

Exploring America's Social Reforms:
A Journey Through the 'I ❤️ History Challenge'

Jai Vang

HIS-131-800: American History I

Professor Brooks-Livingston

9/27/21 – 11/27/21

Introduction:

The " I ❤️ History Challenge " series offers an immersive exploration of significant historical events and movements, encouraging a deeper understanding of our past and its influence on the present. Through various digital exhibits and primary sources, these challenges highlight pivotal moments and figures in history. Challenge #1 explores the lives of tenement women in New York's Lower East Side, examining their roles as agents of change. Challenge #2 delves into the women's suffrage movement, tracing its evolution from the Seneca Falls Convention to the eventual victory for voting rights. Challenge #3 investigates the rise and impact of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, uncovering the group's deep-seated racism and its influence on American politics. Challenge #4 focuses on Florence Kelley, a dedicated social reformer whose tireless efforts improved working conditions for women and children, established child labor laws, and advocated for women's suffrage. Challenge #5 tests knowledge of American civics, highlighting gaps in public education and the implications for voting rights. Together, these challenges provide a comprehensive look at the struggles and triumphs that have shaped our society.

I ❤️ History Challenge #1

Tenement Women: Agents of Change

1. *Which digital exhibit did you explore, and why?*
2. *From what you saw in this exhibit, what was life like for people living in New York in these tenements in the Lower East Side?*
3. *What was the main story of the exhibit that you explored?*
4. *What did you learn? Could you have lived like this? Why or why not?*
5. *What connections can you make to what we've read or discussed in this chapter, or in the primary sources?*

1. I choose Tenement Women: Agents of Change as the digital exhibit to explore. I choose this exhibit because I see the change and impact my wife makes at her elementary school as a school social worker. With that, I am very interested to see how these women during the early 1900s changed our society through hard work and tireless efforts.
2. People living in the tenements of the Lower East Side in New York probably made lower than minimum wage. When the price of meat skyrocketed 50%, from 12 to 18 cents a pound, it was a big deal. I do not recall anyone boycotting McDonalds when they raised the price of the double cheeseburger from one dollar to a dollar and fifty cents. However, in the early 1900s, a few cents could have made the difference between life and death. Some families could have starved if nothing was done.

The work conditions were unsafe. There was no such thing as Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) like today. Though some plants were powered by electricity, had higher ceilings, larger windows where more air and light can travel through, the workplace conditions regarding safety did not change. Employers either could afford to make the changes or did not care. Some employers probably did not see the need to make improvements in the work conditions.

3. The main story of the exhibit I explored was that women can do more for society than most people perceived. Women felt empowered to oppose unfairness and injustice during those days. The more they voiced their concerns, the braver they became. With the collaboration of other women, they were able to form groups and opposed many obstacles that came their way.

4. I learned that women played a major role during that time and during our time as well. With my wife being a school social worker, I can see the impact she made on the lives of children and families at her school. She does not do it for the money but for the well-being of the people, she is serving. Women in the early 1900s had the same mindset as well. They stood up to butchers who raised the meat price, risking arrest for disturbing the peace. Women opposed employers for not improving the miserable and unsafe work conditions, wage cuts, sexual harassment, and unpredictable workweeks of up to seventy-five hours. Many tenement women fought for the right to exercise their political voices.

They challenged discrimination and formed unions that collaborated with other women to strengthen their cause.

Base on my life experience, I believe I could have lived through a time like this. The reason why is because I see the good that can come out of it. In my own life, there had been times I had to stand up to some discrimination and unfairness from my workplace. The process was difficult, but at the end of the tunnel, the reward was wonderful.

People's lives benefit from your sacrifices and tireless efforts. Furthermore, I grew up in a very poor beatdown neighborhood. Some of the pictures from the museum reminded me of the buildings and homes I grew up around. I understand what it means to have very little.

5. As stated in the paragraph above, I grew up in a similar society like this, though not as bad. As a child, I can still remember how my father's employer treated him because of the different colors of his skin. My father made less than a few dollars an hour. Whenever the price of food and housing would go up, it was difficult for my parent. As a child, I always wonder why my father would keep everything he catches from the river. The phrases "catch and release" were foreign to my father's mindset. Now I understand why he did things a certain way. This is how I can connect with what I read and what was discussed in this chapter.

I ❤️ History Challenge #2

Struggle and Sacrifice: The Fight for Democracy, 1916-1917

1. Seneca Falls and Building a Movement, 1776 – 1890

Primary Source: New Jersey Women Gain, then Lose the Vote

The Acts of the Council and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey (ACGASNJ) was the freedom to vote granted for women on paper. Another way of seeing this is like someone who is finally coming out of prison after serving a number of years. They receive a discharge certificate stating they have completed their time and are set free from confinement. Regardless of what others may think or say, their papers display their freedom and privileges granted from imprisonment. The former inmate is ready to give instead of taking from society. The ACGASNJ is very similar. The establishment of it meant women saw their right to vote. They can finally make a change in their world.

The Library of Congress tells us that the aftermath of the American Revolution made former colonies rewrite their state constitutions and redefine voting rights. The 1776 New Jersey state constitution allowed suffrage to all residing within the states who meet age criteria, property, and residency requirements, thus allowing certain women to participate in local and state elections. However, this change lasted thirty-one short years. In 1807, suffrage ended. The new state law restricted voting to only white male citizens.

The primary source taught me that women's fight for the right to vote is much like our own battles against opposition in life. We will have our own up and down battles in life. Just when we think that everything is fine and well, all hell breaks loose. However, we can not be discouraged by it. In a way, these small victories we have in life will lead to greater victories in the future. Even though the women in the 1800s thought they achieved complete suffrage but only to discovered thirty-one years later it lacked a firm foundation, their efforts and sacrifices will not be in vain. As we will see later on that victory was just a little over the horizon.

2. New Tactics for a New Generation, 1890-1915

Primary Source: Suffrage Victories in Washington State and California

In this primary source, women seem to be tirelessly spreading suffrage victories. They are making it known to other women the right to vote and contribute to the upcoming referendum. These women in the photo are putting up as many posters as possible to visually communicate suffrage.

In 1910, Washington State passed suffrage. This lead advocates of Seattle to launch the Western Woman Voter (WWV) to inform newly enfranchised women on civic matters. The WWV encouraged and empowered women alike in California to participate in voting. The campaigns in both states included younger women and not just middle and older age women

The primary source taught me that my influence on younger people will have a lasting result. Just as we read on how older women encouraged and empowered younger women to vote and give to society, if we do the same, our communities and our country will change for the better.

3. Confrontations, Sacrifice, and the Struggles for Democracy, 1916-1917

Primary Sources Journey: Pennsylvania Day on the Picket Line

Women are standing outside the White and protesting. Written in bold letters on the posters are the words, “Mr. PRESIDENT, HOW LONG MUST WOMEN WAIT FOR LIBERTY”. These are courageous women who are not afraid of what people may think or say to them.

Every day the women marched together in a line starting from Congressional Union headquarters to the White House. They protested peacefully and position in their stations as “silent sentinels”. Women representing different states, organizations, and occupations protested on different days to maintain press interest. Almost two thousand suffragists who traveled from thirty different states protested.

From this source, I learned that women’s fight for the right to vote came at a heavy cost. Those who supported this cost must support it with more than just words and money. To fully contribute, some traveled hundreds and thousands of miles to protest at the Nation’s Capital.

4. Hear Us Roar: Victory, 1918 and Beyond

Primary Source Journey: First Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin Lobbies President Wilson

In the first photo, we see Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin reading *The Suffragist*. Two other individuals are there with her as well, smiling. In the other photo, we see a letter written by Rankin to the President.

The Library of Congress tells of Rankin's request made to President Wilson. Rankin asked President Wilson to influence doubting members. She then reminded him of his avowed support for democracy. The following day, President Wilson endorsed the federal suffrage amendment, and on January 10, the bill passed both the House and Senate.

From this primary source, I learned that those who fight for people's rights will achieve victory if one does not give up. Rankin is a great example of this. After a long-fought battle, her home state of Montana passed women's suffrage. Two years after this she was elected to Congress. The day before the President publicly announce his support or nonsupport on women's suffrage, Rankin wrote a short letter reminding him of his avowed support. One may wonder if this concreted the President's decision. However, the President announced his support, and from there paved the way for the establishment of the amendment. Those who fight for people's rights will achieve victory if they do not grow weary and give up.

5. More to the Movement

Primary Source: Zitkala-Sa

When I look at this source, I see a strong and influential Native American Women. She seems to be determined to help others reach their full potential as America Citizens through suffrage.

The Library of Congress tells us that Zitkala-Sa supported women's rights and civil rights for Native Americans, along with the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act. However, Native Americans struggled to exercise their full voting rights in upcoming decades due to restrictive state legislation.

I learned from this primary source that those who fought for women's right to vote influenced more people of different ethnicities than they could have imagined. People like Zitkala-Sa were probably impacted when she watched and heard how other women stood against social injustice. This may have empowered Zitkala-Sa to help her own minority people find liberty.

Conclusion:

This assignment has taught me a lot about what our country had gone through to be where it is today. It's not a perfect country. However, we have so many rights and privileges many other countries do not possess nor will they ever. I also learned that the good deeds we do today will impact many others in the future. Just like how these people stood up to social injustice, we

should do our best to stand up and opposes opposition that may come our way. Lastly, I learned that voting is so important at all levels. It is the one avenue we have as citizens to make changes.

We can voice our beliefs and value through voting.

ng.

I ❤️ History Challenge #3

Exploring the 1920s Through Library Guides: A Deep Dive into Historical Research

Library Guides are a digital resource created by a library staff person that collects lots of resources related to one topic. Many of those resources are housed in that library, but not always. They are excellent resources to help you expand on a particular topic of interest, and are used by researchers in lots of different ways to add depth and complexity to a topic about which they are writing.

This week, we're going to delve into the world of research, taking a look at [this library guide on the 1920s](#). After you click on that link, on the left-hand side of the page, you will see a list of topics. Choose one, then explore some of the resources you see. Keep a record of the path down which you research - what topic you pick first, then the secondary topic, on down to the individual pages you look at.

For this assignment, write a paper addressing the following:

- 1. Explain the topic you chose from the main list, then how you narrowed down your interest to a specific topic within that topic.*
- 2. Describe what you ended up researching - what did you find?*
- 3. Find several primary sources, describing them in complete sentences.*

4. *Make a connection between at least two of the primary sources you found and topics from Chapter 22. Explain how these primary sources contribute to the history of the 1920s we've been studying.*
5. *Is there anything else to share, like what you've learned through this search, or about this topic?*

1.

In all honestly, I really do not know much about the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Since childhood, I have always been taught that the KKK was a racist group. I remember seeing writings such as “KKK” on the wall of the stalls in elementary school. I learned to stay away from people associated with this organization. Besides that, I have very little knowledge of this group. On doing some research, I discovered that KKK is a domestic terrorists group founded shortly after the U.S Civil War. Furthermore, the KKK is an American white supremacist terrorist hate group that targeted African Americans as well as Jews, Immigrants, leftists, homosexuals, Catholics, Muslims, and atheists.

Upon entering the library guide on the 1920's, the tab “Ku Klux Klan” caught my eyes. After selecting it, I glanced down the list of primary sources. At the bottom, the title “White sheets in Washington, D.C” interested me. I decided to read this source because I have always wondered how the public people and government handled and viewed such groups. Washington, D.C is the capital of our nation, and to see an article about the KKK in the streets of D.C must have been big in those days.

2.

On August 8, 1925, forty thousand members of the KKK marched down Pennsylvania Avenue. The movement succeeded in attracting national attention. With three million members living in metropolitan areas, the Klan was strongest in the Midwest and Southwest. The KKK loudly professed anti-Catholicism and anti-Semitism as well as racism. The sources stated the following about the KKK, “the second Ku Klux Klan shared with its nineteenth-century namesake a deep racism, a fasciation with mystical regalia, and a willingness to use violence to silence its foes”.

3.

The primary source titled “The Ku Klux Klan In Washington State” stated that the KKK during the 1920s was part of the second of three waves of activity in America. The second KKK gain numerous followers after World War 1. The sources describe the second KKK this way, “The second KKK claimed over 4 million members across the country... and in 1924 shaped presidential politics and helped pressure politicians to pass the most severe immigration restriction in the history of the United States. The second KKK also helped train some leaders who later formed the third KKK decades after World War II.

Indiana’s KKK group was noted as the largest state branch in the Klan’s “Invisible Empire”. The D.C Stephenson Trial of 1925 led to a decline in Indiana’s KKK organization membership and political influence. Stephenson, who was known for being a powerful grand dragon of the Indiana Klan was trailed and found guilty of the rape and murder of Madge Oberholzer. Stephenson demanded for a pardon, but none was given. In July 1927, out of revenge for not getting his expected pardon, Stephenson released to the press “little black boxes” which contained names and incrimination records of political leaders in Indiana who had been on

the Klan's payroll. As a result, Governor Jackson and some other public officials were indicted. The result added to the decline of the KKK's influences in the State of Indiana.

Another primary source titled, "40,000 Ku Klux 1925" was about four thousand Ku Klux Klansmen making a spectacle sight in Washington, USA, as they marched in groups and lines wearing white robes and hoods. Some carried the U.S flag while marching. Women are seen dressed as Uncle Sams followed by others in white robes carrying banners with crosses on them.

4.

The above primary sources contributed to the history of the 1920s in numerous ways. With the increase of immigrants, Catholics, and modernists in the United States after War World I, some organized the group known as Ku Klux Klan (KKK) to strike back against such opposition. As mentioned in Yawp, the KKK is "a white supremacist organization that expanded beyond its Reconstruction Era anti-Black politics to now claim to protect American values and way of life from Black people, feminists, immigrants, Catholics, Jews, atheists, and bootleggers..." Some felt that this was probably the only way to purify the country of other ethnicities and restore it back to its original state. As a result, hate crime came out of it. What was interesting to note in the D.C Stephenson Trial of 1925 was that hate crime towards a white American woman (Madge Oberholzer) played a critical role in the collapse of the second KKK movement. This displayed that the KKK movement was not about the reconstruction of the country, but it displayed the fact that evil towards humanity was still in the hearts of Americans as seen in the Oberholzer case. From the beginning of our studies until now, the theme of evil, hate, and racism has not been settled. Whether it was evil and racism against another group of

people or the same group, it still existed. These are some of the connections between the primary sources and the history of the 1920's we have been studying.

5

Before this study, I did not know how the KKK came about. At a young age, I was taught that KKK was a hate group and I should not associate with it or with people who are part of it. Little did I not know that KKK was just a manifestation of evil and hatred in the hearts of many Americans. Though KKK does not make highlight news anymore, in a real way, we can still see it taking place in our society. However, we do not have to follow the same dark path many people followed. Instead, we can choose to care for and love those that are different from us and work alongside different ethnicities to create a great community and a safer world for everyone.

Links for primary sources:

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6689>

http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/kkk_intro.htm

<https://www.famous-trials.com/stephenson/74-home>

<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/40-000-ku-klux>

I ♥ History Challenge #4

Life and Work of Florence Kelley

Florence Kelley

By: Jai Vang



Timeline

- Florence Kelley was born on September 12, 1859 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- At sixteen years old, she entered Cornell University located in Ithaca, New York. After graduating in 1882, she moved to Europe to study at the University of Zurich.
- While in Europe, she joined the Germany Social Democratic Party.
- In 1891, she returned to the United States and joined the reform movement in Chicago.
- She was the first woman to be selected as Chief Factory Inspector for the state of Illinois.
- In 1895, she graduated with a law degree from Northwestern University.
- In 1899, she moved to New York City and became the head of the National Consumers League (NCL).
- Florence died on February 17, 1932 in Germantown, Philadelphia

Issues addressed



- Florence was a social reformer and political activist who defended the rights of working women and children.
- In 1909, she served as the first general secretary of the National Consumers League (NCL) and helped form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
- She worked at the Hull House and found children as young as three or four working in the tenement sweatshops. This issue was presented to the state, resulting in the Illinois State Legislature first factory law prohibiting employment of children under age 14.
- As an inspector, she tried to force sweatshops to follow the rules to treat their employees better. She sued several businesses, but she never won. Because of this, she decided to pursue a career as a lawyer.
- Women's work days and hours were reduced for health purposes.

Opposition

- Florence was passionate to improve working conditions for women. However, she met numerous obstacles, including decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court that legislative reforms brought on the state level were unconstitutional. She never gave up. A decision was made for women's work days to be reduced from 12-14 hours per day to a 10-hour work day.



Quote

- This quote by Florence is from when she spoke out against child labor and for woman suffrage in a July 22, 1905 speech in Philadelphia.
- This quote meant that while adults are sleeping, there are young children who are up and working throughout the night.
- This quote is significant because it lead to the first factory law prohibiting employment of children under age 14.

"Tonight while we sleep, several thousand little girls will be working in textile mills, all the night through, in the deafening noise of the spindles and the looms spinning and weaving cotton and wool, silks and ribbons for us to buy."

– Florence Kelley



Legacy

- Florence's legacy is reflected in the ongoing fight for fair wages, economic mobility, and worker protections. With her outreach networks, she greatly impact labor laws and policies.
- A huge accomplishment for Florence was making it illegal for children under the age of 14 to work. This is something we can continue to thank her for our children's safety.
- I was aware of Florence Kelley prior to this assignment because I had took American History I last semester. All of the information was a good reminder of who she was and what she did as a social reformer.



I ❤️ History Challenge #5

Citizenship Test

1. I did poorly on the test. I missed 50 questions out of 68. I struggled with questions regarding the Bill of Rights, census, the different Branches in the Government, the number of states needed to ratify the Constitution, and many more. YIKES!!!
2. Unfortunately, I would not be able to vote.
3. I don't believe most people would be able to pass this test. People aren't educated in these areas enough. Even in public school, these topics aren't taught well. I believe people gain more knowledge through the news and social media, which makes it scary. There's a lot of fake news out there and social media is always over-exaggerating on every subject.
4. I'm surprised at my low score. I did not know most of the questions. I did not realize a type of test like this was perfectly legal up until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. I was always taught the requirement for voting was that you must be 18 years of age, not be in prison or on parole, be a U.S citizen, register to vote, and reside in a voting district.