

## **The Long, Painful Journey: Discrimination; Racism and the Struggle for everlasting Freedom.**

*Veronica Everett*

“The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security for the minorities.”

-Lord Acton

### **Introduction and Rationale**

“All men are created equal.” If this is true than why have so many had to fight for freedom? From Frederick Douglass to Cesar Chavez to Carrie Chapman Catt, all of these influential leaders asked the government to recognize that their minority groups were not being granted the same freedoms as others and respectfully asked for freedoms. What is Freedom and what does it mean to different people? From the very beginnings of American independence the Declaration of Independence proclaimed “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” and also that “all men are created equal”. If these words are written out and outlined giving all Americans freedoms then why is it that African American, Mexican Americans and Women had to struggle and fight to gain equality and their freedoms? These three minority groups, among more, engaged in the long painful journey and struggled to make the words of the founders of the Declaration of Independence a reality for all Americans.

As a middle school teacher of Social Studies I feel that it is my responsibility to demonstrate to students the hardships and strides that many people took to gain equality and freedom. This unit will look at how different three different minority groups struggled to gain freedom and what kind of freedoms they gained. This unit will look at African Americans, Mexican Americans and Women through different time period throughout our history. Please note you do not have to be an expert on these individual minority groups or the time periods. The idea of this unit is to identify and define Freedom as it related to each minority group.

I chose this topic because many of my students do not realize the meaning of freedom. It is a word that is taken for granted by many, especially by the youth of today. I hear them say, “I am grounded this weekend.” Do they realize that a small freedom was just taken away? Now yes, this is not the type of freedom that I am here to teach about but I think for this generation I need to start here. This generation probably does not know how hard slaves, women, Hispanics and others fought for freedom. The unit will focus

on how the notion of how freedom has changed over time and how the meaning of freedom has been defined differently over the years.

We must teach students to view historical time periods through the lens of the times they are studying. Our ideas of today are in most cases not the ideas of yesteryear. In order to engage my students in learning I need to relate the topics to their own experiences they have or have had in the past. To just teach past events is boring to them and if they cannot relate to the subject matter I will not have much buy in. My students become excited and passionate about learning when they can bring in their own experiences or when I can provide current issues and make it “real” to them.

The purpose of this unit is to guide the students to identify how the meaning of freedom has changed over time and how people’s understanding of freedom and liberty differ according to different minority groups. They will use this historical understanding to develop a working definition of the word freedom or liberty. I will be using the terms freedom and liberty interchangeably as many historians do. The Unit’s lessons will focus on how African Americans, Mexican Americans and Women struggled and fought for their freedoms. I chose these three minority groups to demonstrate the change of Freedom over time and how the definition of freedom to different groups differs. I want my students to have an understanding and an appreciation for the freedoms they have today and the struggles people went through in the past to secure their freedoms for today.

Prior to teaching this unit, my students will have already completed a unit of study on majority and minority rule as well as a unit on political and economic freedoms. They would have studied securing economic freedoms as well as political freedom and the difference between the two. In addition, students would have defined what majority rule and minority rights are and how just because the majority may decide something does not mean the minority rights get ignored.

## **Objectives**

I have created this unit to align with the Delaware State Standards for seventh grade. By the end of the unit, my students should be able to understand how freedom has changed over time and how it is defined by different minority groups. Students will use illustrations, primary and secondary sources from different time periods to analyze different events. Since there is such a diversity of students in my classes I want students to know the hardships and struggles their ancestors may have encountered. Instead of them taking freedom for granted I want them to know the influential people or persons who fought to give them their freedom. I want them to know and understand that freedom did not always exist as it should have and they should value their rights as citizens and what it means to be a citizen and be protected under our Constitution.

## **Demographics**

This unit will be taught in my 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies classes. In my classes there are students with varied learning levels and abilities including an inclusion class that is co-taught; one teacher is the regular education teacher and the other is a special education teacher. Stanton Middle School serves a very diverse student population. We have many students that are bussed in from the city and may not have the same economic or socioeconomic values as the students from the surrounding neighborhoods. Students come to Stanton from Wilmington, Elsmere, and Newark, Delaware. Elsmere has a large immigrant population. The diverse background includes African America, Hispanic/Latino, Caucasian, Asian and Multi-Racial. Stanton Middle School is comprised of sixth, seventh and eighth grade with approximately seven hundred and thirteen students. Our diverse population is broken down into thirty five percent Hispanic/Latino, thirty two percent African American, thirty percent Caucasian, two percent Multi-Racial and one percent Asian. Seventy seven percent of our students are low income families, most receiving free lunch. Stanton Middle School is an example of true diversity and minorities, both racial and economical. This lesson will allow students to relate to how different minority groups had to fight for their freedoms and how some still continue to fighting. Stanton Middle School is located in the Red Clay Consolidated School District, which was formed on July 1, 1981. It is one of four districts created when the New Castle County School District was reorganized. Red Clay includes northwestern sections of the City of Wilmington and its suburbs, all the way to the Pennsylvania state line, from the Brandywine Creek to the Pike Creek Valley area, and along the Christina River back to the city line. Red Clay is the 2nd largest public school district in the state. The district serves more than 15,000 students in 14 elementary schools, six middle schools, five high schools, four special education schools, and three charter schools.

## **Africa Americans**

“Freedom did not come to blacks. It merely visited for a while.”<sup>1</sup>

Frederick Douglas was asked to speak on *What to the slave is the Fourth of July?* He mocks his audience who invited him so speak. His audience is comprised of northerners and Northern officials who feel they have helped the slaves gain freedom. Douglas says in his speech “It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom.” His entire speech he makes reference to you the white man while we, the blacks, are still searching for freedom. So to the Slave I ask you, what did freedom mean to them after being freed? This speech is important because it demonstrates the

abolitionist's naivety towards slavery. The abolitionists felt proud of how they felt they were supporting the southern blacks. They invited Frederick Douglass to speak expecting him to be grateful towards them. However in his eloquently addressed speech he said how great America and freedom are and he said someday blacks will get there but this is "their" America, meaning the whites. This speech was demonstrating that the African Americans had not seen this freedom nor this America yet.

At the end of the Civil War blacks were declared free. Many blacks while in slavery had dreamed about what freedom would be for them if the day would ever come. Some slave owners never did tell their slaves that they were free; it took some a good year before they found out. For others it was an immediate gratification.

*"Freedom. One day they had been awakened by the sound of the overseer's horn. The next day they were not. One morning they had gone to the fields and before the sun set, they had left their hoes, their plows, their cotton sacks lying in the furrows. And they put the full meaning of it into one eloquent phrase, which they sang over and over.*

*Free at last,  
Free at last,  
Thank God A-Mighty,  
I'm free at last.<sup>2</sup>*

Although slaves were told they were going to get "forty acres and a mule" that would never happen. The vast majority of freed blacks remained poor and without property during this time period. Many slaves returned back to their owners because they simply had nowhere else to go. They had no money, no place to live and no food. Even though the slaves had gained freedom, at what cost and what kind of freedom did they gain? Freedom to Slaves at this time was freedom from their masters. The Emancipation Proclamation officially brought freedom to the slaves in the Confederacy however it did not grant them any of the necessities in order to truly survive and obtain freedom.

Many of the steps that had been taken toward racial equality during the Reconstruction period were thus reversed during the Progressive Era. Southern governments imposed a wide range of Jim Crow laws on black people. Using the rationale that by legalizing segregation there would be a more orderly and systematic society. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the principle of racial segregation in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Although the holding of *Plessy* permitted segregation as long as blacks were provided with "separate but equal" facilities, in reality southern blacks faced vastly inferior conditions in school, transportations, and other aspects of public life. In the face of the rigidly segregated society that confronted them, blacks themselves were divided concerning the appropriate course of action.

Since 1895, Booker T. Washington had urged that blacks should not actively agitate for equality, but should acquire craft skills, work industriously, and convince whites of

their abilities. W. E. B. Du Bois insisted instead (in *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903) that black people ceaselessly protest Jim Crow laws, demand education in the highest professions as well as in crafts, and work for complete social integration. This was important because he felt that blacks should acquire skills as the whites had and be educated and prove that they were equally important to our developing society. In 1910 the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded to advance these ideals. From Reconstruction to the Progressive Era, Blacks have made some strides towards freedom. Now, how would they define Freedom?

During the 1920's many African Americans, over 800,000 left their homes in the South and moved north. This movement is known as The Great Migration of the 1920's. This movement of African Americans to the north and west not only change the racial composition of these regions, but also helped to produce racial tension within the African American community. Many were unskilled laborers and they took jobs others did not want. They were low paying jobs as they demand few skills, however many of them lost their jobs when the depression hit. As they were the last hired, they were the first to be fired. The few jobs that were available almost always went to whites. Discrimination made chances of finding work slim, and by 1932 the jobless rate was fifty percent. Those who did manage to keep their jobs also suffered. Wages were cut, in some cases almost in half; many took jobs in private homes as domestics. Many still lived in the South, as tenant farmers paying shares to their landlords. Their crops or harvest paid their rent, or failed to do so leaving them deeper in debt.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is probably the most famous African American studied by our students as leading the way for freedom for African Americans. His famous "I have a dream" speech inspired many African Americans to fight for their rights and freedoms. Many African Americans, although coming a long way since slavery, still felt as though they were not being treated equally. They still did not obtain Freedom. By May of 1963 in Birmingham, Alabama, African American had had enough of segregation. At a time when the civil rights movement was struggling, Birmingham's black youth answered Dr. Martin Luther King's call to "fill the jails" of their city. With lives and jobs at stake, most adults were hesitant to protest the city's racist culture. Instead, children and teenagers marched to jail to secure their freedom. Dr. King had asked parents to sacrifice their children during protests. Many children were willing to go to prison so that the prisons would be filled. This would allow African American adults to protest the discrimination and police brutality they were facing in Alabama. By the children and teenagers going to prison they drew national attention to the cause and helped to bring about the repeal of segregation laws, and inspired thousands of other young people to fight for their rights as well. Rosa Parks, whom the US Congress called "the first lady of the civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement" was an African American Civil Rights Activist. A strong black woman, Ms. Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus and move to the back so that more whites could have seats. She was sitting ten rows back where the blacks were supposed to be. Dr. Martin Luther King, Ms. Rosa

Parks, the young children who sacrificed and went to jail for Dr. King all believed in their rights, equality and freedom.

## **Mexican-Americans**

“If freedom means the right to do pretty much as one pleases, so long as one does not interfere with others, the immigrant has found freedom.”<sup>3</sup>

Mexican immigrants, along with their Mexican American descendants, occupy a unique place in the story of U.S. immigration. They are known by many different names, come from divergent origins, and took widely different paths to becoming part of the United States. Millions of people in the United States today identify themselves as Mexican immigrants or Mexican Americans. They are among both the oldest and newest inhabitants of the nation. Some Mexicans were already living in the Southern and Western regions of the North American continent centuries before the United States existed. Many more Mexicans came to the country during the 20th century, and Mexican immigrants continue to arrive today

The Progressive Era is an age when political and economic freedoms expanded for many. This was also a time of massive immigration. Not just from Southern and Eastern Europe but approximately one million immigrants from Mexico as well. As many immigrants did during this time period, the early 1900's, many immigrant families within a few years conformed to the American culture and language. Many Mexicans decided to leave their homeland at this time due to the harsh conditions during the Mexican Revolution. It is during this time where we see no distinct American culture due to immigration.

In the 1920's over one million Mexicans came to the United States. Their plight was much worse. Most of them worked on farms as laborers, they were already earning low wages, and with the depression these jobs were cut. The Great Depression of the 1930s hit Mexican immigrants especially hard. Along with the job crisis and food shortages that affected all U.S. workers, Mexicans and Mexican Americans had to face an additional threat: deportation. As unemployment swept the U.S., hostility to immigrant workers grew, and the government began a program of repatriating immigrants to Mexico. Immigrants were offered free train rides to Mexico, and some went voluntarily, but many were either tricked or coerced into repatriation, and some U.S. citizens. Some voluntarily returned to Mexico, others were sent home by force. Cities with relief programs did not want to spend money on Mexicans. Altogether about 400,000 Mexicans were repatriated. Some of them sent back were children who were born in the United States. This meaning that the U.S. was sending back its own citizens were deported simply on suspicion of being Mexican. All in all, hundreds of thousands of Mexican immigrants, especially

farmworkers, were sent out of the country during the 1930s--many of them the same workers who had been eagerly recruited a decade before.

Although farming was an important source of employment for Mexican immigrants, by the end of the 1930s Mexican Americans were established throughout the American workforce. Mexican immigrants and their descendants could be found in most of the industries of the Southwest, including ranching and mining. America's growing rail network was particularly important for Mexican immigrants. The railroad industry had long turned to immigrants from Mexico as a source of low-cost labor. In return, Mexican workers found that the railways offered not only employment, but also mobility. They often used this relatively inexpensive form of travel to move their families further into the North and East of the U.S., and into a more urban way of life. By the end of the Great Depression many Mexican families were moving from rural areas to the more industrialized cities.

During the Civil Rights movement, Dr. King was not the only influential minority leader of this time. Many Mexican American Civic Organizations became prominent postwar years. Perhaps the most well-known Mexican American Movement was the UFW, United Farm Workers, during the 1960s and '70s led by Cesar Chavez. The UFW organized farmworkers nationwide and pressured employers through boycotts of non-union produce. These campaigns received widespread publicity, and the UFW's leader, César Chávez, became a well-known representative of the Mexican American community nationwide. Other activists fought for greater recognition of Mexican Americans and began to describe themselves as Chicanos and Chicanas. César Estrada Chávez born on March 31, 1927 and died on April 23, 1993 was an American farm worker, labor leader and civil rights activist who, with Dolores Huerta, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers (UFW). A Mexican American, Chávez became the best known Latino American civil rights activist. Both of these leaders helped pave the way for minorities to achieve freedom and fight for equality.

Mexican Immigrants are still struggling today. President Barack Obama made an Executive Action Order known as the Dream Act. However the Dream Act was first introduced in 2001 and was not passed. This Act needs to carry 60 votes in congress in order to become an official law. It has never passed. President Barack Obama made the Executive Action in 2012 that he would stop deporting young undocumented immigrants that matched certain criteria. However many states didn't go along with this including Arizona. The Dream Act is being introduced again into the House and Senate soon after President Obama takes his oath of office for 2013. There will be new stipulations and guidelines for trying to officially pass this Act. <sup>4</sup>

## Women

Sessions of the National Woman's Suffrage Association in Chicago had been held decades before the Civil War. In 1848 in New York, at the Seneca Falls Convention, activists from the Northeast began a seventy-year struggle for what seemed to be a natural right. This right seemed natural to them because it was a right of all Americans. It gained momentum in the 1850's, led by abolitionist activists such as Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Alice Paul. In the document written for this meeting by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments," women laid claim to the need for judicial, religious, and civil equality with men. The most controversial of the resolutions held that men had denied them their "inalienable" right to the franchise and that women had a duty to seek the right to vote. By the 1850s, suffragists, sometimes affiliated with antislavery and temperance groups, were actively lobbying at the state level for constitutional changes at the same time that they traveled throughout the United States giving speeches to raise the women's consciousness of the importance of the vote. Connecting freedom for slaves with their own civic emancipation, women had great hopes for the postwar period. These hopes were not realized. Instead, women were not included in the postwar settlement that included the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments. The courts continued to deny that citizenship included the right to vote, although as women activists such as Stanton and Anthony noted that their conditional citizenship included the obligation to pay taxes.

Women for a long time had been fighting for freedom. Led by Alice Paul, a group of only twelve women gathered in front of the White House with a banner reading, "How long must woman wait for liberty?" and began picketing. This showed the President and all Americans that women wanted their rights too. It was here during WWI that women wanted to try and gain the right to vote. They did this by thinking that if they supported President Woodrow Wilson's administration and the American participation in the War then the President and Congress would pass a law allowing women to vote. It was Carrie Chapman Catt who let the way for Woman's suffrage. In 1918 Congress approved the nineteenth amendment which became part of the Constitution in 1920. This amendment gave women the right to vote. Many women's groups would soon emerge from this time on. Today in our Nation's Capital there is an unfinished statue representing woman's rights. The statue was purposely not completed in demonstrating to people that women still have a long way to go and have not achieved "freedom."

On Election Day in 1920, Millions of American women exercised their right to vote for the first time. It took activists and reformers nearly 100 years to win that right, and the campaign was not easy. Disagreements over strategy threatened to ratify giving all



American women the right to vote and declaring for the first time that they, like men, deserve to have all the same rights and freedoms of citizenship.

In the 1920's a new woman was born. She smoked, drank, danced, and voted. She cut her hair short, later to be known as the "bob", wore make up, and went to parties. She was giddy and took risks. She was a flapper. This new profound woman felt herself being more carefree and having equal freedoms as men. This was known as the Flapper era. This era was a cultural change that allowed woman more freedoms. The Flappers image consisted of drastic, to some shocking, changes in woman's clothing and hair. Nearly every article of clothing was shorten and lightened in order to make movement easier on the dance floor. During this time where women had a sense of cultural liberation, women also smoked, something only men had previously done and drank.

With soldiers going off to war woman were sent to the workforce. This was another great gain for woman. Woman began working in factories and kept the economy slowly going. However the impact of WWII would have long last effects not just on people's freedoms but on our nation as well. When men returned back from the war, it is almost as though women took a step back in time. Women who had been working in place of the men were sent back to the households. Women were often replaced by returning soldiers or so it would have seemed. Many veterans had a difficult time finding work, which left families without money. These were tough times for many families that before the war would be considered middle class. So although we had won the war and were free at what cost did this come to the American people? Veterans returned home and were not the same. Many suffered from PTSD, although it was not called this at that time. "He was never the same after the war." My mom would tell me.<sup>5</sup> This was a common phrase heard over and over. Even today when soldiers come home from fighting overseas this is a common phrase. What kind of freedom did American citizens have upon returning from war?

In the 1960, the world of American women became limited in almost every aspect, from family life to the workplace. Not much was expected from women except to follow one path: to marry in her early 20's, start a family and devote herself to homemaking. They were merely subjects to their husbands. The 38 percent of women who did work had low paying jobs and were limited to jobs such as teachers, nurses and secretaries. The feminist movement in the 1960's and 1970's originally focused on gaining equality in the workplace. In 1964 Representative Howard Smith of Virginia proposed to add a prohibition on gender discrimination into the Civil Rights Act that was under consideration at that time. It was passed eventually and added into the amendment. However women still faced discrimination in the workplace with salary, job types, etc. Betty Friedan founded the organization NOW, National Organization for women, which assisted women with legal aid as they battled workplace discrimination in the courts.

After WWII, the boom of the American economy outpaced the available workforce making it necessary for women to fill new job openings; in fact, in the 1960's, two-thirds of all new jobs went to women. As such, the nation simply had to accept the idea of women in the workforce. Meanwhile having two incomes became critical to achieving a lifestyle where the expectations for a comfortable middle-class lifestyle rose. Thus making women's participation in the workforce still more acceptable.

## Lessons

### Essential Questions

1. What is Freedom?
2. What minority groups do you think have had to fight for Freedom?
3. How has the meaning of freedom changed over time?
4. Why does the word freedom have different meanings to different minority groups?
5. In the Declaration of Independence, it states "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." How do you think African Americans, Mexican Americans and Women felt about the words written in this document?

### Lesson 1

1. Warm up Activity: Have students get a sheet of paper out. Tell them that you are going to put a word on the board and you want them to write the first five things that they think of when they see or hear this word. The word is 'Freedom'. After students have about a minute to come up with five words. Write the word on the board. Have students either come up and write one word they chose or you write the answers the students selected. Have a brief discussion on why they selected the words they did.
2. Next come up with a classroom definition of what freedom is. Then brainstorm as a class different minority groups that had to fight for freedom. (Narrow it down to African Americans, Mexican Immigrants and Women)
3. Ask students to discuss in groups what kinds of freedoms there are and what kinds of freedoms each of these three minority groups were seeking.
4. Making Comparisons prior to the lesson create folders of information for the students. Each group will either have a **Error! Bookmark not defined.** or Women's Suffrage folder. Each folder should contain the pictures and text document that

relate to their topic. In addition, each folder should have enough copies of the photo analysis worksheet and compare/contrast graphic organizer for every student. Have students analyze the pictures and record their observations on the organizer.(few pictures are provided but teacher may provide more)

## Lesson 2

Have students work in collaborative pairs to read background information on Jim Crow Laws and the women's suffrage movement and compare the effects they had on minorities/ individuals. Assign half the groups the Jim Crow Laws and the other half the women's suffrage movement. See Appendix D. After completing half of the organizer, students will pair up with another student who had a different article. Together the two should complete a graphic organizer and write a summary paragraph outlining the similarities and differences.

## Lesson 3: Application Cause-and-Effect Timeline

Working in collaborative pairs, students will construct a cause and effect timeline using the following events:

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Voting Act of 1965

Jim Crow Laws

Women's Suffrage Movement

Students will complete a timeline and provide the cause and effect of certain legislation or movements and evidence supporting the explanation of why the event occurred. They will be using the information and material from lessons one, two and the articles found in Appendix F. This timeline may be completed on poster paper or students may complete electronically on a computer. It is also recommended that students add pictures, graphics, newspaper headlines, etc., on their timelines.

Why has legislation protecting minorities changed over time? Support your response with a specific example.

## **Appendix A**

### Standards

History Standard One: Students will employ chronological concepts in analyzing historical phenomena [Chronology]. Students will examine historical materials relating to particular region, society, or theme; analyze change over time, and make logical inferences concerning cause and effect.

History Standard Three: Students will master the basic research skills necessary to conduct an independent investigation of historical phenomena.

Civic Standard Two: Students will understand that the concept of majority rule does not mean that the rights of minorities may be disregarded and will examine and apply the protections accorded those minorities in the American political system.

## **Appendix B**

### Photo Analysis Worksheet

#### Step 1. Observation

A. Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible.

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B. Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph.

People	Objects	Activities
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#### Step 2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

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#### Step 3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

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B. Where could you find answers to them?

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## **Appendix C-Jim Crow Laws**

Document #1



Source: <http://www.lz95.org/msn/faculty/jlippert/images/waterfountain.jpg>

Document #2



Source: <http://feldmeth.net/JimCrowInDurhamNC.jpg>

Document 3:



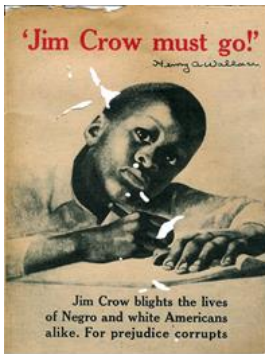
Source: <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what/108.htm>



Document #4:

Source: <http://thisfragiletent.files.wordpress.com/2009/11/jim-crow-2.jpg>

Document #5



Source: <http://worldofwonder.net/2009/04/06/6a4dcd78.jpg>

## Women's Suffrage Movement

Document #1



Suffragettes marching in front of the White House, 1918. AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Source: <http://www.bookrags.com/research/womens-suffrage-movement-aaw-03/>

Document #2



Source: [http://womenshistory.about.com/library/pic/bl\\_p\\_opposed\\_suffrage\\_hq.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/library/pic/bl_p_opposed_suffrage_hq.htm)

Document #3



<http://staff.harrisonburg.k12.va.us/~cwalton/solpracticetests/USHistory/suffrageparade.jpg>

## Appendix D

### Women's Suffrage Movement

American women's efforts to win the vote were significantly influenced by both the Civil War and World War I. The organized suffrage movement was in its beginning stages in 1861 when the pressures of the Civil War forced activists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony to choose between concentrating their energies on such activities as organizing fundraisers to support Union troops or focusing on suffrage laws and property rights for married women. In World War I the choice was the same, although the context and the response were different. In August 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. Partly as a result of the war, all American women finally received the right to vote.

### Nineteenth-Century Efforts

Before the Civil War, the idea of women voting was a radical concept that threatened the traditional male role as head of the household. In 1848, at the Seneca Falls Convention in New York, activists from the Northeast began a seventy-year struggle for what seemed to them a natural right of all Americans. In the document written for this meeting by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments," women laid claim to the need for judicial, religious, and civil equality with men. The most controversial of the resolutions held that men had denied them their "inalienable" right to the franchise and that women had a duty to seek the right to vote. By the 1850s, suffragists, sometimes affiliated with antislavery and temperance groups, were actively lobbying at the state level for constitutional changes at the same time that they traveled throughout the United States giving speeches to raise the women's consciousness of the importance of the vote. Connecting freedom for slaves with their own civic emancipation, women had great hopes for the postwar period.

These hopes were not realized. Instead, women were not included in the postwar settlement that included the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments. The courts continued to deny that citizenship included the right to vote, although as women activists such as Stanton and Anthony noted that their conditional citizenship included the obligation to pay taxes. Another argument used by opponents was that women did not serve in the military and hence did not merit the vote. By the end of the nineteenth century, four Western states—Idaho, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming—had enfranchised women, in most cases after elaborate, expensive campaigns by the suffrage associations at the state level.

### Twentieth-Century Movements

In the twentieth century, the focus turned to a crusade by the National American Woman's Suffrage Association to pass a national amendment, the Susan B. Anthony Amendment authorizing suffrage, which had been presented to Congress annually from 1870 on, but until 1914 the resolution never had sufficient support for an affirmative vote, much less the requisite two-thirds majority.

Inspired by the radical tactics used by women in Great Britain, a group of younger American women led by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns formed the National Woman's Party in 1915. They emphasized attention-getting parades and other forms of publicity as well as pressure tactics that made women's suffrage an unavoidable topic even for those who opposed it. When World War I began in April 1917, the more conservative National American Woman's Suffrage Association for a time submerged its suffrage activities in war work. The association supported war work and efforts to inspire female patriotism even at the cost of suffrage efforts. Women who had little to do with the suffrage campaign were drawn into wartime work outside the home, and their contributions became an important part of the suffragists' argument that women deserved the vote.

Meanwhile, Paul and her activists challenged Woodrow Wilson's government. Beginning in 1917, these women made the case, often using President Wilson's own



words on their banners, that the war was being fought for democracy. Quoting Wilson, a favorite banner read, "We shall fight for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments."

The National Woman's Party stationed pickets outside the White House until embarrassed officials began arresting and imprisoning them on frivolous charges such as impeding access to sidewalks. In prison, Alice Paul insisted that they were political prisoners. When privileges such as writing letters and not wearing prison uniforms were denied, the Paul and other women in jail began hunger strikes, which, in an overreaction by the government, led to their being force-fed. Still, Wilson—who believed that suffrage was a state and not a federal issue—withheld his support from a national amendment. Finally, in early 1918, under pressure from both of the suffrage associations, he urged a compliant Congress to pass what became, when it was ratified in the summer of 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment.<sup>6</sup>

Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States of America; At the First Session,

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the nineteenth day of May, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

#### JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislature of three-fourths of the several States.

#### "ARTICLE

"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.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."<sup>7</sup>

#### Jim Crow Laws

From the 1880s into the 1960s, a majority of American states enforced segregation through "Jim Crow" laws (so called after a black character in minstrel shows). From Delaware to California, and from North Dakota to Texas, many states (and cities, too) could impose legal punishments on people for consorting with members of another race. The most common types of laws forbade intermarriage and ordered business owners and public institutions to keep their black and white clientele separated.

A sampling of laws from various states:

Nurses: No person or corporation shall require any white female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which negro men are placed. *Alabama*

Buses: All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races. *Alabama*

Railroads: The conductor of each passenger train is authorized and required to assign each passenger to the car or the division of the car, when it is divided by a partition, designated for the race to which such passenger belongs. *Alabama*

Restaurants: It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city, at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectually separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided for each compartment. *Alabama*

Pool and Billiard Rooms: It shall be unlawful for a negro and white person to play together or in company with each other at any game of pool or billiards. *Alabama*

Intermarriage All marriages between a white person and a negro, or between a white person and a person of negro descent to the fourth generation inclusive, are hereby forever prohibited. *Florida*

Cohabitation: Any negro man and white woman, or any white man and negro woman, who are not married to each other, who shall habitually live in and occupy in the nighttime the same room shall each be punished by imprisonment not exceeding twelve (12) months, or by fine not exceeding five hundred (\$500.00) dollars. *Florida*

Education: The schools for white children and the schools for negro children shall be conducted separately. *Florida*

Barbers: No colored barber shall serve as a barber [to] white women or girls. *Georgia*

Amateur Baseball: It shall be unlawful for any amateur white baseball team to play baseball on any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of a playground devoted to the Negro race, and it shall be unlawful for any amateur colored baseball team to play baseball in any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of any playground devoted to the white race. *Georgia*

Parks: It shall be unlawful for colored people to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the benefit, use and enjoyment of white persons...and unlawful for any white person to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the use and benefit of colored persons. *Georgia*

Circus Tickets: All circuses, shows, and tent exhibitions, to which the attendance of...more than one race is invited or expected to attend shall provide for the convenience

of its patrons not less than two ticket offices with individual ticket sellers, and not less than two entrances to the said performance, with individual ticket takers and receivers, and in the case of outside or tent performances, the said ticket offices shall not be less than twenty-five (25) feet apart. *Louisiana*

Housing: Any person...who shall rent any part of any such building to a negro person or a negro family when such building is already in whole or in part in occupancy by a white person or white family, or vice versa when the building is in occupancy by a negro person or negro family, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not less than twenty-five (\$25.00) nor more than one hundred (\$100.00) dollars or be imprisoned not less than 10, or more than 60 days, or both such fine and imprisonment in the discretion of the court. *Louisiana*

Hospital Entrances: There shall be maintained by the governing authorities of every hospital maintained by the state for treatment of white and colored patients separate entrances for white and colored patients and visitors, and such entrances shall be used by the race only for which they are prepared. *Mississippi*

Prisons: The warden shall see that the white convicts shall have separate apartments for both eating and sleeping from the negro convicts. *Mississippi*

Education: Separate free schools shall be established for the education of children of African descent; and it shall be unlawful for any colored child to attend any white school, or any white child to attend a colored school. *Missouri*

Militia: The white and colored militia shall be separately enrolled, and shall never be compelled to serve in the same organization. No organization of colored troops shall be permitted where white troops are available, and while white permitted to be organized, colored troops shall be under the command of white officers. *North Carolina*

Transportation: The...Utilities Commission...is empowered and directed to require the establishment of separate waiting rooms at all stations for the white and colored races. *North Carolina*

Fishing, Boating, and Bathing: The [Conservation] Commission shall have the right to make segregation of the white and colored races as to the exercise of rights of fishing, boating and bathing. *Oklahoma*

Lunch Counters: No persons, firms, or corporations, who or which furnish meals to passengers at station restaurants or station eating houses, in times limited by common carriers of said passengers, shall furnish said meals to white and colored passengers in the same room, or at the same table, or at the same counter. *South Carolina*

Child: Custody It shall be unlawful for any parent, relative, or other white person in this State, having the control or custody of any white child, by right of guardianship, natural

or acquired, or otherwise, to dispose of, give or surrender such white child permanently into the custody, control, maintenance, or support, of a negro. *South Carolina*

Education: [The County Board of Education] shall provide schools of two kinds; those for white children and those for colored children. *Texas*

Intermarriage: All marriages of white persons with Negroes, Mulattos, Mongolians, or Malaya hereafter contracted in the State of Wyoming are and shall be illegal and void. *Wyoming*

Lesson 3 articles:

### ***The Voting Rights Act of 1965***

This “act to enforce the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution” was signed into law 95 years after the amendment was ratified. In those years, African Americans in the South faced tremendous obstacles to voting, including poll taxes, literacy tests, and other bureaucratic restrictions to deny them the right to vote. They also risked harassment, intimidation, economic reprisals, and physical violence when they tried to register or vote. As a result, very few African Americans were registered voters, and they had very little, if any, political power, either locally or nationally.

In 1964, numerous demonstrations were held, and the considerable violence that erupted brought renewed attention to the issue of voting rights. The murder of voting-rights activists in Mississippi and the attack by state troopers on peaceful marchers in Selma, AL, gained national attention and persuaded President Johnson and Congress to initiate meaningful and effective national voting rights legislation. The combination of public revulsion to the violence and Johnson's political skills stimulated Congress to pass the voting rights bill on August 5, 1965.

The legislation, which President Johnson signed into law the next day, outlawed literacy tests and provided for the appointment of Federal examiners (with the power to register qualified citizens to vote) in those jurisdictions that were "covered" according to a formula provided in the statute. In addition, Section 5 of the act required covered jurisdictions to obtain "preclearance" from either the District Court for the District of Columbia or the U.S. Attorney General for any new voting practices and procedures. Section 2, which closely followed the language of the 15th amendment, applied a nationwide prohibition of the denial or abridgment of the right to vote on account of race or color. The use of poll taxes in national elections had been abolished by the 24th amendment (1964) to the Constitution; the Voting Rights Act directed the Attorney General to challenge the use of poll taxes in state and local elections. In *Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections*, 383 U.S. 663 (1966), the Supreme Court held Virginia's poll tax to be unconstitutional under the 14th amendment.

Because the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was the most significant statutory change in the relationship between the Federal and state governments in the area of voting since the Reconstruction period following the Civil War, it was immediately challenged in the courts. Between 1965 and 1969, the Supreme Court issued several key decisions upholding the constitutionality of Section 5 and affirming the broad range of voting practices for which preclearance was required.

The law had an immediate impact. By the end of 1965, a quarter of a million new black voters had been registered, one-third by Federal examiners. By the end of 1966, only 4 out of the 13 southern states had fewer than 50 percent of African Americans registered to vote. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was readopted and strengthened in 1970, 1975, and 1982.

### ***Civil Rights Act of 1964***

In a nationally televised address on June 6, 1963, President John F. Kennedy urged the nation to take action toward guaranteeing equal treatment of every American regardless of race. Soon after, Kennedy proposed that Congress consider civil rights legislation that would address voting rights, public accommodations, school desegregation, nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs, and more.

Despite Kennedy's assassination in November of 1963, his proposal culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson just a few hours after House approval on July 2, 1964. The act outlawed segregation in businesses such as theaters, restaurants, and hotels. It banned discriminatory practices in employment and ended segregation in public places such as swimming pools, libraries, and public schools.

Passage of the act was not easy. House opposition bottled up the bill in the House Rules Committee. In the Senate, opponents attempted to talk the bill to death in a filibuster. In early 1964, House supporters overcame the Rules Committee obstacle by threatening to send the bill to the floor without committee approval. The Senate filibuster was overcome through the floor leadership of Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, the considerable support of President Lyndon Johnson, and the efforts of Senate Minority Leader Everett Dirksen of Illinois, who convinced Republicans to support the bill.

### **Major Features of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

#### **Title I**

Barred unequal application of voter registration requirements, but did not abolish literacy tests sometimes used to disqualify African Americans and poor white voters.

#### **Title II**

Outlawed discrimination in hotels, motels, restaurants, theaters, and all other public accommodations engaged in interstate commerce; exempted private clubs without defining "private," thereby allowing a loophole.

### **Title III**

Encouraged the desegregation of public schools and authorized the U. S. Attorney General to file suits to force desegregation, but did not authorize busing as a means to overcome segregation based on residence.

### **Title IV**

Authorized but did not require withdrawal of federal funds from programs which practiced discrimination.

### **Title V**

Outlawed discrimination in employment in any business exceeding twenty five people and creates an Equal Employment Opportunities Commission to review complaints, although it lacked meaningful enforcement powers.

### **The Chicano movement**

The Chicano movement blossomed in the 1960s. The movement had roots in the civil rights struggles that had preceded it, adding to it the cultural and generational politics of the era. The early proponents of the movement — Rodolfo Gonzales in Denver, Colorado and Reies Tijerina in New Mexico — adopted a historical account of the preceding hundred and twenty-five years that obscured much of Mexican-American history. Gonzales and Tijerina embraced a form of nationalism that was based on the failure of the United States government to live up to the promises that it had made in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. That version of the past did not, on the other hand, take into account the history of those Mexicans who had immigrated to the United States. It also gave little attention to the rights of illegal immigrants in the United States in the 1960s — not surprising, since immigration did not have the political significance it was to acquire in the years to come. It was only a decade later when activists embraced the rights of illegal immigrants and helped broaden the focus to include their rights.

Instead, when the movement dealt with practical problems most activists focused on the most immediate issues confronting Mexican-Americans: unequal educational and employment opportunities, political disenfranchisement, and police brutality. In the heady days of the late 1960s, when the student movement was active around the globe, the Chicano movement brought about more or less spontaneous actions, such as the mass walkouts by high school students in Denver and East Los Angeles in 1968 and the Chicano Moratorium in Los Angeles in 1970.

The movement was particularly strong at the college level, where activists formed MEChA, *el Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán*, which promoted Chicano Studies programs and a generalized nationalist agenda. The student movement produced a generation of future political leaders, including Richard Alatorre and Cruz Bustamante in California.

Some women who worked within the Chicano movement felt that participants were more worried about other issues, such as immigration, than solving problems that affected women. This led Chicanas to form the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional in 1970.

By the mid 1980s to our present day, a major focus of the Chicano movement has been to advance the representation of Chicanos in all American mainstream media. Criticism of the American mainstream news media and U.S. educational institutions by Chicano activists has been particularly harsh in recent years subsequent to the massive displays of support for immigrant rights such as that seen during La Gran Marcha (The Great March) on March 25, 2006 in Los Angeles. As of today, this self-proclaimed "largest march in U.S. history" which was primarily organized by Mexican American organizations, Chicano activists, and fueled through a large network of active Internet users, L.A. Spanish language television, and Spanish language news radio coverage, is still virtually ignored by American mainstream (English language) news media and all textbooks of the American educational system.

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Curriculum Unit  
Title

**The Long, Painful Journey: Discrimination;  
Racism and the Struggle for everlasting  
Freedom.**

Author

Veronica Everett

**KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.**

Freedom didn't come free for many people. Students will be able to follow three different groups of people and see what freedom meant to them and the struggle they went through to gain freedom.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT**

How has the meaning of the word freedom changed over time and how it is defined by different minority groups?

**CONCEPT A**

The Meaning of Freedom.

**CONCEPT B**

How the meaning of the word freedom has  
*changed over time*

**CONCEPT C**

Students will gain insight to the  
*hardships and struggles that African*

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A**

Why does the freedom have different meanings to different minority groups?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B**

How has the meaning of freedom changed over time?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS C**

What are the similarities and differences among African Americans, Mexicans and Woman during their journey for freedom?

**VOCABULARY A**

Freedom, Minority, Immigrants, Equality, Segregation, Desegregation, Jim Crow Laws

**VOCABULARY A**

The Great Migration, Flapper, Executive Action, Dream Act, Women's Suffrage, Civil Rights

**VOCABULARY A**

Cause, Effect, outcomes

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES**

Primary sources,  
Web articles  
Web site pictures

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<sup>1</sup> Lester, Julius. To Be A Slave

<sup>2</sup> Lester, Julius. To Be A slave

<sup>3</sup> Foner, Eric

<sup>4</sup> The dream Act

<sup>5</sup> Childers, Tom.

<sup>6</sup> ([http](#)) transcript of 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the U.S. Constitution:Women's Right to Vote (1920)

<sup>7</sup> Our documents