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Earned Not Endowed: What Do La Salle Collections Teach Us About Early Feminism and the Suffrage Movement?

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Earned Not Endowed: What Do La Salle Collections Teach Us About Early Feminism and the Suffrage Movement?

Miranda Clark-Binder & Heather Willever-Farr
Explorer Café, March 3, 2021
Overview

- Suffrage chronology
- Women’s Club Movement
- The Civic Club of Philadelphia
- Intersections with La Salle’s Art Collections
- Racial and socio-economic makeup of the Civic Club
- Discussion (Padlet!)

Sara Yorke Stevenson papers
Suffrage Chronology (US)

- **1848**: Seneca Falls Convention, 1st women's rights convention
- **1851**: Sojourner Truth delivered her famous “Ain’t I a Woman” speech
- **1851**:
- **1866**: Suffragists petition Congress to end disenfranchisement based on gender
- **1870**: Fifteenth Amendment Ratified
- **1878**: Women's Suffrage Amendment proposed
- **1890**: National American Woman Suffrage Association formed
- **1890**: General Federation of Women's Clubs formed
- **1896**: Wyoming 1st state to allow women to vote
- **1920**: 19th Amendment ratified
Women’s Club Movement

Women’s clubs campaigned for:

- End to lynching
- Promoting art and music
- Food, sanitation, housing regulations
- Health clinics
- Food and milk pantries
- Child labor laws
- Settlement homes
- Public libraries
- Kindergartens and nursery schools
- School lunch programs
- Pay equity for female teachers
- Parks and playgrounds
- Conservation and environmental regulations
- Temperance
The Civic Club of Philadelphia
The Civic Club
Philadelphia
Invites you to a First View of
Works of Art suggested for
School Room Decoration
at the
Drexel Institute
Friday evening April 5, 1895
Addresses in the Auditorium 8-9
Cecilia Beaux (1855-1942)

Portrait of Colonel Leslie Buswell,
https://artcollection.lasalle.edu/objects-1/info/2685

Young Man with an Urn,
https://artcollection.lasalle.edu/objects-1/info/3112
Violet Oakley (1874 – 1961)


Edith Emerson
(1888-1981)

The Bridge of Ronda (Spain),
https://artcollection.lasalle.edu/objects-1/info/2025

Standing Nude Woman,
https://artcollection.lasalle.edu/objects-1/info/2691
Edith Emerson

Recessional (Procession in an Italian Church),
https://artcollection.lasalle.edu/objects-1/info/1531
To find out more about Violet Oakley in Philadelphia

- Violet Oakley murals at the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown: https://www.fpcgermantown.org/about/our-building/violet-oakley-murals/


- Woodmere Exhibition about Violet Oakley: https://woodmereartmuseum.org/experience/exhibitions/a-grand-vision-violet-oakley-and-the-american-renaissance

- Violet Oakley murals at the PA state capitol building: http://cpc.state.pa.us/history/artists/violet-oakley.cfm

The Civic Club is a large association of women who, regardless of class, or race, of religious or political creed are banded together for the promotion in the community of a higher public spirit and for the raising of the general standards in every department of our municipal life.

They believe that every citizen is responsible for his share in any deficiency that may place our city below the highest level reached in other centers, and that it is a citizen's duty to freely place whatever special attainments he or she may possess at the service of the community. For purposes of classification and in order that each member may work where best fitted by nature or education, the Club has divided its labors among four departments — each special committee of which attend to special interests. There is
Discussion

**Question #1**

Women’s clubs often couched their work in terms of improving the lives of women and children—they were utilizing their ‘domestic’ knowledge to solve public problems. Would you label these women feminists? Why or why not?

**Question #2**

Civic Club leaders were mostly white and affluent. Disadvantaged community members appeared to play a limited role in shaping the work of the Club. How might the biases of the Club's leadership have influenced the Club’s work in addressing the challenges Philadelphia faced? How effective are community solutions when not all impacted groups have a seat at the table?