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Girls Just Wanna Be President: How the History of Female Presidential Candidates Affects Political Ambition and Engagement

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GIRLS JUST WANNA BE PRESIDENT:
HOW THE HISTORY OF FEMALE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AFFECTS
POLITICAL AMBITION AND ENGAGEMENT

by
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ABSTRACT

Female political ambition drops around high school, none of the 45 presidents of the United States have been female, and the history of female presidential candidates is largely absent from public memory. This project examines the connection between social perceptions of political involvement and the history of female politicians by creating a resource website of female presidential candidates in the United States. The website is meant to encourage youth political engagement, specifically the engagement of middle school to college-aged female students to lower the gender gap of political ambition. Without representation within American politics, many young women are not inspired to become politically involved. Ultimately the project examines how the presentation of these neglected narratives leverages history to provide encouragement, rather than to perpetuate one-dimensional histories. Historians need to question previously used paradigms and rhetorical lenses that framed certain people and events as insignificant, ultimately negatively impacting vulnerable and/or underrepresented demographics. The product of this thesis resides at girlsjustwannabepresident.wordpress.com.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Female¹ political ambition is lower than that for males, all 44 presidents of the United States (encompassing 45 presidential administrations) have been male, and the history² of female politicians is largely absent from public memory. I argue all three have directly affected one another. Without representation of female bodies throughout political history, young women see American politics as an unwelcoming and inaccessible environment for women; conversely, with representation, these role models make adolescent girls expect to be involved in politics in the future.³ As Robert Watson and Ann Gordon described in *Anticipating Madam President*, “the White House has been America’s ultimate tree house, with a “No Girls Allowed” sign posted on it.”⁴ This figurative signage, in the form of rhetoric and representation, has essentially made its

¹ This project uses the terms “female” and “women/woman/girl/girls” interchangeably, despite the former referring to biological sex and the latter referencing gender. The language is not meant to conflate the words. Instead, the dual use serves to make the project more inclusive. All of the women who have run for president have been cisgender and the studies concerning political ambition use a heteronormative dichotomous framework. Completely avoiding the word “female” would not be representing either of these areas as concisely and accurately as this author believes they should be (hence the use of the word female in the title). However, it is not the intent to exclude non-cisgendered persons from relating to or learning from the content. While the dualistic rhetoric is merely a nod towards inclusion, it hopefully represents the fact that this history is for everyone. The English language is unfortunately rigid and exclusionary, but this project is not. If and when a non-cisgendered woman runs for president, she will also be included in this project and historical resource website.

² Unless specifically noted as historiography or public history, the definition of “history” being used throughout this project is the general knowledge of historical events and people that is present in either public memory or history lessons taught in classrooms and various avenues the lay citizen has to learn about history (film, non-academic books, etc.). It is the definition that non-historians mean when using the term.

³ David E. Campbell and Christina Wolbrecht. “See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents.” (The Journal of Politics, 2006), 244.

⁴ Robert P. Watson and Ann Gordon. *Anticipating madam president* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 2003), xii.

way into classroom textbooks and the halls of museums, and thus the minds of American youth.⁵

If elementary school students are asked what they want to be when they grow up, one will hear answers ranging from doctor to veterinarian or actor; one may even hear a few children say president. At age seven, 30% of boys and girls want to be president.⁶ However, as these children get older, fewer and fewer girls create plans for their future that involve politics in any facet. Political scientists Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox have pinpointed the age group of young women that begins to lose this political ambition. While some girls begin to lose interest even earlier, the gender gap in ambition significantly increases around high school and the transition to college.⁷ In fact, per a 2015 survey, college women are 45% more likely than men to assert they will never run for a political office and 63% of women say they have never considered running for an office (compared to 43% of men) in this age group.⁸ The study uncovered numerous explanations for these phenomena, including the gender differences in how teachers and families discuss politics with children. However, one of the primary reasons — and the one that is most pertinent to this project — is that young women are not being encouraged to engage in politics due to a social perception that women are not qualified for political office.

⁵ Incho Lee. “Teaching How to Discriminate: Globalization, Prejudice, and Textbooks.” (Teacher Education Quarterly, 2011), 59.; Carol Scott. “Museums and Impact.” (Curator: Quarterly Publication of the American Museum of Natural History, 2003), 305.

⁶ Marianne Schnall. *What will it take to make a woman president?: conversations about women, leadership and power* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2013), 27.

⁷ Jennifer Lawless and Richard L. Fox. “Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition.” (American Political Science Review, 2014), 510.

⁸ Lawless and Fox. “Uncovering the Origins of the Gender Gap in Political Ambition”, 2.

But why? Answering this question is no simple matter. However, the adage that you cannot be what you cannot see may provide more than a mere antidotal observation. This project proposes that the lack of representation of female politicians in American history — be it academic historiographies or even public memory — warrants a large piece of the blame. Marianne Schnall, author of *What Will it Take to Make a Woman President?*, notes that “you have to have the descriptive representation of bodies in order to show that everybody is a citizen, that everybody gets a say in [the American] process.”⁹ Furthermore, as former president of Czechoslovakia Vaclav Havel wrote in 1975, dominant historical narratives based upon selective and exaggerated stories produce psychological effects: the identities of minority citizens within the nation fade and many are left feeling cynical and alienated.¹⁰ If omitted from the traditional dialogue, non-privileged historical figures become forgotten, and the average citizen cannot relate to most aspects of their own nation’s history. It is difficult for girls and women to become actively involved in American politics when society views it as a male-dominated world; expanding American political history to better include women and their involvement can help break down some of the barriers placed in the way of contemporary young women.

⁹ Schnall, 17.

¹⁰ Claudia Koonz, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*. Edited by John R. Gillis (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 258.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORIOGRAPHY

Admittedly, presidential candidates who lose rarely receive attention from historians or larger society. Perhaps a history text names the candidate of the losing primary party when explaining whom the president-elect defeated in the general election, but further details are rarely noted. Non-Republican or Democratic Party candidates do not even get that much attention. In addition, examination of the historiography that exists about women who have run for president finds even further significant, and avoidable, inadequacies. While the histories have undergone various evolutions, and incorporated more interdisciplinary research, they still largely treat the women as isolated case studies. Because of this, the narratives lack the fundamental perception of larger significance needed before being incorporated into the traditional narrative, and thus public perception, of American politics. The following discussion of historiographical works illustrates why further examination of women presidential candidates is needed, ultimately framing the motivation for the project.

Few resources specifically discuss female presidential candidates as a larger category than mere individual politicians. The Center for American Women and Politics provides factsheets with basic explanation of women candidates who received national attention. Similarly, Presidential Gender Watch includes biographical paragraphs about a “selected list” of women who received national attention for various reason. By focusing on women who had the privilege of being included in national polls or having political

prominence, these sites leave out numerous candidates. Furthermore, each entry focuses on the significance of their campaign. The significance highlights each as some kind of “first”, which trivializes the women as novelties while failing to flesh out more pertinent and substantive aspects of their contributions.¹¹ This criticism is not to diminish the value of the resources in the least, as they provide a needed forum to begin the discussion of women candidates. However, they continue to focus on the superficial aspects of many of women’s campaigns and do not provide analysis on how the women share(d) commonalities and built their successes off each other.

Other resources discuss female presidential candidates on a more individual basis, primarily books written around the 1970s and after. Five primary works that illustrate not only an academic perspective, but also an evolution of how the phenomena has been discussed throughout the years, are: *Fighting Shirley Chisholm* (1975); *The Other Candidates: Third Parties in Presidential Elections* (1983); *The Woman Who Ran for President* (1995); *Paving the Way for Madam President* (2006); *Women for President: Media Bias in Either Campaigns* (2008). While several books cover the campaigns or lives of some of the women who have run for president,¹² they never interrelate the experiences and accomplishments of the women into a single path towards greater gender representation.

¹¹ Further analysis on the negative impacts of the “first” trope can be found below in the Analysis section.

¹² Though there are more books written about women who have run for president in the United States, their coverage of topics does not largely vary from the current discussion. Most books focus on just a handful of famous women who ran presidential campaigns. Furthermore, authors without academic credentials wrote many of the books. As a result, only a small number of books cover female presidential candidates through a professional lens.

James Haskins wrote the earliest book, *Fighting Shirley Chisholm*, in 1975 — only three years after Chisholm ran for the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party. Haskins was a prominent scholar and journalist of black history who had a personal relationship with Shirley Chisholm, even giving thanks to her in the first pages of the book by stating that, “this book could not have been written [without her], and I am deeply grateful to her.”¹³ The information documented in the book clearly illustrated the intimate relationship of the author and the subject, if for no other reason than the ability to provide more insight into her career and personal life. *Fighting Shirley Chisholm* created a full picture of Chisholm — the woman, not necessarily the politician. In this way, the book celebrated the accomplishments of Chisholm without elaborating on the larger significance of how she helped advance the relay race towards greater gender representation in American politics and presidential candidacies.

Haskin emphasized the woman who ran for president. Frank Smallwood emphasized the political party in *The Other Candidates* (1983) and its inclusion of Deirde Griswold’s run for president under the Workers World Party in 1980.¹⁴ The book is a collection of interviews, of which Griswold was one of many. Most of the questions asked of her were about the work of the Workers World Party; even inquiries into Griswold’s own presidential campaign focused on how the party shaped her run. While Smallwood expanded the discussion, he focused on the role of third parties rather than the gender of candidates.

¹³ James Haskins. *Fighting Shirley Chisholm* (New York: Dial Press, 1975), preface.

¹⁴ Frank Smallwood. *The Other Candidates: Third Parties in Presidential Elections* (Hanover, NH: Published for Dartmouth College by University Press of New England, 1983), 291.

Louis Beachy Underhill¹⁵ wrote *The Woman Who Ran for President* and, though written over one hundred years after Victoria Woodhull ran under the Equal Rights Party, presented a more personal view of the candidate than the previous two works. The book focused primarily on the unorthodox personal life of Woodhull which emphasized her *uniqueness* as a significant trait, diverting away from Haskin's use of personal life in combination with her career and political environment to show her *accomplishments* as a significant trait. Underhill's analysis seemingly argued that being the first woman to run for president was merely a side effect of the overall eccentric character of Woodhull and did not venture into how the campaign created a foundation for future female candidates.

The final evolution focused on the professional life of the candidate. One example is *Paving the Way for Madam President*, written by Nichola D. Gutgold in 2006. The book broke down the attributes that help make women politically successful, including what is necessary to be a viable presidential candidate. Skills, character, and communication style are just a few examples of the traits mentioned. In contrast to the previous evolutions' focus on the individual women, Gutgold used the candidates' personal lives to highlight the important traits needed for the profession overall. *Paving the Way for Madam President* offered a collective look at candidates, but fell short of interrelating their experiences with one another.

¹⁵ Underhill became a guest curator for the New York Historical Society during their Woodhull exhibition from September 18 to February 4, 1997. With no intent of diminishing Underhill's scholarship and credentials, the fact that the museum chose a non-historian working in marketing at the time of the exhibition as guest curator indicates the low number of historians who work in the study of female presidential candidates. If there was a scholar on the subject, one would assume Underhill's single book would not have propelled her into such a position.

Erika Falk featured the professional life of the candidates to provide resources for modern female politicians in *Women for President*. Falk used political science data with communication analysis to discuss ways media representation of certain candidates illustrated gender bias and sexism. Through comparing the media attention of the women with that of male candidates of the same year who had similar polling data, Falk did a comparative study of the ways in which the media's treatment of two candidates differed because of their gender. Falk's discussion emphasized the profession (female candidacy) over the individual (the female candidate), using the women as tangible examples rather than primary subjects. Instead, the book focused on the treatment of female candidates and the different barriers or perceptions present. The conclusion further emphasized the profession by examining media bias throughout history and by providing suggestions for future candidates. This application of the history got the closest to a more complete narrative by examining shared experiences (of media bias), but again stopped before developing historical associations.

Stepping back from the specific topic of female presidential candidates, there are a greater number of works written more generally about female politicians in the United States. *American Political Women: Contemporary and Historical Profiles* (1980), *Encyclopedia of Women in American Politics* (1999), *From Suffrage to Senate* (1999), and *Encyclopedia of Women Social Reformers* (2001) constitute examples of the primary books available on the subject. The prominence of encyclopedias and similarly constructed reference works is not arbitrary. Rather, these forms of documented histories are some of the few available on female politicians and their influence on American

policies.¹⁶ In fact, prior to producing their own volume, Jeffrey Schultz and Laura van Assendelft stated that there were no previous works specifically addressing women in American politics.¹⁷ Similarly, Helen Rappaport lamented the difficulty of her research arising from the lack of sources and the inconsistencies of the sources that do exist.¹⁸ Despite the existence of these books, the list-driven approach of these leaves them lacking larger significance and application in broader political and gender histories. After all, encyclopedias and anthologies give brief descriptions of each female candidate, without much context or further analysis of the historical significance.

The historiography of female presidential candidates and female politicians in general includes important works, but by treating the women in isolation of one another, the narratives miss the struggles and accomplishments they collectively faced. Each woman, whether running for president or for a lower political office, lived in a society affected by the women before them. By connecting them to one another, this project outlines the significance of these women to prove they beneficially impact(ed) American politics. Highlighting the positive role of women in political history is an important step in inspiring contemporary young women to run themselves.

¹⁶ Other works on specific women or groups of women who have possessed certain political positions do exist. However, these histories are either written for or against female politicians to bolster or destroy their career, as anomalies of tokenized women instead of presenting the role of women in American politics in general, or are philosophical and sociological discussions of the role of women in politics, rather than their histories.

¹⁷ Jeffrey D. Schultz and Laura A. Van Assendelft, *Encyclopedia of women in American politics* (Phoenix, Ariz: Oryx Press, 1999), xi.

¹⁸ Helen Rappaport, *Encyclopedia of women social reformers* (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2001), xviii.

CHAPTER THREE: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The deficiency of female representation in the political historiography mimics the lack in contemporary politics. The United States places 100th in the global ranking for women in parliamentary and/or congressional governmental positions, between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and well below all other western nations.¹⁹ It has a non-proportional percentage of female leadership in Congress and other political offices, and unlike many other countries, has never had a woman executive. In general, as noted by the National Democratic Institute, “equitable participation of women in politics and government is essential to building and sustaining democracy and [sic] Democracy cannot truly deliver for all its citizens if half of the population remains underrepresented in the political arena.”²⁰ Specifically, the lack of proportional gender representation in the United States shapes the direction of political discourse within the country. Women express concern about issues such as education, health care, birth control, abortion, the environment, and Medicare at higher rates than men do.²¹ Not only does equitable gender representation in politics mean women will be involved in conversations instead of merely talked *about*, but it also means they will bring a new perspective of important issues to the table.

¹⁹ “Women in national parliaments.” *Inter-Parliamentary Union*. Updated December 1, 2016, <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>.

²⁰ “Gender, Women and Democracy.” *National Democratic Institute*. Accessed December 28, 2016, <https://www.ndi.org/gender-women-democracy>.

²¹ “Political Participation Full Section.” *Status of Women in the States*. Accessed December 28, 2016., <http://statusofwomendata.org/explore-the-data/political-participation/political-participation-full-section/>.

This project is based on the belief that the field of history can help break down the social perceptions that limit women's access to political office — instead of perpetuating them. Doing so may also help counter a significant barrier to equal representation in American politics; after all, Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox argue that “the fundamental reason for women's under-representation is that they do not run for office.”²² This project hopes to serve as an example of finding significance in omitted histories to create a more inclusive discipline. Furthermore, by focusing on the history of female candidates, it aims to give women a representational and motivational history that helps break down social stereotypes and trends in American politics. Doing so will hypothetically increase the number of women willing to run for president or other political offices. If more historians make the conscious decision to holistically examine the neglected histories of female politicians — in combination with social movements and added pressure for women to run from different outlets — there is a potential for the gender gap in political ambition and political participation to decrease.

To that end, this project provides a resource website about women who ran for president, aimed at girls and young women. Presenting the histories of these women in a timeline of influential progression, along with their contributions to the environment of women in politics overall, has the potential to inspire and combat negative social perceptions that fuel the gender gap in political engagement. This website negates the belief that only men belong in politics by highlighting the history of women in a concise and accessible manner.

²² Jennifer Lawless and Richard L. Fox. “Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics.” *Women and Politics Institute, School of Public Affairs* (January 2012), 3.

Female Presidential Candidates

There are 519,682 elected positions in the United States. According to the Center for American Women in Politics (as of December 2016), 4,177 women had been elected to national, state, and local offices.²³ With a clear gender disparity throughout most, if not all, levels of government in the country, the question of how to discuss unequal representation and, more importantly, how to foster better representation becomes complicated. This project undertakes that topic by using the case study of female presidential candidates.

The timing of this project — being completed after an unprecedented election year that not only saw objectively the most successful female candidate, but also an increase in public interest in national election cycles²⁴ — makes the presidential lens a practical choice. Furthermore, what happens in Washington D.C. shapes how many individuals view all levels of politics and government. While there are various levels of political offices, all providing important supporting roles for the entire governmental system, the national offices gain the most attention.²⁵ More attention means the lack of gender representation in these offices creates an even greater societal impact. By having the greatest national attention, the office of the president thus provides unique benefits for gender political analysis.

²³ “Current Number”. *Center for American Women and Politics*. Accessed December 28, 2016, <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/current-numbers>.

²⁴ The 2016 elections saw an increase of political interest across all age groups, exceeding the levels from 2012. 74% of registered voters said who won was “very important”, more than the 63% in 2012 and 2008, and even the 67% in 2004. Furthermore, 60% of registered voters said they were more interested in politics than they were four years ago, mimicking 2008 numbers, but higher than any other election cycle in that last few decades. “2016 Campaign: Strong Interest, Widespread Dissatisfaction”. *Pew Research Center*. July 7, 2016. <http://www.people-press.org/2016/07/07/1-campaign-engagement-and-interest/>

²⁵ Jennifer L. Lawless and Richard Logan Fox. *Running from office: why young Americans are turned off to politics*, (2015), 7.

But just as the presidency can be used as a case study for female political engagement, so too is this project an example for how historical narratives can be used to encourage change and provide inspiration. As noted by gender historian Joan Wallach Scott, “we are learning that the writing of women into history necessarily involves redefining and enlarging traditional notions of historical significance...such methodology implies not only a new history of women, but a new history.”²⁶ The quantity and quality of studies about women presidential candidates presently available suggests historians do not believe these women merit sustained study. Perhaps it is because they lost; perhaps there are other reasons. However, by enforcing the same paradigm of historical significance used on male presidential candidates, a part of female political history and American political history is lost. These women ran for a reason, and it would be difficult to prove most of them believed the American constituency would vote them into office. So why then did they run? What was the point they were trying to make about the value of the candidacy itself?²⁷ Their campaigns had purposes and impacts in their own times, and these cascaded forward in significant ways, similar to other marginalized voices throughout history.

Case in point, President Barack Obama — when speaking at the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in 2016 — commented on the significance of including the histories of Black Americans into our social dialogue:

²⁶ Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis.” *The American Historical Review* (91, no. 5), 1054.

²⁷ Madeleine Kunin, *Pearls, politics, & power: how women can win and lead* (White River Junction, Vt: Chelsea Green Pub, 2008), 148.

As Americans, we rightfully passed on the tales of the giants who built this country, who led armies into battle, who waged seminal debates in the halls of Congress and the corridors of power, but too often we ignored, or forgot, the stories of millions upon millions of others, who built this nation just as surely, whose humble eloquence, whose calloused hands, whose steady drive, helped to create cities, erect industries, build the arsenals of democracy..... A museum alone will not...immediately ensure that justice is always color-blind. It won't wipe away every instance of discrimination in a job interview, or a sentencing hearing, or folks trying to rent an apartment. Those things are up to us.... But what this museum does show us is that even in the face of oppression, even in the face of unimaginable difficulty, America has moved forward.²⁸

Obama's words reflect the importance of bringing public attention to omitted histories to counter generations of injustice. Similarly, this project on female presidential candidates draws inspiration from the work of revisionist historians that have highlighted African American history. By shifting the paradigm of who made a historically significant impact, just as was done with the National Museum of African American History and Culture, this project brings to light previously absent histories that aim to provide inspiration for future generations.

²⁸ Reilly, Katie. "Read President Obama's Speech at the Museum of African American History and Culture". *TIME Magazine*, September 24, 2016. <http://time.com/4506800/barack-obama-african-american-history-museum-transcript/>

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS

The overt focus of the project is the presentation of historic narratives to a target audience. However, aside from using historical analysis, the project also aims to contribute to academic discussions surrounding the future of public history. It does so by exploring rhetorical framing, paradigm restructuring, and the negative perception of activist history.

Not the First Woman

Victoria Woodhull became the first woman to run for president when she announced her candidacy in 1872. While there were many other barrier-breaking “firsts” — like the first African American nominee, first woman to run for a primary party, or first woman to win the nomination of a primary party — there were no other firsts for running in general. Yet, too often, the rhetoric surrounding female presidential candidates marks them as *the* first female candidate, regardless of when they ran. This “pioneer” framework is a metaphor consciously or unconsciously created about female candidates, likening them to the pioneers of the American past. This metaphor creates a two-fold misconception: first it situates women as novices and second creates a novelty.²⁹ This

²⁹ Kristina Horn Sheeler and Karrin Vasby. Anderson. *Woman President: Confronting Postfeminist Political Culture* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 17.

helps perpetuate the myth that women do not belong in the political sphere and thus opens even greater scrutiny than would otherwise be experienced.³⁰

Clearly, the framing of candidates as the “first” has a negative impact on contemporary political ambitions, but it also serves to erase the fact that the history of female candidates is extensive. By using the pioneer language, academics (including historians) manufacture a deceiving picture. While such rhetoric is technically correct, it consciously or unconsciously manipulates the narrative into a singular story rather than part of a trajectory of political growth. This limits both the significance of the history for many laypersons, as well as its usability to change societal perceptions.

Despite the problems of “first” rhetoric, completely neglecting the key firsts of various accomplishments can harm the “so what?” factor of some narratives. It also serves as a form of omission, like the kind created by focusing on pioneer language. Because of this, there needs to be a balance of information that points out the first accomplishments of the historical figures, but also connects those firsts to the larger history. While it may take up more space and appear wordier than some persons wish to present, adding greater context is necessary to avoid rhetorical framings that can have negative tangible consequences as well as linguistic misdirection. With that in mind, this project discusses the accomplishments of women who broke down barriers, but attempts to contextualize these accomplishments and present the individual narratives in a timeline of progression. The pioneer metaphor is thus immediately challenged.

³⁰ Erika Falk, *Women for president: media bias in eight campaigns* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 3; Watson and Gordon, 123.

Paradigm Restructuring

Academic historians must reexamine what they have considered historically significant to expand public historical narratives beyond traditional white, male, heteronormativity. As Howard Zinn asserted, we construct history based on accounts left by the most privileged members of society.³¹ Transforming these narratives will not occur without direct and intentional changes in academia. For instance, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie mused in *We Should All Be Feminists* that,

If we do something over and over again, it becomes normal. If we see the same thing over and over again, it becomes normal. If only boys are made class monitor, then at some point we will all think, even if unconsciously, that the class monitor has to be a boy. If we keep seeing only men as heads of corporations, it starts to seem ‘natural’ that only men should be heads of corporations.³²

While Chimamanda was referring to social and cultural perceptions of gender, her argument also applies to the study of history. What historians have already written about is automatically deemed historically significant and worth analysis and interpretation, while areas presently neglected are often dismissed because *clearly* there must be a reason academics have not previously discussed them.

These filters of historical significance have been written about, taught, and learned for generations. As Clarence Lusane observed in *The Black History of the White House*, the dominant historical narratives have, “validated a view that overly centralizes

³¹ Zinn, 39.

³² Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists* (New York: Anchor Books, 2012), 13.

the experiences, lives, and issues of privileged, white male Americans and silences the voice of others.”³³ These interpretations of the past, having been engrained through repetition, push marginalized groups to the periphery of historical analysis. In fact, if you read a traditional narrative, one would assume women and persons of color only lived in the United States during national conversations pertaining to the unequal treatment of the aforementioned groups.

Along with leaving areas of significance unexamined and being unable to fully analyze and interpret historical events and people, narrow historical lenses promote problematic societal perceptions that are not based on full historical events and contexts. Looking specifically at the subject of the American presidency, we can see that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was correct when noting, “politics is very much about cultural narratives.”³⁴ The institution is not immune to social and cultural norms, but instead built around them. This ultimately perpetuates the fact that all presidents have been men; patriarchal characteristics define the presidency because men are presidents and women are not. The writing of history helps to determine what is “seen” by the public, for better or worse, and narrow lenses drastically affect society.

Activist History

Activist history leverages history to solve current problems, yet many academics view it as biased and motivated by predetermined expectations. Clearly, I personally believe that more women should be involved in politics and that belief motivated the

³³ Clarence Lusane. *The Black History of the White House*. (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2011), 19.

³⁴ Justin S. Vaughn and Lilly J. Goren. *Women and the White House: gender, popular culture, and presidential politics* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 26.

project. However, having beliefs on a subject does not delegitimize one's studies. In fact, attempts to avoid claims of activism and bias often lead historians to overcorrect by creating narratives that rely heavily on factual descriptions, rather than nuanced interpretations. Such approaches water-down the important role of history in explaining the past and its influence on contemporary times.

In *The Politics of History*, Howard Zinn said “we [historians] need to become the critics of the culture rather than its apologists and perpetuators.”³⁵ Academic institutions are not apolitical; there are already powerful interests at work, be it funding, university policies, or just the political mentalities of those in charge.³⁶ Aside from the environment in which historians function, the writing of history requires the person to deem what is important enough to be included in the narrative. Historians cannot be neutral as each decision evaluates the relevancy and importance of the subjects. Merely looking at the connection between the traditional white-dominated history of America and contemporary political trends, which connect non-white with un-American, illustrates the impact of these choices.³⁷

At the 129th American Historical Association Committee on Women Historians, Jacqueline Jones gave an address titled “Women and Social Justice: What’s History Got to Do with it?”, during which she noted that the scholarship on gender history reflects contemporary gender relations, and vice versa. But what role should historians have in

³⁵ Zinn, 13.

³⁶ Zinn, 9.

³⁷ Annelise Orleck, “The Problem of Citizenship in American History”. *The Flow of History: Teaching About Citizenship*. Accessed January 5, 2017.
http://www.flowofhistory.org/c_toolkit/essays/citizenship.html

political activism? Per Jones, historians can provide individuals who care about social justice a fuller understanding of the world and how the past helped create it.³⁸ Instead of following a false sense of neutrality, historians need to understand and embrace the responsibility of constructing narratives for public consumption. Activist history, when done ethically and using rigorous scholarly techniques, presents historical narratives that help explain issues of social justice today and help non-historians benefit from the work done by people in the past. After all, the wheel does not need to be recreated, just as the historical lessons of which approaches have helped push agendas or the downfalls of non-intersectional platforms (just to name a few) should not have to be rediscovered.

Further Research

The project at hand also illustrates where areas of further research are needed. Rather than studying the individual campaigns of these women, this project aims to examine the role of the *history* (i.e. narratives) of the campaigns on larger society. However, to expand on the significance of these women, research into the larger historical contexts and commonalities these women share(d) is needed. Were there specific political and/or social climates that fostered more female candidates? How did candidate differences affect their runs? While conjectures can be made based off the research already performed about their individual campaigns, specific analysis would elevate the discussion beyond the potentially tokenizing effect of using the women as political specimens.

³⁸ Jacqueline Jones, “Women and Social Justice: What’s History Got to Do with It?”. Lecture, *American Historical Association Committee on Women Historians* (New York City, January 4, 2015).

Furthermore, studies concerning the statistical impact of these histories of female politicians will need to be conducted in the future to confirm the success of narratives in providing inspiration for political ambition. To what extent do these inclusive narratives *directly* correlate to an increase in political ambition by inspiring future careers versus *indirectly* correlating by changing social perceptions of who belongs in politics? While current research proves representative role models beneficially impact young women, analysis specific to historical representation of female politicians would allow for greater nuance within the field. For instance, which means of presenting the histories has the greatest impact? Only future research will be able to answer these questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: WEBSITE

Girls Just Wanna Be President combined all the above analysis to create the resource website targeting middle-school to college-aged women.³⁹ While this project aims at broadening the definition of historical significance and relating often neglected histories, it's also intended to make these new narratives accessible for public consumption and for the target audience of young women. Most academic publications remain in the academic sphere and have little to no impact on the average American's understanding of the past. While this does not demote the value of such research, it does have the negative impact of intellectualizing history in an exclusionary and inhibiting fashion.

Some historians labor to make academic writing more accessible to lay persons. Digital media has been gaining momentum as an alternative to academic publications in recent years. Using the web and digital history allows for easier access and thus, potentially, a wider audience. More people are likely to search a website (which requires keyword searches and clicking, and perhaps a trip to the local library) than to physically visit most historical sites or local museums (which require traveling, a larger period of free time, and money to sustain the trip). Furthermore, a study conducted in 2014 found

³⁹ I chose to specifically target this age group in order to preempt and concurrently work against the decrease of political ambition that occurs. Though the content design was targeted towards this audience, the website has resources for various ages and for various persons with relationships with girls and young women.

that digital storytelling⁴⁰ created a more engaging and exciting learning environment, increasing student motivation and content comprehension.⁴¹ While digital media cannot completely replace other forms of historical presentation, it does increase accessibility and engagement.

Aside from the convenience of accessing digital media, a website also provides the best format for targeting girls and young women. One of the most dominant resources currently used to influence youth within the United States is the educational system.⁴² Therefore, this project includes lessons plans to help teachers incorporate the history of female presidential candidates into their curriculum. It must be acknowledged, however, that various limitations prevent school systems from successfully advocating political engagement on a larger scale. Schools and teachers simply exist in the current paradigm of societal assumptions that men are more qualified to hold political office and thus rarely encourage their female students as aggressively as their male students; some may even fear repercussions from going against the status quo. Furthermore, Michael X. Delli Carpini goes on to argue in *Gen.com: Youth, Civic Engagement, and the New Information Environment* that “schools, while increasingly acknowledging their responsibility to provide students with opportunities to become involved in public life, have largely limited their efforts to narrow definitions of public service such as one-to-one

⁴⁰ Digital storytelling is a form of short narratives that are presented through graphics, videos, animations, or other digital tools. While often historical in nature, digital storytelling can also be personal stories and contextualized in modern experiences.

⁴¹ Najat Smeda, Eva Dakich, and Nalin Sharda. "The effectiveness of digital storytelling in the classrooms: a comprehensive study". *Smart Learning Environments*. (1 no. 1: 2014).

⁴² Carolyn Kinder. "The Effects of Institutions on Human Behavior." *Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute*. Accessed March 15, 2017. <http://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum/units/1987/5/87.05.03.x.html#1>

volunteerism.”⁴³ Volunteerism is an important means to be actively involved in the community, but it does not usually translate to active political involvement. And even with this advocacy, the school system is not the preferred environment to push for community or political involvement. Similarly, Mark E. Kann, Jeff Berry, Connor Grant and Phil Zager believe youths are commonly distrustful of the government and prefer less institutionalized, non-governmental approaches to meeting public needs.⁴⁴ The internet, on the other hand, creates more personalized opportunities for youth engagement in politics and provides motivation, facilitation, and invitation for that involvement.

GirlsJustWannaBePresident.wordpress.com

The title of this project — Girls Just Wanna Be President — is in homage to the Lawless and Fox who inspired this project; it cites not just their study’s title (*Girls Just Wanna Not Run*), but also their results mentioned in the introduction. Girls *do* want to be president; however, as they age, women lose their political ambition due to a lack of encouragement and representation. The title also attempts to reclaim the word “girl”, going off the momentum of similar campaigns that argue “girl” does not equate to something demeaning. From the Always campaign #LikeAGirl that counters the stigmatized phrase “like a girl” in sports to the political nonprofit EMILY’s List use of “run like a girl” on much of their merchandise, “girl” is being reshaped into a positive attribute. Girls Just Wanna Be President symbolically supports of that reclamation, which

⁴³ Michael X. Delli Carpini, "Gen.com: Youth, Civic Engagement, and the New Information Environment." *Political Communication* (17, no. 4: 2000), 344.

⁴⁴ Mark E. Kann, Jeff Berry, Connor Grant, and Phil Zager. "The Internet and Youth Political Participation." *First Monday* (12, no. 8: 2007).

is harmonious with the project's argument of restructuring paradigms for greater inclusion.

Criteria

To determine which women to include in the project, certain criteria had to be established. Pre-1900, the criteria are lax. Only two women attempted to run for president during this period, and the exceptional political barriers faced by women of the time make further criteria arbitrary and potentially unfair. After 1900, the standards are as follows:

1. Any woman who won a widely-recognized party nomination, whether a primary or third party;
2. Any woman who did not win a party nomination, but had a well-organized and mathematically viable campaign during the primary election;
3. Specific women that do not meet the other criteria, but do represent significant contributions or milestones that will be further justified on an individual basis.

The women who meet one or more of these criteria are Victoria Woodhull (1872), Belva Ann Lockwood (1884), Gracie Allen (1940), Margaret Chase Smith (1964), Charlene Mitchell (1968), Linda Jenness (1972), Shirley Chisholm (1972), Ellen McCormack (1976), Deirdre Griswold (1980), Sonia Johnson (1984), Lenora Fulani (1988), and Monica Moorehead (1996). Though academic historians often dismiss contemporary examples due to a lack of retrospect and entrance into a realm of policy rather than that of historical analysis, this project embraces their inclusion. They help illustrate that women who run for president engage in a relay race, with women handing

the baton to the next generation to help break down political barriers and bring women closer to the highest office in the United States. Women not shaped political history in the past, they also represent a present. To that end, the project also covers the political environments and political careers of Hillary Rodham Clinton (2008), Cynthia McKinney (2008), Jill Stein (2012), and Hillary Rodham Clinton (2016).

As noted, the women highlighted in this project do not make up an exhaustive list of female presidential candidates. Logistics prevented the inclusion of every woman who has announced her candidacy for president; some counts, such as those from the Smithsonian Institute, claim as many as 200 women have done so. However, I hope that the women represented within this project motivate readers to research other women who ran for president, as well as women who have pursued other political offices. Furthermore, under the “Get Involved” section of the website’s menu, there is a section where users can question the inclusion of a candidate or justify a further addition to the discussion.

Web Design and Content

While there were no models or methodologies of design used for reference, I created a navigation system that breaks the website down into cohesive elements that further the main objective of encouraging youth political engagement. The site organizes the historical elements of the women who ran for president by era and year. Under the profiles for each, quotations help frame who the candidate was or is. Additionally, a synopsis of their presidential campaign and a “so what?” section helps emphasize the fact that these women had positive effects on American politics despite having lost their

campaigns. Images of these women and their campaign add visual appeal for users, and links direct users to further biographical information, decorative quotation images I created to combine the power of personal statements with visual appeal, and any primary sources mentioned explicitly in the text. When navigating to the candidate profiles on the menu, users also find pages for each election year that briefly describe the social and political climate of the year,⁴⁵ as well as the results of the election, in order to provide site visitors with great context for the personal narratives.

Other sections on the site include Get Involved, Resources for Guardians, Lesson Plans for Teachers, and The First Female President. Get Involved intends to help young women find ways to become actively engaged in American politics; subsections in this area include Organizations and Youth Engagement, along with other sections ranging from websites to podcasts, which provide resources to young women. With historical narratives aimed at encouraging political inspiration, the sooner users can connect to ways to be involved, the more likely it will happen. Resources for Guardians encourages parents and guardians of young girls to recognize the role they play in the political aspirations of their children, as well as providing suggestions for books, movies, and television shows that give children strong female role models in politics. Similarly, Lesson Plans for Teachers urges teachers to treat their male and female students equally when it comes to encouraging future political engagement; the page also includes lesson

⁴⁵ To provide appropriate context for the years in question, while simultaneously writing for the intended audience of adolescent girls, I attempted to balance the content between data centric to the elections and information that would be interesting to a younger audience. Significant world and national events were balanced out with popular culture information in the hopes of maintaining interest. Complex information needed to better understand the political climate, such as economic data, was written in simple terms to meet the needs of the audience.

plans for grades 7-9 and 10-12 that help incorporate the history of female presidential candidates and female politicians into the traditional lessons of government and elections. Finally, The First Female President page hopefully mitigates the possibility of the project coming off with a negative lens — after all, these women lost their elections and there has yet to be a female president. Instead of focusing on this present state, the page focuses on the future and the potential of young women today to make history.

As for the overall design of the website, great care was taken to make the site appealing and accessible. Taking knowledge from my experience as an Accessibility Analyst for the Boise State University Office of Technology, stylistic decisions followed the WCAG 2.0 Web Accessibility guidelines that serve as the national standard for making online environments accessible to persons of all abilities. Though there may be a few minor accessibility issues built into the theme that only WordPress can resolve, all images, fonts, and presentations focus on providing smooth usage for screen readers, page zooms, etc. For visual aesthetics, website color branding research explains that there is a psychology of color that impacts the experience of viewers. The colors white and light gray were utilized because they represent youth/freshness and maturity respectively; therefore, these create an environment of respect for youthful participation. Finally, in an attempt for greater inclusion, special care was taken to use diverse stock images throughout the site to represent as many different girls as possible; this was sadly a difficult feat, as there is a surplus in stock images of white girls, but not of other ethnicities and races. These choices were made because even the most important and perfected message cannot reach the public if it is not designed appropriately for the intended audience.

Narrative

The project emphasizes a social history that values personal stories as inspirational. To reassure young women that they belong in politics, it is important to illustrate that women have been working in the field for generations. Despite having not won, they each covered significant distance in the baton race of female presidential campaigns that will one-day end at the finish line of a woman winning a national election. Rather than viewing them in isolation as the previous historiography has done, the interconnection of these women's stories — created through “so what?” sections that speak to the influence the individuals had on larger political practices, as well as the literal connection created through proximity to one another — is emphasized to show political progression. However, biographical narratives are not traditionally viewed as inspirational, especially not inspirational enough to encourage a behavioral change.

Howard Zinn counters the above assumption in his book *The Politics of History*, which argues for a more radical approach to history and for a revisionist role of historians. Simply, he argues that a “new” narration is far more powerful than an uncontroversial interpretation of a common narrative.

It is often assumed that narrative history, the simple description of an event or period, is “low level” history, while the interpretation of events, periods, individuals is “high level” and thus closer to the heart of a socially concerned historian. But the narration...to someone with a rosy picture of the American

court system, has far more powerful effect on the present than an interpretation of the reasons of the war of 1812.⁴⁶

Ultimately, narrative history can be both powerful and inspirational depending on how much, quality, information the average person has on the subject. Few people know there have been a significant number of women who have run for president; perhaps even fewer would believe the first woman ran as early as 1872. Because of this, unveiling these narratives in a manner accessible to a lay audience and with many representational bodies is arguably more shocking and powerful to non-academics than an interpretation of a more commonly known history could be.

Social Media Plan

This project includes a social media plan to increase the presence of the website and make it more interactive. The forms of media implemented are Pinterest, Twitter, and Facebook. Pinterest is a simple way to try to increase traffic to the resource website; the media platform directs all users who run across the photographs of the women who have run for president, quotation images created for the project, or infographics concerning the number of women in American politics to the WordPress site. As for Twitter and Facebook, both are implemented in unique ways to avoid repetition of functions. The Twitter account is used to boost the voices and profiles of female politicians; rather than creating content, the account “retweets” messages and news articles about female politicians (both historical and contemporary) to provide a single platform that has the potential to connect users to these women. Facebook, on the other hand, is original

⁴⁶ Howard Zinn, *The politics of history* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 28.

content and personally researched articles and images; promoted as an organization, the Facebook page is meant to serve as a forum and source of community like other political — but not politically active — groups on the platform. All three social media sites promote the resource website, while simultaneously promoting the project’s objective of spreading public awareness about female politicians.

Social media does have the potential of increasing bias simply due to the nature of online forums and information bubbles. In order to avoid as much bias as possible, the accounts are devoid of policy. While many female politicians developed strong political platforms, the sharing of posts is limited to comments or news articles that do not mention specific policy issues. This decision intends to avoid isolating persons because of their own political ideologies. While this has the potential to negatively sterilize the work of these women, users have the potential to access the profiles of the politicians and do their own research if they so choose.

The hope of the social media plan is to provide girls and young women a means to take control of how they interact with the subject at hand. Social communication can help improve the user experience and connection with the information. To engage the Next Generation, Infinite Earth podcast examined how it is important to “put your organization behind the youth. Give them the power and leadership and responsibility to take ownership and have their ideas matters.”⁴⁷ While a website does not provide full control of the content — aside from the contact form requesting suggestions — social media does give users control of when, where, and how they interact with it.

⁴⁷ ‘012: Youth Perspective – How to Engage the Next Generation in Decision-Making’. Podcast. InfiniteEarth Radio, 2016. <http://podbay.fm/show/1076462336/e/1458804600>.

Pinterest Handle: Girls Wanna Be President

Twitter Handle: @GirlsWannaBPres

Facebook URL: facebook.com/GirlsJustWannaBePresident

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

Girls Just Wanna Be President is a project aimed at presenting an often unknown or neglected history to the public with the hope that the narratives will inspire young women to get involved in American politics by countering the social perception that political careers are for men. The narratives of female presidential candidates in this project counter the perceptions created through the absence of public knowledge and the “first” treatment of more contemporary politicians. They provide representation that illustrate possibilities, ultimately encouraging political participation. To allow for the greatest reach of the content, the project uses a website with a social media model. After all, even the most important work cannot make a social impact if it is not accessible to society and the internet is quickly becoming one of the fastest growing innovations for presenting historical artifacts and interpretations.

Studies, such as Lawless and Fox, prove girls want to be president, while young women alter their future aspirations due to social pressures. Historians cannot be the only professionals attempting to inspire greater political involvement — leadership organizations and familial support are only two more of the innumerable areas involved — but presenting the history of women who have worked in politics is one of the first steps in breaking down barriers of misperceptions and boosting political confidence. After all, as previously noted by David Campbell and Christina Wolbrecht in “See Jane

Run”, female politicians serve as role models to younger generations.⁴⁸ The outpouring of letters from little girls to Hillary Rodham Clinton during her 2016 presidential campaign proves this point.⁴⁹ Young women simply need to know about the women. The “No Girls Allowed” sign must be taken off textbooks and the rooms of historical societies if it is to ever be torn down from the door of the White House.

⁴⁸ Campbell and Wolbrecht, 244.

⁴⁹ Prachi Gupta. “16 Heart-Melting Letters to Hillary Clinton From Girls Who Just Want to See a Woman in the White House.” *Cosmopolitan*. August 24, 2016. <http://www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/a63195/hillary-clinton-girls-letters/>

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APPENDIX A

A Text Version of GirlsJustWannaBePresident.wordpress.com

This Appendix represents the text of the website found at girlsjustwannabe-president.wordpress.com. Only images that provide content information, and not merely visual enhancement, are included; all images included are given text attributes to describe their appearance. Menus and widgets are given detailed descriptions; when they appear in more than one location, only the first appearance with describe content. When possible, links are provided in HTML code to illustrate their text and pages they direct to; links within paragraphs that direct users to bibliography pages and/or primary and supplementary information were not added in order to avoid clutter and improve readability.

Header

[Image: Header with left aligned White House clipart and text “No Girls Allowed” with “No” crossed out and right aligned text “Girls Just Wanna Be President: The History of Female Presidential Candidates”]

Menu

- Home
- Get Involved Now!
- About This Project
- Resources for Guardians
- Lesson Plans for Teachers
- 1800s

- 1872
 - Victoria Woodhull
 - 1884
 - Belva Ann Lockwood
- 1900-1950
 - 1940
 - Gracie Allen
- 1950-2000
 - 1964
 - Margaret Chase Smith
 - 1968
 - Charlene Mitchell
 - 1972
 - Linda Jenness
 - Shirley Chisholm
 - 1976
 - Ellen McCormack
 - 1980
 - Dierdre Griswold
 - 1984
 - Sonia Johnson
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 - 1996
 - Monica Moorehead
- 21st Century
 - 2008
 - Hillary Rodham Clinton
 - Cynthia McKinney
 - 2012
 - Jill Stein
 - 2016
 - Hillary Rodham Clinton
- The First Female President

Home

Girls want to be president. And women have been making it a reality. The White House has been America's ultimate tree house, with a NO GIRLS ALLOWED sign posted on its door. But that doesn't mean women haven't been knocking for generations.

While a woman winning the nomination of a primary political party has shattered the lock on the door, there is still a large gender gap in political ambition and participation. The symbol of the presidency and its history can play a key role in motivating political involvement by proving not only that women belong in politics, but also that they have been present from the beginning.

Explore the pages on this site to learn about the women who have run for president, find information to help you get involved, and use resources for guardians and teachers alike.

[Testimonials that appear two-at-a-time in a randomized order]

No one gives up power easily [and] if you don't have a seat at the table, you're probably on the menu.

Elizabeth Warren

There cannot be true democracy unless women's voices are heard. There cannot be true democracy unless all citizens are able to participate fully.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

We've chosen the path to equality. Please, don't let them turn us around.

Geraldine Ferraro

Getting off the sidelines means women making a difference by letting their voices be heard on the issues they care about.

Kirsten Gillibrand

For me, a better democracy is a democracy where women do not only have the right to vote and to elect but to be elected.

Michelle Bachelet, Chile president

People ask me sometimes 'When will there be enough women on the court?'

And my answer is: 'When there are nine'.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Leadership is not about men in suits. It is a way of life for those who know who they are and are willing to be their best to create the life they want to live.

Kathleen Schafer

As women, we must stand up for ourselves. We must stand up for each other. We must stand up for justice for all.

Michelle Obama

Get Involved Now

The change of tomorrow starts today. Youth political engagement is creating real change in local communities and even on the national level.

Getting involved can be as simple as staying informed or as grand as starting your own nonprofit. No action is too small to make a difference! Browse the options below to start getting involved and help this project grow.

[Grid of page previews for *Activities, Organizations, Contact, Empowering Websites, Youth Engagement, and Historical Archives*]

Activities

From games to even podcasts, the internet provides us with vast resources to get information about the world and be involved. Your political future is just a click away.

Board Games:

[Democracy](http://www.democracyboardgame.com/)

[Corporate America](http://nothingsacredgames.com/nsgames/corporate-america/)

[Campaign Manager 2008](https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/46255/campaign-manager-2008)

Online and Video Games:

[Win the White House](https://www.icivics.org/games/win-white-house)

[Activate](https://www.icivics.org/games/activate)

[Executive Demand](https://www.icivics.org/games/executive-command)

[Democracy 3](http://www.positech.co.uk/democracy3/)

[Civilization V](http://www.civilization5.com/)

Podcasts:

[Pantsuit Politics](http://www.pantsuitpoliticsshow.com)

[Stuff Mom Never Told You](http://www.stuffmomnevertoldyou.com/)

[The New Yorker: Politics and More](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/new-yorker-political-scene/id268213039)

Organizations

Join or support political and community organizations. Not only are they a great way to give back, but they also help you develop connections and experiences to last you a life time.

Political Youth Organizations:

[Young Politicians of America](http://www.ypa.org/home.php)

[Junior State of America](http://jsa.org/)

[National Youth Rights Assoc.](http://youthrights.org/)

[Arsalyn](http://www.arsalyn.org/)

[International Young Leaders Assembly](http://www.iyla.info/)

[Running Start](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tabby-biddle/girls-change-the-presiden_b_10316494.html)

Special Interest:

[Girls Inc.](http://www.girlsinc.org/)

[PETA Kids](http://www.petakids.com/)

[Green Guerillas](http://www.greenguerillas.org/)

[Kids Voting USA](https://www.kidsvotingusa.org/)

[Taking IT Global](http://www.tigweb.org/)

Organizations that support female politicians:

[EMILY's List](https://www.emilyslist.org/)

[League of Women Voters](http://lwv.org/)

[Women Impacting Public Policy](http://www.wipp.org/)

[Political Institute for Women](http://www.politicalinstituteforwomen.org/)

Contact

GJWBP is not just a static resource — it's meant to be dynamic and inclusive to foster strong women in American politics. Help create this space by being actively involved in the discussion!

If you have any comments or want a new woman featured on this site, fill out the form below.

[Contact form with name, email, and comment text areas]

[WordPress comment tool section]

Empowering Websites

The internet is full of resources to help young women get interested and involved in politics. Below are some sites aimed at helping girls and women engage their communities and political surroundings.

[Off The Sidelines](http://offthesidelines.org/)

[Center for American Women in Politics](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/)

[EMILY's List](https://www.emilyslist.org/)

[Running Start](http://runningstartonline.org/)

[Girls State](http://www.boysandgirlsstate.org/girls.html)

Youth Engagement

Youth across the United States have taken a stand for movements they believed in or fought against unjust policies. Here are some news articles to both inspire and give these youths the attention they deserve.

[10-year-old Lobbies for Constitutional Amendment so She Can Run for President...Someday](http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2015/10/10-year-old-girl-lobbying-for-the-presidency.html)

[Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Brings Pipeline Protest to the White House](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/standing-rock-sioux-tribe-rally-white-house_us_57d9b63ae4b08cb14093882a)

<http://www.teenvogue.com/story/middle-school-football-team-beaumont-bulls-getting-death-threats-anthem-protest>>Beaumont Bulls Youth Football Team Protests Anthem

<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/246513/Egypt/Politics-/Egypt-National-Youth-Conference-to-start-Tuesday;- .aspx>>Egypt National Youth Conference to Start

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/cameron-fenton/climate-change-protest-arrests_b_12626628.html>Youth are Pushing Back Against Fossil Fuel Influence

Historical Archives

Knowing the past gives you power to shape our future. You can use these online archives if you're interested in learning more about other strong women or anything else in the past that peaks your interest!

<https://www.loc.gov/>>Library of Congress

<https://www.archives.gov/about/history>>National Archives

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/archives>>The National Museum of American History Archives

<https://sfi.usc.edu/vha>>Visual History Archive

<http://www.densho.org/>>Densho

https://www.nps.gov/mamc/learn/historyculture/mamc_nabwh.htm>National Archives for Black Women's History

About the Project

This website is the product of a thesis project for a Masters of Applied Historical Research. This project proposes that the largely absent or otherizing history of female politicians is at least partially to blame for the gender gap in political ambition within the United States. Through serving as a collective resource on the symbolic position of the presidential candidate, this website creates a place for young women to learn about strong female politicians and ways in which they can become politically involved themselves.

To read the full project thesis:

www.girlsjustwannabepresident.wordpress.com/thesis>Girls Just Wanna Be President: The Impact of the History of Female Presidential Candidates on Political Ambition and Engagement

www.girlsjustwannabepresident.wordpress.com/criteria>Criteria of included candidates

[Testimonials]

Criteria

The women included in this project do not make up an exhaustive list of women presidential candidates. Rather, there are many more who partook in the baton race towards the presidency, in one facet or another. However, due to an inability to logistically discuss every woman who claimed a run, there were limiting criteria put in place.

Pre-1900, the criteria was lax. This is justified by the fact that only two women attempted to run for president during this time period and women were still fighting for the right to vote, let alone an ability to run for any political office. Due to the exceptional political and cultural barriers for these women, further criteria felt arbitrary and unfairly judgmental.

After 1900, the criteria were as follows:

1. Any woman who won a widely recognized party nomination, whether a primary or third party;
2. Any woman who did not win a party nomination, but had a well-organized and mathematically viable campaign during the primary election;
3. Specific women that do not meet the other criteria, but do represent significant contributions or milestones that will be further justified on an individual basis

Though more contemporary examples are often dismissed in historical narratives, this project embraces their inclusion to help illustrate the baton narrative that has helped break down political barriers and brought women closer to the highest office in the United States. Women not only encompassed a past in political history, they also represent a present.

It is my hope that the women represented within this project motivate readers to research the other women who ran for president, as well as women who have ran for other political offices and helped shape American politics. Under the “Get Involved” section, there is a section where you can question the inclusion of a candidate or justify a further addition to the discussion.

Resources for Guardians

One of the five factors that contribute to the gender gap in political ambition among students, which were discovered by the study *Girls Just Wanna Not Run*, includes the fact that young men are more likely than young women to be socialized by their parents to think about politics as a career path. In fact, young men are encouraged to pursue politics by their parents 10% more than women, while women are 4 to 5% more likely to be discouraged from pursuing a political career. Young men are also more likely to have politics discussed at the dinner table than young women, with 24% compared to 19%, which amounted to one of the most significant statistical differences between genders and politicized homes.

What do all these numbers mean? They mean that parents and guardians provide an important level of influence, direct or indirect, on whether or not a child grows up to be interested in being politically involved or not.

Help encourage your daughter, granddaughter, niece, or other female child in your life to be politically active at an early age! Give them books about strong women in politics. Discuss candidates and legislation at every meal. Take them to community rallies and town halls. Now is the time to create a foundation for political and community engagement — and all you have to do is not stand in the way of potential passions and give a supporting hand!

I'm not the only person to urge parents to encourage their daughters to get involved in politics. Here are some resources and tips!

[11 Ways to Encourage Your Daughter to Pursue Politics](http://tag.rutgers.edu/11-ways-to-encourage-your-daughter-to-pursue-politics/)

[Go Run! How to Close the Gender Gap in Politics by Encouraging Young Girls to Consider Careers in Public Service](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elsie-owolo/go-run-how-to-close-the-g_b_5602230.html)

[Girls Change the Presidential Conversation](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tabby-biddle/girls-change-the-presiden_b_10316494.html)

Books to Empower

[Girls Rule! : Amazing Tales of Female Leaders](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/17658273-girls-rule)

[Grace for President](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1452374.Grace_for_President)

[The Little Book of Politics for Girls](http://thelittlebookofpoliticsforgirls.com/)

[Women Who Changed the World: 50 Amazing Americans](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/25779073-women-who-changed-the-world)

[Hillary Rodham Clinton: Some Girls Are Born to Lead](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/25817319-hillary-rodham-clinton)

[Ballots for Belva: The True Story of a Woman's Race for the Presidency](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/4579842-ballots-for-belva)

[Madam President: The Extraordinary, True \(and Evolving\) Story of Women in Politics](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/315221.Madam_President)

[Sarah Palin, Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton & Caroline Kennedy: Female Force V1](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/6502420-sarah-palin-michelle-obama-hillary-clinton-caroline-kennedy)

[Vote!](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1757050.Vote_)

[With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/701294.With_Courage_and_Cloth)

Movies and TV Shows

[Veep](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1759761/?ref_=nv_sr_1)

[Madam Secretary](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3501074/)

[The Contender](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0208874/?ref_=nv_sr_1)

[Political Animals](http://www2.usanetwork.com/series/politicalanimals/)

Documentaries

[Makers: Women in Politics](http://www.makers.com/documentary/womeninpolitics)

[Raising Ms. President: Raising the Next Generation of Female Political Leaders](http://www.raisingmspresident.com/)

[Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority](http://www.aheadofthemajority.com/)

Lesson Plans for Teachers

A recent study found that boys are more likely to be encouraged to run for student government and 7% more likely to be encouraged to run for politics later in life by their teachers. While not all students will want to grow up to be in politics and there are numerous ways to support one's community outside of politics (grassroots organizations, for example), teachers have an obligation to show students the opportunities they have. This can be done by discussing political issues equally with all your students or supporting all political and community work students take a part in. Another way, however, is to teach students about strong women who have made an impact in American politics. Both boys and girls will benefit from expanding their understanding of who can make a difference and who already has. "Although young women are less likely than young men ever to have considered running for office, they are just as likely as men to respond positively to encouragement." Be the encouragement students need by teaching them the history and roles of women in American politics through the lens of the exciting American presidency.

Grades 7-9

The American presidency is a significant part of the government and offers students and teachers alike a new way to explore United States history. This lesson plan is intended to be supplementary to government or history lesson plans discussing the American Presidency. It has been arranged to laud the contributions of female presidential candidates alongside other presidential candidates and nominees.

[Link to PDF document with text: The American Presidency: Campaigns and Elections]

[Link to PDF document with text: Campaign Slogan Activity Sheet]

Grades 10-12

With the United States about to elect their 45th president, there has yet to be a woman in office. Examining the women who have run for president and their campaigns, students and teachers alike will be able to take a closer and more nuanced look into the American presidency. This lesson plan is intended to be supplementary to government or history lesson plans discussing the American Presidency and/or the role of women in American politics.

[Link to PDF document with text: Who Are the Women Who Have Run for President?: A Lack of Gender Representation in the Oval Office]

*These lesson plans are not associated with standardized practices and may need to be altered by teachers to utilize in public schools.

1800s

[Menu option with no page attached]

1872

1872 was the year of Yellowstone National Park being established as the world's first national park, Susan B. Anthony voting against the law and being fined \$100 (which she never paid), Calvin Coolidge's (the 30th president of the United States) birth, and outlaw Jesse James robbing a bank in Columbia, Kentucky for \$1,500. The year also saw the 22nd quadrennial presidential election and a momentous occasion for women in American politics.

There were 3,603,884 citizens living in the United States at the time of the U.S. census of 1870. However only 1,984,467 had the ability to vote in presidential elections, as the remaining persons lived in territorial areas that had not yet been admitted as a state. That meant that as Presidential incumbent Ulysses S. Grant (Republican) was being opposed by Horace Greeley (Liberal Republican), there were only 37 states at play. Ultimately Grant won 31 states and went on to be president for one more term.

All was not calm politically nor socially just because of Grant's win. 1872 reflected a country in the middle of change. Women's suffrage activists were fighting for the right to vote. The South was still under Reconstruction policies that were implemented after the Civil War. The Modoc War against indigenous persons began. Gender, racial, and class struggles could not be ignored and people were beginning to take activist action.

[Right side menu]

Presidential Elections throughout Time

[Timeline of Presidential Candidates](http://girlsjustwannabepresident.omeka.net/timeline)

[Historical Presidential Elections](http://www.270towin.com/historical-presidential-elections/)

Words from the Wise

[Testimonials](http://girlsjustwannabepresident.wordpress.com/testimonial)

Victoria Woodhull

“While others of my sex devoted themselves to a crusade against the laws that shackle the women of the country, I asserted my individual independence [and] boldly entered the arena of politics. I therefore claim the right to speak for the unenfranchised woman of the country and...I now announce myself as a candidate for the Presidency.”
(The Herald, April 1970)

In April of 1870, Victoria Woodhull announced her candidacy for president of the United States to become the first woman to run. Her platform was one of women’s suffrage, regulation of monopolies, nationalization of railroads, an eight-hour workday, direct taxation, abolition of the death penalty, and welfare for the poor. A primary reason for the campaign, however, was to point out the irony that she could technically run, even while she couldn’t vote. Victoria helped organize the Equal Rights Party in 1870 — when she announced that “public opinion is against Equality, but it is simply from prejudice, which requires but to be informed to pass away” — and was nominated as its

presidential candidate in May 1872, with Frederick Douglass as her running mate. The momentous occasion of a woman running for president ended anti-climactically as Victoria was imprisoned the night of the election for printing obscene material in her newspaper and no votes were counted in her favor.

So What?

Victoria Woodhull was always a unique and strong-willed individual, be it becoming the first female stockbroker (along with her sister) on Wall Street or starting her own newspapers and magazines. Her actions did more than just keep her name in the gossip halls during her time, however. Historically speaking, Victoria's run for office provides the beginning of storied timeline containing numerous women running for president and other political offices. There always has to be a first, and through her actions of running for president and creating a legitimate party platform, Victoria was able to begin the fight against political sexism that barred women from participating. Her influence did not stop at just influencing presidential runs, either. After all, as she pondered on November 20, 1871 — "What is freedom?" It certainly isn't being refrained from voting and participating in one's own country. Victoria's charisma and strong-willed campaign helped further the path of the women's rights movement and even though many suffrage leaders of her time did not believe Victoria's free love politics were the right direction of the movement, her candidacy helped to exemplify the irony of voting laws that excluded women fifty years before the 19th Amendment was passed.

[Link to quotation images with text: Quotations of Victoria]

1884

1884 was the year of France gifting the Statue of Liberty to the United States, Alaska becoming a U.S. territory, the creation of the first roller coaster, Mark Twain publishing *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in the UK and Canada (it was printed in the U.S. in 1885), and the 25th quadrennial presidential election.

The Statistical Atlas of the United States showed the United States with a population of 50,155,783 in 1880, a 30% increase from the previous census ten years earlier. The country was in an era of quick growth and social upheaval. The year's presidential election was a symbol of the shift. New York governor Grover Cleveland (Democrat) eked out a win from James G. Blaine (Republican) with a 48.5% to 48.2% win. Before the election, the Democratic Party was on the longest losing streak of any primary political party in history, with six presidential election losses.

This same year, women's suffrage was still struggling for the right to vote. Susan B. Anthony stood before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives urging for a Constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote. Anthony's argument came sixteen years after legislators had first introduced a federal woman's suffrage amendment.

[Right side menu]

Belva Ann Lockwood

“If a woman demonstrates that she is fit to be president she will someday occupy the White House.” (1914, at 84 years old and still not able to vote)

Lockwood became a presidential candidate because of her work for the suffrage movement, always noting that “I can’t vote, but I can be voted for.” Lockwood accepted her nomination from the Equal Rights Party and Clemence S. Lozier became her running mate (some records state that Harriet Stow was in fact her running mate, illustrating the fluidity of smaller political campaign structures). She pledged that her platform would “take up every one of the issues of the day”. Her fifteen-point platform included: promoting and maintaining equal political privileges; appointment of a reasonable number of women as district attorneys, marshals, and federal judges; extension of commercial relations with foreign countries; citizenship for Native Americans; increased benefits for veterans. Thanks to a sophisticated campaign plan that involved numerous campaign rallies, speeches, and even a request to debate the Democratic Party nominee Grover Cleveland, Lockwood gained the attention of papers and journalists treated her with a sense of professionalism and viability. Through her efforts, electors from seven states (New Hampshire, California, Maryland, New York, Oregon, Michigan, Indiana) pledged to vote for her and she received a few thousand popular votes. Unfortunately, an official count was impossible and Lockwood sent a petition to Congress in January of 1885 claiming many of her votes were either thrown out or given to one of the leading candidates. Belva Ann Lockwood also ran for president in 1888, when she received a few more votes but less media attention than before.

So What?

Always the self-made professional woman, Belva attended National University Law School, to the anger of many men who stated they would not graduate with a

woman, and as the story goes, had to pry her law school degree from the hands of President Ulysses S. Grant in 1873. Though with a degree in hand, Belva still faced many barriers. In 1876, the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court refused to admit her to its bar, because “none but men are permitted to practice before us”. But that didn’t stop Belva. Single-handedly, she lobbied the United States Congress to pass “An Act to relieve certain legal disabilities of women”. On March 3, 1879, Belva became the first woman admitted to the Supreme Court bar. In 1880, she became the first woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court with *Kaiser v. Stickney*. As can be seen, limiting Belva’s influence to her political run would be misguided — but that doesn’t mean it didn’t have historical influence on its own. By taking the step to run for president and present a woman-centric platform, Belva gave credence to her stance that, “...equality of rights and privileges is but simple justice”. She should have had the right to vote, as a matter of simple justice, and to help illustrate this Belva Lockwood became the second of many women to run a presidential campaign.

[Link to quotation images with text: Belva Ann Lockwood]

1900-1950

[Menu option with no page attached]

1940

The year 1940 saw Frank Sinatra’s debut, the premier of *Pinocchio*, the first successful helicopter flight in the United States, and Germany’s creation of ghettos for

Jewish citizens. In the midst of an expansion of American popular culture and an international war, the United States held its 39th quadrennial presidential election.

The 1940 United States census data showed a population of 131,669,275 (the territories of Alaska, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, the Panama Canal, and the American Virgin Islands — locales unable to vote in presidential elections — hosted 2,477,023 people). The American population was just emerging from the Great Depression and was witnessing battles being fought in Europe by close allies. During this turmoil, incumbent President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Democrat) broke with executive tradition and ran for a third term in office against Wendell Willkie (Republican). Despite, or potentially because of, the political and social climate of the country, Roosevelt won the election with nearly 55% of the vote and 449 electoral votes.

The United States was not yet at war, but it was to officially come just over a year after the 1940 presidential election. As bombs began to drop overseas, the country was looking for ways to be distracted from the violence.

[Right side menu]

Gracie Allen

“Yeah, isn’t that exciting? I’d be the first one!” (when told that there hasn’t been a woman president) — Burns & Allen Show, Government Jobs

Gracie Allen, one half of the Burns & Allen comedy duo, announced her run for president on the radio in the March of 1940. The party? Her very own, which she named the “Surprise Party”. Though the campaign was originally conceived as a gimmick — being used to promote twelve episodes of The Hinds Honey & Almond Cream Program

Starring George Burns & Gracie Allen (CBS) — it quickly gained momentum. The same demeanor that led Gracie to exasperatedly announce one evening to her husband George Burns that “I’m tired of knitting this sweater. I think I’ll run for president this year” led to people who were frustrated or disheartened by the political process to through their support behind her. The campaign always focused on humor, but in that humor Gracie brought attention to serious issues; after all, she wanted the American people to be proud of their \$43 billion national debt. The symbolic importance of Gracie’s campaign was cemented when First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt invited Gracie to the Women’s National Press Club in Washington D.C. as a guest of honor, and Harvard University jovially gave her their endorsement. Numerous public appearances and radio talks later, there were no exact figures of how many votes Gracie received — speculations have run from a few hundred write-in votes to 10,000, 20,000 or even 40,000!

So What?

Though built on comedy, Gracie’s presidential campaign was significant in progressing political perceptions. Due to the comedic and outlandish character of her campaign, Gracie’s run was not covered simply because of her gender. Rather, it was her celebrity and humor that caught the news headings. By the near non-interest (excluding when Gracie would make a comedic remark about it) on her gender, it began the first normalization of a woman in the headlines for attempting to be president. It wasn’t the candidate’s gender that was outrageous!

[Link to quotation images with text: Gracie Allen Quotations]

1950-2000

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1964

1964 was the year of the first Beatle's album being released in the United States, the first US Surgeon General report that smoking is hazardous to one's health, the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Martin Luther King Jr. winning a Nobel Peace Prize. The year also provided the 45th quadrennial presidential election.

With a population of 191,888,791, the United States had developed into a world power. To illustrate its power, the U.S. had been at war with Vietnam for nine years by the time 1964 came around. On top of that, the election between Vice-President turned President Lyndon Johnson (Democrat) and Barry Goldwater (Republican) came just shy of a year after President John F. Kennedy's assassination. A country still in mourning, with war protests blossoming on college campuses, ultimately voted for Johnson with 61% of the popular vote.

[Right side menu]

Margaret Chase Smith

“I have few illusions and no money, but I'm staying for the finish. When people keep telling you, you can't do a thing, you kind of like to try” — Margaret Chase Smith

Margaret Chase Smith was the first woman to run for the presidential nomination of a primary party when she put her bid in for the Republican Party. Before running, many political pundits speculated that Margaret would be Barry

Goldwater's choice for Vice President. But in a time where even female journalists were writing that it is "doubtful that the country will see a woman head of state in the near or even distant future", Margaret was not taking second place and at the Women's National Press Club on January 27, 1964, she announced her candidacy. Her campaign had no press bus, headquarters, or even rallies. Instead, she spent most of her time seeing to her duties as an active Senator and left her campaign to manifest through one-on-one conversations and public support. Margaret ultimately lost every state primary. However, she did receive 25% of the vote in Illinois and became the first woman to have her name placed in nomination for the presidency at a major political party's convention, where she received 27 delegate votes.

So What?

During one of her small tours, Margaret told a young school girl: "What I am doing today may make you President someday". Just as the women before her, Margaret was not running for president because she believed she could win. Rather, in a country that was still shaken up by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy just a year prior, it was her goal to shake it up for a positive outcome. People previously denied representation and justice were finally being heard, from the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to feminist icons like Gloria Steinem fighting for equal pay and treatment. Margaret Chase Smith's presidential run was an attempt to jump on this movement's coattails to entrench the idea that women were capable.

1968

1968 was the year of the U.S. premier of Rosemary's Baby, Marines raise the American flag at Iwo Jima, country-wide student Civil Rights protests and school walk outs, and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. In the shadow of these events, the United States held its 46th quadrennial presidential election.

Still at war in Vietnam, incumbent President Lyndon Johnson chose not to run for re-election. Instead, Richard Nixon (Republican) ran against Hubert Humphrey (Democrat) and George Wallace (Independent). With a promise for new leadership in Vietnam, Nixon won 43.4% of the popular vote to go on and become President of the United States.

1968 was the first election after the Voting Rights Act of 1965, with a massive influx of previously disenfranchised racial minorities heading to the ballot box and, unfortunately, a push back against such rights. The year can be ultimately summarized as a tumultuous time as American citizens navigated an ongoing war and domestic racial discrimination.

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Charlene Mitchell

“The platform was to put an open door policy on the White House so that in terms that an African American woman would change the way the White House looks.”

Charlene Mitchell, 2006 interview

Charlene Mitchell became the party nominee for the Communist Party ticket in 1968 and became the first black woman to run for president of the United States.

Charlene ran knowing she would receive few votes, even admitting so in a KTVU

interview in July of 1968. But the number of votes didn't deem her campaign a success or not, but rather "whether or not Communists would be able to present to the American people their views and their platforms in a way in which the American people can begin to understand what Communists see as some of the solutions to the problems in our country." Ultimately, the plan of her candidacy was to be the representation of the anti-war movement, anti-racism movement, and the youth movement all brought together within one campaign. Charlene only appeared on the ballot in two states due to various election laws, many of which denied the Communist Party any ballot access, and received 1,076 votes.

So What?

Charlene Mitchell was the first African American to run for president. As readers from an era after the first African American man was elected to the White House, such an accomplishment in racial history should be clear. This was not the only contribution of Charlene's campaign, however. Rather, she was able to combine all of the emotions and activism of an era of war and social upset into a cohesive platform. Though not successful in the sense that she did not win the presidency, Charlene was able to give voice to those feeling disenfranchised and disheartened by the current government. Her activism led to the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression to name a human rights award in her honor. Politically, Charlene also set precedent for third parties when she filed suit against the state of Minnesota for denying her access to the ballot, even though she had met the required signatures.

[Link to quotation images with text: Quotations by Charlene Mitchell]

1972

The year 1972 saw US airlines beginning mandatory inspection of passengers & baggage, the premier of The Godfather, the Watergate Scandal, and The Price is Right debuts on CBS. 1972 was also the year of the 47th quadrennial presidential election.

Incumbent President Richard Nixon (Republican), even in light of a growing scandal, ran for re-election against George McGovern (Democratic). McGovern ran an anti-war campaign, but Nixon had the image of working to end the Vietnam War already; he also had a record of positive foreign relations with China and an improving economy on his side. In the end, Nixon won in a landslide with 60.7% of the popular vote and 18 million more votes than McGovern — an election record.

The presidential term of 1973-1977 is unique in history because it is the only term where both the president and vice president both failed to complete the term. Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned less than a year after the election (replaced by Gerald Ford), and Nixon resigned in August of 1974 due to the Watergate Scandal. While they resigned after the election of 1972, the political and social environments that led to their early terminations were fully at play on November 7, 1972 — along with further blossoming of racial tensions and anti-war protests.

[Right side menu]

Linda Jenness

“[They say Socialists] still wouldn’t win the elections in November ’72. And that is absolute true. But why is that? It’s because the vast majority of Americans still have

illusions in the capitalist system and in the Democrat and Republican parties.” Linda Jenness, 1972 at UCLA

Linda Jenness became the Socialist Workers Party presidential candidates in 1972. Her campaign tackled hot-button issues and her posters proudly proclaimed sayings such as “Repeal all anti-abortion laws” and “From 1965 to 1971 the Democrats and Republicans dropped more than 6 million tons of bombs on the people on Vietnam...Bring the troops home now. Stop the bombing”. Many of Linda’s speeches and rallies were held at universities, where she urged students to join the anti-war movement and question capitalism and the current government system. A specific advocacy was for the expansion of voter rights, such as the access of Spanish-language ballots and voting rights for prisoners. One of the major successes of her campaign was her ability to convince Representative Paul McCloskey, a congressman from California who was challenging Nixon for the 1972 Republican nomination, to debate her during the New Hampshire primary; she was unable to get the Democratic nominee to debate her. Though nominated, Linda was only 31 years old and did not meet the Constitutional age requirement to be president (a requirement she thought should be changed as “turning 35 does not make you a genius politically”). Because of this, she was removed from a few state ballots (such as Ohio) when she could not prove she was 35. Regardless, Linda made it on the ballot in 25 states and received 83,380 votes.

So What?

Linda Jenness’s primary contribution to history and the baton-race of presidential campaigns is the fact that she was able to debate a Republican candidate for president.

Though this may seem like a small feat, it was a previously unattainable victory. Through her determination, Linda broke down that barrier for a female candidate and also helped further legitimize third-parties in the process. In a male-dominated, two-party political system, Linda stood as a fighter for more inclusive representation and symbolized the small steps that help build the path to that goal.

Shirley Chisholm

“The next time a woman runs, or a black, a Jew or anyone from a group that the country is “not ready” to elect to its highest office, I believe he or she will be taken seriously from the start. The door is not open yet, but it is ajar.” — *The Good Fight*, 1973

Shirley Chisholm became the first African American woman to run for a major political party (the Democratic Party) when she announced her run in 1972. She knew her candidacy did not have a chance, but she ran because someone had to do it first. She also wanted her campaign to be symbolic to prove that Americans would in fact vote for a black woman. Shirley’s platform was framed around providing equality to all persons and breaking down the rhetoric of difference that divided people. “I am not the candidate of black American, even though I am black and proud. I am not the candidate of the women’s movement of this country, although I am a woman and I am equally proud of that...I am the candidate of the people of American.” Shirley was able to raise \$95,000 from supporters, but unfortunately her campaign cost \$300,000 and was left with personal debt after her run. If she had had the money to hire professionals to raise funds, Shirley believed her campaign would have been more successful. Even with financial limitations, however, she received votes in primaries in twelve states and won 28

delegates during the primary process. She won 430,703 votes in Democratic primary and ultimately received 152 delegate votes — 10% of the total vote — during the national convention.

So What?

During her second term in the House of Representatives, Chisholm traveled to and spoke at over a hundred campuses in forty-two states and on most of them she was asked, “Why don’t you run for President in 1972?” One day she was asked the same question and she gave the same response she always gave, “I am black and I am a woman.” The student’s response? “When are you going to break that tradition [of those groups being excluded]?”

It is not a coincidence that Shirley Chisholm has become a beacon of hope and perseverance for generations. She broke down the barriers before women of color and women trying to become president. Aside from this, and as Chisholm herself noted, “A candidate with little chance of being nominated who addressed himself directly to the major issues of the campaign might help force the major candidates to address the issues more directly” Chisholm wasn’t just a symbol — she was a fighter for her platform and the people she hoped to represent.

[Link to quotation images with text: Quotations by Shirley Chisholm]

1976

1976 was the year of Charlie’s Angels debuting in the United States, the resigning of President Richard Nixon, Queen Elizabeth II sending out the first royal email, the first

woman being admitting into the Air Force Academy, and the death of Mao Zedong. The year also held the 48th quadrennial presidential election.

President Gerald Ford had become president with the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974. Running for re-election, Gerald Ford (Republican) ran opposed by Jimmy Carter (Democrat). Ford is the only sitting president never elected to national office (he replaced elected Vice President Spiro Agnew) and that fact helped contribute to him also being one of few incumbent presidents to now win re-election. However, it still wasn't a landslide. Carter won 50.1% — compared to 48% for Ford — of the popular vote with a campaign of “Washington outsider” policies.

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Ellen McCormack

“I'm disturbed that the Democratic Party is becoming the party of abortion” —
Ellen McCormack, 1976 political commercial

Ellen McCormack was a candidate for the Democratic Party in 1976, running under a pro-life platform. She self-identified as a housewife and ran a single-issue campaign, hoping to use emotion to garner large support. Even her political advertisements starred babies and images of fetuses, emphasizing her advocacy and urging other political leaders to take up her mantle.

Ellen's campaign received enough attention and monetary contributions that she was the first woman candidate to qualify for federal financing and Secret Service protection. Ellen appeared on the ballot in eighteen states, more than any female candidate up to that point in time, and received 238,000 votes. At the Democratic

National Convention, she received 22 delegate votes. In 1980, Ellen ran for president again, this time as the Right to Life Party candidate. She received 32,327 votes during her second campaign.

So What?

Though the fact receives much criticism, money helps candidates win. Ellen's ability to qualify for federal financing was a significant success. While her being able to receive financing did not guarantee that other female candidates would be so fortunate, it did mark a moment where a woman was receiving serious attention by not just her grassroots supporters, but also government institutions. Each time a female candidate received positive and serious consideration it helped normalize the idea of a woman running for president — even if it did not normalize a female president.

1980

1980 — the year of the President Carter calling for a U.S. boycott of the Olympics being held in Moscow, Post It Notes being introduced to American consumers, the World Health Organization announcing smallpox had been eradicated, Star Wars Episode V-Empire Strikes Back being released, and the United States holding the 49th quadrennial presidential election.

Incumbent President Jimmy Carter (Democrat) ran for re-election in 1980 against Ronald Reagan (Republican). Though incumbents typically win re-election, Carter faced the Iran Hostage Crisis and a worsening economy. Harkening in a conservative era of economics, Reagan won the election with 50.7% of the popular vote.

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Dierdre Griswold

“Actually, it’s not that hard to campaign. It’s very interesting. It’s a great opportunity to test your ideas out on different people, to sharpen your own ability to articulate your views...In terms of personal satisfaction, it was definitely worth it”

Deirdre Griswold, 1983 interview

Deirdre Griswold was the daughter of the Vincent Copeland, founder of the Workers World Party, and was deeply involved in the third-party from childhood. In 1980, she became the party’s first candidate for president (the party had previously not participated in electoral politics and had mostly focused on street demonstrations of protest). Her running mate was Gavrielle (Larry) Holmes, and together they ran a campaign emphasizing the party’s platform of racial equality and anti-imperialism. As Griswold put it, “[the campaign] was primarily an educational objective — to get our program across.” To promote this endeavor, the WWP campaign did not use big rallies; rather, Griswold and Holmes would appear in local meetings, on union picket lines, and even inside people’s kitchens to talk one-on-one. The smaller campaign cost the WWP between \$30,000 and \$50,000. In the end, Griswold’s campaign was mostly limited to California and New Hampshire due to ballot access issues and she earned 13,213 popular votes.

So What?

Just like Linda Jenness before her, Deirde Griswold was significant not only for her role as a female presidential candidate, but also for her work for third parties. “We were offering a real alternative. We told people they did not just have to vote for the lesser of two evils — the Democrats and the Republicans”. Through talking to people on an individual basis she helped them feel like they had a voice in the democratic process, even if they did not vote for one of the two primary parties. The impact these conversations had on citizens and their future political participation is not quantifiable, but it would be problematically dismissive to assume there was no effect. If you make someone believe they can be heard and make a change, there’s no telling where they will go in life.

1984

The year 1984 saw the first airing of Jeopardy!, the opening of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom in the United States, the American government ordering air bags or seat belts would be required in cars by 1989, and the first woman completing a spacewalk (Kathryn D Sullivan). In the midst of technological, popular culture, and political developments, the United States held the 50th quadrennial presidential election.

Incumbent President Ronald Reagan (Republican) ran for re-election against Walter Mondale (Democrat). Due to a national economic recover under his presidency, Reagan won the election with 58.8% of the vote and carrying 49 states.

The election of 1984 also saw a step forward for female politicians. Geraldine Ferraro became the first woman to be a Vice Presidential nominee for a primary party as

Walter Mondale's running mate. Though the decision was not necessarily popular at the time — and controversies arose around her husband — it was an important first.

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Sonia Johnson

“We must remember that one determined person can make a significant difference, and that a small group of determined people can change the course of history”
— Sonia Johnson, *From Housewife to Heretic*

Sonia Johnson ran for president in 1984 for the U.S. Citizens Party, assuming the ticket for the Consumer Party in Pennsylvania and the Peace and Freedom Party in California. She shared the ticket in Pennsylvania with Vice Presidential candidate Richard Walton and with Vice Presidential candidate Emma Wong Mar in California. Sonia grew up in a strong Mormon family, but became uneasy when her church was advocated against the Equal Rights Amendment. This fact pushed her away from her religion, but also pushed her into politics and into running for president. To that point, her campaign was largely about the passing of the ERA. Sonia was the first third-party candidate to qualify for primary matching funds from the government. In total, Sonia received 72, 161 votes, finishing fifth nationally.

So What?

Sonia didn't win her bid for president and the Equal Rights Amendment did not get passed, but she did break common social restrictions she faced as a Mormon, a wife,

and mother. When she announced her candidacy, she had to face questions male presidential candidates are never asked.

“Won’t voters see this as a wacko candidacy?” asked one male reporter.

“What about your children?” said another.

“Is your husband supportive of your candidacy?” asked a third.

Johnson was unshaken. The answers, in order were, “No,” “The kids are fine,” and “I don’t know, but it doesn’t matter.”

Despite the criticism sent her way, Sonia worked tirelessly for the ERA (even fasting for 37 days in her fight) and gained more support than any other third party had previously, gaining institutional support through fund matching. Personally, for this author, Sonia Johnson also has geographical importance. Having been born and raised in Idaho, it is significant that a woman who was also born and raised in the state (Malad, Idaho) ran for president and fought for her beliefs.

1988

1988 was the year of a Federal smoking ban during domestic airline flights of 2 hours or less, the premier of Big in the United States, Asia’s population hitting 3 billion, and the formation of Al-Qaeda. It was also the year of the 51st quadrennial presidential election.

With President Ronald Reagan unable to run for a third term, Incumbent Vice President George H.W. Bush (Republican) ran against Michael Dukakis (Democrat). Working off of Reagan’s popularity, Bush went with 53.4% of the vote. This election

marked the third consecutive presidential victory for the Republican Party, illustrating the conservative environment of the country at the time.

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Lenora Fulani

“There are millions of people who not only feel disenfranchised, but have been disenfranchised by a two-party system” — News Hour interview, 1992

Lenora Fulani was an active participant in the New Alliance Party and became their presidential candidate in 1988, later filing for independent status. Her platform was controversial and she advocated for what she called a “militant crusade for fair elections and democracy”. She believed the two-party system was undemocratic and actively engaged in changing the political process. Lenora qualified for federal fund matching, was the first African American independent candidate and the first female presidential candidate on the ballot in all 50 states and Washington DC. The end results were that Lenora received 225,000 votes (0.2%) — the highest number of votes a female presidential candidate had received in a general election up to that point. Fulani also ran in 1992, but received fewer votes than 1980 with only 0.07%.

So What?

Lenora Fulani gained national attention through her campaign and was able to present her platform as an option for every American citizen, regardless of what state they lived in. Her work is also noted as one of the reasons third party support surged in the late 80s/early 90s. In fact, many a political pundit has claimed she led the way for

Ross Perot's successful third party campaign in 1992. Through her hard work fighting for fair elections, Lenora gave legitimacy and a face to the inclusion of third parties.

1996

The year 1996 was the time the first flip phone (Motorola StarTAC) went on sale, Third Rock from the Sun aired for the first time on NBC, Nelson Mandela stepped down as President of South Africa, and the United States hosted the 53rd quadrennial presidential election.

Incumbent President Bill Clinton (Democrat) ran against Bob Dole (Republican). Despite the Democratic Party losing majorities in Congress two years' prior during midterm elections, Clinton went on to win 49.2% of the popular vote and 370 electoral votes. The Republican Party kept the majority in the House and Senate. Clinton became the first Democratic president since Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 to win re-election.

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Monica Moorehead

“[my campaign] is a clarion call to challenge racism and fight for revolutionary socialism” — Monica Moorehead, 2016 announcement

Monica Moorehead ran for president in 1996 under the Workers World Party, where she received 29,000 votes — the most any candidate for the WWP has ever received. She ran again in 2000, with the same party, and received 4,795 votes. After serving as a campaign manager for the WWP in 2004 and endorsing the Green Party candidate in 2008, Monica received the 2016 presidential nomination of the WWP and

the Peace and Freedom Party in California. Throughout all of these campaign, Monica fought for racial equality, peace, and social justice. With a platform of political reform, her campaign not only fought for these issues but also brought attention to more viable candidates who were also fighting for the same values.

So What?

Monica Moorehead is the epitome of a life-long activist. From speaking at protests like the Rally Against War and Racism in 2001 to writing political commentary for the World Workers Party newsletter, Monica's significance lies in her constant perseverance. Racial profiling, police brutality, and class warfare are real issues that affect real people, and Monica's campaigns helped her gain the national attention that gave her credence to speak out against these issues. With each campaign (and though her popular vote percentages went down), she was able to spread her message. In fact, she was so successful in this that political commentator Michael Moore even blamed Monica for costing Al Gore the Florida electoral vote in 2000; while this was meant as criticism, it illustrates how much impact her campaign had on the political sphere overall.

21st Century

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2008

In 2008, the United States named actor George Clooney the UN messenger of Peace, the Eyak language in Alaska became extinct, Fidel Castro retired as the President

of Cuba, Twilight premiers in Los Angeles, and the United States saw its 56th quadrennial presidential election.

With incumbent President George W. Bush unable to run for re-election, John McCain won the Republican Party's nomination and ran against Barack Obama (Democrat). With a campaign focusing on the issues of Iraq War and the Great Recession which peaked in September of 2008 — and the unpopularity of Bush on his side — Obama won with 52.9% of the popular vote and the highest number of votes ever won by a presidential candidate with 69.5 million votes cast his way.

President Barack Obama was the first African American (and first non-white) President of the United States. Though it did not “sweep [sic] away the last racial barrier in American politics,” this historic election served as a symbol of possibilities available for all Americans. His presidency also illustrated a change in the country, with an increase in minority voters.

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Hillary Rodham Clinton

“We put 18,000,000 cracks in the glass ceiling” — Hillary Rodham Clinton, concession speech

Hillary Rodham Clinton ran for president with the Democratic Party in 2008, losing in the primary to Barack Obama. Her campaign platform focused on re-examining existing trade agreements, national healthcare and women's health issues, creating an anti-crime agenda, and comprehensive immigration reform (along with other national and international platform issues). Hillary ran a strong, nationally recognized campaign that

won 1,896 Democratic convention delegate votes through the popular vote. She ultimately suspended her campaign in June of 2008 to help unify the party about the winning candidate. Barack Obama then appointed Hillary Rodham Clinton as Secretary of State.

So What?

Though many women ran before her, Hillary Rodham Clinton was the first woman to have a probable chance of winning the nomination of a primary party. She was also the first woman to be a candidate in every state primary and caucus. However, Hillary's significance lies not only in the breaking down of barriers, but also in the political and social focus her campaign brought to female candidates in general. Throughout her campaign, Hillary's gender and appearance became common talking points; such biased coverage, that differed from that of male candidates, brought attention to the unfair treatment female candidates receive. Hillary's campaign not only created yet another woman to look up to, but also progressed the discourse around gender and politics.

Cynthia McKinney

“I think it's clear that not only does our country need a new set of values at the helm, our country needs an opposition party like the Green Party, that has the values of the Green Party, so that we can finally see the values that I believe are the majority values of the American people implemented in our public policy.” — Cynthia McKinney, July 2008 interview

Cynthia McKinney ran for president in 2008 under the Green Party, with running mate Rosa Clemente — a campaign duo accredited as the first all-women-of-color presidential ticket. Her platform looked into issues of racial profiling, statehood for the District of Columbia (Washington D.C.), slavery reparations, and abolishment of the War on Drugs and the death penalty.

“The first act would be to assemble a team in the Pentagon that believed in peace and the efficacy of diplomacy. And therefore, we would make sure that we put together an orderly withdrawal, but immediate withdrawal, of all of our young men and women, not just from Iraq and Afghanistan, but from the more than 100 countries around the world in which our soldiers are stationed.”

Cynthia ended up in 6th place nationally, winning 161,603 votes.

So What?

Cynthia McKinney’s presidential run broke race genders the same year Hillary Rodham Clinton broke the barrier for primary parties. While women of color have run for president in the past, an all-women-of-color ticket was and still is revolutionary in presidential politics. This, along with her long career of activism in and out of political offices, led to Cynthia providing yet another strong role-model for young women interested in political office.

2012

2012 was the year Hunger Games premiered in Los Angeles, Kim Jong-un was officially appointed Supreme Leader of North Korea, female athletes were allowed to

compete for Saudi Arabia at the Olympics for the first time, and the Mars Curiosity rover landed successfully on Mars. 2012 also hosted the 57th quadrennial presidential election.

Incumbent President Barack Obama (Democrat) ran for re-election and was opposed by Mitt Romney (Republican). Due to his job creation programs after the Great Recession and the Affordable Care Act, among other favored policy issues, Obama won 51.1% of the popular vote and the presidency.

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Jill Stein

“And that’s true, for the environmental movement, the student movement, the antiwar movement, health-care-as-a-human-right movement — you put us all together, we have the potential for a Tahrir Square type event, and [to] turn the White House into a Green House in November.” Jill Stein, 2012 interview

Jill Stein ran for president in 2012 with the Green Party, alongside running mate Cheri Honkala. Jill’s campaign platform focused on a New Deal-esque policy called the Green New Deal, which was a stimulus package to address both financial and environmental crises. Other policies included increasing the minimum wage, ending corporate welfare, and repealing the Patriot Act. In September of 2012, Jill became one of the few third party candidates to ever appear on national polls — where she was garnering an average of 2% support nationwide. This support led to the campaign raising enough money to receive primary season federal matching funds. In the end, Jill won 469,501 votes (0.36% of the popular vote).

Jill Stein also ran in 2016 with the Green Party, this time with running mate Ajuma Baraka. With 2016 being an unprecedented campaign cycle for many reasons, it was also unique in the large support and attention that third parties received. She ultimately finished in 4th with over 1.4 million votes (more than the previous three Green tickets combined).

So What?

Jill Stein is one of the best known third party candidates in contemporary politics, and in that, she has progressed the path for women running for president. In 2012, she received over 1% of the popular vote in three states: Maine, Oregon, and Alaska (and possibly Arkansas as only 97.7% of the results were reported, and Jill was at 0.9%). In 2016, she broke her own record and received even more support. Such accomplishments help lay the path for a future candidate to finally win at the ballot box.

2016

2016 — the year of the first flower grown in space, an escalation of violence in Syria resulting in millions of refugees, Beyoncé releasing *Lemonade*, an increase in police brutality resulting in civil rights protests across the United States, and the 58th quadrennial presidential election.

With incumbent President Barack Obama ineligible to run for re-election, Hillary Clinton was nominated the Democratic Party candidate. The Republican Party nominated Donald Trump. After a heated campaign cycle, Clinton won 48% of the popular vote, but lost the presidency as Trump won 306 electoral votes. With the 2016 election having so

recently ended, further analysis must wait until after the clouds have cleared more.

However, the election does illustrate an international trend shifting back to conservative values and national exceptionalism.

[Right side menu]

Hillary Rodham Clinton

“We have still have not shattered that highest and hardest glass ceiling. But some day, someone will” — Hillary Rodham Clinton, November 9th 2016

Most of the women who ran for president more than once are given but one page that notes all of their campaign years. Hillary Rodham Clinton is unique because during her run she was only a candidate, while in 2016 she was the Democratic Party nominee. After winning the party nomination, Hillary chose Tim Kaine as her running mate. Her campaign was based on national healthcare, LGBTQ rights, immigration reform, and moderate international relations, among other policy issues. In the end, after most polls projected her to win the presidency, Hillary won a majority of the popular vote, but lost the electoral college to Republican nominee Donald Trump. In fact, Hillary won the popular vote by over 2 million votes.

So What?

As was one of Hillary Clinton’s campaign slogans, she made Herstory. Hillary was the first woman to win the nomination of a primary party. She was the first to win the popular vote. Though she was not the first to be named President of the United States, Hillary knocked at the glass ceiling until it nearly broke. Aside from personal victory,

Hillary's campaign also brought attention to key issues that will help the efforts of female candidates after her. Throughout the campaign, public criticism and awareness of how female candidates are treated differently from their male counterparts rose. Such awareness can help counteract such inequality. Furthermore, with Hillary having won the popular vote, there is renewed scrutiny into the electoral college process. As I write this excerpt, there are still calls for recounts in various states, but regardless of the outcomes, Hillary Clinton truly made Herstory made possible through her own hard work and the dedication and risks taken by the women before her.

The First Female President

There has yet to be a female president. 2016 saw the closest any woman had ever been to holding the highest political office in the United States. In fact, Hillary Rodham Clinton won the popular vote with 48% (59,814,018 votes). Unfortunately, this was not the crack to break the class ceiling, but that does not mean we are done. Girls want to be president, and we will be.

The first woman president of the United States, regardless of current and future political ideology, watched and listened to Hillary Clinton's campaign and it is going to be a defining moment in her life. It is going to spark the fire that will drive her to one day make history.

“To all the little girls watching...never doubt that you are valuable and powerful & deserving of every chance & opportunity in the world” — Hillary Rodham Clinton, November 9th 2016

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APPENDIX B

Grades 7 — 9 Lesson Plan

This Appendix represents the grades 7-9 lesson plan, as well as the campaign slogan activity sheet, found under the Lesson Plans for Teachers page on girlsjustwannabepresident.wordpress.com. The American presidency is a significant part of the government and offers students and teachers alike a new way to explore United States history. This lesson plan is intended to be supplementary to government or history lesson plans discussing the American Presidency. It has been arranged to laud the contributions of female presidential candidates alongside other presidential candidates and nominees.

Lesson Plan

The American Presidency: Campaigns and Elections

Grade Level: 7, 8, 9

Subject(s):

- Social Studies: U.S., State, and Local Government
- History: Presidencies, Government

Duration: 1 to 3 class periods

Description: The American presidency is a significant part of the government and offers students and teachers alike a new way to explore United States history. This lesson plan is intended to be supplementary to government or history lesson plans discussing the American Presidency. It has been arranged to laud the contributions of female presidential candidates alongside other presidential candidates and nominees.

Objectives:

1. Learn about the campaign process of presidential campaigns
2. Be introduced to important campaigns throughout history
3. Evaluate and compare presidential campaigns

Skills: Research, analysis, evaluation of historical information

Terms: Platform; Delegate

Materials:

1. Pen or pencil
2. Campaign Slogan Activity Page
3. Internet access

Introduction

Every four years, the United States elects a president. The process, however, is not as simple as merely getting the most amounts of votes. Rather, the process is a long trial that usually begins more than a year before the actual Election Day for each candidate.

Lecture

1) What is a campaign?

Before anyone becomes president, they must first get elected. The presidential campaign is the traditional way in which candidates attempt to convince the public to vote for them. During the campaign, a candidate will create a *platform* that represents the policies and political ideologies they would enact or take with them into the White House. During the campaign, they also point out why they are better qualified than the other candidates running for president. Armed with that information and how much they personally like the individual candidates, citizens vote for who they want as the next president of the United States.

a) The history

- i. James Madison, a Founding Father of the United States and eventual Secretary of State, first thought of the primary system to allow the important process of selecting a presidential candidate to be controlled by the rules of the Constitution and thus the nomination of presidential candidates and the election of a president would occur during the same time period. Respected individuals of a state would meet up in numbers equal to their states' senators and representatives and vote for two candidates. The person with the most votes became president and runner-up became vice-president. This process was created before the immergence of political parties and was soon found

to be impractical. The election of 1800 took 36 rounds of votes before a candidate was chosen!⁵⁰

On December 9, 1803, the 12th Amendment was proposed.

▪ **Amendment XII**

“The electors shall meet in their respective states and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate... the person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President... But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States.”⁵¹

b) Primary versus caucus

States conduct primaries and caucuses where voters cast their ballots for delegates who will represent them at the National Conventions. At the conventions, the delegates vote to select their party’s candidate for President of the United States.⁵² Though the delegates are the ones casting votes at the party conventions, they vote based off of the candidates the citizens of their state voted for in the primary or caucus. The candidate that receives the most delegate votes wins the presidential nomination for their party. The one nominee each from the party then competes against the other party nominees in the general election. In the United States, this largely comes down between the public choosing the Republican or Democratic candidate.

⁵⁰ “Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr and the Election of 1800.” Smithsonian Magazine. November 2004. Accessed March 26, 2016. <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/thomas-jefferson-aaron-burr-and-the-election-of-1800-131082359/?no-ist>

⁵¹ “12th Amendment.” LII/Legal Information Institute. Accessed March 26, 2016. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxii>

⁵² “Lesson Idea: Primaries and Caucuses.” C-SPAN Classroom. Accessed March 26, 2016. <http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/Lesson/659/Lesson+Idea+Primaries+and+Caucuses.aspx>

VIDEO

How We Choose Our President: Primaries and Caucuses

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojELcKHdwvA>

- i. Primary
 - a. A primary system is set up to mimic the process of voting for a president or other public servant into office. Though there are variations among states — including but not limited to whether only persons of the same party can vote or whether it’s open to all registered voters — there are also some commonalities amongst them all.
 - i. A person seeking a party nomination must first create a petition signed by a stipulated number of voters in the state. Once the person gains enough support, and the candidate meets all of the eligibility requirements such as nationality and age, the candidate’s name will appear on the ballot. The Republican and Democratic candidates, due to the size and popularity of their parties, are typically on the ballot at every state primary. Third party candidates are most often limited to regions or individual states, as the parties do not have the same popularity or monetary resources to gain further support.
 - ii. Voters will go to their designated polling stations on their primary voting day during hours of operation and mark on their ballots which candidate they vote for.
 - iii. The candidate with the most votes in the state get the most number of delegates and the rest are handed out proportionally to all candidates who received enough votes. In some state, the Republican primaries are “winner take all”, where only the top candidate gets any state delegates.
 - iv. The candidate who receives the most amount of delegates in the state primaries (and in the caucuses) becomes the party’s nominee.
- ii. Caucus
 - a. Though the caucus goes through many of the same characteristics of the primary, the way in which a candidate is nominated differs.
 - i. The state party chooses a voting day, just like in the primaries. However, for primaries, a person can go to their polling station any time during operation hours, cast their ballot, and leave. In a caucus, the hours are limited to a meeting time in the evening. Though there are nuances between the states, when a person shows up at the caucus location, they are supposed to remain at the location until the candidate selection has been complete. The caucus is like a town hall style of voting where people physically

interact with one another and show support for their chosen candidates.

VIDEO

How Does the Iowa Democratic Caucus Works, Featuring Legos
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJqv--jyXPg>

c) General Election

Once parties have voted in the primary/caucus system, the chosen candidates participate in the general election. Before the primary/caucus system, individuals of the same party would debate and try to convince that they were the best candidate to represent the party for the presidential election through their campaigns. For the general election, the candidate of one party debates with the candidates of the other parties (the Republican and Democratic candidates typically receive the media attention). Their campaign shifts to why they would be best to represent and run the United States, not just their party, and why persons of any political affiliation should vote for them. The candidates also choose their running mates and the Vice Presidents often debate each other as well.

Election Day is every four years on Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The actual election of the President and Vice President is a two-step process. Citizens go to their polling station on Election Day and cast their votes. This is the “popular” vote. Next, the Electoral College takes the popular vote and turns them into delegates — similar to the primary/caucus system. Each state represents a different number of delegates, depending on their population; if a state votes for the Democratic candidate, then whatever number of delegates that state has is supposed to vote for the Democratic candidate.

2) Important campaigns throughout history

Because of the way in which the presidential election process is set up, there are essentially two types of campaigns: the pre-general election campaign and the general election campaign. Not all candidates have both. Once a candidate a party has been established pre-general election, the others drop out of the presidential race or change parties. There are also different levels of a campaign, which derives from the popularity and attention given to different parties. After all, even though there are third parties in the United States, the election process is a two-party system where citizens ultimately choose between a Republican and a Democrat. Just because some campaigns do not go into the general election or are part of the two-party system, however, does not mean they do not impact the political system. Whether a third party candidate, Republican, Democrat, elected president or not, there have been

numerous campaigns in history that shaped the way in which the United States progressed. Just a few historical campaigns include Victoria Woodhull, Robert La Follette, Shirley Chisholm, and Bill Clinton.

a) Victoria Woodhull

- i) In 1872, Victoria Woodhull became the first woman to run for president in the United States. Her platform was one of women's suffrage, regulation of monopolies, nationalization of railroads, an eight-hour workday, direct taxation, abolition of the death penalty, and welfare for the poor. A primary reason for the campaign, however, was to point out the irony that she could technically run, even while she couldn't vote. Woodhull helped organize the Equal Rights Party and was nominated as its presidential candidate in May 1872, with Frederick Douglass as her running mate. The first female presidential candidate spent her election night in jail, however, due to scandalous articles she wrote about a prominent figure. No votes for her were tallied and many within the suffrage movement backed away from Woodhull's advocacy due to its extreme liberalism of gender equality.^{53 54} Though Woodhull did not become president or even gain many votes, she broke a barrier that prevented women from participating in politics and helped lead the way for women to gain the right to vote.

b) Robert La Follette

- i) In 1890 while serving as a Wisconsin district attorney, Robert La Follette was offered a bribe by a Republican state leader to not indict a group of legislators. This confrontation, which disgusted La Follette, pushed him into various political offices in the early 1900s. His work against political dishonesty and his outspoken stances against American involvement in WWI gave La Follette the national attention he needed to run for president in 1924 on the Progressive Party ticket. He came in third with a win in Wisconsin and 16.6% of the popular vote. His campaign helped bring to light the issues of corruption and the role of the government in public infrastructures, as well as the harms of child labor and the need for better protections of civil liberties.⁵⁵

c) Shirley Chisholm

- i) The election year of 1972 saw the first African American woman to run for president with a primary party when Shirley Chisholm became a candidate in

⁵³ "Victoria C. Woodhull." Ohio History Central. Accessed March 18, 2016. https://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Victoria_C._Woodhull.

⁵⁴ "Victoria Claflin Woodhull (1838-1927)." National Women's History Museum. Accessed March 18, 2016. <https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/victoria-claflin-woodhull/>

⁵⁵ "The Career of Robert M. La Follette." Turning Points in Wisconsin History. Wisconsin Historical Society, n.d. Web. 12 Nov. 2014.

the Democratic primary race. Chisholm led a strong national campaign and ended up on the ballot in twelve primary states. Her campaign was focused on educating individuals about women's rights and racism in the United States. In the end, she received 151.95 delegate votes at the Democratic National Convention. Chisholm also served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1969 to 1983 to become the first African American woman to serve in Congress.⁵⁶ Chisholm's presidential campaign brought attention to women of color and the impact they could have in American politics.

d) Bill Clinton

- i) The day after President Bill Clinton won the Democratic Party nomination in 1992, he appeared on The Arsenio Hall Show, which was a late-night talk show. On air, Clinton played "Heartbreak Hotel" on his saxophone and became the first presidential candidate to appear on popular television.⁵⁷ Not only was this appearance seen as important for Clinton's popularity among minority and young voters, but it also led the way for the use of popular television by politicians and presidential hopefuls. In fact, popular late-night talk shows are now key in appealing to broader audiences and allowing the public to get to know the candidates better.

Activity

Another part of the presidential campaign is to create a brand that is recognizable. One of the most used ways to create a brand is through the use of a slogan. Slogans can be effective for different reasons. They can present the views of a candidate in a succinct phrase and even unite supporters.

Have students read the slogans and answer the questions on the **Campaign Slogan Activity Sheet**.

After the students are done with the activity sheet, discuss with the class which slogans they preferred and why. Also, what similarities and differences did they notice between the slogans?

Homework Assignment

As a homework assignment or class computer lab activity, have students choose a slogan from the worksheet or one they find themselves and do additional research about that presidential campaign. Have students write a 1-2 paragraph response to: Why do you think the presidential candidate chose their slogan?

⁵⁶ Haskina, James. *Fighting Shirley Chisholm*. New York: Dial Press, 1975.

⁵⁷ "Gov. Bill Clinton plays saxophone on "The Arsenio Hall Show" June 3, 1992". Chicago Tribune.

Campaign Slogan Activity Sheet

Directions:

Under each campaign slogan, tell me if you like the campaign slogan (why or why not) and what the slogan says about the candidate running for president. You can also hypothesize why they chose the slogan they did. When done, go through and rank the slogans — 1 being your favorite and 9 being your least favorite.

1. “Who is James K. Polk?”

Henry Clay, 1844

Rank: _____

2. “Let Us Have Peace”

Ulysses S. Grant, 1860

Rank: _____

3. “Victory for Victoria”

Victoria Woodhull, 1872

Rank: _____

4. “Keep Cool with Coolidge”

Calvin Coolidge, 1924

Rank: _____

5. “Down with Common Sense”

Gracie Allen, 1940

Rank: _____

6. "I like Ike"

Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1952

Rank: _____

7. "Unbought and Unbossed"

Shirley Chisholm, 1972

Rank: _____

8. "Let's Make America Great Again"

Ronald Reagan, 1980

Rank: _____

9. "Ross for Boss"

Ross Perot, 1992

Rank: _____

APPENDIX C

Grades 10 — 12 Lesson Plan

This Appendix represents the grades 10-12 lesson plan found under the Lesson Plans for Teachers page on girlsjustwannabepresident.wordpress.com. With the United States having elected their 45th president, there has yet to be a woman in office. Examining the women who have run for president and their campaigns, students and teachers alike will be able to take a closer and more nuanced look into the American presidency. This lesson plan is intended to be supplementary to government or history lesson plans discussing the American Presidency and/or the role of women in American politics.

Lesson Plan

Who Are the Women Who Have Run for President?: A Lack of Gender Representation in the Oval Office

Grade Level: 10, 11, 12

Subject(s):

- Social Studies: U.S., State, and Local Government
- History: Presidencies, Government

Duration: 1 to 3 class periods

Description: With the United States about to elect their 45th president, there has yet to be a woman in office. Examining the women who have run for president and their campaigns, students and teachers alike will be able to take a closer and more nuanced

look into the American presidency. This lesson plan is intended to be supplementary to government or history lesson plans discussing the American Presidency and/or the role of women in American politics.

Objectives:

4. Learn about the women who have run for president in the United States and their contributions to the American political system
5. Cite and analyze examples of primary sources revealing attitudes and beliefs of the time they came from
6. Take a stand (and provide support for it) as to whether or not such attitudes persist today

Skills: Research, analysis, evaluation of historical information

Materials:

1. Pen or pencil
2. Blank sheet of paper
3. Internet access

Introduction

Many women have run for president of the United States, even as far back as the 1800s! However there has yet to be a female president, even while other countries across the globe — like Germany, Argentina, and South Korea — have elected female leaders. Below are a few case studies of women that have run and information about their presidential campaigns.

Lecture

1. Ask students when they think the first woman to run for president was. After letting them know that the year was 1872, have the class discuss whether they are surprised by the date or not. If so, why? Why do students believe a woman hasn't been elected president between 1872 and the present year?
2. Victoria Woodhull
 - a. In 1872, Victoria Woodhull became the first woman to run for president in the United States. Her platform was one of women's suffrage, regulation of monopolies, nationalization of railroads, an eight-hour workday, direct taxation, abolition of the death penalty, and welfare for the poor. A primary reason for the campaign, however, was to point out they irony that she could technically run, even while she couldn't vote. Woodhull helped organize the Equal Rights Party and was nominated as its presidential candidate in May 1872, with Frederick Douglass as her running mate. The

first female presidential candidate spent her election night in jail, however, due to scandalous articles she wrote about a prominent figure. No votes for her were tallied and many within the suffrage movement backed away from Woodhull's advocacy due to its extreme liberalism of gender equality.^{58 59} Though Woodhull did not become president or even gain many votes, she broke a barrier that prevented women from participating in politics and helped lead the way for women to gain the right to vote.

3. Belva Ann Lockwood

- a. Belva Ann Lockwood ran for president in 1884 with the Equal Rights Party. Previously she had fought to attend law school and eventually drafted the law passed by Congress in 1879 that admitted women to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, which she had been denied access to. With her understanding of the law and a history of fighting for gender equality, Lockwood decided to run for president. With the first full-fledged campaign (Woodhull's having been necessarily limited), Lockwood hoped to help women gain the right to vote and access to partisan politics. She outlined a 12-point platform, later refined and presented as 15 positions on a broad range of policy issues including foreign affairs, tariffs, equal political rights, civil service reform, judicial appointments, Native Americans, protection of public lands, temperance, pensions, and the federalization of family law. Her campaign was financed by speeches she gave and she attempted to set up a debate between the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates, Cleveland and Blaine. Many women suffragists believed she was an improper woman who brought shame to the movement, but she still won over 4,000 votes and got Indian's electoral votes.

4. Gracie Allen

- a. Gracie Allen, a radio and comedy star, announced her run for president in 1940. Alen's presidential bid had originally been conceived as a simple radio gimmick with the expectation of a short half-life. Meant to draw a few laughs, the Surprise Party ultimately gained momentum for the unique attributes of the Allen's campaign. The satire of the campaign helped point out real issues in American policy. For instance, Gracie was the only candidate to encourage the American people to take pride in their national debt, boasting that it's the biggest in the world. Though there is no solid count of votes that she received, it has been estimated that she received

⁵⁸ "Victoria C. Woodhull." Ohio History Central. Accessed March 18, 2016.
https://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Victoria_C._Woodhull.

⁵⁹ "Victoria Claflin Woodhull (1838-1927)." National Women's History Museum. Accessed March 18, 2016.
<https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/victoria-claflin-woodhull/>

from hundreds to tens of thousands of votes.⁶⁰ Regardless of the actual count, it can't be denied that Gracie Allen tapped into a public that was disgruntled by politics and found solace in the humor of her campaign.

5. Shirley Chisholm

- a. The election year of 1972 saw the first African American woman to run for president with a primary party when Shirley Chisholm became a candidate in the Democratic primary race. Chisholm led a strong national campaign and ended up on the ballot in twelve primary states. Her campaign was focused on educating individuals about women's rights and racism in the United States. In the end, she received 151.95 delegate votes at the Democratic National Convention. Chisholm also served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1969 to 1983 to become the first African American woman to serve in Congress.⁶¹ Chisholm's presidential campaign brought attention to women of color and the impact they could have in American politics.

6. Lenora Fulani

- a. Lenora Fulani ran for president in 1988 with the New Alliance Party. In college, Fulani became an activist and supporter for Black Nationalist politics. Her activism led to her to be involved in numerous political organizations, but she primarily worked with the New Alliance Party. Though her presidential campaign, she was the first female presidential candidate to be on the ballot in all fifty states and ended up getting a quarter of a million votes, or 0.2% of the vote. Fulani also ran for president in 1992, when she won 0.7% of the vote.⁶² Though Fulani's work has led to some controversy throughout the years, her national campaign helped open the doors to more viable presidential campaigns by female politicians.

Activity

Have students compare and contrast the below excerpts of Victoria Woodhull and Shirley Chisholm, said 100 years apart, and answer the following questions in three to six sentences. What do the excerpts say about the political environments the women lived in and the goals of their campaigns? What are the similarities and differences in the excerpts? Has the United States progressed since these two eras?

⁶⁰ Burns, George (November 1988). *Gracie: A Love Story*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

⁶¹ Haskina, James. *Fighting Shirley Chisholm*. New York: Dial Press, 1975.

⁶² Dennis L. Serrette, "Inside the New Alliance Party", first published in *Radical America*, Vol.21, No.5 [1]. Retrieved May 26, 2016.

“The women of the country have the power in their own hands, in spite of the law and the government being altogether of the male order.”

- Victoria Woodhull, 1872

“At present, our country needs women's idealism and determination, perhaps more in politics than anywhere else.”

- Shirley Chisholm, 1972

Optional Activity 2

On a sheet of paper, have students write down as many names of prominent women in American history that they can think of. When the activity is done, have students call out the names while you write the names on the board. Then cross out the names in this order: 1) wife/ mother/ daughter of a famous man in history; 2) associated with women's suffrage; 3) women famous post-1980s.

How many names are left? Have the class discuss why most women they know of from history are either known because of their association with a man or because of women's suffrage. Why are these the primary roles in which women are depicted in American history?

Ensure you end the discuss by stating there is nothing wrong for a woman to be associated with a prominent male figure or to have been involved in the women's rights movement. They still contributed in making the United States the country that it is today and fighting for equality. This project is merely intended to make students question why they only know about women in certain roles and to push them to expand their ideas of how women have participated in American history.

Homework

As a homework assignment, have students choose a female presidential candidate discussed in class or one they find on their own and do additional research about their campaign. The candidate should be from the 1990s or earlier. Have students write a 2-4-page paper response to: Would your presidential candidate have had a better chance of being elected today? Do the same barriers they faced then still exist today? Explain your answers.