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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2009 Volume II: American Voices: Listening to Fiction, Poetry, and Prose

Setbacks to Suffrage: Inquiry into the Process

Guide for Curriculum Unit 09.02.08, published September 2009

by Deborah M. Fetzer

This unit focuses on the women's movement from 1848 to 1920. The foundation for this unit of study includes three major events: the First Women's Rights Convention, the 14th and 15th Amendments, and the 19th Amendment.

The constitutional history of the women's rights movement is a lost chapter in our history. Students will realize that while there is little reference to the struggle leading to the 19th Amendment, and women clearly have the right to vote, there remain issues around equality for women. Students will understand the consequences of perseverance in the face of adversity or oppression and they will come to understand what it means to have the courage of your convictions. It is by studying the past that we can clarify and better understand issues that face us today. Issues facing women today are some of the same issues that faced women in the 19th century; issues such as violence, job discrimination, pay difference, right to privacy, and connections to family. This unit provides direction for teachers as they help their students understand the women's movement from the 1840s to the 1920s and how this history impacts women today.

(Developed for U.S. History, grade 9; recommended for U.S. History, grades 8-12)

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