



# "Angels & Infidels"

PRE AND POST CURRICULAR MATERIALS

*Bringing the past alive to envision the future*

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(Please note: The connections are not limited to these disciplines)

**HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Core Knowledge: Expansion, Reform and Economic Growth (1800 to 1861)

Standards easily addressed: History Strands 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Standards easily addressed: Language Strands 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
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The value of the study of history is based on the premise that enriching one's sense of the past in the present helps shape the future. Many of the issues discussed in 1850 are still unresolved on the sesquicentennial of the first National Woman's Rights Convention.

Learning is best accomplished when the student is actively engaged in a hands-on, inquiry-based environment. We encourage you to review these suggestions before deciding on the selection of your student "members of the convention". Although only a small number of students will be eligible to attend the free student performance, this opportunity simulates the actual 19<sup>th</sup> century event. Only a small percentage of community members would have felt the desire or curiosity to attend and then affect change within their sphere of influence. It is hoped the same will happen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Following the MCAS tests this May**, consider this opportunity to use a local lens to study America's story and social issues to launch your adventure back in time.

- ❖ Brainstorm about possible local 19<sup>th</sup> century resources within your community.
- ❖ Visit [www.worcesterwomen.com](http://www.worcesterwomen.com) or check the enclosed member list to learn if anyone from your community or surrounding area signed in as a voting member of the 1850 convention. Please note that others attended, but did not sign their names.
- ❖ Research your local 1850 Census, Vital Records and Tax Records to learn more about their families. Students may wish to adopt the character of some of these people.
- ❖ Find the names of community members who belonged to the anti-slavery and temperance organizations in the 1840s, as well as local churches. Create a data base.
- ❖ Have students use local resources to find 19<sup>th</sup> century maps of your community.
- ❖ Invite a local historian to present an overview of your town's antebellum history.
- ❖ Visit a local burying ground to find the people who were alive in 1850. This is a wonderful opportunity for field research linked to math and science concepts. Auburn Middle School also uses their mile walk to evaluate students' fitness levels.
- ❖ Visit historic community sites.
- ❖ Read the 1850 news articles relating to the convention at the web addresses listed above.
- ❖ Interview citizens who were alive when the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was passed August 26, 1920 giving women the right to vote.
- ❖ Do an inventory of your school and local library's resources about individual reformers and the woman's rights movement.
- ❖ Design a web site featuring your town's local history. Investigate what would be needed to implement the site in the future. Visit [www.rootsweb.com/~maworces/](http://www.rootsweb.com/~maworces/) for ideas.
- ❖ Design simple period costumes for the students who wish to attend the dramatization in costume. Please note: wire hoop skirts and bloomers were not worn in 1850.
- ❖ Assign pertinent 19<sup>th</sup> century literature for summer reading.

## BEFORE ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE OF "ANGELS & INFIDELS"

All students attending the performance should have a basic understanding of the following areas to best understand the drama and connect it to their current lives. We encourage students to become actively involved in the research and adventure of role-playing.

### THE SETTING

What was Worcester like in 1850? Read past issues of the *Daily Spy* on microfilm at the Worcester Public Library. Use Albert Southwick's [150 Years of Worcester: 1848-1998](#). Worcester: Chandler House Press, 1998.

Walk down Main Street using the enclosed map of Worcester or use lesson at [www.assumption.edu/whw](http://www.assumption.edu/whw) in electronic classroom called "On the Road to the first National Woman's Rights Convention".

Follow the members of the convention on the attached list by finding their towns on the enclosed 1850 Pathfinder Railway Map. A contemporary New England map is helpful to locate the towns not noted on the earlier map.

How did reformers use the music of composer Stephen Collins Foster and the Hutchinson Family Singers to promote their cause?

Who were the political leaders at the time of the Call (May) and Convention (October)? Why was there a change?

### THE PLAYERS

Research the background of the members to the convention or at least the characters in "Angels & Infidels" on the attached lists. Students should be able to find background information using the attached web sites and selected bibliography. Note the biography supplements for those not readily found in traditional biographical collections.

### THE ISSUES

Ideally students should be able to discuss the issues of the day if someone in character approaches them before the performance.

Use the attached overview and list of resolutions to find issues and details on the [www.worcesterwomen.com](http://www.worcesterwomen.com) primary source documents or use McClymer's [This High and Holy Moment](#).

Dr. William Alcott spoke at the Convention, but not in our drama. Read the newspapers to discover what he said. Investigate his [Guide to Young Men](#) and his [Guide to Young Women](#) located at [www.assumption.edu/whw](http://www.assumption.edu/whw) to learn more about what was expected of children your age during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

How did the Second Great Awakening affect the spirit of reform in antebellum America?

Compare the limited educational options available on the Oberlin and Mt. Holyoke websites.

What is the theory of non-resistance? What 20<sup>th</sup> century leaders used it to effectively gain reforms?

Margaret Fuller was originally who the organizers hoped would take the presidency upon her return from Britain. Why did Mrs. Davis have to take on that role?

Another major political debate was over the Compromise of 1850 with the strong Fugitive Slave Law. Why were there only 30 states at the time of the Call?

Read Frederick Douglas' and Sojourner Truth's narratives (or biographies) and compare their stories of slavery.

Why might some women prefer to keep things as they were.  
Why might L. Mott call them "slothful sisters"?

Read Emerson's "Self Reliance". Do you think Emerson meant his essay to reach both men and women as equals? Include Emerson's views with this assignment:

Ralph Waldo Emerson signed the Call saying, " 'The fact of the political & civil wrongs of woman I deny not. If women feel wronged, then they are wronged.' But 'a public convention called by women is not very agreeable to me, and the things to be agitated for do not seem to me the best.' He would not hesitate to vote for franchise for women, for their legal right to hold property, 'yes & be eligible to all offices as men [are].'

But Emerson could not imagine that the women he admired would want the latter. He did not say it would be unladylike, but that was what he meant: 'I should not wish women to wish political functions, nor, if granted assume them. I imagine that a woman who all men would feel to be the best, would decline such privilege if offered, & feel them to be obstacles to her legitimate influence.' He was obviously embarrassed by Mrs. Davis's invitation [to sign the Call] and somewhat ashamed of his emotional reaction. He begged her not to take his remarks too seriously: At all events, that I may not stand in the way of any right you are at liberty if you wish it to use my name as one of the inviters of the convention, though I shall not attend it, & shall regret that it is not rather a private meeting of thoughtful persons sincerely interested, instead of what a public meeting is pretty sure to be, a heartless noise which we are all ashamed of when it is over."

Gay Wilson Allen, Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Biography

(New York: Viking Press, 1981) pages 558-9.

## VOCABULARY TO KNOW FOR THE DRAMATIZATION

ABOLITION

BLUE STOCKING

EMANCIPATION

INFIDELS

MENTOR

REMUNERATION

TRYANNY

REFORMER

## HISTORIC CHARACTERS OF "ANGELS &amp; INFIDELS"

**Research** the characters you will meet during the performance using biographical resources in your library, web sites and selected bibliography. **Share** your discoveries with your classmates to better understand why they appear in the cast of this pivotal historic event.

Bailey of Boston *Daily Mail*

James Gordon Bennett of New York *Herald*

Henry Blackwell

Rev. Antoinette Brown

Rev. William H. Channing

Paulina Wright Davis

Frederick Douglass

Mrs. Sarah H. Earle (see biographical supplement)

Rev. J. G. Forman (see biographical supplement)

Abby Kelley Foster

Stephen S. Foster

William Lloyd Garrison

Horace Greeley of New York *Daily Tribune*

Dr. Harriet K. Hunt

Lucretia Mott

Abby Price (see biographical supplement)

Ernestine Rose

William Rose (refer to material on his wife)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Lucy Stone

Sojourner Truth

Mrs. Sarah Tyndale

## AFTER VIEWING "ANGELS & INFIDELS"

When given the opportunity to step back in time, it is important to share your discoveries about Antebellum America and the beginnings of the woman's rights movement in a meaningful manner with your school and/or community. Students understand more and remember best when they become involved in educating others.

**REFLECT** Time: Weekend homework assignment following performance.

- ❖ Write a personal journal entry reflecting on what you heard and saw at the "1850 Convention". Be sure to include the people whose ideas, actions and/or personality impressed you as a citizen of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- ❖ Write a personal journal entry reflecting on what you heard and saw from the perspective of a person from your 19<sup>th</sup> century community who traveled to the convention.

**INQUIRE** Time: Independent research questions.

- ❖ Has the word male been taken out of our state constitution? Where is it still mentioned in the U.S. Constitution? (15<sup>th</sup> Amendment)
- ❖ How many women currently hold elective office at national, state and local levels?
- ❖ Why, or why not, is the fat girl's advice to Lucy Stone that the turmoil of ideas "gets others to think" good advice?
- ❖ When moving towards a goal, why is it important to "agree to disagree" to find common ground?
- ❖ How would southern women feel about the resolution to remember the slave women? How might this hinder the woman's rights movement? Read Jane Swisshelm's remarks found at [www.worcesterwomen.com](http://www.worcesterwomen.com).
- ❖ Make a timeline showing the pattern of National Woman's Rights Conventions. See Isenberg.
- ❖ How did each of the principle characters continue their reform efforts after the Civil War? Were they successful?
- ❖ Abby Kelley Foster was Lucy Stone's mentor. Who have been your mentors?
- ❖ Have the next steps been achieved during the past 150 years?

**DISCUSS** your positions on each of the 1850 resolutions today and how you might have felt if you had lived in Antebellum society. Time: 1-2 class periods or independent work time

- ❖ Return to regular classes as curious citizen who attended this convention. The class can either interview the attendee or the attendee can report on what s/he observed.
- ❖ Hold a school-wide or class "lyceum meeting" to discuss the question, "How has American society achieved the goals of the 1850 resolutions?"

**COMMUNICATE** the importance of the first National Woman's Rights Convention to your school and community. Time: 1-5 class periods or independent work time

- ❖ Create informative posters
- ❖ Produce a morning announcement series
- ❖ Write an article or series for your school or community newspaper
- ❖ Produce a video your for local cable station
- ❖ Write a letter to the editor regarding "Equality before the law"