Suffrage Movement in Oregon

Overlapping Experiences:
Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Abigail Scott Duniway, and Beatrice Morrow Cannady

This curriculum may be successfully used with or without a museum visit.

Developed by Sarah Anderson in consultation with OHS staff and advisory board.
# Suffrage Movement in Oregon

## Overview

Students learn about the lives, experiences, and perspectives of three activists from the suffragist era through video, primary sources, and secondary sources. They then build a three-circle Venn diagram to gain more insight into the similarities and differences between black and white activists.

## Learning Objectives

**Students will understand that:**

- As citizens and activists, black suffragists worked to overcome both racial and gender discrimination.
- Voting rights were not the only goal of many activists in the suffrage era; enfranchisement was a tool to achieve increased civil rights in general.
- Owning, editing, and writing for newspapers gave voice to a multitude of women during the suffrage era.

**Students will be able to:**

- Compare and contrast the beliefs and experiences of different historical figures based on evidence from primary and secondary sources.
- Demonstrate the difference between an article and an editorial.

## Guiding Questions

- How did race shape the experiences and beliefs of suffrage-era activists? What role does intersectionality play in the history of the woman suffrage movement?
- What is the significance of suffrage within the fight to secure civil rights for all people in the United States?
- How did/do activists use journalism and writing as a tool for advocacy? What is the role of journalism in a democracy?
- What is the difference between a newspaper article and an editorial?

## Background Information

The three women who serve as subjects for this lesson all fought for women's rights, and they all used writing as a strategic tool through newspaper articles, books, and speeches. Wells-Barnett and Cannady also fought for civil rights, as informed by their experiences as black women in the United States. For them, the right to vote only granted as much political power as was available to black men.
For Cannady, that meant working towards policies such as a public accommodation law in Oregon to address discrimination against black men and women in stores, theaters, and other places. For Wells-Barnett, who lived in Chicago, the vote was a political tool to work towards passing a federal anti-lynching law.

For many black women living in the South, the 19th amendment did not secure the vote, because Jim Crow laws prevented black people from accessing the polls. Not until race-based laws and discrimination were overridden by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 would most black women in the South actually gain voting rights.

To learn more about each woman, see the following articles:

- **Ida B. Wells**: [https://suffrage100ma.org/ida-b-wells/](https://suffrage100ma.org/ida-b-wells/)
- **Abigail Scott Duniway**: [https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/abigail_scott_duniway/](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/abigail_scott_duniway/)
- **Beatrice Morrow Cannady**: [https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/cannady_beatrice_morrow/](https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/cannady_beatrice_morrow/)

Note that Wells-Barnett wrote very powerfully and graphically about lynching as a way to educate and gain support for an anti-lynching movement. See the “Additional Educator Resources” section below for resources on how to prepare your students for content and conversations on the topic of lynching.

<table>
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<th><strong>Background Information (continued)</strong></th>
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<th><strong>Delivery Time</strong></th>
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<td>Three to four 45-minute class periods</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Remote Teaching Guide</strong></th>
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<td>These documents are not meant to be a replacement for the lesson plan, but are intended to be used alongside it to guide delivery modifications. › <strong>Overlapping Experiences Remote Learning Modification</strong> › <strong>General tips for promoting discussion and engagement online</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Vocabulary</strong></th>
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| › **Civil Rights**: the rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality  
› **Discrimination**: the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex  
› **Intersectionality**: the interconnected nature of social categories such as race, class, and gender; these often create overlapping experiences of discrimination or disadvantage |
### Vocabulary
(continued)

- **Lynching:** premeditated extrajudicial killing by a group; in American history, lynchings were carried out by mobs (uncontrolled groups), mostly against black American men, as punishment for an alleged offense without a legal trial.
- **Prejudice:** preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.
- **Primary Source:** information about an event or time in the past made by someone who lived during that time and learned about or participated in the event or time. Some examples include a letter, speech, or artifact, such as a basket or shoe, as long as they were made or used by the person at that time.
- **Secondary Source:** information about an event or time in the past that was created after the fact by someone who did not experience it first-hand or participate in the events. Examples include scholarly books, articles, and reference books such as encyclopedias.
- **Suffrage:** the right to vote in political elections.

### Materials Needed
- Overlapping Experiences Resource Sheets
- Overlapping Experiences Note-Taking Sheets
- Three circle Venn diagram
- Blank newspaper template sheets
- Computers for viewing video (optional)
- Chart paper or other type of large paper for creating Venn diagram
- Markers

### Step by Step Instructions

#### Step One:
Tell students that many women wanted the right to vote, including both white women and women of color. All women faced (and still face) discrimination, but women of color faced (and still face) the added layer of racial and/or ethnic discrimination (and possibly discrimination based on language or nationality). If your students have not yet learned about intersectionality, this may be a good place for a lesson or a refresher. See “Teacher Notes” below for a lesson resource. Alternatively, you could follow up this lesson with more about intersectionality.

#### Step Two:
To explore this idea of overlapping experiences, we will learn about three activists, two from Oregon and one from the South/Midwest. As we learn, we will take notes so that we can compare their lives, experiences, and perspectives. We will be using video, primary sources, and secondary sources.
You have a few different choices in how to share the Overlapping Experiences Resource Sheets with your students:

› Dedicate one class period a day to each activist (a total of three class periods). During that class period, everyone will watch the video, explore the primary documents, and choose one or two secondary sources to read. They will use the Overlapping Experiences Note-Taking Sheets to collect observations and information.

› Assign each activist to one-third of the class and have students use the resource sheets to explore the material in the resource sheets. Students will need some way to view the videos in pairs or small groups. Throughout, they will be taking notes in the Overlapping Experiences Note-Taking Sheets. When it is time to complete the Venn diagram, each group will need a representative for each activist.

› An option that combines the two above is to have three stations in your classroom, one for each activist. Each station will have a computer for viewing the videos, a few sets of the primary sources, and copies of the secondary sources. Students rotate through the stations over 2–3 class periods, using the Overlapping Experiences Note-Taking Sheets to collect and record what they learn.

Step Three:
Once students have completed their note-taking sheets, bring students together in pairs or small groups to create a three circle Venn diagram comparing the lives, experiences, and perspectives of Wells-Barnett, Duniway, and Cannady. Students can either use the document included with this lesson, or use it as a template to create a larger version on larger paper. If your students are not familiar with Venn diagrams, provide a short mini-lesson.

Step Four:
After completing the diagram, use the following questions to guide a whole-class or small group discussion, or as prompts for a reflective writing.

› What do you notice about the overlapping lives of the three activists we learned about? Where did their lives most overlap? Where was there the least amount of overlap?
› What do you notice about the experiences of Wells-Barnett and Cannady compared with Duniway?
› What questions came up for you during this activity? What do you still want to know?
› What did you learn from this activity that you didn’t know before?
Step Five:
Hopefully students noticed that all three activists used newspapers and other forms of writing to give voice to their causes and beliefs. Duniway was one of the only women in the nineteenth-century American West to own a newspaper. Hers was called *The New Northwest*. Cannady became owner and editor of *The Advocate* after being in the role of associate editor and manager for many years. Wells-Barnett wrote for different newspapers and ultimately became co-owner of the *Conservator*. As owners and editors, all three women wrote editorials for their newspapers. Ask students if they know the difference between an article and an editorial.

Step Six:
Portland has been home to many newspapers over its history, including several papers run by black owners for the black community, most of which have gone out of business, just as have most other newspapers. Today, the two primary newspapers for black readers in Oregon are *The Skanner* and *The Portland Observer*. *The Oregonian*, which was run by Abigail Scott Duniway’s brother during the suffrage era, is still a prominent news outlet in Oregon. Use the following links for students to explore different examples of present-day editorials.

- [https://www.theskanner.com/opinion/skanner-editorials](https://www.theskanner.com/opinion/skanner-editorials)
- [https://www.oregonlive.com/editorials/](https://www.oregonlive.com/editorials/)

Step Seven:
Ask students, if they were able to own and edit their own newspaper, what would they do with it? What issues would they give voice to? What topics would they want to educate people about? What would they name it? (Consider the names of the newspapers above and the meaning behind them). Give students the blank newspaper template to complete. The will need to fill in:

- A title/banner on the top of the first page
- Two articles on the first page about events/topics that they think are important for people to know about
- Two illustrations or graphics
- On the back page, an editorial/opinion piece about a topic/issue that is important to them.

If you like, you could also ask students to write articles on a theme or topic such as voting rights today, or equal rights in schools.
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<th>Step by Step Instructions (continued)</th>
<th><strong>Step Eight:</strong> Students can share their completed newspaper templates with each other or you, or they can collate them into a class newspaper collection. You could follow up this lesson with the <em>Nevertheless, They Persisted</em> lesson <em>Becoming Historians: Investigating the Past</em>, in which students learn how history is an evolving process and then investigate historical newspapers in Oregon to discover new information about women’s history. Students could specifically look at editorials in editions of <em>The Advocate</em> and <em>The New Northwest</em>.</th>
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</table>
| **Assessments** | › Note-taking sheets  
› Written reflection on one or more of the above discussion questions.  
› Completed newspaper templates. Check for understanding: difference between an article and an editorial.  

**Exit Ticket Slip**  
› What is 1 thing that all of the activists had in common?  
› What is 1 thing unique to each of them?  
› What is 1 thing you learned about how the experience of black activists differed from white activists during the suffrage era? |
| **Teacher Notes** | *Understanding Intersectionality* lesson from PBS helps lay groundwork for this concept, looking at several different movements in American history. Consider weaving it in, or leading it before or after this lesson.  
If you are pressed for time, you could limit the number of resources that students use to collect information. For example, you could only use the videos, or only the videos and primary sources. You can also pre-select one or two secondary sources to simplify the process for students. |
| **Support for All Students** | › Limit the number of sources for students to use.  
› Have students work in pairs.  
› Model making a Venn diagram on another topic for the class. |
| **Extensions** | Before she became an anti-lynching and woman suffrage advocate, Ida B. Wells-Barnett courageously sued the Chesapeake, Ohio, and Southwestern Railroad Company for making her move out of the women’s car after she had purchased a first-class ticket. When she refused to move, railway workers threw her off the train. She won her case, but then lost it at the Tennessee State Supreme Court level. |
### Extensions (continued)

This is a good example of how intersectionality works. Wells argued that she was in the correct car because it was the car for ladies. The first judge agreed. But because of her race, the higher courts ultimately ruled against her. Share this story and the following primary documents with your students.

- This is a transcription of an article summarizing the first ruling (note how she is described in the title). *A Darky Damsel Obtains a Verdict for Damages Against the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad,* Memphis Appeal-Avalanche, December 25, 1884, typescript, 4 p.
- This overview summaries the second ruling: “Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Tennessee,” Shelby County, April Term, 1887: 613–615, 631, regarding appeal and overturn of *Railroad v. Wells* case, photocopy, 3 p., and typescript, 3 p.

### Connect to the National Story

- This lesson from the National Women’s History Museum further explores the lives, experiences, and beliefs of three black female activists: Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Rosa Parks, and Fannie Lou Hammer.
- For more lessons and articles about black women in the national suffrage movement, see the section titled “Connect to the National Story” in the *Nevertheless, They Persisted* lesson *When Did All Women Achieve Voting Rights in Oregon?: Intersectionality and Suffrage in Oregon.*

### Additional Educator Resources

A few resources to help you teach about lynching:

- Teaching Tolerance put together this toolkit for how to teach about lynching. Use it!
- “An Outrage,” a 30-minute documentary about lynching in the South, is available for rent on Vimeo.
- For a brief overview, the article *Teaching ‘America’s National Crime’* from Teaching Tolerance provides some basic background on lynching.
- Connect to Oregon by sharing this recent story of how a PSU student and Coos Bay is memorializing Oregon’s only documented lynching.
- The Classroom Law Project has put together this page with tons of resources for teaching about lynching, including some with connections to Oregon.

### Oregon Social Studies Standards

- **6.4** Recognize historical and contemporary means of changing societies and promoting the common good.
6.17 Identify and examine the roles and impact of diverse groups of people (e.g. gender roles, social roles, political and economic structures) within the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

6.21 Identify issues related to historical events to recognize power, authority, and governance as it relates to systems of oppression and its impact on ethnic and religious groups and other traditionally marginalized groups in the modern era (bias and injustice, discrimination, stereotypes).

6.24 Gather, interpret, document, and use information from multiple sources and diverse media, distinguish facts from opinions while recognizing points of view through inquiry and research.

6.27 Assess individual and collective capacities to take action to address local and regional issues, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies and potential outcomes.

6.25 Identify issues related to historical events to recognize power, authority, religion, and governance as it relates to systemic oppression and its impact on Indigenous peoples and ethnic and religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups in the modern era.

7.28 Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

7.29 Assess individual and collective capacities to take informed action to address local, regional, and global problems, taking into account a range of possible levers of power, strategies and potential outcomes.

8.10 Explain specific roles and responsibilities of citizens (such as voters, jurors, taxpayers, members of the armed forces, petitioners, protesters, and office-holders).

8.9 Analyze the effect of historical and contemporary means of changing societies, and promoting the common good.

8.27 Determine and explain the importance and contributions (products, events, actions, and ideas) of key people, cultures, ethnic groups (including individuals who are American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Americans of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent), religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups (women, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender) in Oregon, the United States, and the world.
8.25 Evaluate the influence of the intersections of identity, including but not limited to gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, and class on the experiences of peoples, groups, and events.

8.28 Identify issues related to historical events to recognize power, authority, and governance as it relates to systemic oppression and its impact on ethnic and religious groups, as well as other historically persecuted individuals in the United States in the modern era (bias, injustice, discrimination, and stereotypes).

8.29 Use and interpret relevant primary and secondary sources pertaining to U.S. history from multiple perspectives.

8.30 Synthesize information and data to construct an account of historical events that includes multiple sources and varied perspectives.

8.31 Analyze intersecting identities and relationships within the living histories of ethnic groups such as individuals who are American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Americans of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent), religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups (women, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender) in the United States.

8.32 Critique and analyze information for point of view, historical context, distortion, bias propaganda, and relevance including sources with conflicting information in order to question the dominant narratives in history.

High School

HS.10 Explain the roles and responsibilities of active members of a democracy and the role of individuals, social movements, and governments in various current events.

HS.11 Examine the pluralistic realities of society recognizing issues of equity and evaluating the need for change.

HS.55 Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of world, U.S., and Oregon history.

HS.61 Analyze and explain persistent historical, social, and political issues, conflicts, and compromises in regards to power, inequality, and justice, and their connections to current events and movements.
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<th>Oregon Social Studies Standards (continued)</th>
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<td>› <strong>HS.63</strong> Identify and analyze ethnic groups (including individuals who are American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Americans of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent), religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups (women, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender), their relevant historic and current contributions to Oregon, the United States, and the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.65</strong> Identify and analyze the nature of systemic oppression on ethnic and religious groups as well as other traditionally marginalized groups, in the pursuit of justice and equality in Oregon, the United States, and the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.66</strong> Examine and analyze the multiple perspectives and contributions of ethnic and religious groups as well as traditionally marginalized groups within a dominant society and how different values and views shape Oregon, the United States, and the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.67</strong> Evaluate historical sources for perspective, limitations, accuracy, and historical context.</td>
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<td>› <strong>HS.68</strong> Select and analyze historical information, including contradictory evidence, from a variety of primary and secondary sources to support or reject a claim.</td>
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<tr>
<td>› <strong>HS.73</strong> Identify and analyze multiple and diverse perspectives as critical consumers of information.</td>
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