

Suffrage History

Films and Videos

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The lists of films and videos below extend beyond the U.S. and also beyond women's suffrage into women's rights and other issues. There were a number of very early films, most of which lampooned or attacked the suffrage movement. Most of these have not survived. We have not limited our list to "serious" films but have included some fun, not-meant-to-be-educational selections.

This list is for informational purposes only. Being included on the list does not indicate endorsement by the League. We recommend that users research further any film or video intended for educational use.

As of the date of this document, all links are viable. However, this can change as online resources are modified. Contact league@lwv-bmc.org if you have comments or recommendations for additional listings.

General Information

American Experience PBS	2020	<i>The Vote</i> "The Vote brings to life the unsung leaders of the movement and the deep controversies over gender roles and race that divided Americans then — and continue to dominate political discourse today." 2 hours. Not rated. Watch film
De Mare, Anne	2018	<i>Capturing the Flag</i> Three friends go to North Carolina in 2016 to provide voter protection at the polls. A very contemporary film about current democracy and representation issues. Documentary. 76 minutes. Not rated. Trailer
Volpe, Petra	2017	<i>The Divine Order¹ (Switzerland)</i> This powerful film tells the story of a Swiss housewife and mother in a time of social upheaval in 1970. Yes, as shocking as it sounds, Swiss women didn't get the right to vote until 1971. This film is clever, funny and a great look into the shifting power dynamics between men and women that took place in the 1970s. Comedy-drama film. 96 minutes. Not rated. Trailer

Wheelock, Martha	2016	Inez Milholland: Forward into Light The story of Inez Milholland, a notable suffrage activist, as well as a death penalty abolitionist, and advocate for the poor. Documentary. 15 minutes. Not rated. Trailer
Gavron, Sarah	2015	Suffragette¹ (United Kingdom) Tells the true story of the suffragette movement in England, although uses some fictional characters, who are composites of actual women. Historical drama film. 106 minutes. PG-13. Trailer
Lilley, Harvey	2013	Secrets of a Suffragette (United Kingdom) TV program that examines the story of Emily Davison, her death at the Derby and the Suffragette movement. June 4, 2013 was the centenary of the Suffragette Derby in which Emily Wilding Davison threw herself under the King's horse and was fatally injured. TV special. 47 minutes. Not rated. Link
von Garnier, Katja	2004	Iron Jawed Angels¹ (United States) This film stars Hilary Swank as Alice Paul, the real-life suffragette and women's rights activist who was one of the main leaders in pushing for the 19th Amendment to the Constitution that would allow American women to vote. Margo Martindale, Vera Farmiga and Anjelica Huston also star. Historical drama TV series. 2 hours. TV-14. Trailer
Burns, Ken, and Barnes, Paul	1999	Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B Anthony¹ (United States) Master documentary filmmaker Ken Burns created this TV series in 1999 using stunning black-and-white archival footage that shows both the excitement and the challenges civil rights activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony faced almost a century ago. Actors Ann Dowd, Sally Kellerman, Julie Harris, and Amy Madigan provide commentary. Documentary TV series. 3 hours. Not rated. Film clips
Pollak, Ruth	1995	One Woman, One Vote²(United States) This PBS documentary is a sweeping look at the women's suffrage movement, from Elizabeth Cady Stanton's famous Seneca Falls call to arms to the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted women voting rights. Documentary TV series. 120 minutes. Not rated. Trailer
Ivory, James	1984	The Bostonians A romance that takes place in late 19 th century Boston within the setting of the women's suffrage movement. Stars Jessica Tandy, Vanessa Redgrave, and Christopher Reeves. Historical drama film. 122 minutes. Not rated. Trailer

Seaton, George	1947	<i>The Shocking Miss Pilgrim</i> The story of a young typist who becomes involved in the women's suffrage movement in 1874. Songs by George and Ira Gershwin. Starring Betty Grable. Musical comedy film. 84 minutes. Not rated.
Becker, Bruno	1920	<i>Her First Flame</i> This “futuristic” film takes place in 1950 when women have taken over men’s jobs and are running for elected office. Short silent comedy film. Film length unknown.
Guy, Alice	1912	<i>Making an American Citizen</i> An immigrant couple finds the dynamics of their relationship change with their residence in America and exposure to Progressive Era ideas. Silent comedy short film. 16 minutes. Not rated. Watch film
Barnes, Gilly	2013	<i>The 1910s</i> A short film created for <i>Vanity Fair</i> magazine showing one woman's decision to join in the fight for women’s rights in America. 4 minutes. Not rated. Link
Green, John	2013	<i>Women’s Suffrage: Crash Course in U.S. History</i> A clever overview of the fight for women's rights in the Progressive era. 13 minutes. Not rated. Link

Women of Color and the Suffrage Movement

Women who have been widely recognized as leaders in the suffrage movement, such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were white and usually affluent. This picture has long been incomplete. With the interest in the 2020 centennial of the passage of the 19th Amendment, women of color, such as Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell, are finally taking their place in popular history as their stories are being researched and told. They represent not only the early battles for women’s rights but also the ongoing fight to ensure voting rights and equality for all.

Although a few of the resources listed under General Information do cover the diversity of participants in the suffrage movement, the resources listed below focus on the experiences of women of color.

National Geographic	2020	<i>Black Women and the Suffrage Movement: 100 Years after Women’s Suffrage</i> A conversation about the critical role Black women played in the suffrage movement. 58 minutes. Not rated. Link
NBC News	2020	<i>Inside the Black Suffrage Movement</i> “Today marks 100 years since the 19th Amendment was ratified, but the right to vote didn't end the fight to vote for Black women.” 2 minutes. Not rated. Link

RetroReport	2020	<i>How Black Women Fought Racism and Sexism for the Right to Vote</i> Created in collaboration with American Experience PBS for its film “The Vote,” this video focuses on the role of African American women. 10 minutes. Not rated. Link
Seattle Channel	2020	<i>Untold Stories of Black Women in the Suffrage Movement</i> Documentary on the “lives of the women who were leaders in the fight for equal rights for African Americans, especially women.” 9 minutes. Not rated. Link
Washington Post	2020	<i>The Fight: How Black Women Forged their own Path to the Right to Vote</i> This first video covers the beginnings of the suffrage movement. 5 minutes. Not rated. Link (Links to other videos in this series were not found.)
U.S. National Archives	2019	<i>African American Women in the Suffrage Movement and the Battle for the Vote</i> A panel discusses the role African American women played in the suffrage movement and the obstacles they encountered. 90 minutes. Not rated. Link
DuVernay, Ava	2014	<i>Selma (United States)</i> Although not a film about women’s suffrage, <i>per se</i> , this is an important film based on the 1965 Selma to Montgomery voting rights marches. Historical drama film. 128 minutes. PG-13. Trailer

The user is also directed to collections at the Library of Congress (<https://guides.loc.gov/womens-suffrage-mbrs/moving-image>) for more information and research.

Another site worth exploring is [Women’s Suffrage and the Media](#).

Sources

Note: Film summaries and reviews not sourced were provided by League members or created from publisher’s information.

¹ Review from <https://www.sheknows.com/entertainment/articles/1140585/movies-about-women-getting-right-to-vote/>. Accessed 01/06/2020.

² Review from <http://suffrageandthedia.org/source/one-woman-one-vote-pbs-documentary/>. Accessed 12/30/2019.