

Doc Chat Episode Two Transcript

Ian Fowler: Welcome everybody. I'm Ian Fowler. I'm the map curator and geospatial librarian for the New York Public Library. Thank you so much for joining us on this important day 100 years since the passage of the 19th amendment. If you haven't already, please check out NYPL's essential readings on feminism which I'm including in the chat right now which all the panelists here have worked on along with some of our colleagues. If you're not familiar, Doc Chat is a new program series that digs deep in the stories behind the library's most interesting collections and highlights ways that teachers can incorporate them in their classroom. In this episode, Cara Dellatte is joined by Susan Kriete, curator in the Irma and Paul Milstein section of US history local history and genealogy and will discuss the story of one suffragist Militant Maud Malone they will speak for about 15 minutes and then open up to questions and please use a question-and-answer function to share questions and answers. If you wish to remain anonymous please click the button and just so you know the presenters will also be asking you to respond to questions during the presentation using the chat function so please use the chat function for that and the question and answer for the Q&A in the last 15 minutes. And with that I will hand it over to Sue and Cara.

Susan Kriete: Thank you all for joining us on the Centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment. Today's program is on our favorite forgotten feminist Maud Malone who was not only a pioneer in suffragist but also a librarian at our very own New York Public Library, just one of the many reasons why we are all very attached to her. More specifically though, we are going to mostly examine two photographs of suffragists from our collection to see what they can tell us about why Maud Malone is not better known and also about more generally the process of historical marginalization.

I want to start by explaining why we decided to try this approach. Actually we have a lot of [indiscernible] too many to share because by now we have enthusiastic about both Maud Malone and using photographs to tell her story. So you can imagine how gratified we were to see the New York Times making the very point we are today in an article published last week on black suffragists. Mainly that photographs are another tapped resource second skills in virtual analysis which provides [indiscernible] to build on to teach critical evaluation of primary resources. Third, as you will see, fashion and appearance play a primary role in evaluating these photographs that are literally about image and allow you to tap into themes that most students are already talking about most of the time. Speaking of fashion, I do want to point out that the matching shirts that Cara and I are wearing are actually cool votes for women T-shirts from the NYPL store. Since they are a little bit subtle, you might have been thinking that we are just in super casual quarantine mode. So I wanted to point out that these are actually bona fide business attire. talk about women's liberation. Thank you NYPL for making my preferred dress code office appropriate. But I'm digressing.

Getting back to our [indiscernible] last but definitely not least my particular goal is to explode the

impression the suffrage is them is boring which I blame and put in the endless photographs of separatism. You might call it the familiar parade of suffrage parades. My hope is that closely examining suffrage photographs will help [indiscernible] once and for all that far from being boring, suffrage is to put their historian [indiscernible]. But just before we get to work on that, we are going to ask you to take a quick poll that Ian is going to lunch. We will share the results with you later but without waiting I can assure you that many more people in the self-selected audience will have heard of Maud Malone than the students in your classrooms although hopefully that is all about to change. Even among all you suffrage enthusiasts though I assume there are people who are not familiar with Malone, oral have only recently heard about her. I could happily spend all day talking about Maud Malone... We are sort of on a first name basis now. And all the fascinating nuances of her relationship to history but luckily for you, time is short so I'm going to limit myself to just a few of the facts that are most salient for today's exercise.

Malone was a truly radical activist who was responsible for a number of significant suffrage she co-organized the first open-air suffrage meeting introducing the tactic of stump speaking which became a suffrage hallmark. She also court organized the first suffrage.. She was the first American [indiscernible] to be jailed after she was arrested for heckling then governor Woodrow Wilson about votes for women in the 1912 speech.

And if those innovations were not enough to earn Malone a place in history she also organized the first union of public library employees, which created quite a ruckus at the library at the time and I think it is fair to say not everyone appreciates this legacy still today. And while her exploits are largely forgotten today in her own time, Malone was a very well-known figure probably as close to a household name as any suffragist was in the early 20th century. Hopefully this has whetted your appetite about Maud Malone. If you want more information about her, I highly recommend the series of articles that Dan Meharg did for the National Park Service. Dan might be an audience today and if you are, Dan, put a link to the articles in the chat and we will also be linking to them when we put up our blog.

What happened to Maud? We are going to answer that question [indiscernible] book with a photograph of another group of suffragists. [indiscernible] That's okay Cara ... I was going to take it say that while Cara is telling us about that I want the rest of you to just tell us what you are observing and use the comment and chat functions.

Cara Dellatte: so the photograph we are looking at right now is from the Rosika Schwimmer collection which is part of the rare books division of the New York public library. Rosika Schwimmer was a Hungarian feminist that became friends with suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt at the second international suffrage alliance in Berlin in 1904. She would go on to lead a life dedicated to women's rights her collection is rich with letters, newspaper articles and photographs.

[Both speaking]

Susan Kriete: Do we know who the people are in the photograph?

Cara Dellatte: Three of the women identified [indiscernible] daughter of Elizabeth Cady

Stanton was one of the early pioneers of suffrage movement after graduating from Vassar College she moved to New England with her husband Henry Blanch Junior where they live for 20 years and it was here she began to redefine her tactics for women's suffrage and realize that in order to succeed, working-class women would need to be included. Upon returning to the US she became more active in the movement. Blanch adopted many of the techniques Maud Malone pioneered and is often credited with revitalizing the suffrage movement. The other women in the photograph are Emily [indiscernible] is a famous British suffragette and then as the Holland around the radical feminist with a very privileged background. Many of you may have seen her in early suffrage parade photographs sitting atop a white horse to lead the parade.

Susan Kriete: I'm looking through the comments now and everybody is picking up on the fact that these definitely look like a group of wealthy women, which I completely agree with. Somebody, Julie actually pointed out the fur stole. There's a lot of feathers and fur in this photograph and it does definitely, these definitely don't look like women who have income difficulties right? I think some other things that we might want to say about it, are that actually one of the reasons I like this photograph so much is not only because it includes Harriet Stanton Blanch who ends up taking credit for innovations of Maud's but it seems to me the way that you all are picking up on it that like there is no ambiguity about these women being very wealthy. The signs are very very clear. There's also another thing I would point out is the banner, the votes for women banner. It looks a lot like votes for women banners you see in all the other photographs but it's very, it is crafted. It is sewn, it is put together. It's manufactured. It is polished. And another thing that I don't think anybody pointed out is that oh, that is a very good... Comment, you see the red marks on the outside of the photograph what you think it means Cara?

Cara Dellatte: It could mean usually they were crop marks or maybe it was used for promotional material at some point.

Susan Kriete: Somebody said and I think this is a very good point, the women look very happy to be together and to be photographed. And that's definitely something that I picked up on in this photograph and I would go farther than just to say they do look happy and they also look very self-assured. They look self-assured. They look calm, they, another word I might use is dignified. The ladies look very dignified to me. Proud I think is a great adjective for that. And so just to sort of wrap up this part of the analysis, would you guys, people think that this is kind of atypical photograph? does this remind you of other photographs that you see? of suffragists? I can tell you... What do you think Cara? what is your opinion?

Cara Dellatte: From what I have seen yes. A lot of the photographs that we have come across, a lot of the women look like this in this picture. They are dressed very well. They aren't necessarily smiling but as someone mentioned in the chat they look very proud, determined ready to see this passed at some point. And excited to be part of the movement.

Susan Kriete: ...going to say somebody pointed out that not all the women are smiling and I think that's very true but when we go to the next photograph let's compare the expressions and see what we think about it. So let's go to the next photograph now. So I'm interested to get people's observations about this photograph. And I will just tell you that this photograph is actually from NYPL's picture collection. Which is actually significant I think in ways that we will discuss in a minute. Unfortunately we don't have time for me to talk to you about how special the picture collection is but for anyone who has not already explored it, I really encourage you to look online at our website.

Cara Dellatte: The some of the things we want to talk about here does the photograph seemed different than the first one and what are the differences? what does everyone notice?

Susan Kriete: One thing that I see pointed out oh, wow. You guys are so good. You are pointing out a lot of things that I was thinking of. Somebody pointed out the hand-lettered sign. The hand-lettered sign I think is very very significant because you really don't, I have not seen that in very many suffrage photographs. In fact I have only been able to find one other suffrage photograph. I mean I'm sure there are more but I have only seen one at the Library of Congress in which a woman is holding a hand-lettered sign like that. And I think if you are using this in a classroom, it's kind of a great way to tie it in to what is happening now and to talk about these photographs in relation to the black lives matter movement for example. Are the signs that people are carrying more like the crafted, very polished and specially manufactured signs that you see in the first photograph? or are they more likely Maud Malone photograph and I think we would all agree that they are hand-lettered signs. I see them everywhere in my neighborhood been signed by children. So it is this very populist way of doing, of protesting.

Cara Dellatte: Someone just mentioned in the chat that they are wearing suffrage buttons which I think is a great observation because those were not being worn in the first photograph that we looked at and to answer someone else's question, if you look underneath the photograph you will see the caption and you notice that it says this case are, Bolton Hall Maud Malone and Mrs. Borman well so they weren't necessarily spinster some of the women in the photograph are married.

Susan Kriete: Actually all the women in photograph are married except for Maud Malone and as someone pointed at one of the women is not identified at all. The fourth woman is not identified and is that significant I don't know but it's possible that the she did not want to be identified or the photographer did not know her. But definitely something to make note of. So people are saying I'm looking at these comments and these are all great. All of these, you guys are really noticing, paying very close attention and that's exactly what you want to be teaching us to do. I agree that the dresses are less, there's not as many feathers and furs in the photograph. With student in the classroom you might want to, there are very many websites that have sort of like 19th-century fashion encyclopedias. So you could get students to look at those and see how the costumes matchup. I don't think anybody really focused in on the thing that really jumps out to me in this photograph which is Maud's hat. What is going on with hat? I mean I'm far from an expert on 19th-century fashion but I don't think you have to know that

much to know that there is something just a little off about the hat, that that is not a hat that a wealthy woman would be parading around in. One thing I just want to say too about this Mrs business is that it's really important when you are looking for materials relating to suffragists, if you're doing newspaper searches or whatever to make sure you're using the term Mrs, because that is often time the only way they are identified in the paper. So you want to experiment with a variety of terms, but it is important to note and kind of amazing when you think about it in our day and age that women were really only identified in relationship to their husbands. So anything else, Cara? people talked about the facial expressions. I agree, these women, Maud is smiling has sort of a half mile. She definitely looks very self-assured, but I would say these women to me look determined. Defiant we might say. They don't have, it's a different mood in this picture than it is in the other one.

Cara Dellatte: Absolutely I agree with you.

Susan Kriete: Another thing that might not be obvious that you have not looked at a lot of especially newspaper photographs but the photographer is identified in this, which is not a usual practice at that time. For newspaper photographs. And how about typicality? does this seem less typical to you guys than other photographs we looked at? so I'm going to say yes. I don't think this is as typical as... I mean it does not strike me certainly I have not seen a lot of photographs that look like this.

Cara Dellatte: Me neither.

Susan Kriete: So just kind of wrap up I don't know, Cara, what you think we can conclude from the comparison?

Cara Dellatte: I think we are looking at two different types of suffrage, you know people involved in the movement. I think the first photograph we see a group of women who are more wealthy. They are perhaps upper class. Perhaps the way that they are displaying themselves is because they have more political engagement with politicians and so they have to come across a certain way. Whereas this photograph I think we are seeing the on the ground movement itself. People who were a part of it that were not about the upper class. They were doing all of the groundwork. And often, you know not forgotten by history but they are not as well-known as people like Harriet Stanton Blanch and Emmaline Pankhurst and such.

Susan Kriete: It definitely looks like a less well-heeled bunch than the people in the first photograph. I was just looking, somebody mentioned they have coats on in this photograph. But they also have coats on in the first photograph. So I don't think that prevents us from making a comparison. Somebody asked which woman is Maud. So let me say Maud is the one with the crazy hat. She's in the middle holding the sign. And so just before we move on to the next step, I just want to point out that we had an actual reason for doing the photographs in this order you want to talk about that, Cara?

Cara Dellatte: We wanted to show it this way to demonstrate so people could see the first photograph was shown first so that we could show everyone... I'm sorry

Susan Kriete: It's okay I will just jump in. I didn't mean to put you on the spot. I apologize. So the reason to me that we would do it that way is because it is a more typical photo. It is the photo that you're going to see. It's a photo of the well-known suffragists who have survived history who we still know about today and so you're still setting the baseline for comparison. So I think it is more useful to do this exercise in that order actually.

Okay so... Now we are going to move on to the next step, which is to talk about the context of these photographs. And the first thing I want to point out is that it is so important to look at the back of the photograph. Every time, and it's really easy to miss this in our digital collections but if there is the back of it, there's going to be, it's going to show up in a thumbnail at the bottom of the image so always look to see if there is the backside of the image. And if there's anything on the back of the photograph it is always included in the digital collections. So you want to talk about the back of the photograph Cara?

Cara Dellatte: Absolutely. So we think that the photograph was probably used in, they put digests, so we think that's coming from either the readers digest fashion digest or monthly digest. We are not sure. So this photograph was from the Rosika Schwimmer collection there's a chance she herself actually wrote on the back of the photograph and decided to file it under Pankhurst, since at that time she was one of the most well-known suffragettes in England. So there's a good chance you file it under P and that makes sense as being part of Rosika's collection. There's ton of newspaper articles and photographs that are all filed meticulously. So it is easy to find if you are looking for something like this.

Susan Kriete: Another thing I would point out about the back of this photograph is that so it tells you it was used in the digest on this date that is in 1926. So this is actually not published until after the 19th amendment is already passed. And I think that is significant because what that means is that this is being published at a time when they are associated with victory. There's nothing, this is not a photograph that's going to be ridiculed. This is a photograph that as many suffragists were doing the movement, this is kind of tapping into the success of the movement. And this is really the beginning of these women being enshrined in history. Like this is their picture being published by them. They are sending it to the publication so you have, they are exercising a lot of control over their image.

One other thing I will just say about the back of the photograph is that it identified photographer as Underwood and Underwood, and Underwood and Underwood was actually a very prominent photography firm that became kind of well-known pioneers in newspaper photography. So they are plugged in... To this very... Prominent, all the most prominent photographers of the time.

Cara Dellatte: Sue, do you want to start the Q&A now?

Susan Kriete: Sure.

Ian Fowler: Thank you so much for your wonderful comments and inside in the chat. We do have some questions and answers. I would like to start with one that I would like to ask both Cara and Sue, where did the picture of Maud Malone how did that originate? was it something taken for suffrage purposes or what is the Genesis behind that?

Susan Kriete: that's a great question Ian because looking at the photograph what you would expect is that would have been published as part of a suffrage article, and article about suffrage. But if you look at the slide that Cara just put up, see that is not the case at all.

Cara Dellatte: it was actually published as part of an amateur photo prize contest, which is interesting [laughter]. So as you can see with what Sue together you can see that it was part of Leslie's weekly. And we think that is Frank Leslie was a major supporter of the women's suffrage movement and so the photograph was put into that particular weekly. And Sue... If you want to jump in

Susan Kriete: Sure. Actually at the time it is so true actually Miriam Leslie left all of her money, a substantial portion to the national woman suffrage Association at her death so she was a huge supporter of women's suffrage, but actually by this time she was no longer associated with the paper. So I think this really raises the question of what is the purpose of the paper being published? is it really supporting suffrage or is that kind of a ha ha... Look at this funny picture of the suffragists? It is really not clear. We don't know who the photographer is. It is possible that Maud Malone knew the photographer but also possible that she didn't and she wasn't exercising any control over how the photograph was published.

I think this is a great tie in again for students to current events, because this is an example of kind of a precursor to the iPhone photos that made the outrage that is fueling the black lives matter movement today possible because people now have power to take their own images and publish them. But that is not something that was really going on at that time. This is kind of a rare early example of an amateur photographer getting their work to be widely distributed.

Ian Fowler: Thank you so much. We have a few more questions in the Q&A, and please if you have any, please move from the chat to the Q&A because that's what we are looking at now. Cara or Sue is there any sort of physical memorial for Ms. Malone? and we know she has a collection of papers anywhere or not?

Cara Dellatte: I can take that one, Sue. So as far as the collection of papers go, no, she actually does not have a collection of papers that we have come across in our research. She's one of the type of people where you would have to start piecemealing information together by looking at his paper articles and photographs and putting all of that together and we think a lot of it has to do with just not being as well known... I mean like the Rosika Schwimmer collection that we have was donated to the library so we are able to do a comprehensive study of her and the people she associated with through her papers so it is in a sense easier to do research on that particular person than it would be for someone like Maud Malone. I don't want to say she fell through the cracks of history because there have been people that have been able to find a

ton of information on her and put things together but it's not going to be as easy as someone that is perhaps more well-known like Harriet Stanton Blanch or Carrie Chapman Catt or women like that.

Ian Fowler: Thank you. We have another question can you talk a little bit about Rosika Schwimmer. There's a question some people might not be familiar

Cara Dellatte: She was a Hungarian feminist who became friends with Carrie Chapman Catt at the second women's suffrage alliance conference in 1904. She would go on to work heavily with what was called the East conference in 1915 where they tried to send a piece ship all throughout the Atlantic to the belligerent countries that were part of World War I it failed [indiscernible] after the war ended and she went back to hungry things took a turn for the worse there and so she eventually came to America looking for citizenship and was actually denied because she was a huge peace activist and refused to bear arms for the country. There is a court case about her in our library that you can find and her papers are as I mentioned before in the manuscript division. Also part of another bigger [indiscernible] division called the Lloyd collection and so if you are interested in learning more about her or women's suffrage in general that would be a good place to start.

Ian Fowler: thank you so much Cara. Sue, I think this one might be for you is there a difference between the term suffragette and suffragist?

Susan Kriete: this is great, this is a topic that is very dear to my heart. There's a difference between the terms and suffragette is a term that originated in Britain and was used derogatorily to describe the very violently radical suffragettes in England. And when the movement moved over here, the leaders of the movement actually were very consciously trying to distance themselves from that kind of... They, the suffragettes were bombing and there was a lot of violence involved with that and they wanted to distance themselves from it.

So it is true that the Americans you know really by and large refer to themselves as suffragist, but I think people, you know it is very important to remember that sanctions might be clear to us now, and they might have been clear to the leaders of the suffrage movement but they definitely were not clear to everyone. Some more radical American suffragists like Maud M purposely referred to themselves as suffragettes. So it's really important to, when you're doing the research refer to these terms because a lot of times newspaper articles only talk about suffragettes and they are not necessarily making these refined distinctions that we are making.

Ian Fowler: Thank you so much. This came up a lot in the chat and we have a Q&A about this too and I think you can interpret this question pretty broadly. During the research on Maud Malone did you find anything about her thoughts on race? for example about 20 years prior to the photographs, Frederick Douglass had spoken at the Seneca calls convention

Susan Kriete: Yes, I'm actually so glad you asked that because we didn't get to the part about newspaper articles so we actually did have a slight Maud's resignation letter was actually from a suffrage organization was printed in the New York Times... And I'm just looking because I did

print out this quote in it. Here is this quote, and she says it is... It is a great letter and it's a resource because it confirms all of our visual analysis. She's talking about how she's leaving the organization basically because it is too elitist. You will see in that subtitle it even says close of no account. It doesn't matter how people are dressed. And it includes this amazing quote. To me the movement to be truly progressive should recognize no prejudices of race, color, difference" or creed, whether religious or economic. So you know, this message certainly resonates with us today, but it was never the party line of the mainstream suffrage movement. And I think you know that attitude actually helps account for why Malone was sort of shouldered aside because the mainstream movement as we all know... Was purposely racist to appeal to southern voters.

Ian Fowler: That's wonderful. Thank you Sue. The question here that also came up in the chat. How did Maud Malone get to be called militant and was a common for suffragists to get the sort of [indiscernible] and what can this tell us about her and her activism?

Susan Kriete: It was a newspaper headline actually, militant Maud Malone and I think she got it because the alliteration was irresistible to journalists. So it's really a label that was applied to her by... I mean appropriate for America she was militant for Americans although not nearly as militant as British suffragists were. But I think one thing I would say in that connection is that Maud Malone actually had a very good relationship with journalists and she was, although I talk about her not, we are talking about her not controlling her image she was a brilliant strategist and she was brilliant at getting publicity in the papers. She was very good at it. I mean, they published her resignation letter. That doesn't happen for everybody right?

Ian Fowler: Speaking of resignation letters and firings we have had a number of questions about why [indiscernible] New York public library

Susan Kriete: You know that is a great question which actually I have not been able to fully discover the answer for. Not surprisingly, the library was not that interested keeping papers about Maud Malone who was not one of their favorite employees. There was a lot of resistance not just for management but other male librarians about the library union. So I would imagine that it has something to do with that. She eventually did become a socialist. She had a lot of radical, she was, a lot of radical activities but I don't know what the actual reason is and I am still looking so if I ever find out I will definitely post it in the blogosphere.

Ian Fowler: Thank you. This question is interesting to me as one of the upcoming co-creators of the women in activism exhibit. Are there any photos in the collections that show policing a suffrage activity or photos that give a sense of what law enforcement was like during the rallies and demonstrations?

Susan Kriete: There is, there is at least one photograph in our digital collections that shows police lined up alongside a parade. And there are not as many images, but there are newspaper articles that talk about it. So there's a lot of newspaper articles about Maud, for example,

getting, she got arrested a number of times and had run-ins about in public, about parading without a permit. So there's a lot of description of it. I have not seen as many photographs. But I have not specifically been looking for that. So I would be interested to know myself if there's more than what I have seen.

Ian Fowler: Thank you Sue. We have a couple questions related and pretty, they are asking if Maud Malone was Irish and if anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment had something to do with her firing or her work in the movement. Do we have any information about that?

Susan Kriete: I don't, I mean I definitely think that her being an Irish immigrant is interesting in a number of ways because you know it is not a demographic that we really necessarily associate with pro-suffrage. And I would say, so not so much just her being an Irish immigrant but being an immigrant at all was definitely kind of a strike against her. In the suffrage movement. She is a second-generation... It was her parents who immigrated here and her family history is fascinating. She comes from a long line of radical activists. They were Irish Catholic. Her sister was the first woman, the first Catholic woman to graduate from law school and interestingly, there was a newspaper article about her going to her graduation ceremony and not wearing a robe. So clothes... Is just kind of a constant issue with these Malone's.

Ian Fowler: That's very interesting. I think to wrap up, and discovers a couple questions that were in the chat again and in the Q&A, can you speak a little bit about race [indiscernible] movement in the US?

Susan Kriete: Sorry I just missed the last part of that, race.

Ian Fowler: Race and the suffrage movement obviously the photos we show today were all of white women.

Susan Kriete: Yes. Sure. I mean it was a very it was a very exclusionary movement and I actually think that I love using Maud Malone. She is a great example that allows you to segue to talking about how... African-Americans were even more shouldered out of the movement. Right? and one of the reasons, and that is a great tie in. It really ties into the New York Times article that was published last week. They show these photographs and the photographs are not, these are not published photographs. These are portrait photographs that the women themselves arranged because they are so concerned about their image. And it is really, it makes for a fascinating comparison with the photographs that we looked at today and one other point I will make about that is that we have a fantastic collection of African-American women in our digital collections. It is the real strength of our collections. So I definitely encourage people to explore that and we will be linking to that in the call.

Ian Fowler: Thank you so much, Sue I think that will wrap it up now. I would like to let everyone know that I hope you enjoyed the second episode of Doc Chat. if you miss the first one it is available at NYPL.org and we also will send out an email that has links to further research materials and the photos that were shown in this presentation so we will send that out to

everyone and we are going to take a short break on Doc Chat. But we will be coming back on the fall. So stay tuned and watch her email and watch those media. And thank you all very much for coming today.

Susan Kriete: Thanks a lot you guys.