

Teaching with *Mrs. Lamar Looney* by Mike Wimmer



This document is designed to help teachers present, discuss, and teach about Oklahoma history and art literacy through the use of this work of art. The information and exercises here will aid in understanding and learning from this artwork.

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First Analysis and Criticism

The steps below may be used for group discussion or individual written work.

Before beginning the steps, take two minutes to study the artwork. Look at all the details and subject matter. After studying the artwork in silence, follow these steps:

Describe:

Be specific and descriptive. List only the facts about the objects in the painting or sculpture.

- What things are in the artwork?
- What is happening?
- List what you see (people, animals, clothing, environment, objects, etc.).

Analyze:

- How are the elements of art – line, shape, form, texture, space, and value used?
- How are the principles of design – unity, pattern, rhythm, variety, balance, emphasis, and proportion used?

Interpretation:

Make initial, reasonable inferences.

- What do you think is happening in the artwork?
- Who is doing what?
- What do you think the artist is trying to say to the viewer?

Evaluate:

Express your opinion.

- What do you think about the artwork?
- Is it important?
- How does it help you understand the past?
- Do you like it? Why or why not?

Overview of the Artwork

Oklahoma's first female Senator was born Mirabeau Lamar Cole on January 16, 1871 in Alabama. She was named after Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of the sovereign Republic of Texas. As a child, she could be found reading her father's law books. In 1891, she married "Doc" Tourney Looney in Texas. Shortly thereafter, the young couple crossed into the future Greer/Harmon County area in the southwestern part of Oklahoma Territory.

Mrs. Looney soon became a widow and was left with five children under the age of ten to raise alone. To put food on the table, she taught music for a year in her home. She recognized the opportunities of becoming a landowner and filed a claim on a quarter section of land one mile from Hollis. She traded her organ for a team of mules and set about building a sod house. Driving the mule team 13 miles to the Red River, she cut the posts that would fence her land. With only the help of her ten-year old son, she planted her first crop of 20 acres. After receiving the land patent for the farm in 1906, Mrs. Looney moved her family to Hollis so the children could attend better schools.

In 1912, Mrs. Looney was elected registrar of deeds for Harmon County and was later elected twice to serve as county treasurer. In 1916, she was elected to the position of Harmon County Clerk.

A group of friends persuaded Mrs. Looney to enter the Oklahoma Senate race in 1920. Maintaining that she was a staunch Democrat, but not a politician, she campaigned only in Greer County where her expenditures totaled \$149.80. She carried her own county 3-to-1 and carried her incumbent opponent's county by a 2-to-1 vote.

On January 4, 1921, Mrs. Looney took her seat in the Oklahoma State Senate wearing a "smart brown suit and a brown hat, draped with a bit of lace veil." The new senator had a "chain-lightning mind" and was idealistically practical. She served as chairman of the State and County Affairs Committee, the Prohibition Enforcement Committee and the Agriculture Committee. She would maintain the distinction of being the only woman to serve in the Oklahoma Senate until 1975.

Mrs. Lamar Looney was elected to public office before women had a right to vote in Oklahoma. It was not until 1920 that an amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave all women of the United States voting privileges. Comments from men in her door-to-door campaign were "Mrs. Looney, I know you are a capable lady, but I believe a woman's place is in the home." Her response was, "Eating what?"

At age 52, Mrs. Looney was admitted to the bar on December 10, 1923. Her application was made by motion directly to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. In 1926, after serving three terms in the State Senate, Mrs. Looney considered running for Lieutenant Governor. She abandoned the race knowing that the courts would sustain the

Oklahoma constitutional requirement that a man hold the office. Since federal office had no such requirement, she announced her candidacy for the U.S. Senate. She lost her bid for a spot on the U.S. Senate ticket, but won her fourth and final term in the Oklahoma Senate in 1927.

Mrs. Looney pushed for legislation that would allow women to serve in all state offices, although this constitutional amendment was not adopted during her lifetime. She was also actively involved in the campaign giving women the right to vote.

Mirabeau Lamar Cole Looney passed away September 3, 1935. The flag flew at half-staff over the State Capitol Building in her honor, where her casket was placed in state in the Capitol rotunda.

About the Artist

Mike Wimmer Born and raised in Muskogee, Oklahoma, Mike Wimmer began his career as an artist during the seventh grade. He earned his B.F.A. from the University of Oklahoma, where he met Don Ivan Punctatz. Wimmer later moved to Arlington, Texas to be Punctatz's apprentice at Punctatz's famous Sketch Pad Studio. Wimmer learned valuable knowledge regarding the business aspect of illustrating as well as various painting techniques and the working methods of the local Dallas illustrators.

After his two and a half year apprenticeship, he moved back to Norman, Oklahoma and set up his own studio using all that he had learned in Texas. Since then Wimmer has become very successful illustrating children's books such as "Flight: The Journey of Charles Lindbergh" by Robert Burliegh which was the winner of the Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children in 1990. He also illustrated "All the Places to Love" by Patricia MacLachlan which was published in 1994 and won the Oklahoma Book Award for Best Illustrated Children's Book 1995. Wimmer's latest book, "Will Rogers" by Former Governor Frank Keating, was published in 2002 and has won the 2003 Spur Award from the Western Writers Association of America. Even though Wimmer has worked for some of the largest corporations in the world including Disney and Procter and Gamble, Wimmer finds the greatest artistic pleasure within his creation of fine art.

Details



- Mrs. Lamar Looney was a pioneer for women's rights in Oklahoma. These interesting facts about her memorable:
 - Her youngest child was only a few months old when her husband died and she had four other children. However, in order to provide for her family in her husband's absence, Mrs. Looney:
 - Taught music lessons in her home
 - Claimed her own land, fenced it, built a sod house, and farmed the land with the help of her children
 - Opened an insurance company and real estate office in Hollis, OK
 - Mrs. Looney held several public offices, including:
 - Community Postmaster
 - Harmon County Registrar of Deeds
 - County Treasurer
 - County Clerk
 - Oklahoma State Senator
 - Due to the strong example she set for Oklahoma women, when women were granted the right to vote in 1920, Mrs. Looney got so many votes that she beat the male incumbent, G. L. Wilson, for State Senator.

Details



- Mrs. Looney served as State Senator from 1920 to 1928. No other woman was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate until 1975.
- While she held office as a State Senator, Mrs. Looney authored 28 bills during her first term alone. She was also the chairman of several committees, including:
 - State and County Affairs Committee
 - Prohibition Enforcement Committee
 - Agriculture Committee
- Some of the issues Mrs. Looney believed most in were:
 - Taking care of elderly
 - Taking care of children
 - The right to vote for all citizens
 - Further Resources

Further Resources

The Kennedy Center's ARTSEEDGE resources offer a helpful unit on gender issues here:

Tolerance: Gender Issues

Breaking Professional Barriers

http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-6-8/Tolerance_Gender_Issues.aspx

The **Feminist Art Project** offers a comprehensive reading list about feminism and the advances of women here:

<http://feministartproject.rutgers.edu/resources/book-lists/>

Final Analysis

After completing the readings and activities, go back and look at the artwork again. Now that the students are more familiar with the subject matter, ask them to write a few paragraphs about their interpretation of the artwork. In their own words, the writing should address the following:

- Description of the artwork and who/what is in it
- How the elements of art and principles of design are used within the artwork
- What feelings, emotions, or information the artwork depicts
- Their opinion of the artwork

Pass Objectives

Grade 4- Social Studies

Standard 5. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the unique features which contributed to the settlement of the state of Oklahoma.

1. Identify major historical individuals, entrepreneurs, and groups, and describe their major contributions (e.g., Sequoyah, the Boomers and the Sooners, and Frank Phillips).
4. Identify state and local governing bodies (e.g., the state legislature and city councils) and officials (e.g., governor and mayors) that make laws and carry out laws, with an emphasis on civic participation (e.g., the importance of studying the issues and voting).

Grade 4- The Arts

Standard 2: Visual Art History and Culture - The student will recognize the development of visual art from an historical and cultural perspective.

1. Describe and place a variety of specific significant art objects by artist, style and historical and cultural context.
2. Identify themes and purposes of works of art and artifacts in history and culture.
3. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of several fields of art such as painting, sculpture, drawing, computer graphics, printmaking, architecture, and fiber arts.
4. Identify how visual art is used in today's world including the popular media of advertising, television, and film.

High School- Oklahoma History

Standard 1. The student will demonstrate process skills in social studies.

1. Identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary sources (e.g., artifacts, diaries, letters, art, music, literature, photographs, documents, newspapers, and contemporary media).

Standard 8. The student will examine factors that contributed to the political, economic, and social history of Oklahoma during the twentieth century.

1. Identify significant individuals and their contributions (e.g., Jerome Tiger, Frank Phillips, Kate Barnard, Angie Debo, Ada Lois Sipuel, Clara Luper, George Lynn Cross, Ralph Ellison, Robert S. Kerr, Henry Bellmon, and Reba McEntire).

High School- The Arts

Standard 1: Language of Visual Art - The student will identify visual art terms (e.g., content, engraving, foreshortening, mosaic, perspective)

3. Describe exhibitions of original works of art seen in the school or community.
4. Differentiate between art criticism and art reviews, recognizing that criticism is positive as well as negative in its evaluation of a work of art.

Standard 2: Visual Art History and Culture - The student will recognize the development of visual art from an historical and cultural perspective.

5. PROFICIENT: Identify major regional, national, and international collections of art.

Standard 4: Visual Art Appreciation - The student will appreciate visual art as a vehicle of human expression.

2. Demonstrate respect for their work and the work of others.