

Women's Suffrage in Utah

Materials Needed:

Projector to show demonstrative slideshow - Computer to use Quill for each student (not required) – Worksheets

Teacher Power Point Notes

Essential Question:

What is suffrage and why is it important to democracy?

HOOK: Conduct an in-class vote on a relevant or interesting topic to your students. For example, you could conduct a vote on whether or not middle schools and high schools should use the block schedule or not. Have ALL students vote on this issue, and then conduct another vote, this time restricting the number of students who vote by saying something like “those of you wearing Nike shoes are no longer allowed to vote this time.” Vote on the same issue again and assess how the results of the vote have changed. This is meant to represent how women in Utah Territory were able to vote and then had their voting rights taken away. Relate this to your class results and discuss how prohibiting women from voting might have affected the results of votes on important issues.

History of Suffrage in Utah

- **Main idea**—Women had the right to vote in the Utah Territory from 1870–1887. Utah was the first territory to hold an election in which women could vote.

Edmunds Tucker Anti-Polygamy Act

- **Main idea**—The 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Anti-Polygamy Act disenfranchised polygamous men and all women in Utah Territory. The act prohibited polygamy and punished it with fines of up to \$800 and five years in prison.

Important Figures in the History of Utah Suffrage

- **Seraph Young:** The first woman in the United States to vote under a women's equal suffrage law.

<https://www.utahwomenshistory.org/bios/seraph-young/>

- **Martha Hughes Cannon:** The first female state senator in the United States. She was also the first woman in Salt Lake City to register to vote. When she ran for state senate, she ran against her husband and beat him.
<https://www.utahwomenshistory.org/bios/marthahughescannon/>
- **B.H. Roberts:** A Delegate in the Utah Constitutional Convention. Opposed women's suffrage in fear of it stopping the Utah Constitution from being ratified. Roberts was an LDS scholar who wrote many books on the history of the LDS church.
- **Heber M. Wells:** A Delegate in the Utah Constitutional Convention. Argued in favor of women's suffrage. Wells was the first Governor of the State of Utah. He served as Governor from 1896-1905.

WORKSHEET NOTES

Use primary sources provided in Quill surrounding women's suffrage:

Below is the proposition pertaining to Women's Suffrage that generated the most debate. This proposition was later included in the final draft of the Constitution.

Mr. EVANS (Weber) Proposition on Women's Suffrage: e697304

Whereas, both political parties in this Territory have declared in favor of woman suffrage; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the rights of citizens of the State of Utah to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on any account of sex. Both male and female citizens of this State shall equally enjoy all civil, political, and religious rights and privileges.

Petitions from various women's groups around Utah: E692730 Utah Territory, E692051 Weber County Ladies Petition, E692389 Utah County Women's Suffrage Petition, E692727 Woman's Suffrage: Salt Lake City, E692909 Davis County Women's petition, E692912 Juab County Petition

These petitions were given to the Convention by various women's groups around Utah, with the goal of having their voices heard, and for women's suffrage to be included in the Constitution.

Debates in the Utah Constitutional Convention on Women's Suffrage:

E698765 - A speech given by B.H. Roberts - In this section of debate Roberts argues against including women's suffrage in the Constitution in fear that Utah could be denied statehood due to its inclusion.

E698843 - A speech given by Heber M. Wells - In this section of debate Wells argues for the inclusion of women's suffrage in the Constitution stating that, "The right of representation to all persons who are taxed is in my opinion an inherent right and a right which in this country was declared over a hundred years ago to be formidable to tyrants only."

E698770 - A speech given by Andrew S. Anderson - In this section of debate Anderson argues for the inclusion of women's suffrage in the Constitution stating that women suffer just as much as their male counterparts from poor legislation, so why bar them from helping make these monumental decisions.

E698794 – A speech given by Anthony Canute Lund – In this section of debate Lund argues against the inclusion of women's suffrage in the Constitution since if women have the right to vote and run for political office, it will distract women from their duties as wives and mothers.