Lucy Stone has been called the “heart and soul” of the suffrage movement. As a speaker, organizer, editor, and motivating force, she altered public opinion, customs, and laws pertaining to women’s rights.

“Where is Lucy Stone’s monument, reaching up to the stars?”

H. L. Mencken

A Turning Point

A young Lucy Stone was angered by a pastoral letter to Congregational ministers condemning women for public speaking to mixed audiences. As her minister criticized the activist Grimké sisters for speaking on abolition, she made her cousin “black and blue with the indignant nudges of my elbow at each aggravating sentence,” “…If I ever felt bound to silence by misrepresentation of Scripture texts or believed equal rights did not belong to women, that pastoral letter broke my bonds.”

A Voice For Women

After the Civil War Lucy Stone founded the Boston based American Woman Suffrage Association and became editor of The Woman’s Journal, the most influential national publication advocating woman’s suffrage. The Journal also printed pamphlets and brochures that were distributed in states where suffrage campaigns were underway. AWSA emphasized state-by-state efforts to gain suffrage believing that a successful federal constitutional amendment (both congressional approval and state-by-state ratification) would be more likely if women were already voting in several states.

“Lucy Stoners”

Lucy Stone accepted a marriage proposal by reformer Henry Blackwell. A Protest against unjust marriage laws was part of the ceremony. The couple took steps to ensure Stone’s financial and personal independence within marriage. To retain her individuality she kept her own name. Those who followed her lead in not taking a husband’s name were called “Lucy Stoners.”