

## **Fiona Sackett**

**Title:** “Republican Motherhood and the Cult of Domesticity: Their own Separate Spheres”

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Jeffrey Malanson

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**Fiona Sackett** is a senior History major with a minor in Theatre in the Honors program. She is interested in American women’s movements and cultural histories such as popular fashion and etiquette. She is currently planning on applying for grad school in Dramaturgy after her graduation. Fiona is from Huntington, Indiana.

### **Abstract**

When considering women’s equality in the United States, the average person considers examples such as the Suffragist movement at the turn of the twentieth century or the Feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s. These two movements did not just occur on a whim. They were often inspired by previous movements and expectations held for women that they felt was necessary to modernize and adapt, much to the chagrin of the traditionalists of their respective time periods. The same can be said about both Republican Motherhood and the Cult of Domesticity. While overlapping, the two movements have many nuanced differences. The first to appear, Republican Motherhood was the post-Revolutionary War movement for women. Higher expectations for knowledge and education were the main goal in order to raise better American citizens, and also to give a husband an intellectual partner. In contrast, the Cult of Domesticity began to develop after Andrew Jackson was elected as president in 1828. While education remained a major focal point in the home, the real priority was morality in the community, starting from the domestic sphere. Women were often seen in reform movement groups, such as education or temperance groups. The work that is done by both the Republican Motherhood movement and the Cult of Domesticity are large factors that have inadvertently influenced American feminism.

### **Bibliographical Note**

My research consisted primarily of secondary documents varying between Cult of Domesticity and Republican Motherhood, which explained the general understanding of a woman’s place in the world at the time. My research also included primary documents from Abigail Adams’ letters, as well as information my own personal genealogy.