



# Western Civilization from 1650 to the Present

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## TOPIC 8.3. PRIMARY SOURCES: WOMEN OF HASTINGS AND ST. LEONARDS

### WOMEN OF HASTINGS AND ST. LEONARDS

Author Helena Wojtczak has created a gem of local history in her website "English Social History: Women of Hastings and St. Leonards." Through the use of period photographs from the towns themselves, plus an impressive selection of other primary sources, the author describes perceptions of women in Victorian England, and then chronicles the emerging women's movement in the two neighboring towns. Be sure to read the "about the author" page. And don't miss the story of the "two notable women" who were both suffragettes and Titanic survivors!

Explore [the site](#) and answer one or more of the questions.

**What was the status of women in Victorian England? How did their rights compare to those of men?**

**What was life like for the women of Hastings and St. Leonards? What kinds of work did they do?**

**How did some women of Hastings and St. Leonards begin to challenge society's "rules" about what women could or could not do?**

**How did women from these two towns become involved in the women's suffrage movement? Why hadn't women been allowed to vote in the first place? What tactics did women use to call attention to their cause? How did men react to women's demand for the vote?**

**What types of sources did this website's author use to reconstruct life in Hastings & St. Leonards? Which struck you as being unexpectedly rich in information? If you were to undertake a local history of your own hometown, what other types of sources might you try to find?**

Adapted from [Western Civilization](#) by Jackson J. Spielvogel