

The Magic Sash Episode 4: Locked Up

This lesson plan accompanies Episode 4 of the podcast *The Magic Sash*, produced through a partnership of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, National Park Service, public media organization PRX, and Gen-Z Media.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

When should we be able to speak for ourselves?
When should others make decisions for us?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Students will identify the Silent Sentinels and summarize their significance in the passage of the 19th Amendment.
- 2 Students will consider the consequences women suffragists received for their actions in protesting and picketing for voting rights.
- 3 Students will create a political cartoon that supports or opposes an issue with appropriate language and symbols.

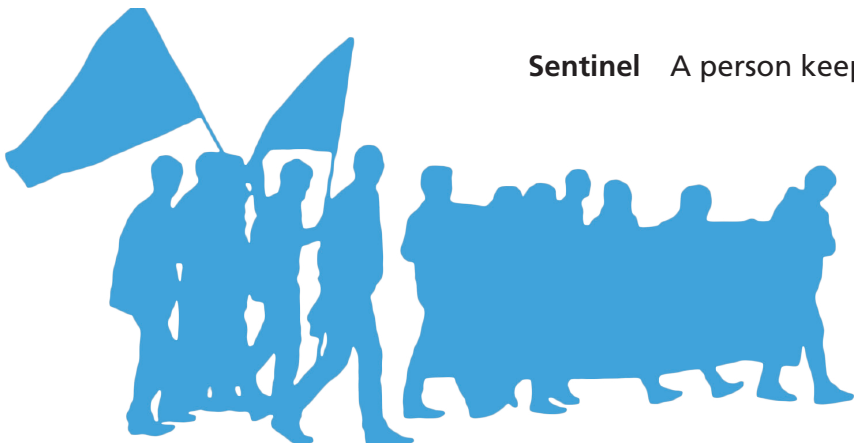
IMPORTANT WORDS TO REMEMBER

Bail A sum of money paid to release a person from jail until they appear in court.

Picketing Persons standing to protest or demonstrate about something.

Amendment A formal or official change to a law.

Sentinel A person keeping watch over something.

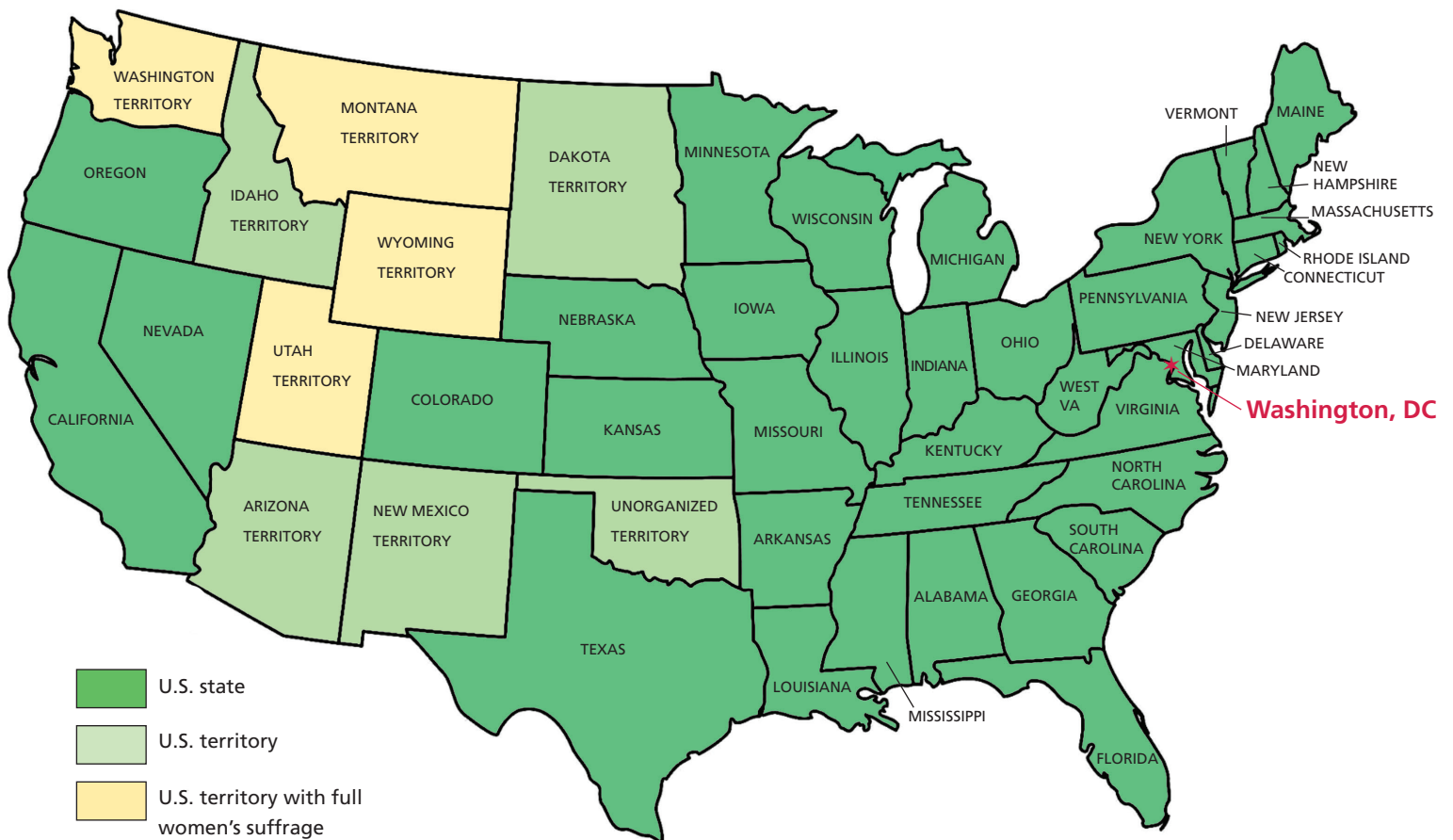


LISTEN TO THE PODCAST

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<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/womenshistory/magicsashep4.htm>

FIND THE LOCATION The United States in 1888—Washington, DC



This map shows the United States in 1888, the year of the International Council of Women Convention. In the years since Susan B. Anthony and others were arrested for voting in 1872, the U.S. saw the end of Reconstruction of the South following the Civil War, the rapid rise of the petroleum and steel industries, expansion of railroads, migration to the western states and territories, and a rise in new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. The country was changing and growing rapidly.

Compare this map with the map from Episode 3 and complete the following activities:

- Find the star locating Washington, DC, the city where Frederick Douglass spoke at the International Council of Women Convention.
- Do you think selecting Washington, DC as the location of this women’s convention made a symbolic statement? What does this city represent to the public and to other countries around the world?
- Count the number of states on the map. _____
- Count the number of territories on the map. _____
- How many more states entered the union since the 1872 map from Episode 3? _____
- How many more territories entered the union since the 1872 map from Episode 3? _____
- How many more places are there where women have voting rights since the 1872 map from Episode 3? _____ Do any states allow women to vote?

BACKGROUND HISTORY



Alison Turnbull Hopkins outside the White House, 1917.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTY COLLECTION

Background History: The Silent Sentinels

When Susan B. Anthony joined with several other women in Rochester, New York, to register and vote in 1872, it would not be the only time women were jailed for trying to vote. In January 1917, a group of women called the “Silent Sentinels” were arrested and imprisoned for picketing outside the White House. Their story helped convince the public and lawmakers that it was time to change the voting laws.

The Silent Sentinels stood outside the White House gates six days every week beginning in January 1917. This was the first organized group ever to picket at the White House. They held signs that demanded the president support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would provide women the vote. At first, the newspapers supported the picketers. Later that year, that support was lost when the United States entered the world war being fought across the ocean. Many people felt that it was unpatriotic for suffragists to criticize the president and government during a time of war.



Helena Hill Weed in DC jail, 1917

NATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTY COLLECTION

The Silent Sentinels continued their picketing at the White House for months. That summer, the police arrested the women and charged them with blocking traffic. They refused to pay fines for their release from jail. Instead, the suffragists said that the First Amendment of the Constitution allowed them freedom of speech and they chose to remain in jail.

Some of the women were sent to the Occoquan Workhouse in Virginia where the living conditions were harsh and they did not receive enough healthy food to stay well. Some refused to eat or perform the work assigned to the prisoners. Many of the suffragists were even beaten or forced to eat by the prison guards. Friends and relatives of the suffragists in the Occoquan Workhouse informed the newspapers about the cruel conditions and beatings. Two weeks later, a judge ordered the suffragists released.

Even after suffering many weeks in jail, the Silent Sentinels returned to picketing at the White House gates. They also traveled across the country and made speeches about their experiences. Their audiences were shocked to learn about the harsh treatment of the women and the suffragists regained public support. By January 1918, one year after they began their picketing at the White House, President Woodrow Wilson announced his support for a women's suffrage amendment.

THINK ABOUT IT

- 1 When Susan B. Anthony was arrested with several other women for voting in the 1872 election, the deputy U.S. marshal announced that her lawyer paid bail money to release her. Why do you think she tried to refuse to accept the bail and be released? Did she believe the charges of voting illegally were moral?
- 2 When Frederick Douglass spoke at the International Council of Women Convention in Washington, D.C. in 1888, what do you think he meant when he said, "She is her own representative"? Is he speaking about a specific woman or does he have a different meaning? Does he think that women are able to speak for themselves or should they have their husbands and fathers speak for them as the laws at that time required?
- 3 What other groups don't have the right to vote or speak for themselves? What about persons under age 18? Can you think of other groups?

ACTIVITY

Make a Political Cartoon

In this episode, Susan B. Anthony is released from jail on bail after being arrested for voting in the 1872 election. Many newspapers printed political cartoons that were critical of Anthony and her supporters. The cartoons suggested that women suffragists were not following the traditional roles of women and were neglecting their homes and families. Cartoonists that supported women's suffrage created cartoons that called for the release of women jailed for protesting and picketing for change in voting laws.



[Cartoon by E.W. Gustin, 1909.](#)

Below: Picketing White House, 1917

ABOVE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

BELOW: NATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTY COLLECTION

Political cartoons have been used for centuries to express both positive and negative opinions about the government and social issues. Cartoonists use both pictures and language to express their message. Sometimes the cartoons are humorous. Sometimes they portray other emotions. An effective political cartoon must contain words and pictures that represent something familiar to readers. Cartoonists use symbols to represent groups of people, ideas, or events. In the ["Election Day" cartoon](#), the man in the cartoon is wearing an apron which may be a symbol for traditional roles of women in the family while the woman is wearing a necktie which may be a symbol for traditional roles for men.

Create a political cartoon to express your opinion about an issue. You might want to use the same issue from Episodes 1 and 2 or think of something else you support or feel strongly against.





President Wilson Says, "Godspeed to the Cause"

[Political cartoon by Nina Allender 1917.](#)

NATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTY COLLECTION

Some points to consider:

- Who is your cartoon "audience"?
- What is the message you want to tell your audience?
- Are you creating a positive cartoon supporting this issue or a negative cartoon against the issue?
- What symbols will best represent people, places, events or ideas in your message?
- What words will tell your audience how you feel about the issue?
- Do you need to put "labels" on your pictures to identify people or things for your audience?

PLACES

Learn about the women jailed at the Occoquan Workhouse

<https://www.nps.gov/places/occoquan-workhouse.htm>

<https://www.novaparks.com/parks/occoquan-regional-park/history>

Workhouse Arts Center

<https://www.workhousearts.org/>

Learn about the National Woman's Party, the Silent Sentinels, and Nina Allender, political cartoonist, at Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument in Washington, DC

<https://www.nps.gov/bepa/index.htm>

