

0. PACKARD CASE - AFTER the VERDICT - Story Preface

1. ELIZABETH and THEOPHILUS PACKARD - BACKGROUND

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3. AN UNJUST LAW IMPACTS MARRIED WOMEN

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8. PACKARD CASE - AFTER the VERDICT

Upset with the jury's verdict, Theophilus took matters into his own hands - again.

When Elizabeth returned home, she found no one was there. Her husband had mortgaged the family's house - purchased with money from her marriage dowry - and left Illinois with money in hand (and children in tow).

Destitute, Elizabeth still had no legal remedies. She had no right to her dowry and no right to her children. She could write about her situation, however, and that is what she did to support herself.

Her several books - such as Modern Persecution - tell the story from her point of view. They are lengthy tomes with few words spared.

In 1867, when she was finally free - but still without her children - Elizabeth traveled to Springfield where she implored the legislature to invalidate the unjust law which had claimed years of her life. Her proposed new law was called a "Bill for the Protection of Personal Liberty." It included the need for due process before someone could be locked-up in an asylum.

Illinois' legislators passed the law. As a result of Elizabeth's efforts, wives and mothers in that state were no longer at risk of lock-up without first having a fair trial.

Nine years would pass before Elizabeth was reunited with her children. (She had decided to fight for custody, in Massachusetts.) To avoid another court order, in her favor, Theophilus gave them back to her voluntarily.

On the 3rd of July, 1869, mother and children were reunited for the first time in nearly a decade.

Elizabeth Packard spent the rest of her life trying to convince lawmakers (including Governor Carpenter and State Senators in Illinois) to change the laws on mental confinement and women's property rights. By the time she died, she had made a difference in thirty-four states.

She never reconciled with her husband and did not live with him after 1864. Elizabeth lived in Chicago, in her home on Prairie Avenue. He lived first in Massachusetts, then in a Chicago boarding house. During his later years, Theophilus lived in Manteno (Illinois), with his sister and brother-in-law.

Although Elizabeth maintained her residence in Chicago, the home was rented most of the time. She had more important things to do - like traveling throughout the country, promoting her legislation.

READ MORE ABOUT IT:

The Private War of Mrs. Packard, by Barbara Sapinsley.

Elizabeth Packard and Boundaries of Gender, Religion, and Sanity in Nineteenth-century America, by Linda V. Carlisle.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PACKARD-CASE-AFTER-the-VERDICT-Packard-Elizabeth-Civil-Rights-Advocate>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/PACKARD-CASE-AFTER-the-VERDICT-Packard-Elizabeth>

Media Stream



Meeting with Governor Carpenter

Image online, courtesy the [Disability History Museum](#) website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Meeting-with-Governor-Carpenter>



Elizabeth Packard - Bill to Protect Women

Illustration from *Modern Persecution, Volume II*, by Elizabeth Packard - published in 1873 - online courtesy Archive.org. Picture appears opposite page 304.

View this asset at:

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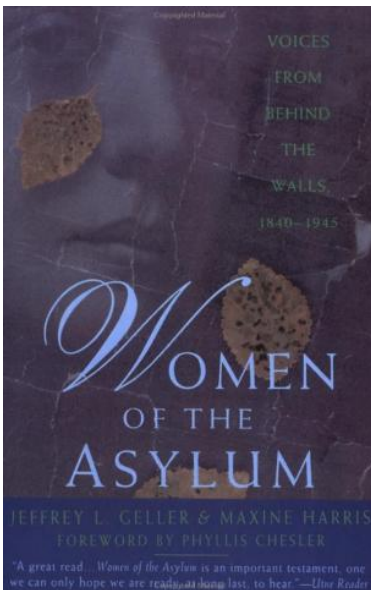


Elizabeth Packard - Reunited with Her Children

Illustration from *Modern Persecution, Volume II*, by Elizabeth Packard - published in 1873 - online courtesy Archive.org. Picture appears opposite page 379.

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Women of the Asylum

Image online, courtesy [amazon.com](#) website.

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