

RACE & WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, IRON JAWED ANGELS & BEYOND

Researching the history and dynamics of women's suffrage has been a revelation and I'm indebted to the League of Women Voters for providing the impetus for additional learning. As a substantial portion of the films presented by Cincinnati World Cinema involve women directors and issues relevant to women and their families, I am accustomed to digging for information on the Internet as well as the process of assessing factual accuracy via multiple sources.

Compared to the paucity of coverage provided in most school systems, I found the depth of information available via the Web to be impressive. Over the course of a month of research, I've only scratched the surface – the links offered on CWC's Educator Resources page, while a salient starting point, are literally the tip of an iceberg. The myriad groups, and the individuals – and personalities – that framed the suffrage movement from the 1840s through the passage of the 19th Amendment, on to the work of the ERA, and up to the present day, could take many months to digest and fully catalog. And that's not counting the overlap between suffrage groups and other issue-driven organizations.

As diversity is an element of the CWC mission, this is something I naturally look for when programming films. There was little ethnic diversity to be found in *Iron Jawed Angels*. To the credit of the film's writers and director, they did not gratuitously insert ethnic characters. Rather, they stuck to history and the facts relevant to Alice Paul's participation in the suffrage movement.

Racism was present at the time of the actual events and the filmmakers did not hesitate to include it in *Iron Jawed Angels*. One scene in particular involved Alice Paul (*Hilary Swank*) and Ida Wells-Barnett (*Adilah Barnes*), a prominent African American journalist, and civil rights and women's rights advocate and leader. The setting was the day of the great Suffrage Parade in Washington, D.C., in 1913. Upon learning that Ida Wells was planning to march as part of the Illinois delegation, Alice Paul told her to march at the back of the parade with other blacks and miscellaneous ethnicities. This was the 1913 equivalent of going to the back of the bus.* Ida Wells acquiesced, but when the parade started she marched instead with her state delegation. The rationale expressed in the film was that the suffrage movement was already under great pressure, so why further antagonize the populace they were striving to enlist? While probably a pragmatic viewpoint at the time, it was clearly not inclusive or visionary.



Ida Bell Wells-Barnett, 1862-1931

* 71 years prior to Rosa Park's historic bus ride, Ida Wells was ordered to give up her seat on a train and move to a "Jim Crow" car. She refused, was forcibly removed, sued the railroad and won a cash award in court. Tennessee Supreme Court reversed the decision.

Beyond the notable exception of Susan B. Anthony, most of the suffrage movement's white leaders were captives to the malaise of the times. Not that they all were glaringly hostile, but instead they were creatures of a long-standing system from which advantage was derived on the basis of race – a more subtle and harder-to-break foundation that has proven pervasive throughout most all multi-ethnic cultures since the human race started living in groups.

Within that rubric, and as a footnote to both the film and the body of scholarly work on women's suffrage, it is important that we respect the contributions of heroes like Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt, but we should understand they were real people with flaws and shortcomings. Equally important, we alive today should realize we can behave differently as a matter of choice and conscience.

When examining women's suffrage we find parallel tracks within the white and black movements, consistent with the parallel cultures that evolved as a result of segregation in America. Few school systems address this phenomenon in detail, but Hallie Quinn Brown's 1926 book *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction* offers a look at numerous African American women who made a difference. It's cliché but true – "ordinary people do extraordinary things" – Brown's compilation brings home the importance of education, caring about the welfare and dignity of others and a strong sense of personal courage and determination.

Following below are the profiles of seventeen women of color who made significant contributions, with links to sources.

~ Timothy Swallow, Cincinnati World Cinema, 31 July 2012

Educator Resources, *Iron Jawed Angels* :: http://www.cincyworldcinema.org/x_120908ija.php

Hallie Quinn Brown was born around 1850 to parents who were formerly slaves. She graduated from Wilberforce University in Ohio with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1873. After graduation, she taught school in Mississippi and South Carolina. In 1885, she became dean of Allen University in South Carolina, and in 1892, she became principal of Tuskegee Institute. The following year, she became a professor at Wilberforce University. She often traveled domestically and abroad giving lectures on temperance, women's suffrage, and rights for African-Americans. In 1899, she represented the US at the International Congress of Women in London. From 1905 to 1912, she was president of the Ohio State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. In 1920, she became president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), and in that role, spoke at the Republican National Convention in 1924. In 1926, she wrote the book **Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction** to document the contributions of other African-American women. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brownhal/brownhal.html>

Mary Ann Shadd Cary was born in Wilmington, DE in 1823 to free black parents. When she was ten, in 1833, her family moved to West Chester, PA, so the children could go to a Quaker-run school. When the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 threatened to force into bondage both free-born blacks and escaped slaves, she moved to Canada. She opposed all forms of segregation and opened an integrated school in Canada. She wrote extensively and published her own newspaper. She also published *A Voice from Harper's Ferry*, by Osborne Anderson. She returned to the US in 1861, as a young widow with two small children. In 1869, she was the first African-American woman to enroll in law courses at Howard University. She studied law at night, while working during the day as a teacher and writing for the *New National Era*, a newspaper published by Frederick Douglass. She joined the National Woman Suffrage Association and testified for women's suffrage before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives. In 1883, she was awarded her law degree from Howard Law School. She was the second African-American woman to become a lawyer. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brownhal/brownhal.html#p92>

Anna Julia Cooper was born in Raleigh, NC in 1858 to a mother who was a slave. After the Civil War, in 1868, she received a scholarship to Saint Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute. In 1877, she married, but her husband died two years later. She graduated from Oberlin College in 1887 with a bachelor's and master's degree. She became a math and science teacher, and then principal at a high school in Washington, DC for prominent black families. In 1892, she wrote *A Voice from the South*, which was a collection of essays advocating for women's rights. She attended the World's Congress of Representative Women in 1893 and spoke at the Pan-African Congress Conference in London in 1900. She helped to found the Colored Women's YWCA in 1905. In 1925, she received a PhD from the University of Paris-Sorbonne. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/cooper/cooper.html>

Sarah J. Smith Garnett was of African-American and Native-American descent, born in 1831 in New York. She began her teaching career at the age of fourteen. In 1863, she was the first African-American woman to become a principal in the New York City schools. In the late 1880's, she organized the Equal Suffrage League in Brooklyn, NY to advocate for women's suffrage. She later became superintendent of the Suffrage Department of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). On behalf of NACW, she attended the first Universal Races Congress in London. Dr. WEB DuBois was among the many people who greeted her on her return to the US. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brownhal/brownhal.html#p110>

Angelina Weld Grimké was born on February 27, 1880 in Boston, MA to a bi-racial family. Her great aunts, Angelina and Sarah, were famous white abolitionists and suffragists earlier in the nineteenth century, and she was named after one of them. Her aunt Charlotte helped to found the National Association of Colored Women. Her father was a lawyer, the second black to graduate from Harvard Law School. She attended the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics, which became Wellesley College. After graduation, she moved to Washington, DC with her father and became a teacher. She was a close associate of Mary Church Terrell and a strong supporter of suffrage. She wrote essays, short stories, and poems which reflected her political views. She also wrote a three-act play for the NAACP, called *Rachel*, which focused on the issue of lynching. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelina_Weld_Grimk%C3%A9

Charlotte Forten Grimké (Angelina Grimké's aunt by marriage) was born in 1837 to prominent, black parents in Philadelphia. She was sent to the Higginson Grammar School in Salem, MA and the Salem Normal School. She became a member of the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society. She also started to attend women's suffrage meetings and met with prominent suffrage leaders including Frederick Douglass, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony. She wrote poetry which reflected her political views. In 1878, at the age of 41, she married a Presbyterian minister. She gave birth to a daughter who died in infancy. After that, she organized a women's missionary group for her husband's church. In 1896, she became a founding member of the National Association of Colored Women. <http://books.google.com/books?id=xkrGN3Rsl30C&lpg=PP1&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was born in 1825 in Baltimore, MD to free African-American parents. She went to the Academy for Negro Youth, run by her uncle, Rev. William Watkins. At the age of twenty, her first volume of poems was published. Following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, she fled Baltimore and moved to Ohio where she worked as a teacher at the Union Seminary. In 1853, she began a tour lecturing against slavery. In 1859, her short story "The Two Offers" was published, the first short story by an African-American to be published. She was a strong supporter of suffrage for women and worked directly with Susan B. Anthony. In 1866, she gave a major speech at the National Woman Suffrage Convention. She subsequently became active in the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). Later, she served as vice president of the National Association of Colored Women. Like Ida B. Wells, she lectured and wrote against lynching.

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/harper-frances-ellen-watkins-1825-1911>

Addie Waites Hunton was born in Norfolk, Virginia in 1875. In 1889, she was the first black graduate of Spencian College of Commerce in Philadelphia. She became the lady principal at State Normal and Agricultural College in Alabama in 1890. She married one of the leaders in the YMCA, and she became active in the YWCA. Beginning in 1911, she wrote a series of articles on women's club for *The Crisis* magazine published by the NAACP. She was an avid advocate of suffrage for women. During World War I, she served as a nurse in France. When the Southern states blocked black women from voting in 1920, after passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, she was part of a delegation of black women who appealed to Alice Paul to have the National Woman's Party (NWP) address the issue. But, the NWP refused.

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/hunton-addie-waites-1866-1943>

On March 15, 1906, **Hester C. Jeffrey**, a community leader and close friend of Susan B. Anthony, spoke at the funeral of Susan B. Anthony, who had passed away two days earlier. She was the only African-American woman to speak at the ceremony. Shortly after that, she helped to establish first memorial to Susan B. Anthony, a stained glass window at the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion church in Rochester, NY. Her association with Anthony was later used by the anti-suffragists as an argument against suffrage for women, because universal suffrage for women would mean black women would have the right to vote.

<http://winningthevote.org/HJeffreys.html>

Adella Hunt Logan was born in Sparta, GA to a black woman and a white farmer in 1863, during the Civil War. Her father did not live with her, but he helped to pay for her education at Sparta's Bass Academy and at Atlanta University. She taught at the American Missionary School and the Tuskegee Institute. She married a fellow teacher in 1888 and had nine children. She was a strong supporter of women's suffrage and promoted suffrage at the Tuskegee Woman's Club. She also lectured at meetings of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. She expressed concerns about the Southern states disenfranchising black men and blocking the right to vote for women. In 1901, she was the only life member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) from Alabama. In 1912, she wrote the article "Colored Women as Voters" for *The Crisis* magazine of the NAACP.

<https://www.google.com/search?tbm=bks&tbo=p&q=%22adella%20hunt%20logan%22>

Gertrude Bustill Mossell was born into a prominent African-American family in Philadelphia, PA in 1855. She worked for several years as a teacher before becoming a journalist in the early 1870's. Her articles were published in black newspapers, including *The Indianapolis Freeman* and *Woman's Era*, as well as white newspapers and magazines, such as *The Ladies Home Journal* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. She edited the first regular woman's column, called "The Woman's Department", in a black newspaper, the *New York Freeman*. In 1893, she married a prominent physician in Philadelphia. In 1908, she wrote the book, *The Work of Afro-American Women*, which documented the contributions of other black women. In 1914, she was appointed by the Pennsylvania Suffrage Association to be a speaker on the suffrage campaign in that state.

http://digilib.nypl.org/dynaweb/digs/wwm9729/@Generic_BookView

Rev. Florence Spearing Randolph was born in 1866 to free black parents in Charleston, SC. She graduated from Charleston's Avery Normal Institute public school. She moved to New Jersey in 1885 and set up a dressmaking business. From an early age she had been active in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so she started to teach Sunday school at the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion church in Jersey City. In 1897, she was given a license to preach. She was ordained an elder in the church in 1903. In 1915, she organized the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs in New Jersey and became a member of the New Jersey State Board of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1917. She served as pastor of the Wallace Chapel AME Zion Church in Summit, New Jersey from 1925 -1946.

http://www.njwomenshistory.org/Period_4/randolph.htm

Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin was born in 1842 in Boston, MA and educated in Massachusetts and New York. In 1858, she married the first African-American to graduate from Harvard Law School. During the Civil War, she and her husband recruited black soldiers to fight for the Union. In 1875, she began working with the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association, an affiliate of the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) formed by Julia Ward Howe and Lucy Stone. In 1894, with the help of her daughter, Florida Ridley, and Maria Baldwin, a Boston school principal, she organized The Woman's Era Club, an advocacy group for black women. She became the editor and publisher for *The Woman's Era*, the first newspaper published by and for African-American women. In 1896, she worked with Mary Church Terrell to form the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) and became one of its vice presidents. She was also one of the charter members of the NAACP.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brownhal/brownhal.html#p151>

Mary Church Terrell graduated from Oberlin College in Ohio in 1884. She taught at Wilberforce College, an historically black college in Ohio, and later became the first black woman appointed to a Board of Education. In 1896, she became the first president of the National Association of Colored Women. Two years later, Susan B. Anthony asked her to speak at the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) convention. At the NAWSA convention in 1900, she gave a keynote speech on "The Justice of Woman Suffrage". In 1904, she spoke at the International Congress of Women in Berlin, Germany. She was the only black woman in attendance. She gave her speech in German, and then in French and English. Ida Husted Harper reported in *The Washington Post* that the speech was "the hit of the congress". She was a friend of Frederick Douglass, and her husband was a Harvard-graduate and a judge in Washington, DC. In 1909, she became a charter member of the NAACP. She joined the National Woman's Party and picketed the White House several times. She was named one of the one hundred outstanding alumni of Oberlin College in 1933. In the early 1950's, she led the fight to desegregate eating establishments in Washington, DC.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Church_Terrell

Margaret Murray Washington was the third wife of Booker T. Washington and the Lady Principal of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. In the late 1890's, she was vice president of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). At the time, NACW had 8,000 members in 125 branches from twenty-six states. On behalf of NACW, she responded to a call from Susan B. Anthony to submit a statement to be published in the fourth volume of the History of Woman Suffrage. Her statement focused on the issues that concerned black women: "Jim Crow" laws, lynchings, and the convict lease system, whereby prisoners in the South were leased to work for private companies. She became president of NACW in 1912.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brownhal/brownhal.html#p225>

In 1884, **Ida B. Wells** was ordered by the conductor of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad Company to give up her seat on the train and move to the smoking or "Jim Crow" car. She refused and was forcibly removed from the all-white railroad car. She sued the railroad and won! But on appeal, the victory was overturned. She was a teacher, a journalist, and a prominent public speaker who became well-known for her anti-lynching campaign. While she was lecturing in Rochester, NY, Susan B. Anthony invited her to stay in her home. When Anthony learned that her stenographer refused to take dictation from this black woman, Anthony fired the stenographer on the spot. After there were race riots against blacks in Illinois in 1908, she was one of only two black women asked to sign a call to action, which resulted in the formation of the NAACP. The "call" was released on February 12, 1909, the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of President Lincoln. **In 1913, she famously refused to march at the end of the suffrage parade organized by Alice Paul in Washington, DC. Instead, she marched with the rest of the delegation from her state of Illinois.** She formed the Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago to encourage black women to vote after women won partial suffrage in Illinois in 1913

<http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/search3t?dbname=lincoln&word=&OUTPUT=conc&CONJUNCT=PHRASE&DISTANCE=3&title=&author=wells-barnett>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=GVoEAAAAMBAJ&lpg=PA261&pg=PA296#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Fannie Barrier Williams Susan B. Anthony was born on February 15, 1820. On February 15, 1907, at its annual convention, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) commemorated Susan B. Anthony, who founded NAWSA in 1890 and died shortly after attending the NAWSA convention in 1906.

At the commemoration ceremony, **Fannie Barrier Williams** spoke on behalf of black women, who were often excluded from NAWSA. She was the first black graduate of Brockport Normal School, a teachers college in New York State. She was a teacher and a leader in the black community, and an associate of both Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington. She first won wide recognition when she gave a speech titled "The Intellectual Progress of the Colored Women of the United States since the Emancipation Proclamation" at the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. She wrote a history of the club movement for black women, which was first published in 1902.

<http://www.archive.org/stream/coloredamericanf00gibsrich#page/n5/mode/2up>