

A Year of Women

Lost in history: Women in Politics

Fact #1 Anna MacQuaid Mason was the first woman mayor in New York State. She was elected mayor of Sackets Harbor in 1917.

Teaching Points

1. The significance of a woman being elected mayor in the early 20th century.
2. How the mayoral victory of Anna MacQuaid Mason helped the overall women's suffrage movement.
3. Understanding how mayoral duties and responsibilities differ from early 20th century to present.

NY Learning Standard(s)

ELA 1; ELA 4; SS 5

Discussion Questions

- 1a.** Discuss the importance of a woman being elected mayor before women, nationally, had the right to vote.
- 1b.** What distinguished Anna MacQuaid Mason from others in order for the citizens of Sackets Harbor to elect her?
- 2a.** What other women were activists in this era for women's suffrage? What were some of their accomplishments?
- 2b.** What part did Mason play in the women's movement? What were some specifics she did to aid the movement?
- 3a.** Compare and contrast the duties and job responsibilities of a mayor in the early 20th century to today.
- 3b.** How did Anna MacQuaid Mason's mayoral job compare with these results? What other job titles or roles did she have? (Example: police chief)

Activity Extensions

1. **Create a Poster:** Select a woman from past or present and create a collage that portrays her life and accomplishments.
2. **Interview:** Find a woman in the community who holds an elected position. Ask the interviewee questions about their role. Find out if they feel their position holds power for women's rights activism. If so how?
3. **Mock Election:** Have a group create a job description and role for a mayor of their respective group. Allow members to campaign and allow for a mock election. Once a candidate is nominated ask them to uphold tasks, duties, and responsibilities, with feedback from the rest of the group.