

CATHARINE BLAINE

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



The Journey of Catharine Paine Blaine

FOR ELEMENTARY GRADES

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 on 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?



The original handwritten copy of the Declaration of Sentiments has been lost, but printed versions were published immediately after the convention. Catherine Paine's name can be clearly seen on the list of those who signed.

Primary Sources for Student Understanding:

1. [1851 Colton Map](#)
2. [Out of the Box: Clothing and Artifact Images](#)
3. Excerpts from the Letters of Catharine Paine Blaine (included in other handouts)

Secondary Sources for Student Understanding:

1. [To Go So Far From Home](#)
2. [What Catharine Carried](#)

Student Worksheets:

1. [Map Their Journey](#)
2. [When Did It Happen?](#)
3. [What Would You Take?](#)
4. [Pack Your Trunk!](#)
5. [Catharine Blaine: Seneca Falls and the Women's Rights Movement in the State of Washington exhibit](#)

Materials:

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

Instructions for Teachers:

PREPARATION

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 1: MAPPING THE JOURNEY

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 to another?*
- *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.*

Step 2

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 excerpts in [the Map Your Journey handout](#) and 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 Catharine want to travel by sea?*
- *Which way would you pick to make the journey? Why?*
- *How do you think that Catharine got to Seattle from New York?*

Step 3

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 students to illustrate a scene from the "Map Your Journey" 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)

Step 1

Although the exhibit "Catharine Blaine: Seneca Falls and the Women's Rights Movement in the State of Washington" is closed, the panels for it may be [downloaded](#) and printed out for classroom use. Using the exhibit panels, ask students to complete the [When Did It Happen?](#) worksheet in order to dig deeper into the life of Catharine Paine Blaine.

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.

ACTIVITY 3: PACKING CATHARINE'S TRUNK

Step 1

Distribute the [What Catharine Carried reading](#) to your students. With this essay, also distribute the [Out of the Box artifact reading](#) for them to look at.

Divide students into small groups and ask them to use both the reading and the artifact images to make a list of everything that Catharine might have brought with her.

Step 2

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

- *Pretend that you are Catharine Paine Blaine and you are preparing to travel to the Pacific Northwest.*
- *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 – but in that trunk, you can only include her five most important things.*
- *With your groups, decide what those five things are and write a sentence about each to explain why they are so important.*

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

Step 3

Ask each group to report on what items they selected. Ask them the following:

- *What objects did you select? (As students share, write their ideas on the board.)*
- *Why do you think these things 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.

ACTIVITY 4: TAKE IT A STEP FURTHER (OPTIONAL)

Have students write about how eastern women affected the lives of their counterparts in the West. How did the ideas and beliefs of those women change the places that they migrated to?

Option 1: Imagine the Journey

Imagine that you were going on a long trip yourself - to a foreign country or to a place that you don't know. What would you take to remind you of your home?

Ask students to imagine an object they could not leave their home without and create a picture of it, illustrating it on an individual basis or as part of a classroom scrapbook.

Option 2: What Ideas Would YOU Bring?

Would you want to share some of the things that you believe in if you traveled on a journey to somewhere new? What kind of ideas might you share?

Using the prompt above, have students write an essay or poem about one of the ideas that they would take with them to a new place.

Option 3: How Did One Person Make a Difference

Ask students to select one woman from the East Coast who made a difference to the lives of people in the West and write a short persuasive essay about her. They may use their exhibit worksheets for ideas. Explain to them that they should review all the materials provided in order to write about what kind of impact eastern reformers had on the West. They should be reminded to look at social, economic and technological impact in considering their arguments. [Washington Stories](#) and the [Women's Rights National Historical Park](#) website are two great sites that offer primary and secondary sources that could be used for this paper.

Depending upon the amount of time you have, students might devote only a few days to this assignment, or, alternatively extend their research into many other sources and devote more time to the writing and presentation of their papers. After students have drafted their persuasive papers, pair them up and have them switch papers. After students have drafted their persuasive papers, pair them up and have them switch papers. Ask them: *Are you persuaded by your partner's recommendation? Why or why not? What evidence has your partner used that persuades you? Where could they improve?*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 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/blaine.aspx>