

“The strong nineteenth-century linkage between gender and culture, separating the lives and duties of men and women . . . , threw women into the company of other women and created new bonds of sisterhood between them. . . .

“In terms of sisterhood the religious movements added substantially to American women’s collective identity. . . . They offered groups of women unprecedented prestige and significance in activities that extended the . . . definitions of their sphere. . . .

“Numerous women [by] the 1840s . . . shared a . . . preoccupation with the needs and influence of women. . . . Increasingly aware of the importance of what they were doing, many of these women grew frustrated with limitations that seemed artificial. The experience of autonomy [within reform movements] . . . encouraged proponents of women to organize their strength and take the offensive against limiting attitudes and conditions. In so doing they established the woman’s rights movement.”

Source: Keith E. Melder, historian, *Beginnings of Sisterhood: The American Woman’s Rights Movement, 1800–1850*, published in 1977

“By 1840 . . . the [American] Revolution had substituted an egalitarian ideology for the hierarchical concepts of colonial life . . . for men, that is; women were, by tacit¹ consensus, excluded from the new democracy. Indeed . . . women’s political status, while legally unchanged, had deteriorated relative to the advances made by men. . . .

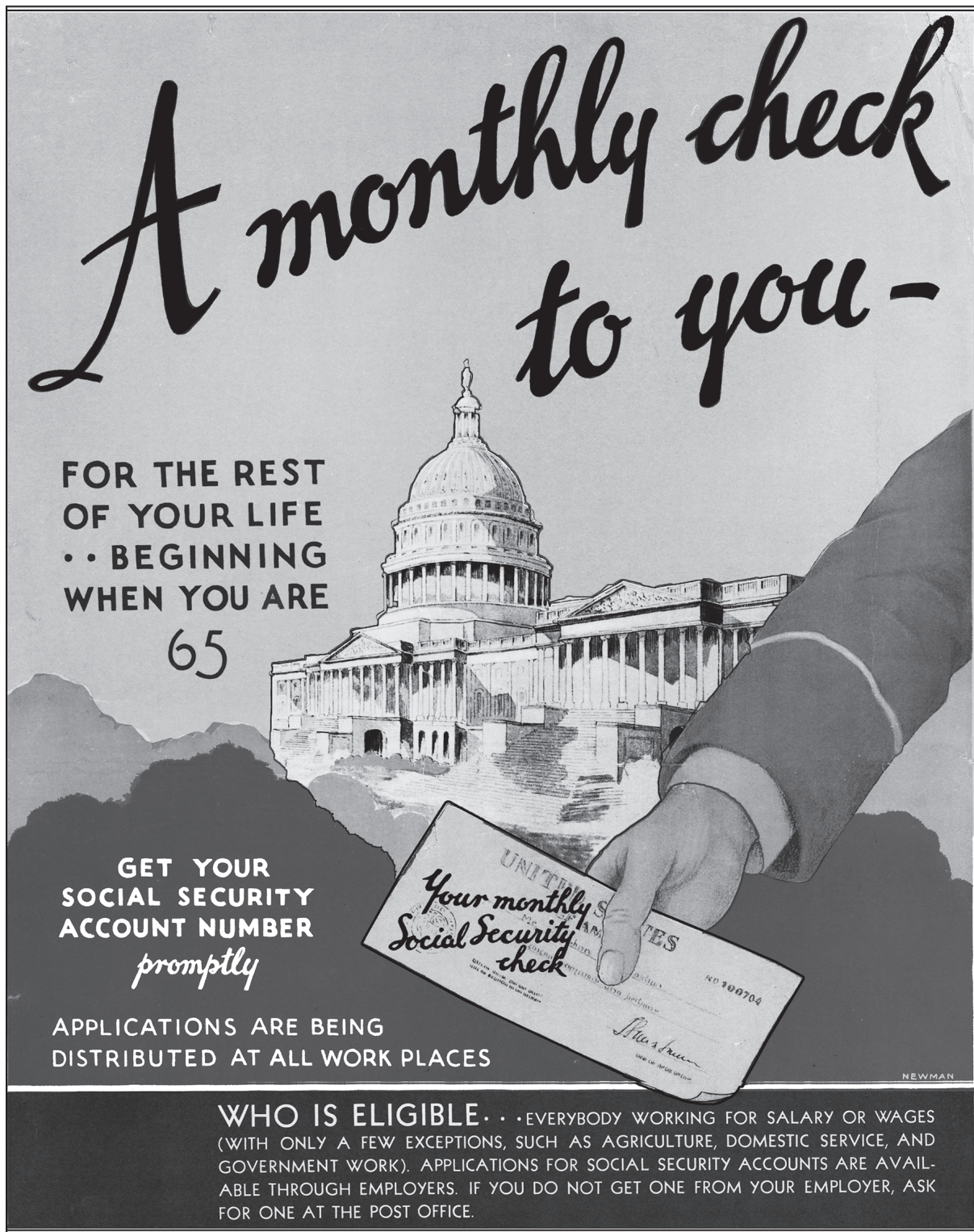
“. . . [A] result of industrialization was . . . increasing differences in life styles between women of different classes. . . . In the urbanized and industrialized Northeast the life experience of middle-class women was different in almost every respect from that of the lower-class women. But there was one thing [these women] had in common—they were equally . . . isolated from the vital centers of power. . . . Propertied women felt this deprivation more keenly. . . . They were bitterly conscious of a relative lowering of status and a loss of position. This sense of frustration led them to action. [While lower-class women] . . . tended to join men in their struggle for economic advancement, . . . the concerns of middle-class women . . . [dominated] the women’s rights movement.”

Source: Gerda Lerner, historian, “Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson,” *Midcontinent American Studies Journal*, 1969

¹ unspoken

1. Using the excerpts, respond to **parts a, b, and c**.

- a. Briefly describe one major difference between Melder’s and Lerner’s interpretations of the origins of the women’s rights movement in the early nineteenth century.
- b. Briefly explain how one historical event or development from 1800 to 1848 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Melder’s interpretation.
- c. Briefly explain how one historical event or development from 1800 to 1848 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Lerner’s interpretation.



Source: Poster promoting Social Security, a federally funded social insurance program to reduce poverty for people over the age of sixty-five, 1936

Courtesy of Library of Congress #LC-DIG-ppmsca-07216

2. Using the image, respond to **parts a, b, and c.**

- a. Briefly describe one historical context that might explain the creation of the image.
- b. Briefly explain how the image reflected one continuity in ideas about reform from 1800 to 1874.
- c. Briefly explain how one previous belief about reform continued from 1875 to 1940.

“The Southern woman of the ante-bellum regime [was] the gracious, charming hostess, the sheltered wife and mother. . . . This is the ideal which the Southern people have been slow to give up. . . .

“. . . Southern women saw homes burned, estates pass to strangers, fathers and husbands dead upon the battle field. . . .

“. . . The old-time idea that a lady must not earn her livelihood had to go down before stern need. . . . Many women faced the terror of family displeasure and went to work, choosing personal independence rather than the misguided approbation of relatives and friends.

“. . . Southern women have come to see that public policies and private conditions are interdependent and cannot be separated. . . .

“. . . The woman who takes absolutely no interest in any public questions is no longer the typical or the ideal Southern woman. No support will be won by standing apart from the strain and struggle of life and merely demanding political rights.”

Source: Pamphlet from a women’s organization in Mississippi, circa the early 1900s

2. Using the excerpt, respond to **parts a, b, and c**.

- a. Briefly describe one purpose of the women’s organization in producing the pamphlet.
- b. Briefly explain how one specific event or development from 1840 to 1900 that is not mentioned in the passage resulted in ideas such as those expressed in the excerpt.
- c. Briefly explain how ideas such as those expressed in the excerpt resulted in one specific effect from 1900 to 1945.