

Ask a Suffragist

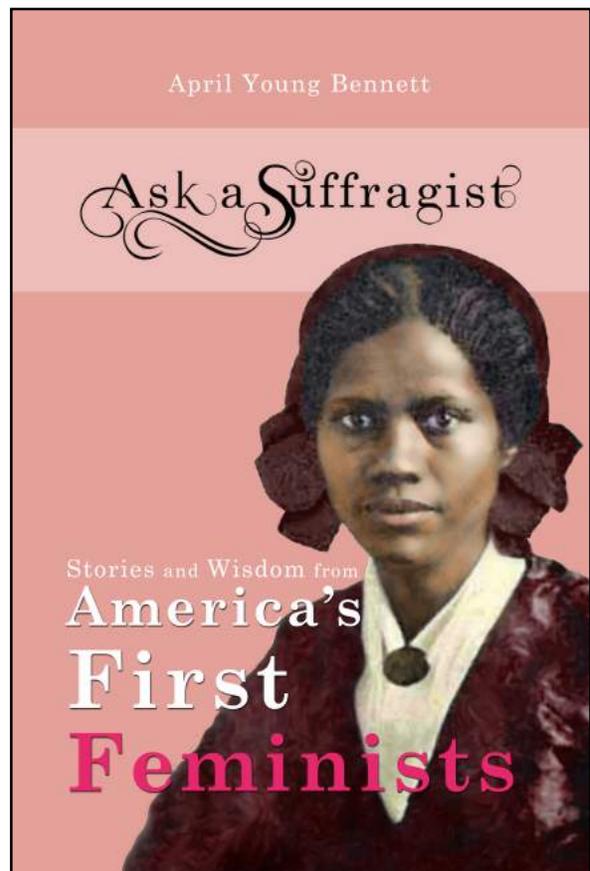
Stories and Wisdom from
America's First **Feminists**

Activist April Young Bennett looks to our foremothers for strategies to address modern challenges.

Since the Women's March on Washington, the Me Too movement and intersecting movements such as Black Lives Matter, the feminist movement has mobilized and expanded to engage everyday people—beyond the Gloria Steinems of the world. A new, more diverse generation of feminists is raising questions about how to effect change. In [Ask a Suffragist: Stories and Wisdom from America's First Feminists](#), modern-day feminist activist April Young Bennett channels the wisdom of the first generation of American feminists as exemplars and advisors to help us find solutions relevant to our modern world.

Feminists with urgent causes to support don't have time to read dull history textbooks, but ignorance about the past can lead to wasted efforts to reinvent the wheel and repeating past mistakes. [Ask a Suffragist](#) shares the radical lives and prescient wisdom of our activist foremothers in a way that is riveting and relevant for modern activists. Instead of droning on like an encyclopedia entry about dates, meeting minutes and genealogy charts, [Ask a Suffragist](#) emphasizes collaborative relationships, strategies, and activism—pressing concerns for modern activists.

[Ask a Suffragist](#) focuses on how suffragists addressed challenges that activists worry about today such as balancing activism with work and personal life, choosing their battles and getting their voices heard. Each chapter raises a question modern



activists might want to ask their forebears, answered by the words and wisdom of a variety of suffragists.

[Ask a Suffragist](#) celebrates diversity instead of neatly pointing readers into one right way of living, highlighting the stories of famous suffragists as well as rank-and-file workers. Many of the suffragists featured are of racial minority background. [Ask a Suffragist](#) acknowledges the racism that plagued the suffrage movement and discusses building a more intersectional feminist movement today.

The first book in the [Ask a Suffragist](#) series, [Stories and Wisdom from America's First Feminists](#) was released on June 4, 2019, the 100th anniversary of the day Congress approved the Nineteenth Amendment and sent it to the states for ratification, which would grant (most) American women the right to vote. By the way, this was an event most of the women and men in this book did not live to see, and none of them were around when the voting rights promised by the Nineteenth Amendment became a reality for Native American women and Southern black women decades later.

You can get more information about the Ask a Suffragist project at askasuffragist.com.

Motivational Speaking

As we celebrate the Women's Suffrage Centennial in 2019 and 2020, it is a great time to look back to what we can learn from the past as we work toward a better future.

April Young Bennett, author of [Ask a Suffragist: Stories and Wisdom from America's First Feminists](#), is a motivational speaker who can speak at your event about what modern leaders, activists and change-makers can learn from bold women from history and what she has learned about changing hearts and minds as an advocate for women, children and underserved populations. Themes include:



- **Leadership:** How do we define our priorities? How do we motivate people?
- **Collaboration:** How do we build our team? How do we find our niche?
- **Diversity:** How do we work with people who are different from us? Why do we need to?
- **Women's Empowerment:** How do we make our voices heard? How do we break the glass ceiling?
- **Teamwork:** How can we support our collaborators? How do we de-escalate conflict?
- **Resilience:** How do we cope with setbacks?
- **Self Care:** How do we balance it all?

Contact her to enquire about her availability for your event: april@apriyoungb.com or 801-253-2895.

What They Are Saying

"A highly readable and engaging work of firmly constructed history."
-Kirkus Reviews

"This is a powerful and deeply-needed resource for bringing back the wisdom of these incredible women who changed our world. Woven together here with context and courage, the lives and work of these brilliant women come shining through the well-written, entertaining and accessible prose to delight and challenge scholars and 'regular readers' alike. Highly recommended, crucial reading."
-Olivia Meikle, Producer and Host, What'sHerName Podcast

"April Young Bennett transforms the personalities and convictions of America's suffragists into modern companions for feminists today. Chronicled through deep questions and engaging narratives, the suffragists become genuine partners on the path to any reader working toward a more equitably society."
-Kate McElwee, Executive Director, the Women's Ordination Conference

"April Young Bennett is an inspiration for all feminists who are part of religious communities. Through her speaking, her writing and her communal work, she has tried to give voice to the values of both religion, faith and feminism. She has worked tirelessly, thoughtfully and respectfully to raise some of the most critical issues facing religious women today and I can think of no one more suited to write on the suffrage movement."
-Bat Sheva Marcus, Founder and Past President, the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance

"Having courageously navigated the patriarchal waters of her religious community and beyond, April Young Bennett is a seasoned and articulate voice for women's equality. Her feminist activism, like her writing, remains consistently clear, intelligent, engaging and informed. *Ask a Suffragist: Stories and Wisdom from America's First Feminists* is no exception. Written with the budding feminist in mind, the book depicts—often in their own words—the diverse relationships and strategies employed by the early advocates for women's rights in the United States. For those of us who continue their work, their stories—sometimes inspired, sometimes flawed—teach us that informed activism is essential to effective activism."
-Lorie Winder Stromberg, Co-founder, Equal in Faith; Executive Board Member, Ordain Women

"I saw your presentation at Counterpoint. How happy I was to have found it here. THANK YOU for sharing it. This was a powerhouse presentation and synopsis. Wow. Wow. Wow."
—Josi Christensen, attendee

April Young Bennett Biography

April Young Bennett began studying the lives of suffragists to inform her own activism. As Communications Director for Voices for Utah Children (utahchildren.org), she worked within nationwide networks of advocates for changes to state and federal policies affecting children and parents such as pay equity, healthcare, education and juvenile justice.

April Young Bennett was a founding organizer and spokesperson for the activist group Ordain Women (ordainwomen.org), which has been featured in respected news outlets such as the New York Times and the Washington Post. Ordain Women collaborates with the Women's Ordination Conference (Catholic), Ordain Women Now (Lutheran), Women of the Wall (Jewish), the Parliament of World Religions Women's Task Force and other networks of religious feminists.



April produces and hosts the Religious Feminism Podcast <https://www.the-exponent.com/category/podcast/>, which provides a forum for feminists across a variety of faith communities and secular feminist organizations to learn about each other and work together toward common goals. She blogs about Mormon feminism at the-exponent.com, which averages 40,000 unique visitors per month.

As April has advocated for gender equity, she has noticed parallels between her modern challenges and those experienced by our first wave feminist forebears. When she marched with hundreds of women to a male-only religious meeting, the women were barred from entrance but allowed to listen over the internet, much in the same way Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were barred from the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840 but allowed to listen from the balcony, behind a bar and a curtain. On another occasion, she was among many women of her faith who demonstrated their desire for gender equity by wearing pants to church instead of traditional dresses. At least one male church member was so peeved that he threatened to shoot any woman who showed up at church in pants. April was reminded of our suffragist foremothers, who received a similarly visceral reaction when they wore bloomers in the 1850s. She witnessed male religious leaders denouncing outspoken women using many of the same tactics employed against women such as Angelina and Sarah Grimké, Lucy Stone and Sojourner Truth.

April began to wonder if her activist community wasn't recreating the wheel with their frantic brainstorming—the world had not changed as much as they had thought, and certainly some of the feminists who came before them had already addressed some of the problems they were facing. What could she learn from our foremothers?

April wanted to read something about this era—one book, preferably, because she was busy—but broad enough to impart the wisdom of activists from a variety of racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. She didn't want it to be limited to the most famous people because in her experience, movements are built by communities of rank-and-file workers, not solitary heroes. And while history can be fascinating, April was in a hurry—she had urgent causes to support—so she wanted something that focused on what was most pertinent to her modern concerns, like collaborative relationships, strategies and activism, but that would be lighter on dates, meeting minutes and genealogy charts.

April didn't find that book. So she read everything: memoirs, biographies, history books, archived letters and diaries, even those boring meeting minutes. She asked suffragists her questions and they answered her, but they didn't all agree with each other; they were a diverse, opinionated bunch. In their lives, April saw much to emulate and some pitfalls to avoid. The people who came before us were as deeply flawed as they were passionate and inspiring.

Now, she's written the book that she wanted to read back when she started this journey: [Ask a Suffragist: Stories and Wisdom from America's First Feminists](#).

Learn more about April Young Bennett at aprilyoungb.com.

On Air Introduction

April Young Bennett began studying the lives of suffragists to inform her own activism. She has campaigned for better state and federal laws that affect children and families; addressing the wage gap, healthcare, education and juvenile justice; and for gender equity within her modern-day patriarchal religious community. As an organizer for the activist organization Ordain Women, she led hundreds of women and men in marches and demonstrations that attracted national attention.

April helps feminists of different faiths share ideas and collaborate toward common goals at the Religious Feminism Podcast. She blogs about Mormon feminism at Exponent II, an organization that began during the second wave feminist movement, that is named after a nineteenth century Mormon suffragist newspaper.

Questions for April Young Bennett

About the Author and the Book

- Why would an activist write a history book?
- How is *Ask a Suffragist* different than a traditional history textbook or biography?
- Why did you choose the suffragists you featured in the book?

About the History

- How did the American women's rights movement begin?
- What are some of the barriers suffragists had to confront?
- How did women of color contribute to the American suffrage movement?
- How did immigrants contribute to the American suffrage movement?
- How did men contribute to (or hinder) the suffrage movement?
- How was activism during the nineteenth century different from modern activism? How was it similar?

Lessons Learned for Modern Activists

- How can we make our voices heard?
- What is men's role in a feminist movement?
- Can we balance family life and activism?
- Is religion compatible with a feminist movement?
- How do we break the glass ceiling?
- Does art inspire change?
- How do we define our priorities?
- How should modern activists emulate suffragists?
- What pitfalls should they avoid?

Book

Title: Ask a Suffragist: Stories and Wisdom from America's First Feminists

Author: April Young Bennett

Hardcover (standard edition)— ISBN-13: 978-1-7338239-0-6 **Price:** \$25:99 (55% wholesale discount through Ingram) **Pages:** 192

Kindle Ebook—ISBN-13: 978-1-7338239-1-3 **Price:** \$9:99

Hardcover Large Print Edition—ISBN-13: 978-1-7338239-2-0 **Price:** \$34:99 (55% wholesale discount through Ingram) **Pages:** 562

Audiobook—Available on Audible, iTunes, Amazon: <http://bit.ly/AskaSuffragist>
Price: \$19:95

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Audience: Young Adult-Adult

Free Illustrated Companion & Social Media Shareables

Join our mailing list <https://askasuffragist.com/listserv/> and you'll receive social media shareables on suffragists' birthdays and on the anniversaries of important events in the suffrage movement. We will also send you a free e-copy of the Illustrated Companion to [Ask a Suffragist: Stories and Wisdom from America's First Feminists](#), complete with pictures of the people, places and events described in the book and discussion questions for your book club, consciousness-raising group or activist organization.

Websites

- Ask a Suffragist: askasuffragist.com
- April Young Bennett: apriyoungb.com
- Exponent II Blog: the-exponent.com/author/April
- Religious Feminism Podcast: the-exponent.com/category/podcast/

Social Networks

- Twitter: [@AprilYoungB](https://twitter.com/AprilYoungB)
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/apriyoungb/>
- Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/apriyoungb/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/apriyoungb/>

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