

The Magic Sash Episode 7: The Vote

This lesson plan accompanies Episode 7 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 QUESTION

How should we remember and commemorate the achievement of women's suffrage 100 years later?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Students will summarize the importance of highly educated and professional women to the women's suffrage movement of the early 20th century.
- 2 Students will research and create a timeline of their state's women's suffrage history.
- 3 Students will identify and explain the important people, places and events in their state's or territory's women's suffrage history.

MEET THE MAIN CHARACTER



Lavinia Dock, ca.1900
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

[Lavinia Dock](#) (1858–1956) Ms. Dock was best known as a pioneer in the profession of nursing but was also an activist for women's rights and women's suffrage. She helped organize and found several professional nursing associations and served on an advisory council to the National Woman's Party. She participated in marches, protests and pickets for women's voting rights. She participated in the Silent Sentinel pickets at the White House where protesters held banners that read "the young are at the gates!"—a quote from an article Dock wrote in the magazine *The Suffragist* in 1917.

IMPORTANT WORDS TO REMEMBER

Mechanical voting machine A device that uses a mechanism to record or tally votes usually through a system of levers; the most common form was invented in 1889 and used until the early 2000s.

Voting booth A room or closed-off area where voters can cast their ballots in privacy.

Lobbying The attempt to influence a politician or public official on issues or actions.

LISTEN TO THE PODCAST

[The Magic Sash Episode 7: The Vote](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/womenshistory/magicsashep7.htm)

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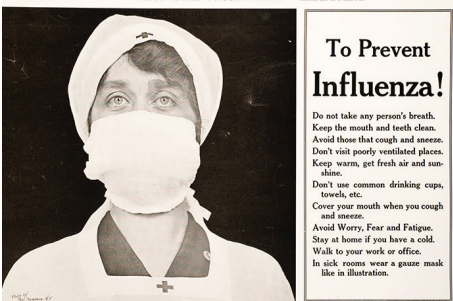
BACKGROUND HISTORY

Lavinia Dock: The Young are at the Gates

<https://www.nps.gov/fomc/learn/historyculture/nurses-and-suffrage.htm>

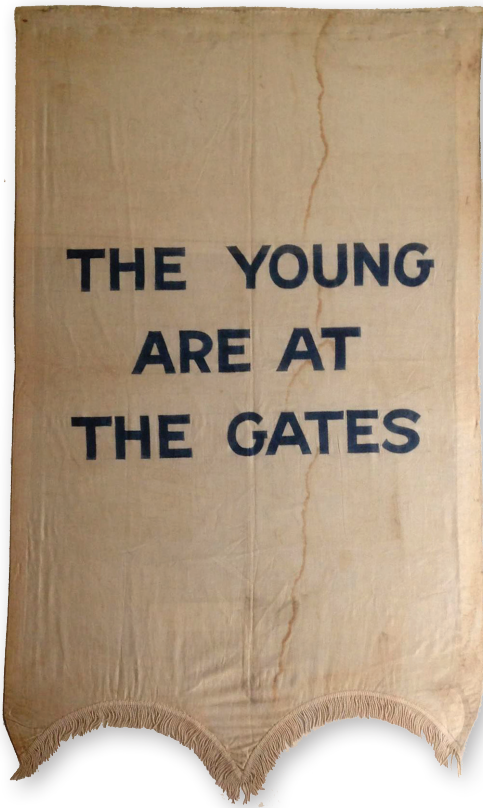
Lavinia Dock was born into a wealthy Pennsylvania family. She was only 18 years old when her mother died, but she inherited some land. That land would provide enough income that Lavinia didn't need to worry about finding a husband or choosing a job that paid enough to support herself. She decided to become a nurse and studied nursing at the Bellevue Hospital in New York City. Following her graduation, she worked as a visiting nurse for the poor in New York. She also traveled to other areas to provide relief following natural disasters and disease outbreaks.

Nurses in the late 1800s did not need any formal education, certification, or licenses. Anyone could call themselves a nurse with little or no training. Nursing schools became more common by 1900, but most trained nurses worked as private caretakers for wealthy people. Hospitals often had volunteer nursing students on their staffs. Nurses began to organize together working for more control over hours, wages, and training standards. In order to have more influence over their own working conditions, professional women like nurses needed to have the vote.



Red Cross nurse demonstrates mask use during Spanish Flu epidemic, 1918.

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Banner used by the National Women's Party during pickets, 1913–20.

Below: Lavinia Dock and Edna Dixon arrested outside White House, 1917

NATIONAL WOMEN'S PARTY COLLECTION

Lavinia Dock became involved in the suffrage movement and was a leader in the National Woman's Party. She wrote many articles in nursing magazines encouraging nurses to join in the suffrage effort. Many nurses organizations at that time, however, felt that it was improper to mix the profession with politics and chose to remain neutral on suffrage. By 1913, more nurses began to support the suffrage movement, and many marched together in the Woman's Procession down Pennsylvania Avenue. Two years later, the American Nurses Association formally supported the 19th Amendment and full woman's suffrage.

Lavinia Dock continued to work for social reforms and for suffrage. She was first arrested in 1896 for attempting to vote and was arrested several more times during the Silent Sentinel pickets at the White House. Dock even served sentences at the Occoquan Workhouse where harsh conditions and treatment resulted in many women being beaten by guards.

In June 1917, Lavinia Dock published an article in the magazine *The Suffragist* that explained her views about why picketing and protesting for suffrage was important. She wrote that young people were fearless enough to challenge unfairness and had the energy to continue the fight even when it looks like nothing was changed. She ended her article with these words:

the old stiff minds must give way. The old selfish minds must go... The young are at the gates!" Soon many suffragists adopted her words and wrote them on the banners held by picketers outside the White House gates.



THINK ABOUT IT

- 1 What did Lavinia Dock mean when she said the “young are at the gates”? Who are the young people she is talking about?
- 2 Why would professional women like Lavinia Dock, who was a trained nurse, be important to the 20th century women’s suffrage movement? What might highly educated and professionally trained women represent to people who believed women’s places should be in the home with her family?

ACTIVITY

The Ratification of the 19th Amendment in Your State

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/womenshistory/19th-amendment-by-state.htm>

Using the web page above, look up your state or territory and make a timeline of the history of the women’s suffrage movement in your state or territory. You can also do additional research to find out more information about the people, places, and events of the women’s suffrage movement leading to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Arrange your timeline from the oldest dates to the newest. Many states and territories did not ratify the 19th Amendment before it was adopted in 1920. Also, there were other important milestones in women’s and voting rights movements after the adoption of the 19th Amendment. Be prepared to explain the people, places, and events featured in your timeline to your classmates or other people who view your timeline. Some points to consider:

- Who were early women’s suffrage supporters in your state or territory?
- Where were some of the important protests, events, rallies or suffrage conventions held in your state or territory?
- What year did women first achieve voting rights in your state or territory? Were they full voting rights or were the rights limited to certain kinds of elections?
- When did your state ratify the 19th Amendment?