



# Revolutionary Backlash

The purpose of this unit is to introduce the background and possible reasons behind the 1807 New Jersey law. This unit will allow students to explore the impact of different events on the belief of women's suffrage and how the backlash of some events led to the loss of the vote in 1807. Students will also explore voting and what people thought of it at different points in the past and in the present.

## MATERIALS

### When Women Lost the Vote Sources

#### BIG IDEA 3: Revolutionary Backlash

#### ONLINE EXHIBIT: *When Women Lost the Vote: A Revolutionary Story, 1776-1807* (Museum of the American Revolution)

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story>

#### VOTER BIOGRAPHIES: Thomas Blue

(Museum of the American Revolution)

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/pages/thomas-blue>

#### VOTER BIOGRAPHIES: Caesar Trent

(Museum of the American Revolution)

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/pages/caesar-trent>

#### VOTER BIOGRAPHIES: Jude or Isaac Blue?

(Museum of the American Revolution)

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/pages/jude-or-isaac-blue>

#### EXHIBIT PAGE: No Racial Requirement: Free Voters of Color in New Jersey (Museum of the American Revolution)

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/pages/no-racial-requirement-2>

#### VIRTUAL TOUR: Museum of the American Revolution

<https://museumvirtualtour.org/>

### Primary Sources

#### OBJECT: Ballot Box, Deptford Township, New Jersey ca. 1811 (Gloucester County Historical Society)

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/pages/how-did-early-new-jersey-vote>

#### OBJECT: Tavern Sign, Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey, 1802

(From the Collections of the Bergen County Historical Society)

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/pages/how-did-early-new-jersey-vote>

#### COLORED ETCHING: Women Marching on Versailles,

5 October 1789 (Heritage Image Partnership Ltd / Alamy Stock Photo)

<https://www.amrevmuseum.org/virtualexhibits/when-women-lost-the-vote-a-revolutionary-story/pages/women-of-the-french-revolution>

## AIMS and OBJECTIVES

The modular activities and extensions in this unit provide opportunities for students to:

- Analyze the various reasons for the backlash against women voting in New Jersey during the years 1776-1807.
- Explore why women lost the vote in New Jersey and, in particular, the role of politics in creating this change.
- Examine primary source arguments for and against women's suffrage in New Jersey.
- Consider how women and people of African descent felt about losing the vote in 1807.
- Explore voting and elections through different periods of time.

#### PAINTING: *Election Day in Philadelphia*, John Lewis Krimmel, 1815 (Winterthur Museum, Museum purchase with funds provided by Henry Francis du Pont, 1959, 0131 A)

<http://museumcollection.winterthur.org/imutest/imu.php?port=40138&request=multimedia&irn=32436&bestfit=yes&width=355&src=button-image&link-enlarge>

### Other Resources

#### VIDEO: Object Highlight: Deptford Ballot Box and Ho-Ho-Kus

Tavern Sign (Museum of the American Revolution)

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

#### VIDEO: Voting in Early New Jersey (Museum of the American Revolution)

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

#### WORKSHEET: Viewpoints on Voting

#### WORKSHEET: Media Tracker

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## PROCEDURES

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### Engagement Activities

These activities can be used as hook activities, introductions to concepts, or shorter lessons.

#### BALLOT BOX AND SECURING THE VOTE

**Objective:** Explore voting and elections through different periods of time.

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Teacher Preparation:** Prepare to display or project the image of the Deptford Township, New Jersey [Ballot Box](#) and review information about the Ballot Box found at the provided link.

Display or distribute copies of the photograph of this ca. 1811 Deptford Township, New Jersey Ballot Box and ask students to study the image for a few moments. After students have had time to examine the image, engage them in a conversation about the Ballot Box, using the following prompts:

- Describe the object's shape, size, and color.
- What items might be held inside the object?
- What do you think this specific box was used for?
- What do you see that makes you say that?

After students have uncovered that the object is a ballot box, zoom in on or draw their attention to the lock. Then, ask students the following questions:

- What is this on the ballot box?  
**A place for a lock to be secured.**
- Why do you think people felt they needed to lock the box?  
**Possible answers could include: they were concerned about the safety and security of the votes; they wanted to protect the integrity of the election; they wanted to ensure that ballots remained private, which could help protect voters from harm.**
- Do people still hold these concerns today?  
**Answers may vary. Some students may reference measures to prevent voter fraud, to ensure voter safety, to prevent foreign interference with the election, etc. as evidence that people do still hold these concerns today.**
- What measures do you think elected and appointed officials take today to secure votes and/or voters?  
**Answers may vary, especially by location. Possible answers could include: instituting strict(er) voter identification laws, raising standards for technology and processes used for casting and counting ballots, banning security cameras/surveillance devices from polling locations, enforcing laws about who and what can be near polling locations, etc.**

**EXTEND:** Have students research what measures are in place in your voting district to make sure votes are secured. In a discussion or written piece, have the students evaluate the existing measures both for ballot security and voter safety and propose improvements.

#### WOMEN OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

**Objective:** Analyze the various reasons for the backlash against women voting in New Jersey.

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Teacher Preparation:** Review the Views on Women Voting section of Big Idea 3: Revolutionary Backlash. Prepare to display or project the [Women Marching on Versailles](#) image.

**Teacher note:** The Women's March on Versailles on October 5, 1789, was one of the earliest and most important events of the French Revolution. Due to the shortage and high prices of bread, bread riots were not uncommon in Paris and other cities in France. However, the October march was different from the traditional bread riot. Rather than occurring in a neighborhood market, the Women's March was city-wide, beginning in the central market and marching to City Hall, where they would arm themselves. There is debate among historians as to whether the women's march to Versailles and the National Assembly was spontaneous; it may have been sparked by calls by Revolutionaries to march on Versailles a few days before. The demonstration grew to over a thousand people throughout the journey from the central market to City Hall, to Versailles and the National Assembly. Some of these women saw themselves as defending their community against the greed of the government, while other women say they were pulled along by the crowd. In the end, the crowd marched into the palace of King Louis XVI and forced him to return with them to Paris, believing that he and the National Assembly should be with the people in the city rather than live outside the city in the Palace of Versailles.

Have the students examine the painting for at least thirty seconds. Then, without knowing the background, ask the students the following questions:

- What do you notice about this painting?  
What makes you say that?
- What do you think is going on in this image?
- How are women depicted in this scene?  
**Draw students' attention to the weapons the women are holding.**

Explain to the students this image was created in France in 1789 during the French Revolution. Engage the students in a conversation around the following questions:

- How might this image have impacted people's views about the role of women in politics in the United States during the French Revolution (1789-1799)?
- What strengths do images (political cartoons, photographs, videos, etc.) have in comparison to words when it comes to influencing people's perspectives?

Conclude by telling the students that images like this one resulted in many Americans viewing women who were involved in politics as aggressive and thus a threat to the social order. Events like these and others would help lead to the loss of women's right to vote in New Jersey and a long battle for women's suffrage.

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## ELECTION DAY IN PHILADELPHIA

**Objective:** Explore voting and elections through different periods of time.

**Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Teacher Preparation:** Display or project the [Election Day in Philadelphia](#) painting.

Explain to students that this image is set in Philadelphia during the beginning of the 1800s.

Engage students in conversation around the following questions:

- Where in Philadelphia is this scene taking place?
- What groups of people do you see?
- What is happening in this scene?
- How are the women portrayed in this image?
- How might this have influenced people's thoughts about women voting?

**EXTEND:** Have the students compare the *Election Day in Philadelphia* to the *Women's March on Versailles*.

## Development Activities

These activities can be used for an entire class period.

### VIEWPOINTS ON VOTING

**Objective:** Examine primary source arguments for and against women's suffrage in New Jersey.

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

**Teacher Preparation:** Prepare copies of the *Viewpoints on Voting* worksheet. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read *Big Idea 3: Revolutionary Backlash* or print out enough copies for each student.

Have students read *Big Idea 3: Revolutionary Backlash*, then distribute copies of the *Viewpoints on Voting* worksheet.

Individually or in small groups, have students summarize each source to decide if the writer was for or against women voting.

After students complete the worksheet, either as a class or in small groups, create a t-chart on chart paper or the board with FOR on one side and AGAINST on the other. Have the students sort specific points from the quotes into their appropriate column. Afterwards discuss the opinions for and against the expanded vote. What surprised or did not surprise you about the quotes? What do these quotes reveal about the time period?

Discuss how the topic of the New Jersey vote was a contradictory one — people had differing opinions on it. Conclude by asking students to think about issues today and the contradicting opinions people have on them. What are some similarities and differences of the arguments and how they are shared between then and now? What, if anything, has changed since then?

## REQUIREMENT REACTIONS

**Objective:** Consider how women and free people of African descent felt about losing the vote in 1807.

**Time:** 40-45 minutes

**Teacher Preparation:** Review the section *Losing Voting Rights in Big Idea 3: Revolutionary Backlash*, the page [No Racial Requirement: Free Voters of Color in New Jersey](#), and the biographies of [Thomas Blue](#) and [Caesar Trent](#), two men of African descent who voted in Montgomery Township in 1801. You may also wish to include the biography of [Judith Blue](#), who may have voted in 1805. All are located in the online exhibit, *When Women Lost the Vote: A Revolutionary Story, 1776-1807*.

Explain to the students that though free people of African descent were able to vote for 31 years, historians have not found evidence of them openly expressing opposition to losing the vote in 1807. Have the students read through the page "No Racial Requirement."

Then have the students choose one of the two (or three) voter biographies noted above to read through and create a journal entry from their voter's perspective reacting to the loss of the vote.

Have several students share their journal entries aloud, or have students share in small groups. Encourage students to discuss similarities and differences between their journal entries, and why they believe their historical figures would have expressed the feelings that they (the students) expressed for them.

## Culmination Activities, Research Projects, and Group Projects

### VOTE TAKEN AWAY NEWS REPORT

**Objective:** Explore why women lost the vote in New Jersey and, in particular, the role of politics in creating this change.

**Time:** Multi-day research and journalism project

**Teacher Preparation:** Review *Big Idea 3: Revolutionary Backlash*. Ensure students have access to computers, tablets, or other devices with working internet connections to read *Big Idea 3* or print out enough copies for each student. Prepare to show the [Voting in Early New Jersey](#) video.

After students have read *Big Idea 3* and watched the *Voting in Early New Jersey* video, assign them, in a group or individually, to create a newspaper article or video news report as though it is the day after the law was changed. The article or report should explain why the New Jersey state legislature took the vote away from women and free people of African descent and should include quotes — historical or informed by historical research — of people from the time period. In an accompanying research note, students should cite their sources and justify any imagined quotes. Have students focus on the following questions:

- Why were some people from New Jersey unhappy with the electoral rules that allowed women, people of color, and immigrants to vote?

- What was the role of partisan politics (political parties and their interactions with one another) in removing the vote from women?
- How might different groups of people who were affected have felt about the decision?

**EXTEND:** Divide students into groups. Assign them to create a group petition letter to send to the New Jersey State Legislature as if they were living in 1807 objecting to women and or free people of African descent losing the vote in New Jersey in 1807. Then have them create their own broadside alerting the local community about this recent change. Examples of broadsides can be found on the [Virtual Museum Tour](#). In the menu choose Revolutionary War and then the War at Sea. The Naval Broadside is located near the cutout of the man standing on a barrel.

**EXTEND:** Have students research how state governments have restricted or are trying to restrict people from voting. In what situations have people had their ability to vote taken away? Then have the students consider the different perspectives on one of the restrictions, and, in an opinion piece, have the students consider if these rules are fair or unfair to citizens of the state.

## ALIEN AND SEDITION ACTS

### AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT Research Activity

**Objective:** Explore why *some people* lost the vote in New Jersey and, in particular, the role of politics in creating this change.

**Time:** Multiple day research and writing project

**Teacher Preparation:** Review the section *Changes in Electorate* in *Big Idea 3: Revolutionary Backlash*.

Have students research the Alien and Sedition Acts and the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions and consider the relation between the acts and the First Amendment. Have them create an opinion piece newspaper article as if they were a person living in 1798 who supported the Federalists, a person who supported the Democratic-Republicans, or a person who was not affiliated with either party when the acts were passed to argue for or against the Alien and Sedition Acts.

## Extension Activities

### PARTISAN SIGNAGE

**Objective:** Explore why women lost the vote in New Jersey and, in particular, the role of politics in creating this change.

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Teacher Preparation:** Review [Part 3: How did Women lose the Vote?](#) in the *When Women Lost the Vote* exhibit. Prepare to display the [Tavern Sign image](#) and show the accompanying [video](#).

Engage students in conversation around the following object observation by examining/investigating the object and noting the following:

- Size, shape, and weight
- Color and texture
- 2-5 details that you find interesting

Then, invite students to draw conclusions about the object, based on their investigation, with the following questions as a guide:

- What might this object have been used for?
- Who might have made it? When and how? Why might they have created it?
- What stories might this object tell?

Then, reveal to students that this was a tavern sign painted with the face of Democratic-Republican party leader Thomas Jefferson. Explain that voting took place in local taverns, who showed their support for one party over the other through signs like this. They illustrated the growing partisan divisions in New Jersey that eventually led to the disenfranchisement of women and free people of African descent.

**EXTEND:** Have students research the regulations surrounding polling locations and political symbolism. How are political symbols and messages found on campaign signs, t-shirts, and advertisements regulated in your polling location? Have students create an instruction page for future campaigners.

### EXPLORE MEDIA BIAS

**Objective:** Explore voting and elections through different periods of time.

**Time:** 1 day, 50 minute class (45 minute activity)

**Teacher Preparation:** Prepare copies of the *Media Tracker worksheet*.

Have students find a recent headline news article and then examine how different newspapers or online news outlets (at least two others) covered the story. Using the first part of the *Media Tracker worksheet*, have the students record the similarities and differences between the stories.

Then have the students look for how each story was reported. Analyze the word choices and the story's framing the writers chose for bias. Encourage students to consider what was emphasized or repeated and when different content appeared in each story. Were there any words with a positive or negative connotation? Students can keep track of this on the second part of the *Media Tracker worksheet*. Then discuss with the students, why do you think the writers chose to use those words?

Finally, in the last part of the *Media Tracker worksheet*, have the students create a 1-2 sentence thesis or topic sentence for each story using not only the content that the stories are reporting but also the way they are being reported. Why do you think the same piece of news was reported differently by each organization?

**EXPAND:** Have the students compare two articles written during the 1790s, one by a Federalist newspaper and one written by a Democratic-Republican newspaper.

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## MAP-MAKING AND THE VOTE

**Objective:** Explore voting and elections through different periods of time.

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

**Teacher Preparation:** Prepare to project an image of your state's congressional district map.

Ask students to consider to what extent political parties today determine the outcome of elections. They may want to consider things like the influence political parties have on who becomes candidates, what the party platform is, published media and advertisements, etc.

Discuss with students or have them research the topic of gerrymandering, the practice of manipulating political boundaries to favor one party. In the United States, this typically refers to the manipulation of the congressional districts for a state. Afterward, ask students the following questions: How do political parties shape the outcome of elections through gerrymandering? Should political parties be allowed to gerrymander? Possible question — look at your state's district map. What are some reasons that the map may have been set up like that? (ie. city locations, county sizes, number of people in an area, ethnic populations, limited number of districts allowed, etc)

**EXTEND:** Have students research and then present a plan for how districts should be drawn in a non-partisan way.

