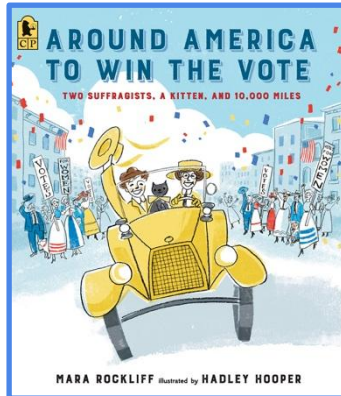


Long-Form Teacher's Guide for
Around America to Win the Vote: Two Suffragettes, a Kitten, and 10,000 Miles

By Mara Rockliff Illustrated by Hadley Hooper



Book Synopsis

In lively fashion, Mara Rockliff shares the true story of Alice Burke and Nell Richardson as they journey across the United States in an attempt to persuade the public that women should have the right to vote. In 1916 the two set out to cross the country in a small yellow car that would prove their determination to spread the word for women's suffrage.

Historical Background

In 1916, capitalizing on the popularity and practicality of the automobile, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) sent two women out on the road. In a media splash, Alice Burke of Illinois and Nell Richardson of Virginia drove from New York to California and back in a yellow, gas-powered car donated by the Saxon Motor Company. They nicknamed their Saxon Roadster the "The Golden Flyer" and drove over 10,000 miles over six months, giving speeches, sewing aprons, writing poems, and fixing their car along the way. Proving automobiles were as much for the modern woman as for men, it was important that Burke and Richardson drove and serviced the vehicle themselves. Throughout the trip, Burke and Richardson rallied support and carried news of NAWSA's plans to promote women's suffrage at the Democratic and Republican national conventions in St. Louis and Chicago later that year. According to the diary written by Alice Burke for the *New York Tribune*, the women were often given gifts during their stops, including a black kitten, given to them in Mobile, Alabama (they named him Saxon!). Despite the frequent stops and gift-giving, their trip was dangerous due to the lack of surfaced roads during the early 1900s, especially in the Southern states where almost 90% of the roads were dirt roads. Alice and Nell's drive across America--and back!--inspired many to support the suffrage movement, and granted them fame across the nation.

Tennessee Social Studies Standards and Practices

Standard 5.09. Analyze the major goals, struggles, and achievements of the Progressive Era, including Prohibition (18th Amendment), women's suffrage (19th Amendment), and the lack of child labor laws.

Essential Questions: What were the major goals, struggles and achievements of the women's suffrage movement? What did suffragists hope to achieve? What obstacles stood in their way? What are some milestones in the movement?

Sub Questions:

- **Who were Nell Richardson and Alice Burke?**
 - Nell Richardson and Alice Burke were two suffragists who traveled across the United States (from New York to California) in 1916 to fight for the cause of "Votes for Women." They reported the conditions of the suffrage movement across the country as well as details about their journey in a diary Alice wrote for *The New York Tribune*. (See the photo: "Suffragettes - Mrs. Alice Burke and Nell Richardson in the suffrage automobile "Golden Flyer" in which they drive from New York to San Francisco. April 7, 1916." Library of Congress Online Catalog: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001704319/> Also see this diary excerpt: *Diary of Suffrage Flier in Tribune*, "New York Tribune." April 7, 1916. From the Library of Congress: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1916-04-07/ed-1/seq-5/>)
- **What strategies did Nell Richardson and Alice Burke use to win women the right to vote?**
 - Nell and Alice traveled with items they could use to argue against anti-suffrage advocates: a typewriter to "dash a poem off right then and there" to prove women possessed intelligence, and a sewing machine to "whip an apron up while Alice gave a speech" to prove their ability to both complete domestic responsibilities alongside citizenship.
 - Shared symbols of their cause: "Nell tied a Votes-for-Women-yellow daffodil behind his [a horse blocking their path] ear."
 - Packed necessities for travel obstacles: "They put on their raincoats and their rubber hats and drove through howling wind and swirling snow;" "They huddled wet and shivering under the blanket and ate the candy until the sun came up."
 - Spoke the language of the crowd: " But no one listened. So she (Alice) told them all about the car instead."
 - Relationships built through communication and participation
 - Parties attended, postcards to school children, joining a parade, having tea, winning a medal at a fair
- **Why take this long and dangerous road trip? What did Nell and Alice hope to achieve?**

- The travel of “ten thousand bumpy, muddy, unmapped miles” was focused on the singular goal that if they could complete this dangerous journey together without any other assistance, then they could prove “WOMEN could do ANYTHING”--including vote!
- **What arguments against women’s suffrage were Nell and Alice ready for?**
 - Nell and Alice packed their car accordingly planning for the argument that: 1. Women didn’t have the intelligence to vote 2. Women were meant to cook and sew and stay in the home rather than be involved in governing.

Teaching with Primary and Secondary Source Documents

SSP.02. Critically examine a primary or secondary source in order to:

- Summarize significant ideas and relevant information
- Distinguish between fact and opinion
- Draw inferences and conclusions
- Recognize author’s purpose, point of view, and reliability

SSP.03. Organize data from a variety of sources in order to:

- Compare and contrast multiple sources
- Recognize differences between multiple accounts
- Frame appropriate questions for further investigation

If a Flashy Car Can Turn Heads, How About One Driven By A Woman?

Always looking for fresh ways to spread the word about voting rights and recruit new supporters, suffragists seized the opportunity automobiles provided. In many areas, women were not the typical drivers, so when suffragists exercised their independence and got behind the wheel, they drew a captive audience. From 1910 to 1920, the automobile played a significant role in how suffragists promoted the need for equal voting rights. They delivered speeches from parked vehicles, decorated them for use in parades, and at times even organized processions comprised only of cars. Check out the “Votes for Women” automobile hood ornament, made by the Henry Brumbl Company. <https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/242001/> (From *Exploring Women’s Suffrage through 50 Historic Treasures*, by Jessica Jenkins, 2020). Also see photographs of their journey--as well as of other women who used cars to spread their suffrage message--at the National Museum of American History: <https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/2014/03/traveling-for-suffrage-part-1-two-women-a-cat-a-car-and-a-mission.html> Also visit [The Suffragist Saffron Saxon](#) to read excerpts about Nell’s and Alice’s journey in their hometown newspapers, and read excerpts of speeches given.

What Happened Along the Way? What and Who did Nell and Alice Encounter?

Have students examine Alice's diary entries to learn more about the obstacles Nell and Alice faced on their journey. Compare these diary entries with depictions in the picture book. How were Nell and Alice received along their journey?

<https://tpsteachersnetwork.org/album/32656-picture-books-and-primary-sources-around-america-to-win-the-vote-by-mara-rockliff>

Government and Civics

Standard 5.54. Describe the structure of Tennessee's government, including the role of each of the three branches, the governor, and state representatives.

Have students discuss why voting today is important. Have students consider the following questions:

- What are elections? When are elections? How do we elect leaders?
- Who votes? How do you vote? Where do you vote?
- Why should people vote? Why is voting an important responsibility for citizens?
- What does the governor do?
- What do state representatives do?
- Who are our current elected leaders?
- What is the government? Why does government matter?
- Has a woman ever been the governor of TN? Who are the women in TN state legislature?

Also, explain to students that the women's suffrage movement led to increased representation of women in Congress. In 1922, one woman (for a short period of time) and 99 men comprised the US Senate. But women's representation has increased over the years. In 2017, 105 (78 Democrats, 27 Republicans) women held seats in the United States Congress, comprising 19.6% of the 535 members; 21 women (21%) served in the United States Senate, and 84 women (19.3%) served in the United States House of Representatives. Ask students: how do these numbers compare to today?

Teachers may want to read the supplementary texts in the lit kit, *What's the Big Deal About Elections*, by Ruby Shamir and illustrated by Matt Faulkner; *Vote for Our Future!* by Margaret McNamara and illustrated by Micah Player; and *Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice* by Nikki Grimes and illustrated by Laura Freeman.

Geography

SSP.06. Develop geographic awareness by:

- Analyzing the spatial relationships between people, circumstances, and resources
- Examining how geographic regions and perceptions of the regions change over time

Use the [Teachers First Reading Trek tool](#) to follow Alice's and Nell's journey across America using Google Maps. The map highlights the cities and states mentioned in the book as Alice and Nell travel 10,000 miles in their yellow Saxton. Also check out the Zeemaps created by the book's author, Mara Rockliffe. At her author website, Mara asks readers: ***Did Nell and Alice stop in your hometown? If you can confirm a stop I missed, please email me and I'll be glad to add it to the map!*** Have students look to see if Nell and Alice traveled to Tennessee, and if so, where they stopped! Also, use the Zeemaps tool to show the route the "Golden Flyer" traveled in 1916. Have students pick spots along the route to research what was happening in the state around women's suffrage at the time. Have students predict if Nell and Alice would have been welcomed or met resistance in various locations on the map.

<https://www.zeemaps.com/map?group=891290&add=1>

Exploring the Book

Teachers might:

- Change the order
 - Select steps you believe would be best for your students
 - Add ones that you feel are important
1. Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students: What is a suffragist? Why are Nell Richardson and Alice Burke wearing yellow and driving a yellow car (suffragists' theme color)? Show students the map in the book of the United States that charts the route of Nell Richard's and Alice Burke's 10,000-mile campaign trail across America. Ask students if they have ever been on a long road trip. How many days did you travel? What was that experience like? Nell Richard's and Alice Burke's trip was from April 6th to September 30th, 1916 (76 days). Mention that driving across America during 1916 was especially challenging because they did not have the conveniences we have today (backmatter has examples). In 1916 there was no GPS -- and there were not even road maps for much of the country. Also, for women to make this trip without a man was shocking to almost everyone during that time. H. Nelson Jackson was the first man to drive from California to New York (1903). In 1909, Alice Ramsey became the first woman to successfully complete the cross-country journey. It should be noted that Alice Burke and Neil Richardson drove many more miles in 1916 than these other two. They also gave speeches at night and drove during the day. This information is located in the backmatter. You will want to briefly compare some of the traveling conveniences we have today to the ones available in 1916. Discuss why people did not believe women could make that trip without a man during that time and compare that to the viewpoints today.
 2. Discuss the time period the book represents based on the front and back covers of the book (in addition to other books that have been showcased prior to this one). You can also include the above discussion to help students ascertain the time period. Have them describe the clothing in order to better understand the time period. Refer to the timeline to help students realize that this event took place in the 1900's (1916). You can subtract 1916 from the current year and mention that this event took place over 100 years ago.

3. Share the author's and illustrator's names. There is some information about their lives on the back flap of the book. Mara Rockliff is an award-winning author who specializes in historical books for children. Hadley Hooper's period-appropriate style of artwork captures mid-20th century illustration technique in children's literature.
4. Share the endpapers of the picture book. They are a bold rust orange color. Ask students to describe their feelings about the color. Does it denote strength, courage, etc.? How does the color of the endpapers compare to the colors in the rest of the book? One idea is that the endpaper colors are a sharp contrast to the other colors in the book.
5. Read aloud and/or picture-walk the story. (You might do both.) Be sensitive to your students' needs and curiosities and briefly pause to address those areas. You might interject your thinking aloud to make sure everyone comprehends the story. However, do this sparingly because you want students to discover and enjoy the overall story for themselves.
6. After the read aloud, entertain questions and mention two or three of the main points in the story.
7. Examine and review the backmatter with students. It has important information about the trip and other historical facts that make the book more interesting. In addition there is a timeline, selected research sources, websites, and an author's note. Mention how the backmatter fortifies and enhances this historical narrative. The backmatter reflects the author's meticulous commitment to research in order to write the book.
8. Show the timeline entry and assign a student to personalize it (write five facts about the event inside of the timeline entry). Refer to the "Timeline Activity" for directions (see "Timeline Activity" on the CCYAL website and in Appendix). Afterwards, place the entry on the timeline in chronological order according to the event year.
9. Entertain questions and encourage connections and comments.
10. Provide closure for the book according to your students' needs and interests.

Interdisciplinary Activities

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English Language Arts/Writing

SSP.05. Develop historical awareness by:

- Recognizing how and why historical accounts change over time
- Recognizing how past events and issues might have been experienced by the people of that time, with historical context and empathy rather than present-mindedness
- Identifying patterns of continuity and change over time, making connections to the present

Creative Writing

1. A Persuasive Poem.

Nell Richardson brought a typewriter with her on the trip, and “If anyone said women didn’t have the brains to vote, then Nell would dash a poem off right then and there to prove they *did*.” Imagine that it is 1916 and write a poem at least eight lines long about why it is important that women get the right to vote. The poem can rhyme or not—it’s your choice.

2. A Celebration of Suffrage

In the book, Nell Richardson and Alice Burke are welcomed at a variety of different festive events in the towns and cities they visit. Imagine that it is 1916 and Nell and Alice are coming to your town. You are in charge of putting together an event to welcome them and call attention to the cause of women’s suffrage. Describe in detail the event you would hold, paying attention to what food you would serve, what kind of decorations you would have, what kind of speakers or entertainers would perform. Remember in choosing food and decorations that the color yellow is an important symbol in women’s suffrage!

Academic Writing

1. Suffrage Symbols.

Use the internet to search “symbols of the women’s suffrage movement.” Find at least three symbols, and then write a paragraph in which you describe each symbol and why it was chosen. Were these symbols effective in raising people’s awareness about the need for votes for women? Remember that a symbol is an object or item that stands for something greater than itself (such as the American flag).

2. Understanding the Opposition.

While the book shows Nell and Alice being warmly greeted in the cities and towns they visit, it is important to remember that many people (both men and women) were against women getting the right to vote. These people were anti-suffrage. Go online and research “arguments against women’s right to vote.” Find at least three examples of reasons why some people thought women should not be allowed to vote. Write a paragraph in which you discuss each reason. Do any of the arguments make good points? What are the claims of each argument? What rationales/evidence is used?

Art/Media

1. Meet Suffrage Cat.

Because Nell Richardson and Alice Burke adopted a black kitten who joined them on their journey, cats became an important symbol of the women’s suffrage movement. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, the National Park Service is using a character called Suffrage Cat. You can meet Suffrage Cat and print up your own version to decorate here: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/suffrage-cat.htm>

1. Color Symbolism--Yellow.

Nell Richardson and Alice Burke traveled around the US in a yellow Saxon Flyer, and yellow is a dominant color in the picture book. The color yellow was significant to the women’s suffrage movement. American **suffrage** colors—purple, white, and

yellow/gold—stood for loyalty, purity, and **hope and enlightenment**, respectively. The sunflower--and yellow jonquils and roses--often appeared at suffrage events. These flowers proved wildly successful as pro-suffrage emblems, so much so that anti-suffragists adopted the red rose to counter their opponents. Anti-suffragists had adopted the colors red, black, and white for the American Beauty rose, steadfastness, and purity, respectively. In 1920, these two factions saw their own “war of the roses” play out in the Tennessee state legislature. (Learn more about this in our guide for *The Voice that Won the Vote*). Ask students to define hope and enlightenment and consider why the color yellow might symbolize these abstract ideas. Ask students why the suffragists might have wanted to convey these ideas. Ask students what else we associate yellow with (e.g., sunshine, light, flowers). Explain to students that the color yellow might have different meanings in other parts of the world. Have students research these meanings. Have students create a design to represent one of these meanings, using only shades of yellow.

If you are reading *The Hope Chest* with students, this book would make a great pairing!

