

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

KEY DEFINITIONS

Suffrage: From the Latin *suffragium*, a vote given in deciding a controversial question or electing a person for an office.

Partial Suffrage: A term in the suffrage movement referring to the ability to vote in elections on specific matters, such as municipal elections, school board elections, liquor licenses, etc.

Suffragist: A woman who fought for the right to vote.

Suffragette: At the time of the women's suffrage movement, a term used to belittle and demean suffragists. Over time, *suffragette* has become a popular term used to describe suffragists.

ORIGINS OF THE MOVEMENT

At the founding of the United States, only land-owning (tax-paying) white males over the age of 21 could vote. Each state decided who could vote, although most outlined similar qualifications. In New Jersey during the Colonial Era, a widow who owned land could vote, but this right was short-lived.

The abolitionist movement inspired women to start calling for more rights. Women actively working in the movement to give African Americans rights were also facing gender barriers and being berated for their efforts.

- One famous example is Sarah Grimké's public "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes" (1838), published in the *Spectator* (Massachusetts) and the *Liberator* (Boston) after she was called out by Catharine Beecher for unladylike actions.¹
- Wisconsin connection: UW–Madison professor Gerda Lerner was foundational in the formation of women's history as a field of study. She wrote her dissertation on Sarah Grimké and her sister, Angelina Grimké, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels against Slavery*, in 1967.

Declaration of Sentiments: In 1848, the Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York, was convened. The women drafted the *Declaration of Sentiments*, modeled on the *Declaration of Independence*, stating, "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal." The document then outlined the inequalities women faced because of their gender.²

¹ To read more on the letters, see <http://www.teachushistory.org/second-great-awakening-age-reform/resources/sarah-grimke-argues-womens-rights>; and for a full text version, see https://archive.org/stream/lettersonequalit00grimrich/lettersonequalit00grimrich_djvu.txt.

² To read the full text of the Declaration of Sentiments, see <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/declaration-of-sentiments.htm>.



WHO WERE THE SUFFRAGISTS?

Since the movement formally lasted from 1848 until 1920, there were many leaders and participants.³ National leaders included:

- Lucretia Mott (1793–1880)—Cofounder of the national movement and co-organizer of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902)—Cofounder of the national movement and co-organizer of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848.
- Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906)—Recruited by Stanton to travel and give many rousing speeches. One of her most famous lines was: “Failure is impossible.”
- Alice Stone Blackwell (1857–1950)—Editor of the leading women’s rights newspaper *Woman’s Journal*.
- Sojourner Truth (1797–1883)—A former slave, she became an abolitionist and women’s rights activist. Famous for her speech “Ain’t I a Woman?”⁴
- Mary Church Terrell (1863–1954)—Suffragist, clubwoman, and widely read author who often called on white women to include black women in the movement.
- Carrie Chapman Catt (1859–1947)—Born in Ripon, Wisconsin, but active at the national level, she was integral in gaining passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution.
- Alice Paul (1885–1977)—Leader of the National Woman’s Party and a more radical suffragist who helped organize the picket of the White House in 1917.

State leaders included:

- Olympia Brown (1835–1926), Racine—The first woman to be ordained a minister in the United States and president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association for 28 years.
- Clara Bewick Colby (1846–1916), Madison—Emigrated from Britain to Wisconsin in childhood and an early female student at UW–Madison; a prominent suffragist, orator, and journalist who started a Nebraska newspaper called the *Woman’s Tribune*.
- Belle Case LaFollette (1859–1931), Summit, Baraboo, Madison—The first woman to graduate from law school in Wisconsin, she served as First Lady of Wisconsin and was an outspoken writer and orator for women’s right to vote.
- Laura Ross Wolcott (1834–1915), Milwaukee—The first woman physician in Wisconsin; active in the early women’s suffrage movement.
- Jessie Jack Hooper (1865–1935), Oshkosh—Suffragist and president of the Wisconsin League of Women Voters; she ran for the US Senate in 1922.
- Ada James (1876–1952), Richland Center—Suffragist leader who was very active in the 1912 referendum efforts and other reforms during the early 1900s.

³For more information on Wisconsin suffragists visit: <http://womeninwisconsin.org>.

⁴For a version of the speech, visit <https://www.nps.gov/articles/sojourner-truth.htm>.



Many suffrage organizations were founded, split, re-formed, and reorganized throughout the quest for suffrage. Some of these splits occurred because of differing opinions on tactics, reasoning, and even who should get the vote.

CRITICISM OF SUFFRAGISTS

Racism and Suffrage. Many of the major suffragists were middle- and upper-class white women. The movement is sometimes criticized for its lack of diversity and, at points, blatant racism.⁵

Prohibition and Suffrage. Often, suffragists were classified as man-hating spinsters who disliked alcohol.⁶ In reality, a wide variety of women were active in the movement. The argument for suffrage and temperance became linked after the Civil War when alcoholism ran rampant and women did not have property rights, so husbands with alcoholism could ruin an entire family.⁷ Ultimately, the 18th Amendment prohibited alcohol and the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote.

SUFFRAGE AROUND THE WORLD

Women around the world began asking for the right to voice their opinions in government in the late 1800s. New Zealand was arguably the first country to give women the right to vote, in 1893.

The radical tactics of some United States suffragists were inspired by the tactics of suffragists in Great Britain.

⁵ For a recent *New York Times* editorial, see <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/02/opinion/sunday/women-voting-19th-amendment-white-supremacy.html>.

⁶ Political cartoons often depicted suffragists: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b49095/>.

⁷ To read “A Protection Manual: Containing an Argument for the Temperance Ballot for Woman and How to Obtain It as a Means of Home Protection” by Frances Willard, see <https://archive.org/details/homeprotectionma00will/page/n6>.



WISCONSIN WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE TIMELINE

The fight for women's suffrage in Wisconsin lasted for over 70 years. Throughout those decades, Wisconsin male legislators introduced dozens of bills that would have granted voting rights to women. But the bills needed to pass two consecutive legislatures before being submitted to the people of Wisconsin as a referendum, and most bills never made it out of committees. Here are some key moments from the struggle for suffrage in Wisconsin:

1846 — Wisconsin Constitutional Convention delegate James Magone of Milwaukee asks that the word male be left off of the constitution before the word *suffrage*. Other delegates laugh, and the idea is abandoned.

1848 — Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and other abolitionist women host the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York.

1855 — National suffrage leader Lucy Stone speaks throughout Wisconsin calling for women to use petitions to earn the right to vote.

1856 — Senator C. C. Sholes from Kenosha County presents three suffrage petitions to the Wisconsin State Senate.

1861–1865 — The Civil War throws the United States into turmoil.

1867 — Janesville hosts the first state universal suffrage convention in Wisconsin.

1867 — Assemblyman John T. Dow of Rock County introduces a joint resolution for women's suffrage in Wisconsin. It passes in the senate and the assembly. Governor Lucius Fairchild approves the resolution.

1868 — Assemblyman William C. Whitford of Milton reintroduces Dow's joint resolution to the next legislative session. It fails in the assembly with a vote of 36 to 46.

1869 — Suffragists organize the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association to bring local suffrage organizations into a statewide structure.

1870 — The 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution is ratified, thereby granting black men the right to vote.

1885–1886 — Senator N. L. James of Richland Center (the husband of suffragist Georgia James) introduces a measure that would give women the right to vote in “any election pertaining to school matters.” The school suffrage measure passes in the senate and the assembly and is approved by Governor Jeremiah Rusk. It then goes to a referendum, where Wisconsin men vote to pass it 43,581 to 38,988.

1887 — Reverend Olympia Brown tests the school suffrage law and attempts to vote in a municipal election that impacts school matters. The Wisconsin Supreme Court decides women can vote only in school elections.



1911–1912 — Senator David James of Richland Center introduces a bill in 1911 that would give Wisconsin women full suffrage. It passes in the assembly and the senate and is approved by Governor Francis E. McGovern. When the legislature passes the bill again in 1912, it goes to a referendum.

1912 — Radical Wisconsin suffragists create the Political Equality League and take to the streets asking men to vote for the suffrage referendum, but it is voted down 135,736 to 227,054.

1913 — The Political Equality League and Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association unify under the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association.

1914 — A suffrage school (a recruiting and training course for suffrage activists) is held in Madison featuring University of Wisconsin faculty members and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin John B. Winslow.

1914 — World War I begins in Europe. The United States will enter the war in 1917.

1916 — A large contingent of Wisconsinites march down Michigan Avenue with other suffragists in Chicago, Illinois, during the Republican National Convention. Their yellow tunics become an icon of the Wisconsin suffrage effort.

1918 — World War I ends and Americans return from Europe.

1919 — On June 10, Wisconsin becomes the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment. Wisconsin legislators vote to ratify the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution, which would give women the right to vote. On June 13, Wisconsin Senator David James of Richland Center (followed closely on the heels by the Illinois representative) reports to the proper bureau in Washington, DC, to file Wisconsin's ratification documents.

1920 — The 19th Amendment takes effect throughout the United States on August 26, and Wisconsin women over the age of 21 are finally allowed to vote in all elections. Thirty-six states were required to ratify the amendment before it could become a law.



WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN WISCONSIN,

1846–1919

WISCONSIN'S FAILED 1846 CONSTITUTION AND 1848 CONSTITUTION

At the Wisconsin Constitutional Convention of 1846, a delegate introduced the idea of women's voting rights into a discussion about black suffrage. It was not taken seriously. Another delegate quickly suggested that the two ideas should be separated so those in favor of black suffrage could "have a fair test of the question." Ultimately, the delegates could not agree on the terms for a new constitution, and neither women nor black men were granted the right to vote in the failed constitution.

In 1848, when the Wisconsin Constitution was adopted, suffrage was not extended to women. This was the same year that women met in Seneca Falls to draft the *Declaration of Sentiments*.

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Mr. Giddings offered an amendment to strike out the "white" before male persons, which would extend the right of suffrage to every male person over twenty-one years of age.

Mr. Magone offered as an amendment that the word male be stricken out and the right of suffrage be extended to females as well as males.

Moses M. Strong hoped the gentleman would withdraw the last amendment and allow those in favor of negro suffrage to obtain a vote and have a fair test of the question.

Mr. Magone was in favor of females voting and wished to tack the motion to a popular resolution to insure its success.

Mr. Strong said he was a friend to females, and it was for that reason he did not wish to see them tacked on to negroes.

Some further conversation passed between the gentlemen on the subject, and the question was then put on the adoption of Mr. Magone's amendment, which was lost.

The question then recurred upon the amendment of Mr. Giddings to strike out the word "white."

Warren Chase supported the amendment, not from any personal considerations, for he was connected with abolitionism in no manner or form; neither was there a negro in the county which he represented; but he considered it a great matter of expediency to abolish this distinction; the existence of this one word in the article was, in his view, the very foundation upon which the abolition party would be raised and other parties distracted.

Mr. Ryan was opposed to the amendment. In the first place, he believed that this extension of the right of suffrage would

Wisconsin Woman at First Suffrage Rally

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE JOURNAL
Pt. Atkinson, Wis.—To be 84 years of age and as active as a woman of 40 is the privilege of Mrs. Louise J. Smith, Pt. Atkinson, who cast her first presidential ballot Nov. 2.

And thereby hangs a tale. After reading a magazine article which gave an account of the first woman's suffrage convention held at Seneca Falls, N. Y., in 1848, she said, "Why, this is all wrong. It states a Mrs. Charlotte Woodward Pierce is the only living survivor of those present at the first suffrage convention held in Seneca Falls and I was there myself!"

And this is a fact. As a little girl of 12, and by the way she was Louise Smith then and has never ceased to be Louise Smith, although she has twice been married—to a Smith both times—she attended that memorable meeting and although young at the time her reminiscences of the occasion are wonderfully clear and convincing.

"A girl friend and I attended it and we became, so interested and enthusiastic by all the wonderful speeches and talks that we came home, cut up our dresses and made them into the "blומר" costume like those worn by many of the suffragists of that period," she said.

Many of Mrs. Smith's recollections of this famous meeting coincide with those of Mrs. Woodward Pierce in the article. Like her she speaks of the great excitement the meeting aroused in the whole country, and also that out of the whole number of educated and intellectual people that were present, only two, Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the former slave, editor and lecturer, Frederick Douglass, believed it possible that women would ever have the privilege of full suffrage.



One of 2 Survivors

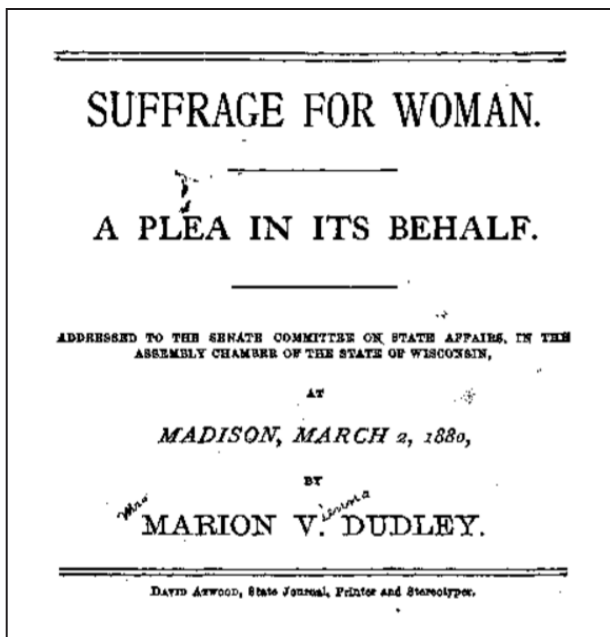
Mrs. Louise Smith, 84, Pt. Atkinson, who is one of two surviving women who attended the first women's suffrage convention in Seneca Falls, N. Y., in 1848.

Left: Report of the Wisconsin Constitutional Convention, October 21, 1846 ⁸

Right: *Milwaukee Journal*, December 5, 1920 ⁹

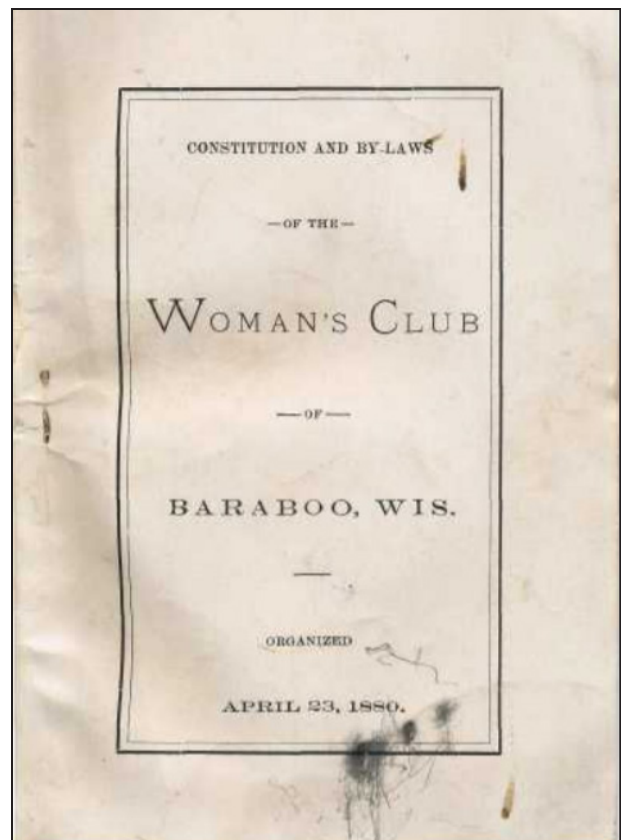
⁸To read the full text of the debate, see <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=55>.

⁹Article available online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Newspaper/BA11525>.



Left: Title page of *Suffrage for Woman: A Plea in Its Behalf*, 1880 ¹⁰

Right: Title page of *Constitution and By-laws of the Woman's Club of Baraboo, Wis.*, 1880 ¹¹



EARLY WISCONSIN EFFORTS

Throughout the late 1900s, suffragists in Wisconsin followed the popular path of asking for full suffrage at the state level (a tactic that was somewhat successful in the West) as well as partial suffrage. Suffragists hosted national speakers including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Women also formed suffrage organizations in cities across Wisconsin including Fond du Lac, Richland Center, Baraboo, Union Grove, and Evansville, to name a few. The Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association (WWSA) formed in 1869 and served as an umbrella organization for all of the local clubs. In 1887, the WWSA began printing the *Wisconsin Citizen*, a suffrage newspaper out of Racine, Broadhead, and later Waukesha.

In Wisconsin, women earned the right to vote in school matters after school suffrage passed the legislature in 1885 and 1886. Reverend Olympia Brown, a pastor at the Universalist Church in Racine, soon tested the law giving women the right to vote in “any election pertaining to school matters.” She believed that any election could pertain to school matters, not just school board elections. In 1887, Brown and others attempted to vote in a municipal election. When she was not allowed to vote, she brought a lawsuit against the city to test the right in court. The court decided against Brown, and Wisconsin women lost their right to vote in school matters for over a decade, until a new act allowed women to have separate ballot boxes—thereby allowing them to submit their ballots for the first time.

¹⁰ To access the full text, see <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/55339>.

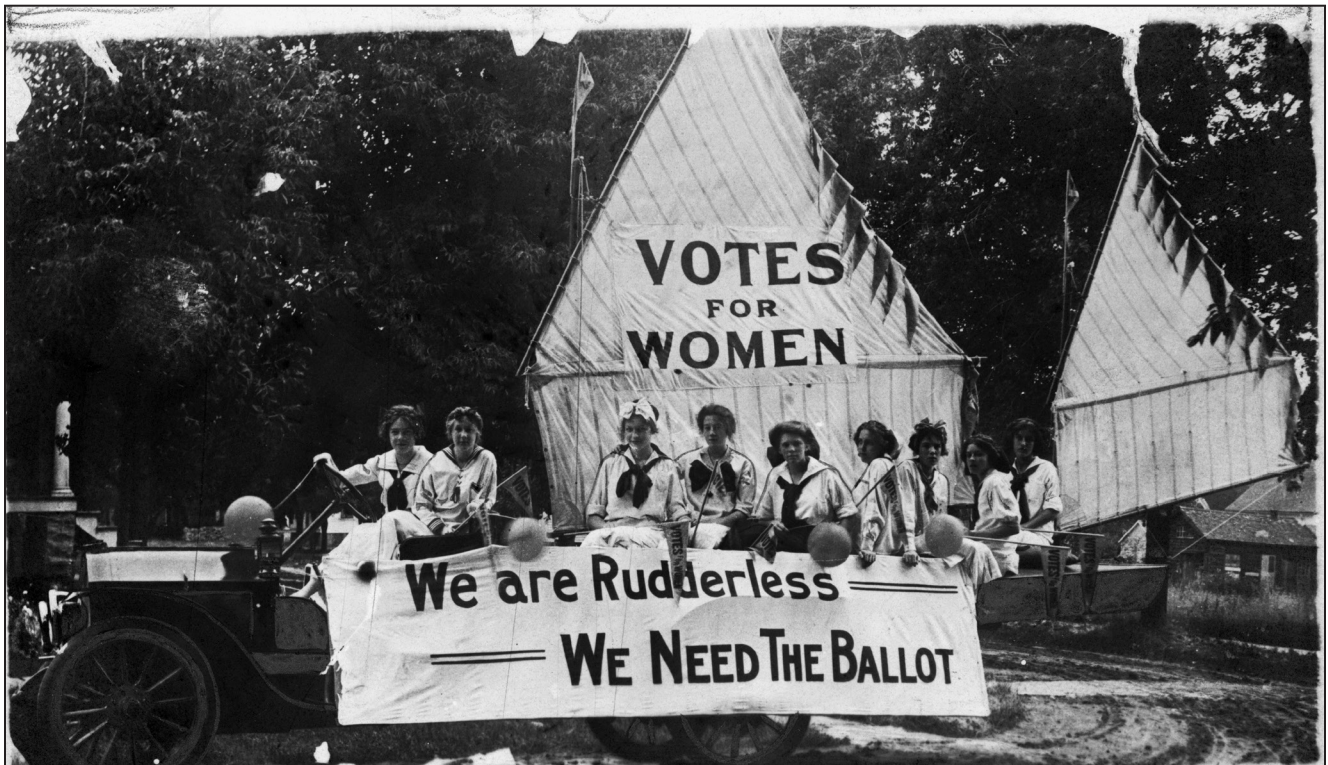
¹¹ To access the full text, see <http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/ref/collection/tp/id/74608>.

1912 REFERENDUM

By 1912, a bill had finally been passed by two consecutive legislative sessions and signed by Governor Francis McGovern. Now, the state's male voters had the opportunity to vote for or against women's suffrage.

After disagreeing with the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association over tactics, Ada James and others formed the Political Equality League and canvassed the state. Suffragists tried to win public favor with stump speeches and automobile tours. Brewers were one of the major anti-suffrage forces in Wisconsin.

Despite the women's efforts, the 1912 referendum failed with a vote of 135,736 to 227,054. Wisconsin women had lost yet another battle for the vote.



Members of the Oshkosh Equal Suffrage League in their 4th of July float made up with a sailboat. Banners read "Votes for Women" and "We are Rudderless, We Need The Ballot." Identified in the picture are Lilian Clark, Bernice Mocke, Helen West, Gertrude Hull, Josephine Van Slyke, Hester Lancaster, Katherine Forward, Jennie Robinson, and Maria Hilton. WHI IMAGE ID 5157 ¹²

¹² Image available online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM5157>.

DANGER!

Woman's Suffrage Would Double
the Irresponsible Vote

It is a **MENACE** to the Home, Men's
Employment and to All Business

EXAMPLE
Official Referendum Ballot

If you desire to vote for any question, make a cross (O) or other mark in the square after the word "yes" underneath such question:
if you desire to vote against any question, make a cross or other mark in the square after the word "no" underneath such question.

Shall Chapter 227 of the laws of 1911 entitled "an act extending the right of suffrage to women" be adopted?

Yes No



The above is an exact reproduction of the separate ballot printed on pink paper which will be handed to you in your voting place on November 5. Be sure and put your cross (X) in the square after the word "no" as shown here, and—be sure and vote this pink ballot.

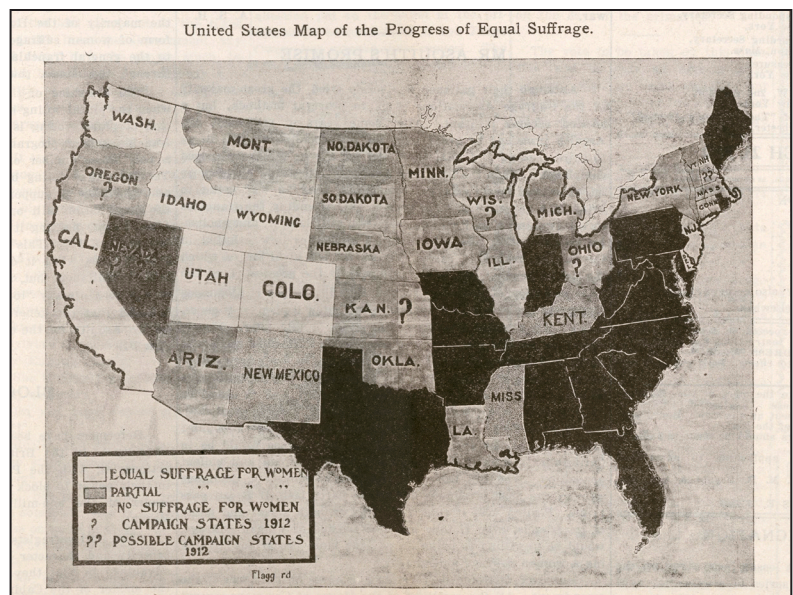
Printed and Circulated by
PROGRESS PUBLISHING CO
WATERTOWN, WIS.



Upper left: Anti-woman suffrage poster that reads, "Danger! Women's Suffrage would double the irresponsible vote! It is a menace to the Home, Men's Employment and All Business!" Printed in Watertown in 1912. WHI IMAGE ID 1912 ¹³

Upper right: Suffragist Katherine Waugh McCullough of Illinois speaks from an open car, ca. 1912. Suffragists traveled across the United States to support the state-by-state suffrage effort. WHI IMAGE ID 1879 ¹⁴

Lower right: A map printed in 1912 illustrating levels of women's suffrage in the United States. WHI IMAGE ID 130595 ¹⁵



¹³ Image available online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM1932>.

¹⁴ Image available online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM1879>.

¹⁵ Map available online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM130595>.

MOVING FORWARD

In 1913, the Political Equality League and the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association merged under the leadership of Theodora Winton Youmans. Although upset by the loss, suffragists continued to work, educating, raising money, writing, and organizing events. The WWSA continued to hold conventions and even hosted a suffrage school to teach about the importance of civics.

In 1916, Wisconsin sent a large contingent to march in the suffrage parade in Chicago, walking down Michigan Avenue in their bright yellow tunics in the pouring rain.

Wisconsin women assisted in the efforts for World War I. At the national level, Alice Paul led the first picket of the White House and Wisconsin-born Carrie Chapman Catt spoke with President Woodrow Wilson about using women's suffrage as a means to rally support for the war.



Left: Theodora Winton Youmans, president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association, ca, 1915. WHI IMAGE ID 1927 ¹⁶

Right: Parade tunic worn in Chicago, 1916. Wisconsin Historical Museum, 1956.1450 ¹⁷

¹⁶ Image available online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM1927>.

¹⁷ For more information, see <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS2808>.

RATIFICATION OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT

Wisconsin Rushes to Be First—the full story!

On the morning of June 10, 1919, 76-year-old former state senator David James of Richland Center came to Madison to witness the state legislature vote on the 19th Amendment. By day's end, he was on a train racing to Washington, DC, with official ratification documents in hand. He needed to deliver the documents to the US State Department in order to make Wisconsin the first state to officially ratify the 19th Amendment.

David James and his daughter, Ada, gathered with other suffragists at the Wisconsin State Capitol that day determined that Wisconsin would be the first state to ratify. Ada described the day in her diary:

“Went to Madison and had an exciting time. We wanted our Legislature to ratify first but two Democrats played politics for over an hour and in the meantime Illinois telegraphed that they had ratified.”¹⁸

Illinois completed their voting process about an hour and half before Wisconsin did, but Wisconsin suffragists did not give up. Ada wrote:

“Mrs. [Jessie Jack] Hooper did not give up, as it is the state that gets the papers on file first at Washington that counts. So they went to see the Governor [Emanuel L. Philipp] and he appointed dad a special messenger.”

David James later described his special appointment to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*:

“After the bill has passed and we were sharing congratulations, a committee came up to me and said I had been chosen as official messenger to go to Washington with the papers. ‘Why don’t you get a younger man?’ I asked, thinking they were joking. But they insisted, and my daughter urged me to take the commission, so finally I said I would and immediately set about preparations.”¹⁹

Mr. James was totally unprepared for a trip across the country. Wisconsin Secretary of State Merlin Hull gave him some money, Ada gave him her handbag, and off he went. Several days later, on June 13, 1919, he arrived at the US State Department clutching Wisconsin’s ratification papers. He recalled:

“We packed into a taxi and arrived at no time at the offices of the Secretary of State, where my papers were safely filed and I received a signed statement that Wisconsin was the first. . . . I returned to the Secretary of State’s just in time for the entrance of the messenger from Illinois. He walked up and slapped his papers down on the table. ‘I’ve brought papers to show Illinois was first,’ he said, and was interrupted by our peals of laughter.”

State legislatures in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan all voted to ratify the 19th Amendment on June 10, 1919. While Illinois was the first state to vote for ratification, thanks to David James’s speedy trip, the US State Department recognized Wisconsin as the first state to complete the ratification process.

¹⁸ Ada James diary, 1918–1919 (Volume 20), Wis Mss OP MAD 3 /27/D7-E3, Box 28, Folder 4, Ada Lois James papers 1816–1952, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Madison, Wisconsin.

¹⁹ “How Wisconsin Beat All Other States on Suffrage,” *Milwaukee Journal*, June 16, 1919.



CLAIM WISCONSIN FIRST TO O. K. SUFFRAGE

SUFFRAGE SPEAKER TELLS HOW ILLINOIS WAS BEATEN

Convention Members Cheer Oldest Worker, 99, at Victory Luncheon

Miss Ada James, Richland Center, suffrage descendant of a suffrage family, is not only as keen a Missourian about "being shown," but she believes also in "showing."

Thus it was that the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage association, gathered 300 strong at its Victory luncheon in the Milwaukee Athletic club, Saturday afternoon, was "shown" positive proof why the recent claim of Illinois women that their state was the first to ratify the suffrage amendment to the constitution of the United States, is false, Senator Medill McCormick to the contrary, notwithstanding, says Miss James.

Receipt Proves Claim.

In her response to the toast, Wisconsin First, Miss James told the tale of the appointment of her father, D. G. James, as a special messenger to carry Wisconsin's ratification papers to the state department at Washington, June 13, last, and of his encountering Illinois' messenger going into that department as he was coming out. The messenger was carrying under his arm a certificate from the chief of the bureau that Wisconsin was the first state whose ratification of the amendment received official notice at Washington.

Luckily for Wisconsin women, D. G. James, equally with his daughter, believes in "showing," so he carried his certificate and receipt back home with

him, and none now can gainsay Wisconsin's claim to the honor of first having ratified the suffrage amendment.

Honor to Aged Suffragist.

Miss James' presentation of the certificate of Wisconsin's claim was loudly applauded by the convention, the applause being equaled at one time only, when Mrs. Henry M. Youmans, president and toastmaster, introduced as a guest of honor Miss Bashua Cornwell, West Allis, aged 99, as the oldest worker for suffrage present, and the entire 300 diners rose in a body in greeting to her.

Mrs. Frederick Carberry responded to the toast of Citizenship. After describing the problem of the housekeeper in towns where apartment buildings, bakeries, and other aids to housekeeping are not found, she told how industries have gathered in women workers until there are none left to aid the housewife.

Suggests Standard of Dress.

"If the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage association wants an object to work for," said Mrs. Carberry, "let it take up propaganda for community kitchens in every city in the state."

"Another object the association might work for is standardization of dress for women."

Mrs. Mary D. Bradford, Kenosha, told of the struggle women have waged against prejudice, for centuries until now they are at the point of victory. She said the struggle had been slow until in the nineteenth century when Lucretia Mott, Margaret Fuller and Susan B. Anthony began the last lap of the struggle in victory, "storming the citadel of the prejudice of the world."

Budget Almost Complete.

The new treasurer, Mrs. A. J. Frame, urged the women to contribute for citizenship work. Something more than \$5,000 of the \$5,500 of the budget adopted at the convention has been raised.

Mrs. Nancy M. Schoonmaker spoke briefly of the conversion to suffrage of former President Taft because he found during war work the unspeakable conditions under which millions of women are working in the United States. Miss Schoonmaker said, that although they have won much, they must exert themselves still for others less fortunate than themselves.

Efforts of Journal Acknowledged. Mrs. Youmans acknowledged a debt of deep gratitude to The Journal for the extensive publicity it has given to suffrage work preceding and during the convention. At an executive board meeting, held before the luncheon, Mrs. Schoonmaker presented a

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Left: Milwaukee Journal, November 2, 1919²⁰

Bottom: Former Wisconsin State Senator David G. James, Republican from Richland Center (1908–1912) and the father of suffragist Ada James. The photograph was likely taken June 13, 1919, after James delivered Wisconsin's ratification of the 19th Amendment in Washington, DC. James is surrounded by suffragists at the National Woman's Party headquarters building at 14 Jackson Place. The document he is holding is his appointment by Governor Philipp as Special Courier to deliver the ratification.

WHI IMAGE ID 35075²¹



²⁰ Article available online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Newspaper/BA7478>.

²¹ Image available online at <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Image/IM35075>.

APPENDIX

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

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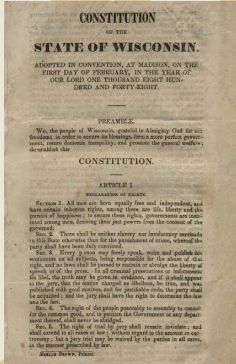
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VOTER ORIGINS OF THE MOVEMENT



Wisconsin's first constitutional convention was held in 1846, and a second convention was held two years later. The constitution drafted in 1848 remains our constitution today. However, it did not include women's right to vote.

WHS PAMPHLET 97-3076



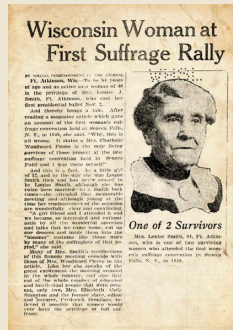
Women watch children at the Kenosha County Equal Suffrage League's nursery in about 1914. WHI IMAGE ID 24521

At the Wisconsin Constitutional Convention of 1846, a delegate introduced the idea of women's voting rights, also known as women's suffrage, into a discussion about black suffrage. People laughed. Another delegate quickly suggested that the two ideas should be separated so those in favor of black suffrage could "have a fair test of the question." Ultimately, the delegates could not agree on the terms for a new constitution, and neither women nor black men were granted the right to vote in 1846. Wisconsin women did not gain the right to vote until 1920.



The *Wisconsin Citizen* was established in 1887 and operated as a paper for about 30 years. Proposed by the president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association, Mrs. A. B. Grey of Schofield, the paper was used by suffragists to promote their agenda and share news of the movement.

Wisconsin Citizen, November 1895



Wisconsin women worked for suffrage around the state and the nation. They attended conventions and rallies, and they actively participated in pro-suffrage clubs and associations.

Milwaukee Journal, December 5, 1920

Suffragists hand out literature in downtown Milwaukee around 1910.

WHI IMAGE ID 55954

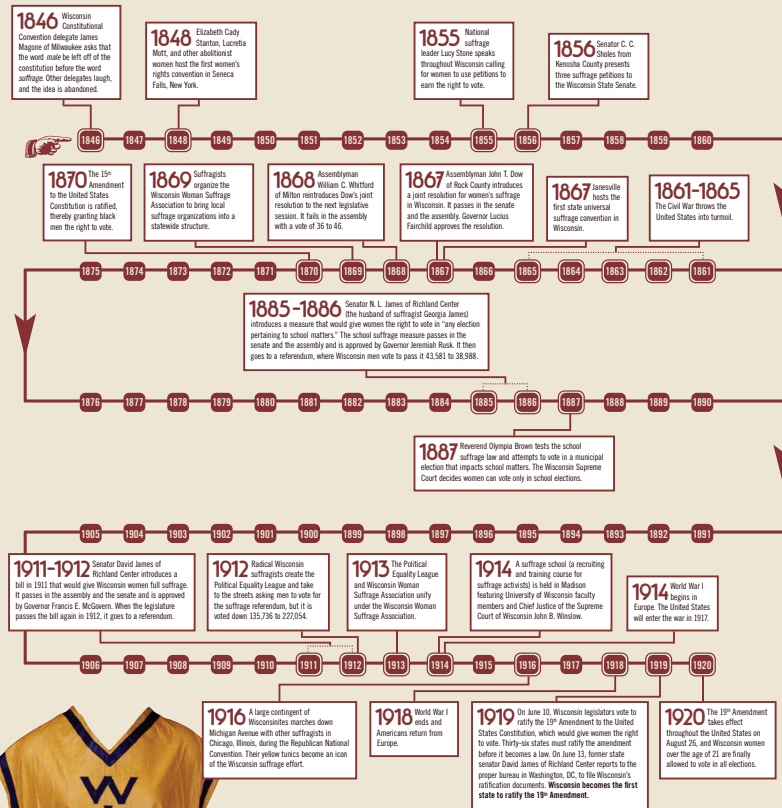


The Woman's Hour Has Struck

Wisconsin: The First State to Ratify the 19th Amendment

A SUFFRAGE TIMELINE

The fight for women's suffrage in Wisconsin lasted for over 70 years. Throughout those decades, Wisconsin legislators introduced dozens of bills that would have granted voting rights to women. But the bills needed to pass two consecutive legislatures before being submitted to the people of Wisconsin as a referendum, and most bills never made it out of committees. Here are some key moments from the struggle for suffrage in Wisconsin.



While the yellow tunics worn by Wisconsin suffragists who marched through the streets of Chicago in 1916 caught the attention of many onlookers, the tunics did little to keep the women dry.

WHS MUSEUM 1956.1450

"So the cause advanced, with no appearance of advancement sometimes, from one year's end to another."

—Theodora W. Youmans



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

DANGER!

THE 1912 REFERENDUM



This is the April 26, 1911, voting record of the Wisconsin State Assembly on a bill that would have given Wisconsin women full suffrage. It passed the assembly and the senate and was approved by Governor Francis E. McGovern. When the legislature passed the bill again in 1912, it went to public referendum, where it ultimately failed.

WHI IMAGE ID 7666

By 1912, a bill had finally been passed by two consecutive legislative sessions and signed by the governor. Now, the state's male voters had the opportunity to vote for or against women's suffrage. Suffragists led by Ada James tried to win public favor with stump speeches and automobile tours. Despite these efforts, the 1912 referendum failed with a vote of 135,736 to 227,054. Wisconsin women had lost yet another battle for the vote.

"Woman suffrage is coming, but it is not coming as the light follows the darkness or the summer follows the winter. It is coming as the harvest follows the patient."

—Theodora W. Youmans

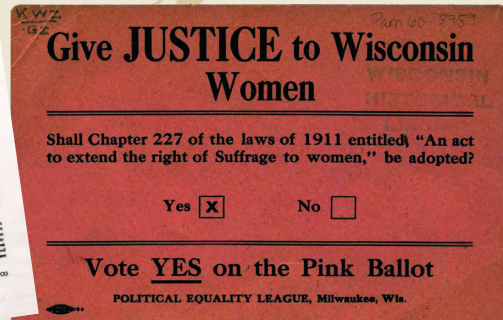
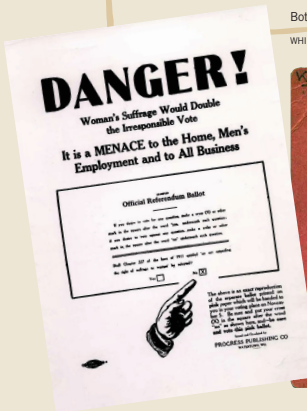
Shall Chapter 227 of the laws of 1911 entitled 'an act extending the right of suffrage to women' be adopted?

Yes

No

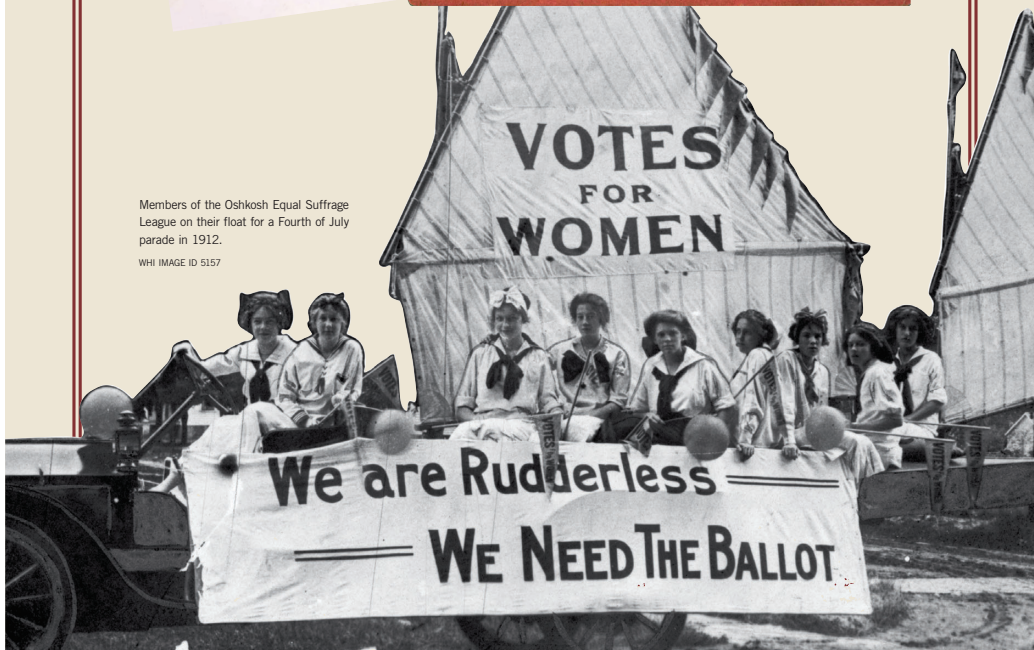
Both suffragists and anti-suffragists printed and distributed flyers throughout the state.

WHI IMAGE ID 1932 (left); WHI IMAGE ID 142750 (below)



Members of the Oshkosh Equal Suffrage League on their float for a Fourth of July parade in 1912.

WHI IMAGE ID 5157



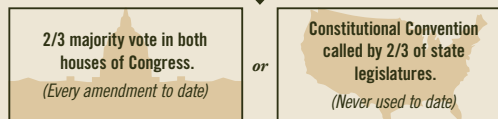
AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

How is the Constitution amended? United States Constitution Article V reads:

"The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate."

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

An amendment is proposed by one of the following methods:

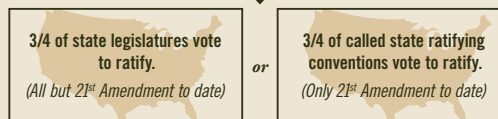


RATIFICATION

Congress determines the ratification method (below) and may specify a deadline.

The national archivist sends notification to each state's governor; the Office of the Federal Register tracks the amendment's progress.

The governors provide the amendment to their states' legislatures or ratifying conventions.



Once passed, each state legislature/ratifying convention must return proof of ratification/ documents to the Office of the Federal Register.

Once the Office of the Federal Register receives documentation from 3/4 of the states, the amendment is proclaimed adopted.

Certification is published in the Federal Register and immediately goes into effect.



Theodora W. Youmans, president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association, poses in one of the tunics worn by Wisconsinites at the suffrage parade she led during the Republican National Convention in Chicago in June 1916.

WHI IMAGE ID 1927

The Woman's Hour Has Struck

Wisconsin: The First State to Ratify the 19th Amendment

WISCONSIN RUSHES TO BE FIRST!

On the morning of June 10, 1919, 76-year-old former state senator David James of Richland Center came to Madison to witness the state legislature vote on the 19th Amendment. By day's end, he was on a train racing to Washington, DC, with official ratification documents in hand. He needed to deliver the documents to the US State Department in order to make Wisconsin the first state to officially ratify the 19th Amendment.

David James and his daughter, Ada, were ardent suffrage leaders. They gathered with other suffragists at the Wisconsin State Capitol that day determined that Wisconsin would be the first state to ratify. Ada described the day in her diary:

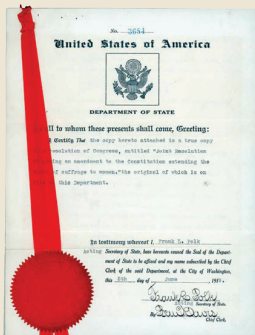
"Went to Madison and had an exciting time. We wanted our Legislature to ratify first but two Democrats played politics for over an hour and in the meantime Illinois telegraphed that they had ratified."

Illinois completed their voting process about an hour and half before Wisconsin did, but Wisconsin suffragists did not give up. Ada wrote:

"Mrs. [Jessie Jack] Hooper did not give up, as it is the state that gets the papers on file first at Washington that counts. So they went to see the Governor [Emanuel L. Philipp] and he appointed dad a special messenger."

David James later described his special appointment to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*:

"After the bill has passed and we were sharing congratulations, a committee came up to me and said I had been chosen as official messenger to go to Washington with the papers. 'Why don't you get a younger man?' I asked, thinking they were joking. But they insisted, and my daughter urged me to take the commission, so finally I said I would and immediately set about preparations."



The official certification accompanying the proposed 19th Amendment that was sent from the US Congress to states for ratification on June 5, 1919.

WHS ARCHIVES



In this photo likely taken on June 13, 1919, David James holds an unidentified document, possibly naming him as the amendment's courier, signed by Wisconsin Governor Emanuel L. Philipp.

WHI IMAGE ID 142504



The certification accompanying Wisconsin's ratification documents, which was carried by David James to Washington, DC, in June 1919.

National Archives #1633882

Mr. James was totally unprepared for a trip across the country. Wisconsin Secretary of State Merlin Hull gave him some money, Ada gave him her handbag, and off he went. Several days later on June 13, 1919, he arrived at the US State Department clutching Wisconsin's ratification papers. He recalled:

"We packed into a taxi and arrived at no time at the offices of the Secretary of State, where my papers were safely filed and I received a signed statement that Wisconsin was the first. . . . I returned to the Secretary of State's just in time for the entrance of the messenger from Illinois. He walked up and slapped his papers down on the table. 'I've brought papers to show Illinois was first,' he said, and was interrupted by our peals of laughter."

State legislatures in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan all voted to ratify the 19th Amendment on June 10, 1919. While Illinois was the first state to vote for ratification, thanks to David James's speedy trip, the US State Department recognized Wisconsin as the first state to complete the ratification process.



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

PASSING THE 19TH AMENDMENT

After many years of suffragists' efforts, the United States Congress finally passed a proposal in 1919 to amend the Constitution and grant women the right to vote. From that day on, suffrage supporters in each state had to work through the rules and procedures of the political process in order to get the amendment ratified. The graphic below shows how these events moved quickly in Wisconsin.



Wisconsin Governor Emanuel L. Philipp.
WHS ARCHIVES

Amendment resolution passed by Congress

Resolution sent to Wisconsin



Wisconsin Assemblyman Thomas S. Nolan.
WHS ARCHIVES

Resolution debated and passed by Wisconsin Assembly

Resolution debated and passed by Wisconsin Senate



Wisconsin Assemblyman John P. Donnelly.
WHS ARCHIVES

Resolution certified by Wisconsin

Resolution delivered to Washington, DC

Amendment adopted

May 21, 1919: The US House of Representatives passes the resolution to amend the Constitution.

June 4, 1919: The US Senate passes the resolution. The ratification process begins.

June 5, 1919: Acting US Secretary of State Frank L. Polk forwards the ratification materials to the states.

June 7, 1919: Wisconsin Governor Emanuel L. Philipp forwards the amendment resolution to Wisconsin Secretary of State Merlin Hull.

June 10, 1919: Hull forwards the resolution to both houses of the state legislature.

June 10, 1919, 10:30 AM: The state assembly convenes. Assemblyman Thomas S. Nolan pushes for the resolution's immediate passage; Assemblyman John P. Donnelly says he supports the amendment but wants it put to referendum in the 1920 election. He does not have enough support.

June 10, 1919, 11:10 AM: The assembly passes the resolution. (Donnelly votes for its passage.)

June 10, 1919: State senators Roy P. Wilcox and George B. Skogmo offer competing resolutions to pass the amendment.

June 10, 1919, 11:35 AM: The senate learns that the assembly passed a resolution first and discontinues its effort. Wilcox moves for an immediate vote on the assembly's resolution.

June 10, 1919, 11:42 AM: The senate passes the resolution.

June 10, 1919: Wisconsin Secretary of State Merlin Hull certifies the joint resolution and prepares the ratification materials for return to Washington, DC.

June 10-12, 1919: David James, suffrage supporter and father of Ada James, personally carries the state's ratification materials via train to Washington, DC.

June 13, 1919: David James delivers the ratification materials to the state department and receives a receipt.

August 18, 1920: The 19th Amendment is officially adopted after Tennessee's ratification.



Wisconsin State Senator Roy P. Wilcox.
WHS ARCHIVES



Wisconsin State Senator George B. Skogmo.
WHI IMAGE ID 43009



Wisconsin Secretary of State Merlin Hull.
WHS ARCHIVES

David James stands with suffragists outside the National Woman's Party building in Washington, DC, after delivering Wisconsin's ratification documents, likely on June 13, 1919.

WHI IMAGE ID 35075



THE WOMEN OF THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

Laura Ross Wolcott is remembered as a physician and suffragist. She graduated from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1856—the third woman in the United States to earn a medical degree. She moved to Milwaukee in 1857 but was denied admittance to the Medical Society of Milwaukee County. In 1867, she moved to Paris, where she continued her medical studies and became interested in the suffrage movement. Wolcott returned to Milwaukee in 1869 and was eventually admitted to the Milwaukee County Medical Society.

In 1869, with the help of fellow suffragist Lila Peckham, Wolcott organized a women's suffrage convention in Milwaukee where Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Mary Livermore spoke. The Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association was formed as a result of this convention, and Wolcott became the first president of the organization in 1880. She died in 1915, before women were granted full suffrage.

The records of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association are accessible as part of the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

LAURA ROSS WOLCOTT

THE FOUNDER
1826–1915, Milwaukee



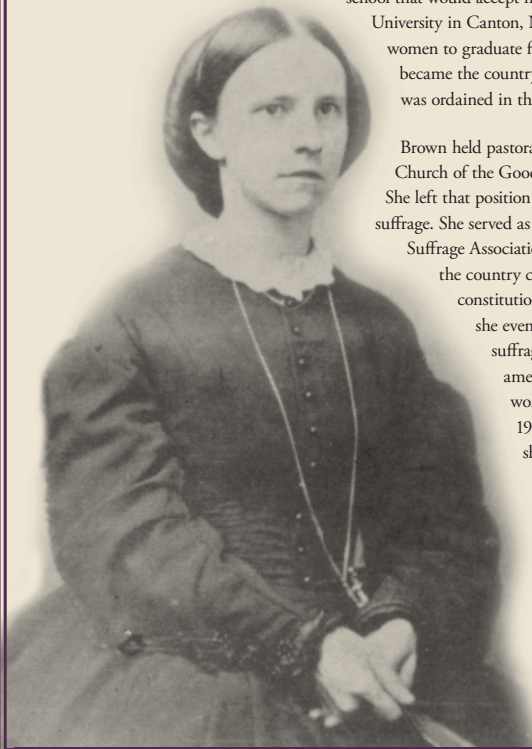
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OLYMPIA BROWN

THE BIG THINKER
1835–1926, Racine

Olympia Brown was born in a log cabin in Prairie Ronde, Michigan, and began teaching school at age 15. She struggled to find a university that would admit her, but she eventually graduated from Antioch College in Ohio in 1860. She then searched for a divinity school that would accept her and was admitted to St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York. Brown was among the first women to graduate from college in the United States, and she became the country's first woman minister in 1863 when she was ordained in the Universalist Church.

Brown held pastorates in several cities before arriving at Church of the Good Shepherd in Racine, Wisconsin, in 1878. She left that position in 1887 to focus on working for women's suffrage. She served as president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association from 1884 to 1912. She traveled across the country campaigning for the amendment of state constitutions to allow women the right to vote, and she eventually began working with a group of suffragists on passing a federal constitutional amendment to grant voting rights to all women in the country. She lived to see the 19th Amendment pass in 1920, and at age 85 she voted in her first presidential election.



WHI IMAGE ID 115683

The Woman's Hour Has Struck

Wisconsin: The First State to Ratify the 19th Amendment

THE WOMEN OF THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

The fight for women's suffrage required the skills and talents of thousands of women across the country. These Wisconsin women played pivotal roles in the success of the movement.

Belle Case was born in Summit, Wisconsin, and grew up in Baraboo. At age 16, she enrolled at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where she met the man who would become her husband, Robert M. La Follette, Sr. A skilled orator, she delivered a prize-winning commencement speech when she graduated in 1879. She then taught high school in Spring Green while her husband pursued his law degree. In 1883, she began taking law classes herself, and in 1885, she became the first woman to earn a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School.

Belle Case La Follette believed that women should have the right to vote, and she was a strong advocate for peace and equality. When her husband ran for Congress, the governorship, the US Senate, and then the presidency, she helped write his speeches and manage his campaigns. She co-edited *La Follette's Weekly Magazine*, which later became the *Progressive*, and wrote a column for the magazine called Home and Education, in which she campaigned for women's suffrage. From 1915 to 1919, she traveled the country speaking out for women's right to vote. In 1919, she was sitting in the visitors' gallery of the US Senate chamber when the 19th Amendment was approved and sent to the states for ratification.

BELLE CASE LA FOLLETTE

THE ORATOR
1859–1931, Summit,
Baraboo, and Madison



WHI IMAGE ID 3841

THEODORA WINTON YOUMANS

THE CLUBWOMAN AND
JOURNALIST
1863–1932, Ashippun and
Waukesha



WHI IMAGE ID 142391

Theodora Winton graduated from Waukesha's Carroll Academy as class valedictorian in 1880. She soon became the first woman to join the full-time staff of the *Waukesha Freeman*. By 1889, she was named assistant editor of the newspaper and worked alongside her husband, Henry Mott Youmans, who was the paper's editor. The number of women journalists in the state was growing quickly, and by the 1890s Youmans was one of 30 women working for Wisconsin newspapers. She was also very active in the women's club movement of the 1890s, during which women's clubs subtly advocated for women's rights and debated the role and influence of women in society.

It was not until 1910 that Youmans became an outspoken advocate for suffrage. The newspaper articles she wrote between 1910 and 1920 now serve as some of the best sources on the Wisconsin suffrage movement. When the 19th Amendment came to a vote in 1919, she was serving as the president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association and as the assistant editor and "suffrage writer" of the *Waukesha Freeman*. In 1920, after the passage of the amendment, she was named the first vice-president of the Wisconsin League of Women Voters. A lifelong Republican, Youmans remained active in politics until her death in 1932.

A nearly complete set of the Waukesha Freeman is accessible in the library of the Wisconsin Historical Society.



WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

THE WOMEN OF THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

Carrie Chapman Catt was born in Ripon in 1859. In 1880, she graduated from Iowa Agriculture College, where she was the only woman in her class. She worked as a law clerk, a teacher, and eventually a school principal. She married and became co-editor of her husband's newspaper, the *Republican*, where she wrote a weekly feature called *Woman's World*, which discussed the issue of women's suffrage. Catt began working for the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1890 and was soon asked by Susan B. Anthony to speak to Congress about the proposed suffrage amendment. She served as president of NAWSA from 1900 to 1904 and from 1915 to 1920. Catt also helped organize the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and traveled to other countries to promote equal voting rights worldwide.

Catt's writing and speaking for NAWSA built her reputation as a leading suffragist. She was considered a brilliant strategist and thought that the best way to promote women's suffrage was through coordinated support for World War I. This strategy worked, and Catt is often credited with creating the plan used to win suffrage for American women. After the passage of the 19th Amendment, she stepped down as NAWSA's president and founded the League of Women Voters.

Carrie Chapman Catt's 1911–1912 diaries are accessible as part of the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT

THE ACTIVIST
1859–1947, Ripon



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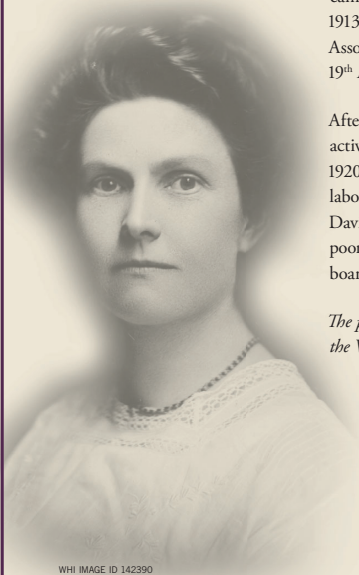
ADA JAMES

THE ORGANIZER
1876–1952, Richland Center

Ada James was a social worker, reformer, and suffragist. Born in Richland Center, James graduated from high school in 1894 and taught school for several years. Her parents were active in the women's suffrage movement, and she soon became involved in the movement as well. In 1911, she became president of the newly formed Political Equality League. It was in this role that she led a grassroots campaign for the 1912 suffrage referendum. She held the office until 1913, when the league combined with the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association; she led the combined association until the passage of the 19th Amendment.

After 1920, James remained an active grassroots organizer and social activist. She contributed to many of the reform movements of the 1920s, including temperance, pacifism, birth control advocacy, child labor reform, labor reform, and prison reform. She administered the David G. James Memorial Fund, established in 1922 for the relief of poor families in Richland County, and chaired the county children's board for many years.

The personal papers of Ada James are accessible as part of the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society.



WHI IMAGE ID 142390

USING THE VOTE

Women became leaders in the peace movement during World War I and after winning the right to vote. They formed groups with the goals of promoting peace around the world and uncovering the causes of war to prevent it from happening again.



American delegates at the 1915 International Congress of Women at The Hague, Netherlands. Julia Grace Wales is highlighted.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Records, Swarthmore College Peace Collection

In 1914, University of Wisconsin professor Julia Grace Wales created a plan for international peace called *Continuous Mediation without Armistice*, a document that came to be known as the Wisconsin Plan, which called for "a world thinking organ . . . a World Federation." This idea inspired the formation of the League of Nations after World War I and, later, the United Nations. Belle Case La Follette helped found the Woman's Peace Party in 1915 and served as honorary president of the party's Madison branch. The organization



Julia Grace Wales in 1916 during her time as a professor at the University of Wisconsin.

Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada

later became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, a group that continues its work today. Jessie Jack Hooper of Oshkosh represented the General Federation of Women's Clubs at the 1932 World Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, where she presented petitions including the signatures of almost one million people who supported international peace.



Petitions for peace at the World Disarmament Conference in 1932.

WHI IMAGE ID 142394

"We women have the power. We have the ballot, and on the issue of militarism we hold the balance of power."

—Belle Case La Follette



Wisconsin delegates hold a banner at the Seneca Falls Equal Rights Convention and Historical Pageant in 1923. Left to right: Antoinette Jackowsky-Peterson, Caroline Hipke, Anne Rotter, Lenore Cawker.

WHS ARCHIVES PH 3044



The Woman's Hour Has Struck

Wisconsin: The First State to Ratify the 19th Amendment

USING THE VOTE

Women's suffrage organizations ended when the 19th Amendment was officially ratified on August 18, 1920. However, women in Wisconsin continued to do work related to voting rights and gender equality.



A group portrait of Wisconsin's League of Women Voters in 1920. Left to right: unidentified, Jessie Jack Hooper, Jane Rogers, Theodora W. Youmans, Rachel Jastrow, Alice Curtis, Ada James, Charlotte Jordan, Emma Robinson.

WHI IMAGE ID 100039

Many members of the Political Equality League and the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association joined the new League of Women Voters of Wisconsin. The League and other civic-minded women's clubs throughout Wisconsin offered voter education classes and ran voter registration drives to get women to the polls. Within these groups, women focused on such issues as education, child welfare, and healthcare.

One of the first victories for the women of Wisconsin after winning suffrage was an equal rights amendment signed into state law on July 11, 1921. Through women's clubs and the League of Women Voters, women became informed, active participants in local, state, and national governments.



A poster issued by the Milwaukee County League of Women Voters in the 1920s urging women to vote.

WHI IMAGE ID 37894

“Every woman an intelligent voter.”

—League of Women Voters

Governor John J. Blaine shakes the hand of Mabel Raef Putnam, Wisconsin chair of the National Woman's Party, outside the Wisconsin State Capitol in 1921. Putnam holds the black quill pen Governor Blaine used to sign Wisconsin's equal rights bill, the first in the nation. Left to right: Governor Blaine, Anne Rotter, Rachel Jastrow, Kathryn Hoebel, Mabel Raef Putnam, unidentified, unidentified (possibly Anna Blaine), Louise Anderson.

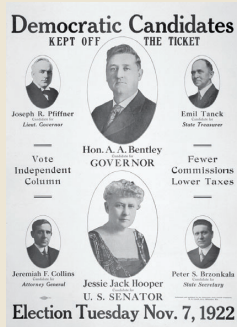
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WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

USING THE VOTE

Although the voting rights obtained under the 19th Amendment are sometimes referred to as “universal suffrage,” not all women were treated equally during the movement or after the amendment passed. Discriminatory laws based on race and citizenship kept many women away from the polls for decades after 1920. For them, the fight for voting rights continued.



A poster from Milwaukee listing Democratic candidates who were left off the ticket including Jessie Jack Hooper, who ran for the US Senate in 1922.

WHI IMAGE ID 9815

Wisconsin women who could exercise their rights began running for political office in larger numbers in the 1920s. In 1922, Jessie Jack Hooper ran as the Democratic candidate for US Senator against Senator Robert M. La Follette, Sr., the Republican incumbent. Hooper lost badly, but her campaign proved that women were motivated to run for elected office. Mildred Barber, Helen Brooks, and Helen Thompson were the first women elected to the state legislature in 1924. In 1922, Ada James became the vice-chair of the Republican State Central Committee and then chaired the Children’s Board of Richland County in the 1930s and 1940s. Countless women have followed these examples by running for office in Wisconsin and across the nation.

“I am thoroughly convinced that women will have to make as hard a struggle for positions in our governing bodies as we did for suffrage.... I believe I owe the vote I received to the women of the state. They were honestly and earnestly concerned in having me elected.”

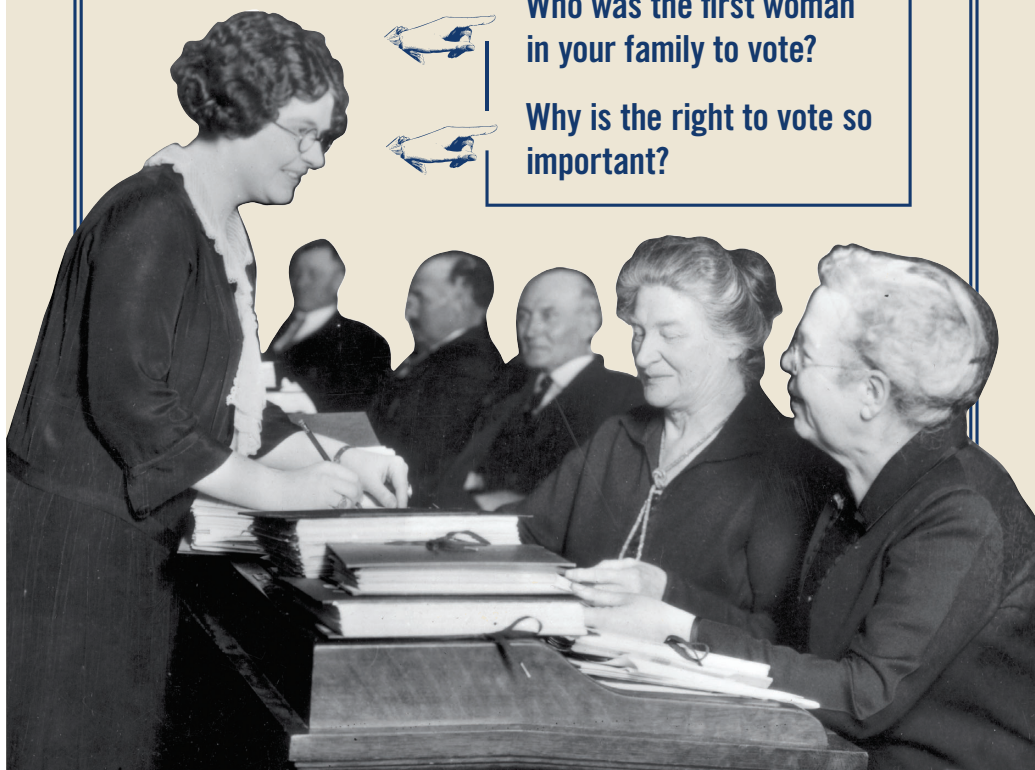
—Jessie Jack Hooper

Mildred Barber (left), Helen Thompson (second from right), and Helen Brooks (right) in the Wisconsin State Legislature in 1939. In 1924 they were the first women elected to the state legislature.

WHI IMAGE ID 65405

Who was the first woman in your family to vote?

Why is the right to vote so important?





State of Wisconsin
2019 - 2020 LEGISLATURE

LRB-2264/1
CMH:amn

2019 ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to:** celebrating June 10, 2019, as the 100th Anniversary of ratifying the
2 19th Amendment.

3 Whereas, June 10, 2019, marks the 100th anniversary of Wisconsin leading the
4 nation as the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment, allowing women the right to
5 vote; and

6 Whereas, Wisconsin women fought for the right to vote for more than a century
7 before it was granted and persevered in the face of resistance; and

8 Whereas, the national constitutional amendment for women's suffrage passed
9 overwhelmingly in the Wisconsin Assembly 54 to 2 and in the Wisconsin Senate 25
10 to 1; and

11 Whereas, to be the first state, Wisconsin raced with Illinois and Michigan,
12 appointing former State Senator David James as special messenger to transfer the
13 certification to Washington, D.C., with James hand-delivering the certification
14 moments before the Illinois messenger arrived; and

1 Whereas, Wisconsin became the first state to file the certification, other states
2 soon followed; and

3 Whereas, the necessary 36 states soon ratified the 19th Amendment; half of the
4 U.S. population was enfranchised on August 26, 1920; and

5 Whereas, the fight for women's suffrage, from the first women's rights
6 convention to enfranchisement, lasted 72 years, with women from all walks of life,
7 political views, and demographic backgrounds asking for the right to voice their
8 opinions at the polls; and

9 Whereas, Wisconsin women by the thousands advocated for the right to vote on
10 the streets, in newspapers, and in the state and federal capitols; and

11 Whereas, Wisconsin-born Carrie Chapman Catt led the national movement,
12 meeting with President Woodrow Wilson to secure his support for suffrage in light
13 of women's contributions during World War I; and

14 Whereas, Wisconsin women, like former First Lady Belle Case LaFollette and
15 Reverend Olympia Brown, garnered national attention for their suffrage efforts; and

16 Whereas, Ada James took women's right to vote to the streets and re-energized
17 suffrage efforts in 1912; and

18 Whereas, Theodora Winton Youmans helped heal the state's suffragists after
19 the failure of the 1912 referendum and continued the movement to educate
20 Wisconsin residents on the benefits of women voters; and

21 Whereas, women had been organized under the statewide structure of the
22 Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage Association since 1869; and

23 Whereas, it took male allies to support women in their endeavor to vote, for it
24 was sons, husbands, and fathers who ultimately heard the calls of women and took
25 this historic vote on June 10, 1919; and

Woman Suffrage Timeline

(1840-1920)

1840

Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are barred from attending the World Anti-Slavery Convention held in London. This prompts them to hold a Women's Convention in the US.

1848

Seneca Falls, New York is the location for the first Women's Rights Convention. Elizabeth Cady Stanton writes "The Declaration of Sentiments" creating the agenda of women's activism for decades to come.

1849

The first state constitution in California extends property rights to women.

1850

Worcester, Massachusetts, is the site of the first National Women's Rights Convention. Frederick Douglass, Paulina Wright Davis, Abby Kelley Foster, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucy Stone and Sojourner Truth are in attendance. A strong alliance is formed with the Abolitionist Movement.

1851

Worcester, Massachusetts is the site of the second National Women's Rights Convention. Participants included Horace Mann, New York Tribune columnist Elizabeth Oaks Smith, and Reverend Harry Ward Beecher, one of the nation's most popular preachers.

At a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, Sojourner Truth, a former slave, delivers her now memorable speech, "Ain't I a woman?"

1852

The issue of women's property rights is presented to the Vermont Senate by Clara Howard Nichols. This is a major issue for the Suffragists.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Harriet Beecher Stowe, is published and quickly becomes a bestseller.

1853

Women delegates, Antoinette Brown and Susan B. Anthony, are not allowed to speak at The World's Temperance Convention held in New York City.

1861-1865

During the Civil War, efforts for the suffrage movement come to a halt. Women put their energies toward the war effort.

1866

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association, an organization dedicated to the goal of suffrage for all regardless of gender or race.

1868

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Parker Pillsbury publish the first edition of *The Revolution*. This periodical carries the motto "Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less!"

Caroline Seymour Severance establishes the New England Woman's Club. The "Mother of Clubs" sparked the club movement which became popular by the late nineteenth century.

In Vineland, New Jersey, 172 women cast ballots in a separate box during the presidential election.

Senator S.C. Pomeroy of Kansas introduces the federal woman's suffrage amendment in Congress.

Many early suffrage supporters, including Susan B. Anthony, remained single because in the mid-1800s, married women could not own property in their own rights and could not make legal contracts on their own behalf.

The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified. "Citizens" and "voters" are defined exclusively as male.

1869

The American Equal Rights Association is wrecked by disagreements over the Fourteenth Amendment and the question of whether to support the proposed Fifteenth Amendment which would enfranchise Black American males while avoiding the question of woman suffrage entirely.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony found the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), a more radical institution, to achieve the vote through a Constitutional amendment as well as push for other woman's rights issues. NWSA was based in New York

Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, Julia Ward Howe and other more conservative activists form the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) to work for woman suffrage through amending individual state constitutions. AWSA was based in Boston.

Wyoming territory is organized with a woman suffrage provision.

1870

The Fifteenth Amendment gave black men the right to vote. NWSA refused to work for its ratification and instead the members advocate for a Sixteenth Amendment that would dictate universal suffrage. Frederick Douglass broke with Stanton and Anthony over the position of NWSA.

The *Woman's Journal* is founded and edited by Mary Livermore, Lucy Stone, and Henry Blackwell.

1871

Victoria Woodhull addresses the House Judiciary Committee, arguing women's rights to vote under the fourteenth amendment.

The Anti-Suffrage Party is founded.

1872

Susan B. Anthony casts her ballot for Ulysses S. Grant in the presidential election and is arrested and brought to trial in Rochester, New York. Fifteen other women are arrested for illegally voting. Sojourner Truth appears at a polling booth in Battle Creek, Michigan, demanding a ballot to vote; she is turned away.

Abigail Scott Duniway convinces Oregon lawmakers to pass laws granting a married woman's rights such as starting and operating her own business, controlling the money she earns, and the right to protect her property if her husband leaves.

1874

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) is founded by Annie Wittenmyer. With Frances Willard at its head (1876), the WCTU became an important proponent in the fight for woman suffrage. As a result, one of the strongest opponents to women's enfranchisement was the liquor lobby, which feared women might use their vote to prohibit the sale of liquor.

1876

Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage disrupt the official Centennial program at Independence Hall in Philadelphia, presenting a "Declaration of Rights for Women" to the Vice President.

1878

A Woman Suffrage Amendment is proposed in the U.S. Congress. When the 19th Amendment passes forty-one years later, it is worded exactly the same as this 1878 Amendment.

1887

The first vote on woman suffrage is taken in the Senate and is defeated.

1888

The National Council of Women in the United States is established to promote the advancement of women in society.

1890

NWSA and AWSA merge and the National American Woman Suffrage Association is formed. Stanton is the first president. The Movement focuses efforts on securing suffrage at the state level,

Wyoming is admitted to the Union with a state constitution granting woman suffrage.

The American Federation of Labor declares support for woman suffrage.

The South Dakota campaign for woman suffrage loses.

1890-1925

The Progressive Era begins. Women from all classes and backgrounds enter public life. Women's roles expand and result in an increasing politicization of women. Consequently the issue of woman suffrage becomes part of mainstream politics.

1892

Olympia Brown founds the Federal Suffrage Association to campaign for woman's suffrage.

1893

Colorado adopts woman suffrage.

1894

600,000 signatures are presented to the New York State Constitutional Convention in a failed effort to bring a woman suffrage amendment to the voters.

1895

Elizabeth Cady Stanton publishes *The Woman's Bible*. After its publication, NAWSA moves to distance itself from Stanton because many conservative suffragists considered her to be too radical and, thus, potentially damaging to the suffrage campaign.

1896

Mary Church Terrell, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Frances E.W. Harper among others found the the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs.

Utah joins the Union with full suffrage for women.

Idaho adopts woman suffrage.

1903

Mary Dreier, Rheta Childe Dorr, Leonora O'Reilly, and others form the Women's Trade Union League of New York, an organization of middle- and working-class women dedicated to unionization for working women and to woman suffrage.

1910

Washington State adopts woman suffrage.

The Women's Political Union organizes the first suffrage parade in New York City.

1911

The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) is organized. Led by Mrs. Arthur Dodge, its members included wealthy, influential women, some Catholic clergymen, distillers and brewers, urban political machines, Southern congressmen, and corporate capitalists.

The elaborate California suffrage campaign succeeds by a small margin.

1912

Woman Suffrage is supported for the first time at the national level by a major political party -- Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party.

Twenty thousand suffrage supporters join a New York City suffrage parade.

Oregon, Kansas, and Arizona adopt woman suffrage.

1913

In 1913, suffragists organized a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. The parade was the first major suffrage spectacle organized by the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

The two women then organized the Congressional Union, later known as the National Women's Party (1916). They borrowed strategies from the radical Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in England.

1914

Nevada and Montana adopt woman suffrage.

The National Federation of Women's Clubs, which had over two million women members throughout the U.S., formally endorses the suffrage campaign.

1915

Mabel Vernon and Sara Bard Field are involved in a transcontinental tour which gathers over a half-million signatures on petitions to Congress.

Forty thousand march in a NYC suffrage parade. Many women are dressed in white and carry placards with the names of the states they represent.

Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Massachusetts continue to reject woman suffrage.

1916

Jeannette Rankin of Montana is the first woman elected to the House of Representatives. Woodrow Wilson states that the Democratic Party platform will support suffrage.

1917

New York women gain suffrage.

Arkansas women are allowed to vote in primary elections.

National Woman's Party picketers appear in front of the White House holding two banners, "Mr. President, What Will You Do For Woman Suffrage?" and "How Long Must Women Wait for Liberty?"

Jeannette Rankin of Montana, the first woman elected to Congress, is formally seated in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Alice Paul, leader of the National Woman's Party, was put in solitary confinement in the mental ward of the prison as a way to "break" her will and to undermine her credibility with the public.

In June, arrests of the National Woman's party picketers begin on charges of obstructing sidewalk traffic. Subsequent picketers are sentenced to up to six months in jail. In November, the government unconditionally releases the picketers in response to public outcry and an inability to stop National Woman's Party picketers' hunger strike.

1918

Representative Rankin opens debate on a suffrage amendment in the House. The amendment passes. The amendment fails to win the required two thirds majority in the Senate.

Michigan, South Dakota, and Oklahoma adopt woman suffrage.

President Woodrow Wilson states his support for a federal woman suffrage amendment.

President Wilson addresses the Senate about adopting woman suffrage at the end of World War I.

1919

The Senate finally passes the Nineteenth Amendment and the ratification process begins.

August 26, 1920

Three quarters of the state legislatures ratify the Nineteenth Amendment.

American Women win full voting rights.

National Women's History Museum

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