



ALFRED...

Women Campaigned for Equality

In this activity you will consider the women's rights movement that emerged during the 1840s and reactions to it.

CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITY FOR POLITICAL CARTOON 24

Directions Read the following information about the women's rights movement and study the cartoon on page 47. Then answer the questions.

Women who were active in the abolition movement during the 1830s gained experience in public speaking, group leadership, and social reform. Many men in America became uneasy about such active women. They preferred the image of women devoted entirely to home and family, not involved in the "heartless" business and political activities traditionally reserved for men. On family farms, women had always worked along with the men. With the industrialization of parts of the United States, however, men became the breadwinners in most families, and women raised the children and tended the home. Through the efforts of education reformers such as Catharine Beecher of Connecticut, women were welcomed to the profession of teaching. It was felt that they could help build character in their students as mothers did in their children.

Although most women did not campaign for equal rights, there were activists, especially in the northern states, who demanded equality. In 1848 Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example, organized a convention at Seneca Falls, New York, to voice women's hopes for suffrage, or voting rights, and fair treatment in family life and in other endeavors. Some male reformers in enterprises such as the abolition movement supported the demands of women for equal rights and leadership positions in organizations. Many men, however, did not. The women's rights movement continued to press for suffrage throughout the 19th century, with little success. The cartoon, published in the early 20th century, showed that the suffrage movement hadn't died.

1. Why is the man beaming with pride and approval in the scene at the left?

2. What is the woman doing in the scene at the right?

CRITICAL THINKING

3. Identifying Central Issues This cartoon about women actually makes a strong point about men. What is the main idea of the cartoon?

4. Formulating Appropriate Questions What question would you ask the man about the contrast between his two reactions?

5. Identifying Alternatives What other methods besides petitions might women have used to gain the right to vote?
