

Better Days 2020 Reading Club

WEEK 5

FROM MANNISH RADICALS TO FEMINIST HEROES: SUFFRAGISTS IN POPULAR CULTURE

For the reading club this week, we are going to be jumping back in time and looking at the entire span of women's suffrage history through pictures. This article is by Allison K. Lange, and she creates an incredible timeline of how the depiction of American suffragists had changed throughout the movement. She explains how many people in power used their connections with artists and printers to create anti-suffrage images. The main tactic used against suffragists was to paint them as women without femininity, who were against life in the home and too hysterical to have a place in politics. When articles and cartoons with visuals like this would be distributed, it would hurt the suffrage cause significantly. Because of this, major suffrage organizations began to depict and photograph and their leaders as loving mothers and competent voters. As the suffrage movement grew more popular, pro-suffrage political cartoons became popular as well to establish their platform. Women were gaining more and more access to photograph, print, and other images: and it showed. The 19th Amendment would be ratified just a few years later.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What was the initial tactic used by anti-suffrage groups in newspapers?
What images did they create?
- How did suffragists eventually react to the imagery created to mock them?
What images did they create?
- What groups were often marginalized by suffragists' efforts to gain favor with the American public?