

**Volume 7**

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**Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley - I**

**Lead: Born in 1793 in Concord, Massachusetts, Sarah Alden Bradford became one of America's most influential intellectuals of 19<sup>th</sup> century.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley was the eldest child of a New England sea captain with family roots tracing back to the Plymouth Colony governor, William Bradford. She grew up in an intellectual family. Her parents collected books from all over Europe, and they arranged for a**

**classical education for all of their children at a time when there were few opportunities for girls to study classics, much less go to college. Sarah had a precocious mind and a keen sense of observation, particularly of the natural world.**

**By the time she was fourteen, she had collected botanical specimens of most of the plants in her neighborhood. These samples, pressed and dried, are still preserved in the town library. As Sarah grew older she gave reign to her curiosity educating her in a wide variety of interests – botany, physics, history, religion, philosophy. When her mother contracted tuberculosis, at age fourteen, Sarah took over the**

**domestic responsibilities of her family which, at that time, included six younger brothers and sisters.**

**In 1818, a year after her mother's death and with her father's blessing, twenty-five year old Sarah, who considered herself rather shy and clumsy, married Samuel Ripley, a Unitarian minister and uncle to young Ralph Waldo Emerson. Living in the parsonage of a religiously liberal minister, awash in the heady literary and philosophical ferment that, in those years was sweeping across New England and then America, Sarah became something of a mentor and friend to a group of contemporary thinkers many of whom would be**

**called “transcendentalists.” Next  
Time: the talented Mrs. Ripley.**

**At the University of Richmond,  
this is Dan Roberts.**

**Resources**

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