

INQUIRY LESSON PLAN:
VOTES FOR WOMEN – WHY SO LONG?

Abstract:

Women's suffrage in the U.S. trailed over fifty years beyond the guarantee to vote for African American men in the 15th Amendment, despite over eighty years of struggle by the women's suffrage movement officially begun at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Why did the passage of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing women (50% of the population) the right to vote, require such a tumultuous campaign of several generations? Stirrings of the women's suffrage movement can be traced back to Abigail Adams in a letter she wrote to her husband, John, as he collaborated in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. Students will explore the various social and political obstacles that suffragettes in the U.S. encountered toward their goal of full enfranchisement. Students will explore various strategies employed by petitioning groups within a democracy, as well as the varied responses of a democratic government to petitioning groups. This lesson will expose students to how one disenfranchised group (women) eventually reached their goal via increasingly aggressive venues of confrontation. Within this historical context of social and political struggle, and the tactics adopted by suffrage supporters, students are encouraged to expand their understanding of social movements of other marginalized groups in U.S. society.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

- 1- Analyze and articulate the various factors that influenced positive and negative aspects of the women's suffrage movement in the U.S., as well as supporting and opposing viewpoints. (B.8.4)
- 2- Critically assess the credibility and bias of various historical documents. (B.8.1)
- 3- Compare and contrast events in the women's suffrage movement with similar events in present-day U.S. and world. (B.8.2)
- 4- Evaluate and articulate the various social and political positions of the time and the women's suffrage movement's impact on expressions of democracy and justice within the U.S. then and now. (B.8.5)

WMASS Standards Addressed By This Lesson:

B.8.1: Students will interpret the past using a variety of sources, including newspaper accounts of the time, eyewitness interviews, newsreel footage of the time, and other primary and secondary materials and to evaluate the credibility of sources used.

B.8.2: Students will employ cause-and-effect arguments to demonstrate how significant events have influenced the past and the present in United States and world history.

B.8.4: Students will explain how and why events may be interpreted differently depending on the perspectives of participants, witnesses, reporters, and historians.

B.8.5: Students will use historical evidence to determine and support a position about important social values, such as freedom, democracy, or justice, and express that argument coherently.

Ideal Audience:

This lesson plan is designed for use in a high school American History class but can, also, be appropriate for 8th grade American History.

Materials:

- *Attached Data Sets
- *Internet access (for Website
<http://www.kn.att.com/wired/fil/pages/webwomenswe.html>)
- *A copy of “Iron-Jawed Angels”, 2004 HBO movie
- *Poster board
- *Construction paper
- *Blunt scissors
- *Markers/Crayons
- *Glue
- *Blackboard or Overhead

Procedure:

1. **Engagement in Inquiry:** Students will be shown a specific scene from the 2004 HBO video “Iron Jawed Angels”. This scene is a recreation of the 1913 women’s suffrage parade in Washington, D.C. which coincided with President Woodrow Wilson arriving in Washington, D.C. for pre-Inauguration festivities. The scene shows both the supportive elements and opposing elements in reaction to the parade, as well as the police actions leading up to and during the riot which eventually disrupted the parade. (Chapter 4 – ‘Woman on a Horse’, 4 minutes, 50 seconds). Prior to viewing this scene, students will be instructed to observe in the video instances of: When did you notice a change in mood during the parade? Who joined the parade? What did the police do during the parade? Following this, a student volunteer (determined prior to showing the video clip) will read the overview of the women’s suffrage movement in the U.S. Students will then be invited to consider the images they viewed in the video clip, using the preceding questions, and the information in the overview. With these considerations, students will then be given 3 to 5 minutes to write down a hypothesis addressing the focus question of “Why did it take so long for women to get the vote in the U.S.?” This focus question will be read aloud by the teacher and then written on the board as students are writing their hypotheses. Note: students have already been exposed to the concept of hypothesis and its definition but it may be helpful to briefly remind students of the definition.

2. Following this, students will break into pre-assigned groups. Each student's group number is noted on the class list located in the top right drawer of the teacher's desk. The class has done extensive work in small groups throughout the year and students are familiar with this process, as well as their particular assigned group. As part of this process, students are aware of the time limit of one minute to join their respective small group.
3. **Eliciting Student Hypotheses:** Students in their small groups will discuss the images from the video clip and the information in the overview read by the student volunteer and share their impressions and opinions with a particular emphasis on their observations of the video based on the pre-viewing questions. They will then compare hypotheses, discard duplicates, and mutually decide on the one hypothesis they will contribute to the compilation of a class group list of hypotheses. The teacher will individually invite each group to share their main hypothesis. Following this, the teacher will go around a second time to each small group to invite members to share individually hypotheses which have not been shared in the first round. This will continue until no other hypotheses are offered.
4. Following this, the teacher will facilitate a class discussion and vote on which hypotheses appear to be most likely. The teacher then invites the small groups to generate the most unlikely hypotheses they can think of and gives about 3 – 5 minutes for this exercise. Those hypotheses are then added to the list, which has been put on the board or an overhead, depending on school resources.
5. **Gathering Data and Revising Hypotheses:** The teacher will then distribute the first three data sets to the small groups. Note: there will be only three data sets distributed each time but there will be more than three small groups so every small group will not receive a data set each time. In subsequent data set distributions the teacher should make sure that different small groups receive data sets to ensure that each small group gets to read at least one data set.
6. As each data set is read, students at large will be given an opportunity to comment on the information contained in the data set but this is not intended to be a full class discussion at this time – only minimal comments. The teacher needs to be proactive in limiting class contributions to short comments. Those short comments should be written on the board or overhead for future reference during small group and class discussion. Following the reading of this data set, small groups will be given 3 to 5 minutes to discuss the information contained in the data set. The teacher will stress to the class that the small group assignment at this time is to review the hypotheses generated so far as to whether the information supports or does not support those hypotheses. In addition, students in small groups are invited to generate new hypotheses in light of the information contained in the data set.
7. The teacher will then facilitate a class discussion in which each small group shares their discussion as to revision of the generated hypotheses list and to explain their reasons behind their decisions. The teacher should include in the

facilitation questions asking students to evaluate the source of the various data sets and any potential bias. Note: the teacher should remind the small groups of the rule that each student in each small group will take a turn at reporting the small group decisions to the overall class discussion.

8. The teacher will show a short clip from the HBO video “Iron Jawed Angels” in which Alice Paul explains to a group of women factory workers the benefits of women’s suffrage. (Chapter 2 – ‘Building Support’, 1 minute, 20 seconds into the chapter. The teacher should use small group time to place this viewing at the appropriate place in the video). This scene begins by showing women textile factory workers at their job and then attending a meeting in which suffragists are discussing the upcoming parade and the incentive for these women to participate. In this scene, Alice Paul points out that safety measures in the work place can be mandated by law but that women, not being allowed to vote, are at a disadvantage in lobbying for such measures to be implemented and enforced. This clip also includes a short scene in which a representative of the Black Women’s Suffrage Movement in Chicago confronts Alice Paul, a White Women’s Suffrage Leader, about the inclusion of African American marchers in the planned 1913 Women’s Suffrage Parade in Washington, D.C. This video clip will provide students with varying perspectives of the Women’s Suffrage Movement. This video clip lasts 3 minutes, 45 seconds. Following the video, the teacher asks students if they recognize any characters from the previously-viewed parade scene and facilitates a brief discussion on their significance in the women’s suffrage movement (i.e. the Polish factory workers marching in the parade in their native dress and the African American woman who joined the parade in progress).
9. Following the viewing of this video clip, the teacher will review the hypotheses list generated from the previous class period and will invite students to share any brief comments about what was discussed last time. Then the teacher will distribute another data set to those small groups that had not received the previous data set. A student volunteer in each of these small groups will then read the data set. Students in the small groups will then discuss the new information contained in this data set and proceed with the previous process of revision of the hypotheses list. Students are reminded to critique hypotheses based on their opinions of the new information supporting or not supporting each hypotheses.
10. After the small groups have discussed the information from the new data set, approximately 3 – 5 minutes, the teacher will facilitate a continuing discussion of hypotheses support or non-support in the same fashion as the previous data set class discussion. Discussion will revolve around the information presented in the new data set as it compares with the information contained in the previous data sets and video clips. As part of this discussion, the teacher will include invitations to compare information of events of the women’s suffrage movement with current events. Students will be encouraged to share examples of parades, petitions, demonstrations, etc. that they have seen on TV or heard discussed at home or with

friends. The teacher should offer examples of such recent events to spark discussion if students do not offer examples. The class discussion at this point will combine events and strategies of the women's suffrage movement with similar current events and strategies used by groups in the U.S. today.

11. Prior to the showing of the next visual aid, the teacher will introduce the brief summary of information included in the packet regarding the women's suffrage movement strategy as part of the re-election of President Woodrow Wilson. This consisted of groups of women suffragists traveling to those Western states who had granted women the right to vote and encouraging women in these states to vote against Wilson's re-election as a means of protest for his failure to support an Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing women the right to vote. As part of this exercise, students will participate in an activity to determine estimates of how many miles women suffragists traveled from Washington, D.C., and the estimated time involved in this travel, based on the average mile-per-hour capacity of cars of that era. This activity consists of the estimated distance between Washington, D.C. and Cheyenne, Wyoming (1643 miles) and the average top speed of a Model T in 1915 (45 mph). Wyoming was the first western state to grant women the right to vote in 1890. New Jersey had been the first state to grant women suffrage in 1776 but it was rescinded in 1807. Students will calculate the time, if a driver drove straight through, of such a trip to complement the time commitment of women suffragists to the cause of the women's suffrage movement.
12. The teacher will then show a scene from the video "Iron Jawed Angels" in which women suffragists begin picketing on the sidewalk in front of the White House and display banners with quotes from President Woodrow Wilson. (Chapter 10 – Sentinels). This video clip will last 1 minute and 55 seconds. The scene shows how women suffragists, using quotes from speeches by President Wilson, demonstrate the double standard of women's status in the U.S. with the increasing sympathy in U.S. foreign policy for non-U.S. citizens that would eventually lead to U.S. involvement in WWI.
13. Following this video clip, students will discuss within their small group any modifications to remaining hypotheses on the board or overhead and/or any additional hypotheses they want to add to the list. The teacher will facilitate this discussion in the same manner as previous hypotheses discussions, with an emphasis on eliminating those hypotheses which are not supported by information in the data sets and video clips.
14. **Conclusion:** The teacher will show the short video of period newsreels on the web site noted above. It is the first listing under Background Information and is titled "video clips of women's suffrage". Following this, students in small groups will complete the final round of hypotheses testing. They will revise, as warranted, any remaining hypotheses that have not been eliminated based on

information from prior data sets and video clips. The teacher will facilitate a final class discussion regarding the remaining hypotheses and will encourage student groups to offer any new hypotheses that may be generated.

15. Following this final discussion, students will return to their seats and individually write a statement as to the hypothesis they believe to be the most appropriate with an emphasis on defending their choice. Students will be instructed to include in their statements the reasons for their choice and the particular information in the data sets which best supported their hypothesis choice. This exercise should be given sufficient class time for students to finish within the class period. Students needing accommodations should be given the option of completing this at home.
16. The next class period, students will break into their small groups and will create a time line of events in the women's suffrage movement in the U.S. This project will be given an entire class period and students will be told at the previous class period that they must complete this project within the time frame of the class period. The teacher will instruct the class to discuss within their small groups which events were most notable in the women's suffrage movement and to specify why they think that on their small group poster project.
17. At the end of the poster project, the teacher will show the final video clip from the movie "Iron Jawed Angels". (Chapter 11 – Sacrifice – 2 minutes 50 seconds into the chapter). This scene lasts 1 minute 40 seconds and is the speech that President Wilson delivered to Congress in support of the Amendment giving women the right to vote. President Wilson's speech is interspersed with brief scenes of women suffragists being released from prison. The theme of President Wilson's speech is that of the amendment being presented as a 'war measure'.
18. For homework, students will be asked to create a 2-page reflection paper based on the information in the data sets and video clips. They will be asked to reflect on the final video clip of the amendment passage as a 'war measure' and answer the question: Would the 19th Amendment have been passed if the U.S. had not been involved in WWI?
19. **Assessment:** Students will be informally assessed based on small group and whole-class participation. Students will be formally assessed based on the hypothesis statement and timeline that they turn in at the conclusion of the final class period of the lesson and the 2-page reflection paper turned in as homework.

Bibliography

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/wlhba/articleView.asp?pg=1&id=13398&key=suffrage>

<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbcml&fileName=scrp7010201/rbcmlscr>

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/fullimage.asp?id=1932>

<http://womenshistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa022299.htm>

<http://www.teacher.scholastic.com/activities/suffrage/history/htm>

http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/reform/jb_reform_wilson_2_e.html

<http://www.history.rochester.edu/class/suffrage/Anti.html>

<http://womenshistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa010118c.htm>

http://womenshistory.about.com/od/suffrage/a/why_women_vote.htm

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAsuffrage.htm>

HBO TV 2004 Movie Iron Jawed Angels, directed by: Katja von Garnier

Overview

The Women's Suffrage Movement officially began in 1848 at a meeting held at Seneca Falls, New York. From that meeting, the National Woman Suffrage Association was formed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony. There were rival women's suffrage groups which worked during the 1800s and, in 1890, the two largest women's suffrage groups merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). This organization was led by long-time suffragists Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt.

As well as working for women's suffrage, many women's groups worked for social movements such as health reform, prison reform, and child labor law reform. This work demonstrated women's competence in the political arena but it was not enough to further their cause for women's suffrage.

By the time Alice Paul arrived in Washington, D.C., there were several Western states who had granted women the right to vote but it was not on the national agenda. Alice Paul, through a high-profile women's suffrage parade in Washington, D.C. on the eve of the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson, tried to bring the issue into mainstream politics. She formed the National Women's Party (NWP) whose main goal was for a Constitutional Amendment that would guarantee women the right to vote in the U.S. This was opposed by NAWSA, which thought it best to gain women's suffrage state by state.

Data Set 1

Areas of Difference Between Men and Women

(Summary of newspaper stories and editorials from the early 1900s)

1. The “frailty” of women make them “unsuited” for the vote. “Once a woman arrived [at the polling place] she would have to mingle among the crowds of men who gather around the polls...and to press her way through them to the ballot box. Assuming she reached the polling place, she might get caught in a brawl and given women’s natural fragility, she would be the one to get hurt.” (Mayor, 64)
2. “Allowing women to vote would lead to foreign aggression and war.” (Mayor, 65)
3. If women got the vote they would be placed in situations where their vulnerability, based on ignorance and frailty, would be exploited.
4. If women got the vote, they could hide extra ballots in their dress and slip them into the ballot box unnoticed.
5. If women got the vote, they would have to mingle in the dirty world of politics and would tarnish their naturally high morals.

Reflection

According to the PASS Standards, I think this lesson would score a 4 for Higher Order Thinking because the small groups are designed to require each member to take a turn at reporting and defending the group's choice of hypotheses and subsequent revision of the hypotheses list. Included in that is the final hypothesis statement that each student is required to make, as well as the reflection paper, to demonstrate individual higher order thinking, as well as group participation.

For Deep Knowledge, I think this lesson scores a 3 because there are some conflicting points presented within primary documents but the language of those documents may be too difficult for students to fully understand. As a means of improving this lesson, I realized while I was compiling the data sets that I would need to rephrase several of them to assist students to better understand the points included. I would still keep the original primary documents but have the rephrased version alongside. I did do that on a limited basis but now think that I would need to expand that process more during the lesson.

For Substantive Conversation, I think this lesson would score a 4 because students would have participated in a discussion that required them to view the argument from different perspectives. In addition, the teacher would be encouraging students to make comparisons with current situations in the U.S. and world. This may be a difficult exercise for students and may need some prompting from the teacher to spark class discussion.

For Connections to the World Beyond the Classroom I think this lesson would score a 3 because, as noted in the above reflection, it would require the teacher to make suggestions and prompts to assist students to make the leap to connect events in the

women's suffrage movement to modern-day events. It does, however, include in the final video clip of period newsreels, information about women's suffrage movements in other parts of the world and this could expand student discussion beyond the specific period in the lesson.

For Ethical Valuing, I think this lesson would score a 4 because there is a heavy emphasis on the meanings of democracy and the formation of public policy. The obstacles encountered by suffragists and the various strategies they employed are still used by groups in present-day U.S. and the world.

For Integration, I think this is the lowest point value and I would score it a 3. This is because there are really only three areas which are addressed in this lesson – those of sociology, time, and math. The math component could be enhanced by additional exercises of students figuring percentages of women voters in a state to reinforce the idea of such a significant percentage of a population not being part of the decision-making process of government.

Beginning Video Set

Video “Iron Jawed Angels”, Chapter 4 “Woman on a Horse”, 4 minutes, 50 seconds.

(summary included in procedure section of lesson plan)

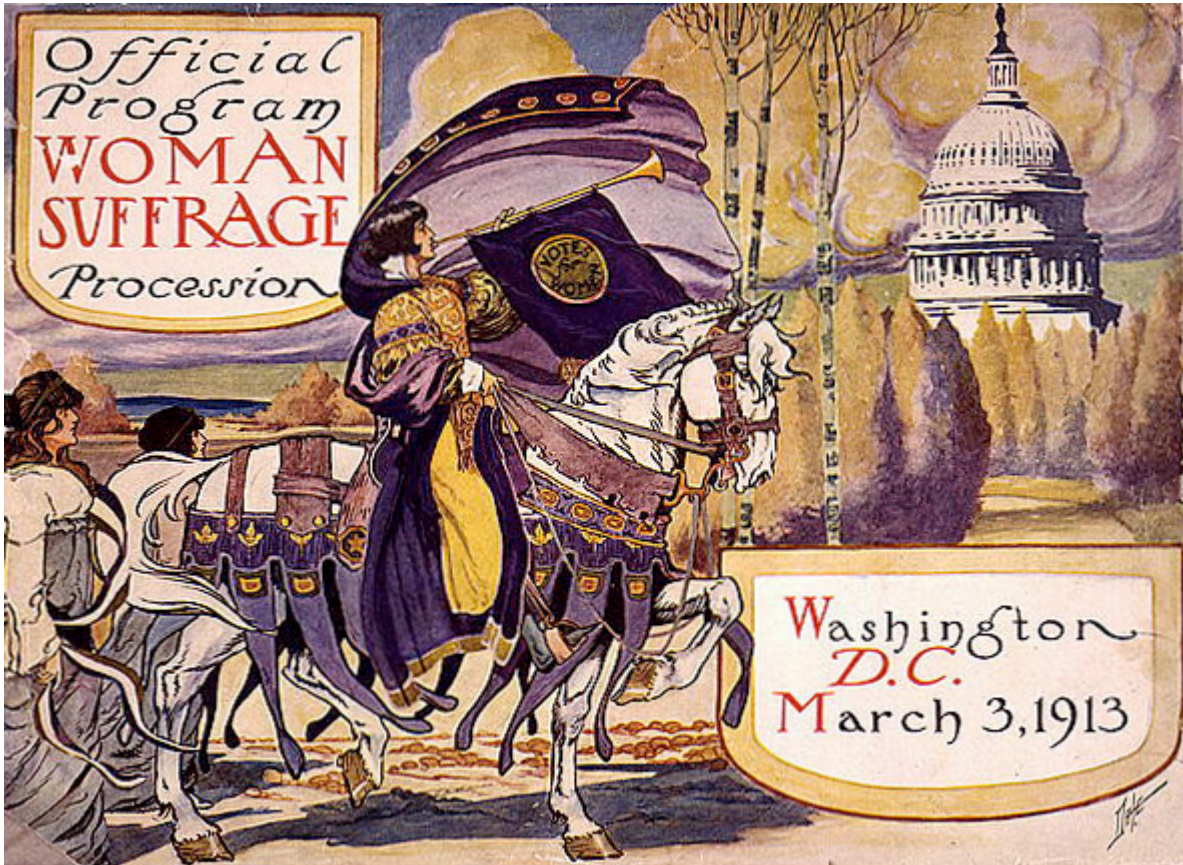
Data Set 1

Areas of Difference Between Men and Women

(Summary of newspaper stories and editorials from the early 1900s)

1. The frailty of women make them unsuited for the vote. Once a woman arrived [at the polling place] she would have to mingle among the crowds of men who gather around the polls...and to press her way through them to the ballot box. Assuming she reached the polling place, she might get caught in a brawl and given women’s natural fragility, she would be the one to get hurt.
2. Allowing women to vote would lead to foreign aggression and war.
3. If women got the vote they would be placed in situation where their vulnerability, based on ignorance and frailty, would be exploited.
4. If women got the vote, they could hide extra ballots in their dress and slip them into the ballot box unnoticed.
5. If women got the vote, they would have to mingle in the dirty world of politics and would tarnish their naturally high morals.

Data Set 2



Library of Congress. *By Popular Demand: "Votes for Women" Suffrage Pictures, 1850-1920, American Memory collections*. Retrieved October 16, 2006 from http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/reform/jb_reform_wilson_2_e.html

VIROQUA'S HISTORIC SPOT; SUFFRAGE ADDRESS IN 1856

A news story from Viroqua tells of a historic spot where the first woman's suffrage speech in Wisconsin was made:

There is a field of one and a quarter acres at the north end of the city of Viroqua, west of the ancient cemetery where the victims of the great tornado lie buried. In the grove on the hillside there, sixty-odd years ago, the settlers used to meet and enjoy picnics and listen to whoever would address them on Independence day and on Sundays. On July 4, 1856, the chief orator was a woman, the pioneer of the women's rights movement in this country.

Lucy Stone Blackwell was the wife of Harry E. Blackwell, and the subject of her address on that memorable fourth of July sixty-four years ago, still recalled by R. V. Porter and other old residents, was "Slavery and the Woman's Rights Question."

Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell had driven from Chicago in a buggy and while Mr. Blackwell interested himself in inspecting school lands, which he later purchased, his better half mixed with the people of the sparsely settled community and advocated suffrage and other reforms. During her anti-slavery address the platform broke down.

Ready with pat words, Mrs. Blackwell picked herself up and without waiting to dust off her dress or smooth her hair, said:

"So will this nation go down unless slavery be abolished."

On July 19, 1856, the Viroqua Times said:

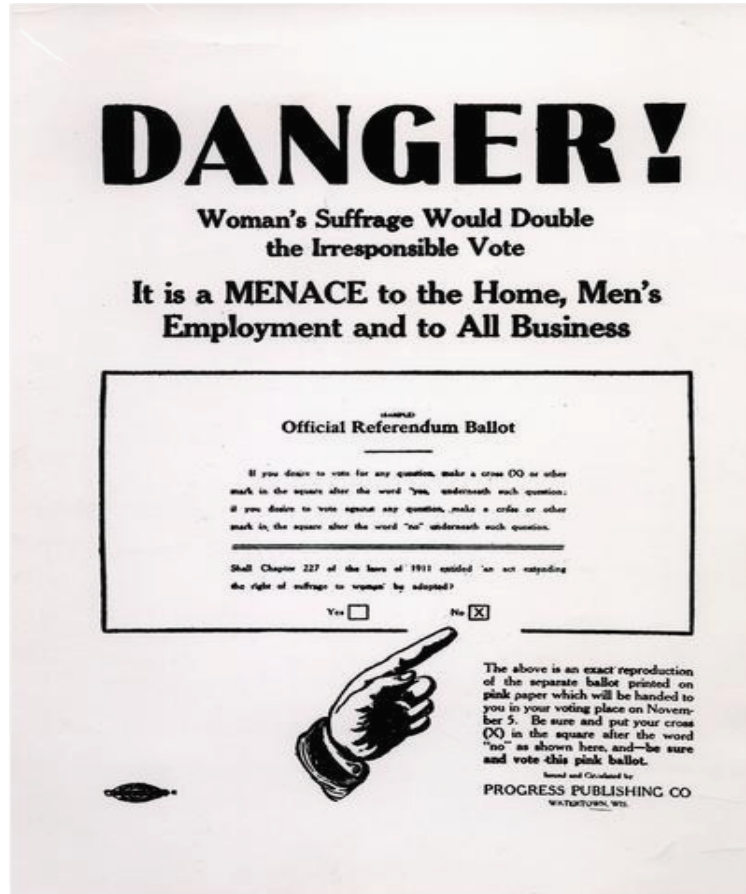
"The lecture of Mrs. Lucy Stone (as she chooses to be called) was then listened to. On account of the great crowd in attendance her lecture was delivered in the grove. She is a very excellent speaker. Her anti-slavery and a portion of the women's rights opinions are all well enough, yes, very good, but women never will demand universal suffrage and accept the responsibilities and unnatural hardships inseparably connected with the exercise of that natural attribute of man."

Data Set 4

Video “Iron Jawed Angels”, Chapter 2 – “Building Support”, 1 minute, 20 seconds.

(summary included in procedure section of lesson plan)

Data Set 5



Progress Publishing Company, [1912?]. Watertown, Wisconsin. “*Danger! Women’s Suffrage would double the irresponsible vote!*”. Retrieved October 18, 2006 from <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/fullimage.asp?id=1932>

Data Set 6

(9) Leaflet written and distributed by [Alice Paul](#) outside of the White House in 1917.

President Wilson and Envoy Root are deceiving Russia. They say "We are a democracy. Help us to win the war so that democracies may survive." We women of America tell you that America is not a democracy. Twenty million women are denied the right to vote. President Wilson is the chief opponent of their national enfranchisement. Help us make this nation really free. Tell our government that it must liberate its people before it can claim free Russia as an ally.

(n.d.) Spartacus International. *Leaflet written and distributed by Alice Paul outside of the White House in 1917*. Retrieved October 15, 2006 from

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAsuffrage.htm>

Data Set 7



Equal Franchise Society

Legislative Series

(EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM MRS. ABIGAIL ADAMS
TO HER HUSBAND JOHN ADAMS)

"I long to hear that you have declared our independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

"That your sex are naturally tyrannical is a truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute; but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of master for the more tender and endearing one of friend. Why, then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity?

— "Braintree, March 31, 1776"

Library of Congress. Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897-1911. *Equal Franchise Society*. Retrieved October 18, 2006 from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbcmil&fileName=scrp7010201/rbcmilscr...>

Data Set 8

This is a math component of the lesson that demonstrates the high level of time, resources, and energy commitment of people involved in the women's suffrage movement. Not only were women suffrage supporters willing to devote time handing out leaflets, petitioning, and participating in local marches, but they were willing to take their message to all parts of the country. Their western campaign, also, demonstrated women's political intelligence and ability to compete in the political arena:

This activity consists of the estimated distance between Washington, D.C. and Cheyenne, Wyoming (1643 miles) and the average top speed of a Model T in 1915 (45 mph). Wyoming was the first western state to grant women the right to vote in 1890. New Jersey had been the first state to grant women suffrage in 1776 but it was rescinded in 1807. Students will calculate the time, if a driver drove straight through, of such a trip to strengthen the concept of the time commitment of women suffragists to the cause of the women's suffrage movement.

Data set 9

Video :Iron Jawed Angels”, Chapter 10 – “Sentinels”, 1 minute, 55 seconds.

(summary included in procedure section of lesson plan)

Data Set 10

“video clips of women's suffrage” located on web site:

<http://www.kn.att.com/wired/fil/pages/webwomenswe.html>

Data Set 11

Video “Iron Jawed Angels”, Chapter 11 – “Sacrifice”, 2 minutes, 50 seconds.

(summary included in procedure section of lesson plan)