



A Lady Has the Floor: Belva Lockwood Speaks Out for Women's Rights

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Unafraid to take to the floor and speak her mind, lawyer, activist, and presidential candidate Belva Lockwood devoted her life to overcoming obstacles and demanding equality for women.

Activist Belva Lockwood never stopped asking herself the question Are women not worth the same as men? She had big dreams and didn't let anyone stand in her way--not her father, her law school, or even the U.S. Supreme Court. She fought for equality for women in the classroom, in the courtroom, and in politics. In her quest for fairness and parity, Lockwood ran for President of the United States, becoming the first woman on the ballot. In this riveting nonfiction picture book biography, award-winning author Kate Hannigan and celebrated artist Alison Jay illuminate the life of Lockwood, a woman who was never afraid to take the floor and speak her mind.

A Lady Has the Floor: Belva Lockwood Speaks Out for Women's Rights Details

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From Reader Review A Lady Has the Floor: Belva Lockwood Speaks Out for Women's Rights for online ebook

Rebecca Gierman says

Why have I never heard of Belva Lockwood? I assure you my daughter will know who she is.

Buff says

I really enjoyed this children's picture book biography. I had never heard of Belva Lockwood before. She made huge advancements in Women's and minority rights. One of the first women in America to earn a law degree in 1873. First woman attorney to argue a case before the Supreme Court. 1884 first woman to launch a viable presidential campaign and appear on ballots for president. Represented the Eastern Cherokee Nation in relation to money owed by US gov related to The Trail of Tears.

Richie Partington says

Richie's Picks: A LADY HAS THE FLOOR: BELVA LOCKWOOD SPEAKS OUT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS by Kate Hannigan and Alison Jay, ill., Boyds Mills/Calkins Creek, January 2018, 32p., ISBN: 978-1-62979-453-2

“This is my fight song
Take back my life song
Prove I’m alright song
My power’s turned on
Starting right now I’ll be strong
I’ll play my fight song
And I don’t really care if nobody else believes
‘Cause I’ve still got a lot of fight left in me”
--Rachel Platten (2015)

“An attorney now, Belva helped poor widows, Civil War veterans, and freed slaves fight for what they deserved. But certain high courts refused to let women lawyers argue.

Bang, bang! sounded the gavel.

SIT DOWN! shouted the judge.

Belva protested to the U.S. Supreme Court, the highest court in the land. The justices there told her what she’d already heard before: No women allowed!

Belva refused to be silenced.

Belva battled for a women’s right to practice in any court. ‘Nothing was too daring for me to attempt.’ Over five years she drafted new rules, lobbied congressmen to her side, and argued for equality.

In 1879, Belva won! Standing tall before the marble columns and the nine black-robed justices, Belva filled the chamber of the Supreme Court—for the first time in America’s history—with a woman’s voice.”

Today was International Women's Day. To commemorate the event, The New York Times published a piece entitled "Women We Overlooked in 167 Years of Obituary Writing." The Times included fifteen women in the article, all fine choices including Ida Mae Wells, Charlotte Brontë, Ada Lovelace, and Emily Warren Roebling.

The Times could well have also included Belva Lockwood. I know that from reading the illuminating picture book, *A LADY HAS THE FLOOR* by Kate Hannigan and Alison Jay.

Alison Jay's illustrations, with their crackle-varnish finish, have such a distinctive style that, from a mile away, you can tell that a picture book is her work. I'm very fond of her style, and was drawn to this book in the Women's History display of my local independent bookstore. Reading it, I was excited to discover one more great woman hero in our national history.

Starting on a farm in upstate New York, Belva Lockwood's journey involved a lot of men telling her no. Women are better off today thanks to Belva Lockwood refusing to be deterred. Ms. Lockwood spoke out for equal pay as a teenage teacher who was paid half the wages of her male counterparts. She later fought to get into college and then fought for equal opportunities for the few women there. (You'll be astounded by the jaw-dropping details.) She then fought to get into law school and fought for equal opportunities for women there, too.

Are you starting to get the picture? This lady really stood up for herself and was one helluva fighter for women's rights.

Many of Alison Jay's wonderful illustrations include quotes from Belva Lockwood. The source of each quote is listed in the extensive backmatter.

You'll enjoy meeting Belva Lockwood. Perhaps The Times will include her in next year's commemoration.

Richie Partington, MLIS
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Jenny says

I'd never heard of Belva Lockwood before but she was fascinating to read about. She believed women had the same worth as men. She challenged inequality in education and she became one of the first female lawyers. She worked to represent the poor, freed slaves, Civil War veterans and others in court. But the Supreme Court would not allow female lawyers argue in the Supreme Court. She worked tirelessly until, in 1879, she was allowed to speak in front of the Supreme Court justices. Belva continued to fight for women's rights, even running for president. She died in 1917, 3 years before the 19th Amendment was ratified.

Barbara says

What an amazing woman Belva Lockwood was! It is cool that young readers can now draw inspiration from her story since this picture book biography is pitched to them. The first woman to have her name on a presidential ballot, Belva grew up as independent and questioning why girls and women were not treated equally. Throughout her life, she continued to ask that question. Not only was she paid half what the other male teachers were paid in her first job, but she later challenged the teaching practice of not allowing girls to give speeches or take physical education. She fought hard for change, even attending college and law school, and once her law degree was granted, she worked on behalf of others, eventually arguing for the rights of women to practice law in front of the Supreme Court. She didn't live to see women gain suffrage through the Nineteenth Amendment, but it is clear that she helped pave the way for that to happen. Her story should send every woman of voting age scurrying to the voting booth on election day. An Author's Note, Timeline, Bibliography, and Source Notes provide additional information, including the fact that she was married and a widow at a young age, something that isn't mentioned in the story. One is tempted to ponder how this need to make a living for her family had something to do with her life decisions and involvement in politics and changing the world. I loved the story and was intrigued by the unique illustrations, created with Alkyd paint and crackle varnish. This book would be an excellent addition to a collection devoted to feminists, individuals who made a difference, and groundbreaking figures in history.

Lesley Burnap says

How have I not heard of Belva Lockwood? This text highlights Lockwood's life events from childhood to her passing. Education was important to Belva as she became a teacher, attended university to become a lawyer, and then, ran for president in 1884 & 1888. All this well before equal rights and votes for women. This should be required reading for all children.

Illustrations remind me of oil paintings from the 19th century with their crackles across each image. Characters are stylized by rounded bodies, thin limbs and small facial features, typical (I believe) of the paintings from Lockwood's era. Cursive-style quotes may be difficult for children to read.

Author's note in back matter gives further detail into Lockwood's life. Also included are a detailed timeline (extended beyond her life to include events important to women's history), bibliography, and source notes.

Elizabeth? says

This book taught me so much about women's place in American history. Lockwood is one name I have never heard, but she certainly advocated not just for women, but freed slaves and Native Americans and other marginalized groups in society. There is a great reference list in the back also.

The reason we picked it is up is because my oldest daughter noted the illustrator, Alison Jay. We love the pictures that accompany this one.

Baby Bookworm says

This review was originally written for The Baby Bookworm. Visit us for new picture books reviews daily!

Hello, friends! Our book today is *A Lady Has The Floor: Belva Lockwood Speaks Out For Women's Rights*, written by Kate Hannigan and illustrated by Alison Jay, a fabulous biography of one of America's first great feminists.

Since she was a little girl in the late 1800's, Belva Lockwood outright refused to be treated any differently than a boy. When she became a schoolteacher at the age of 14 and found out that she was paid half of what male teachers made, her resolve was solidified. She decided to pursue a degree in education when it was rare for women to do so, and then went back to get her law degree when women were outright banned from studying law at all! During the way, Belva fought prejudice, harassment, and mockery, not only for herself but for all women and girls. When she became a lawyer, she dedicated herself to taking cases that no one else wanted: women, former slaves, Native Americans. She fought hard and long, eventually becoming the first woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court, and the first women to run for President.

This book was AWESOME! Belva is an inspiring figure in her own right, and this biography does her story great justice for little readers. Along with a good overview of Belva – who she was, what she believed, and her many accomplishments – the story also integrates her powerful quotes in both the text and the illustrations. The art is meant to emulate oil paintings of the era, and do a fantastic job of bringing Belva and the time she lived in to life. The length is better for slightly older bookworms, though JJ sat through it quite comfortably. This one is an absolute winner, and a great choice to show little ones that they should never let the world they live in dictate the person that they have the will to become. Baby Bookworm approved!

(Note: A copy of this book was provided to The Baby Bookworm by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.)

Be sure to check out The Baby Bookworm for more reviews!

Jason says

Why don't we know just as much about Belva Lockwood as we do about Susan B. Anthony? She accomplished so much in the face of so much resistance, it's kinda ridiculous. Also, she went to seminary right around the corner from here in Lima! We walked down the same hallways! Who knew?

Jana says

This picture book biography tells the story of a woman determined to fight for fairness and equality for women in schools, courtrooms, and at the ballot box. Belva Lockwood, born in 1830, believed women should be treated the same as men. She fought for the right to attend college and law school. As an attorney, she fought for the right to present arguments before the Supreme Court. With the help of other pioneering women, she fought for the right to vote. Well researched and beautifully illustrated, this book is a great nonfiction resource for the bookshelf.

Tasha says

The incredible and impressive life of Belva Lockwood is depicted in this nonfiction picture book. Belva grew up playing outside with the boys and soon became a teacher in her community. Though women did not attend college, Belva did and graduated with honors in 1857. She taught school, but didn't like that the girls in the class were not called on or asked to recite in front of the class. She worked with Susan B. Anthony to demand that New York public schools teach public speaking to all students and that girls be able to have physical education as well. Belva went to law school in a time when women were not allowed to be lawyers. She was at first denied her diploma, though she finished her courses. Even after becoming an attorney, some judges refused to hear her in their courtrooms. In 1879, Belva convinced law makers for women's rights to be attorneys and got the laws changed. Belva fought for women's rights to vote as well, becoming the first woman to run for president in 1884.

Belva Lockwood is a woman that we should all know better than we do. This biography of her is filled with impressive moments, ones that set her apart from even the other women working on the same issues. Belva is incredibly tenacious and resilient, never giving up and managing to get change to happen after years of work. She is a great model for today's women's rights movements. The illustrations by Jay have her signature folk style with cracked paint that perfectly evoke the time period and invite readers into the past.

A biography of an inspiring figure in American her-story. Appropriate for ages 6-9.

Patricia Gmitrovic says

Be bold!

Cathy Outten says

The artwork is very engaging, I love the crackle, it gives a time-period feel to the book, and for some reason I find the shapes of the animals and people very satisfying. It is a story I haven't heard before, and while her story is very positive and empowering, I couldn't help but feel disgust that 150 years later we are fighting many of the same fights.

Diane says

“I was not to be squelched so easily.”

The inspirational story of Belva Lockwood: from her tomboy beginnings on the farm, to her time teaching in a one room school house. From her quest for equal education for girls to being admitted to law school. From demanding her diploma from Ulysses S. Grant to practicing law to aid Civil War widows and veterans, former slaves and Native Americans. Finally turning to Women's suffrage and becoming the first woman on the ballot for US President. “Fight, fight, fight everlastingly - not with your claws and fists, but with your wits.”

Includes an Author's note, timeline and good-sized bibliography for additional reading on this fascinating woman.

QNPoohBear says

Belva Lockwood was so cool! This little book packs a big punch. It tells the story of Belva Lockwood, a girl who dared to challenge the gender norms of the early 19th-century. She was physically free, intelligent and unafraid of a challenge. Belva Lockwood changed education for girls, became a lawyer (she had to lobby the President for her diploma), argued before the Supreme Court, fought for women's rights including suffrage and ran for President of the United States! Sadly, Belva Lockwood died just a few years before the 19th Amendment was passed. Wow! I can't believe I had never heard of this woman! I looked at the bibliography at the end and still have never read any of those books listed and I basically majored in 19th-century women's history at the graduate level!

The prose is easy to read for an independent reader or an adult reading to a child. It's a bit long for a younger child. I liked how the author put Belva's life into context, explaining what girls could and couldn't do. The illustrator chose to include quotes from Belva or about Belva written in script writing. An older child could read this to a younger sibling or cousin. I liked the author's note, timeline and bibliography so I can learn more about this amazing woman! The illustrations are a little too cutesy. They're designed to look like folk art paintings of the 19th-century- complete with crackle finish. I'm not sure why the illustrator chose this style. I like what's happening in the illustrations but not so much the style. I don't know if the style of illustrations appeals to young readers but I hope the story does because Belva Lockwood deserves to be known!
