PROGRAMMING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

Women’s Suffrage
A guide for libraries

2022
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Letter from the Authors

“Primary sources are the raw materials of history—original documents and objects that were created at the time under study,” reads the Library of Congress website. As such, these items are powerful teaching tools. Bringing people of all ages into close contact with items from bygone eras can make the past come alive in a uniquely powerful way.

For those interested in primary sources, the Library of Congress—the largest library in the world, with millions of books, recordings, photographs, newspapers, maps and manuscripts in its collections—is a veritable treasure trove. And you don’t have to go to Washington, D.C. to access its materials; millions of primary sources are freely available in the Library’s digital collections.

Since 2006, the Library of Congress has awarded Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) grants to build a network of organizations that create teaching materials and deliver educational programming based on the Library’s digitized primary sources and other online resources. In 2021, the American Library Association (ALA) joined this network, seeking to explore how primary sources might be incorporated into library programming, especially programs for adults.

ALA put out a call for librarians who would like to lead this endeavor. Dozens of applicants responded, and the four of us—representing academic, K–12, and public libraries across the country—were selected as the authors of this guide. Over the coming months, we took a deep dive into the Library of Congress digital collections. We focused on items from the Library’s collections on women’s suffrage, a topic about which the four of us are deeply passionate.

Utilizing this wealth of firsthand accounts, ephemera, photographs, and more, we developed program and activity ideas that we hope will serve our fellow library workers in two ways: (1) to inspire librarians to find new and creative ways to bring primary sources into their programming, and (2) to use primary sources to paint a more inclusive, more holistic, more accurate picture of the women’s suffrage movement.

The approaches and ideas we share in this guide can be applied to countless other topics besides women’s fight for the vote. We encourage you to use these primary source recommendations, program ideas, analysis tools and questions as a jumping-off point. We hope that sifting through the raw materials of history will help program facilitators and participants to develop an awareness of the voices that were left out of the textbooks and mainstream narratives on any number of topics.

—TATIANA BRYANT, CARA DELLATTE, SUSAN SHELTON WITTE, REGINA E. VITOLO

(above) Johnstown Weekly Democrat, April 4, 1890. chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86083274/1890-04-04/ed-1/seq-5
Helpful Links for Analyzing Primary Sources

Thousands of Library of Congress items tell the stories of the women’s suffrage movement: historic and contemporary audio and video files, posters, photographs, magazines, sheet music, maps, manuscripts and rare books, as well as government documents and legislation.

But before we dive into the collections, take a moment to familiarize yourself with some of our favorite Library of Congress resources related to primary source analysis. Developed by classroom teachers and librarians, these links and handouts provide foundational information about primary sources that may help you plan your programming.

1. What did you do over the past 24 hours, and what evidence was left behind? What would a future historian be able to tell about your life based on the evidence of your daily activities? This 4-minute video uses these questions to explain the difference between primary and secondary sources.

2. This 2-minute instructional video explains how to analyze a primary source through observation, reflection and questioning. Print this PDF of the Primary Source Analysis Tool for brainstorming activities, as well as the helpful Teacher’s Guide.

3. Teacher-created classroom materials and lesson plans can be utilized for library programs.

4. Primary Source Sets are collections of primary sources on commonly taught topics, along with historical background information and teaching ideas. Check out the Women’s Suffrage Primary Source Set.

5. In its Free to Use and Reuse Sets, the Library identifies items that are in the public domain, have no copyright, or have been cleared by the copyright owner for public use. Visit the Free to Use and Reuse: Women’s History Month collection. (Note that Free to Use and Reuse Sets represent just a small sample of the Library’s digital collections that are free to use and reuse.)

A Note About Copyright and Fair Use

The Library of Congress works with primary source creators and owners to make as many sources as possible available to view online, but it is important to note that copyright restrictions still apply to the use or re-use of those sources outside of the Library’s website. Your use of primary sources for educational purposes may be considered fair use and qualify for certain copyright exemptions, but it is always best to defer to the Library’s website and check the “Rights and Access” or “Rights Advisory” statement for each individual item to understand what kinds of use are acceptable. Whether an item is in the public domain or qualifies for fair use, always properly cite any primary source you use.
Revisiting Women’s Suffrage

BY REGINA VITOLO

In 2020, libraries, museums and cultural institutions across the nation commemorated the women’s suffrage centennial with celebrations, lectures and special exhibits utilizing the rich trove of primary source materials preserved and made accessible by institutions like the Library of Congress.

One hundred years prior, in August 1920—after three quarters of a century of struggle—the grassroots efforts of politically conscious women from all walks of life had culminated in the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, ostensibly enshrining women’s right to vote in the U.S. Constitution. The Nineteenth Amendment removed the arbitrary legal constraint of gender on voting and officially acknowledged women’s presence as a political force in the public sphere.

Votes for Women

Prior to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, the majority of women worked and paid taxes, but they had limited access to education and many professions, and they were barred from political participation. Women were trusted with rearing and educating children and running households, and they were generally considered bastions of morality. However, they were not considered smart enough or sturdy enough to participate in politics.
Antisuffragists—those who were against enfranchising female American citizens—devised arguments against women’s suffrage based on pseudoscience and conjecture. Most of the arguments adhered to a common theme: women were too emotional, too fragile and not intellectual enough to participate in politics. These arguments revealed deeper cultural and societal issues rooted in sexism that proved to persist beyond the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Reexamining the Legacy of the Nineteenth Amendment

While winning the fight for the Nineteenth Amendment represented a monumental civil rights victory, deeply entrenched race- and class-based discrimination persisted. Many state and local governments, especially in the South, continued to refuse to acknowledge the political equality of non-white people. Voter suppression tactics, such as literacy tests and poll taxes, kept the newly enfranchised from participating in the democratic process. For decades more, those affected by systemic discrimination and disenfranchisement continued to advocate, organize and agitate for full political equality. Women placed themselves front and center of the struggle, and it would be nearly five decades after the Nineteenth Amendment until non-white women were fully enfranchised with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

From its inception, the women’s suffrage movement drew on the momentum of other reform movements of the Antebellum and Progressive Eras, such as the anti-slavery, temperance and labor movements. Many suffragists, like Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and The Grimke Sisters, developed their political consciousness and awareness of gender-based discrimination from participation in the Abolitionist movement. Suffragists adopted and adapted activist tactics from earlier reform movements, but they also introduced novel strategies utilizing advances in technology and influenced by greater access to education and the public sphere. The civil rights movement, the women’s liberation movement, and most recently, the 2017 Women’s March used similar strategies as the suffragists to protest and advocate for equality.

Up until the last decade, a whitewashed version of the women’s suffrage movement, largely shaped by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, served as the touchstone for the history of the movement. Based on Stanton and Anthony’s history, mainstream history books situate the birthplace of the women’s suffrage movement and, more broadly, the women’s rights movement, in 1848 Seneca Falls, New York, where abolitionists and social reformers Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and
Frederick Douglass convened the first official Women’s Rights Convention. Records of the time indicate a gathering of about 300 men and women were present when Stanton presented the Declaration of Sentiments—her feminist spin on the Declaration of Independence—officially calling for women’s political enfranchisement as a right of citizenship. Stanton’s declaration was received with mixed feelings and was ironically considered too radical by many attendees to be included as a plank in the women’s rights platform. Stanton refused to budge on voting rights for women, letting the women’s suffrage plank eclipse all other issues addressed in the Declaration of Sentiments.

Continuing the Fight

Over the past few decades, feminist historians and scholars have searched through family attics, archives and libraries in search of non-white voices and first-person accounts from the women’s suffrage movement, uncovering stories that had been deemed unimportant and therefore relegated to the dustbins of history. A wealth of new artifacts and primary source material from the women’s suffrage movement continues to be located, and previously documented sources have been re-examined, revealing a more accurate, richer and more nuanced account. Non-white female reformers were fierce political actors in the movement and organized and advocated on behalf of themselves and white women. Many of these stories are now preserved and accessible through the Library of Congress digital collections.

The women’s suffrage movement, also referred to as the “Votes for Women!” campaign, remains the longest—and one of the most faceted—movements in U.S. political history. While momentum for the movement ebbed and flowed between its start and finish, the tenacity and persistence of three generations of suffragists buoyed the cause each time it was nearly drowned out by national and global crises. The women’s suffrage movement persevered through competing social reforms, two wars and a deadly influenza pandemic. But suffragists were not deterred; they seized the opportunities these challenges presented to exercise civic leadership and to strive for a more equal and just society for all.

As we approach another important centennial, that of the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment, proposed in 1923 by suffragist and National Women’s Party founder Alice Paul, many parallels can be drawn between current headlines and those of the women’s suffrage era. The social and political unrest pulsing through the United States today is an apt backdrop for revisiting the movement and reexamining the legacy of the Nineteenth Amendment. Paul, foreseeing the obstacles women would continue to face in terms of legal and political rights after the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, proposed the Equal Rights Amendment with the hope of enshrining equal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. Nearly 100 years later, we are still waiting—and fighting—for equality.
Pairing primary source analysis with a reading and discussion program is a great way to add another layer of history and information skills to a program your library may already offer.

The following titles were selected by humanities scholars to deepen popular understanding of the complex history of women’s voting rights. They explore who was part of the mainstream suffrage movement, who was excluded, and how the fight for equality went far beyond the Nineteenth Amendment.

Consider reading these books with your patrons and experimenting with ways to incorporate primary sources and the Library of Congress’s Primary Source Analysis Tool. For each book, we get you started with one of our own primary source recommendations.

This section is adapted from Let’s Talk About It: Women’s Suffrage, an ALA project designed to spark conversations about American history and culture through an examination of the women’s suffrage movement. To learn more about the Let’s Talk About It program model, visit ala.org/LTAI. Let’s Talk About It: Women’s Suffrage resources were authored by Melissa Bradshaw, Ph.D., and Allison K. Lange, Ph.D., and their creation was supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
**BOOK**

**Vanguard**

How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All

by Martha S. Jones

Martha S. Jones’ history stretches from the aftermath of the Revolutionary War to the present, introducing us to women leaders who insisted that the phrase “equality for all” be taken literally. Black women’s work as preachers, educators and civic leaders shaped American public culture, and yet they faced opposition from all sides, including from within national women’s suffrage organizations, whose leaders worried that their presence would jeopardize support from Southern states. They also faced opposition from within Black churches, where their wisdom and leadership challenged centuries-old prohibitions against women preaching.

These overlapping and intertwined obstacles are best described by the legal term intersectionality. Coined in 1989 by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality characterizes a kind of discrimination different than that experienced by Black men or white women, particular to Black women’s intersecting racial and gendered identities. These are simultaneous identities that cannot be pulled apart. In documenting Black women’s intersectional struggles with racism and sexism, Jones shows us the determination, courage and political savvy they brought, and continue to bring, to the fight for equal justice.

**RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCE PAIRING**

→ loc.gov/item/90898298

“Mary Church Terrell was the most famous Black woman suffragist. She advocated for voting rights, civil rights and antilynching, often in alliance with white women through the National American Woman Suffrage Association and others, despite the racism in those organizations. She also countered antisuffrage sentiment in Black political circles, which often focused on civil and economic rights for Black people rather than women’s suffrage. In this pamphlet, Terrell discusses the achievements of African American women.” —TATIANA BRYANT
Ida B. the Queen
The Extraordinary Life and Legacy of Ida B. Wells

by Michelle Duster

Ida B. the Queen provides an in-depth look at one of the women profiled in Vanguard, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a journalist, antilynching activist, suffragist and civil rights pioneer. Author Michelle Duster, a great-granddaughter of Wells-Barnett, and a journalist herself, tells the story of how Wells-Barnett, born enslaved in Holly Springs, Mississippi, in 1862, became a celebrated, and in some corners, feared and despised crusader for civil rights. Like the women profiled in Vanguard, Wells-Barnett fought both racism and sexism. This is seen most powerfully in her 1884 lawsuit against a railway company for forcibly removing her from a white-only train car, and in her insistence on marching alongside Illinois delegates in a 1913 women’s suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., rather than marching at the back with other Black suffragists as had been ordered by the white suffragists organizing the parade.

Ida B. the Queen is illustrated with archival documents, such as images of letters to Wells-Barnett from Frederick Douglass, excerpts from Wells-Barnett’s diaries, and reproductions of some of her fabled newspaper columns. Portraits and mini-biographies of other significant Black leaders, timelines and informative sidebars ground Duster’s retelling of the life story of Wells-Barnett within the larger context of the fight for equal justice from the end of slavery to the present. The book also draws a line from Wells-Barnett’s work to that of contemporary voting and civil rights advocates like Stacey Abrams.

RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCE PAIRING


loc.gov/item/rbpe.20801600

“Michelle Duster, the author of Ida B. the Queen, notes that Ida B. Wells-Barnett and others were invited to the march represented in this brochure. However, they were told they would have to march at the end of the procession. On page 70, the book states, ‘Ida integrated in the march.’ What does this mean? Can you find any mention of Black suffragists in the program?” —Susan Witte
The Once and Future Witches
by Alix Harlow

The Once and Future Witches, a fantasy novel, moves the fight for suffrage to an alternate reality version of 1890s America, where witches are real and magic and spells are passed from mothers to daughters. But even in this alternate reality, patriarchal values prevail. Witches’ powers can only be exercised in secret, from within the safety of homes. Women who publicly use their powers are hunted, imprisoned and even executed. What happens when the witches of New Salem fight back, using magic to get the civic powers that come with voting? The novel tells the story of the three Eastwood sisters, Beatrix Belladonna, Agnes Amaranth and James Juniper, who must learn to trust one another again after a painful childhood before they can convince the women of New Salem to work together to secure their political rights.

RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCE PAIRING


loc.gov/item/mss154040308

“The relationship between the three sisters in The Once and Future Witches is often fraught with tension, but the love they have for one another is also evident. How does this letter between suffragists Rosika Schwimmer and Carrie Chapman Catt reflect that same tension/love?” –CARA DELLATTE
**Women Making History**  
The 19th Amendment  
Tamara Gaskell, editor

This collection of short essays offers a useful overview of the fight to secure the ballot for women. We discover how antisuffragists gained support as well as ways the suffrage movement developed differently throughout the United States. The collection looks at the social movements that overlapped with women’s suffrage, such as those against slavery and alcohol, and considers the ways that we remember the suffrage movement today.

**RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCE PAIRING**

→ loc.gov/item/mnwp000270

“Maps like this one can provide fascinating insight into history. What do you think newspaper coverage was like for this envoy? Use ProQuest Historical papers or the Library of Congress Chronicling America to look up newspapers from cities on the route. Why do you think Southern states like Texas were left off the route? How do maps expose racial, social and political inequalities?”—REGINA VITOLO
Other Program Ideas

**SuffRAGE against the Machine:**
**How Suffragists Communicated Their Ideas (A Zine Workshop)**

This teen and adult program uses Library of Congress primary sources, alongside your library’s own databases and physical holdings, to explore the non-conformist, creative and subversive ways that suffragists educated and agitated for the right to vote.

The zine has its roots in the feminist movements of the 20th century, serving as a creative vehicle for knowledge acquisition and transfer. Traditional and mainstream methods of communicating ideas were often off-limits to grassroots social and political movements such as the women’s suffrage movement. Suffragists, like later feminists of the women’s liberation movement and the Riot Grrrl era, created magazines (zines) to establish their own means of production to broadly communicate their ideas. These methods of information production and distribution often serve to disrupt norms and call out institutions that perpetuate systems of oppression and inequality.
After learning the basics of fair use and copyright, attendees of this program will use primary sources printed from Library of Congress digital collection as well as contemporary media (e.g., magazines, newspapers) to create their own zines. Participants can use the primary sources listed below or locate their own sources online.

Upon completion of this program, attendees will be able to:

- Understand some of the subversive communication methods that suffragists utilized and how those methods were mirrored in later movements
- Effectively navigate Library of Congress digital collections
- Understand the basics of fair use and copyright

RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCES

OTHER RESOURCES

- Zines at the Library of Congress
- How to Make a Zine
- Primary Source Analysis Tool
- Women’s Suffrage Primary Source Set
- “Gidra: Now Available Online,” Densho

PROGRAM LENGTH

90 minutes to 3 hours

LOCATION

In-person, virtual or hybrid. If attendees will be participating virtually, you may invite them to pick up zine-making kits in advance.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Decide whether your attendees will work in small groups or individually. If working in small groups, gather zine-making materials (e.g., printouts of primary sources cleared for fair use, magazines, pens, glue sticks, tape, scissors, staplers) into craft baskets at tables. Each table may focus on a particular suffrage communication style (e.g., propaganda posters, protests and picket lines, suffrage newspapers, cartoons, songs, suffrage fashion, suffrage ephemera) or themes or groups related to women’s suffrage (e.g., civil disobedience, Silent Sentinels). Attendees will focus their zine on the category designated for their table.

If working individually, set up a zine supply station for participants to grab what they need. Print suffrage cartoons, broadsides, ephemera, posters and articles in advance for participants to select and use for their zines. Alternately, participants could identify and print their own items from the Library of Congress digital collections; for this option, you will need to provide access to a printer during the program. Table topics may serve as keyword/phrase searches (e.g., “civil disobedience and suffrage”).

If your library has zines or titles about zine-making in your physical collection, set them out for browsing and inspiration.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. Facilitator defines “zines,” summarizes their history, and shares physical and/or online examples. See “A Brief History of Zines” on the UNC Chapel Hill Rare Book Blog for background.

3. Facilitator discusses tactics and communication methods used by suffragists to fight for the right to vote and to communicate their ideas. See “Tactics and Techniques of the National Woman’s Party Suffrage Campaign” from the Library of Congress: American Memory for background. You may also wish to draw upon “Gidra,” a zine of the Asian American movement available in the Densho Digital Repository, to explore how another group of people struggled to be recognized and gain political agency.

4. Facilitator introduces the Library of Congress digital collections and briefly discusses fair use and copyright, explaining how participants can determine what they can print and use from the Library website for the zine project.

5. Facilitator gives an overview of workshop steps and goals (small group work, table topics, size of zine, materials).

6. Working in small groups or individually, attendees research topics in the Library of Congress digital collections and document their ideas. Attendees work hands-on to assemble their own zines. Facilitators and other library staff assist and answer questions as needed.

7. Facilitator calls for each group to present their zines to other attendees. Ask attendees if they recognize any of the same communication strategies being used by political activists today.

8. Facilitator wraps up. You may wish to ask attendees to donate their zine to the library for display or to consent to their zine being photographed/digitized for the library’s social media or online repository.
PROGRAM

Hot Button Issue: Votes for Women!

This hands-on program for teens or adults uses primary sources to explore photographs, slogans and political ephemera of the women’s suffrage movement and create buttons.

Attendees will view examples of women’s suffrage buttons and discuss how they were used as marketing pieces. After learning the basics of fair use and copyright, attendees will use primary sources printed from the Library of Congress digital collections and contemporary media (e.g., magazines, newspapers) to create their own buttons. Participants can use the primary sources listed below or locate their own.

Upon completion of this program, attendees will be able to:

- Understand the suffragists’ use of buttons and other political memorabilia and draw connections to how these items are used today
- Identify some of the slogans used for the women’s suffrage campaign and discuss their provenance
- Effectively navigate Library of Congress digital collections
- Understand the basics of fair use and copyright

RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCES


OTHER RESOURCES

- Women’s Suffrage Primary Source Set
- 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Primary Documents in American History
PROGRAM LENGTH
90 minutes to 2 hours

LOCATION
In-person

ADVANCE PREPARATION
With a button maker, create several examples of buttons using favorite photographs, cartoons and other images from the Library of Congress digital collection.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. Facilitator introduces the Library of Congress Women’s Suffrage Primary Source Set and briefly discusses fair use and copyright, explaining how participants can determine what they can print and use from the Library website for the button project.

2. Facilitator discusses why women’s suffrage was a “hot button issue” and discusses the impact that women’s suffrage had on other hot button issues of the day.

3. Facilitator discusses slogans and colors from the women’s suffrage campaign and how the movement was marketed to the public using buttons, posters and more.

4. Facilitator explains and demonstrates the process for adapting a primary source image into the button design size and how to print and create the button using the button maker.

5. Attendees work hands-on to create their own buttons. Facilitator and other library staff assist and troubleshoot issues as needed.

6. Attendees share their button creations and discuss why they chose their primary source for their button.

7. Facilitator wraps up.
PROGRAM

SIFTing through Women’s Suffrage

This information literacy workshop introduces Michael Caulfield’s SIFT method to analyze, interpret and contextualize online primary sources from the Women’s Suffrage era. SIFT (The Four Moves) is designed to help people decipher truth from fiction through four steps: Stop; Investigate the Source; Find Better Coverage; and Trace Claims, Quotes and Media to the Original Context.

Attendees of this program will use SIFT and the Library of Congress’s Primary Source Analysis Tool to analyze and interpret cartoons, broadsides and posters.

Upon completion of this program, attendees will be able to:

- Apply the SIFT method to evaluate the credibility of primary sources
- Effectively navigate the Library of Congress digital collections
- Analyze and interpret primary sources, including cartoons, broadsides and propaganda posters

RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCES


OTHER RESOURCES

- Primary Source Analysis Tool
- Women’s Suffrage Primary Source Set
- Library of Congress Information Literacy and Primary Sources Webcast (for library staff to review prior to program)
**PROGRAM LENGTH**
60 to 90 minutes

**LOCATION**
In-person, virtual or hybrid. If attendees will be participating virtually, you may invite them to pick up program kits in advance.

**ADVANCE PREPARATION**
Prepare program kits. Kits should include color prints of the primary sources used for analysis in the program, preferably on white cardstock; a printout of basic rhetorical and visual analysis questions (see #3 under Program Outline); a printout of the SIFT method infographic; a printout of the Primary Source Analysis Tool; a pen or pencil; extra blank paper; a link or QR code directing attendees to the Women’s Suffrage Primary Source Set.

**PROGRAM OUTLINE**

1. Facilitator introduces the Library of Congress Women’s Suffrage Primary Source Set and briefly discusses fair use and copyright, explaining how participants can determine what they can print and use from the Library website for the project.

2. Facilitator explains and demonstrates the SIFT method using primary sources of their choice, such as posters or political cartoons.

3. Facilitator uses Library of Congress primary sources to lead attendees through an evaluation of the pre-selected primary sources. The primary sources can be displayed on a projector. Attendees will also have printed versions of the primary sources in their program kits. Facilitator may ask attendees the following questions:
   - Who is the intended audience?
   - Who is/are the creator(s)?
   - What is the historical context?
   - What is the purpose?
   - What is the tone?
   - Does the primary source appeal to reason or emotion?
   - Is the image accompanied by words or a caption? If so, how does it add to the image?

4. Facilitator asks participants to search the Library of Congress digital collections for their own example of a women’s suffrage primary source to evaluate with the SIFT method.

5. Facilitator gives attendees the opportunity to present their findings.

6. Facilitator wraps up.
PROGRAM

Getting the Word Out: Suffragist Communication Tactics

This discussion-centered program draws connections between the communication tactics of the suffrage movement and present-day women’s activism. Participants will look at the provided primary source examples and learn how telegrams were used to organize rallies and get important information to people in a timely fashion.

Two primary sources are recommended for use in this program: a telegram from Harriot Stanton Blatch to Anne Fitzhugh Miller, sent February 23, 1909, and a related newspaper article from the following day. In the telegram, Blatch asks Miller to arrange an interview with Speaker James Wadsworth, a known antisuffragist, for the following day, before a suffrage hearing. They hoped to meet with him before the march to Albany, where more than 1,000 suffragists and antisuffragists would converge. This primary source illustrates how telegrams were used almost as a precursor to today’s text messages.

Together we will look at fliers and other telegrams and compare them to today’s tactical tools, such as social media, email and texting.

Upon completion of this program, attendees will be able to:

- Understand what a telegram is
- Understand suffragists’ use of telegrams and draw connections to activists’ use of social media and other communication tools today
- Effectively navigate Library of Congress digital collections

RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCES


OTHER RESOURCES

Primary Source Analysis Tool
PROGRAM LENGTH
90 minutes

LOCATION
In-person, virtual or hybrid

ADVANCE PREPARATION
Set up a projector or large monitor to demonstrate accessing the Library of Congress digital collections. Print out copies of the two primary sources and the Primary Source Analysis Tool. Alternatively, the Primary Source Analysis tool could be projected and attendees could copy the format onto blank paper. Set up laptops or other devices for attendees to perform self-guided searching of the Library of Congress website.

PROGRAM OUTLINE
1. Facilitator introduces the Library of Congress digital collections and the Primary Source Analysis Tool.
2. Facilitator leads the group in looking closely at primary sources Harriot Stanton Blatch to Anne Fitzhugh Miller, February 23, 1908 and New York Suffragettes Invade the Capital. The primary sources can be displayed on a large screen. Attendees should also have print versions available.
3. Using the Primary Source Analysis Tool, the facilitator guides attendees through observing, reflecting and asking questions about what they are seeing.
4. Facilitator asks attendees to search the Library of Congress digital collections for examples of other telegrams and fliers from the Suffrage movement and use the Primary Source Analysis Tool to analyze what they find. Facilitator may ask participants to consider the cost of sending telegrams and how cost or availability affected what information would be included in a telegram versus a handbill or flier.
5. Facilitator gives attendees the opportunity to present their findings and discuss how it relates to the communication strategies of contemporary activists. Facilitator may ask attendees the following questions:
   - Who is the audience?
   - What is the purpose of the communication?
   - What goes into a telegram versus a handbill versus an editorial?
   - How did suffragists use the communication technology available to them to propel their movement forward?
   - How can we compare and contrast those strategies with current strategies of contemporary activists?
6. Facilitator wraps up.
PROGRAM

The Suffragist Playbook: Using Primary Sources for Civic Engagement

This teen or adult program uses Library of Congress primary sources, such as letters, diaries, women’s self-published information sources and other ephemera, to examine the strategies suffragists used to advocate for voting rights. Program attendees will adapt the suffragists’ strategies to create an action plan or playbook for activism and civic engagement on important issues in their communities.

Library staff can reach out to local League of Women Voters members, civic groups or political science instructors to present the workshop as part of their community and educational outreach. This program can focus on one form of advocacy, such as sending letters to local officials, or include additional methods for advocating.

Upon completion of this program, attendees will be able to:

- Identify and discuss key strategies the suffragists used to advocate for women’s voting rights
- Adapt suffragist strategies to create an advocacy plan for current issues, including, but not limited to, researching local elected officials, drafting letters or phone scripts, or identifying nonpartisan voter education resources
- Effectively navigate Library of Congress digital collections

RECOMMENDED PRIMARY SOURCES

- There is work to do! Instructions to suffragists by Harriot Stanton Blatch with sample letter to New York legislators urging them to submit a woman suffrage amendment to the people. New York City, New York, Jan. 1909. Manuscript/Mixed Material. The Library of Congress, loc.gov/item/rbcmiller001223.
OTHER RESOURCES

- Youth Activist Toolkit from Advocates for Youth
- National Constitution Center
- League of Women Voters
- Youth.gov

PROGRAM LENGTH

90 minutes to 3 hours

LOCATION

In-person, virtual or hybrid

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Participants will need access to a computer and the internet. Contact your local League of Women Voters, civic group or political science instructor and invite them to co-facilitate the program or suggest additional resources.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

1. Facilitator gives a brief overview of the women’s suffrage movement and summarizes the strategies suffragists used to advocate for voting rights. See “Tactics and Techniques of the National Woman’s Party Suffrage Campaign” from the Library of Congress: American Memory for background.

2. Facilitator or guest speaker discusses the strategies citizens can use today to participate in the political process. See “How to Participate in Politics” from the New York Times or “The Bucket List for Involved Citizens: 76 Things You Can Do to Boost Civic Engagement” from the Brookings Institution for background.

3. Facilitator discusses Plans of the Suffragists and There is work to do! and gives examples of how similar strategies are used today.

4. Facilitator or guest speaker leads the group in creating an advocacy toolkit that can be featured on the library’s website or printed for distribution in the library.

5. Facilitator wraps up and encourages attendees to share the information they learned with their friends and family.
This teen or adult program uses Library of Congress women’s suffrage primary sources, such as letters, diaries, women's self-published information sources and other ephemera, to examine how suffragists documented their activism and feelings on women's rights and social issues of the time. Program attendees will use current magazines, newspapers, flyers, ephemera and personal effects to start their own scrapbook and create their own DIY personal history that might become a future primary source.

Library staff can reach out to local university archivists or special collections librarians to request information on how archival organizations assess which personal items they acquire for their collections. This program can be simplified by setting up the scrapbooking materials ahead of the program at one central table or at each table for attendees. The program can also be expanded by introducing copyright-free and free-to-reuse images from the Library of Congress digital collections and image bank websites like Pexels or Wikimedia Commons.

Upon completion of this program, attendees will be able to:

- Identify and discuss the role that archives, scrapbooks, diaries, letters and other personal effects play in preserving and documenting history
- Discuss the importance of primary sources like scrapbooks, letters, proceedings, diaries and other personal artifacts for documenting the history of women's activism
- Effectively navigate Library of Congress digital collections

**RECOMMENDED PRIMARY RESOURCES**

OTHER RESOURCES
National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection

PROGRAM LENGTH
3 hours

RECOMMENDED PROGRAM LOCATION
In-person

ADVANCE PREPARATION
This program is best executed in person. Ask participants to bring any personal items they would like to use to start their scrapbook. Pre-select discarded library magazines, books and newspapers and collect craft items such as scissors, tape, markers, pens and pencils for the scrapbooking portion of the program.

PROGRAM OUTLINE


2. Facilitator demonstrates a search in the Library of Congress women’s suffrage digital collections.

3. Facilitator discusses how documenting and studying personal histories are important for creating a nuanced and accurate version of history.


5. Facilitator discusses the process for donating personal items of historical significance to local archives.

6. Attendees work hands-on to create their own scrapbook pages. Facilitator and other library staff assist as needed.

7. Attendees are given the opportunity to share their scrapbooks in progress and the story behind their scrapbook pages. Sharing could take place in pairs, where attendees can discuss the choices they made and why; “pair and share” arrangements may be more comfortable for attendees who feel reticent about addressing a larger group.

8. Facilitator wraps up and asks attendees to post photos of their creations on social media and tag the library.
Evaluating Your Program with Project Outcome

Evaluation is essential to determining your program’s impact and whether your goals have been met. Think of evaluation not only as a way to gauge the level of effectiveness of the program but also as a tool to plan future programs.

About Project Outcome

The Public Library Association’s Project Outcome is a FREE toolkit designed to help libraries understand and share the true impact of their essential services and programs by providing simple surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes. Project Outcome also provides libraries with the resources and training support needed to apply their results and confidently advocate for their library’s future, helping them turn better data into better libraries.

What It Measures

Project Outcome helps libraries easily measure their patron outcomes, which are just one piece of the evaluation puzzle. An outcome is a specific benefit that results from a library service or program. Outcomes can be quantitative or qualitative, and are often expressed as changes that individuals perceive in themselves. Measuring outcomes helps libraries answer the question, “What good did we do?”

How It Works

The Project Outcome toolkit provides libraries with FREE access to quick and simple patron surveys, an easy-to-use Survey Portal to collect their outcomes, ready-made reports and visually interactive Data Dashboards for analyzing the data, and various resources to help move libraries from implementing surveys to taking action using the results. Project Outcome provides three tools for libraries to measure their outcomes:

- Project Outcome Immediate Surveys: used to measure patron-reported learning
- Project Outcome Follow-Up Surveys: used to measure patron-reported adoption/application
- Outcome Measurement Guidelines: used to measure deeper analysis and long-term benefits

Learn more at projectoutcome.org.
Additional Resources

Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy from the Society of American Archivists
→ archivists.org/standards/guidelines-for-primary-source-literacy

Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy from the Association of College and Research Libraries
→ ala.acrl/sites/ala.acrl/files/content/standards/Primary%20Source%20Literacy2018.pdf

Biographies, articles, activities and more from the National Women’s History Museum Lesson plans, free poster exhibits, biographies, articles and more from the National Women’s History Alliance
→ womenshistory.org/womens-history

Analyzing a primary resource: How to video from the Library of Congress
→ loc.gov/item/webcast-6633

Interacting with History: Teaching with Primary Sources by Katharine Lehman
→ alastore.ala.org/content/interacting-history-teaching-primary-sources

Let’s Talk About It: Women’s Suffrage—Scholarly Essay, Book List and Discussion Guide
→ ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/LTAI_Womens_Suffrage_Essay_020722.pdf
Further Resources

- **Recasting the Vote: How Women of Color Transformed the Suffrage Movement**
  by Cathleen Cahill

  Cahill’s collective biography highlights the ways that women of color led the women’s voting rights movement. She focuses on three Native American women who fought for gender equality and for Native American rights: Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin, Gertrude Simmons Bonnin (Zitkala-Ša) and Laura Cornelius Kellogg. Also featured are Black activist Carrie Williams Clifford, Chinese-American suffragist and scholar Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, and Adelina Nina Luna Otero-Warren (of Spanish descent).

- **Free Thinker: Sex, Suffrage, and the Extraordinary Life of Helen Hamilton Gardener**
  by Kimberly A. Hamlin

  *Free Thinker* is the first biography of Helen Hamilton Gardener, who died as the highest-ranking woman in the federal government and a national symbol of female citizenship. Similar to *Vanguard*, Hamlin exposes the racism that underpinned the women’s suffrage movement and the contradictions of Gardener’s politics. Gardener’s life sheds new light on why it was not until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that the Nineteenth Amendment became a reality for all women.

- **Work/Cited Episode 14: Sex, Lies, and Suffrage History**
  by NYPL’s Cara Dellatte and Kimberly A. Hamlin

  This video recording of a New York Public Library program features author Kimberly A. Hamlin discussing her book, *Free Thinker: Sex, Suffrage, and the Extraordinary Life of Helen Hamilton Gardener*. With scholarship drawn from the Library’s Paul Kester papers, Hamlin reveals the fascinating story of the “fallen woman” who reinvented herself and became the “most potent factor” in Congressional passage of the 19th Amendment.
The Portable Anna Julia Cooper edited by Shirley Moody-Turner and Henry Louis Gates

A collection of essential writings from the iconic foremother of Black women’s intellectual history and activism, Cooper (1858–1964) penned one of the most forceful and enduring statements of Black feminist thought to come out of the nineteenth century.

Virtual Author Talk: Mr. President, How Long Must We Wait? by Tina Cassidy

In this recording, librarians Regina Vitolo and Bronwyn Sutherland of Lone Star College-CyFair facilitate a discussion with author and journalist Tina Cassidy on her book, Mr. President, How Long Must We Wait?: Alice Paul, Woodrow Wilson, and The Fight for the Right to Vote.

Carrie Lane Chapman Catt Home Tour & Discussion

Cheryl Erb of the National Nineteenth Amendment Society in Iowa gives a virtual tour of the girlhood home of Carrie Lane Chapman Catt, renowned suffragist, peace activist and founder of the League of Women Voters. Timothy Lane, Catt’s great-great nephew, is a special guest.

19th Amendment Podcasts

In honor of the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment and women’s right to vote, the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission, the National Park Service and public media organization PRX partnered to create a set of history-driven podcasts inspired by the courageous suffragists who worked to secure the right to vote for American women. The podcast series—designed for tweens, teens and adults— take listeners to the years before women could fully participate in their own democracy, when universal suffrage—the right to vote—was denied to them.

She Votes! Podcast

The 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, but American women’s battle for the ballot began long before that day in August—and continues, even to this day. She Votes! digs into the complex history of the women’s suffrage movement and its enduring significance, hosted by award-winning journalists Ellen Goodman and Lynn Sherr.
About the Authors

TATIANA BRYANT is the research librarian for digital humanities, history, and African American studies at UC Irvine. She holds a MPA from NYU and a MSLIS from Pratt Institute.

CARA DELLATTE is a reference archivist in the Manuscripts and Rare Books division at the New York Public Library. She has a Masters in Library Science with a certificate in Archival Studies and Records Management from Queens College and is currently finishing a Masters in History from the College of Staten Island. She is currently a co-chair of the Public Services Council and is co-curating the exhibition Her Vote, Her Voice: The Fight for Women’s Equality.

As a third-generation librarian, SUSAN SHELTON WITTE has a lifelong enthusiasm for the library field. Through the University of North Carolina Greensboro Susan traveled abroad to study archives and libraries. She completed her Master’s of Library and Information Science from Louisiana State University. Susan created a COVID-19 public school archive for all Rockford Public Schools. She participated in reading studies, sits on the Michigan Association for Media in Education’s advocate committee, and teaches students about the library field.

REGINA E. VITOLO is a faculty joint-use librarian for Lone Star College and Harris County Public Library, and she is an active member of the American Library Association (ALA) and the Texas Library Association (TLA). Her interests include public history, poetry, and cat TNR and rescue. Regina’s writing on American women’s political history has been featured in Houston History Magazine, the 2017 National Women’s Conference, and the 2018 Houston History Alliance program guide. She received her M.S. in Library Science from the University of North Texas and her B.A. in History from the University of Houston where she focused on women’s political history, world cultures, and literature. Regina has post-graduate certifications in archival studies and primary source pedagogy. She currently serves on the board of Women in the Visual and Literary Arts.

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