Women in the Antebellum U.S.
Women's lives disrupted:
--political conscience awakened
--involved in things during Independence movement and war that are openly political
--women's organizations formed to help support war effort
"Remember the Women"
--Abigail Adams, 1774--talked of "your" affairs to John; by late '70s talked of "our" estate, property, etc.
--in '80s used "my" on occasion and then apologized.

Equality"
--not right to vote for women
--not for women holding office
wanted modest things:
--protection in law against male abuse
--modest property rights for women

--operates with understanding of two separate interdependent spheres
Domesticity and republican motherhood:
Pre-1800--motherhood takes on a political dimension
--sons will participate directly
--daughters will help out on the home front; mothers will raise good soldiers

post-1800:
--republican motherhood idea emphasized a public dimension to motherhood
--outside world becoming more selfish, brought on by market economy
--home would be the sanctuary from competition, from the bad world
--home manufacturing becoming less and less important
Marriage and Divorce
--marriage decisions become more personal rather than familial
--being able to decide for oneself very important for women
--evidence that marriage increasingly becoming the choice of the woman--marriage takes place out of the birth order
--women more inclined to file for divorce
from 1692-1765--in Mass. 46 women file
from 1765-1786--82 women file
--reasons they cite, change: pre-1765--most women file for desertion

post-Revolutionary years:
--men increasingly petition on basis of desertion 35%
--women increasingly file on basis of adultery 30%
--grounds change b/c women won't put up with adulterous behavior
Singlehood:
--by 1830s & 40s singlehood becoming more accepted
--old revolutionary idealism of independence and self-reliance not entirely negative
--emphasis on women's education continues
--change in American economy--women find opportunity to leave home, mills, etc.
--women support groups in New England--to leave home did not mean to be alone
--sisterhood begins to replace family ties