



WOMEN'S ROLES IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity and appear at the end of this student version.

- Item 1: 1850 Census Return
- Item 2: 1851 Political Cartoon

Student Learning Objectives

- I will be able to gather information from a primary source.
- I will be able to interpret a political cartoon from 1851 in historical context.
- I will be able to find evidence of women's rights issues during the Antebellum Period in an 1850 Census questionnaire and an 1851 political cartoon.

The decades leading up to the Civil War were a time of great change in the United States — politically, economically, and socially. Rapid economic growth brought about a growing middle class, in which many women were better educated than previous generations of their peers. At the same time, a greater number of lower-class women began working outside the home to earn a living. These and other changes led to gender equality becoming one of the most important societal issues of the era.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Answer the following questions using **Item 1: 1850 Census Return**, which lists the responses of several households in Kentucky.

1. Record several observations and questions about the data.

2. Looking closely at column 7, what do the wording of the prompt and the answers provided reveal about the role of women at the time? Explain.

Answer the following questions using **Item 2: 1851 Political Cartoon**, which was featured in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in July of that year. The cartoon's caption reads, "Upon my word, Mr. Peewitt! Is this the way you fill up your census? So you call yourself the 'head of the family' — do you — and me a female!"

3. Who are the characters in the cartoon, and what are they doing?

4. What does the caption tell you about what's really going on in the scene?

5. How are the woman and the man portrayed physically in the cartoon? Why do you think the illustrator chose to draw them that way?

Answer the last question using both **Items 1** and **2**.

6. Do the two items support or contradict each other in terms of what they reveal about women's rights during the Antebellum Period? Use specific details to support your answer.

Item 1: 1850 Census Return

SCHEDULE I. — Free Inhabitants in District No. 2 in the County of Fayette
of Kentucky enumerated by me, on the 7th day of Aug. 1850. Jno. M. Monroe

Dwellings numbered in the order of visitation.	Families numbered in the order of visitation.	The Name of every Person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1850, was in this family.	DESCRIPTION.			Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each Male Person over 15 years of age.	Value of Real Estate owned.	PLACE OF BIRTH. Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	Married within the year.	Attended School within the year.	Persons over 20 yrs of age who cannot read & write.	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.
			Age.	Sex.	Color. White, black, or mulatto.							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		Nancy Wheatley	59	F				Maryland				
		Walter S. Wheatley	17	M		Printer		Kentucky				
408	429	John McCracken	71	M		Farmer	8,000	Ireland				
		Emily McCracken	54	F				Ireland				
		Frederic Myers	35	M		Gardener		Germany				
409	430	C. M. Farland	44	M		None		Massachusetts				
		J. J. Moore	29	M		None		Maryland				
410	431	Augustus Mosebach	24	M		Baker		Germany				
		Charles Kanz	25	M		Baker		Germany				
		James Hanna	40	M		None		Ireland				
411	432	Henry Clay	73	M		Statesman	50,000	Virginia				

www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/sis/resources/historical-documents-and-images/h03-figure6.jpg

Click on the link above to view the census return online.

Item 2: 1851 Political Cartoon



www.census.gov/main/.in/php_module/lightbox/media.php?l_de573330249590dfb8f201907a585880

Click on the link above to view the cartoon online.