

A Year of Women

Lost in history: Women in Politics

Fact #2 Eleanor Lansing Dulles was a Watertown native that served in the Department of State for over two decades. She earned a reputation as an expert in U.S.-German affairs. One of her greatest accomplishments was the organization of the ‘Berlin Desk.’

Teaching Points

1. Career barriers for early 20th century women.
2. Eleanor Lansing Dulles’ role in post WWII rehabilitation and reconstruction.
3. The organization of the ‘Berlin Desk’ and its impact on U.S. - German relations.

NY Learning Standard(s)

ELA 1; SS 1; SS 2

Discussion Questions

- 1a.** What are specific career barriers that women faced in the early 20th century? (Ex: Sex Discrimination, the Glass Ceiling, etc.) Do career barriers still exist today?
- 1b.** Why do you think Eleanor Lansing Dulles’ accomplishments were overlooked during this time frame? What do you think she might have done to overcome this?
- 2a.** What are some of the programs and reforms that were adopted post WWII?
- 2b.** How did Eleanor L. Dulles aid these new reforms?
- 3a.** What was the ‘Berlin Desk?’ How did Eleanor L. Dulles help create it? How did the ‘Berlin Desk’ affect U.S.- German relations?
- 3b.** What is the current status of U.S. - German relations?

Activity Extensions

1. **Simulation activity:** For example only blue eyed children can receive special treatment---discuss the relation to career barriers that women faced then and now.
2. **A trip to the library:** Research a career in the Department of State, determine job duties, tasks, and responsibilities. Compare and contrast Eleanor L. Dulles’ achievements with the descriptions you find.
3. **Research the Berlin Desk:** Prepare a short speech that identifies its purpose, its goals, and create a case against or for its creation. Would the ‘Berlin Desk’ be useful in today’s affairs?