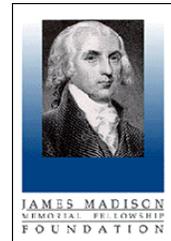


Constitutional Conversations Study Guide

Women Vote in New Jersey (4:55)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J1cRyHpogXQ>



Summary

This short video focuses on late 18th century New Jersey—the only state which (temporarily) enfranchised (some) women. The 1776 New Jersey constitution granted voting rights to all property-owning inhabitants while the constitutions of 1790

and 1796 referred to voters as “he and she.” Professor Rosemarie Zagari concludes that the political ideology of the American Revolution did have lasting implications for women, even though New Jersey rescinded their voting rights in 1807.

Courses appropriate for this segment: United States History, American Government

Grade level: 11th -12th grade

RECALL QUESTIONS

1. What voting qualification did many states keep when rewriting their state constitutions?
2. For what years do we have evidence that women voted in New Jersey?
3. What was the underlying logic and ideology of the American Revolution?

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do you think the ideology of the American Revolution impacted voting rights legislation, especially for women in New Jersey?
2. Unmarried women and widows were enfranchised, but married or young women were not. What does this distinction between the groups of women who were allowed to vote in New Jersey suggest about the logic for the enfranchisement of unmarried and widowed women?

ASSESSMENT OR ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Students may research the evolution of voting rights in one of the 13 colonial states, as well as at the national level to evaluate the continuity and change of suffrage for women, and the contextual factors that influence the evolution of voting rights.
2. Students may research voting requirements across the 13 states during the American Revolution to compare and contrast voting requirements, while drawing conclusions about how each state used the logic and ideology of the American Revolution to write its voting laws.

ANSWERS FOR RECALL QUESTIONS

1. Property ownership
2. 1790 to 1807
3. No taxation without representation.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS FOR CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Individuals were given the right to vote based upon property ownership. If a person owned property, they paid taxes, and thus were entitled to representation. Women who owned property were allowed to vote because they were paying taxes.
2. This distinction suggests that state legislators were grounding their reasoning in the American Revolution logic, no taxation without representation. Therefore, married women or young women who were still living with their parents would be represented through their husbands or fathers, thus negating the necessity of a vote. On the other hand, women who owned their property and paid taxes did not have representation through another individual; therefore, they were given the right to vote.

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES

1. Divide the classroom into small groups and assign each group one of the 13 original states. Students will research voting rights legislation in that state during the 18th, 19th, and 20th century and then compare the evolution of voting rights in those states to the national trends (i.e. 15th Amendment, 19th Amendment, Voting Rights Act of 1965, etc.). Students should answer the following questions:
 - a. To what extent do voting rights in individual states follow national trends?
 - b. What does the evolution of voting rights suggest about changing attitudes towards voting?
 - c. To what extent does the American Revolution's ideology of "no taxation without representation" play a role in the later extension of suffrage?

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