

AFRICAN AMERICAN SUFFRAGISTS AND THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT

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GUIDING QUESTION:

To what extent did African Americans advance the woman's suffrage movement?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students will examine primary sources to learn about the way that race was debated in the woman's suffrage movement. Students will explore the contributions of and debates surrounding African Americans in the quest for woman's suffrage.

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- > Identify several African American suffragists;
- > Explore the challenges faced by African Americans pushing for woman's suffrage in the early twentieth century; and
- > Evaluate the role of women of color and white women in the advancement of woman's suffrage.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CONNECTIONS TO C3 FRAMEWORK

- > D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.
- > D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.
- > D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

DOCUMENTS USED

PRIMARY SOURCES

Mary B. Talbert, "Women and Colored Women," *The Crisis*, August 1915 (excerpt)
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
<https://archive.org/details/crisis910dubo/page/n55/mode/2up?q=august+1915>

Mary Church Terrell, *The Progress of Colored Women*, Address to the National American Women's Suffrage Association, Washington, D.C., February 18, 1898, (excerpt)
Library of Congress (90898298)
<https://loc.gov/item/90898298>

Speech, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Given at the National Woman's Suffrage Convention*, January 19, 1869 (excerpt)
Susan Brownell Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Ida Husted Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage: 1861-1876*, 1881
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_Woman_Suffrage_1861_1876/DINKAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0

Speech, Frederick Douglass, *We Welcome the Fifteenth Amendment*, May 12-13, 1869 (excerpt)
The Speeches of Frederick Douglass: A Critical Edition, 2018

Speech, Julia Anna Cooper, *Woman's Cause is One and Universal*, May 18, 1893 (excerpt)
Black Past
<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/1893-anna-julia-cooper-womens-cause-one-and-universal/>

Speech, Sojourner Truth, *Address to the First Annual Meeting of the American Equal Right Association*, May 9, 1867 (excerpt)
Library of Congress (ca10003542)
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbnawsa.n3542/?sp=22>

"Votes For Women," *The Crisis*, September 1912 (excerpt)
Brown University
<https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1305565999281253.pdf>

SECONDARY SOURCES

"15th Amendment, Right to Vote Not Denied by Race"
National Constitution Center
<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendment/amendment-xv>

Online Exhibit, *More To the Movement*
Library of Congress
<https://www.loc.gov/exhibitions/women-fight-for-the-vote/about-this-exhibition/more-to-the-movement/?st=gallery>

Online Exhibit, *Parading for Progress*
National Women's History Museum
<https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/parading-progress>

TEACHER-CREATED MATERIALS

- > Voices of the Woman's Suffrage Movement Graphic Organizer
- > Voices of the Woman's Suffrage Movement Primary Source Packet

ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Make one copy of the Voices of the Woman's Suffrage Movement Primary Source Packet for each group of three or four students.
- > Make one copy of the Voices of the Woman's Suffrage Movement Graphic Organizer for each student.
- > Organize students into groups of three to four students each.

PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY ONE (30 MINUTES)

- > Project the following quote for the class: "Finally, votes for women mean votes for black women. There are in the United States three and a third million adult women of Negro descent. Except in the rural South, these women have larger economic opportunity [sic] than their husbands and brothers and are rapidly becoming better educated. One has only to remember the recent biennial convention of colored women's clubs with its 400 delegates to realize how the women are moving quietly but forcibly toward the intellectual leadership of the race." *The Crisis*, 1912.

> Lead a discussion:

- > *What is the main idea of this editorial? What is The Crisis? What happened in 1912 that would have inspired this editorial? Why does the author believe that African American women have earned the right to vote?*
- > Point out that by 1912, African American men had received the right to vote with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. Despite the constitutional amendment, however, many Black men were prohibited from voting by local and state governments that instituted literacy tests, grandfather clauses, and poll taxes. American women did not get the right to vote until 1920. While Black women could legally vote under the Nineteenth Amendment, many of them were not able to exercise their right to vote due to various restrictions enforced by Jim Crow laws.
- > [Project the Fifteenth Amendment](#) for the students to read. Ask students to explore the contradictions that existed between passage of the Fifteenth Amendment and the need for a Nineteenth Amendment.
- > Present students the online exhibits, *Parading For Progress* from the National Museum of Women's History and *More To the Movement* from the Library of Congress. Students can view in small groups or individually. Ask students:
 - > *What did you learn about the suffrage movement that you did not know before? Did it make you reevaluate what you thought about woman's suffrage?*
 - > *Where do you see instances of race causing divisions or tensions? How did they shape the movement?*
 - > *Where do other women of color fit into this discussion? Did Asian American women seek to challenge voting restrictions? What about women living in U.S. territories, such as Puerto Rico and the Philippines? Did all women have the same experiences or did women of color face more challenges?*
 - > *Did white women have the same experiences as women of color? Did they address or ignore racial disparities? Why did this happen?*
 - > *Devise at least two questions you still have concerning the suffrage movement.*

CONNECTIONS

The struggle for suffrage was marked by leaders often failing to understand or appreciate the needs of women of color. Across time, opinions have differed within the movement for women's rights. This book contains lessons that highlight the connections between the Abolitionist and Temperance Movements to the suffrage movement, as well as the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement.

- > Organize students into groups of three to four students each.
- > Explain to students that they are going to analyze primary source documents to learn more about the arguments for and against African American women’s suffrage.
- > Distribute one copy of the Voices of the Woman’s Suffrage Movement Primary Source Packet to each group.
- > Distribute one copy of the Voices of the Woman’s Suffrage Movement Graphic Organizer to each student.
- > Direct students to complete the graphic organizer using the primary source document excerpts provided.
- > Lead a whole-class discussion to debrief students about what they learned through their analysis of the primary source documents. Some possible questions include:
 - » *Why did some white suffragists oppose the Fifteenth Amendment?*
 - » *What do the documents suggest about the challenges of implementing social change?*
 - » *What lingering or new questions do you have after reviewing the primary sources?*
- > Students can create an informational poster, website, podcast, or other digital media in which they answer the lesson’s guiding question. Students should consider the following:
 - » *Who is your target audience?*
 - » *What is the thesis of your project? What are you trying to persuade people to believe?*
 - » *What challenges are present in the movement?*
 - » *How do you propose to fix those challenges?*

STUDENTS INTERESTED IN THIS TOPIC MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING THE FOLLOWING FOR AN NHD PROJECT

- > Ida B. Wells and the Alpha Suffrage Club
- > 1913 Woman’s Suffrage Parade
- > American Equal Rights Association
- > The National Association of Colored Women (NACW)
- > Asian American women and the suffrage movement
- > Woman’s suffrage in the U.S. territories

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- > Students can write a speech to explain the challenges faced by African American women seeking the right to vote in the early twentieth century. The speech should integrate primary source material from the time (from the primary source packet or other credible sources) and can be delivered in a written or oral format.
- > Students can pose and research the issue of woman’s suffrage as it pertained to a group of American women.

To access a PDF containing all of the sources and materials to complete this lesson plan, go to:

WWW.NHD.ORG/250

EDSITEment!

RELATED RESOURCES

Lesson Plan: Chronicling and Mapping the Women’s Suffrage Movement

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/chronicling-and-mapping-womens-suffrage-movement>

Lesson Plan: Who Were the Foremothers of the Women’s Suffrage and Equality Movements?

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/who-were-foremothers-womens-suffrage-and-equality-movements>

Closer Readings Commentary: The Declaration of Sentiments by the Seneca Falls Conference (1848)

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/closer-readings/declaration-sentiments-seneca-falls-conference-1848>

Humanities: “How Black Suffragists Fought for the Right to Vote and a Modicum of Respect”

<https://www.neh.gov/article/how-black-suffragists-fought-right-vote-and-modicum-respect>

THE CRISIS, 1912

“Finally, votes for women mean votes for black women. There are in the United States three and a third million adult women of Negro descent. Except in the rural South, these women have larger economic opportunity [*sic*] than their husbands and brothers and are rapidly becoming better educated. One has only to remember the recent biennial convention of colored women’s clubs with its 400 delegates to realize how the women are moving quietly but forcibly toward the intellectual leadership of the race.”

VOICES OF THE WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET

Speech, Sojourner Truth, *Address to the First Annual Meeting of the American Equal Right Association*, May 9, 1867
Library of Congress (ca10003542)
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbnawsa.n3542/?sp=22>

“My friends, I am rejoiced that you are glad, but I don’t know how you will feel when I get through. I come from another field—the country of the slave. They have got their liberty—so much good luck to have slavery partly destroyed; not entirely. I want it root and branch destroyed. Then we will all be free indeed. I feel that if I have to answer for the deeds done in my body just as much as a man, I have a right to have just as much as a man. There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you see the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before. So I am for keeping the thing going while things are stirring; because if we wait till it is still, it will take a great while to get it going again. White women are a great deal smarter, and know more than colored women, while colored women do not know scarcely anything. They go out washing, which is about as high as a colored woman gets, and their men go about idle, strutting up and down; and when the women come home, they ask for their money and take it all, and then scold because there is no food. I want you to consider on that, chil’n [*sic*]. I call you chil’n; you are somebody’s chil’n, and I am old enough to be mother of all that is here. I want women to have their rights. In the Courts women have no right, no voice; nobody speaks for them. I wish woman to have her voice there among the pettifoggers. If it is not a fit place for women it is unfit for men to be there. I am above eighty years old; it is about time for me to be going. I have been forty years a slave and forty years free and would be here forty years more to have equal rights for all. I suppose I am kept here because something remains for me to do; I suppose I am yet to help to break the chain. I have done a great deal of work; as much as a man, but did not get so much pay. I used to work in the field and bind grain, keeping up with the cradler; but men doing no more, got twice as much pay; so with the German women. They work in the field and do as much work, but do not get the pay. We do as much, we eat as much, we want as much. I suppose I am about the only colored woman that goes about to speak for the rights of the colored woman. I want to keep the thing stirring, now that the ice is cracked. What we want is a little money. You men know that you get as much again as women when you write, or for what you do. When we get our rights we shall not have to come to you for money, for then we shall have money enough in our own pockets; and may be you will ask us for money. But help us now until we get it. It is a good consolation to know that when we have got this battle once fought we shall not be coming to you any more. You have been having our right so long, that you think, like a slaveholder, that you own us. I know that it is hard for one who has held the reins for so long to give up; it cuts like a knife. It will feel all the better when it closes up again. I have been in Washington about three years, seeing about these colored people. Now colored men have the right to vote; and what I want is to have colored women have the right to vote. There ought to be equal rights now more than ever, since colored people have got their freedom. I am going to talk several times while I am here; so now I will do a little singing. I have not heard any singing since I came here.”

VOICES OF THE WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET (CON'T)

Speech, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Speech Given at the National Woman's Suffrage Convention*, January 19, 1869 (excerpt)
Susan Brownell Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Ida Husted Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage: 1861-1876*, 1881
https://www.google.com/books/edition/History_of_Woman_Suffrage_1861_1876/DINKAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0

"If American women find it hard to bear the oppressions of their own Saxon fathers, the best orders of manhood, what may they not be called to endure when all of the lower orders of foreigners now crowding our shores legislate for them and their daughters. Think of Patrick and Sambo and Hans and Yung Tung, who do not know the difference between a monarchy and a republic, who cannot read the Declaration of Independence or Webster's spelling book, making laws for Lucretia Mott, Ernestine L. Rose, and Anna D. Dickenson. Think of jurors and jailers from these ranks to watch and try young girls for the crime of infatidise, to decide the moral code by which the mothers of this Republic shall be governed? This manhood suffrage is an appalling question, and it would be well for thinking women, who seem to consider it so magnanimous to hold their own claims in abeyance until all men are crowned with citizenship to remember that the most ignorant men are ever the most hostile to the equality of women, as they have known them only in slavery and degradation."

Mary Church Terrell, *The Progress of Colored Women*, *Address National American Women's Suffrage Association*, Washington, D.C., February 18, 1898 (excerpt)
Library of Congress (90898298)
<https://loc.gov/item/90898298>

"But, from the day their fetters were broken and their minds released from the darkness of ignorance to which for more than two hundred years they had been doomed, from the day they could stand erect in the dignity of womanhood, no longer bond but free, till tonight, colored women have forged steadily ahead in the acquisition of knowledge and in the cultivation of those virtues which make for good. To use a thought of the illustrious Frederick Douglass, if judged by the depths from which they have come, rather than by the heights to which those blessed with centuries of opportunities have attained, colored women need not hang their heads in shame. Consider if you will, the almost insurmountable obstacles which have confronted colored women in their efforts to educate and cultivate themselves since their emancipation, and I dare assert, not boastfully, but with pardonable pride, I hope, that the progress they have made and the work they have accomplished, will bear a favorable comparison at least with that of their more fortunate sisters, from whom the opportunity of acquiring knowledge and the means of self-culture have never been entirely withheld. For, not only are colored women with ambition and aspiration handicapped on account of their sex, but they are everywhere baffled and mocked on account of their race."

VOICES OF THE WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT PRIMARY SOURCE PACKET (CON'T)

"Votes For Women," *The Crisis*, September 1912 (excerpt)

Brown University

<https://library.brown.edu/pdfs/1305565999281253.pdf>

"Finally, votes for women mean votes for black women. There are in the United States three and a third million adult women of Negro descent. Except in the rural South, these women have larger economic opportunity than their husbands and brothers and are rapidly becoming better educated. One has only to remember the recent biennial convention of colored women's clubs with its 400 delegates to realize how the women are moving quietly but forcibly toward the intellectual leadership of the race."

Speech, Frederick Douglass, *We Welcome the Fifteenth Amendment*, May 12–13, 1869 (excerpt)

The Speeches of Frederick Douglass: A Critical Edition, 2018

"I must say that I do not see how any one can pretend that there is the same urgency in giving the ballot to women as to the negro. With us, the matter is a question of life and death. It is a matter of existence, at least, in fifteen states of the Union. When women, because they are women, are hunted down through the cities of New York and New Orleans; when they are dragged from their houses and hung upon lamp-posts; when their children are torn from their arms, and their brains dashed out upon the pavement; when they are objects of insult and outrage at every turn; when they are in danger of having their homes burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot equal to our own."

Mary B. Talbert, "Women and Colored Women," *The Crisis*, August 1915 (excerpt)

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

<https://archive.org/details/crisis910dubo/page/n55/mode/2up?q=august+1915>

"It should not be necessary to struggle forever against popular prejudice, and with us as colored women; this struggle becomes two-fold, first, because we are women and second, because we are colored women. Although some resistance is experienced in portions of our country against the ballot for women, because colored women will be included, I firmly believe that enlightened men, are now numerous enough everywhere to encourage this just privilege of the ballot for women, ignoring prejudice of all kinds.

"The great desire of our nation to produce the most perfect form of government shows incontestible [*sic*] proofs of advance. Advanced methods in prison reforms are shown by our own state Commissioner, Miss Katherine B. Davis. Advanced methods in school reforms are shown by Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, Superintendent of Education of Chicago. Advanced methods in the treatment of childhood and adolescence, are shown by the bureau of child welfare under Mrs. Julia C. Lathrop. Each of these women have been most kindly toward the colored women. In our own race advanced methods of industrial training are shown by Miss Nannie H. Burroughs, Mrs. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, and Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, and numbers of other colored women in various lines have blazed the path of reform.

"By her peculiar position the colored woman has gained clear powers of observation and judgment—exactly the sort of powers which are today peculiarly necessary to the building of an ideal country."

VOICES OF THE WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

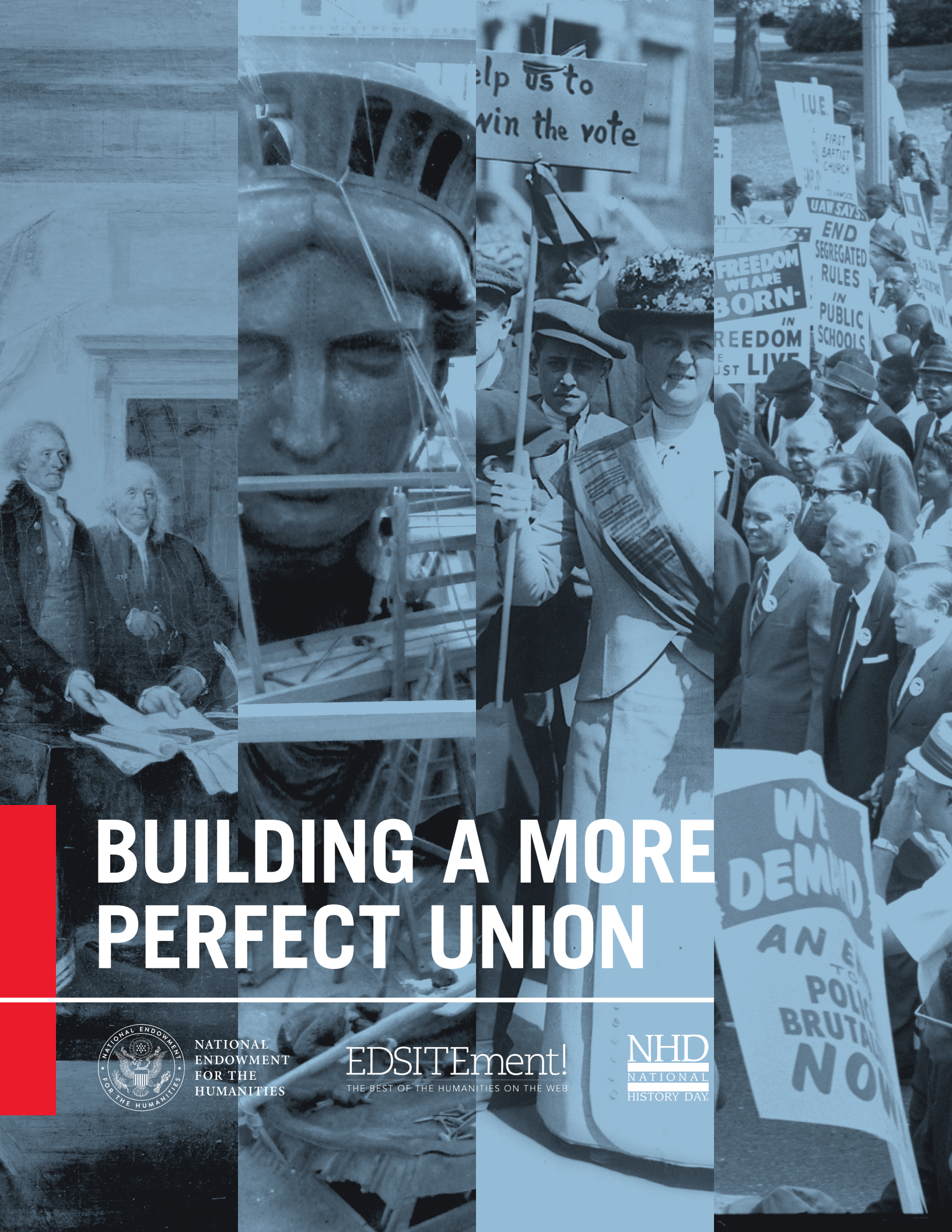
Historical Figure	Historical Context: What is the context of this historical document? What was going on at the time and/or location?	Intended Audience: Who was the intended audience? How does this affect the argument being made?	Point of View (PoV): What is the author's PoV? Think about his or her background, position in society, outlook on the world, etc.	Purpose: Why was this document created?	Outside Information: What specific historical information outside of the document can you connect to the document?
Sojourner Truth					
Elizabeth Cady Stanton					
Mary Church Terrell					
W.E.B. Du Bois (editor of <i>The Crisis</i>)					
Frederick Douglass					
Mary B. Talbert					

VOICES OF THE WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT GRAPHIC ORGANIZER (CON'T)

Based on the primary sources, what were some of the compelling arguments for African American women's suffrage? How did different suffragists set up their arguments?

Based on the primary sources, how did racial divisions in the United States pose challenges to the woman's movement and lead to problems for African Americans?

What questions do you still have about woman's suffrage?



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