CITIZENS AT LAST
Texas Women Fight for the Vote

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About the Film

*Citizens at Last* is a documentary film that tells the story of the grit, persistence, and tactical smarts of the Texas women who organized, demonstrated, and won the vote for women. Texas became the first state in the South and the ninth in the nation to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment. *Citizens at Last* elucidates the crucial role Texas women played in the long struggle for equal voting rights. The words of Suffragist, Jane Y McCallum, captured the thrill of voting for the first time after a long, hard fight, whether for the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920, or the Voting Rights Act in 1965, when she wrote,

“With what high hopes and enthusiasm women stepped forth into a world in which they were citizens at last!”
Nancy Schiesari, *Producer, Director, Writer*

Nancy Schiesari is an experienced director, producer and cinematographer on both broadcast documentaries and award-winning independent films. Her latest full-length documentary, *Canine Soldiers: the Militarization of Love*, premiered at the Austin Film Festival and aired nationally on PBS over Memorial Day weekend, 2018. Nancy is a professor in production in the Radio–Television and Film Department at the University of Texas at Austin. In 2010, she founded MO-TI productions, dedicated to making films with diverse talent committed to telling stories from new perspectives.

[www.motiproductions.com](http://www.motiproductions.com)
Ellen Temple, *Producer*

Ellen C. Temple has been involved with researching, writing and publishing about Women in Texas History for 50 years, including writing columns for the Diboll Free Press and publishing two pioneering books: *Citizens at Last: the Woman Suffrage Movement in Texas*, edited by Judith MacArthur and Ruthe Winegarten, and *Jane Y. McCallum: Diaries and writings of a Texas Suffragist* by Janet Humphrey. It was her understanding that the exciting story of the Texas fight for woman’s vote has remained largely invisible that led her into documentary filmmaking, ET Films, and the production of *Citizens at Last* with renowned filmmaker Nancy Schiesari.
Karen Bernstein, Consulting Producer

Karen Bernstein, recently lauded at DocNYC 2019 and SXSW 2020, and prior to that with Richard Linklater – *dream is destiny* at the Sundance Film Festival 2016, enjoys collaborating with other stellar directors and producers on furthering their own projects. In her role as a series producer for *American Masters* and producer of *Ella Fitzgerald – Something To Live For* (1999), Bernstein received a national Emmy award for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series. For producing *Lou Reed – Rock and Roll Heart* (1998), she received a Grammy award.
Laura Furman, *Writer*

Laura Furman is the author of four short-story collections, two novels, and a memoir. Her latest book is *The Mother Who Stayed: Stories*. Her short stories have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Southwest Review*, *The American Scholar*, *Subtropics*, *Yale Review*, and elsewhere. She is the recipient of fellowships for her fiction from the New York State Council on the Arts, Guggenheim Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and the Paisano Project, and has been awarded residencies by The American Academy in Rome, The Liguria Study Center (Bogliasco), and Yaddo.
Why is voting so important?

In our country, people’s vote helps determine many crucial issues that directly impact our lives. We don’t just vote for presidents but also governors, mayors, local officials, school boards, and even specific laws. When someone is voted into one of these positions, it can affect things like how much money your school gets, how much you get paid, or simply what you are allowed to do.

Imagine all these decisions are being made, but you have no say in it, even when it directly affects you. **How would you feel if you weren’t allowed to help make those decisions?**
Citizens at Last Vocabulary Crossword

DOWN
1. The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age or sex.
2. An organized body having the authority to make laws for a political unit.
6. A civil rights organization in the United States, formed in 1909 as an interracial endeavor to advance justice for African Americans.

ACROSS
3. A strategy used to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing specific groups of people from voting.
4. The right to vote in political elections.
5. A Mexican American inhabitant of southern Texas.
7. An election to select candidates to run for public office.

Primary  Discrimination  Suffrage  NAACP  Tejano  Legislature  Voter Suppression

Answers on Slide 28
**TESA vs. NAWSA**

The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was the organization pushing for women’s voting rights on a national level. The Texas Equal Suffrage Association (TESA) was the state chapter of NAWSA and focused on suffrage for Texas women. Why two? Well, states can make their own laws that sometimes go against the federal law. So it was important that they fought for suffrage at the national and state level.

Let’s look at what else operates like this. Can you fill in the state or national equivalent in each row?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Level</th>
<th>National Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Supreme Court of Texas</td>
<td>The U.S. Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitution of Texas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers on Slide 28
Timeline of State vs. National Voting Legislation

Here is a timeline of state and national decisions being made, sometimes in conflict with one another.

- **1890**: NAWSA Formed
- **1903**: TESA formed.
- **1918**: In Texas, women are allowed to vote in the primary election.
- **1919**: Texas ratifies the 19th amendment.
- **1920**: 3/4 of the state legislatures in the U.S. ratify the 19th amendment, making it federal law.
- **1923**: Texas creates white primaries, preventing Black men and women from voting in primary elections.
- **1944**: U.S. Supreme Court bans the white primary law in Texas. Voter suppression still rampant on communities of color for the following decades.
- **1965**: U.S. Congress passes the Voting Rights Act
The Suffragists

Let’s learn more about the suffragists that fought for women’s right to vote. Then, we’ll test your memory with a fun activity at the end!
Minnie Fisher Cunningham

- President of TESA from 1915-1918.
- Her leadership helped women win the right to vote in primary elections two years before the ratification of the 19th Amendment.
- Moved to Washington DC in 1919-1920 to work for NAWSA.
- Part of the team who persuaded President Woodrow Wilson and members of Congress to pass the 19th Amendment.
- In 1928, she was the first Texas woman to run for U.S. Senate, and in 1944, she was a candidate for governor.
Christia Daniels Adair

- Took action after learning that Texas allowed political parties to keep Blacks from voting in primaries.
- Joined the Houston NAACP in 1925. She was the executive secretary when they fought the U.S. Supreme Court and ended the barring of Blacks from party primaries.
- Helped desegregate Houston’s public library, airport, veterans’ hospital and city buses.
- Helped give African Americans the right to serve on juries and work county government jobs.
Annette Finnigan

- Suffragist, businesswoman, and philanthropist.
- In 1903, her and her sisters launched suffrage leagues in Houston and Galveston, organized in other cities, and co-founded the Texas Woman Suffrage Association, which later became TESA.
- Recruited Minnie Fisher Cunningham, the energetic president of the Galveston league, to conduct an organizing tour. Mentored Cunningham’s leadership skills.
Mariana Folsom

- Traveled to Texas and delivered more than 60 lectures in 1884.
- Founded the Texas Equal Rights Association in 1893 and convened 83 meetings across the state the following year.
- In the early 1900s, she focused on educating lawmakers and found a champion in state Rep. Jess A. Baker, who introduced suffrage legislation in 1907, 1911 and 1917.
Jovita Idář

- Born in Laredo. Worked as a teacher, journalist and political activist.
- Joined her family’s Spanish-language newspaper, La Crónica, which featured stories on discrimination and lynchings of Mexican-Americans, as well as pro-suffrage articles.
- As the first president of La Liga Feminil Mexicanista, Idar led efforts to provide education for indigent children.
- In 1916, began publishing a newspaper, Evolución, which featured regular articles supporting women’s suffrage.
Maude Sampson

- Co-founded the Black Women’s Civic and Enfranchisement League in El Paso in 1918.
- Lifelong member of the El Paso NAACP. Served as vice president from 1917 to 1924.
- Chaired a committee dealing with public housing shortages and black homeowners’ property values. Also played a role in desegregating Texas Western College (now UTEP).
The Suffragists Quiz

Type your answers to the statements below on the next slide. Do it letter-by-letter and the underlined letter in each name will vertically spell out the answer to this statement:

In 1918, when women won the right to vote in the Democratic primary, 1500 Black women registered to vote in ______ County, however, when they arrived to the polling station they were denied.

1. This suffragist was a part of the Houston NAACP.
2. As president of the La Liga Feminil Mexicanista, this suffragist wrote and published pieces advocating for women’s suffrage.
3. This suffragist traveled all over Texas to spread the word about women’s suffrage.
4. This suffragist was the first Texas woman to run for U.S. Senate.
5. This suffragist was Minnie Fisher Cunningham’s mentor.
6. This suffragist served as Vice President of the El Paso NAACP

WORD BANK

Maude Sampson
Jovita Idar
Minnie Fisher
Annette Finnigan
Mariana Folsom
Christia Adair
The Suffragists Quiz

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

is the county that is home to Houston, TX, the most populous county in Texas, and third most populous in the U.S.

Answers on Slide 28
Fight For Your Right!

After learning about these Texan suffragists, let’s imagine we are suffragist in this time period!

Imagine social media existed during this time period. Fill out your suffragist social media profile!

Name: 
Location: 
Bio: When it comes to voting rights, I believe that 
_____________________.
I believe this because 
_____________________.
Occupation: 
Favorite Suffragist from History: 
Favorite Book: 

If you were fighting for equality back then, what would you write on your banner?

Draw your Suffragist!
Ratification Requirements

In order for an amendment to be officially written into the Constitution, \( \frac{3}{4} \) of the states must ratify it. In 1920, there were 48 states in the U.S.

Can you figure out how many states were needed to ratify the 19th amendment?

Do you know which two states were not a part of the U.S. yet?

Answers on Slide 28
Suffrage for Women of Color

The 19th amendment of 1920 may have said that women could now vote, however, many women of color were still excluded from the ballots. The majority of Asian, Black, Latinx, and Native American women waited decades longer until they were granted suffrage. The achievement of passing the 19th amendment was not seen as an end for many.

“We need to see the 19th amendment as part of a longer discussion. Not all women got to vote in 1920 when the 19th amendment is passed. These battles continue.”

- Jessica Brannon-Wranosky, Ph.D. Historian, Texas A&M University, Commerce
What do you know about voter suppression after the 19th amendment?

Voter suppression would continue for many years, partly because states still had power over how they ran elections. They found unjust ways to keep communities of color from voting such as literacy tests, poll taxes, property-ownership requirements, or grandfather clauses. Additionally, African-Americans often risked enduring harassment, intimidation, or violence when trying to register or vote.

Let’s see what you know about voter suppression during this time period. If you’re stuck on a question, use the links on the next slide as a resource!
What do you know about voter suppression after the 19th amendment?

In 1965, law enforcement violently attacked hundreds of marchers marching from Selma to Montgomery to exercise their right to vote, despite a segregationist system keeping them from doing so. What is the nickname of this event in history? If you need help with the answer, then click here.

The same event was also televised for the country to see, which greatly pressured the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Which president signed this act into law? Hint: He succeeded JFK and was sworn into office while on Air Force One. If you need help with the answer, then click here.
In 1971, 18 year-olds were drafted for the war but were not old enough to vote, which upset them. The 26th amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. **What war was happening in 1971 that sparked this amendment?** If you need help with the answer, then click here.

For a long time, voting was only done in English. This created a barrier for many non-English speaking voters. **Congress expanded the Voting Rights Act to protect language minorities from voting discrimination in what year?** If you need help with the answer, then click here.
The Paramount Theatre in 1920

The Paramount was under its original name, The Majestic Theatre. It was just 5 years old and tickets were less than a dollar. Vaudeville shows were the most popular. They included comedians, musicians, dancers, and magicians, all in one show. The theatre also showed silent films along with a live orchestra.

Still image from Citizens at Last, showing a march down Congress Avenue in 1917, passing the Majestic Theatre.
More Resources

Library of Congress Classroom Materials: Women’s Suffrage
https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/womens-suffrage/

Citizens at Last Website
https://www.citizensatlastfilm.com/

Texas State Historical Association (TSHA)
https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/projects/texas-women

Register to Vote
https://www.rockthevote.org/
Answers

Vocab Crossword
1. Discrimination
2. Legislature
3. Voter Suppression
4. Suffrage
5. Tejano
6. NAACP
7. Primary

Secret Answer
1. Christia Adair
2. Jovita Idar
3. Mariana Folsom
4. Minnie Fisher
5. Annette Finnegan
6. Maude Sampson

Secret Answer: HARRIS

TESA vs. NAWSA
1. The Governor
2. The U.S. Supreme Court
3. The Army National Guard
4. The U.S. Constitution

Voter Suppression After the 19th Amendment
1. Bloody Sunday
2. Lyndon B. Johnson
3. The Vietnam War
4. 1975

Ratification Requirements
1. \( \frac{3}{4} \times 48 = 36 \) states
2. Hawaii and Alaska
About The Paramount Theatre

The Paramount Theatre was built over 100 years ago in 1915. Back then, Congress Avenue was a dirt road and the automobile was a new invention. As one of the first examples of early theatre architecture, the Paramount has been bringing Austin families together for generations. When you visit the theatre, you enter a place that feels exciting and welcoming. From your seat, you can almost reach out and touch the performers on stage! Many famous people have performed at the Paramount. From magician Harry Houdini to the premier of the original Batman movie, the Paramount and its audiences have seen it all over the past 100 years...here's to the next century!
About Paramount Education

We inspire the intellect and imagination of young people by providing opportunities to experience, perform, and learn through the arts. We can’t wait to see you again at our theatre or in our school programs! Paramount Education programs are made possible through generous donations from our community. Learn more about us or make a donation. Thank you!
Take a virtual tour of the Paramount Theatre now!
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