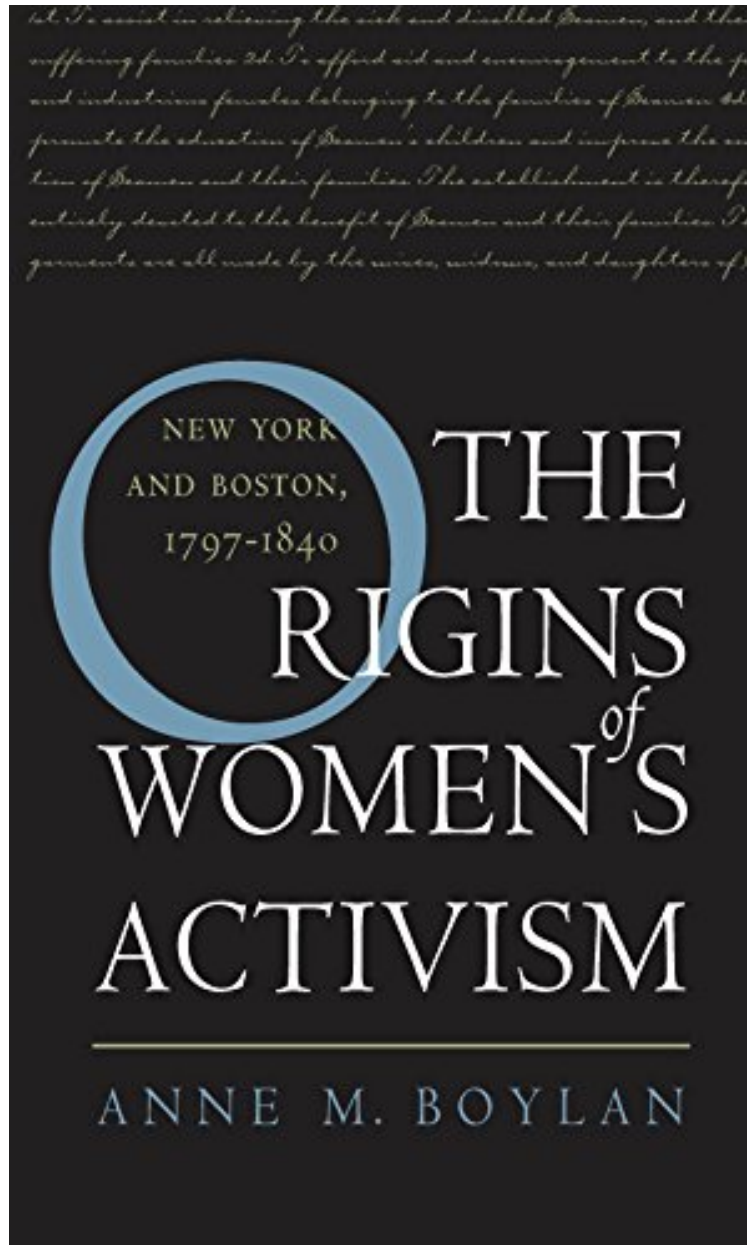


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# The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840

Anne M. Boylan

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and Boston, 1797-1840:

Tracing the deep roots of women's activism in America, Anne Boylan explores the flourishing of women's volunteer associations in the decades following the Revolution. She examines the entire spectrum of early nineteenth-century women's groups--Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish; African American and white; middle and working class--to illuminate the ways in which race, religion, and class could bring women together in pursuit of common goals or drive them apart. Boylan interweaves analyses of more than seventy organizations in New York and Boston with the stories of the women who founded and led them. In so doing, she provides a new understanding of how these groups actually worked and how women's associations, especially those with evangelical Protestant leanings, helped define the gender system of the new republic. She also demonstrates as never before how women in leadership positions combined volunteer work with their family responsibilities, how they raised and invested the money their organizations needed, and how they gained and used political influence in an era when women's citizenship rights were tightly circumscribed.

"A thoroughly researched and convincingly argued addition to the literature on women's charitable and reform activities. Beautifully written." - Lori D. Ginzberg, author of *Women in Antebellum Reform* [A] stimulating examination. . . . Succeeds in illuminating new aspects of women's reform efforts.--Choice  
A thoroughly researched and convincingly argued addition to the literature on women's charitable and reform activities. Beautifully written, the book moves easily between discussions of complex ideologies and detailed examinations of individuals and organizations in their own settings; throughout, Boylan never fails to remind us of the many and intricate ways that 'power matters.'--Lori D. Ginzberg, Penn State University  
Fine, innovative study. . . . With its wide-ranging research, persuasive argument, and clear prose, Boylan's book deserves an honored place next to the now-classic works.--Historian  
Important and engagingly written.--Maryland Historical Magazine  
Beautifully written and cogently argued. . . . Anyone interested in antebellum politics, social reform, or women's activism will find this book. . . . [a] superb history.--American Historical [The Origins of Women's Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840] is the definitive history of the emergence and maturation of women's organizations in the key cities of New York and Boston in the early nineteenth century. . . . Brilliant and path-breaking work.--H-SHEAR  
Important revelations emerge from this comprehensive study. . . . One hopes that others will walk through the door [Boylan] has opened by the inclusion of Catholics to begin to write women's history in which discussions of gender include the impact of distinctive Catholic values, practices, and institutions.--Catholic Historical  
This book, written by one of the finest historians of American women working today, is not only a solidly researched study of two cities but also a general reinterpretation of women's profoundly ambiguous place in the public life of the early republic. Comprehending Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish women, black and white, wealthy, middle-class, and working-class, Professor Boylan's research enables her to sustain a synthetic account of early women's activism.--Daniel Walker Howe, Oxford University  
By combining exhaustive research on seventy-seven organizations and 1,142 individuals with a mastery of the secondary literature, [Boylan] weaves her history of women's organizations and gender ideology into the tapestry of economic booms and busts, religious revivals and rivalries, developing class consciousness, immigration, and shifting political power that characterized the period.--History of Education Quarterly  
Boylan's latest book has . . . added significant new insights and a broader angle of vision to the history of women's benevolent activism.--Journal of Interdisciplinary History  
Boylan's narrative of women and associational activity gives meaning to the word definitive. In compelling portraits of individuals and widely ranging analysis, we see the galvanizing force of 'women's activism' writ large.--Journal of American History  
Boylan has written the definitive history of antebellum women's organizations in New York and Boston. . . . The richness of detail is extraordinary, as is the complexity of the story that Boylan tells. . . . Boylan has written a history of antebellum women's organizations that sets the standard in the field.--New England Quarterly  
From the Inside Flap  
Tracing the roots of women's voluntary activism in the decades following the Revolution, Boylan examines over 70 organizations founded in New York and Boston and led by women from across the spectrum: Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish; African American and white; middle- and working-class.