Oberlin’s Women: A Legacy of Leadership & Activism

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• Inspiration from the Smithsonian Institution’s educational materials

• Traveling Exhibits (e.g., Milt Hinton and Mary Church Terrell)

• Broader view of women’s suffrage and leadership - our work is an important contribution

• The importance of a Social Media campaign

• Charge to the Oberlin College Libraries’ Working Group

• Our projects engage on Scholarly, Pedagogical, Curatorial, and Professional levels

• Our programs are supported through fundraising and collaboration with groups (e.g., the Friends of the Oberlin College Libraries)
Co-education Monument, Oberlin College, c. 1937
Lucy Stone
Oberlin Collegiate Institute,
Class of 1847
The Woman’s Rights Almanac for 1858
Special Collections, Terrell Main Library
Universal Suffrage Convention, 1866
Special Collections, Terrell Main Library
Marianne Dascomb
Principal, Ladies Department
(1835-36, 1852-1870)
James Harris Fairchild
Oberlin College graduate, A.B. 1838
faculty member (1839-1898),
President (1866-1889), and
Trustee (1889-1901)

Woman’s Right to the Ballot
James Harris Fairchild, 1870
Mary Church Terrell
Oberlin College, Class of 1884
Tainted: Anti-Suffragism and Race Politics in the Crusade for Women’s Votes

Part of the NWHM Centenary Celebration Series
“Determined to Rise”: Women’s Historical Activism for Equal Rights

March 10, 2020
Equal Rights League,
Oberlin College Chapter
Hi-O-Hi Yearbook, 1910
Azariah Smith Root
Oberlin College Class of 1884 and
College Librarian (1887-1927)
Suffrage Parade outside of Carnegie Library, Oberlin College, 1915
Doris Stevens
Oberlin College Class of 1911
The “Silent Sentinels”
2020 Calendar: Commemorating Oberlin College and Conservatory’s Commitment to Women’s Education and Suffrage

The Oberlin College Libraries presents this calendar to commemorate the life and legacy of Oberlin College alumnae who fought for social justice and women’s rights and who worked to make a difference in our world.

This calendar features photographs and brief biographical statements for these women and includes important dates related to their lives and significant dates in Oberlin and United States history.

Calendar coordination by:
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Proceeds to benefit the Mary Church Terrell Endowed Book Fund. Thank you!
Lucy Stone
Oberlin College Class of 1847
January page

Mary Burnett Talbert
Oberlin College Class of 1886
June page
Oberlin College Libraries’ Traveling Exhibit

Oberlin’s Co-education and Suffrage: A Legacy of Leadership

The Influence of Women, 1840s - 1860s

Once viewed as subordinate to men in every aspect of life, women began to challenge this stereotype in the 19th century. Oberlin was a leader in co-education, with women and men attending the same classes, sharing the same campus, and sitting together in lectures. The narrative of women’s rights began with the Underground Railroad, where women served as guides and agents of change, helping slaves escape to freedom. The first women were admitted to Oberlin in 1837, and by 1840, full co-education was in place. Oberlin’s commitment to women’s education continued to grow, and in 1866, Oberlin became the first women’s college to grant degrees.

“...I believe that the influence of woman will save the country before every other power...
- Lucy Stone, Oberlin College Class of 1847

The Cause of Freedom, 1870 - 1899

The Civil War led to significant changes in American society, and Oberlin was in the forefront of these changes. Oberlin students and faculty were involved in the abolitionist movement, and the school played a key role in the Underground Railroad. Oberlin was also a leader in the Reconstruction effort, with students and faculty working to establish schools and hospitals in the South. The civil rights movement of the 1890s was also reflected in Oberlin’s commitment to social justice.

Giving Justice to All, 1900 - 1920

Oberlin continued to be a leader in social justice and progressive change in the 20th century. The school was involved in the labor movement, with students and faculty organizing strikes and supporting workers’ rights. Oberlin also played a role in the women’s suffrage movement, with students and faculty advocating for women’s right to vote. The school was also at the forefront of the civil rights movement, with students and faculty working to end discrimination and inequality.

[Images of documents and photographs related to Oberlin’s co-education and suffrage movements]

[Quote: "I believe that the influence of woman will save the country before every other power." - Lucy Stone, Oberlin College Class of 1847]
Oberlin's Women: A Legacy of Leadership & Activism
The Influence of Woman, 1840-1860s

The Cause of Freedom, 1870s-1899

Giving Justice to All, 1900-1920

Introduction

As women began to be educated and enter the workforce alongside men, the need to address gender discrimination became increasingly necessary. The matter came to a head in 1857 with the Seneca Falls Convention and the drafting of the Declaration of Sentiments, but was later overshadowed by the Civil War.

The seed of the suffrage movement was soon sown before the Seneca Falls Convention came to order. For instance, in education, the practice of educating male and female students in the same classrooms, generated an increased interest in women's rights. At the forefront of this reform was Oberlin College, which first admitted female students to its undergraduate program in 1837. Prior to this, women who attended college were awarded literary degrees upon completion of their studies. Other colleges followed Oberlin's lead.

During the 1840s, it became clear that the practice of co-education did not resolve gender disparities in education. Despite being educated in the same classrooms, options for men and women varied to a very weakly. For instance, at Oberlin College, while women were permitted in classrooms along with men, they were not permitted to participate in extracurricular clubs and societies. This was due in part to the influence of the Oberlin Female Moral Reform Society, which was founded in 1833 with the mission of rooting out “immorality to all forms” (POM 1994). A prominent member of this society was Margaret Fuller, who helped to craft the 1844 Declaration of Sentiments.

While the women's suffrage campaign fragmented, an anti-suffrage campaign solidified. Anti-suffragists courted women who wanted the vote for being aristocratic, immoral, and selfish. Even at Oberlin College, which had been so eager to adopt coeducation, anti-suffrage sentiment prevailed. James Fairchild, president of Oberlin College, considered the idea of women's suffrage such an outrage that he punished a student against it.
“History at the Museum” course
Winter Term, January 2020
“History at the Museum” course, student-curated cases installed
Women in Leadership exhibit homepage
Oberlin Women in Leadership exhibit, Sylvia Hill Williams, Class of 1957

Sylvia Hill Williams

"If there is an opposite point of view, you are going to hear it at Oberlin."

Sylvia Hill Williams (1936–1996, OC 1957) was a Smithsonian museum director, curator, and scholar of African art. She was born in Lincoln University, PA, in 1936. After attending Lincoln
Letterpress Printing Project

From January 6 through 29th, a group of Oberlin College students took part in an intensive experience learning how to set movable type, create linocut illustrations, and use two types of hand-operated presses. Under the guidance of experienced printers Robert (Bob) Vekemen and Edward Verrill, Head of Special Collections and Preservation in the Mary Church Terrell Main Library, the students designed and printed their own material and contributed to a project commissioned as part of the women suffrage centennial celebrations.

Contents
1. The Commission
2. Rules for the Commission
3. The Participants
4. Printmaking in Action
5. The Posters

Begin with "The Commission"

* Or, navigate to "History of Opikids from China to Oberlin"
Examples of the Students’ handbills and posters

"With a keen sense of the RESPONSIBILITY which we shall continue to assume, we look forward to a FUTURE large with PROMISE & HOPE."

Mary Church Terrell

“Provide Rights to: THEM
Show POWER
Let THEM Succeed
Respect THEM
Give THEM VOTE

THE FIGHT IS NOT DONE

100 YEARS OF WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

2020

471 FEDERAL OFFICES UP FOR ELECTION
48 STATES THAT STILL DISENFRANCHISE 6.1 MILLION PEOPLE IN 2018

0 REASONS NOT TO VOTE

VOTES FOR WOMEN

VOTE 2020

VOTE 2020

60th Congress of the United States of America;
Every office in the several States for which there is a vacancy shall be filled by election at large of the electors vote thereof.:

Joint Resolution

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution providing for the equal protection of the sexes.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, that the following amendment to the Constitution, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fifths of the several States:

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
"Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

VOTE 2020
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A Legacy of Leadership & Activism

https://www.artsteps.com/view/5e98cc3529ddef40614245d3
History of Opioids
From China to Oberlin
鸦片的历史-从中国到欧柏林

created and presented by:
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History of Opioids from China to Oberlin

About the Opioid Project

As a part of the Oberlin College Libraries’ 2020 exhibition Oberlin’s Women: A Legacy of Leadership & Activism, this presentation History of Opioids from China to Oberlin investigates the relationship between opium and its history with women.

By looking at the history of opium, its original medicinal role, and its eventual transformation into recreational usage, it will be demonstrated that the current opioid crisis in the United States and its impact on women’s health can be traced back to the 19th century’s prescription to and consumption of legal opium.

Through objects, archival materials, and photos related to opium and women, this becomes a reference for Oberlin College students, faculty, and staff.

A History of Opioids
Social Media Campaign

Introducing Sunday Edition: Celebrating Women

2020 will mark the Women’s Suffrage Centennial. In order to properly commemorate the upcoming 100th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, every Sunday this semester we will highlight the women of our collections. Female authors, books of feminisms, archives on the suffrage movement, you name it! We are excited to explore and showcase our collections. Check out our first post next Sunday!

Image courtesy of womensvote100.org

1920 2020
WOMEN'S VOTE CENTENNIAL

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Acknowledgements

Unless otherwise indicated all materials are from the Oberlin College Archives or the Special Collections in Mary Church Terrell Library.

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