

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.

THE UNITY AND DISUNITY 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 are "the ways in which understanding their diverse stories makes us understand the suffrage movement in ways we hadn't seen it before?"

1. What similar experiences did women of color suffragists share?

2. What were the different experiences of women of color suffragists and how did that impact their goals in the fight for the right to vote?

3. Why did Cahill choose to feature the specific women of color suffragists she did in *Recasting the Vote*? What did their stories represent about the suffrage movement?

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

Prejudice: attitude that people of a specific gender/gender preference, race or other factors are inferior

Discriminate: unfair or different treatment based on gender/gender preference, age, race or other factors

Disenfranchised: deny (someone) the right to vote

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