

# The Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States

An Online Professional Development Seminar

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**AMERICA *in* CLASS<sup>®</sup>**

*from the* National Humanities Center

# The Woman Suffrage Movement

## GOALS

- To demonstrate that the franchise was not just *given* to women when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. Rather, it required the work of generations of suffragists who labored long and hard to *win* it
- To provide fresh instructional material and approaches for use with students

## FROM THE FORUM

### Challenges, Issues, Questions

- Why were women denied the right to vote?
- What initially prompted women to seek the vote?
- How active were married women in the woman suffrage movement?
- How did the struggle to win the vote for women relate to the same struggle on behalf of African Americans?

## FROM THE FORUM

### Challenges, Issues, Questions

- Was the woman suffrage movement mainly a rural or an urban phenomenon in its origin?
- Was the movement largely the work of affluent women? Were working class women much involved?
- What role did gender stereotypes play in the movement?
- What arguments did women make in favor of suffrage?
- How did men respond to the woman suffrage movement? Did they dismiss it as a bunch of “garden parties”? Were they hostile to it? Did many men support it?



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*Women's Rights, Family Values,  
and the Polarization  
of American Politics  
(in progress)*

*New Women of the New South:  
The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage  
Movement in the Southern States  
(1993)*

# The Woman Suffrage Movement

## What We Will Discuss Today

- Why a suffrage movement was necessary
- How the movement began
- How it changed over time in response to changes in American politics and society
- Suffrage leaders –their supportive relationships and tensions among them
- The diversity of the movement in terms of region, race, class, ethnicity, attitude
- Betrayal of suffrage ideals
- Why some American men and women opposed woman suffrage
- How suffragists overcame obstacles to win the vote

# The Woman Suffrage Movement

## In the Beginning . . .

### *Femme Covert or Coverture*

The legal doctrine under which a husband and wife were considered one person, and that person was the husband.

According to this doctrine, a married woman could not own property, sign legal documents or enter into a contract, obtain an education against her husband's wishes, or keep a salary for herself.

Since at the time the United States became a nation, there were property requirements for voting, this left women out. Like other “dependent” persons, women were not assumed to have separate interests of their own that needed to be represented in politics.

# The Indirect Influence Argument

**MARCH 31, 1776**

**ABIGAIL ADAMS TO JOHN ADAMS**

"I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors.

"Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands.

"Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.

"That your sex are naturally tyrannical is a truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute; but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up -- the harsh tide of master for the more tender and endearing one of friend.

"Why, then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity?

"Men of sense in all ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the (servants) of your sex; regard us then as being placed by Providence under your protection, and in imitation of the Supreme Being make use of that power only for our happiness."



# The Indirect Influence Argument

APRIL 14, 1776

## JOHN ADAMS TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

"As to your extraordinary code of laws, I cannot but laugh.

"We have been told that our struggle has loosened the bonds of government everywhere; that children and apprentices were disobedient; that schools and colleges were grown turbulent; that Indians slighted their guardians, and negroes grew insolent to their masters.

"But your letter was the first intimation that another tribe, more numerous and powerful than all the rest, were grown discontented.

"This is rather too coarse a compliment, but you are so saucy, I won't blot it out.

"Depend upon it, we know better than to repeal our masculine systems. Although they are in full force, you know they are little more than theory. We dare not exert our power in its full latitude. We are obliged to go fair and softly, and, in practice, you know we are the subjects.

"We have only the name of masters, and rather than give up this, which would completely subject us to the despotism of the petticoat, I hope General Washington and all our brave heroes would fight."

### Discussion Questions

- Is Abigail Adams asking for women to have the vote? If not, what is her concern? What is she asking for?
- How would you characterize the tone of John Adams's response to his wife?
- What is his reply to her request to "remember the ladies?"

# The Second Great Awakening Leads to Reform Movements

Second Great Awakening: a Christian revival movement that swept through the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century

- Characterized by dynamism and energy, religious revivals and conversions. Also by belief in the sinfulness of humans but also in people's ability to turn away from sin
- Emphasized reform of society and stimulated many social reform movements including temperance and abolition.
- Many women were inspired to become reformers, but were ridiculed for speaking out in public, and then started working for women's rights along with promoting temperance or opposing slavery.
- Some male reformers tried to discourage this, which made the women even more convinced that a woman's rights movement was needed.



## Theodore Weld to the Grimké Sisters August 15, 1837

[T]here is no reason why *woman* should not make laws, administer justice, sit in the chair of state, plead at the bar or in the pulpit, if she has the qualifications, just as much as tho she belonged to the other sex. . . . I do most deeply regret that you have begun a series of articles in the Papers on the rights of woman. . . . [Y]ou are *Southerners*, have been slaveholders . . . You can do more at convincing the north than twenty *northern* females, tho' they could speak as well as you. Now this peculiar advantage you *lose* the moment you take *another* subject. You come down from your vantage ground. . . . Let us all *first* wake up the nation to lift millions of slaves of both sexes from the dust, and turn them into MEN and then when we all have our hand in, it will be an easy matter to take millions of females from their knees and set them on their feet, or in other words transform them from *babies* into *women*.

## Angelina Grimké to Theodore Weld August 20, 1837

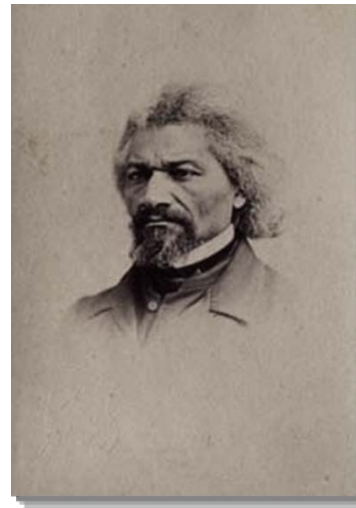
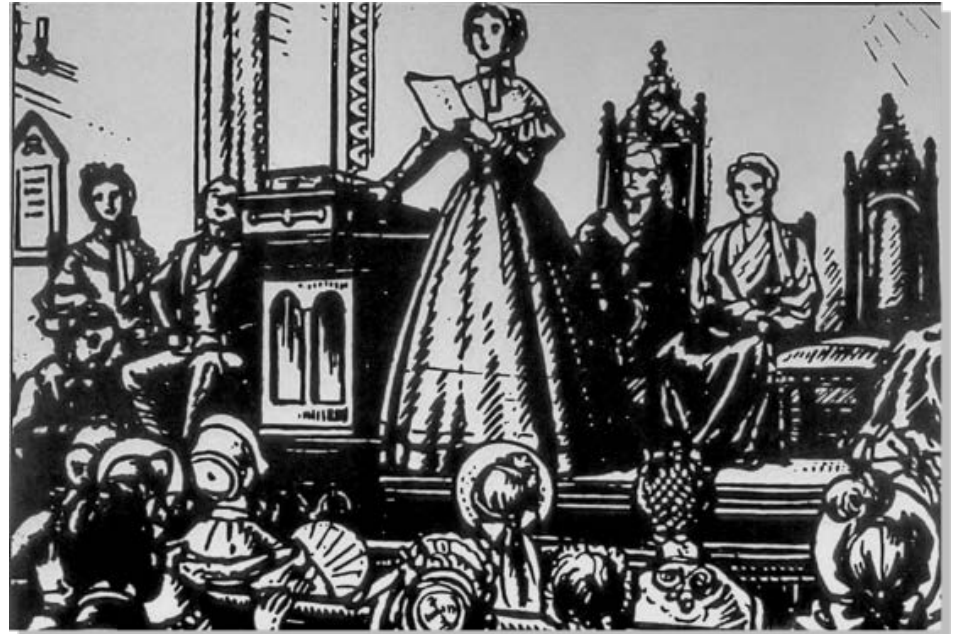
[W]e are gravely told that we are out of our sphere even when we circulate petitions; out of our “appropriate sphere” when we speak to women only; and out of them when we *sing* in the churches. Silence is *our* province . . . [W]e cannot push Abolitionism forward with all our might *until* we take up the stumbling block out of the road . . . How can we expect to be able to hold meetings much longer when people are so diligently taught to *despise us* for thus stepping out of the ‘sphere of woman!’ . . . I fully believe that so far from keeping different moral reformations entirely distinct that no such attempt can ever be successful . . . They blend with each other like the colors of the rain bow

### Discussion Questions

- Why does Weld want the Grimké sisters (Sarah and Angelina) to abandon their writing on women’s rights?
- What argument does Angelina Grimké make in response?

# Seneca Falls Convention

- Held in Seneca Falls, New York, July 19-20, 1848
- Organized by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- Raised a variety of women's issues
- Heated debate over whether the Declaration should include the right to vote
- Frederick Douglass & Elizabeth Cady Stanton argued in favor of woman suffrage



# The Seneca Falls “Declaration of Sentiments”

“We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.... The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world..... because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.. In entering upon the great work before us. we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the State and National legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and the press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions embracing every part of the country.”

**Resolved,** That it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise.”



## Discussion Questions

- What other important document in US history is the Seneca Falls Declaration modeled after? How is the rhetoric of the American Revolution reflected in it and why?
- What did the signers plan to do next?



# Susan B. Anthony

- Born February 15, 1820 in Adams, Massachusetts
- She began her career teaching at a school in Rochester, New York and campaigned for equal pay for teachers.
- In 1852 Anthony joined with Elizabeth Cady Stanton in campaigning for woman suffrage. She was also involved in the temperance and anti-slavery movements and helped escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad.
- During the Civil War she was one of the founders of the Women's Loyal League that pushed for a 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to abolish slavery.
- From 1868 to 1870 Anthony and Stanton she published a woman's rights newspaper, *The Revolution* 1868 - 1870
- In 1869 she and Stanton founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).
- She was arrested for voting in the 1872 presidential election
- She became the best known leader suffrage leader and campaigned for it until her death in 1906.



# Suffrage Movement Divides in 1869: Competing National Organizations Established

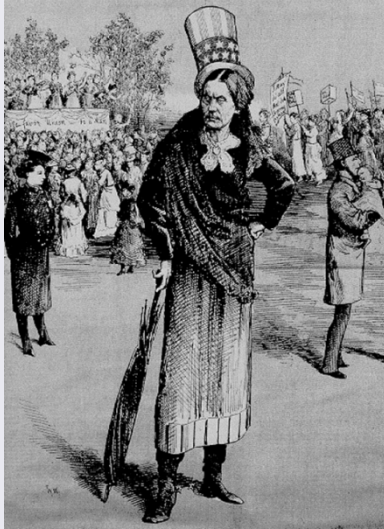
## National Woman Suffrage Association NWSA

- Based in New York City
- Headed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony
- Opposed the 15th Amendment, which prevents the US from denying a citizen the right to vote on the basis of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude,” because it left women out
- Demanded that women be given the vote right away, by federal action
- Called for a 16th Amendment to enfranchise women
- Adopted a militant tone “demanding” their rights
- In the 1870s began a “New Departure” claiming that as citizens they had the right to vote and tested this claim in the courts.

## American Woman Suffrage Association AWSA

- Based in Boston
- Led by Lucy Stone, her husband Henry Blackwell, Julia Ward Howe, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Henry Ward Beecher
- Supported the 15th Amendment
- Believing a federal woman suffrage amendment not yet possible, worked for state suffrage amendments and any other form of woman suffrage that could be attained
- Persuasive in tone, sought to build grassroots support
- From 1870 through 1920 they promoted women’s right through their newspaper, the *Woman’s Journal*.

# Susan B. Anthony at Her Trial, 1873



## Excerpt Susan B. Anthony's Speech

"Fellow people in this here world: I stand before you tonight under indictment for the alleged crime of having voted at the last presidential election, without having a lawful right to vote. It shall be my work this evening to prove to you that me thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's rights, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any state to deny....

It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people - women as well as men. And it is a downright bad to talk to women of their enjoyment of the blessings of liberty while they are denied the use of the only means of securing them provided by this democratic-republican government - the ballot."

### Discussion Question

- Why was Anthony being tried? What was her defense?



# Minor v. Happersett, 1875

Virginia Minor, woman suffrage leader in Missouri, v. Reese Happersett, registrar who refused to register Minor as a voter

## The Court considers the question:

The question is presented in this case, whether, since the adoption of the fourteenth amendment, a woman, who is a citizen of the United States and of the State of Missouri, is a voter in that State, notwithstanding the provision of the constitution and laws of the State, which confine the right of suffrage to men alone.

The [plaintiff's] argument is, that as a woman, born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, is a citizen of the United States and of the State in which she resides, she has the right of suffrage as one of the privileges and immunities of her citizenship, which the State cannot by its laws or constitution abridge.

It is clear, therefore, we think, that the Constitution has not added the right of suffrage to the privileges and immunities of citizenship as they existed at the time it was adopted. This makes it proper to inquire **whether suffrage was coextensive with the citizenship of the States at the time of its adoption.** If it was, then it may with force be argued that suffrage was one of the rights which belonged to citizenship, and in the enjoyment of which every citizen must be protected. [88 U.S. 162, 172] But if it was not, the contrary may with propriety be assumed.

# Minor v. Happersett, 1875

## The Court decides the question:

In this condition of the law in respect to suffrage in the several States it cannot for a moment be doubted that **if it had been intended to make all citizens of the United States voters, the framers of the Constitution would not have left it to implication. So important a change in the condition of citizenship as it actually existed, if intended, would have been expressly declared.**

Certainly, if the courts can consider any question settled, this is one. For nearly ninety years the people have acted upon the idea that **the Constitution, when it conferred citizenship, did not necessarily confer the right of suffrage.**

Being unanimously of the opinion that the Constitution of the United States does not confer the right of suffrage upon any one, and that the constitutions and laws of the several States which commit that important trust to men alone are not necessarily void, we  
AFFIRM THE JUDGMENT.

## Discussion Question

- What implications did this ruling have for the future of the woman suffrage movement?

- 56 Campaigns of referenda to male voters
- 480 campaigns to urge legislatures to submit suffrage amendments to voters
- 47 campaigns to induce state constitutional conventions to write woman suffrage into state constitutions
- 277 campaigns to persuade state party conventions to include woman suffrage planks
- 30 campaigns to urge presidential party conventions to adopt woman suffrage planks in party platforms
- 19 campaigns with 19 successive Congresses

## Passed Woman Suffrage while Territories

Wyoming 1869  
(Statehood, 1890)

Utah 1870  
(Statehood, 1896)



“The Awakening,” Hy Mayer, 1915

## Discussion Question

➤ Why did the West lead the way?

## Passed Woman Suffrage as States

Colorado 1893

Idaho 1896

Washington 1910

California 1911

Oregon 1912

Kansas 1912

Arizona 1912

# Victories in the West

- ✓ To attract attention—marketing
- ✓ To attract women from the East who could not find husbands because of the dearth of men caused by the Civil War
- ✓ Women would “civilize” the West
- ✓ In Utah, to demonstrate that, despite polygamy, Mormon women were treated well and to outvote non-Mormons

## Discussion Questions

- What practical advantages for their states and territories did western political leaders see in woman suffrage?
- What lesson did national suffrage strategists take away from this about the need for “expediency arguments” in addition to arguments based on natural rights and justice?

# A New Ally, The Woman's Christian Temperance Union

Frances Willard, President of the WCTU, 1879-1898, From “Home Protection,” speech delivered at a July Fourth celebration in Connecticut, 1879.

*The WCTU formally endorsed woman suffrage in 1880.*

“But women should content themselves with educating public sentiment,” says one [opponent of women temperance activists promoting suffrage]. Nay, we can shorten the process; for we have the sentiment all educated and stored away, ready for use in brain and heart. Only give us the opportunity to turn it to account where in the least time it can achieve the most! **Let the great guns of influence, now pointing into vacancy, be swung to the level of benignant use and pointed on election day straight into the faces of the foe!** “No, but she should train her son to vote aright,” suggests another. But if she could go along with him and thus make one vote two, should we then have a superfluous majority in a struggle intense as this one is to be? . . .



## Discussion Questions

What argument is Willard making—and rejecting? What does she mean when she says “the great guns of influence are “pointing into vacancy?” Why was the WCTU endorsement so valuable? Why did it also produce a new and powerful enemy for the cause? What do you think SHE thought about the ‘indirect influence’ idea?

# 1890: NWSA + AWSA = NAWSA (The National)

## National American Woman Suffrage Association

In 1890 the AWSA and the NWSA put aside their differences and merged their organizations into one powerful national association led by Susan B. Anthony. They agreed that the ultimate goal of the NAWSA, better known simply as the National, was a federal suffrage amendment but that they must first build support state by state. They adopted a new strategy that would in three decades result in a victory for their movement:

**Enfranchise enough women through state suffrage amendments that Congress would have to approve a federal amendment and three-fourths of the states would be sure to ratify.**

NAWSA leaders including Anthony also concluded that the movement must focus almost exclusively on winning the vote, shed its radical image, and avoid association with radical causes in the future. The movement retained its goal of a federal amendment but took a more conservative approach toward achieving it. Anthony's view was that women could do little to help others or improve the world until they could help themselves by gaining "direct influence" through the vote.



### Discussion Questions

- After restoring unity to the movement, how did they combine their approaches to create a new strategy that would, in time, bring victory?
- Why is it that no amendment that is perceived as "radical" can succeed and be added to the US Constitution?



# NAWSA tries to “Bring in the South” using an “expediency argument” based on racism

In the 1890s white southern politicians sought to restore white supremacy in politics. Southern suffragists, with the backing of NAWSA leaders, suggested that southern states adopt woman suffrage with restrictions (literacy or property) that would exclude most black women. They warned that denying black men their right to vote was a violation of the Fifteenth Amendment and that federal government might not tolerate it. However, southern politicians were strongly opposed to women voting and chose to take the chance.

Between 1890 and 1903 nearly all southern states adopted voting requirements including poll taxes and “understanding clauses” that virtually disfranchised blacks, a practice that Congress finally brought to an end through the Civil Rights Act of 1965.

“Today one-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race.... In some Southern States the Negroes far outnumber the whites, and are so numerous in all of them as to constitute what is called a "problem...." The enfranchisement of women would insure immediate and durable white supremacy, honestly attained; for, upon unquestionable authority, it is stated that "in every Southern State but one, there are more educated women than all the illiterate voters, white and black, native and foreign, combined." As you probably know, of all the women in the South who can read and write, ten out of every eleven are white. When it comes to the proportion of property between the races, that of the white outweighs that of the black immeasurably. The South is slow to grasp the great fact that the enfranchisement of women would settle the race question in politics...” -- Belle Kearney, Mississippi suffrage leader, speech to the NAWSA Convention, New Orleans, 1903

## Discussion Questions

- Why was it important for the NAWSA to “bring in the South?”
- Why did national suffrage leaders, some of them former abolitionists, use or permit southern women like Kearney make arguments like this?
- How did this strategy reflect the lessons about practical politics suffragists had taken away from the successful suffrage campaigns in the West?



# Woman Suffrage, not Universal Suffrage

## Connection with anti-immigrant fervor

DO YOU KNOW that extending the suffrage to women increases the number of native-born voters; that for every one hundred foreign white women immigrants coming to this country there are 129 men, while among Asiatic immigrants the men outnumber the women two to one, according to the figures of the census of 1910?—Carrie Chapman Catt

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I am a free-born American woman....I deny that my brother American can properly represent me. How can I, with the blood of heroes in my heart, and with the free and independent spirit they bequeathed me, quietly submit to representation by the alien and the negro?”  
—Ella C. Chamberlain, founder of the Florida Woman Suffrage Association

### Discussion Question

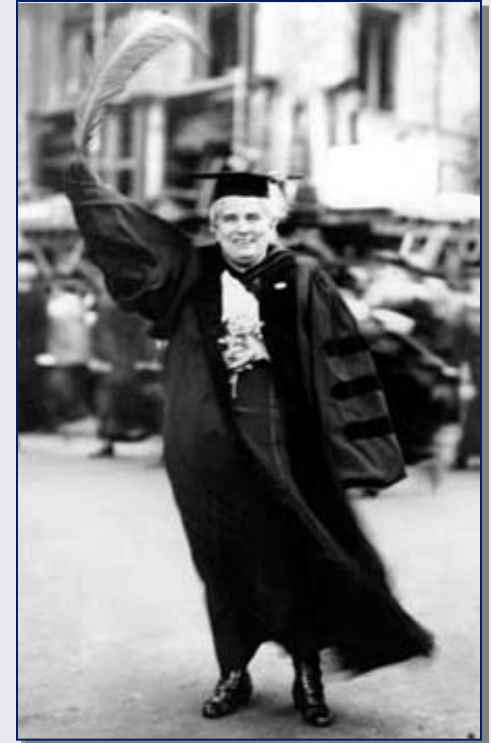
How did the Woman Suffrage Movement reflect the turn in American public opinion following the massive increase in immigration, much of it from parts of the world with languages, religions, and cultures very different from that of the majority of native-born Americans?

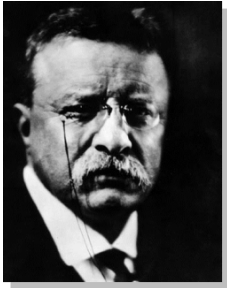
# A Suffrage Renaissance: 1896-1910

## Reaching Out to New Constituencies

Under the leadership of Anthony's successor, Cary Chapman Catt, and her successor Dr. Anna Howard Shaw (right), NAWSA Promoted an image of the movement as respectable and mainstream and attracted many new supporters.

- Recruited socially prominent, influential women, many of whom helped fund the suffrage campaign. This helped shed image of "radicalism."
- Involved a new generation of women, many of them college-educated, who brought fresh ideas and tactics including parades and public speeches
- Appealed to women workers with the argument that they could gain new protections
- Expanded educational efforts, distributed literature to schools, sponsored debates and essay contests designed to create more support for the cause
- Reached out to growing numbers of women active in women's clubs including those promoting the goals of the new Progressive Movement





## The Progressive Movement

- Reform movement beginning circa 1900 with support from both the Republican and Democratic Parties
- Sought to rid government of corruption and improve society
- Valued professional expertise, science, and efficiency
- Promoted pure food and drug legislation, regulation of business, protection of workers including banning child labor, Americanization of immigrants, and adoption of woman suffrage
- Gave suffragists a new, more positive, and very effective argument for woman suffrage as politically expedient. If women had more than “indirect influence” their support for Progressive reform was carry more weight.



# Women in the Home

The place of the Woman is in the Home. But merely to stay in the Home is not enough. She must care for the health and welfare, moral as well as physical, of her family.

**SHE** is responsible for the cleanliness of the house.

**SHE** is responsible for the wholesomeness of the food.

**SHE** is responsible for the children's health.

**SHE** is responsible above all for their morals.

How far can the mother control these things?

She can clean her own rooms and care for her own plumbing and refuse, **BUT** if the building is unsanitary, the streets filthy, and the garbage allowed to accumulate, she cannot protect her children from the sickness that will result.

She can cook her food well, **BUT** if dealers are permitted to sell adulterated food, unclean milk, or short weight or measure, she cannot provide either wholesome or sufficient feeding for her family.

She can open her windows to give her children air, **BUT** if the air is laden with infection, she cannot protect her children from disease.

She can send her children out for exercise, **BUT** if the conditions on the streets are immoral and degrading, she cannot shield them from these dangers.

It is the government of the town or city that controls these things and the officials are controlled by the men who elect them.

Women do not elect these officials, yet we hold the women responsible for the results of—

**Unclean Houses, Defective Sewerage, Unwholesome Food, Fire Risks, Danger of Infection, Immoral Influence on the Streets.** If women are responsible for the results, let them have something to say as to what the conditions shall be. There is one simple way to do this. **GIVE THEM THE VOTE.**

Women are by nature and training housekeepers. Let them help in the city housekeeping. They will introduce an occasional spring cleaning.

## VOTES FOR WOMEN

Equal Suffrage Association of North Carolina



### Discussion Questions

- How did suffragists make use of current ideas about woman's "place" to argue for the vote?
- How do their arguments reflect Progressive ideas about woman's nature and role and about what government should do?

# Woman Suffrage and the Progressive Movement



## African American Women and the Suffrage Movement

- Despite the racism of some white suffragists, many African American women actively supported woman suffrage during this period, using both “justice” and “expediency” arguments:
- Adella Hunt Logan (left) a Tuskegee University faculty member, and Mary Church Terrell (right), a prominent clubwoman, said that if white women needed the vote to protect their families, black women needed it even more.
- Ida Wells-Barnett (center) was a leading crusader against lynching and for woman suffrage, wanting the power of black women’s votes to be used for social justice.
- W.E.B. DuBois, Editor of the NAACP newspaper, *The Crisis*, also supported woman suffrage and hoped black women could help overturn Jim Crow laws and other racist legislation.

# President Wilson, 1916

Address at the Suffrage Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey  
September 8, 1916

I have come to suggest, among other things, that when the forces of nature are steadily working and the tide is rising to meet the moon, you need not be afraid that it will not come to its flood. We feel the tide; we rejoice in the strength of it; and we shall not quarrel in the long run as to the method of it. Because, when you are working with masses of men and organized bodies of opinion, you have got to carry the organized body along. The whole art and practice of government consists not in moving individuals, but in moving masses. It is all very well to run ahead and beckon, but, after all, you have got to wait for the body to follow. I have not come to ask you to be patient, because you have been, but I have come to congratulate you that there was a force behind you that will beyond any peradventure be triumphant, and for which you can afford a little while to wait.

## Discussion Questions

What is President Wilson telling suffragists in this speech? What does he mean when he says, “we rejoice in the strength of it; and we shall not quarrel in the long run as to the method of it.”



# Alice Paul, the National Woman's Party, and Suffrage Militance

## Alice Paul

- Born in 1885 in New Jersey, a Quaker
- Educated at Swarthmore, the University of PA, and American University LL.B & LL.M
- Traveled to England in 1907 where she sees suffrage militancy, demonstrations, arrests, hunger strikes, etc.
- Returned to US in 1910 and chairs NAWSA's Congressional Committee; urges complete focus on federal amendment. Plans massive suffrage parade during Wilson's inauguration. Marchers attacked by onlookers and many injured, creating sympathy for the cause.
- Split with non-partisan NAWSA over Paul's plan to oppose all Democrats, the party in power, and committed to "states' rights" opposed the federal amendment for woman suffrage.
- Formed National Woman's Party in 1916 and urges all women to oppose Wilson's re-election. Urged a return to the militant spirit of the 1870s.
- During WWI NWP pickets White House, burns Wilson's speeches. Paul is arrested, goes on hunger strike and is forcibly fed.
- Ill treatment of suffragists in jail creates public sympathy support for the federal amendment.



## Carrie Chapman Catt

- Born in Iowa
- President of NAWSA 1900-1904
- Returned to presidency in 1915, replacing Dr. Anna Howard Shaw who had focused only on suffrage campaigns in the states
- Introduced her top secret “Winning Plan” for a coordinated national suffrage campaign and gain enough states that Congress would have to approve the Federal Amendment
- The goal of the Winning Plan is to focus NAWSA resources on “winnable” states and avoid campaigns where they would lose. In effect “writes off the South” until the ratification stage.
- Opposed Paul’s militant tactics as radical and hurting the suffrage cause; seeks to reason with Wilson and other politicians.
- Despite her own pacifist beliefs she urges suffragists to support the war; angry when Paul and the NWP picket the White House during wartime, angering President Wilson and the nation.





# Militant Suffragists Seek to “Embarrass the President” Demand Endorsement of the Federal Amendment



Protest organized by Alice Paul, 1916

## Discussion Questions

- What did the NWP Accuse President Wilson of doing?
- How did their strategy differ from that of Carrie Chapman Catt and the NAWSA?

# From President Woodrow Wilson's Address to the Senate on the 19th Amendment, September 30, 1918

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE: The unusual circumstances of a world war in which we stand ... will, I hope, justify in your thought, as it does in mine, the message I have come to bring to you. I regard the concurrence of the Senate in the constitutional amendment proposing the extension of the suffrage to women as vitally essential to the successful prosecution of the great war of humanity in which we are engaged. ...It is my duty to win the war and to ask you to remove every obstacle that stands in the way of winning it.

...

We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right? This war could not have been fought, either by the other nations engaged or by America, if it had not been for the services of the women, -- services rendered in every sphere, -- not merely in the fields of effort in which we have been accustomed to see them work, but wherever men have worked and upon the very skirts and edges of the battle itself. We shall not only be distrusted but shall deserve to be distrusted if we do not enfranchise ...

...

Have I said that the passage of this amendment is a vitally necessary war measure, and do you need further proof? Do you stand in need of the trust of other peoples and of the trust of our own women? Is that trust an asset or is it not? I tell you plainly, as the commander-in-chief of our armies and of the gallant men in our fleets, as the present spokesman of the people in our dealings with the men and women throughout the world who are now our partners...that this measure which I urge upon you is vital to the winning of the war and to the energies alike of preparation and of battle.

## Discussion Questions

- How does this speech compare with Wilson's 1916 speech to the suffrage convention?
- What reason does Wilson give for at last supporting the federal amendment?

# The Battle for Ratification: Suffragists Confront a Serious Problem, Southern Opposition to “Another” Federal Suffrage Amendment

## BEWARE!

**MEN OF THE SOUTH:** Heed not the song of the suffrage siren! Seal your ears against her vocal wiles. For, no matter how sweetly she may proclaim the advantages of female franchise,—  
**REMEMBER,** that *Woman Suffrage* means a reopening of the entire *Negro Suffrage* question; loss of State rights; and another period of reconstruction horrors, which will introduce a set of female carpetbaggers as bad as their male prototypes of the sixties.

**DO NOT JEOPARDIZE** the present prosperity of your sovereign States, which was so dearly bought by the blood of your fathers and the tears of your mothers, by again raising an issue which has already been adjusted at so great a cost.

**NOTHING** can be gained by woman suffrage and much may be lost

MS. AC. 74-99

(Extracts from *The Messenger*)

## THE NEGRO AND THE NEW SOCIAL ORDER

A Reconstruction Program, Prepared by Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph (negroes),  
Editors of *The Messenger*, March 10th, 1919  
THE MESSENGER PUBLISHING CO.  
2305 SEVENTH AVENUE NEW YORK CITY

### POLITICAL PROGRAM

Page 6—Political action must go hand in hand with industrial action. A class of people without the vote or the privilege of determining the kind of government under which they live, has neither security of life nor property from which liberty proceeds.

In view of the foregoing **WE DEMAND** the rigid enforcement of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, which were primarily framed to give protection to negroes.

**WE DEMAND** the reduction of representation in the South upon the basis of actual voting population. The negro is not allowed to vote, which is in criminal violation of the Federal Constitution.

We condemn all property and educational tests for suffrage.

the fact that no genuine brotherhood can exist so long as the issue of social equality is not squarely met.

**SOCIAL EQUALITY** has grown out of the two cardinal and corollary principles of *identity of treatment and free interchangeability*.

### INTERMARRIAGE

We now approach the American bugaboo—the question upon which the negroes and whites alike set up false theories in flagrant violation of the most fundamental principles of social evolution. *We refer to intermarriage between the whites and negroes.* **WE FAVOR THE INTERMARRIAGE** between any sane, grown persons who desire to marry—whatever their race or color. **WE FAVOR THE INTERMARRIAGE OF WHITE MEN WITH COLORED WOMEN AS WELL AS COLORED MEN WITH WHITE WOMEN,** because there is no natural or

## THAT DEADLY PARALLEL

No. 1  
The FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT  
to the Constitution of the United States as  
adopted in 1870.

### ARTICLE XV

Sec. 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State, on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Sec. 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

No. 2  
The PROPOSED “SUSAN B. ANTHONY” Amendment to the United States Constitution:

Sec. 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of SEX.

Sec. 2. Congress shall have the power by appropriate legislation to enforce the provisions of this article.

**Can Southern Men and Women  
Forget so Soon?**

## BEWARE!

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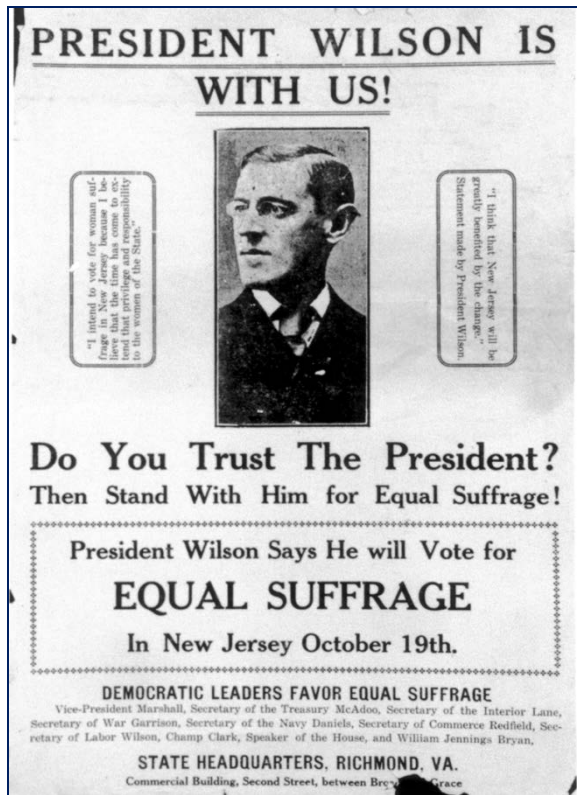
## Discussion Questions

- Why did these white southerners oppose woman suffrage?
- What historical memories does this poster call upon?



# The Battle for Ratification in the South

## Southern Suffragists Urge Southern States – All Controlled by Democrats – to Follow Wilson’s Plea to Ratify the Federal Amendment for Woman Suffrage



In 1920 all southern states were controlled by Democrats. Most opposed woman suffrage

For the federal amendment to succeed some southern states must ratify. Kentucky, Arkansas, and Texas ratified. The rest refused.

Wilson was eager that a Democrat-controlled state gain credit for the suffrage victory –

Wilson persuaded the Governor of Tennessee to call a special session for August 1920.

### Discussion Question

Why would politicians be eager for their party to claim credit for woman suffrage?

# The Battle for Ratification: It All Came Down to Tennessee



## The Federal Suffrage Amendment WILL NEVER BE RATIFIED IF THE PEOPLE OF TENNESSEE GUARD THEIR RIGHTS

The Susan B. Anthony Federal Suffrage Amendment has NOT been ratified. The Tennessee Constitution PROHIBITS ratification of ANY Federal Amendment until the PEOPLE ELECT a NEW Legislature. ANY GOOD LAWYER who has ever heard of the *Haire vs. Rice* Case, 284 United States Reports, KNOWS that the attempted and so-called ratification by an illegal and insufficient PART of the present Tennessee Legislature (less than a legal quorum) was NULL AND VOID, ILLEGAL AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL. NOBODY but the United States Supreme Court has a right to say that the Tennessee Constitution is in conflict with the United States Constitution. It is NOT IN CONFLICT, and CANNOT be in conflict, unless the UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT DECIDES THAT IT IS.

GOV. JAMES M. COX, Democratic Candidate for President, says: "Most lawyers to whom I have talked believe that it is not in conflict. It is a very good provision that ought to be in every State Constitution."

If it is NOT in conflict, then every attempt to EVADE and OVERRIDE the Constitution of Tennessee is plain LAWBREAKING and VIOLATION of their OATHS OF OFFICE by every official who solemnly swore, with God as a witness, to uphold the Constitution of Tennessee.

Such men ought to be IMPEACHED, as well as ENJOINED.

A man who deliberately CONSPIRES with lobbyists to break the SUPREME LAW of the State of Tennessee is in the same class with the BOOTLEGGERS and the BOLSHEVIST. THE PEOPLE must see to it that OFFICIAL LAWBREAKERS are dealt with BY THE COURTS, just as any OTHER LAW-BREAKERS.

ABLE LAWYERS and Tennessee citizens have already ENJOINED officials who want to DEFEY and OVERRIDE the CONSTITUTION and the PEOPLE OF TENNESSEE.

DO YOUR BIT, ORGANIZE MASS MEETINGS, Circulate Petitions, and we will UPHOLD the Constitutional Rights of the People.

- Wilson persuaded the Governor of Tennessee to call a special session in August in order for ratification to be possible before the November 1920 elections.
- Suffragists from the NAWSA and the NWP joined Tennessee suffragists in Nashville to work for ratification.
- Anti-suffragists from across the nation also converged on Tennessee including lobbyists for the "Whisky Interests" and other business interests industries that opposed women's votes. Many legislators committed to woman suffrage mysteriously changed their minds.

## Discussion Questions

- Why was a special session necessary and important?
- Why did the liquor industry oppose ratification?

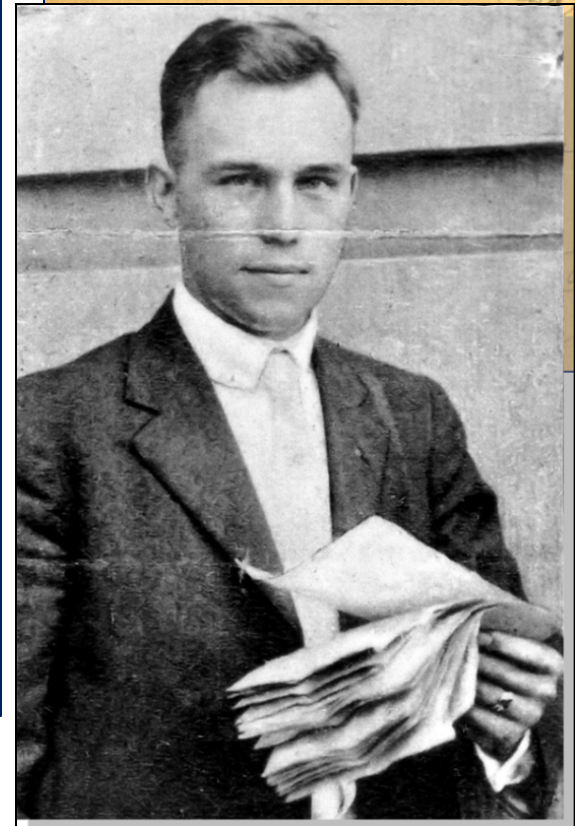
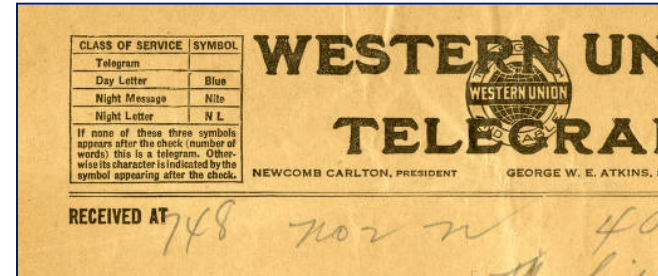
# The Winning Vote: Harry Burn

Harry Burn hears from his mother:

“Dear Son: Hurrah and vote for suffrage! Don't keep them in doubt! I notice some of the speeches against. They were bitter. I have been watching to see how you stood, but have not noticed anything yet. Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt put the “rat” in ratification.” -- Your mother

Mrs. Burns hears from Carrie Chapman Catt:

“You are blessed with a brave and honest son whatever the enemies of justice and decency may do now to show their vengeance upon him He is bound to have a great future You will ever be proud of him.”





# The Woman Suffrage Movement: VICTORY AT LAST!

## The Nineteenth Amendment

**Ratified August 26, 1920**  
**Now celebrated annually as**  
**“Women’s Equality Day”**

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”



Final slide.

Thank You