

MARGARET FULLER



Sarah Margaret Fuller Ossoli, commonly known as **Margaret Fuller**, (May 23, 1810 – July 19, 1850) was an American journalist, critic, and women's rights advocate associated with the American transcendentalism movement. She was the first full-time American female book reviewer in journalism. Her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* is considered the first major feminist work in the United States.

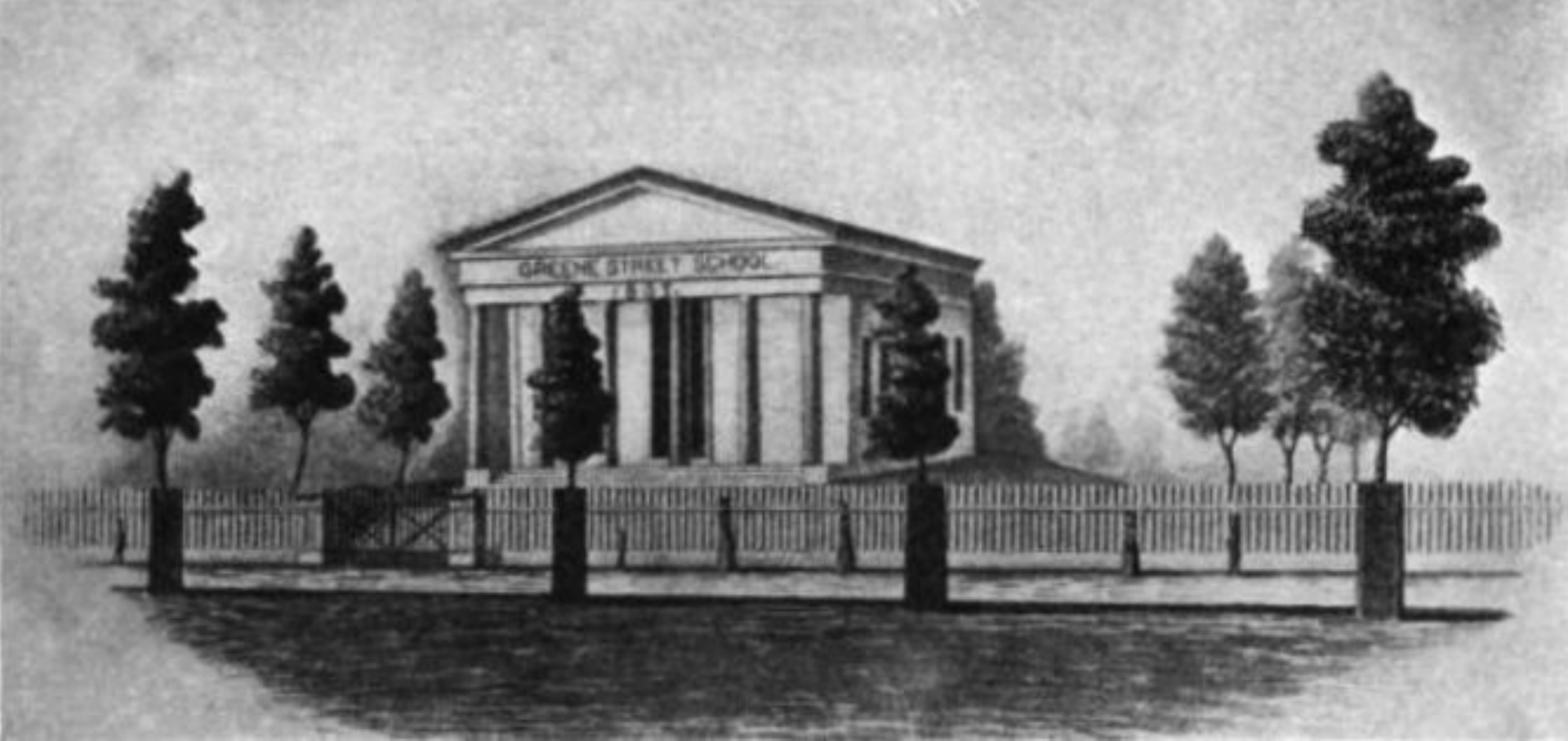


Born Sarah Margaret Fuller in Cambridge, Massachusetts, she was given a substantial early education by her father, Timothy Fuller. She later had more formal schooling and became a teacher before, in 1839, she began overseeing what she called "conversations": discussions among women meant to compensate for their lack of access to higher education. She became the first editor of the transcendentalist journal *The Dial* in 1840, before joining the staff of the *New York Tribune* under Horace Greeley in 1844. By the time she was in her 30s, Fuller had earned a reputation as the best-read person in New England, male or female, and became the first woman allowed to use the library at Harvard College.





BIRTHPLACE AND CHILDHOOD HOME OF
MARGARET FULLER




THE GREENE STREET SCHOOL WHERE FULLER
TAUGHT FROM 1837 TO 1839



Her seminal work, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, was published in 1845. A year later, she was sent to Europe for the *Tribune* as its first female correspondent. She soon became involved with the revolutions in Italy and allied herself with Giuseppe Mazzini. She had a relationship with Giovanni Ossoli, with whom she had a child. All three members of the family died in a shipwreck off Fire Island, New York, as they were traveling to the United States in 1850. Fuller's body was never recovered.

Fuller was an advocate of women's rights and, in particular, women's education and the right to employment. She also encouraged many other reforms in society, including prison reform and the emancipation of slaves in the United States. Many other advocates for women's rights and feminism, including Susan B. Anthony, cite Fuller as a source of inspiration. Many of her contemporaries, however, were not supportive, including her former friend Harriet Martineau. She said that Fuller was a talker rather than an activist. Shortly after Fuller's death, her importance faded; the editors who prepared her letters to be published, believing her fame would be short-lived, were not concerned about accuracy and censored or altered much of her work before publication.



In Fuller, Ossoli, and their child began a five-week return voyage to the United States aboard the ship Elizabeth. The ship slammed into a sandbar. Fuller's body nor that of her husband was ever recovered.



Memorial marker
for Margaret
Fuller
and family located at
Mount Auburn Cemetery
in Cambridge,
Massachusetts





FULLER WAS AN EARLY PROPONENT OF FEMINISM AND ESPECIALLY BELIEVED IN PROVIDING EDUCATION TO WOMEN. FULLER ALSO ADVOCATED REFORM AT ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING PRISON.

SHE ALSO SUPPORTED THE RIGHTS OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS, REFERRING TO "THIS CANCER OF SLAVERY", AND SUGGESTED THAT THOSE WHO WERE INTERESTED IN THE ABOLITION MOVEMENT FOLLOW THE SAME REASONING WHEN CONSIDERING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN: "AS THE FRIEND OF THE NEGRO ASSUMES THAT ONE MAN CANNOT BY RIGHT HOLD ANOTHER IN BONDAGE, SO SHOULD THE FRIEND OF WOMAN ASSUME THAT MAN CANNOT BY RIGHT LAY EVEN WELL-MEANT RESTRICTIONS ON WOMAN. "

SHE SUGGESTED THAT THOSE WHO SPOKE AGAINST THE EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES WERE SIMILAR TO THOSE WHO DID NOT SUPPORT THE EMANCIPATION OF ITALY.

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W O M A N

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY S. MARGARET FULLER.

"Frei durch Vernunft, stark durch Gesetz,
Durch Sanftmuth gross, und reich durch Schätze,
Die lange Zeit dein Blasen dir verschwing."

"I meant the day-star should not brighter rise,
Nor lend like influence from its lucid seat;
I meant she should be courteous, facile, sweet,
Free from that solemn vice of greatness, pride;
I meant such softest virtue there should meet,
Fit in that softer bosom to reside;
Only a (heavenward and instructed) soul
I purposed her, that should, with even powers,
The rock, the spindle, and the shears control
Of destiny, and spin her own free hours."

NEW-YORK:


GREELEY & McELRATH, 160 NASSAU-STREET.

W. CROSBY, Printer, 88 William-street.

1845.

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IS A BOOK BY AMERICAN JOURNALIST, EDITOR, AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCATE MARGARET FULLER. ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN JULY 1843 IN *THE DIAL* MAGAZINE AS "THE GREAT LAWSUIT. MAN VERSUS MEN. WOMAN VERSUS WOMEN", IT WAS LATER EXPANDED AND REPUBLISHED IN BOOK FORM IN 1845.



Woman in the Nineteenth Century, which has become one of the major documents in American feminism, is considered the first of its kind in the United States. Scholars have suggested *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* was the first major women's rights work since Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), beginning with a comparison between the two women made by George Eliot in her 1855 essay "Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft". Even so, Fuller's work is considered mainly literary today because oratory was more valued in the politics of her time. Oratory relied strictly on masculine conventions and women's writing was generally sentimental literature. Sandra M. Gustafson writes in her article, "Choosing a Medium: Margaret Fuller and the Forms of Sentiment", that Fuller's greatest achievement with "The Great Lawsuit" and *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* is the assertion of the feminine through a female form, sentimentalism, rather than through a masculine form as some female orators used.



