Women’s Suffrage in the United States: Primary Sources and Activities

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The efforts of American women to achieve the right to vote continued for seven decades. Activists encountered barriers every step of the way and employed a variety of methods, including some radical tactics, to persuade Congress and the people of the United States that women deserved the right to vote.

Suffrage instruction in a high-school classroom can begin during a discussion of antebellum America, continue through the Civil War and Reconstruction, into the Progressive Era, and culminate during World War I. The struggle for women’s suffrage was a long, complex movement, driven by a series of remarkable leaders acting in courageous ways.

Coming into high school, students may have a general understanding of the idea that women could not vote in the first century and a half of the United States’ existence, and won the right to vote in 1920. But the suffrage movement was a continuous theme throughout the mid-to-late 19th century and early 20th century, and cannot be entirely addressed in a single class period. Nor can most teachers devote a full week during one era to the subject of suffrage. Suffrage instruction usually meets somewhere in the middle.

Library of Congress Resources

The Library of Congress holds thousands of documents related to the struggle for suffrage. Many of the documents are cataloged specifically in these collections:

- “Votes for Women”: Selections from the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, 1848-1921. [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawshome.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawshome.html)


Women’s Suffrage Primary-Source Set: Sources and Activities

This primary-source set builds on the work already done by the Library of Congress, as well as the identification of additional Library of Congress sources and supporting sources from the Minnesota Historical Society, to create three in-class activities for high school students to teach about three particular elements of the suffrage movement:

- **72 Years in the Fight**
- **The Movement Gets Radical: American Suffragettes Employ New Tactics**
- **Resistance to Women's Suffrage**

The sources and activities here provide teachers with activity suggestions that can occupy one class period or less. The inclusion of Minnesota sources helps to make the connection between state and national history, illustrating that events on the national stage also played out in Minnesota. Library of Congress sources include:

- “The first convention ever called to discuss the civil and political rights of women, Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19, 20, 1848. Women’s rights convention.” 18--.
- “Consistent democracy. The elective franchise for women. Twenty-five testimonies of prominent men.” 1858.
- “We’ll Vote Against the Terrible Men.” Frank Howard. 1869.
- “An account on the proceedings of the trial of Susan B. Anthony, on the charge of illegal voting, at the presidential election in Nov. 1872.” Susan B. Anthony. 1874.
- “Woman suffrage in the U.S. Senate, 1879: argument for a sixteenth amendment.” United States Congress. 1879.
- “Votes for Women Broadside.” Women’s Political Union. 1911.
- “The only way Speaker – ‘The only way we can gain women’s suffrage is by making our appeal through our charm, our grace and our beauty.’” John Held. 1912.
- Suffragists Protest Woodrow Wilson’s Opposition to Woman Suffrage, October 1916. Photograph.
- “The sky is now her limit.” Bushnell. 1920.

Minnesota sources (from the Minnesota Historical Society) include:

- Minneapolis League of Women Voters banner. “Minnesota Denies the Vote to Criminals, Lunatics, Idiots and Women Is This Chivalry.”
Women’s Suffrage: Context

**July 1848:** 300 women and men met in Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss the rights of woman. They signed a Declaration of Sentiments and adopted 11 resolutions, including a resolution that read: “It is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.”

**August 1920:** Tennessee becomes the 36th state to ratify the federal suffrage amendment, creating the necessary majority to officially adopt the amendment to the Constitution.

In the 72 years in between, American women fought with a variety of weapons to get the vote. They organized, nationally and locally; they petitioned the government; they voted illegally; they gave speeches and published documents; they marched; they picketed the White House and went to jail; they went on hunger strikes and were force-fed.

Leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony devoted several decades in the 19th century to the cause, while women such as Alice Paul picked up the cause in the 20th century and radicalized it. Activists introduced a suffrage amendment to Congress every year from 1878 until ratification.

Along the way, disagreements about how to achieve suffrage led to fragmentation within the movement. When the 15th amendment granted blacks the right to vote, but not women, many in the suffrage movement broke ties with their abolitionist allies. This break also led to the creation of two separate suffrage organizations – the more radical National Woman Suffrage Association and the conservative American Woman Suffrage Association. The two organizations merged in 1890 to form NAWSA. In 1915, Alice Paul formed the Congressional Union, later called the National Woman’s Party, and embarked on a series of militant tactics.

Suffragists met with opposition from the government, the press, organized groups (such as the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage), and other women. Black women often met with opposition from white suffragists.

Ultimately, President Woodrow Wilson declared his support for women’s suffrage during World War I, and in 1920, Congress ratified the 19th amendment, which reads: “The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

**Minnesota Suffrage Movement**

Minnesota women first petitioned the state legislature to strike the word “male” from the voting requirements in 1868. They were promptly laughed off the floor. The next year, women formed the first suffrage organization in the state, and in 1881, the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association was officially created to act as the nerve center for the local activity in the state. Clara Ueland, the final president of the MWSA, was an efficient organizer of support for the cause. She was one of 30 suffragettes present when the governor ratified the 19th amendment for Minnesota in 1919.
72 Years in the Fight

Library of Congress documents for this activity:

The First Convention Ever Called. 1848. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbnawsa.n7548

Consistent Democracy. 1858. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbnawsa.n6179

The trial of Susan B. Anthony (p. 82). 1873. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbnawsa.n2152

Argument for a 16th amendment (p. 6, last paragraph). 1879. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbnawsa.n8360

Votes for Women Broadside. 1911. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rcmil.scrp7003401


Minnesota document for this activity:


Activity Procedure:

The official suffrage movement in the United States spanned 72 years. Beginning with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and ending with the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, the movement was successful due to the work of thousands of women and men. Their tactics and actions changed over the course of seven decades, reflecting the times in which the actions occurred. Over time, women tried organizing, petitioning, voting illegally, agitating, gathering support from men and local groups, and lobbying.

1. Distribute all sources above to students in groups of three or four. Do not provide dates for the documents (this will allow them to assess effectiveness without attaching a time period). The groups will read and discuss all documents and determine the tactic each document reflects. Groups will determine the motivation behind each document, or, in other words, what suffragettes were trying to accomplish with each one.

2. After they have read and discussed, tell them that each group is in charge of preparing a plan for achieving women’s suffrage. But their time and resources are limited. They must choose two tactics for achieving the vote. Groups will reflect on the documents, discuss the tactics, and choose the two tactics that they would use.

3. Each group will present their decision and rationale before the full group.

4. If there is time, show the dates for the documents and talk about the progression of tactics over time.
DECLARATION OF SENTIMENTS.

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they were accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

"The first convention ever called to discuss the civil and political rights of women, Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19, 20, 1848. Women's rights convention." 18--. Library of Congress.
He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men—both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master—the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes of divorce; in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given; as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women—the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration.

He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction, which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education—all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in Church, as well as State, but a subordinate

"The first convention ever called to discuss the civil and political rights of women, Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19, 20, 1848. Women's rights convention." 18--. Library of Congress.
position, claiming Apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the Church.

He has created a false public sentiment, by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation,—in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the state and national legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country.

Firmly relying upon the final triumph of the Right and the True, we do this day affix our signatures to this declaration.

Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eunice Newton Foote, Mary Ann McClintock, Martha C. Wright, Jane C. Hunt, Amy Post, Catharine A. F. Stebbins, Mary H. Hallowell, Charlotte Woodward, Sarah Hallowell.

Richard P. Hunt, Samuel D. Tilman, Elisha Foote, Frederick Douglass, Elias J. Doty, James Mott, Thomas McClintock.

This Declaration was unanimously adopted and signed by 32 men and 68 women.

"The first convention ever called to discuss the civil and political rights of women, Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19, 20, 1848. Women's rights convention." 18--. Library of Congress.
TESTIMONIES.

Hon. H. B. Anthony, Ex-Gov. of R. I.,
(Founder of the Providence Journal.)

A collection of women arguing for political rights, and for the privileges usually conceded only to the other sex, is one of the easiest things in the world to make fun of. There is no end to the smart speeches and the witty remarks that may be made on the subject. But when we seriously attempt to show that a woman pays taxes ought not to have a voice in the manner in which the taxes are expended, that a woman whose property and liberty and person are controlled by the laws, should have no voice in framing those laws, it is not so easy. If women are fit to rule in monarchies, it is difficult to say why they are not qualified to vote in a republic; nor can there be greater indelicacy in a woman going up to the ballot box, than there is in a man opening a legislature or issuing orders to an army. We do not say that women ought to vote, but we say that it is a great deal easier to laugh down the idea than to argue it down.


We need the participation of woman in the ballot box. It is idle to say that she will meet with disrespect or insult at the polls. Let her walk up firmly and modestly to deposit her vote, and all men will make way for her, and if any one ventures to molest her, the crowd will swallow him up as the whale swallowed Jonah!

Rev. Wm. H. Channing.

Our whole plan of government is a hypocritical farce, if one-half the people can be governed by the other half, without their consent being asked or granted. Conscience and common sense alike demand the equal rights of women.

Rev. Dr. Foote.

Woman, though possessed of that rational and moral nature which is the foundation of all rights, enjoys among us fewer legal and civil rights than under the law of continental Europe.

O. S. Fowler.

Politics and government require the participation of women, in some form, as much as of man; and till it has been, to all intents and purposes, will be marred by all the imperfections of the old bachelor.

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Women have the whole ground conceded to them at the beginning. "All government arises from the consent of the governed." Our fathers held that doctrine as self-evident, and the men of this country have conceded the whole ground — those who are ruled by law should have the power to say what shall be the laws, and who the lawmakers. Women are as much interested in legislation as men, and entitled to representation.

Horace Greeley.

As to woman's voting or holding office, I defer implicitly to herself. If the women of this or any other country believe that their rights would be better secured and their happiness protected by the assumption on their part, of the political franchises and responsibilities of men, I, a Republican in principle, shall certainly interpose no objection.

Hon. Wm. Hay, Saratoga, N. Y.

I am convinced that until the individual and social right of our whole race, without distinction of caste or sex, shall have been universally recognized, the tyrannies of earth will not cease from it. The Woman's Rights reform may yet lead to the practical adoption, here, of Jefferson's elementary truth, (almost self-evident, yet treated as a theory,) that government derives its just powers from the consent of all (not half) the governed. Partial consent can confer only unjust power.

Hon. E. P. Hurlbut of N. Y.

If woman's mental characteristics are essentially the same as man's, the same reason which uphold universal suffrage for the male sex, must extend it also to the female.

* * Suppose (on the other hand,) her character to vary essentially from man's; admit her to have peculiar views, peculiar interests and moral instincts; this but enhances the necessity for a peculiar representation of her moral interests in the Legislature. Man, then, cannot properly represent her.

There would seem to be no escape from the claims of woman to the full rights of citizenship, whether she is considered as possessing the same nature with man, or one peculiar and different. In the one case, she can claim to exercise the elective franchise of common right, and in the other, from a peculiar necessity. — Essay on Human Rights and their Political Guaranties.

Rev. T. W. Higginson.

If anything caps the sum of the argument for the political rights of woman, it is the fact of those domestic duties which some foolishly array against these rights. What has a man at stake in society? His own personal duties. A man invests himself in society; woman invests infinitely more, for she throws in her child. The man can run away to California, with his interests and from his duties; the woman is anchored to her home. It is important to him, you say, whether the community provides, by its legislation, schools or drama shops. Then how vast, how unspeakable, the importance to her. Deprive every man in the nation of the ballot, if you will, but demand, oh demand, its protection for the wife and mother!
Miss Anthony—Yes, your honor, I have many things to say; for in your ordered verdict of guilty, you have trampled under foot every vital principle of our government. My natural rights, my civil rights, my political rights, my judicial rights, are all alike ignored. Robbed of the fundamental privilege of citizenship, I am degraded from the status of a citizen to that of a subject; and not only myself individually, but all of my sex, are, by your honor’s verdict, doomed to political subjection under this, so-called, form of government.

Judge Hunt—The Court cannot listen to a rehearsal of arguments the prisoner’s counsel has already consumed three hours in presenting.

Miss Anthony—May it please your honor, I am not arguing the question, but simply stating the reasons why sentence cannot, in justice, be pronounced against me. Your denial of my citizen’s right to vote, is the denial of my right of consent as one of the governed, the denial of my right of representation as one of the taxed, the denial of my right to a trial by a jury of my peers as an offender against law, therefore, the denial of my sacred rights to life, liberty, property and—

Judge Hunt—The Court cannot allow the prisoner to go on.

Miss Anthony—But your honor will not deny me this one and only poor privilege of protest against this high-handed outrage upon my citizen’s rights. May it please the Court to remember that since the day of my arrest last November, this is the first time that either myself or any person of my disfranchised class has been allowed a word of defense before judge or jury—

Judge Hunt—The prisoner must sit down—the Court cannot allow it.

ARGUMENT FOR A SIXTEENTH AMENDMENT.

er equaled the greatest achievements of men. But it is equally true that in those same departments women have exhibited an intellectual ability very far beyond that of the average of men, and very far beyond that of most men who have shown very great political capacity. But let the comparison be made in regard to the very thing with which we have to deal. Of men who have swayed chief executive power, a very considerable proportion have attained it by usurpation or by election, processes which imply extraordinary capacity on their part as compared with other men. The women who have held such power have come to it as sovereigns by inheritance, or as regents by the accident of bearing a particular relation to the lawful sovereign when he was under some incapacity. Yet it is an undisputed fact that the number of able and successful female sovereigns bears a vastly greater proportion to the whole number of such sovereigns, than does the number of able and successful male sovereigns to the whole number of men who have reigned. An able, energetic, virtuous king or emperor is the exception and not the rule in the history of modern Europe. With hardly an exception the female sovereigns, or regents have been wise and popular. Mr. Mill, who makes this point, says:

"We know how small a number of reigning queens history presents in comparison with that of kings. Of this smaller number, a far larger proportion have shown talents for rule, though many of them have occupied the throne in difficult periods. When to queens and empresses we add regents and viceroys of provinces, the list of women who have been eminent rulers of mankind swells to a great length. . . . . Especially is this true if we take into consideration Asia as well as Europe. If a Hindoo principality is strongly, vigilantly, and economically governed; if order is preserved without oppression; if cultivation is extending and the people prosperous, in three cases out of four that principality is under a woman's rule. This fact, to me an entirely unexpected one, I have collected from a long official knowledge of Hindoo governments.

"Certainly history gives no warning that should deter the American people from carrying out the principles upon which their governments rest to this most just and legitimate conclusion. Those persons who think that free government has anywhere failed, can only claim that this tends to prove, not the failure of Universal Suffrage, but the failure of masculine suffrage. Like failure has attended the operation of every other great human institution, the family, the school, the church, whenever Woman has not been permitted to contribute to them her full share. As to the best example of the perfect family, the perfect school, the perfect church, the love, the purity, and the truth of Woman are essential, so they are equally essential to the perfect example of the self-governing state.

Geo. F. Hoar.
John H. Mitchell.
Angus Cameron.
Suffrage Association badge. Minnesota Historical Society.
The Movement Gets Radical: American Suffragettes Employ New Tactics

Library of Congress documents for this activity:


Minnesota document for this activity:


Activity Procedure:

1. Watch the movie clip from “Iron Jawed Angels” (force feeding scene): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO70ZjZ0wrw. Don’t give students any context; just have them observe, and then after the clip, jot down their thoughts about the scene.

2. Explain that although this is a Hollywood movie, it is based on real events, of women jailed, participating in hunger strikes, and enduring force-feeding to protest for the right to vote.

3. Consider the position of suffragettes in the 1910s. Women had been petitioning, lobbying, speaking and organizing for the vote since 1848, and the suffrage amendment had been proposed to Congress every year since 1878. Aside from some minor victories, the big goal was nowhere in sight. What would you do if your cause was in its 65th year?

4. In the early 20th century, American women took a page from the British suffragettes’ book and began picketing, agitating, countering anti-suffrage arguments more forcefully, committing acts of civil disobedience, and overall acting in more aggressive, creative ways.

5. Look at the four sources in small groups. Discuss the methods used and talk about why the suffragettes would have used these tactics. Consider these questions:

   a. Do you think these methods were more, or less, effective than the tactics used by 19th-century suffragettes? Why?

   b. What do you think was the impact on suffrage opponents?

   c. Women were granted suffrage in 1920. Do you think these radical methods helped lead to that outcome? Or were the times changing anyway, and suffrage was going to happen anyway?
Being Fed Through Nostrils
Is Described by Alice Paul,
Young American Suffragette
Inventor of Hunger Strike Tells How British Prison Physicians Keep Life in Women Who Won't Eat or Wear Clothes.

London, Dec. 9.—Miss Alice Paul, of Philadelphia, the suffragette who was arrested November 9th and sentenced to a month's hard labor for her share in the suffrage demonstration at the Lord Mayor's banquet at the Guildhall, was released from Holloway jail this morning on the completion of her thirty days. She left the prison in a cab, accompanied by two wardresses, and went to the home of friends. A doctor was immediately called to attend her there owing to her weakened condition.

Miss Paul, who was the inventor of the suffragettes' "hunger strike" and practiced it during her last term in jail, was cheerful, and said she did not regret her conduct, and was prepared to repeat it again if necessary. She said she was unable to undergo the ordeal of an interview, but later she sent your correspondent a statement by a friend. On previous convictions, Miss Paul was able to gain her freedom by refusing to eat, but her tactics were futile this time.

Miss Paul said she was the granddaughter of a New Jersey judge, and a master of arts of the University of Pennsylvania. She had done a great deal of settlement work during the last four years, and came to London in September, 1908, to study economics. After saying that she was first struck by the contrast between the academic interest in woman suffrage in America and the lively character of the movement here, Miss Paul told this story of her prison life.

"I practiced a hunger strike until November 11th. After that date they fed me twice a day by force, except on one day when I was too ill to be touched. I have no complaints against the Holloway officials. I spent the whole time in bed, because I refused to wear prison clothes. Each day, I was wrapped in blankets and taken to another cell to be fed, the food being injected through my nostrils. "During this operation the largest wardress in Holloway sat astride my knees, holding my shoulders down to keep me from bending forward. Two other wardresses sat on either side and held my arms. Then a towel was placed around my throat, and one doctor from behind forced my head back, while another doctor put a tube in my nostril. When it reached my throat my head was pushed forward. "Twice the tube came through my mouth and I got it between my teeth. My mouth was then pried open with an instrument. Sometimes they tied me to a chair with sheets. Once I managed to get my hands loose and snatched the tube, tearing it with my teeth. I also broke a jug, but I didn't give in."

Miss Paul lives alone in London. Her friend told me with great gusto how Miss Paul had eluded the vigilance of the police at the Lord Mayor's banquet. It seems she and Miss Amelia Brown, her partner in the escarpade, dressed as charwomen, went to the Guildhall at 9 o'clock in the morning. Every time they met anyone they asked the way to the kitchen. They had many hairbreadth escapes, and once, seeing a policeman close at hand, they knelt down to escape notice. In the dark the policeman actually put his cape on them. Finally they succeeded in getting to the gallery overlooking the banqueting hall, where they shrieked and threw stones through a stained glass window.

Miss Lacy Burns, the other American suffragette, is following Winston Spencer Churchill around the country, making it as warm as possible for the President of the Board of Trade.
Introduction

FATHER, what is a Legislature?
A representative body elected by the people of the state.
Are women people?
No, my son, criminals, lunatics and women are not people.
Do legislators legislate for nothing?
Oh, no; they are paid a salary.
By whom?
By the people.
Are women people?
Of course, my son, just as much as men are.

Our Idea of Nothing at All

("I am opposed to woman suffrage, but I am not opposed to woman."—Anti-suffrage speech of Mr. Webb of North Carolina.)

O women, have you heard the news
Of charity and grace?
Look, look, how joy and gratitude
Are beaming in my face!
For Mr. Webb is not opposed
To woman in her place!

O Mr. Webb, how kind you are
To let us live at all,
To let us light the kitchen range
And tidy up the hall;
To tolerate the female sex
In spite of Adam's fall.

O girls, suppose that Mr. Webb
Should alter his decree!
Suppose he were opposed to us—
Opposed to you and me.
What would be left for us to do—
Except to cease to be?
[ 13 ]
ARE WOMEN PEOPLE?

Why We Oppose Pockets for Women

1. Because pockets are not a natural right.
2. Because the great majority of women do not want pockets. If they did they would have them.
3. Because whenever women have had pockets they have not used them.
4. Because women are required to carry enough things as it is, without the additional burden of pockets.
5. Because it would make dissension between husband and wife as to whose pockets were to be filled.
6. Because it would destroy man's chivalry toward woman, if he did not have to carry all her things in his pockets.
7. Because men are men, and women are women. We must not fly in the face of nature.
8. Because pockets have been used by men to carry tobacco, pipes, whiskey flasks, chewing gum and compromising letters. We see no reason to suppose that women would use them more wisely.

[44]
MINNESOTA DENIES
THE VOTE TO
CRIMINALS
LUNATICS
IDIOTS AND WOMEN
IS THIS
CHIVALRY
Resistance to Women’s Suffrage

Library of Congress documents for this activity:

Women’s Rights. 1867. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbnawsa.n2744

We’ll vote against the terrible men. 1869. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.music/musmisc.awh0002


The only way we can gain women’s suffrage... 1912. http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/98502866/

Minnesota document for this activity:


Activity Procedure:

1. Ask the class who they think might have been opposed to women’s suffrage. Explain that women, along with men, fought against women’s suffrage. Brainstorm some reasons that women and men might have opposed women voting and make a list on the board.
   
   a. Some reasons may include: women are not as intelligent, women have no interest in politics, women don’t understand the political process, women have more important duties at home, voting is unladylike, women would just do what their husbands/fathers/brothers told them to, etc.

2. Pass out all or some of the documents above to groups of three or four. In the groups, have students examine all the documents and come up with their own list, based on the documents, that opponents gave to protest women’s rights.

3. As a large group, come back together and briefly discuss all the documents and the reasons students came up with for suffrage opposition. How did these reasons and the people who supported them contribute to the long fight for suffrage in the United States?

4. As an extension, have students create a piece of anti-suffrage propaganda, similar to the documents they viewed (a poster, song, cartoon, pamphlet, etc.) They should choose one or more arguments and illustrate their argument to try to get more support for their point of view.
VOTING.

Take off the robes, and put on pants and show the limbs, and grace and mystery are all gone. And yet, to be like a man, you must doff your own dress and put on ours. In doing it, you lose more than I can tell. No! Ladies want our respect, and admiration, and reverence too much ever to lay aside their appropriate dress. Their very instincts make them safe here.

VOTING.

A great hue and cry is set up about the right of women to vote, and the cruelty of denying them this right. Plainly this is merely a civil and not a natural right. Minors, foreigners, and idiots are denied it. The property of the world, for the most part, is, and ever has been, and must be, earned by men. It is useful only to support and educate families—our own, or those of others. It would seem best, then, for those who, at any hazard or labor, earn the property, to select the rulers, and have this responsibility. The wealth of the age is expended by woman—earned by the man—for the most part. He wants rulers in reference to the industry and business of his age. Let him select them. Moreover, there is something so unseemly in having woman wading in the dirty waters of politics, dragging and wrangling around the ballot-boxes, e. g., mingling with the mobs and rowdies in New York city, that I wonder she ever thinks of it. But “she is a widow, and has property, and pays taxes, why not vote?” Being a widow, or fatherless, is a misfortune. But the husband or father earned the property, and voted as long as he lived. It may be a misfortune that the property does not now vote, but not so great a misfortune to the world as to have the sex go out of their sphere and enter into political life. Indeed, it is allowed that voting is only the stepping-stone to civil office. But it is stepping out of her sphere, and the moment you do that, you put a few of the sex into office, but depress and degrade at least a thousand where you elevate one. If a few go up, the many go down.
"We’ll Vote Against the Terrible Men." Sheet Music. Frank Howard. 1869. Library of Congress.
We’ll Vote against the Terrible Men.

SONG AND CHORUS.

Words and Music by FRANK HOWARD.

Lively.

1. Oh, how we suffer, maids and wives, Although our wants are very slight; How
2. There’s Miss - ter Br - ady’s pretty wife, Although she lives in queen - ly style, I
3. Of course we know each word is false, That’s said of Miss - tress Wil - liam Brown, That
4. And when you hear my own sad case, I know your hearts will bleed for me; You can

Entered according to Act of Congress, A.D. 1869, by W. W. Whiting, in the Clerk’s office of the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.
"We'll Vote Against the Terrible Men." Sheet Music. Frank Howard. 1869. Library of Congress.
"We'll Vote Against the Terrible Men." Sheet Music. Frank Howard. 1869. Library of Congress.
"The only way we can gain women's suffrage is by making our appeal through our charm, our grace, and our beauty."
