

# CATHARINE BLAINE

## Seneca Falls and The Women's Rights Movement in the State of Washington



### The Journey of Catharine Paine Blaine

#### FOR MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL

##### Summary:

Women played a vital role in the settlement of the West, both in the creation of frontier towns and in promoting political ideals. Many of the women who settled in the West brought with them ideals that they had learned at home in the East Coast. Reform movements that had begun back East often took root in the territories in which these women came to live.

This lesson plan examines the life of Catharine Paine Blaine, missionary, schoolteacher, and women's rights activist who traveled from Seneca Falls, New York to Washington Territory in the 1850s. Students will examine primary sources and make connections to their own experiences, mapping the route that the Blaines took to reach Seattle from Seneca Falls. Using everyday items that Catharine brought with her to the Pacific Northwest, your students will explore how eastern settlers brought both objects and ideas with them as they traveled.

##### Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs):

This lesson plan satisfies Washington state standards in Social Studies, Civics, Reading, Writing, and Art. It may also be used to fulfill a [Dig Deep](#) Classroom-Based Assessment. This lesson plan also meets New York state's Social Studies standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 3.2, 5.1, and 5.3.

##### Essential Questions for Students:

- › What did Catharine experience when she traveled from New York to Washington Territory? What dangers did women settlers face when moving west?
- › How can people change the places in which they live? What kind of change did Catharine Paine Blaine bring to the Pacific Northwest?
- › What is a reform movement? How did eastern ideas change the lives of people in the West?
- › What were some of the specific problems that American reformers wanted to solve in the late-19th century?

##### Primary Sources for Student Understanding:

1. [1851 Colton Map](#)
2. [Out of the Box: Clothing and Artifact Images](#)
3. [The Declaration of Sentiments](#)
4. [Report of the Woman's Rights Convention](#)
5. [In Catharine's Words \(Excerpts from the Letters of Catharine Paine Blaine\)](#)
3. [Catharine Paine Blaine: Additional Resources](#)

##### Secondary Sources for Student Understanding:

1. [To Go So Far From Home](#)

2. [What Catharine Carried](#)
3. [Seneca Falls in 1848](#)
4. [Abolition, Women's Rights, and Temperance Movements](#)
5. [The Fight for Washington Women's Suffrage: A Brief History](#)
6. [Catharine Blaine: Seneca Falls and the Women's Rights Movement in the State of Washington exhibit](#)

#### Student Worksheets:

1. [Map Their Journey](#)
2. [When Did It Happen?](#)
3. [What Would You Take?](#)
4. [Pack Your Trunk](#)

#### Materials:

1. [Large map of the United States](#) (optional)
2. Push pins or markers to designate locations on map (optional)

#### Instructions for Teachers:

##### PREPARATION

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Prepare yourself by reading the material provided for you and your students throughout this lesson plan. You may also wish to incorporate some of this material as part of a larger unit on women's suffrage and westward expansion. In the introduction to the unit, it will be necessary to remind students that women have not always had the right to vote in the United States. You may wish to utilize the [What is Suffrage?](#) reading before using this lesson plan.

As part of this unit, students will be mapping out the journeys of Catharine Paine Blaine and her husband, David, and discussing the distance between East and West Coasts. Take a United States map and post it on the classroom wall, using it to remind students of the geographic distance that isolated the Blaines from friends and family on the East Coast. You may also wish to refer back to this map as you complete different portions of this curricular unit.

##### ACTIVITY ONE: MAPPING THE JOURNEY

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###### Step 1

Introduce this lesson plan to your students by sharing some of the following objectives:

- *What was life like for American women in the 1800s?*
- *Did women on the U.S. East Coast have more rights than those on the West Coast? What was the same? What was different?*
- *How did ideas travel from one part of the country from the other?*
- *We will find out by tracing the route of one woman's journey from Seneca Falls, New York to Washington Territory to see what happened to her. This woman, Catharine Paine Blaine, was an early woman's rights activist who brought ideas from her home in the East to the place where she and her husband settled in the West.*

You may assign the ["To Go So Far From Home"](#) reading as homework or read it aloud to your students to introduce them to who Catharine was and explain her importance to the women's rights movement.

###### Step 2

Hand out the following readings for student reference: ["Seneca Falls in 1848"](#) and ["The Declaration of Sentiments."](#) After reading about Catharine Blaine and the movement in Seneca Falls, have students read through the Declaration of Sentiments. You may choose to do this out loud, having students take turns reading each "sentiment."

Ask your classroom what rights the women were asking for. List these rights on a chalkboard or whiteboard. Select one to three of the topics to discuss in further detail (the right to education, the right to vote, and the right to own property may be a good starting point).

###### Step 3

Ask students to imagine what it would have been like to be a settler traveling the Oregon Trail from the East Coast to the West. Explain that there was more than one way to travel to the Pacific Northwest – have students read [the letter Catharine wrote planning the route](#) and the letter excerpts in [the Map Their Journey handout](#). Then discuss the following questions:

- *How did most settlers travel to the Oregon territory in 1853?* (Students should answer either "land," "overland trail," or "the Oregon Trail" - the railroad was not yet completed.)
- *How does Catharine Paine Blaine suggest that she and her husband come to Seattle? Why does she want to travel by sea?*
- *When you read her letter, what do you think is significant about the fact that she proposes the route? Do you think that most women settlers had a say in how their families traveled west?*
- *In the end, the Blaines took the route that Catharine had selected. When you think about this, what does it tell you about Catharine? About the journey itself?*

#### **Step 4**

Explain to students that they will be creating their own maps of Catharine's journey from Seneca Falls to Seattle using the clues from the handout provided.

Using the ["Journey" handout](#) and a [blank North American map](#), ask them to trace the route that the Blaines took to the Pacific Northwest. The [1851 Colton Map of the United States](#) is also provided for you to show students what kinds of maps were available to Catharine and her husband before they began the journey.

You may also wish to ask them to illustrate a scene from the reading. Alternately, this exercise can be broken into two parts or done in groups – with lower level readers doing an illustration while the other half of the room creates the map. Encourage students to share their work with the class after they have finished.

### **ACTIVITY 2: EXHIBIT ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL)**

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#### **Step 1**

Although the exhibit "Catharine Blaine: Seneca Falls and the Women's Rights Movement in the State of Washington" is closed, the exhibit panels may be [downloaded](#) and printed out for classroom use. Using the exhibit panels, ask students to complete the worksheet in order to "dig deeper" into the concepts and ideas that were so important to Catharine in her life.

If you choose to supplement this unit with a writing exercise, ask students to keep their worksheets and use that information to support their essays. This portion of the unit also supports the discussion in Activity 3.

### **POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: PACKING CATHARINE'S TRUNK**

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#### **Step 1**

Distribute the ["Out of the Box"](#) and [In Catharine's Words](#) readings to your students.

Divide students into small groups to work with both this readings and the ones they have previously discussed. Ask them to think beyond the material goods that settlers brought west and make a list of the ideas and concepts that Catharine might have brought with her.

#### **Step 2**

Once they have created their lists, using the information provided, ask the groups to do the following:

- *If you were in Catharine Paine Blaine's position, what would you bring with you to the Pacific Northwest? Make a list of items that would be useful/necessary out west and/or remind you of the home that you had left behind.*
- *Using what we have learned, take a look at the list that you have made.*
- *Now imagine that you are packing a trunk for Catharine to take with her. In that trunk, you can only include her five most important things. Each thing that she will take with her represents a personal belief or ideal.*
- *With your groups, decide what those five things are and write a sentence about each to explain what belief each object or document represents.*

- *Don't forget to look at your readings for ideas!*

### Step 3

Ask each group to report on what items they selected. Ask the following questions about their lists:

- *What objects did you select? What ideas do they represent? (As students share, write their ideas on the board.)*
- *Why do you think these concepts were important to Catharine?*

After students have discussed their top items, use the list that you have generated from their ideas and take a classroom vote. You may wish to offer the groups a chance to prepare a short presentation and "campaign" for their top object.

### TAKE IT A STEP FURTHER: COMPARE AND CONTRAST

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Catharine Paine Blaine and her family did not remain in Seattle after the Blaines moved west. For a number of different reasons, the Blaines would travel between east and west for the rest of their lives. Many other settlers did the same - "back and forth" settlement was not uncommon. This constant movement of people and ideas resulted in changes across the country.

Just as Catharine brought beliefs from her eastern home to her new residence in Seattle, so did she carry new ideas back with her when the Blaines returned to the Seneca Falls area.

Have students research Seattle and Seneca Falls during this time period. Ask them to specifically focus on the differences between Seattle and Seneca Falls, first in 1856, then in 1883.

Have them consider the following questions:

- *What civil rights (suffrage, education, etc.) were different from Seattle to Seneca Falls in 1856? In 1883?*
- *Based on what you know about Catharine Paine Blaine, what aspects of life in Seattle did she share with her family back East?*
- *Do you believe that she tried to take any ideas with her when she returned to Seneca Falls/Waterloo, New York - if so, which ones? And why?*

Based on this examination, ask students to write a short persuasive essay about one idea that Catharine held important. Women's rights, education, and community are three examples of different ideas that students could choose. As part of the paper, ask them to use the differences between the two cities to support reasons for Catharine's advocacy and/or influence in those areas. Students may access a number of online resources at the [Catharine Paine Blaine: Additional Resources webpage](#).

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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- Visit the [Women's Rights National Historical Park](#) either in person or online.
- [Book a field trip](#) to the Washington State History Museum to see exhibits about Washington women and settling the Pacific Northwest.
- Have students look at family letters, diaries and ephemera of travel to see what types of connections they can make between Catharine's journey and others that members of their families may have taken. Encourage them to share this information with the class.
  - Bring artifacts into the classroom. The Washington State History Museum has a [Frontier Towns history box](#) available with artifacts spanning much of this time period. A traveling trunk may also be checked out from the Woman's Rights National Historical Park at <http://www.nps.gov/wori/forteachers/classrooms/travelingtrunks.htm> . Many other state and local historical societies also provide similar materials. Ask students to analyze and write about these items as part of their culminating project.
- Use this classroom project as a springboard to inspire students to explore the ideas, people, and stories as part of National History Day. Visit the [Washington](#) or [New York](#) History Day websites to find out more about the program.



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<http://columbia.washingtonhistory.org/lessons/blaineMSHS.aspx>