Iron Jawed Angels: Hollywood vs. History

"I think the riotous feast which has just passed our doors is the last effort of the institution to dislodge all os us who can be dislodged. They think there is nothing in our souls about friend chicken."

-Lucy Burns

"Food simply isn't important to me."

-Alice Paul

We women of America tell you that America is not a democracy. Twenty million women are denied the right to vote."

Fact vs Fiction

SIMILARITIES

The film *Iron Jawed Angels* is mostly accurate. The film goes in chronological order of what happened in history. The filmmakers did a great job of portraying the historic events. From the parade, to the White House Picketing, to the women's imprisonment, the historical timeline of the movie was pretty accurate with some small deviations here and there. The costumes were pretty close to being accurate. Alice Paul's and Lucy Burn's outfits were pretty identical to what the women suffragists wore back in the day. Long, draping skirts, coats, and big flamboyant hats. For example, Inez Milholland is portrayed on the white horse, looking powerful and majestic while opening the suffrage parade. The costuming is very similar to the pictures we have of her. The other women's outfits in the parade was extremely accurate as well. They asked women with a college degree to wear their gowns, and in the movie, you see women like Alice Paul wear a graduation gown.

"I don't want to do anything more. I think we have done all this for women, and we have sacrificed everything we possessed for them, and now let them fight for it now. I am not going to fight anymore."

-Lucy Burns

"If we are to be starved, I prefer to be starved at once."

-Alice Paul

"There is no use giving us special food today and not tomorrow simply to keep us alive as long

-Alice Paul

"It is better, as far as getting the vote is concerned, I believe to have a small, united group than an immense debating society"

-Alice Paul

"I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality."

-Alice Paul

Shalysse Sheppard



Background of Ladies, Hunger Strike, Themes/Frames, Ideologies/ The Movie/





The White House Picketing and the Imprisonment were also scenes in the movie that were depicted quite well. In history, the women picketed for close to a year, and the movie does a good job of letting the audience know the changing of seasons. The movie does a fine job of depicting the women picketing in silence. Although the scene when Alice Paul is outraged while in front of the White House is fictional, for the most part, the movie depicts the women as silent and peaceful which is extremely accurate to history. Alice Paul and the women suffragists silently, and peacefully picketed the White House and there was never any shouting or rioting. Another similarity during the White House Picketing scenes, is the signs. The signs are exact to what the signs donned in real life.

as possible."

-Alice Paul

"The Woman's Party is made up of women of all races, creeds and nationalities who are united on the one program of working to raise the status of women."

-Alice Paul

"When you put your hand to the plow, you can't put it down until you get to the end of the row."

-Alice Paul

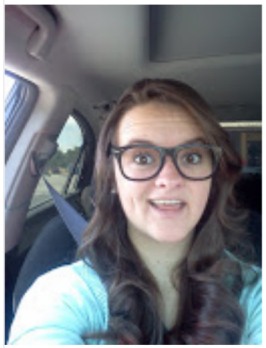
Mary Taggart



History and Background, The Men, President Wilson, Women's Suffrage Parade, White House Picketing, Differences

Conclusion

Jill Hodson



The Movie, 19th Amendment, The Imprisonment, Sources

The imprisonment was shown very accurate as well. The conditions in which the women were living in were almost exact to the quotes Alice Paul stated about the prison. There were times in prison (the majority of the time) when Alice and Lucy were extremely ill, and this is true. Alice and Lucy stated after their release, just how sick they were while staying in the jail. The details like the beds and worms in the food were exactly what Alice described. Even though it doesn't exactly say just how many times Alice Paul was force fed, it eludes to her being force fed over and over. The movie did a fantastic job at depicting the women in prison.

A small yet significant similarity is during the scene when Congress is voting for women's suffrage. During that time, congressmen in favor of women's suffrage would wear a yellow rose on their jackets while congressmen against women's suffrage would wear a red rose. In the scene when Harry Burn was voting for or against the 19th Amendment, he finally sways in favor of women's suffrage and votes "yes" to the amendment. After he did so, a congressman handed him a yellow rose to put on his jacket.

The film depicts these women as strong women who fought for a cause. That is exactly who these women were. They were women who wanted their rights. The real women of the women's suffrage were a little radical, and the movie depicts this well. The filmmakers even go far enough to show the viewers, Alice Paul being force fed. It is gruesome, but this was something that really happened. The movie does a wonderful job at depicting these women. You can feel Alice Paul and Lucy Burn's vigor and passion for the cause, it is practically radiating through the television. From the reading and research conducted, these women were portrayed frighteningly well. We feel that the film is depicted pretty accurately. It is a good representation of the women suffrage movement.

DIFFERENCES

HUNGER STIKE

Amy Nelson



New York Times Coverage, Conclusion, Editing, Similarities/Differences, Blog



The hunger strike was probably the most significant and jaw-dropping scenes in Iron Jawed Angels. Yet affecting, and poignant, the movie did not frame the reason the women (most importantly, Alice Paul) were on the hunger strike in the first place. The movie depicts Alice Paul and the other women going on a hunger strike because they were mad about their imprisonment in general and they weren't going to yield until their point was reached towards the government. But in reality, Alice Paul went on the hunger strike because she was dissatisfied with the way she and her fellow inmates were being treated. Alice discovered the suffragists were being treated more poorly than the 17 murderers who were in the prison. She discovered they were eating more poorly, given less air and exercise, and were provided sheets and blankets that have never been washed. Alice demanded she and her fellow suffragists would be treated in better conditions and she took her stance by a hunger strike.

http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F50E16F8395B11738DDDAE0894D9415B878DF1D3

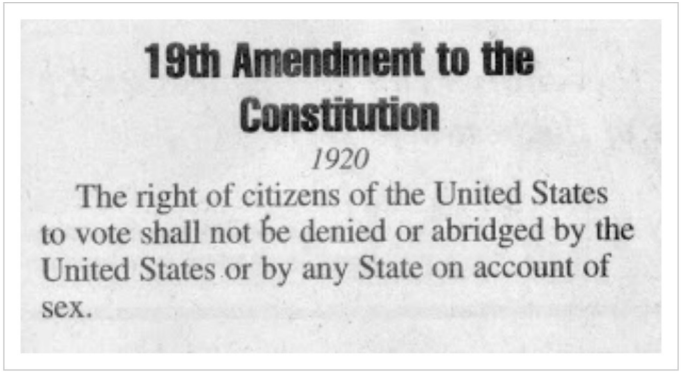
MEN'S INVOLVEMENT



In the movie, it depicted men as strictly the enemy. There were no positive characters seen in the movie that were in support of women's rights, until the very end when Woodrow Wilson talks to congress about passing the 19th Amendment, and when Harry Burn decided to vote in favor of the 19th amendment. In reality, this is completely false. There were thousands of men in favor of women's suffrage throughout history. Many political figures were involved in the progress of women's equity. Even in the Women's Suffrage Parade, there was a section dedicated completely to the men who wanted to march a long with the women. Even further, in that point in history, men were the only figures in congress, so there were men who had to vote for the amendment to pass in the first place. Men had a significant role in women's suffrage.

http://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/rightsforwomen/menforsuffrage.html

19th AMENDMENT



The movie makes it seem as if the 19th Amendment was passed almost directly after Alice and the women suffragists were released from jail. This is simply not true. It took a year after the women were released for the amendment to actually pass. Although a small difference, it is still not historically accurate to the actual women suffragist timeline.

http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=63

NO FICTIONAL CHARACTERS



Along with a lot of other historic movies, there were fictional characters added to Iron Jawed Angels. These characters were added as representations of larger groups of people. For example Emily Leighton was a representation for all mothers who were involved in the suffragist movement. Along with Emily Leighton, Senator Leighton was a representation of how most senators felt about women's suffrage at this time. Ben Weissman was also a fictional character added to the movie. He was Alice Paul's love interest and as far as history facts go, there is no evidence that Alice Paul ever had a romantic interest during the time of the Women's Suffrage Parade, or when she was held in prison.

ALICE PAUL DID NOT ORGANIZE PARADE



The movie depicts Alice Paul completely organizing the Women's Suffrage Parade in Washington D.C., but this is not true. Alice hired a couple of women to organize the parade. The woman who was the leader of the parade, and the main organizer of the event was Mrs. Richard Coke Burelson. Even though Alice was involved in the creation of the parade, she wasn't the sole woman who did all of the work for it. Alice did however; raise the funds for the parade.

http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2001704301/

ROMANCE



In the film Iron Jawed Angels, a troubled love story is told between Alice Paul and Ben Weissman. Ben Weissman, working as a political cartoonist for the Washington Post, was placed in the film for the romantic element. This romance, nor any romance, ever took place during Alice Paul's life. Alice Paul never married. She committed herself to her work and her cause. She lived with her sister Helen in 1941 then moved in with her closest friend, Elsie Hill, who was also an activist. She then lived alone in nursing facilities until she suffered from a stroke in 1974, then in 1977 died of heart failure at 92 years old.

www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/paul/ali.htm

THE JAILS

In the movie, the women are shown as being in one jail all together. In reality, Alice Paul went to Washington Jail, while Lucy Burns and other women went to the Occoquan Workhouse. Alice Paul started the hunger strike in the Washington Jail and as word leaked out about it's happenings, the women at Occoquan began the hunger strike as well. The film never differentiates the fact that Alice Paul and Lucy Burns are in different jails, it just gives us the idea they were all in the same jail.

THE SPLIT

There were two prominent woman's suffrage groups during the suffrage campaign. The

National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and the National Woman's Party (NWP). In the beginning of the film it is depicted that Alice and Lucy are apart of the NAWSA. This is factually correct. However, the film never makes mention that Alice and Lucy started the NWP. The film implies that they are going head to head with Carrie Chapman Catt and the NAWSA. As a viewer of the film I assume that Alice and Lucy are still apart of the NAWSA, but they are taking a smaller group of women and taking a more radical approach to woman's suffrage. In reality, the women start a whole different group. This is happening in the film, but it wasn't clear. In the article *Suffragists Storm Over Washington D.C. in 1917,* it clearly states the split. "In March 1917, Alice Paul's organization joined an allied western group to form the National Woman's Party, and Paul, overwhelmingly elected chairwoman, became nationally prominent."

"Suffragists Storm Over Washington D.C. in 1917." *Http://www.historynet.com/nineteenth-amendment*. History.net, n.d. Web.