

# Glossary

**American Colonization Society.**  
Founded in 1816 to encourage free blacks to emigrate to Africa. James Madison was one of the founding members. The society established a colony in West Africa in 1822 that later became Liberia. Beginning in the 1830s, it was denounced by most abolitionists, who believed its primary goal was to rid the country of free blacks, not to end slavery.

**benevolent.**  
Compassionate, charitable. “Benevolent societies” were organizations, primarily women’s organizations, with a mission to help the poor, widows, orphans, and other needy groups.

**ca.**  
The abbreviation for circa, meaning roughly or approximately. The term is used in dates, as in ca. 1795, to indicate that the precise year is not known.

**cult of domesticity.**  
The term preferred by some historians over the “cult of true womanhood.”

**cult of true womanhood.**  
Historian Barbara Welter’s 1966 term for the nineteenth-century belief system that set piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity as the highest female values.

**domesticity.**  
A focus on the home and family.

**early republic.**  
A term used by historians to refer to the period of U.S. history between 1789 and 1815, when the War of 1812 ended. Sometimes the 1820s is used as the end-date. The decades after the early republic are called the antebellum years, ending with the outbreak of the Civil War.

**intersectionality.**  
A scholarly term for the interconnectedness of categories like gender, class, and race, which creates overlapping patterns of discrimination.

**matrilineal.**  
Applies to kinship systems in which people trace their ancestry through their mothers rather than their fathers. See *patrilineal*.

**moral suasion.**  
The attempt to convince with a moral argument; equal to moral persuasion. William Lloyd Garrison and Lydia Maria Child used this tactic in early arguments against slavery.

**patrilineal.**  
Applies to kinship systems in which people trace their ancestry through their fathers, and fathers’ surnames are passed on. See *matrilineal*.

**primogeniture.**  
In law or custom, the exclusive right of the oldest son to inherit his parents’ estate.

**piety.**  
The quality of being religious, devout.

**purity.**  
Cleanliness. In the nineteenth century, it referred to moral or sexual cleanliness.

**republican womanhood.**  
A scholarly term for the standard set for American women after the Revolution, in which they were considered morally superior, and therefore responsible for maintaining American citizenship values in their husbands and children.

**Second Great Awakening.**  
A period of Protestant revivalism that spread across the U.S. between the 1790s and the 1840s, and reinforced commitment to reform activities.

**submissiveness.**  
Willingness to submit to another’s will or authority.

**Washington City.**  
The early name for Washington, D.C. In 1791, the newly designated federal district was named the Territory of Columbia, and the city itself was referred to as Washington City, or the Federal City. The word “District” replaced “Territory” when the capital was incorporated in 1871.