The Seneca Falls Convention began a six decade career of women’s rights activism by Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

“‘It has been said that I forged the thunderbolts and she fired them.’

Elizabeth Cady Stanton on her partnership with Susan B. Anthony

A Unique Partnership

She has been called the “outstanding philosopher” of the women’s movement. Even in childhood Elizabeth Cady Stanton had a passion for equality. In order to compete with boys she studied the “books they read and the games they played,” beginning a lifelong habit of intellectual curiosity. Later, as the mother of seven children, she sometimes felt like a “caged lioness.” Elizabeth wrote speeches and prepared arguments for her friend Susan B. Anthony to deliver on the lecture circuit.

On the Road

Cady Stanton took to the lecture circuit in middle age promoting suffrage and other women’s issues including divorce reform (particularly in the case of drunken or abusive husbands), the right to own property independently, and child custody (left exclusively to the husband after marital breakup). Often involved in controversy, her personal demeanor could be disarming.

“My pail full of arguments against is getting emptied and the pail of arguments for is filling up,” wrote one audience member.

Notes for Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s “Woman’s Bible.” Challenging scriptural passages that seemed to subordinate women was one of her most controversial projects, making her appear too radical for some reformers. Lamott on Commonreads

Low Point

The women’s suffrage movement split over the 15th Amendment, guaranteeing voting rights to black men but not women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton broke with former abolitionist colleagues arguing in a disparaging tone that educated women should vote first if there must be a choice. A painful rift persisted for decades.