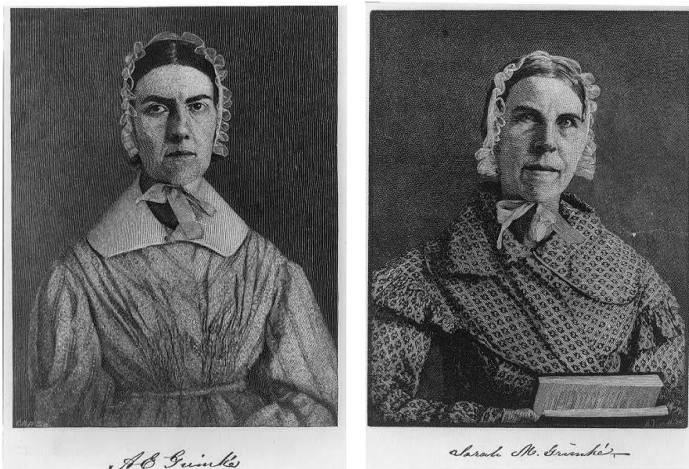


In 1839, the Grimkes and Weld published *Slavery As It Is*, which shared true stories of the horrors of slavery drawn from accounts in Southern newspapers. This book became source material for Harriet Beecher Stowe's influential novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.



Angelina and Sarah Grimke. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Angelina and Sarah Grimke are featured on the Boston Women's Heritage Trail.

Learn More

To learn more about the women featured here, abolitionism in Lexington, the "Something Is Being Done" monument, the Women's Visibility Banners, and the Ellen Stone Building, please see:

- Lexington Lyceum Advocates: <https://www.lexlyceum.org>
- LexSeeHer: <https://www.lexseeher.com>
- Mary E. Keenan, *In Haste, Julia*, Lexington Historical Society
- Mary E. Keenan, *Petitions: A Patriot Legacy*, Lexington Historical Society



Women Abolitionists of Lexington

In the decades before the Civil War, women abolitionists, both Black and white, entered the public sphere in unprecedented numbers to take part in the political battle to end slavery in the United States. They worked as the "great silent army" of the anti-slavery movement by doing grassroots organizing, raising funds, and writing key arguments against slavery. Several Lexington women took part in this "silent army".

Mary Elizabeth Miles Bibb

An educator, journalist, and abolitionist, Mary Elizabeth Miles Bibb became the first Black woman to graduate from Lexington's teacher training school, the Normal School, in 1843. When Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, she left the United States for Canada. There, she founded an anti-slavery newspaper, a school for Blacks, and a Refugee Home Society to support self-emancipated people who fled to Canada.

The Canadian government designated Mary and her husband, Henry, national historic persons in 2002.

Mary Elizabeth Miles Bibb is featured on a LexSeeHer Women's Visibility Banner and on the "Something is Being Done" women's monument being constructed in Lexington.

Julia Robbins Barrett and Ellen Robbins Stone

The Robbins sisters were members of a prominent East Lexington family and became active in the abolitionist movement. Together, they represented Lexington at the American Anti-Slavery Bazaar in Boston in 1850.

In the decades before the Civil War, the American Anti-Slavery Society held annual end-of-year bazaars to raise money for the Society's efforts. Both Ellen and Julia helped set up the Bazaar in 1850, and Julia stayed in Boston to staff one of the many booths selling donated wares and to listen to talks by leaders of the movement—William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Rev. Samuel May, Lexington's Theodore Parker, Charles Remond, Lucy Stone, and others.



Mary Elizabeth Miles Bibb as she appears on the LexSeeHer Women's Monument.

Julia also arranged for speakers at her father Eli Robbins' Lyceum in what is now called the Ellen Stone Building. From 1833, the Stone Building became the focal point for anti-slavery discussions in Lexington as such topics were discouraged at other venues. The Robbins family brought nationally recognized abolitionists speakers such as Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, Parker Pillsbury, and Lucy Stone to the Lyceum.

Ellen lived in the Stone Building for several years with her husband, Abner Stone, and daughters, Ellen and Mary. After her death, her daughter Ellen deeded the building to the Town of Lexington as a library, a purpose it held for more than 130 years. One of the primary goals of the Lexington Lyceum Advocates is to see this building reopened and returned to community use.

Julia and Ellen Robbins are featured on a LexSeeHer Visibility Banner. Julia and her niece, Ellen, are also featured on the "Something Is Being Done" monument.

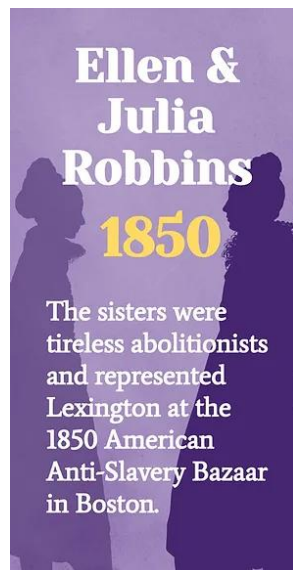
Hannah Robbins

Hannah Robbins, the mother of Julia and Ellen and wife of Eli Robbins, served on the Executive Committee of the Middlesex County Anti-Slavery Society, which sometimes met at the family's Lyceum. Hannah often attended anti-slavery events in Boston and in nearby towns with her daughters Julia and Ellen.

Although women were not yet allowed to vote, Hannah took advantage of one of the few political actions open to women in the 19th century—petitioning. She signed several anti-slavery petitions, including one drafted by her husband, Eli, to protest the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, which allowed slavecatchers to pursue self-emancipated and free Blacks throughout the country.



Hannah Robbins. Courtesy of the Lexington Historical Society.



LexSeeHer Visibility Banner honoring Ellen and Julia Robbins.

Eliza Cabot Follen

Eliza was a novelist, poet, and children's author. Married to Rev. Charles Follen, an anti-slavery activist and the namesake for Lexington's Follen Community Church, Eliza came to Lexington when her husband was asked to minister to the East Lexington community. The Robbins family invited Eliza and Charles to live in the Stone Building, where, in the second-floor Lyceum, Charles first ministered to his congregation. A staunch abolitionist herself, Eliza encouraged Lexington women to take part in anti-slavery efforts, telling them "abolition is women's work."

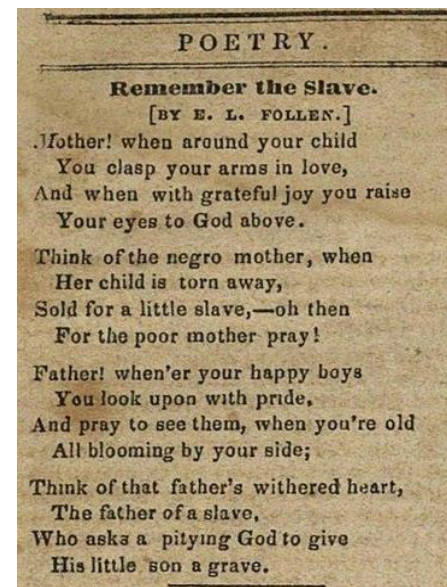
After her husband's untimely death in 1840, she served for several years as editor of the *Child's Friend*, published Charles Follen's writings in the multi-volume *The Works of Charles Follen*, and continued to publish her own works, including *To Mothers in the Free States*, *Anti-Slavery Hymns and Songs*, and *From Little Songs, for Little Boys and Girls*.

Eliza Cabot Follen is featured on a LexSeeHer Visibility Banner, the Lexington women's monument, and as part of the Boston Women's Heritage Trail.

Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke

The Grimke sisters and Angelina's husband, Theodore Weld, were teachers in the 1860s at the Lexington school for young women run by Mr. and Mrs. Dio Lewis. The sisters grew up in a slaveholding family in Charleston, South Carolina, but found they could not reconcile the practice of slavery with their religious beliefs and so moved North.

Before her marriage to the abolitionist Weld, Angelina gained national attention in the 1830s for the anti-slavery letters she penned for William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator* and for the public speeches she gave against slavery to both mixed gender and racially integrated audiences.



Source: <https://capeannslavery.org/role-of-religious-communities-in-the-anti-slavery-movement/>