

Douglass and the Freedmen, when offered the 15th Amendment, would step away from the very women that had kept their cause alive for the 20 to 25 years prior. The choice Douglass made is understandable; Lucy Stone's decision to back the 15th amendment and split the women's movement is also understandable. Our goal is not to judge their choice, but to see the similarities with today's attacks on those who step out, and the internal strains that cause groups to break apart in the heat of the struggle.

It is also important to see neither Anthony or Stanton gave up, nor did they retreat an inch. As Douglass achieved his goal, he did continue to speak out for women. But age caught up with him, and having achieved his goals, his reach was diminished. Stanton, perhaps in total frustration, also eventually espoused concepts far too radical for many women's groups to accept. Her opponents made certain the rest of the world knew of her depraved ideas, claiming she was showing her true colors. By doing so, they completely moved Stanton off the stage. This is yet another method used today to undercut those who lead against the status quo. Thus, these two leaders eventually lost their audiences.

But Anthony remained active and engaged, reaching for the maximum audience with the most impact. She would maneuver to reunite the separated suffrage organizations to one big umbrella by the end of the 19th century. She mentored upcoming leaders, notably Catt, equipping them for the coming final fight for women's suffrage. Though Anthony did not live to see the passage of the amendment recognizing a woman's right to vote, her peers named the amendment in her honor.

Similarities: Telling Stories Rather than Giving Lectures

Anthony is seen today as an historic agent of change for woman. She is also a literal icon, the first actual woman to be featured on American currency. Many people of her era may have noticed and noted the diminished rights of women, and the fallacy that women were being protected in a separate sphere. But it was Anthony that spoke out and paid the price for doing so. But she never stopped speaking, and in her talks, she held the mirror so those men could see the reality that they were not protecting women but keeping them in their place. It infuriated men and discomfited many women who benefited from the arrangement.

Anthony's use of the story of Sioux City's mothers and wives faced with their husbands' support of prostitutes caused outrage and embarrassment. It prompted the offer of a coat of tar and feathers. But to Anthony, it underlined the disparity between the treatment of men and women, and she repeated it in speeches across the country. While Sioux City may not have appreciated its footnote in history, the example it provided shows that unless a power group is confronted, and embarrassed by their actions, they will avoid change at all costs. The women of Sioux City who took steps to attempt to burn the offending building, were stepping beyond their assigned 'sphere' when they confronted the issues. They were also breaking the law. But the legal system frustrated

any attempt by women to confront the issue. Why would two prostitutes attempt suicide if they had been free to leave? But in an intentionally slanted legal system, and one coupled with an economic system designed to keep them as subjects, not as participants in society, they signaled their refusal to accept the idea. Supposedly women of Sioux City first attempted to burn the building, and later some of the females in the building would attempt to escape by eating ice cream laced with narcotics to induce suicide. These are the things that happen when legal and social avenues block the way to right wrongs.

But the message for the women of Sioux City reached others, because Susan B. Anthony transmitted that message using an additional conduit of social media of her era – the lecture circuit. She did it by sharing stories to highlight her logic. We see the same thing today on social media – it is the story, not the logic, that gives weight to the argument, and causes a message to go viral. The story of the Sioux City women burning the house of ill repute is still known 150 years later, as well as the story of the same madam's escape legal punishment six years later for running another such house six years later.

Did this single story change the tide of battle? No. But may it have convinced other women of the validity of the cause? Remember, Anthony was never committed to a fast victory – only an eventual one. When her plans failed, she tried yet another strategy. But she never relented in her efforts to show that women were being constrained and harmed by consigning them to a separate sphere, rather than protected.

Susan B. Anthony: A Revolutionary, and Much More.

Anthony's statement, "when women associate with men in serious matters... both will grow stronger, and the world's work will be better done" clearly was the most unlikely prophecy when she proclaimed it. It proves the hard-headed Susan B. Anthony was a prophet. Today, we hear her described as a visionary, or as an icon. Even now, the powers that be shy away from calling her what she really was – a revolutionary, much as Washington, Adams, and Jefferson were revolutionaries.

She put her efforts into creating change. Her trip to California may not have been a rousing success she had envisioned, but from May to October in 1871, her message was heard. For years to come, women and men across the continent would continue to hear her arguments, using examples from the headlines, as she did in Sioux City. Anthony planted the seeds that would grow within the listener. Her efforts to focus all women on a joint goal they could agree on would heal the rift she created in 1870, and bring the two female rights groups back together, first under Stanton, and then Carrie Chapman Catt.

Anthony positioned women for their eventual success in 1920, when those many scattered seeds from that 1871 trip blossomed and new women like Catt and Paul took the lead. They would accomplish her shared vision of securing the ballot for women, and thus, the all-important step toward achieving equality. But in the end, it took women, women whose names we do not know, marching, demonstrating, acting up and acting out, daily, to win the vote. They were following the lead, and leadership that Susan B.

Anthony demonstrated. These many women were the result of the seeds Anthony planted for 50 years.

Following Anthony's visit in 1871, newspapers noted that in the next election two women cast ballots in the local election in Le Mars, Iowa. It was not legal, but they did it just the same. Revolutions start small, and Susan B. Anthony would proudly wear the title of revolutionary and should be remembered first and foremost as one.

Notes:

"The Lecture. Susan B. Anthony at the Academy of Music." *Sioux City Journal*, Nov. 8, 1877. Microfilm (1991): reel 19, slide 580.

The *Sioux City Daily Times*, June 15, 1871

The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony, 1906

The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Volume V, Edited by Ann D. Gordon, 2009