

## MY TALK AT THE SENECA FALLS MARCH TODAY

JANUARY 21, 2017

WELCOME TO MAKING HISTORY!! This moment is unprecedented. Women and our male allies are gathered today in all 50 states and 32 countries around the world. In addition to the cities that have organized, people are spontaneously gathering in villages and towns, coming together in what may go down in history as the largest international grass-roots movement the world has ever seen. A mere 200 busloads of people came into DC yesterday for Trump's inauguration. 1200 busloads of people came into DC today for the women's march.

For some of you this is your first march. Welcome. It took courage to come. You did it because you understand that there can be no bystanders in this moment in history. Either we will shape our future or we will be shaped by it.

**Oh, rebellious woman, Matilda Joslyn Gage wrote 150 years ago, "to you the world looks in hope. Upon you has fallen the glorious task of bringing liberty**

**to the earth and all the inhabitants thereof.” She would rejoice in our gathering today.**

The fox are now in charge of the chicken coop. But we have come too far on the road to freedom to turn back.

We have been about the business of creating liberty and justice for all in this country since a handful of rich, white Founding Fathers learned democracy from the Haudenosaunee but applied it only to themselves. Millions of people just like us here today have slowly pushed open the door of freedom bringing in more and more of us. The suffragists, who, like the Founding Fathers, were students of their Haudenosaunee neighbors and saw what women’s rights looked like in action.

Peace activists like Belva Lockwood who grew up in this land of the Haudenosaunee, who formed a peace confederacy long before Columbus.

Lockwood ran for president in 1884 on an Equal Rights Party ticket proclaiming that war is a barbarism of the past. Abolitionists like Frederick Douglass, who supported women’s rights along with his own, knowing that all freedoms hang together.

Don't kid ourselves. We are in for some tough times. The fox are poised to clean out the chicken coop, eating up all our hard-won freedoms. But we can be sure of one thing. As Matilda Joslyn Gage said in her first women's rights speech in 1852, **Fear not any attempt to frown down the revolution already commenced; nothing is a more fertile aid of reform, than an attempt to check it.** Each attempt to chip away at our rights will rouse another sleeping giant and tens of thousands will resist. We are the majority. We will not let the minority take away our rights.

Two things we gotta remember about our revolution. One is that we're gonna get our asses kicked. The other is that we're gonna win.

And we are gonna win big. As far as they push us back, we'll come hurling forward as we push back against them and we'll find ourselves further ahead at the end of four years – maybe only two - than we are now. Then the friends of freedom will be stronger than we've ever been, and we will show the world that this is what democracy looks like. The people's needs will be in control of the government, not

the gluttony of the 1% .

We have a unique legacy in this part of New York. This is where all the radical reform movements sprang up 150 years ago. Abolition, women's rights, temperance, alternative healing and healthy food. And it wasn't by chance. Our radical ancestors learned what a sustainable world of peace and justice looked like from their Haudenosaunee neighbors, and they emulated it.

And just as our forefathers learned democracy from their Haudenosaunee teachers, and our suffragist foremothers learned women's rights from seeing it in action, so can we learn how to create a world in harmony and balance, a world of equality and justice, from those same teachers who have a track record.

The stakes are higher than they have ever been. We face the very real possibility that life on this planet will cease to exist. It is estimated that as many as half of all the forms of life on the planet will disappear by mid-century. This last year was

again the hottest year in recorded history. We must act fast and decisively to stop the climate catastrophe that is rapidly descending on us.

We have teachers among us here today who learned centuries ago how to live with all of nature as a relative, to be treated respectfully and helpfully. And to revere the mother of us all, the earth on which we live. Despite our dramatic attempts to destroy them, these Haudenosaunee teachers amazingly reach out to us in friendship still today, as they did to our foremothers and fathers. We must learn to be their students to survive.

We have been given the terrifying and transformational challenge of turning the country back on the path toward freedom. It will not be easy. We need to reach into the depths of ourselves and pull out our greatest courage. We cannot back down, no matter how hot it gets. We need to remember two things: one is that we are gonna get our asses kicked. And the other is that we are gonna win.