

Susan B. Anthony
A program for Women's History

2006 is the one hundredth anniversary of Susan B. Anthony's death making it an especially appropriate time for branches to celebrate her life and times. Anthony lived in a period when the law of the land declared that when a couple married, the man and woman became one and "that one was the man." Under the principle of "femme couverte" a woman had no legal identity separate from her husband. She had no right to her own wages, could not sign contracts or own property. According Martha Saxton in 1810 the average woman had eight children and twenty per cent of women died during childbirth. Half of all children died before age ten. It took fifty gallons or four hundred pounds of water to do the family laundry and that water was hauled in buckets. Very few professions were open to women and when women did work they earned about a quarter of what men made.

Susan B. Anthony never married. She served as a leader and particularly as an organizer of the women's suffrage movement. She was bold, outspoken, altogether fascinating. She spoke at a teacher's meeting after the men debated allowing for half an hour pointing out to the men that if they wished more respect and money, they must support respect and money for women teachers with whom they competed. She attempted to vote, was arrested and tried but refused to pay her fine. She was an ardent abolitionist.

Information about her is available from the sources listed below:

Failure Is Impossible by Lynn Sherr collects the words of Anthony herself. Times Books (Random House) copyright 1995. Now available in paperback

Not for Ourselves Alone by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns describes the lives of Anthony and of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. A companion to the television series. Alfred A Knopf, New York, copyright 1999. Also available as a dvd.

Susan B. Anthony, biographical dvd from A&E will be available July 26 and is currently available in VHS.

All of the above are available from Amazon. In addition Google returns 4,530,000 results. A particularly useful web-site is <http://www.rochester.edu/SBA/resources.html>.

Nora Bredes, Director, Anthony Center for Women's Leadership at the University of Rochester (585/275-9283 or 585/275-8799) does a program entitled "What Would Susan Say?" no fee.