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.*

LESSONS FOR TODAY FROM 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’s happening now? What are the lessons of Recasting the Vote for those of us who want to protect voting rights now?”

1. Why does Cahill say voting rights are “fragile and important”? 
   
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2. How does the right to vote unite people and how is that tied to power? 
   
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3. Why are there efforts to disenfranchise people to make voting harder and what are those efforts? 
   
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Vocabulary

Disenfranchise – take away or limit the right to vote

WOMEN OF COLOR SUFFRAGISTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria Adelina “Nina” Otera-Warren</td>
<td>Hispano (Spanish/Mexican)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin</td>
<td>Turtle Mountain Chippewa and French North Dakotan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mabel Ping Hua-Lee</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laura Cornelius Kellog</td>
<td>Wisconsin Oneida</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gertrude Simmons Bonnin</td>
<td>Yangton Dakota Sioux</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrie Williams Clifford</td>
<td>African American</td>
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Key Events in Relation to Suffrage in the United States

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.

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

1890

1900

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.

1925

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).

1965 – Voting Rights Act: Bans voter discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (gender), and national origin (place of birth).

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

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

1968

2000

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.