

How Women of Color Transformed the Suffrage Movement

Award-winning historian Cathleen D. Cahill, author of *Recasting the Vote: How Women of Color Transformed the Suffrage Movement*, in conversation with Virginia Scharff, the Autry's Senior Scholar and Distinguished Professor Emerita, University of New Mexico.

These video clips require a general knowledge of women's suffrage and the 19th Amendment. Please see the Autry lesson: Women's Suffrage in the West.

CLASS AND PRIVILEGE OF WOMEN OF COLOR SUFFRAGISTS

Task: As you watch the video clip, listen for the answers to the questions below. Write your response in the space provided. Use the list of women of color suffragists to help you.

Guiding Question: "What role does class status and other forms of privilege play in inspiring and facilitating the activism of these women?"

1. What is evidence that women of color suffragists were "elite" because they had high levels of education?

2. How else were women of color suffragists "elite"?

3. What are some examples that women of color suffragists were "elites" in their communities?

WOMEN OF COLOR SUFFRAGISTS

Maria Adelina "Nina" Otera-Warren
Hispano (Spanish/Mexican)

Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin
Turtle Mountain Chippewa and French North Dakotan

Mabel Ping Hua-Lee
Chinese

Laura Cornelius Kellog
Wisconsin Oneida

Gertrude Simmons Bonnin
(used the penname Zitkala-Sa)
Yangton Dakota Sioux

Carrie Williams Clifford
African American

Vocabulary

Elite - upper class

PhD: an advanced degree from a university in any field of study that requires intensive research and studies beyond the 4-year Bachelor's degree and 2-year Master's degree

Seminary: a school that focuses on the study of religions and religious beliefs

Suffragist: a person who promotes the right to vote for more people, often used to describe women who promoted and fought for the right for women to vote

Bureau of Indian Affairs: United States government agency whose job is to manage relations with Native American tribes

Key Events in Relation to Suffrage in the United States

1850

1870 – 15th Amendment: Voting for United States citizens cannot be denied on the basis of race. Native Americans were not U.S. citizens, they were considered wards of the state so they could not vote.

1875 – Jim Crow Laws: State laws to limit voting for Black, Chinese and other races of men born in the U.S. by requiring a tax, property, or literacy test to vote.

1900

1882 – Chinese Exclusion Act: Chinese immigrants denied U.S. citizenship; Chinese immigrants cannot vote.

1920 – 19th Amendment: Voting cannot be denied on the basis of gender. Women can vote.

1924 – Native American Citizenship Act: Native Americans are U.S. citizens and can vote.

1950

1943 – Magnuson Act: Chinese immigrants can become naturalized U.S. citizens; at naturalization they can vote.

1957 – Civil Rights Act Revision: Federal government has oversight of voter registration and the authority to call upon courts for injunctions (orders to stop something) to protect voters and their rights.

1964 – 24th Amendment: Eliminates poll tax for voting (a tax in order to vote despite income level).

1964 – Civil Rights Act: Bans discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (gender), and national origin (place of birth).

1965 – Voting Rights Act: Bans voter discrimination based on race, color, or membership in a language minority group. Literacy tests are illegal; a “preclearance” from the federal government for any new voting practices or procedures in states is required.

2000

1967 – Civil Rights Act Revision: Federal government has authority to inspect voter registration in states; there are criminal penalties for obstructing people from voting.

2013 – Shelby v. Holder: United States Supreme Court ruling that the “preclearance” required by the 1965 Voting Rights Act for state districts to submit changes to voting laws to the government was unconstitutional. Oversight on district and state voting laws by the federal government is limited.

2050