

Notes on Race and Gender

Race after the Revolution

1. The Revolutionary Era transformed slavery into a moral problem.
2. African American soldiers served with valor at the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill. In November 1775, however, Congress decided to exclude blacks from future enlistment out of sensitivity to the opinion of southern slaveholders. But in 1775, the royal governor of Virginia offered to emancipate slaves who joined the Royal Army. Lord Dunmore's offer of freedom led Congress reluctantly to reverse its decision, fearful that black soldiers might join the redcoats.
3. As a result of the Revolution, slavery was transformed into a purely sectional institution. When the war was over, the New England and Middle Atlantic states abolished slavery by legislative or judicial action or adopted gradual emancipation schemes. Still, as late as 1810 there were more than 30,000 slaves in the northern states. *Slavery expanded in the South.*
7. The Northwest Ordinance outlawed slavery in the west north of the Ohio.

Women after the Revolution

Essential Points:

1. The Revolutionary era had contradictory effects on the status of women.
2. Women assumed unaccustomed responsibilities during the Revolution. But the Revolution also created thousands of widows and single mothers.
3. The Revolutionary generation assigned new significance to women's roles. *Republican mothers were responsible for shaping society's moral character.* Women needed to be educated and literacy rocketed upward.
4. Women received new ways to contribute to their family's income, through household industries, early factories, teaching and writing. Women also became active in charitable and reform societies.
5. More negatively, the Revolutionary era accentuated the political and economic differences between men and women. The Revolutionary generation spoke of the rights of man. Women were denied access to the vote, to higher education, and to the professions.