**Remember the Ladies!**

Essay and materials about Alice Paul and the passage of the 19th Amendment

This is the message Abigail Adams urged on her husband, John Adams, as he sat in the Continental Congress in 1776, deciding upon the course for a new nation.

But the ladies were not remembered in 1776 in the Declaration of Independence, nor in 1787 with the adoption of the new country’s Constitution, nor when the 15th Amendment to the Constitution was adopted in 1870 granting the right to vote to all men, regardless of “race, color or previous condition of servitude.”

The “ladies” finally took matters into their own hands.

As we observe Constitution Day on September 17 and especially as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the historic Civil Rights March on Washington in 1963, it behooves us to “Remember the Ladies” who struggled, marched, protested and even went to jail to obtain this most basic civil right for the women of America.

Today, Susan B. Anthony is probably the best-known American suffragist. After all, she has a U.S. dollar coin in her honor.

She and her suffragist sisters Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Lucy Stone campaigned tirelessly throughout the second half of the 19th century for women’s right to vote in individual states and before the U.S. Congress.

But by 1900, women had the vote in only four western states. By 1910, the women’s suffrage movement was stagnant.

It took a slight, quiet Quaker woman from New Jersey to turn up the heat.

---

1 These Vision 2020 educational materials include an essay annotated with additional resources as well as curriculum framework resources which can be found at the end of the essay.

2 "I long to hear that you have declared an 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." [http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/abigail-adams-urges-husband-to-remember-the-ladies](http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/abigail-adams-urges-husband-to-remember-the-ladies)
Alice Paul was a radical. She founded of the National Women’s Party in 1915 after being thrown out of the more conservative National American Women Suffrage Association. Having learned political protest strategies from the militant suffragettes in England, Paul took the fight for women’s suffrage to the streets.

In March 1913, 28 year-old Alice Paul organized a public march in Washington D.C. for the day before President Woodrow Wilson’s first inauguration. More than eight thousand women and men paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue behind a yellow banner declaring, “We Demand an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States Enfranchising the Women of this Country.”

Many in the crowd of more than 250,000 mostly men, became ugly, grabbing banners, toppling parade floats and spitting, pinching and groping women marchers. The police did nothing and the federal cavalry had to be called to restore order in the city.3

---

3 5000 Women March, Beset by Crowds, file://localhost/Users/betholanoff/Documents/Vision2020/curriculum%20resources/NYTimes%201913%205,000%20WOMEN%20MARCH,%20BESET%20BY%20CROWDS%20-.html
Paul and her suffragists used cross-country automobile caravans, railroad whistle stop tours, posters, pamphlets, petitions and political cartoons to make their point.
Neither did the suffragists hesitate to embarrass President Wilson. During a 1914 presidential speech to Congress, Paul's suffragists unfurled a banner from the front row of the visitors' gallery, reading, “Mr. Wilson, what are you doing for women's suffrage?"

Paul and her National Women’s Party continued to press Wilson and the Congress for national suffrage.
Starting in January 1917, Paul took her fight to the gates of the White House as the first cause ever to do so. Paul and her “Silent Sentinels” maintained an almost constant vigil for 18 months in front of the White House.

Unlike other organizations, Paul specifically declined to reduce her political agitation for suffrage on account of the U.S. entry into World War I in April 1917.

In June 1917, the White House picketers greeted a visiting Russian delegation with signs that read, “Tell our government that it must liberate its women before it can claim free Russia as an ally.” After this so-called “Russian Incident,” the White House changed its laissez-faire attitude towards the suffrage picketers and the first arrests were made for “obstructing traffic.”
After a “Kaiser Wilson” banner was unfurled on August 14, 1917, an angry mob of government workers and sailors responded by assaulting the picketers. Police did not intervene.

Picketers continued to be arrested through the fall with longer sentences imposed. The treatment of the jailed suffragists got worse.

On November 15, 1917, suffragists endured what was later called the Night of Terror at Occoquan Workhouse. Under orders from W. H. Whittaker, superintendent of the Occoquan Workhouse, as many as forty guards with clubs went on a rampage, brutalizing thirty-three jailed suffragists. They beat Lucy Burns, chained her hands to the cell bars above her head, and left her there for the night. They hurled Dora Lewis into a dark cell, smashed her head against an iron bed, and knocked her out cold. Her cellmate Alice Cosu, who believed Mrs. Lewis to be dead, suffered a heart attack. According to affidavits, other women were grabbed, dragged, beaten, choked, slammed, pinched, twisted, and kicked. ⁴

---

Finally, in jail, Paul and others decided to implement a strategy Paul had learned in England – the hunger strike - refusing to eat as a protest of their detention. Prison officials responded by force-feeding the hunger strikers with forcibly inserted nasal tubes. Paul herself was held in solitary confinement and even placed in a psychiatric ward.

The National Women’s Party was able to turn the barbaric treatment of Paul and the other jailed suffragists into sympathy for their cause and embarrassment for President Wilson. Responding to public pressure, finally, Wilson announced his support for the federal suffrage amendment. With his support, Congress passed the amendment in June 1919 and it was ratified and signed into law on August 26, 1920.

5 Force-feeding scene from the movie Iron Jawed Angels (Caution: this scene is graphic and disturbing) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO70ZjZ0wrw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO70ZjZ0wrw)
It seems inconceivable to us today that women would not have the right to vote, to control their own wages, to own property in their own names or to be admitted on equal terms to schools, jobs and professions. But without the struggle, perseverance, suffering and dedication of Alice Paul and her fellow suffragists, it might have taken much longer to obtain these rights.

And so, we honor and “Remember the Ladies.”
Who were the Ladies of the 19th Amendment?

1. **Abigail Adams**, the woman who urged her husband, John Adams, to “remember the ladies,” had six children and is one of only two women to have been both a wife and mother of a U.S. President. (Married to John Adams, the second president and mother to John Quincy Adams, the sixth U.S. president.) (Extra points! Who was the other first lady also to be the mother to a president?)

2. **Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott** were two women active in the anti-slavery movement along with their husbands. When they were denied seats on the main floor and the right to speak at the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840, they began to plan a convention to address the rights of women.

   That meeting took place in 1848 and was called the Seneca Falls Convention. It produced the Declaration of Sentiments and is considered the start of the long campaign for women’s suffrage. The **Declaration of the Seneca Falls Convention**, using the model of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, forthrightly demanded that the rights of women as right-bearing individuals be acknowledged and respected by society. It was signed by sixty-eight women and thirty-two men.
3. **Susan B. Anthony** was the first woman to be honored by having her likeness appear on a circulating United States coin. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed the Susan B. Anthony Dollar Coin Act into law and on July 2, 1979, the U. S. Mint officially released the Susan B. Anthony coin in Rochester, NY, Susan B. Anthony's hometown. In the years 1979 to 1981 almost 900 million coins were produced. (Extra points! Who is the only other woman ever to appear on a U.S. dollar coin?)

4. **Alice Paul** was extremely well educated for her time or even for today. She graduated from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania with a degree in biology in 1905. She studied at Columbia University in New York and received both a Master of Arts and Ph.D in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. She also received three law degrees: Paul received her law degree from the Washington College of Law at American University in 1922. In 1927, she earned an LL.M, and in 1928, a Doctorate in Civil Laws from American University.

5. **Inez Milholland** was the lady wearing the dramatic white cape who lead the suffrage parade on March 13, 1913 astride a snow white horse. She was an ardent activist for women's suffrage and other causes. She was also a lawyer, having received her degree from New York University Law School. She insisted on an active speaking schedule for women's suffrage despite suffering ill health and collapsed while making a speech in Los Angeles and died only a month later.

---

8 Sacagawea on the dollar coin: 1999-Present.  
http://www.usmint.gov/about_the_mint/fun_facts/?action=fun_facts8
9 For more information about Alice Paul, visit [www.alicepaul.org](http://www.alicepaul.org)
6. **Ida B. Wells** was one of a number of African American women who were active in the suffrage movement. In the planning for the March 1913 parade, Alice Paul asked the African American delegation to march in a segregated group in order to pacify the delegations of women from the south. Ida B. Wells agreed but then joined the main parade in progress marching with her home-state Illinois delegation.

Wells was also an active campaigner against racial discrimination. At the age of only 22, Wells refused to give up her seat and the conductor and two men dragged her out of the car. Wells sued the railroad and won receiving a court settlement of $500. In April 1887, however, the Tennessee Supreme Court reversed the ruling.
7. **Sojourner Truth** was born into slavery in 1797 in New York with the name Isabella Baumfree. She gained her freedom with the New York Anti-Slavery Law of 1827. Isabella became an itinerant preacher and in 1843 took a “free” name of Sojourner Truth. During this period she became involved in the growing antislavery movement, and by the 1850s she was involved in the woman’s rights movement as well.

At the 1851 Women’s Rights Convention held in Akron, Ohio, Sojourner Truth delivered what is now recognized as one of the most famous abolitionist and women’s rights speeches in American history, “Ain’t I a Woman?” 10

8. The **“Silent Sentinels”** were the many women who took turns holding banners outside the gates of the White House from January 1917 to June 1919 calling publicly on President Woodrow Wilson to support freedom and equality for women. This was the first time that a cause had used the now common tactic of picketing in front of the White House with signs and banners. While at first the president and police allowed the activity, eventually the police and administration decided to put a stop to it with arrests for “obstructing traffic.” 11

---

10 http://www.nps.gov/wori/historyculture/sojourner-truth.htm
9. **Lucy Burns** was the co-founder of the National Women’s Party along with Alice Paul. They met in a London police station after they were both arrested for demonstrating for women’s suffrage in London. Thereafter they became close friends.

Lucy was one of the women arrested in November 1917 who was subjected to the Night of Terror in the Occoquan Workhouse. It was reported that guards beat Lucy Burns, chained her hands to the cell bars above her head and left her that way for the night.
Vocabulary and Important Terms

1. **Suffrage** - the right to vote.

2. **Suffragist** – the name given to a woman who advocated for women’s suffrage in the United States.

3. **Civil disobedience** – the active refusal to comply with certain laws, rules or orders of government or governmental authority because the law, rule or order is believed to be unfair or wrongly enforced.

4. **Hunger strike** – a form of non-violent resistance in which participants refuse food as an act of political protest.

5. **Force feeding** – the practice of feeding a person against their will, for example, through a tube inserted in the nose or mouth.

6. **Occoquan Workhouse** – the workhouse in Virginia in which suffragists were imprisoned following their arrest for picketing outside the White House in support of women’s suffrage.

7. **19th Amendment** – “The right of 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.” Adopted in August 1920.

8. **15th Amendment** – “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” Adopted in February 1870.

9. **Abolition** – the word “abolition” means putting an end to something by law. In the political context of the 19th century in the United States, abolition referred to the outlawing of slavery.

10. **Civil rights** - The rights belonging to an individual by virtue of citizenship, especially the fundamental freedoms and privileges guaranteed by the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, including civil liberties, due process, equal protection of the laws, and freedom from discrimination.
Curriculum Framework\textsuperscript{12}

Big Ideas

Civics and Government
1. All citizens are equal before the law.
2. Citizens understand their rights and practice their responsibilities in a democratic society.
3. Political and economic ideas motivate societies to new behaviors.

History
1. Historical context is needed to comprehend time and space.
2. Historical interpretation involves an analysis of cause and result.
3. Perspective helps to define the attributes of historical comprehension.
4. The history of the United States continues to influence its citizens and has impacted the rest of the world.

Essential Questions

Civics and Government
1. What is the proper course of action when individual rights and liberties conflict with the common good?
2. Why must the rights of the minority be protected within the rule of the majority?
3. Why must all citizens be treated equally under the law?
4. What are a citizen’s obligations when s/he perceives an injustice under the law?

History
1. How can the story of another American, past or present, influence your life?
2. How does continuity and change within U.S. history influence your life and community today?
3. How has social disagreement and collaboration changed and benefited society today?

Concepts

1. Conflict is a natural outgrowth of any society. Civil discourse and the deliberative process are effective means of dealing with conflict and compromise.
2. The interpretation of civic rights and responsibilities may change over time.
3. Civil disobedience is a strategy sometimes used by citizens to redress perceived injustice under the law.

\textsuperscript{12} The elements of the Curriculum Framework used here are described in the Standards Aligned System Portal of the Pa Dept. of Education. \url{http://www.pdesas.org/}
Competencies

1. Analyze changes in how rights and responsibilities are interpreted.
2. Describe examples of the use of civil disobedience in American history to call attention to and redress perceived injustice under the law.

Standards

• **Pennsylvania Civics and Government**
  - **5.1.9.A:** Apply examples of the rule of law as related to individual rights and the common good.
  - **5.2.9.D:** Analyze citizens' roles in the political process toward the attainment of goals for individual and public good.
  - **5.3.C.G.** - Analyze the influence of interest groups in the political process.

• **Pennsylvania History**
  - **8.1.7.A:** Demonstrate continuity and change over time using sequential order and context of events.
  - **8.1.8.A:** Compare and contrast events over time and how continuity and change over time influenced those events.
  - **8.1.7.B:** Identify and use primary and secondary sources to analyze multiple points of view for historical events.

• **Common Core State Standards Literacy in History/Social Studies**\(^\text{13}\)
  - **6-8.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
  - **6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
  - **6-8.4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
  - **6-8.5:** Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
  - **6-8.6:** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
  - **6-8.7:** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
  - **6-8.8:** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
  - **6-8.9:** Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

\(^{13}\) [http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/6-8)