

The Anti-Suffragists: Challenges to the Ballot

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Description: Following Seneca Falls there were significant divisions amongst suffragists, notably over the 15th Amendment which excluded women from voting and the use of racially divisive tactics by the National Woman Suffrage Association. In addition, there were multifaceted and nuanced ways in which suffragists were challenged, both by men and women, in their efforts to win the ballot. In this lesson, students will examine suffrage not just as an issue colored by gender, but by immigration status, race, and myriad other factors based on a close read of primary sources produced by those opposed to suffrage. This lesson will serve as an introduction to the concept of intersectionality and used as a lens to understand the world.

Short Description: The 19th Amendment did not come without a prolonged fight. Students will examine rationale for opposing suffrage through the lens of class, immigration status and race. Students will conduct their own research to uncover additional rationale.

Grade Level: 9th-12th

Time: 1-2 45 minute periods

Objective:

1. Students will create and test their own hypotheses for why some Americans opposed the 19th Amendment.
2. Students, based on their close examination of primary sources, will determine why some Americans opposed the 19th Amendment
3. Students will produce a short response, based on what they have learned in class, to explain why opposition to the 19th Amendment existed, and assess the validity of their arguments.

Prerequisites: Students should be introduced to female suffragist leaders, their arguments for suffrage, and the efforts of NAWSA (National American Woman Suffrage Association). Students should also be familiar with the significance of Seneca Falls and the divisions within the suffrage movement.

Materials

1. Primary Sources (pgs 3-8)
2. Graphic Organizer (pg 9)

Procedures

1. Do Now: Create a hypothesis! Why did people, including women, oppose suffrage for women?
2. Class share out: Students will verbally respond to the Do Now. Expected responses include apathy for the cause, sexism, and the cult of domesticity.
3. Inform students that they are going to test their hypothesis today by closely examining primary sources created by Anti-Suffragists.

4. Students will complete graphic organizer (included) as they examine primary sources. Teacher should circulate, ask students what they think about primary sources and observe general reaction. The sources include a wide-range of opinions and are accessible for most groups of students.

5. Class Discussion based on student work. Potential discussion questions are included below

- Why did people oppose women's suffrage?
- What were the push and pull factors which made the decision to support or oppose suffrage difficult for women in particular? (Teacher can introduce intersectionality and explain that the decision to support or oppose is not based solely on gender)
- Which arguments for the anti-suffragists do you find compelling, if any?
- Do we still find these arguments or rhetoric about the role of women or other groups today? If so, where?

Assessment/Homework: Based on what you learned today in your exploration of primary sources regarding opponents to suffrage as well as class discussion, juxtapose your hypotheses with what we have learned. What is similar? What is different? How does this relate to intersectionality?

You will incorporate one 19th or 20th century anti-suffrage song or political cartoon into your response. I recommend using the Library of Congress or National Archives for cartoons, and YouTube for music. Generally, a Google search can be fruitful as well, as long as you consider the reliability of your sources.

Standards

D2.His.4.9-12.

Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.1.9-12

Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

PETITION

From the Women Voters Anti-Suffrage Party of New York

TO THE
UNITED STATES SENATE

Whereas, This country is now engaged in the greatest war in history, and
Whereas, The advocates of the Federal Amendment, though urging it as a war measure, announce, through their president, Mrs. Catt, that its passage "means a simultaneous campaign in 48 States. It demands organization in every precinct; activity, agitation, education in every corner. Nothing less than this nation-wide, vigilant, unceasing campaign will win the ratification," therefore be it

Resolved, That our country in this hour of peril should be spared the harassing of its public men and the distracting of its people from work for the war, and further

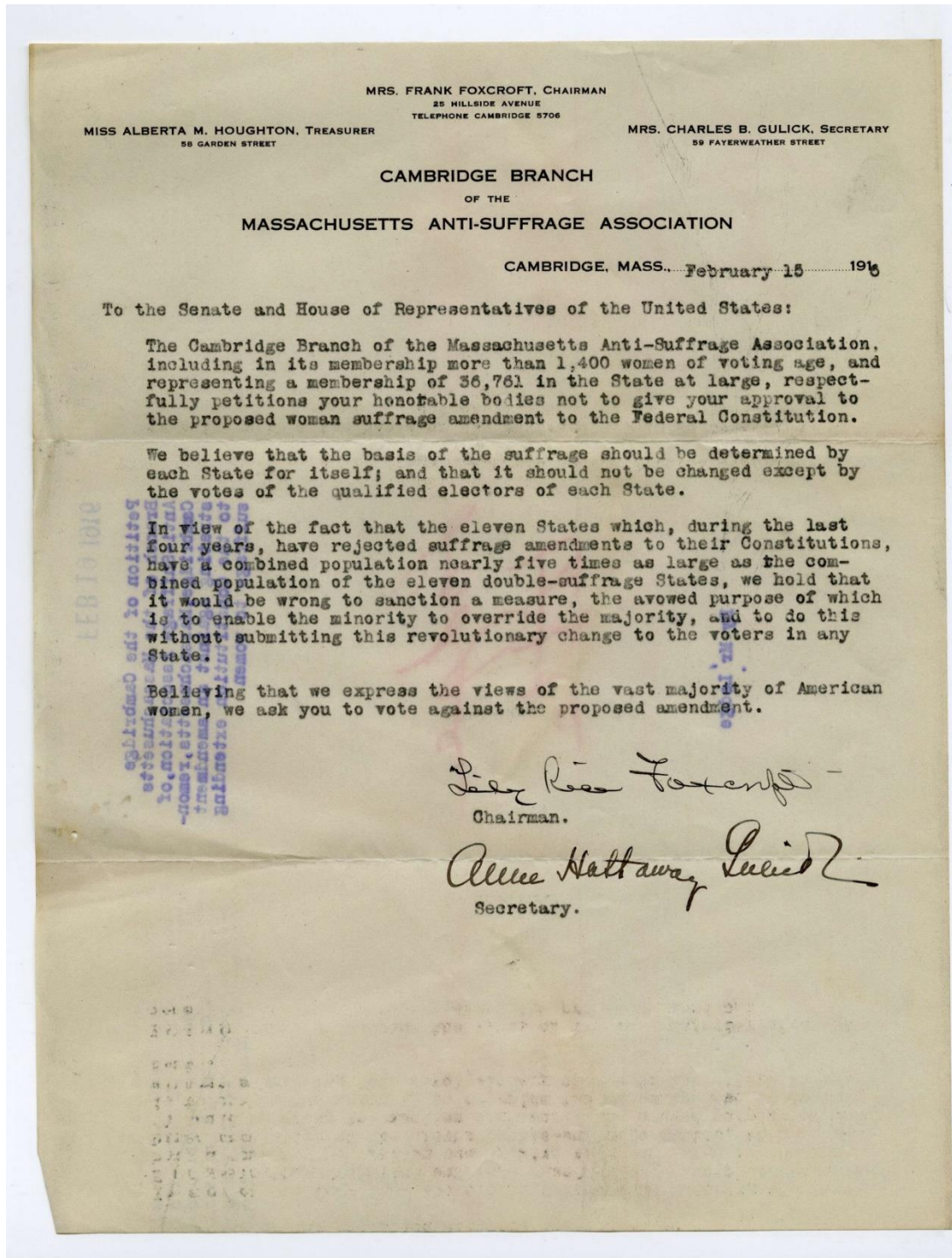
Resolved, That the United States Senate be respectfully urged to pass no measure involving such a radical change in our government while the attention of the patriotic portion of the American people is concentrated on the all-important task of winning the war, and during the absence of over a million men abroad.

NAME	ADDRESS	SERVICE
Jean M.A. Staples	528 Richmond Ave.	National League for Woman's Service
Mrs. G. K. Staples	528 Richmond Ave.	
Betty A. Freely	200 Niagara St	National League for Women's Service
Mable Spawton	410 Hoyt St	"
Emma Burris	1698 Main St	National League for Woman's Service
Ruth L. Staples	528 Richmond Ave	Govt Service
Mrs. H. C. Wood	75 Hampshire St	Bureau of Aircraft Production
Elizabeth Cohen	426 Wilson St.	Red Cross
Evelyn Cantor	205 Hickory	Red Cross
Mrs. F. L. Tucker	168 Delaware Ave	
Bessie Murtaugh	215 Northland Ave	Red Cross
Mrs. Frances Drexton	39 Bennett St.	Red Cross
Mrs. Lou Jackson	424 Jefferson St	
Mrs. J. Licht	424 Jefferson St	
Helene Stern	795 Duhrst St	
Mrs. H. C. Stern	" " "	
Ethel Stearns	" " "	

Context: This petition was sent to the United States Senate and includes the names of women opposed to women's suffrage in 1917.

Source: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/7452146>

Document B: Letter to Congress from the Cambridge Branch of the Massachusetts Anti-Suffrage Association



Context: The Massachusetts Anti-Suffrage Association sent this letter to the Senate and House of Representatives asking Congress to oppose the proposed woman suffrage amendment.

Source: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/74884215>

Document C: Letter Regarding the Federal Amendment from Ellen F. Vanderbilt

THE FEDERAL AMENDMENT

- Do you realize that the Federal Amendment aims at woman's suffrage through the legislatures, and is not referred to the people?
- Do you realize that, if the Federal Amendment passes this session of Congress by two-thirds majority, it will be referred to the states, and, if ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states, woman suffrage becomes the law of all the states?
- Do you realize that woman suffrage has been defeated by 14 states through the will of the people since 1913?
- Do you realize that the passage of the Federal Amendment will not only nullify the will of the people in these states, but give no opportunity for Rhode Island and many other states to vote on the question at all?
- Do you realize that the politicians and not the people decreed presidential suffrage to Rhode Island?
- Do you realize that election expenses have been doubled in Illinois since the women have voted there?
- Do you realize that the population of Rhode Island is more than 50% foreign, and that these people may be the special prey of pacifists and anti-American influences?
- Do you realize that every pacifist is a suffragist, and that the women of the West voted for Wilson because he had kept us out of war?
- Do you realize that many leading suffragists, like Jane Addams, are pacifists, and that many suffragists before the New York election said, if women had the vote they would stop the war?
- Do you realize that the vote of New York state, outside of New York city, defeated woman suffrage by nearly 4,000?
- Do you realize that it was the unprecedented increase in the socialist vote in New York city, 142,000 against 36,000 (the highest previous vote), which gave woman suffrage to New York state?
- Do you realize that every socialist is a suffragist, and that socialism in New York city is anti-Americanism, many leaders having left the socialist party, denouncing it as anti-American?

It is the right of our Representatives at Washington to learn if their constituents are opposed to the passage of the Federal Amendment for woman suffrage at this time.

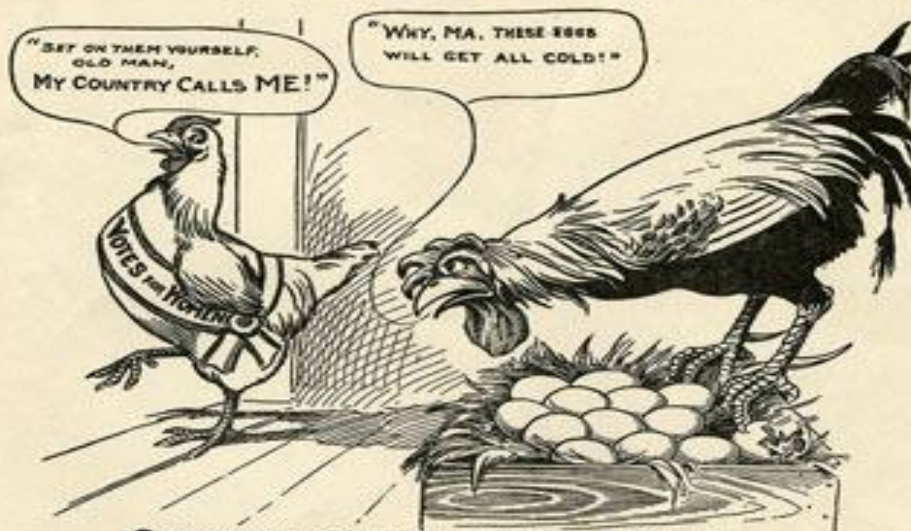
As a patriotic American, will you not ask them to vote against the Federal Amendment, to the end that every issue may be subordinated to the one great purpose of winning the war?

Ellen F. Vanderbilt.
(*Ann French Vanderbilt*)
Newport, R.I.

Context: Ellen F. Vanderbilt of Newport, RI, sent this letter to members of the Senate and House of Representatives. She expresses her opposition to the Federal Amendment for woman suffrage (the 19th Amendment), describing it as anti-American and an increase to the socialist vote.

Source: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/74884297>

America When Femininized



The More a Politician Allows Himself to be Henpecked
The More Henpecking We Will Have in Politics.

A Vote for Federal Suffrage is a Vote for Organized Female
Nagging Forever.

"American pep which was the result of a masculine dominated country will soon be a thing of the past. With the collapse of the male ascendancy in this country we can look forward to a nation of degeneration. The suppression of sex will ultimately have its harvest in decadence, a phenomenon already beginning. The effect of the social revolution on American character will be to make "sissies" of American men—a process already well under way."—Dr. William J. Hickson, Chicago University.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE denatures both men and women; it masculinizes women and femininizes men. The history of ancient civilization has proven that a weakening of the man power of nations has been but a pre-runner of decadence in civilization.

Will you stand for this? Prove that you will not by voting to Reject the Federal Woman Suffrage Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

**SOUTHERN WOMAN'S LEAGUE FOR REJECTION OF THE
SUSAN B. ANTHONY AMENDMENT**

WE SERVE THAT OUR STATES MAY LIVE, AND LIVING, PRESERVE THE UNION

Context: This pamphlet was distributed in 1920 in the State of Tennessee to oppose the 19th Amendment.

Source: <http://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15138coll27/id/6>

Document E: Speech in Congress, Representative John Moon

"It has been insisted that the real purpose of this amendment is to deprive the Southern States of representation in part in Congress...."

In those Southern States where the colored population outnumbers the white, to double the number of ignorant voters by giving the colored woman the right to vote would produce a condition that would be absolutely intolerable. We owe something to the wishes and the sentiments of the people of our sister States struggling to maintain law and order and white supremacy...."

Context: Source: Representative John A. Moon of Tennessee, speech in House of Representatives, January 10, 1918, on the issue of the woman suffrage amendment.

Document F: Political Cartoon



Context: Illustration shows a jury of men crying as they present a "Not Guilty" verdict; standing before the jury, a man, also crying, embraces a woman.

Source: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2011660530/>

Document G: The Anti's Alphabet

A is for Antis with Banner afloat;
B is for Battle against woman's vote.
C is for Children we fight to protect;
D is for Duties we never neglect.
E is for Energy strengthened by hope.
F is for Folly with which we must cope.
G is the germ of unrest in the brain.
H is for Home, which we mean to maintain.
I is Insurgency now in the air;
J is calm Judgement we're bringing to bear.
K is for Knights, our American men;
L, Loyal Service far out of our ken.
M is for Might in our cause to prevail;
N, Noble standards that naught can assail.
O, Obligations we cannot ignore;
P is for Principle marching before.
Q is the Quibble which we must combat;
R is for Reason that answers it pat.
S is Sound Sense, which we have on our side;
T is for Truths that cannot be denied.
U is for Union, whose aid we entreat;
V, Votes for women, we're sworn to defeat.
W is wages the suffragettes claim;
X is for Xanthic, the color and fame.
Y is for Yankee, of Red, White and Blue;
Z is the Zeal to protect them for you.

Context: The Woman's Protest, an anti-suffrage newspaper, published this "Anti's Alphabet" in August, 1912.

Graphic Organizer: Why Oppose Suffrage?

Directions: Based on four documents, complete the graphic organizer to explore why suffrage was opposed.

<i>Directly quoting the text, why did people oppose women gaining the vote?</i>	<i>How is the document intended to make the viewer feel?</i>	<i>To what extent do you believe the document is successful in its aims?</i>