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Abby Hopper Gibbons: Prison Reformer and Social Activist (Suny Series in Women, Crime, and Criminology)

Margaret Hope Bacon

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This first contemporary biography of nineteenth-century American social activist and prison reformer Abigail Hopper Gibbons (1801 1893) illuminates women s changing role in the various reform movements of the period. Beginning as an abolitionist/feminist, Gibbons helped to found the Women s Prison Association of New York City in 1845. This group established the Isaac T. Hopper Home for discharged women prisoners, the first such institution in the world. Gibbons later became an advocate and lobbyist for improvements in the care of women in the city prisons, for the employment of police matrons, and for the establishment of separate correctional facilities for women prisoners.
Though born a pacifist Quaker, Gibbons became a Civil War nurse who protected escaping slaves. During the 1863 Draft Riots, her house in New York City was sacked. Following the war, she was involved in establishing several New York charities. In the 1870s she became a leader and lobbyist for the Moral Reform Movement, both locally and nationally. Her story is intrinsically interesting, and illustrates the political action employed by women of her period."

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