

# SOJOURNER TRUTH PROJECT — AKRON

## WHO WAS SOJOURNER TRUTH AND WHY IS SHE IMPORTANT TO AKRON?

Sojourner Truth was born into slavery in the late 1790s in rural New York State. In 1826 she ran away from her family and that existence. By 1843 she had transformed herself into Sojourner Truth, traveling America as an itinerant preacher, advocating abolitionism, women's rights, woman suffrage, temperance, and denouncing slavery.

She spoke here in Akron on May 28 and 29 in 1851 at the Second Ohio Women's Rights Convention. She was not invited but attended anyway. She was not asked to speak but rose to advocate for all women's rights, including women of color. As the location of Sojourner Truth's historic "Ain't I a Woman" speech, which , Akron played an extraordinary role in the fight for voting rights for all women.

The Sojourner Truth statue will stand as a reminder of the work that is still necessary to ensure all women are included in the fight for equality.

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In 2020, community leaders in Summit County came together to establish the Summit Suffrage Centennial Committee to recognize the importance of the Suffrage Centennial in Summit County. From this committee, the Sojourner Truth Project—Akron was born. The project is a renewed effort to establish a Sojourner Truth statue **and plaza** in Akron, the site of Truth's famous *Ain't I a Woman?* Speech.

The committee is raising funds and working with local artist, Woodrow Nash to create a statue of Sojourner Truth. The United Way parking lot on North High Street will be reborn as Truth Plaza. The statue will serve as an ongoing opportunity to educate the public on the progress made over the last 100 years, and will honor the fight for voting rights for all women – especially many women of color who were excluded from voting until the 1960s.

Educational materials about Sojourner Truth in Akron are now available at <https://www.summitsuffragecentennial.com/resources> for use by students, teachers and community members. These include curated classroom resources and several educational videos, which are also available via YouTube.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS: <https://www.summitsuffragecentennial.com/resources>

TWITTER/INSTAGRAM: @SojournerAkron

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/Sojournertruthprojectakron>

YOUTUBE: <https://www.youtube.com/@sojournertruthprojectakron4050>

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## ONLINE CLASSROOM RESOURCES RECOMMENDED BY AKRON SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

### Ohio History Central

[https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Sojourner\\_Truth](https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Sojourner_Truth)

A short biography of Sojourner Truth, who gave her famous “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech in Akron, Ohio.

### Sojourner Truth – Know Ohio

<https://westernreserve.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/sojourner-truth-know-ohio-video/wviz-newsdepth-know-ohio/>

This video from WVIZ/PBS Ideastream briefly discusses the dual issues of women’s rights and racial equality at the time of Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech, which she gave at the 1851 Ohio Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio. A transcript of the video is available. Grades 3-8.

### American Battlefield Trust

[www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/narrative-sojourner-truth](http://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/narrative-sojourner-truth)

This Web site provides a transcription of the 1878 book *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*. A link to the digitized book from the Library of Congress (also on this list) can be accessed here [www.loc.gov/resource/lhbum.25244/?sp=1](http://www.loc.gov/resource/lhbum.25244/?sp=1)

### Human Rights First

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJucKgFosu4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uJucKgFosu4)

A performance of Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech by actress Alfre Woodard is included in a blog post celebrating Truth’s life and anti-slavery activism.

### Narrative of Sojourner Truth (Library of Congress)

[www.loc.gov/resource/lhbum.25244/?sp=1](http://www.loc.gov/resource/lhbum.25244/?sp=1)

The digitized 1878 book on the life of Sojourner Truth through her own recollections.

### National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/sojourner-truth.htm>

The Women’s Rights National Historical Park article about Sojourner Truth’s famous 1851 speech in Akron, Ohio.

### National Women’s History Museum

The NWHM displays the life of Sojourner Truth as a digital exhibit and offers a section with lesson plans focused on the work of Truth and others in the Women’s Suffrage Movement.

### Sojourner Truth Online Exhibit

[www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/sojourner-truth?gclid=Cj0KCCQiAyJOBbHdCARIsAJG2h5ftAtgSjvrIYVmYukGJdNe5mYe6k980NalShclnhE53cJjx5KfWCBYaAhY4EALw\\_wcB](http://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/sojourner-truth?gclid=Cj0KCCQiAyJOBbHdCARIsAJG2h5ftAtgSjvrIYVmYukGJdNe5mYe6k980NalShclnhE53cJjx5KfWCBYaAhY4EALw_wcB)

### Sojourner Truth Biography and Re-

sources [www.womenshistory.org/resources/lesson-plan/seneca-falls-and-suffrage](http://www.womenshistory.org/resources/lesson-plan/seneca-falls-and-suffrage)

### New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

<https://parks.ny.gov/history/women/default.aspx>

New York, the state of Sojourner Truth’s birth, provides videos on the 2020 installation of a bronze statue to honor Truth at Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park.

### Sojourner Truth Memorial Committee

<https://sojournertruthmemorial.org/sojourner-truth/her-history//>

The Sojourner Truth Memorial Committee of Florence, Massachusetts, the one-time residence of Sojourner Truth, provides biographical information of the abolitionist’s life in that community. The Web site includes excerpts from speeches and links to additional Sojourner Truth resources.

### The Sojourner Truth Project

[www.thesojournertruthproject.com/](http://www.thesojournertruthproject.com/)

This project looks at the controversy over the two transcriptions of Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech, provides the opportunity to compare the speeches and includes readings by women in contemporary Afro-Dutch dialects, representing Truth’s now lost specific dialect.

“There is a River.” *This Far by Faith*. PBS

[www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/sojourner\\_truth.html](http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/sojourner_truth.html)

Episode 1 of the *This Far by Faith* series about the African-American religious experience includes the key moments of Sojourner Truth’s faith during her life as an enslaved woman and activist. Only the transcript of the episode is available from the Web site at [www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/about/episode\\_1.html](http://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/about/episode_1.html).

