

Second Great Awakening

The Second Great Awakening was a mass religious movement in America and the second of its kind. Notably, the evangelical impulse that began in 1790 and lasted through the 1840s emphasized the individual's role in universal salvation. In a time when many Americans frowned on women's work outside the home, the religious nature of the movement legitimized women's activities in the public sphere, empowering women to take up a variety of secular causes in an effort to reform society.

In the 1730s and 1740s both Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, two of the leading First Great Awakening preachers, laid the groundwork for a faith that emphasized the role of an individual in seeking their own salvation based on personal revelation. Nonetheless, many Protestant theologians held fast to the doctrine of predestination, a belief that God had chosen only a few people to be saved and that there was nothing a person could do to change their eternal destiny.

In the late 1700s a number of influential revivalists sought to reestablish personal choice as a doctrine in salvation, and in so doing created the Second Great Awakening. Evangelists, like Charles Grandison Finney taught that God offered an opportunity for salvation to all people. Black, white, young, old, rich, poor, men, and women had access to salvation – not just a privileged few. In this new faith, it was up to believers to make a “free will” choice to seek out and accept the gift of salvation from God.

The mass religious movement swept through both cities and the countryside. In the country, camp revival meetings became common as early as 1800. Hundreds of people from various denominations flocked to hear sermons preached by rotating charismatic ministers. The net effect was that visitors listened to sermons all day long. In some cases, religious services went on for several days. Many preachers adopted the practice of placing prospective converts in the “anxious box” so that they could preach directly to them hour after hour until they accepted salvation. Often, converts displayed overtly dramatic responses by falling on the ground and shaking widely, creating a lively and entertaining revival atmosphere. In the cities, the fiery messages that preachers delivered were said to awaken believers from spiritual slumber by igniting a spiritual fire inside their hearts. In New York State, for example, some areas were nicknamed “burnt-over districts.” According to some estimates, in 1839 Finney converted more than 100,000 people in New York, and often times the majority of converts were women.

The universal nature of the new faith particularly attracted women. Since colonial times, traditional Protestants had viewed women as the weaker sex. In contrast, evangelicals, who believed that all people could be saved, placed women in a state of spiritual equality with men. In fact, in some ways, women were regarded as spiritually superior to men, because more women than men heeded the call to salvation. Some evangelists capitalized on the state of affairs by empowering women to tend to the salvation of the rest of their households. Many women responded by bringing their husbands and children to the faith. Others became evangelists and spiritual hymn writers spreading the message to the world.

The universal nature of the new faith resulted in a more democratic approach to religion. In short, the Second Great Awakening empowered women as individuals and as a group. It changed the way Americans saw women's role in religion and society and this new view encouraged women to engage in reform movements, based on the notion that if women were uniquely able to reform their own households they might also be best suited for national reforms,

based on superior “Female Moral Authority.” Some of the most notable female reform movements included temperance, abolition, suffrage, and utopian ventures.

Ultimately, leadership roles in the new faith equipped some women to take on new leadership roles in society. Many women joined activist clubs. Some of the most famous activists included: Sojourner Truth (an advocate of abolition and women’s rights); Harriet Tubman (an abolitionist and the “Chief Conductor” of the Underground Railroad); and Susan B. Anthony (a proponent of temperance, abolition, and suffrage, who was arrested for voting illegally in a presidential election and proclaimed at her trial, “Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God.”).

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See also: Abolition/Antislavery Movement; Anthony, Susan B.; Female Moral Authority; Great Awakening; Temperance Movement; Truth, Sojourner; Tubman, Harriet; Women’s Rights Movement

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Passing Soldiers

Early American history provides significant evidence of women’s desires to participate in the battle for freedom. The American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) is one of the first conflicts with documented evidence of women disguising their gender in an attempt to fight on the battlefield. While there are fewer documented cases of women passing for men in the Revolutionary War, by the American Civil War (1861-1865) there are accounts of hundreds of women cutting their hair, adopting male aliases, and bandaging their breasts to serve alongside their male counterparts. These women challenged society’s gender roles that only allowed women to serve as nurses, cooks, laundresses, and spies by pushing such gender boundaries and gathering up arms to fight.

During the American Revolutionary War, this gender ruse allowed women to live lives beyond the confines of the home and move into roles other than wife and mother. Many women who decided to disguise their gender were concerned with more than adventure. Most were poor, unmarried, and young and wished to go to war so as to collect a soldier's paycheck. One of the more well-known women who served in the Revolutionary War as Deborah Sampson (1760-1827) of Plympton, Massachusetts. Noted to have been a direct descendant of William Bradford (1590-1657), the former governor of Plymouth Plantation, Sampson enlisted in the 4th Massachusetts Regiment in 1782 under her deceased brother’s name of Robert Shurtliff. She fought in New York until 1783 when she was wounded in battle and her true gender was discovered by the attending physician. The doctor did not reveal her secret, and after a year and a half of serving with her regiment, Sampson was honorably discharged.

In 1777, Ann (or Nancy) Bailey of Boston adopted the name Samuel Gay and enlisted in the 1st Massachusetts Regiment. While there are few details about her short time in service, there

are accounts that confirm she was promoted to the rank of corporal, the highest rank of any woman who served during the Revolutionary War. After a few weeks of service, Bailey left the 1st Massachusetts Regiment. It is believed that her abrupt departure may have been linked to the discovery that she was a female. Her true gender identity discovered, Bailey was fined and imprisoned for impersonating a man.

Sally St. Claire, a Creole woman from South Carolina, joined a South Carolina regiment during the Revolutionary War to remain close to her lover. Little is known of St. Claire's early life or her time in service. Records indicate that she enlisted in 1778 and fought in the Battle of Savannah where both she and her lover were killed in battle. It was not until her death that she was discovered to be a woman.

While the numbers were lower for women who served in the Revolutionary War, historians note that by the American Civil War, there were upwards of 400 women who served under the guise of being men. These women came from diverse and varied backgrounds – rich and poor, literate and illiterate, city dwellers and rural denizens. Their reasons for service were varied. Many women enlisted to remain close to their husbands, lovers, or brothers. Others enlisted for adventure. Some women enlisted to avoid being married off to unsuitable men or to free themselves from unbearable family situations. Enlistment in the army allowed women to make their own money and many were able to relieve the financial burdens of their families back home. Other women enlisted because they deeply believed in the cause for either the Confederate or Union sides and desired to play a more active role in the war effort.

Unlike many of the Revolutionary War women, who tended to serve for short periods of time, women who enlisted during the Civil War as men served for relatively long stretches of time. Most were able to easily pass the physical entrance examination. For most enlistees, the exam consisted of little more than a doctor checking an enlistee's teeth and adding their names to the muster list. As more soldiers were killed and the need to replenish those lost soldiers increased, the physical exam became no more than a formality, making it much easier for women to enlist and serve their country as "passing" soldiers. A woman risked detection if she was wounded or killed on the battlefield or became pregnant while serving. Passing soldiers had little trouble concealing their menstrual habits, or their different approaches to urination, in part because even nineteenth century American men tended to cloak bodily functions in privacy.

Martha Parks Lindley, who enlisted in the 6th U.S. Cavalry as James (Jim) Smith, served alongside her husband William. In 1861, when Lucy Thompson Gauss's husband enlisted in the 18th North Carolina Infantry of the Confederacy, she too enlisted. Gauss served until 1862 when she became pregnant and was forced to leave before her true gender was revealed. Clearly, both Lindley's and Gauss's husbands knew about and approved of their wives' secret lives.

In 1861, Loreta Janeta Velázquez (1842-1897?) enlisted in the Confederate Army under the name Harry Buford. Her husband enlisted at the outbreak of the war; however, despite Velázquez's repeated attempts to sway her husband to let her enlist, he refused. Velázquez moved to Arkansas, dressed as a man, and joined the Confederate ranks. In her 1876 memoir, she notes that she was successful in recruiting over 200 volunteers to join the Arkansas regiment in just over four days. She was quickly promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. Velázquez took her men to Florida where her husband was stationed to show him her command. A few short days after finding her husband, he fell victim to a shooting accident during training and died. Velázquez went on to fight in the First Battle of Bull Run, the Siege on Fort Donelson, and the battle at Shiloh. She served until 1865 when she was wounded by a stray bullet, the treatment of

which revealed her gender. Velázquez continued to help the Confederate war effort by serving as a spy.

Sarah Emma Edmonds (1841-1898) was a Canadian who used her enlistment as a means to escape an abusive father and an arranged marriage. In early 1861, with her mother's assistance, Edmonds fled to the United States where she joined the 2nd Michigan Infantry in the spring of 1861 under the alias Franklin Thompson. Edmonds served without incident until she contracted malaria in the spring of 1863. In need of medical attention but fearing detection, Edmonds left her company to seek treatment. She fully intended to rejoin her command after her recovery; however, she discovered that she had been listed as a deserter. The punishment for desertion was death. Edmonds eventually re-enlisted as a nurse, a role that did not require her to hide her gender.

Some women soldiers who passed for men maintained their disguise after their service. Jennie Hodgers (1843-1915) mustered into the 95th Illinois Infantry under the name of Albert Cashier in 1862. Hodgers fought in the Illinois Regiment until the war's end in 1865. Her true gender identity remained concealed, allowing her to collect a military pension. Hodgers continued to live her life disguised as a man for over fifty years. In this time, Hodgers was able to vote and earn a living for herself. It was not until 1910 when she was hit by a car and suffered a broken leg that her true gender was discovered. Sympathetic hospital doctors and nurses agreed not to divulge her gender, allowing Hodgers to be placed at the Soldiers and Sailors Home in Quincy, Illinois. By 1913, Hodgers was suffering from dementia and was placed in a home for the insane. Her gender was once again discovered, this time by less sympathetic caregivers, and she was forced to wear a dress for the remaining two years of her life. Hodgers died in 1915 and was buried in her Union military uniform with a headstone that listed her as Albert Cashier. Some years later, a second headstone was added with the name Jennie Hodgers.

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See also: Boyd, Belle; Corbin, Margaret; Cushman, Pauline; Davis, Ann Simpson; Edmonds, Sarah; Knox, Lucy; Revolutionary War; Sampson, Deborah; Women Soldiers; Velazquez, Loreta

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Sacagawea (c. 1788-1812/1884)

Shoshone Indian Sacagawea accompanied the Lewis and Clark expedition as the only woman from the Missouri River over the Continental Divide on to the Pacific Coast. The wife of the expedition's Canadian French interpreter Toussaint Charbonneau, Sacagawea has been memorialized as the indispensable guide for Lewis and Clark. She captured the romantic imagination of the nation, becoming the symbol of both the contributions of Native Americans to American history and their fate at the hand of American settlers. While her role as a guide has been exaggerated, Sacagawea's services as an interpreter and her knowledge of native food resources greatly contributed to the success of the expedition. As such, she served an important role as a cultural broker between Indian and American worlds.

Sacagawea was born in a Northern Shoshone village near the Lemhi River Valley in present-day Idaho, likely a member of the Agaiduka, or Salmon Eater, band of the tribe. Around 1800, when the band was on a hunting or war expedition east of their home territory in present-day Montana, Sacagawea was captured by the Hidatsa Indians from what is now North Dakota. In 1804, French fur trader Toussaint Charbonneau purchased her from the Hidatsa and claimed her as his wife. Lewis and Clark encountered the two while wintering among the Mandans in 1804-05 and hired Charbonneau as their interpreter. When they embarked upon their journey west in April of 1805, Sacagawea accompanied the expedition together with the couple's two-month-old son strapped to a cradleboard on her back.

When she became part of the expedition, Sacagawea did not control her life. She was a teenager with a young infant, bound to a man who apparently had a liking for young Indian women (at the time, he had another young Indian wife). In his journals, Meriwether Lewis commented on her cheerful, co-operative attitude, one that he interpreted as different from the indifference that set primitive people apart from civilized people. Lewis was to change his mind later, not just about Sacagawea but to some extent about Indian people in general, and come to see her as a full human being.

There was a clear advantage to having Sacagawea and the young infant along: their presence signaled to possibly hostile Indians along the way that the expedition was not a war party. But there was more to her role in the success of the endeavor than her mere passive presence. Although not accredited in the roster as an equal partner with the interpreters George Drouillard and Charbonneau, she performed crucial translation tasks from the very beginning of the trek west. Often it was Sacagawea who communicated with the Indians and translated what they were saying to Charbonneau who then delivered the message to Lewis and Clark. When Sacagawea became seriously ill in early June, Lewis himself acknowledged the significance of her role as not just interpreter but as a cultural mediator, noting in his journal that she was "our only dependence for friendly negotiation [sic] with the Snake [or, Shoshone] Indians, upon whom we depend for horses to assist us in our portage from the Missouri to the Columbia River."

When the expedition finally came across the Shoshones, it became apparent that they were Sacagawea's people. She was immediately recognized by a woman who had also been a captive of the Hidatsas and general rejoicing at her return followed. An even more emotional reunion took place when Sacagawea sat down to interpret the meeting between Lewis and Clark and the Shoshone leader Cameahwait. Looking up at the chief, she realized he was her brother. In their *History of the Expedition*, the two explorers noted that "she instantly jumped up, and ran and embraced him, throwing over him her blanket, and weeping profusely." Negotiations for

buying the horses for the overland journey went on for two weeks. In the end, while she could have rejoined her people, Sacagawea carried on with Lewis and Clark, clearly identifying her own best interests with the expedition and maybe even enjoying the adventure of exploration.

Sacagawea's most critical contribution to the expedition came in helping alleviate the greatest threat to its success: perpetual hunger. While the men all hunted and fished, they were not consistently successful. Sacagawea had grown up learning the female indigenous skills of collecting roots and berries; she could locate and prepare edible plants unknown to the men in the expedition. She also understood their medicinal properties. In addition, she was able to trace the underground food caches of small animals and merely dug them up to feed the men. She cracked small animal bones to extract the nourishing marrow, and prepared the meat and other meals. William Clark was impressed with Sacagawea's service as well as her strength in the harsh conditions, nicknaming her Janey in his journals. He also became attached to her son, Jean Baptiste, whom he fondly called Pomp, and assumed responsibility for his education.

After wintering among the coastal Indians, the expedition began its return trip to St. Louis, retracing its route over the first mountain range. At that point, the group decided to split. Lewis took a few men to explore a short north route back to the falls of the Missouri while Clark and the rest of the expedition retraced the route they had taken west the previous summer, then cut across to the Yellowstone River and followed it back up to the Missouri. On this trek, Sacagawea came into her own as a guide, leading the expedition through her childhood surroundings.

When the two groups met, the expedition was over. They cruised down the Missouri, greeted by Indians who had seen them off the previous year. Since his services as interpreter were no longer necessary, Charbonneau asked to be paid and released from service. On August 17, 1806, Lewis noted in his journal the services Charbonneau had provided. Furthermore, he wrote, "his wife was particularly useful among Shoshones. Indeed, she has borne with a patience truly admirable the fatigues of so long a route, encumbered with the charge of an infant, who is even now only 19 months old." Charbonneau received his wages of \$500.33 while Sacagawea received nothing, reflective of notions about women and their rights, or lack thereof. According to the legal practice of the time, a woman at marriage became a *feme covert*, or her legal identity was absorbed into that of her husband's. It did not even occur to Lewis and Clark to compensate Sacagawea because she was a married woman. Additionally, regardless of the respect they had for her, she was an Indian.

Sacagawea's life after the expedition remains shrouded in mystery. Traditional historical records suggest that Sacagawea, her son Jean Baptiste and Charbonneau went to St. Louis around 1810 to accept Clark's offer of 320 acres of land and additional pay as well as to finance the education of their son. Sacagawea and Charbonneau returned to the Upper Missouri River country to work for the Missouri Fur Company trader Manuel Lisa. Jean Baptiste appears to have stayed behind to begin his education under the patronage of William Clark. Most historians believe that Sacagawea herself died at Fort Manuel on the Missouri River of "putrid fever" on December 20, 1812.

The alternative version of Sacagawea's life persists among the Shoshone, Comanche, Mandan/Hidatsa, Gros Ventre, and other Indian nations. Their oral traditions maintain that Sacagawea left Charbonneau and wandered from tribe to tribe until marrying and having children among the Comanches. When her Comanche husband died, she reunited with her first-born son and adopted nephew and helped her Wind River Shoshone people in their transition to

life on their newly created reservation. In this version of her life, she died and was buried on her Wyoming reservation on April 9, 1884.

Sacagawea continues to capture the imaginations of both Indians and non-Indians alike. Arguably, there are more monuments, memorials, rivers, lakes and other natural markers named after her than any other American woman. Her life, both real and fictional, has been resurrected numerous times by historians, novelists, anthropologists and feminists alike. In 1998, the Dollar Coin Design Advisory Committee recommended that Sacagawea be depicted on the new dollar coin, first minted in 2000. The most authentic picture of this extraordinary young woman emerges from the journals of Lewis and Clark but it is a picture seen through the eyes and prejudices of American men. The real Sacagawea remains elusive.

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See Also: Coverture; Kitomaquund, Mary; Pocahontas; Tegakwitha; Women of All Red Nations

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