

**Harriet and the Cary Sisters: Some Key Dates**  
**Dr. John Getz**  
**Year of the Woman Discussion Series**  
**Harriet Beecher Stowe House, May 5, 2020**

**1810s**

1811 Harriet Beecher born in Litchfield, CT. Her father is the famous Presbyterian minister Lyman Beecher, and her mother is Roxana Foote Beecher from an Episcopal family.

**1820s**

1820 Alice Cary born on a farm in Mount Healthy, several miles north of Cincinnati. Her parents, Robert and Elizabeth Cary, are Universalists.

1824 Alice's sister Phoebe born.

**1830s**

1832 Harriet moves to Cincinnati with her father and his family when he becomes president of Lane Theological Seminary in Walnut Hills.

1833 Two of the Cary girls' sisters die of tuberculosis.

1834 Harriet's first creative publication appears in the *Western Monthly Magazine*.

1835 The Cary girls' mother dies, and two years later their father marries a woman hostile to the sisters' love of reading and writing.

1836 Harriet marries Calvin Stowe and becomes Harriet Beecher Stowe.

1838 Teenagers Alice and Phoebe each have a poem published in a newspaper.

**1840s**

1847 After publishing without pay for several years, Alice begins to be paid for her poetry and prose, both locally and nationally. One of the periodicals that will publish her work is the *National Era*. The sisters' work draws praise from Edgar Allan Poe, Rufus Griswold, and Horace Greeley.

1848 Griswold includes the Cary sisters' poetry in his anthology *The Female Poets of America*.

1849 Greeley visits the Cary sisters in their Mount Healthy cottage.

**1850s**

1850 Griswold helps the sisters publish *Poems of Alice and Phoebe Cary*. They visit Boston and New York and meet some of their supporters, including John Greenleaf Whittier, who remains a good friend for the rest of their lives.

Alice moves to New York to try to make her living as a writer.

1851 Now living in Brunswick, ME, Harriet begins serializing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in the *National Era*. Phoebe and Elmina, the youngest Cary sister, join Alice in New York.

1852 Harriet completes the serialization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and publishes it as a book. It's on its way to becoming the best-selling book in the world other than the Bible in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Alice publishes *Clovernook: or, Recollections of Our Neighborhood in the West* and follows it with three more Clovernook volumes through the 1850s.

1854 Phoebe publishes *Poems and Parodies*.

1855 Beginning of the decade scholar David Reynolds calls "the American Women's Renaissance," including works by Emily Dickinson, Louisa May Alcott, and Alice Cary.

Alice buys a house on 20<sup>th</sup> St. in New York, and for 15 years the sisters turn it into a salon for tea and conversation that attracted famous writers, artists, and social reformers.

**1860s**

1869 Alice becomes the first president of Sorosis, the first organization for professional women.

Phoebe publishes *Hymns for All Christians*.

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton have been trying unsuccessfully to recruit Harriet and her sister Isabella Beecher Hooker to write for and even edit their weekly feminist newspaper *The Revolution*, for which Phoebe briefly works. Late in 1869 they settle for a novel by Alice, "The Born Thrall, or Woman's Life and Experience." Stanton hypes Alice's story: "What 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was to the anti-slavery movement, this work will be to the cause of Woman," but it remains unfinished as Alice's health declines and she dies in early 1871, followed by Phoebe several months later.