

Dorothea Dix: One Woman Crusade

The Barriers She Broke and What She Left Behind

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Dorothea Dix is important in history because of her undying drive to make a change in the world. The things she accomplished speak for those who couldn't, weren't able to or were too scared to speak for themselves. A lot of the things Dix did wouldn't have been done if she hadn't been around to do them.

Starting my project was difficult at first. I wasn't exactly sure what I wanted for a topic yet, so I had to do a lot of digging to find something I felt really connected with. That's how I came across the asylum movement and Dorothea Dix. After I had done some research into Dix through Elm, I decided to make that my topic. The majority of the research I conducted in the beginning stages of my project was done through online databases provided by Elm.

Next, after exhausting most sources I could get through Elm, I decided to take to Google and see what I could find through there. Turns out, there are actually a lot of secondary sources to be found through a simple Google search. During this, we also took a trip to Wilson Library where I was able to find and get pdf scans of primary source articles and writings.

I did end up running into a few issues while researching for my project. The biggest issue I had was the couple of times where it seemed like I had completely exhausted every source I possibly could, which made it difficult to keep finding new information. I started to feel a bit discouraged when this happened but ended up pushing through it.

Dorothea Dix was incredibly important in the push for better treatment of the mentally ill, and not only was she an advocate and reformer, but she was made 'Superintendent of Army Nurses' for the Union Army during the Civil War. She may not have broken as many physical barriers as one would assume of a reformer, but she drew attention to the issue at hand and broke

one social barrier after another during her time. She gave society that extra push it needed to get started on fixing the issue.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary (10)

“A Victorian Mental Asylum.” *Science Museum*, 2013,
www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/victorian-mental-asylum.

I needed primary source images of restraints that were used in asylums during the 1700s to the late 1800s and found this website. I actually found multiple images from this site that I used in multiple parts of my project.

“Divinest Sense.” *Madness in 18th Century England*,
umich.edu/~ece/student_projects/madness/cures.html.

From this site, I found multiple images that were taken from within an asylum which show just how horrifying the treatments actually were back then. I used the images found here to help contribute to the background portion of my website.

“Library Collections: Document: Full Text.” *Disability History Museum--Senate Debates On The Land-Grant Bill For Indigent Insane Persons, February 21, 1854*,
www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/lib/detail.html?id=1222&page=all.

Dorothea's land grant bill was ultimately unsuccessful, however, reading it did help contribute to my project. I included information on the land grant bill in the short term impact part of my project, along with a quote.

“Quotes about Phineas - Phineas Gage: A Gruesome but True Story about Brain Science.”
Google Sites, sites.google.com/site/strangelandphineas/quotes.

Phineas P. Gage is mentioned in the background of my project as he was one of the biggest cases to make up modern psychiatry. I used a primary quote from Phineas' doctor that was taken from this site.

“Samuel Tuke (1784-1857).” *York Civic Trust*,
yorkcivictrust.co.uk/heritage/civic-trust-plaques/samuel-tuke-1784-1857/.

Using this site, I was able to find a primary image of Samuel Tuke which I used in my Heart of the Story. Samuel Tuke was one of the major players who influenced Dorothea's views and was mentioned multiple times throughout my research process.

“Top Benjamin Rush Quotes.” *Inspirational Quotes To Fire You Up With Motivation Even When Taking A Single Step Seems Difficult.*,
quotes.thefamouspeople.com/benjamin-rush-3674.php.

Benjamin Rush, the father of psychiatry, was one of the most influential people in the history of psychiatry. A quote from him seemed appropriate to include since he was such an impactful individual so I used this site to get a primary quote.

Hamilton, Jon. “Why Brain Scientists Are Still Obsessed With The Curious Case Of Phineas Gage.” *NPR*, NPR, 21 May 2017,
www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/05/21/528966102/why-brain-scientists-are-still-obsessed-with-the-curious-case-of-phineas-gage.

Phineas Gage was a man who experienced one of the most astounding cases of its time. From this site, I took a primary source image of Phineas himself which I used on the Background section of my website.

Irving, Jenni. “Trephination.” *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 1 May 2013, www.ancient.eu/Trephination/.

Using this website allowed me to provide a primary source visual aid to help others better understand what some of the treatments actually looked like. I used the image taken from this source for the background section of my project.

Seymour, Lord, et al. "PDF." 1844.

When it comes to primary sources, this is one of the best ones I found. It gives access to the full original document. I attached the PDF to the build-up section of my website.

Thompson, Helen. "Meet the Doctor Who Convinced America to Sober Up." *Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 6 July 2015, www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/how-colonial-doctor-changed-medical-views-alcohol-180955813/.

Benjamin Rush often referred to as 'the father of psychiatry,' was one of the earliest players in the treatment of the mentally ill. I used a primary source photo of him on the Background section of my website.

Secondary (19)

"Dorothea Dix." *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 12 Apr. 2019, www.biography.com/activist/dorothea-dix.

Looking through a biography of Dix was really helpful in creating the long term impact. I was able to see how people reacted after Dorothea passed and the lasting things she accomplished during her time.

"Education: Essay." *Disability History Museum--Education: Essay: Disability History Museum*, www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/edu/essay.html?id=35.

This secondary source helped me a lot with the long term impacts of Dorothea's efforts as an activist and reformer. This site provided dates along with information and places that Dix went and what she did there.

*, Name. "Franklin Pierce's 1854 Veto." *Social Welfare History Project*, 18 July 2017, socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/issues/franklin-pierces-1854-veto/.

In the short term impacts part of my project I talked about how President Franklin Pierce vetoed a land grant bill proposed by Dix. I used this website to include information on why he vetoed it and what his reasoning was.

"Science Museum. Brought to Life: Exploring the History of Medicine." *William Tuke (1732-1822)*, broughttolife.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/people/williamtuke.

William Tuke was one of the major players in the background part of my project. I ended up finding a bit of information on him on this site which I used to contribute to the background of my site.

Bumb, Jenn. "Dorothea Dix." *Dorothea Dix*, faculty.webster.edu/woolfm/dorotheadix.html.

Using this secondary source, I was able to expand my knowledge on the short term impacts of Dorothea's efforts. I used the information gathered from this site to add to the short term impacts section of my website.

"Who Was Dorothea Dix? Everything You Need to Know." *Childhood, Life Achievements & Timeline*, 2017, www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/dorothea-dix-5377.php.

While looking through this site, I was able to get a better understanding of where all of Dix's achievements fell in history. I used a lot of the information found on this site to add to both the short term and long term impact sections of my website.

Sweet, Matthew. "Bring on the Van, Syringe and Straitjacket." *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 21 Sept. 2011, www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/bring-on-the-van-syringe-and-straitjacket-737681.html.

While looking for information on Isabella Thackeray for the background section of my website, I ended up needing some background on what asylum she had been placed in. I dug up this article which further helped me uncover where Isabella may have ended up.

"ELibrary Minnesota." *ELibrary Minnesota at Minitex*, school-eb-com.content.elibrarymn.org/levels/high/article/pedagogy/108621#39083.toc.

In the beginning, I had used this page to help me decide what topic I wanted to do for my project. After I had decided on a topic, I ended up using some of the information provided on this site to help me actually start my project.

"Dorothea Dix." *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 12 Apr. 2019, www.biography.com/activist/dorothea-dix.

When I first began my project, I needed a place to start. So, I decided to start by looking into Dix's upbringing and used the information I collected to help write a summary of Dorothea on my home page on my website.

"Dorothea Dix." *Biography.com*, A&E Networks Television, 12 Apr. 2019, www.biography.com/activist/dorothea-dix.

This is a secondary source. It provided me with a thorough overview of Dorothea's life and her accomplishments. This source helped me most with short term and long term impacts. I used the information from this site to help me fill out the consequences piece and helped me find other pieces of context to include in my thesis.

Timeline. *A History of Mental Institutions in the United States*,
www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/37146/A-History-of-Mental-Institutions-in-the-United-States/#vars!date=1802-10-03_10:50:00!

This site really helped provide a good sense of where all of the events fell in history. The timeline showed also gave a lot of useful background information like names, dates, quotes, and other related occurrences. The information taken from the timeline was mainly used to find groups to use in the build-up section and to write the short term impacts about how groups involved reacted.

Roberts, Andrew. *Mental Health History Timeline*, studymore.org.uk/mhhtim.htm#1800.

The above site is a historical timeline that specifically focuses on the events and people in history that have played into or contributed to mental health in some way. Information from this site was used to help find groups, events, and people that have contributed to the build-up leading to the Asylum Reform Movement.

Anonymous. "Dorothea Dix: Mental Health Reformer and Civil War Nurse." *Smithsonian Institution Archives*, 29 Mar. 2012,
siarchives.si.edu/blog/dorothea-dix-mental-health-reformer-and-civil-war-nurse.

Dix wasn't only an activist and reformer, she had many other achievements. One of these achievements was her nursing role for the Union Army during the Civil War. I ended up including part of this in my long term impact.

Fry, Terry. "The General Lunatic Asylum, Nottingham, 1812-1902 (Also Known as Sneinton Asylum) ." *The Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* > The Thoroton Society, 2008, www.thorotonsociety.org.uk/publications/articles/asylum.htm.

Looking for information on this particular place was a bit difficult but I did manage to find this site. I used this information to add to the build-up of my project.

Norwood, Arlisha R. "Dorothea Dix." *National Women's History Museum*, 2017, www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/dorothea-dix.

Dix had many other things she had accomplished during her time. This site gives a summary of everything she did. I used the information from this site to add to both my short term and long term impact sections.

"Story of the Bell." *Mental Health America of the Heartland*, mhah.org/who-we-are/story-of-the-bell/.

Using this site, I was able to add more details to my short term and long term impact pages. The Bell represents the voices of those who had been subjected to the conditions of asylums.

Tartakovsky, Margarita. "Read About the Birth of the Mental Asylum." *World of Psychology*, PsychCentral, 8 July 2018, psychcentral.com/blog/the-birth-of-the-mental-asylum/.

I wanted to make the state of mental illness clear to myself before jumping into the project itself, and I wanted to be able to give better descriptions of the events that took place. So overall, this site helped with a lot of different aspects of my project.

“Unite For Sight.” *A Brief History of Mental Illness and the U.S. Mental Health Care System*, www.uniteforsight.org/mental-health/module2.

Before I could start thinking about Dix, I wanted to get a better understanding of what mental illness looked like throughout history. So, I took to Elm and found this site which gave me a thorough overview of what mental illness was like in different periods through history.

History.com Editors. “Dorothea Lynde Dix.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 9 Nov. 2009, www.history.com/topics/womens-history/dorothea-lynde-dix.

When it comes to looking at Dorothea's impact in history, this website lays it out perfectly. It broke up Dix's life into different sections which allowed me to easily navigate and find the information I needed for my project.