

THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

By our civil rights editor

October 25, 1850

THE first annual National Women's Rights Convention ended in triumph yesterday. At the historic gathering in Worcester, delegates from 11 U.S. states heard speeches on women's right to vote as well as their right to equal wages and to own property.

Both women and men attended the two-day convention at Brinley Hall, which attracted activists from as far away as the new U.S. state of California.

The press, sensing a good story, were not always kind to the participants. One newspaper called them a "motley mingling." Lucy Stone (right), of West Brookfield—the first woman from Massachusetts to earn a college degree—was one of the main organizers. She called for women to have the right to vote



and to own property. Ernestine Rose, who fled Poland for America, said: "We have heard a great deal of our Pilgrim

Fathers ... but who has heard of the Pilgrim Mothers?"

Abby Kelley Foster urged listeners not to argue over

women's rights but to seize them, "as did our fathers against King George III." Sojourner Truth, the abolitionist born into slavery, gave a rousing speech on women's rights.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a leader in the women's rights movement, was unable to attend due to her pregnancy, but sent a letter of support: "The earth has never yet seen a truly great and virtuous nation, for woman has never yet stood the equal with man."

Others who attended were abolitionists Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison. Nantucket-born Lucretia Mott, who had helped to organize the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, the first regional women's rights convention, also attended.

The gathering in Worcester is surely not the last: women are finding their voice, and plan to hold another convention next year.