

This paper focuses on the romantic relationships between women in the North, South, and Western part of the United States, and how societal expectations and developments shaped their interactions. The history of women's romantic relationships in the mid-Nineteenth Century is a growing subject of study in the field of United States history. The mid-Nineteenth Century in America was a transitional time for women as the end of the Revolutionary War brought new ideas about womanhood that led to changes in women's roles. The idea of separate spheres, a social phenomenon that there were separate public and private domains, became relevant as men and women were separated based on whether they belonged to the public domain of politics and social interactions or the private domain of domesticity. As a result, the women's sphere witnessed the growth of "romantic friendships" during this era. Women formed close emotional, social, and sometimes intimate bonds with each other because of the encouragement and cultivation of separate spheres. How these relationships contributed to the changing cultural and social norms is addressed in the presentation. This paper relies on secondary sources on culture and society in America during the Nineteenth Century as well as primary documents like women's letters and diaries to reveal how women's relationships interacted positively with society and culture at the time. Scholars, Carol Smith-Rosenberg and Lillian Faderman provided an understanding of women's relationships and the ways in which members of their community addressed them. This paper builds on those studies of lesbian history while also examining the subject through an intersectional lens to further our understanding of how race and class played a role. By studying these early bonds between women, we can understand how these concepts came to shape current views on relationships between women.