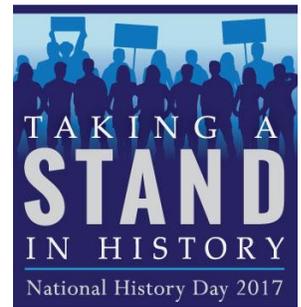
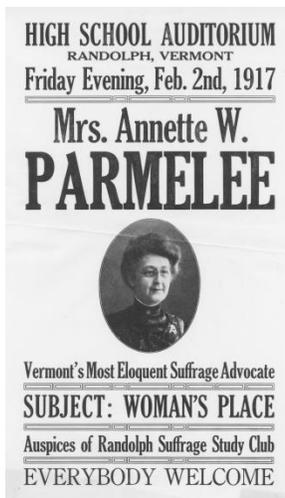


Taking a Stand in Vermont History



Selecting a topic for your Vermont History Day project is a big decision. There are an endless number of topics you could choose, although your project must show a connection to the annual theme. This year the theme is “**Taking a Stand in History.**” Taking a stand is active and requires making choices. Taking a stand involves risk or resistance. Change might be the goal of taking a stand, although taking a stand may or may not be successful. You can select a person, a group of people, or a movement who took a stand. And don’t forget that your topic must be “in history.” The topic should be from long enough ago that historians have had time to analyze the impact. Current events are too recent to know the full impact. You should also select a topic that you find interesting, since you will be spending a lot of time researching and writing about your topic.

Your project for Vermont History Day does not have to be about Vermont history, but you might want to consider a local history topic. There are archives and museums in Vermont where you can research local stories and make local connections; and there are experts who can help you. You can uncover a local story that is not widely known and have a unique topic at the state contest. And you can qualify for one of the special prizes that are awarded for Vermont history projects.



One way to find a Vermont topic is to start with a national topic and make a local connection. Maybe you are interested in how women won the right to vote in the United States. You could do a project about a figure in the national suffrage movement. Or you could pick a person who fought for women’s suffrage in Vermont. One such person is Annette Parmelee from Enosburgh Falls. She actively “took a stand” in the late 1800s and early 1900s to help women gain the right to vote. She earned the nickname “Suffragette Hornet” because she fought so hard for her cause. For your Vermont History Day project, you can use primary sources as evidence of ways she “took a stand.” This poster from 1917 calls her “Vermont’s Most Eloquent Suffrage Advocate.” You can analyze her letter from March 20, 1908 where she asks a newspaper editor if she can submit “literature covering statistics and facts favorable to the Equal Suffrage movement.” (You can find this letter in the Vermont Historical Society Library.) She didn’t just support the movement,

she wrote articles and made speeches to further the cause. You can also look for primary sources that show opposition to her. Other people made speeches and used the newspapers to disagree with her. (Chronicling America is a great resource to explore how people debated issues in newspapers.)

In addition to exploring what Annette Parmelee did and how other people responded to her, you also need to explore the **context** of your topic. The women’s suffrage movement was a statewide, nationwide, and worldwide movement. What happened before? What happened elsewhere? What happened afterwards? Events in history do not happen in isolation. You also want to look at the **significance** of your topic. What difference did Annette Parmelee’s stand make? Was she a significant person in the Vermont Equal Suffrage Association? Was the state of Vermont a leader in the suffrage movement? She doesn’t have to be a famous person to be significant in history. For Vermont History Day, YOU get to be the historian who develops a thesis, analyzes primary and secondary sources, and uses evidence to support your argument that her stand was significant.

Vermont topics for the theme: Taking a Stand in History

- Suffrage movement – Annette Parmelee, Clarina Howard Nichols, Vermont Equal Suffrage Association, Women’s Christian Temperance Union, Vermont League of Women Voters
- The environmental movement in Vermont – George Perkins Marsh, Act 250, taking a stand for or against Vermont Yankee
- *Baker vs. Vermont*, taking a stand for civil union and marriage equality
- Matthew Lyon, Representative from Vermont in the late 1700s, taking a stand against the Sedition Act
- Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys taking a stand against the Yorkers
- Abolition movement – Underground Railroad, Rowland Robison at Rokeby, Vermont Anti-Slavery Society
- Bernie Sanders, Mayor of Burlington or Representative from Vermont in the 1980s and 1990s (but not Bernie Sanders, presidential candidate in 2016, which is a current event)
- Abenaki taking a stand for state recognition – fish-ins, Abenaki Self-Help Association
- The defeat of the Green Mountain Parkway in the 1930s
- Senator Ralph Flanders taking a stand against Joseph McCarthy
- Civil War – Vermont soldiers taking a stand at Gettysburg or the Battle of Cedar Creek
- Revolutionary War – Taking a stand at the Battle of Bennington or the Battle of Hubbardton
- Reaction to the KKK in Vermont
- Reaction to the Eugenics movement in Vermont
- The Vermont in Mississippi Project, taking a stand for civil rights in the 1960s
- Taking a stand against Wal-Mart in St. Albans or the Pyramid Mall in Williston
- Protecting the Vermont brand – maple sugar, cheese, other Vermont made products
- Saving historic buildings in your community
- Protecting the environment in your community
- Alexandr Solzhenitsyn’s exile in Vermont – taking a stand against the Soviet Union
- Abby Hemenway – preserving Vermont history in the Gazetteer
- Founding of the Vermont Asylum for the Insane in the 1830s
- Labor movement – strikes at the Ely Copper Mine, Bellows Falls International Paper, granite industry in Barre and Northfield, Vermont Marble Company
- Calvin Coolidge and the Boston Police Strike
- Grey Lock taking a stand to protect Abenaki land
- *Brigham vs. State of Vermont* and the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (Act 60)
- Equal rights – Vermont Commission on Women, Vermont Human Rights Commission
- Students Against Apartheid at UVM or Middlebury College (1980s)