

Primary Document Analysis
Paper Assignment

Dr. Clare Lyons
Hist 210 / WMST 210
Women in America to 1880

The Paper:

This paper is your opportunity to study one area of early American women's history in more depth. Your paper will be a close reading of primary documents put into historical context. You will select one of the three topics listed below, and then analyze that set of documents in comparison to the findings on that topic for Philadelphia, as outlined in Sex Among the Rabble.

What do these documents demonstrate (prove ?) about your topic? What can we learn about the history of women and/or gender relations from these documents? How does the evidence presented in these documents compare to the history presented in Sex Among the Rabble? Do they support or undermine Lyons' conclusions? If they conflict or complicate the story, what might account for this difference?

The paper should demonstrate the uses of these sources by analyzing them, and placing them into the historical context you have discovered through the secondary readings (you may of course, draw on information you've gleaned from lecture, textbook, and required essays). Compare your findings for New York or Massachusetts to those for Philadelphia, and speculate about why your findings correspond and/or differ from those in Philadelphia.

Be sure to begin your paper with a thesis statement. Use specific examples as evidence for your points, and avoid unsupported generalizations. You are writing a piece of history.

The Paper should be approximately 8 pages long, typed and double spaced. All quotes and ideas taken from the documents or other readings must be cited using footnotes. Correct form for citations, footnotes, bibliography, and other issues of format can be found in: A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, by Kate Turabian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

Plagiarism (representing the ideas of another as your own) is unacceptable.

Topic & Document Selection:

New York Run Away Wife Advertisements 1754-1774 Sex Among the Rabble Chapter 1

Boston Bastardy Court Documents 1750s & 1760s Sex Among the Rabble Chapter 2

New York Popular Print Documents on Prostitution, 1790-1810 Sex Among the Rabble
Chapters 3 & 6

Paper Due in Class on November 7 at 10:00