

Middle Class.

1820-1860

Identifications

7/16

(Cont.)

Doctrine of the Spheres True Womanhood

Powerpoint #9b

Doctrine of the Spheres

As part of this Second Great Awakening, they promoted an ideology of gender called the **Doctrine of the Spheres**. *wholly different from each other* This code of behavior said that men and women were very different, with separate but complementary roles, behavior rules, and "spheres" (appropriate environments).

1840

Men:

- Naturally aggressive *(heterosexual)*
- Use their strengths to benefit society in the world at large
- **Public** sphere – world of work, politics, outside
- Aggressions could turn to sinful behavior if left unchecked
- Comfortable with other men – 'homosocial' *single*



Women:

- Naturally moral and spiritual
- Designed by nature and culture to be nurturing and caring
- **Private** sphere – the world of home, *(domesticity)* inside *(in house)*
- Should influence and civilize husbands & children
- Most comfortable in the company of other women



Doctrine of the Spheres continued...

These rules were spread by traveling preachers and especially in printed publications like books, newspapers, and magazines.

Both men and women were responsible for propagating these values, and judging other women who did not abide by them. ^{they were 80 considered superior to men.}

For Northern women, it was expected that they try to fulfill the tenets of **True Womanhood** as proper, moral females. (Rich women) ^{thought is way for} a role of their gender.

Poor women did not have time for this because they did not have time for that. They were working to help feed their families



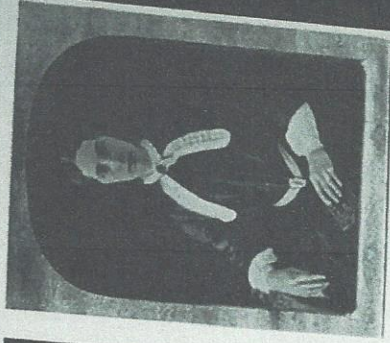
Ideal woman — Queen Victoria.
idea of middle class woman

True Womanhood (1830s-1850s)

The rules and expectations of True Womanhood were widespread among middle-class Northerners of the mid-1800s, and were believed and articulated by women as much as men.

There were four overall qualities "True Women" should have and demonstrate:

1. **Piety** – being religious Protestants
2. **Submissiveness** – to both husbands and to God
3. **Purity** – chastity, faithfulness, morality
4. **Domesticity** – living fulfilling lives through home and family, making the home a refuge from the polluted outside world and sin



True Womanhood continued...

The ultimate goal and responsibility of women's lives was motherhood, and the greatest joy as well. In the household they ruled supreme, since men were rarely expected to be there for long.

While they loved their husbands from afar, many women's most intense relationships were with their children and other women, with whom they spent time, corresponded, and confided.

For these women, patriarchy was almost completely gone from the home that was their domain.

But – they were economically dependent on husbands, and still lacked public citizenship rights to control their own money and property, to vote or testify, to divorce from bad marriages, to be fully independent adults.

Some reformer women felt this was wrong, and began agitating for a women's rights movement.

