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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume I: The Use and Abuse of History in Film and Video

Herstory: Women Portrayed in Film

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.01.02
by Jean Gallogly

This unit is about collaboration, about women and their contribution to history, and about using film and books to help students learn productively.

As a Library Media Specialist in New Haven, my job is to work with the classroom teachers that draw from both our strengths. Therefore, this unit was produced in cooperation with the team from my school, the L.W. Beecher Elementary School. My unit will supplement those produced by our team as well as provide some stand-alone lesson plans.

Women are often relegated to second place in the history books, between accounts of wars and presidents. They come into their own only in March, when Women's History Month is celebrated. Because they should be celebrated all year, I have chosen to work with women historical figures, both real and fictional.

Topics covered by this unit are Tall Tales and their heroines, such as Mrs. Davy Crockett and Angelica Longrider; the record-breaking athlete and Civil Rights worker, Wilma Rudolph; Harriet Tubman, the woman who led approximately 300 slaves to freedom; and the remarkable story of Annie Oakley.

Included in the reading lists are children's books that teach about other notable women and their roles in history.

(Recommended for Literature and Social Studies, grades 1-3)

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