THE CHANGING AMERICAN FAMILY

A. Women growing more conscious of themselves as individuals and as "sisters" as the male and female sex roles were becoming more increasingly divided.
1. Still a man's world but women fared better in U.S. than in Europe, especially on the frontier where women were more scarce.
2. Increasing numbers of women avoided marriage; 10% by 1860
3. Women began working as schoolteachers and in domestic service.
   a. 10% of white women working for pay outside own homes in 1850
   b. 20% had been employed at some time prior to marriage.

B. Most women left their jobs upon marriage and became homemakers
1. "Cult of Domesticity" glorified traditional function of the homemaker.
2. Women commanded immense moral power and increasingly made decisions that altered the character of the family itself.
3. Godey's Lady's Book, founded in 1830, survived until 1898; promoted "cult of domesticity" → Read by countless millions of women; circulation was a staggering 150,000.
   a. Called on American inventors to improve life for the homemaker
   b. Redesigned the American kitchen and home to provide more comfort for women and a nurturing environment for the family.
   c. Ironically, labor-saving inventions made many women's life more challenging as more work was expected of them as a result.

C. Changes in the family
1. Love, not "arrangement", more frequently determined the choice of a spouse → Families became more close-knit and affectionate
2. Families grew smaller
   a. Avg. of 6 kids in 1800; less than 5 in 1900; births fell 1/2 during the 19th C.
   b. Contraception practiced quietly and secretly; still taboo topic in public.
3. Smaller families meant child-centered families → Corporal punishment reduced; more emphasis on shaping than breaking.
4. Children raised to be independent individuals making decisions on internalized moral standards.
5. Thus, outlines of the "modern family" were clear by mid-century.