

Prudence Crandall as a Test Case in Connecticut (1833)

“The only title in our democracy superior to that of President (is) the title of citizen.”

Louis Brandeis (1937)

DOCUMENT: A Statement of Facts, Respecting The school for Colored Females, in Canterbury. Ct. Together With a Report of the Late Trial of Miss Prudence Crandall, Brooklyn, CT: 1833. Advertiser Press.

CT STANDARD: Students will gain an understanding of the relationship between the individual and the groups and institutions which exist in society and culture.

FOCUS: Throughout history ordinary people exhibit extraordinary courage when faced with injustice.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. Can one person make a difference?
2. Can one person's actions effect societal change?
3. What triggers a shift in perception?
4. Are some ideas greater than ourselves?
5. Can laws codify morality?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING: Does democracy allow for the individual to question the will of the majority?

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

1. Create a timeline of the events which led to the arrest and trial of Prudence Crandall.
2. Interpret “An Act for the admission and settlement of Inhabitants of Towns” Approved 24 May 1833.
3. Apply the method of case briefing to Prudence Crandall case.

PROCEDURE:

1. SOAPSTONE the “Statement of facts doctrine”
2. Review any pertinent vocabulary.
3. Have students in groups of four create a timeline or list of the events which led to Prudence Crandall's arrest.
4. Examine the rapid intervention of the general assembly.
5. Read and interpret each of the four (4) sections of the statute.

6. Discuss legislative intent in light of the swift enactment of the criminal statute.
7. Brief Prudence Crandall's case either individually or in pairs.
8. Discuss ideas generated by the completion of each step.

ASSESSMENT: Students will reflect upon the essential questions. Students will write an essay considering these questions. The student is encouraged to highlight Prudence Crandall's decisions, assess current events, or to view personal experiences in the mirror of history.

ATTACHED:

1. SOAPSTONE FORMAT
2. CASE BRIEF FORMAT
3. "A Statement of Facts" Primary Source Document

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