Independent Women's Forum®

The Women Who Won the Vote

Celebrating 100 Years of Women's Suffrage

CHARLOTTE HAYS

Foreward by Ambassador Nikki R. Haley

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To all of my colleagues at Independent Women's Forum who fight every day to support policies that ensure healthy communities so people can pursue their own visions of happiness.

Table of Contents

Foreward

Ambassador Nikki R. Haley

It's a day that America will always remember—August 18, 1920, when the women of this great country won the right to vote. So, first thing's first: Happy hundredth anniversary!

All across America, women—and men, too—will celebrate the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Independent Women's Forum is helping lead the way. When IWF asked me to write the foreword, I was thrilled. It's an honor to help tell one of the greatest stories in American history—one that holds lessons about our country's past, present, and future.

This story of courage and empowerment and leadership never gets boring, no matter how often it's told. When the 19th Amendment was ratified, it marked the fulfillment of decades of hard work. In these pages, you'll meet some of the amazing women who made that day possible. When many of them started down that road, success looked unlikely, if not impossible. But they didn't give up. They pushed forward, and they changed history.

Who were these incredible women?

Most of us have heard their names, but many still don't know their stories. Susan B. Anthony took up the cause before the Civil War, as did many others. While she died before the 19th Amendment, her unmatched efforts in the 19th Century helped make the ultimate victory possible. Sojourner Truth was born a slave, walked to freedom, and lent her voice to equal rights for Americans of all races and both genders. Jeannette Rankin, as the first female member of Congress, introduced the legislation that ultimately became the right to vote.

These are just a few of the strong women profiled in this book. As you read about their lives, you're sure to be inspired all over again. If you're anything like me, you'll see this book as an introduction to the topic, not the final word. After all, there are many others who played an important role. We should remember not just the women whose names we know, but also the countless others who aren't recorded in the history books. This was a movement of millions, all of whom deserve our thanks.

But the story of women's suffrage isn't just a matter of *who*. Just as important is *what* they achieved.

When women won the right to vote, they won a victory for the American ideal of equal rights for all. They built on the victories of earlier generations. Just as the Founders created a country dedicated to the idea that all of us are created equal, and just as the abolitionists ended the monstrous evil of slavery, the suffragettes made sure that women weren't excluded from American democracy. They moved the entire country closer to upholding its original promise.

Of course, suffrage wasn't the first barrier that women had to break down in America. And it certainly won't be the last. Before winning the right to vote, women fought for the right to own property, keep their income, and get an education. With every barrier they toppled, these freedom fighters kept going, ready to turn their attention to the next one. They kept going no matter who or what stood in their way.

This makes the story of women's suffrage even more amazing. It was the capstone of a cultural transformation that totally changed how America treated women. How's that for an accomplishment?

So, the story of the right to vote for women has an inspiring *who* and an incredible *what*. But it's also worth thinking about *how* the 19th Amendment came to be.

There's no question that women's suffrage was a matter of right and wrong. It was about justice and liberty and equality, which are all American values that deserve the strongest support. Given what was at stake, it would have been easy for the suffragettes to resent and reject America for violating its founding principles and their rights. Considering how many barriers they faced, and how long it took to break them down, they could have simply said that America was unjust and irredeemable.

But they didn't. They took to the streets, but they didn't turn to violence or vandalism. They made their voices heard, but they didn't shout down those who disagreed. They took a reasoned approach, not a radical one, which united the country rather than divide it. Is it any wonder that they moved America forward and made it a much better country for us all?

I bring this up because it holds some important lessons for our country today. As I write this, the entire country is having a debate about racism, racial injustice, and equal treatment under the law. At times, the debate has spiraled downward into violence and destruction. Even when it hasn't, a growing number of people have taken the view that America is bad to the core. We're hearing a lot about how our country needs to be torn down and rebuilt so that it looks nothing like it does right now.

The women of the suffrage movement show us a better way. They saw major flaws in the country, but their answer was to fix those flaws, not break everything else. They did the hard work of convincing others and bringing them along (or to their side). Ultimately, they embraced America instead of rejecting it. That should be our model as we work together to make these United States more free, more just, and more equal for all.

America isn't perfect. But the principles at the heart of America are. Our job today is to follow in the footsteps of the suffragettes, and all who've poured their hearts into making our country's promises a reality. One of the best ways we can do that is by using the very thing that the suffragettes fought to give us. It's up to us to *vote*.

Every time we vote, we honor the women who made it possible, including those you'll read about in this book. Every time we vote, we have a chance to make America that much better, with more opportunity, prosperity, safety, and security for everyone—women, men, and children alike. If the women's suffrage movement teaches us anything, it's that we can't wait for someone else to do the right thing. We have to be out there, in the fight.

If you're reading this book, I suspect you're on the front lines already. Thank you. Across America, there are plenty of courageous women out there who would make those in this book proud. We need more of them—in politics, yes, but not only there. We need loud and proud women from all walks of life who will stand up and speak out for the values that make our country the greatest the world has ever seen. We need to inspire a new generation of principled, powerful women who will give their all to make America greater still.

That's the story told in this book. But it doesn't end on the last page. The story of American progress is still being written right now. We've come a long way over the last century, but we've still got a lot of work to do. I'll do my part, and I'm confident that you will join me. After all, the women of America always rise to meet the moment.

God bless,

Nikki R. Haley

Introduction

Charlotte Hays

It was the war of the roses. Women from rival camps—the suffragists sporting yellow roses in their lapels, and anti-suffragists announcing their opposition with red roses—circulated around the lobby of the Beaux-Arts Hermitage Hotel in Nashville, located across the street from the Tennessee state capitol building. It was August 1920, crunch time.

Thirty-five states had voted to ratify the 19th Amendment—dubbed the Susan B. Anthony Amendment—and eight states had rejected the amendment. Three states declined to entertain a vote on the Amendment. Only one more state was needed to reach the magic number—36—to make the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote, part of the U.S. Constitution. Tennessee, where the vote was expected to be a squeaker, was make or break.

The Hermitage was the place to be, as was evident from the number of top politicians making the trek across the street to huddle with the women. Tennessee was calling a special session of the legislature to vote on the Amendment. Ignoring Prohibition, the anti-suffragists plied the legislators with so much alcohol that their mezzanine suite was

called "Jack Daniel's suite." This was a not too subtle reminder that many suffragists had been stalwarts of the temperance movement, and, once dangerously armed with the vote, these harridans might take off after the liquor business. Meanwhile, in Suite 309, Carrie Chapman Catt, the brilliant political strategist, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, the handpicked successor of the revered Susan B. Anthony, was certain her phone was tapped. It very well might have been.

A resolution supporting the 19th Amendment passed the Tennessee State Senate and attention turned feverishly to the state House of Representatives. The vote in the state house was tied, which meant that the Amendment would be defeated, when suddenly Harry T. Burn, age 24 and the youngest member of the state house, still wearing his anti-suffragist red rose in his lapel, cast a surprise vote for the Amendment. In his pocket was a letter from his mother, Febb Ensminger Burn, a former school teacher, who now ran the family farm. Mom urged:

> *Hurrah and vote for Suffrage and don't keep them in doubt. I noticed Chandlers' speech, it was very bitter. I've been watching to see how you stood but have not seen anything yet ... Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Thomas Catt with her "Rats." Is she the one that put rat in ratification, Ha! No more from mama this time.*

On August 18, 1920, American women gained the right to vote. Governor Albert H. Roberts of Tennessee certified the results and sent them along to Washington, D.C., where they were received two days later. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby officially declared that the 19th Amendment had passed. It was signed by President Woodrow Wilson, a latecomer to the cause of women's suffrage. It reads:

It has been a long road with many twists and turns. The Susan B. Anthony Amendment had been put before Congress in 1878, introduced by Senator A.A. Sargent, a California Republican and friend of Anthony's. The Amendment failed repeatedly. You may be surprised to know that when the version that passed was brought before Congress in 1919 had stronger Republican than Democratic support.

> *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.*

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the amendment in May. The vote was 304 to 89, with Republicans voting 200 to 19 in favor, and Democrats a lagging 104 to 70 in favor. The Amendment then went to the Senate, where the Democrats voted for it only by 20 to 17, but the Republicans voted 36 to 8, ensuring that the Amendment was at last passed and sent to the states for ratification. Southern Democrats, concerned about African American women receiving the vote, were a solid block against the Amendment.

The suffragists who brought the 19th Amendment to fruition were not a monolithic lot. There were bluestocking Quaker women who were originally attracted to women's suffrage through the abolitionist movement, a former slave who gave one of the most rousing speeches in the annals of American oratory, a firebrand who learned her tactics from the most radical suffragettes in England, and the founder of a Republican women's club. As with most vibrant movements, there were factional splits, big quarrels over big ideas, and reunions.

Not one of these women was a victim or shrinking violet. When somebody said they couldn't do something, such graduate from Oberlin

College, the first college to admit women, they just did it. Some had great, supportive marriages, and some eschewed marriage as an impediment to activism. Oh, yes, and they loved to issue declarations and statements. When one married the love of her life, the couple just naturally issued a statement on the general oppressiveness of marriage in society at large. Hard to imagine anyone oppressing any one of these dynamos, however.

Along the way, in addition to securing the right to vote, they enlarged our worlds in different ways. Because we're used to seeing professional women in high places, we may not realize that several suffragists, who had studied the law, were denied membership in their state bar associations for no other reason that they were women. The vast legion of women lawyers today might find a patron saint in one of the women in this book.

Next time you step into court, Ms. Counsellor, say a silent thanks to Myra Bradwell, whose memory should be revived as we celebrate the 19th Amendment. Bradwell took her case to the U. S. Supreme Court, which sided with the Illinois bar in turning down her bar membership. The Illinois bar conferred membership on her late in life, after she had enjoyed an outstanding career editing an influential legal journal.

Women's property rights and equal pay were also causes the suffragists embraced and worked for in state legislatures. The Married Women's Property Act, passed in New York in 1848, gave women control over their property and stipulated it could not be seized by her husband's creditors. Susan B. Anthony and other suffragists led the way towards revising property rights for women. Myriad state and federal laws—including the Civil Rights Act and the Equal Pay Act—outlaw baseless sex discrimination in the workplace. When you factor in the choices that women make, whether to take time out to raise a family, for example, there is today almost no wage gap between men and women. This tremendous progress toward greater justice began with the suffragists.

Interestingly, the American suffrage movement, which started in New York and New England, took root most quickly in the Western states and territories. The Wyoming Territory granted women the right to vote in

1869, becoming the first state or territory to do so. Utah, Colorado, and Idaho quickly followed. These states may have adopted women's suffrage early because pioneers left behind the social strictures of older parts of the country, or simply because they needed to attract women to the developing states and territories.

Illinois granted women the partial right to vote in 1913 (women could vote in any election in which voting rights were not restricted to men by state law). New York state passed women's suffrage by a referendum in 1917. Carrie Chapman Catt, who advocated using states that granted suffrage to pressure on a national level, was active in the New York campaign. This strategy was part of her "Winning Plan" that culminated on that raucous day in Tennessee, August 18, 1920.

Today, women not only vote, but are determining our country's path forward as leaders in academia, business, politics and every sphere of life. Independent Women's Forum recognizes the debt we owe to the early leaders of the women's movement who stood up for equality and equal opportunity for women. They not only changed history, but provide an example of all that people can accomplish in spite of prejudice and tremendous obstacles.

This book tells the story of 12 women who contributed to the passage of the 19th Amendment. Some names may be familiar, but others you likely have never heard of. But each of these women's work helped shape the last 100 years since women were, at long last, granted the right to vote.

SUFFRAGIST ONE

Susan B. Anthony

1820–1906

When the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which gave women the right to vote, was adopted on August 26, 1920, it was dubbed the "Susan B. Anthony Amendment," honoring a woman who had died in 1906. An "Anthony Amendment," which was substantially similar to the 19th Amendment, had first been introduced in 1878.

Susan B. Anthony's struggles over more than five decades of organizing, speaking out publicly, being shouted down, holding meetings, scraping together money for the cause, and sometimes disagreeing with her fellow suffragists over strategy, helped make the 19th Amendment possible. Anthony and her friend and associate, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, are today among the best-remembered of the indomitable nineteenth century suffragists.

"I have encountered riotous mobs, and I have been hung in effigy," she once recalled, adding that none of this could make her waver from her motto: "Men their rights and nothing more; women their rights, and nothing less."

"There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers," Anthony said.

She was a stern-looking woman, generally garbed in black, with, in later life, rimless glasses and her hair pulled back. Anthony radiated fearlessness. "Cautious, careful people," she said, "always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing, never can bring about a reform. Those who are really in earnest must be willing to be anything or nothing in the world's estimation, and publicly and privately, in season and out, avow their sympathy with despised and persecuted ideas and their advocates, and bear the consequence."

> *Perhaps because of this Quaker heritage, Susan did not immediately see voting rights essential for equality.*

Susan B. Anthony was born into the high moral seriousness of a prosperous Quaker family in Adams, Mass., in 1820. Her father, Daniel, owned a mill. Her mother, Lucy, was not a Quaker but gave up dancing and other activities frivolous in the eyes of the Friends to marry Daniel. As a mill owner, Daniel Anthony made every effort to avoid buying cotton that had been produced by slave-labor. If it were not for a whim of the Anthony children, Susan would be known to posterity as mere Susan Anthony, but the middle-name-less brood, of their own accord, felt the need to bestow upon themselves middle names. Susan's "B" is for Brownell, the name of her Aunt Susan's husband.

Quakers believed in educating women and Susan was taught in a home school before being sent to a Friends' women's seminary near Philadelphia (until Daniel suffered financial reverses). It was at the Philadelphia school that she became friends with Lydia Mott, member of another prominent Quaker family, and cousin by marriage of the more famous Lucretia Mott. Both Motts worked with Susan in the movement for women's rights.

After the Anthony family moved to Rochester, New York, their residence became a Sunday gathering place for the anti-slavery

Susan B. Anthony (1820—1906), late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

movement. Among the anti-slavery luminaries Susan met at the Anthony house were the former slave Frederick Douglas, William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the abolitionist newspaper The Liberator, abolitionist orator Wendell Phillips, and perhaps the fieriest of them all, Parker Pillsbury, also an ardent supporter of women's rights. They regarded the Constitution as pro-slavery and their cry was, "No Union with Slaveholders." Daniel Anthony followed the Quaker custom of refusing to vote (Quakers did not want to be complicit in a government that waged war).

Perhaps because of this Quaker heritage, Susan did not immediately see voting rights essential for equality. Indeed, Anthony came to believe "that the right which woman needed above every other, the one indeed which would secure to her all the others, was the right of suffrage."

Modern readers may be surprised at another cause that Susan B. Anthony embraced: temperance, which attracted the efforts of a number of suffragists. Susan became president of the Rochester chapter of the Daughters of Temperance. Many suffragists believed that divorce laws should be liberalized to take into consideration the plight of women married to serious abusers of alcohol.

Supporting herself as a school teacher, Anthony also found herself learning about another cause, women's rights. She was impressed with the high moral caliber of men and women who were taking part in this movement, according to her biographer Alma Lutz.

Many suffragists believed that divorce laws should be liberalized to take into consideration the plight of women married to serious abusers of alcohol.

Anthony began to yearn to meet Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton was author of the famous "Declaration of Sentiments," a milestone document in the history of women's rights, issued at a women's convention held at Stanton's Seneca Falls, New York residence. When the two women met in 1851, Anthony and Stanton instantly liked each other. Unlike the plainspoken, unmarried Anthony, Stanton came from wealth and was married to the

abolitionist Henry Stanton, with whom she had seven children. Stanton became the one who provided the intellectual ballast for the movement, while Anthony's organizational and oratorical skills led her to be called "the Napoleon" of the suffragist movement. Or as Stanton characterized the way they worked together, "I forged the thunderbolts, she fired them."

"I forged the thunderbolts, she fired them."

Anthony gave her first public speech on women's rights at the National Women's Right Convention in Syracuse, New York in 1852. She traveled extensively to speak on women's rights, organized and spoke at numerous conventions, and campaigned for property rights for married women in New York.

Anthony disapproved of the Civil War but felt that, if it were being waged, complete emancipation, not preservation of the union, had to be the stated cause. When the Fourteen Amendment, which granted citizenship to those born and naturalized in the United States, and Fifteenth Amendment, which said that the right to vote should not be abridged by "on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude," were being debated, Anthony insisted that women should be included specifically. Anthony and Stanton, unlike some suffragists, had come to believe that women's suffrage should not be fought primarily through states but that a federal amendment was the better path.

Stanton's and Anthony's new-found reliance on a federal amendment and insistence that women should be specifically named in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment split the women's movement. When the Fifteenth Amendment was being publicly debated, Susan's old friend Frederick Douglass quoted Julia Ward Howe, author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, saying, "I am willing that the Negro should get the ballot before me. I cannot see how anyone can pretend that there is the same urgency in giving the ballot to women as to the Negro."

Despite their warm and longstanding friendship, Douglass and Anthony engaged in a fiery debate. Anthony's protest against the

ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, unless it included women, earned a rebuke from the famous newspaper editor Horace Greeley. "This is the Negro's hour," he told her. "Your turn will come next." Anthony, rooted as she was in the abolitionist movement, "saw no disloyalty" to the cause of enfranchisement of blacks, biographer Lutz notes, but she was convinced the amendments were inadequate because they overlooked women.

A significant portion of suffragists opposed Anthony and Stanton on the amendments and also disliked the fiery tone of their magazine, The Revolution. Meanwhile, Anthony and Stanton were embracing a new interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment under which a woman's right to vote was tacitly upheld. Francis Minor, a St. Louis lawyer, argued that the Fourteenth Amendment did give women the right to vote, though it did not specifically name them. "To claim the right to vote

Portrait of Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906) seated at a desk. Anthony was a leader in the abolitionist and women's suffrage movements.

under the Fourteenth Amendment made a great appeal to both Susan and Elizabeth Stanton," wrote Lutz.

> *A significant portion of suffragists opposed Anthony and Stanton on the amendments and also disliked the fiery tone of their magazine, The Revolution.*

This claim led to one of the most dramatic episodes on Anthony's public life: her arrest and trial for voting in the 1872 presidential election. Anthony and several other female aspiring voters walked into the barber shop in Rochester, New York that served as a voter registration office on the first day of November that year. When election inspectors refused to accede to Anthony's demands that she be registered to vote, under the Fourteenth Amendment, knew what to do. "If you refuse us our rights as citizens, I will bring charges against you in Criminal Court and I will sue each of you personally for large, exemplary damages!" She added, "There is any amount of money to back me, and if I have to, I will push to the 'last ditch' in both courts."

The inspectors capitulated. A few days later, on November 5, Anthony and several other women cast their votes for president. "Well I have been & gone & done it!!–positively voted the Republican ticket–strait this a.m. at 7 O clock–& swore my vote in at that–was registered on Friday....then on Sunday others some 20 or thirty other women tried to register, but all save two were refused," Anthony wrote to Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

On November 18, a U.S. Marshall knocked on the door to fetch Anthony to the office of the commissioner who would formally arrest her. "I sent word to [the commissioner] that I had no social acquaintance with him and didn't wish to call on him," the spunky gray-haired lady with a shawl recalled saying. Anthony ended up going to the office to be arrested. She saw it as a publicity bonanza for the cause. While awaiting trial, Anthony embarked on a frenetic lecture tour. Her talk was entitled "Is It a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?"

When the trial opened on June 17, 1873 in Canandaigua, the courtroom was packed. The defense argued that Anthony sincerely believed that she was entitled to vote under the Fourteenth Amendment and thus she could not be prosecuted for "knowingly" committing a crime. But it hardly mattered what the defense said. After the arguments, the judge reached in his pocket for a prepared statement. The judge said that the Fourteenth Amendment didn't apply and directed the jury to return a guilty verdict. After the verdict, Anthony's lawyer requested that the jury be polled but was turned down. Anthony, after making a passionate statement, over the judge's orders to sit down, was sentenced to a fine of $100. Anthony said she would never pay the fine and she did not.

Many observers in the courtroom judged that Susan B. Anthony had more than held her own and that she had carried the day. True to form, Anthony regarded the proceedings as a good way to publicize the suffrage issue and made sure transcripts found its way onto the desks of opinion makers of the day.

Susan B. Anthony's oft-repeated rallying cry was, "Failure is impossible." During the last months of her long life, she was asked if women would ever be able to vote in the United States. "It will come, but I shall not see it," she said. "It is inevitable." Her faith was justified on August 26, 1920, when the 19th Amendment proved that for Susan B. Anthony failure was really not an option.

Susan B. Anthony Dollar Coin.

SUFFRAGIST TWO

Lucy Stone

1818–1893

In 1921, a year after the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote, a marble statue of suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott was unveiled in the U.S. Capitol, the gift of women's organizations around the U.S.

In a way, there was a missing woman: Lucy Stone.

When these famous suffragists were in the thick of the battle for women's suffrage, Stone was generally ranked with Stanton and Anthony as a triumvirate. Stone was a compelling and appealing speaker and hands down the leading orator of the women's suffrage movement. She was instrumental in organizing the first national woman's rights convention in 1850, in Worcester, Mass., and she and Anthony worked together to organize subsequent conventions. Stone was the first Massachusetts woman to obtain a college degree.

She enjoyed a highly fulfilling marriage to the abolitionist Henry Browne Blackwell, though they began their married life by issuing what they called a "Protest" over the status of women in marriage. It used to

be that women who continued to use their maiden names after marriage were known as "Lucy Stoners."

Stone's biographer Sally G. McMillen, author of *Lucy Stone: An Unapologetic Life*, calls Stone's absence in the Capitol Rotunda "nearly astonishing." But not entirely accidental: Stone eventually split from Anthony and Stanton, primarily over whether women should endorse the Fifteenth Amendment, which gave former slaves but not women, the right to vote. Unlike Anthony and Stanton, Stone supported the Fifteenth Amendment.

> *"Well, whether we like it or not, little woman, God has made you an Orator."*

Because of the split, Stone was slighted in the book Anthony and Stanton wrote about the history of women's suffrage, McMillen proposes. Stone, however, was once known as the "heart and soul" of the movement. "Where is [Lucy Stone's] monument, reaching upward to the stars? For one, I believe that it is too long delayed," wrote the curmudgeonly sage of Baltimore, H. L. Mencken, in a 1930 review of Stone's daughter's biography of her mother.

Lucy Stone was born August 13, 1818 on a farm at Coy's Hill near West Brookfield, Massachusetts, the daughter of Francis and Hannah Stone. The Stones had come from England to New England seeking religious freedom in the 1630s, where Lucy's grandfather had been an officer in the American Revolution. They were rooted in the Congregational Church and staunch abolitionists.

The Stones were far from rich. Lucy, one of nine children, worked on the farm and sewed shoes to sell. Lucy was, at one time, required to make nine pairs a day, according to her daughter, because she was so fast with her needle. "There was but one will in our home, and that was my father's," Lucy recalled. Francis Stone was a heavy, sometimes verbally abusive, drinker and notoriously stingy with money. Lucy went into the woods and collected chestnuts to sell to buy a book when

Portrait of Lucy Stone, circa 1860s.

Francis refused to buy it for her. Despite this, Lucy regarded her childhood as a happy one and as an adult would reminisce about what she remembered as the "opulent" food produced on the farm.

At the age of sixteen, Lucy was teaching in a district school for the sum of a dollar a week. She had conceived a desire for further education and began saving for it. Neither of her parents approved of this ambition, though Francis gladly paid for college tuition for her brothers.

In 1839, having saved the money, Lucy became a student at Mary Lyon's Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Lucy spent three months at Mount Holyoke, clashing with Lyon after Lucy placed a copy of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator* newspaper in the reading room. Lyon warned Lucy that abolition was a matter on which opinion was divided.

> *Stone was acknowledged leader of the fifth National Women's Rights Convention, held in Philadelphia in 1854.*

By 1843, Lucy had saved enough money to enroll at Oberlin Collegiate Institute in Ohio, the first college in the U.S. to accept women. By this time, Lucy had been inspired by Sarah Grimke's *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes*. Because of finances, Lucy was 29 when she graduated from Oberlin. She was offered the opportunity to have a paper she had written read by a male graduate during graduation festivities but declined if she could not deliver it herself. As graduation approached, Lucy announced her intention to embark on a career in the cause of abolition. William Lloyd Garrison hired her as a public lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society. She sometimes found she could not resist interjecting "the women question" into her lectures.

Lucy Stone quickly became one of the most sought-after anti-slavery lecturers in the country. "Lucy is queen of us all," another lecturer observed. Frederick Douglass, the former slave, praised her as "one of the most attractive and effective advocates" for the cause of abolition.

It must be said that Lucy had an offbeat kind of femininity. She was tiny, barely a hundred pounds, with a rosy complexion, sweet voice, and blessed with what McMillen calls "an innocence and seductive appeal." Mencken described her as "saucy."

The couple issued their "Protest," jointly composed, which criticized laws on marriage.

This did not mean that Lucy was not pelted with rotten vegetables, or that hostile crowds did not taunt her or try to shout her down. On one occasion, she was physically attacked. But she was recognized as a spell-binding, brave, and impassioned orator. A newspaper reporter once wrote, "Well, whether we like it or not, little woman, God has made you an Orator."

One of the people drawn to Lucy was the abolitionist Henry Browne Blackwell, who is regarded as one of the founders of the Republican Party. Henry began to pursue Lucy, but the impediment was that she was determined that she would never marry. She softened after he rescued a slave girl from her master and mistress as they traveled through a free state. Lucy and Henry were married May 1, 1855 in the Stone family farmhouse, which was decorated with orange blossoms. The couple issued their "Protest," jointly composed, which criticized laws on marriage. "This action on our part," they wrote, referring to their marriage, "implies no sanction of, nor promise of voluntary obedience to such of the present laws that refuse to recognize a wife as an independent, rational being, while they confer upon the husband an injurious and unnatural superiority." Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the Unitarian minister who performed the marriage ceremony, released the Protest to the press. It became a national sensation.

It should be noted that Henry Blackwell is widely believed to have had an affair during the marriage. But, if that is the case, it ended without breaking up the marriage. Henry always played second fiddle to Lucy, but it was by all accounts a deeply fulfilling union for both.

Lucy was acknowledged leader of the fifth National Women's Rights Convention, held in Philadelphia in 1854. It was at this meeting that there was a foreshadowing of the coming clash with Anthony and Stanton. The women at this meeting considered and then rejected adopting the 1848 Seneca Falls Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, according to Sally McMillen's authoritative biography of Stone. The Declaration of Sentiments, the product of the famous Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, was authored by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The Philadelphia convention found, according to McMillen, that "it placed too much blame on men and offered more grievances than goals."

In a suffragists version of addressing the work-life balance issue, Lucy reduced her lecturing and organizing briefly after the birth of Alice Stone Blackwell in 1857. Susan B. Anthony, who didn't like it when suffragists married and began fussing over their infants, didn't approve. While caring for Alice, Lucy found an opportunity to engage in civil disobedience, however. Lucy refused to pay her New Jersey taxes in 1857, citing the injustice of the laws regarding women as her reason. Some household goods were seized and sold at auction. The heroism of this particular act of civil disobedience might be dimmed somewhat, however, as a friendly neighbor purchased the items and returned them to Lucy, as had been planned in advance.

Susan B. Anthony, who didn't like it when suffragists married and began fussing over their infants, didn't approve.

Stone split with Anthony and Stanton over the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution in 1869. Stone and other more moderate suffragists such as Julia Ward Howe, author of the words of The Battle Hymn of the Republic, were willing to embrace the amendments, even though they did not extend suffrage to women. "Mrs. Stone has felt the slaves' wrongs more deeply than her own—my philosophy was more egotistical," said Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Stone and Howe founded the American Woman's Suffrage Association, in opposition to Stanton and Anthony's National Woman Suffrage Association. Stone served as editor of the *Women's Journal*, a more moderate publication than Stanton and Anthony's *The Revolution.* Julia Ward Howe did some of the editing for the *Women's Journal.* Her daughter Alice Stone Blackwell became editor after Lucy died in 1893. By that time, *The Revolution* had long since folded and the Journal was the established paper of the suffragist movement.

Lucy Stone lived to see the two factions of the suffragists movement reunite in 1890. But by this time, Stanton and Anthony in their writings had slighted one of the most interesting of the great 19th century suffragists in their histories and recollections. Perhaps 2020, when women celebrate the 19th Amendment, will be a good year for the memory of Lucy Stone.

SUFFRAGIST THREE

Lucretia Mott

1793–1880

Although Lucretia Mott was elected as an American delegate to the World Anti-Slavery Convention, held in London in 1840, upon arriving the renowned Quaker preacher learned that women would not be seated. Of course, that didn't stop Mrs. Mott from becoming one of the most memorable figures at the meeting, speaking at associated gatherings, and even being depicted in the famous Benjamin Robert Haydon commemorative portrait of the event.

"Nobody doubted that Lucretia Mott was the lioness of the convention," a reporter wrote. "She is a thin, petite, dark-complexioned woman, about fifty years of age. She has striking intellectual features, and bright vivacious eyes." She wore the distinctive monochrome apparel of a member of the Society of Friends, or Quaker.

In the history of women's suffrage, the London convention has a special place. It is where Lucretia met Elizabeth—that would be Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The two women would collaborate on the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, the first woman's rights convention in the U.S., and

the Declaration of Sentiments, which came out of the convention. In its fiery radicalism, the Declaration of Sentiments, though not universally accepted by suffragists, even at the time, remains a key historical document in the suffrage movement.

> *Lucretia Mott, abolitionist, Quaker preacher, suffragist, and one of the founders of Swarthmore College, was one of the most famous women of her day.*

Lucretia Mott, abolitionist, Quaker preacher, suffragist, and one of the founders of Swarthmore College, was one of the most famous women of her day. She is not as well-known today, though that could change with a new scholarly interest in her. "Although a major figure in the reform movements of the nineteenth century," the website of the Lucretia Coffin Mott Papers Project at Pomona College observes, "Mott's importance has been under-estimated by the public and scholars until recently." The 100th anniversary of women's suffrage is likely to put her in the spotlight once again.

Lucretia Coffin was born in 1793 on the island of Nantucket, to whaling ship captain Thomas Coffin and Anna Folger, through whom Lucretia could claim cousinship to Benjamin Franklin. The Coffins were Quakers, and throughout her life Lucretia dressed as a Quaker and employed the Quaker terms "thee" and "thy" in addressing others. It can be momentarily disconcerting to read her letters and find her addressing the firebrand Stanton as "thee." The Quaker religion combined with the demands of life in Nantucket fostered a spirit of independence among Nantucket women.

"In the monthly meetings of the Friends (Quakers) on that island," Mott recalled in a letter to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "the Women have long been regarded as the stronger part—This is owning in some measure to so many men being away at sea. During the absence of their husbands, Nantucket women have been compelled to transact business, often going to Boston, to procure supplies of goods, exchanging for oil, candles,

Circa 1850: Portrait of Lucretia Mott

whalebone, etc. This has made them adept in trade. They have kept their own accounts and indeed acted the part of men. Then education and intellectual culture have been for years equal for girls and boys, so that women are prepared to be companions of man in every sense, and their social circles are never divided."

> *In the 1850s, the Mott residence became a stop on the Underground Railroad that helped fugitive slaves escape to freedom.*

The Coffins moved to Boston when she was a child, and, at the age of 13, Lucretia was sent to Nine Partners, a Quaker school in New York state. She was an assistant teacher when she met fellow teacher James Mott, member of an old Quaker family. They married in 1811, setting up housekeeping in Philadelphia. Both James and Lucretia were abolitionists. James at one time was engaged in a lucrative cotton business but quit because cotton was produced by slave labor. In the 1850s, the Mott residence became a stop on the Underground Railroad that helped fugitive slaves escape to freedom. In her twenties, Lucretia was recognized as a minister in the Society of Friends in 1821.

Mott and Stanton appear to remember the seminal London conference of 1840 differently. Stanton would later write that, after being barred from taking their seats, the two women "walked home, arm in arm, commenting on the incidents of the day, we resolved to hold a convention as soon as we returned home, and form a society to advocate the rights of women."

Mott never provided a memory of this encounter. James Mott did not mention it in "Three Months in Great Britain," his report on the couple's experiences surrounding the London conference. "The absence illustrates the two women's different understandings of the wellspring of women's rights," Mott biographer Carol Faulkner writes. Mott's support for the suffrage movement, Faulkner suggests, "flowed less from her outrage at exclusion than from her notions of individual liberty and common humanity."

Mott may also have been more intensely focused on the abolitionist cause at the moment.

At any rate, the Seneca Falls Convention took place eight years later. It was held in a Wesleyan chapel in Seneca Falls, New York, where Stanton lived. Despite its place in suffrage history, it was not a woman who presided over the proceedings. James Mott, described as "tall and dignified, in Quaker costume," chaired the convention. Stanton read the famous "Declaration of Sentiments," on which she and Lucretia Mott had collaborated, and which was written to recall the Declaration of Independence. It began, "When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have heretofore occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course."

The Declaration of Sentiments included 12 resolutions, all of which were passed.

Despite the use of the word *mankind*, which some advanced thinkers might want to censor today, the Declaration was actually quite advanced, and will appear so still for those who actually read and ponder it. It describes history as "repeated injuries and usurpations" by men toward women. It accuses men of endeavoring to "destroy [women's] confidences in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life." It is a powerful document that should be read and discussed as we approach the 100th anniversary of our suffrage.

The Declaration included 12 resolutions, all of which were passed. Interestingly, the only one that wasn't passed unanimously concerned the right to vote. It was deemed too radical and indeed, when passed, opened the suffragists to ridicule. Stanton fought hard for it. Lucretia Mott originally questioned this resolution. Quakers were skeptical about participation in electoral politics. However, Mott ultimately embraced

suffrage. She and James Mott voted for the resolution and signed the Declaration. The Encyclopedia Britannica states that this resolution "served as the cornerstone of the woman suffrage movement that culminated in passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920."

The year after Seneca Falls, Lucretia Mott delivered her famous "Discourse on Women." It was in response to lawyer and memoirist Richard Henry Dana's insistence that women were best suited to the domestic sphere. While affirming the innate differences between men and women, Mott said that women could flourish in pursuits then more commonly open to men.

"We would admit," Mott said, "all the difference that our great and beneficent Creator has made, in the relation of man and woman, nor would we seek to disturb this relation; but we deny that the present position of woman is her true sphere of usefulness: nor will she attain [her true]sphere until the disabilities and disadvantages, religious, civil, and social, which impede her progress, are removed."

The portrait monument to Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony statue sits in the Capitol building rotunda in Washington, D.C

Mott was a woman with a remarkable presence. She was once engulfed by a furious mob, protesting her reform activities. She took the arm of one of the rowdies and directed him to escort her home. He led her to safety. "[T]here was a magic in her eloquence, a power in her calm, deliberate but pitiless logic that seemed to sway the minds of her hearers even against their will," according to a reminiscence in a memorial book compiled by her friend and fellow Quaker, the poet John Greenleaf Whittier.

> *While affirming the innate differences between men and women, Mott argued that women could flourish in pursuits then more commonly open to men.*

Lucretia Mott died in 1880, but we expect to hear her eloquence recalled as this year we move towards the centennial of women's suffrage, a cause she embraced, at first with reservations, and then wholeheartedly.

SUFFRAGIST FOUR

Julia Ward Howe

1819–1910

When young women visited Julia Ward Howe, famous author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," and crusader for extending the franchise to women, they inevitably asked the suffragist sage what they should do to prepare for their futures. "Study Greek, my dear, it's better than a diamond necklace," she suggested.

That was Howe. Erudite, original, and literary. Julia Ward Howe will forever be remembered as the author of the immortal, thumping anthem that is still sung at the funerals of the great and good.

Authorship of the "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," published in the Atlantic Monthly in 1862, when Howe was 42, overshadowed her other achievements, including her career as a prominent suffragist. She was a late in life convert to the cause of voting rights for women, but once committed, she was an indefatigable champion.

When the suffragist movement split in 1869 over the over ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, which guaranteed suffrage to former slaves but not women, Howe joined forces with the moderates, Lucy Stone,

Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910), author of Battle Hymn of the Republic.

Henry Blackwell, and others who were willing to embrace the Fifteenth Amendment, despite the flaw.

Firebrand Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony denounced the Fifteenth Amendment as an injustice to women. The suffragist movement was split until the 1890s. Stanton and Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association, which called for reform on a wide array of issues, including divorce law. NWSA pursued a federal amendment as the only way to secure the vote for women. Men were not included in its membership.

Meanwhile, Howe, Stone Blackwell, Mary Livermore, and other more moderate reformers organized the American Woman Suffrage Association in 1869. AWSA was a single-issue organization that concentrated solely on the right to vote. It welcomed male reformers into its ranks and advocated a state-by-state strategy as opposed to a federal amendment. In 1870 Stone established The Women's Journal, which Howe edited and contributed to for two decades.

> *"These men and women had been champions of the slave. They now asked for wives and mothers those civil rights which had been given to the negro."*

Julia Ward Howe was born into a wealthy New York family in 1819. Her father, Samuel Ward, was a banker, and her mother, Julia Rush Cutler, was a poet. She died when Julia was five. An aunt took charge of Julia's education, hiring private tutors and exposing Julia to literature, music and the study of foreign languages. Her brother married an Astor and Julia and her siblings moved in New York's best social circles.

Howe's biographer Elaine Showalter, the feminist scholar, described Julia in her early years as being like "the princess in the castle," "cherished, indulged and praised," but at the same time acknowledging in her memoir that she often felt like "a young damsel of olden time, shut up within an enchanted castle. And I must say my dear father, for all his noble generosity and overweening affection, sometimes appeared to me as my jailor."

Samuel Ward was a man of strict Calvinist convictions, which Julia gladly shed, becoming a Unitarian. Samuel Ward died in 1839.

In 1841 Julia was visiting in Dorchester, Mass., when her friends, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and abolitionist Charles Sumner, suggested that they drive out to the Perkins School for the Blind to see the great work being done there by Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe. Howe was well-known as a champion of education for the blind, deaf, and those in prisons. Howe wasn't there when they arrived, but he soon came galloping up on his black horse. Julia was immediately impressed: "I looked out and beheld a noble rider on a noble steed." Howe was indeed a glamourous and accomplished man. Soon after Harvard Medical School Howe had gone off to fight in the Greek War for Independence, a gesture of Byronic heroism for which the king of Greece made him Chevalier of the Order of St. Savior. His nickname thereafter was Chev. An abolitionist, Chev would become one of the "Secret Six," who financed John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. Howe was eighteen years Julia's senior.

> *One thing the mismatched couple could support together was work for the abolition of slavery.*

They were married in 1843. It was a miserable marriage. Howe was a dictatorial man who expected his wife to devote herself entirely to him and their six children. He disapproved of her literary ambitions. "I have been married 22 years today," she wrote on her anniversary in 1865. "In the course of this time I have never known my husband to approve of any act of mine which I myself valued. Books—poems—essays—everything has been contemptible or contraband in his eyes." It probably didn't help that Howe managed to lose Julia's fortune through a series of bad investments. Nor was Howe happy. He asked for a legal separation at one point, but Julia refused.

One thing the mismatched couple could support together was work for the abolition of slavery. The Howes went to the White House to meet Abraham Lincoln in 1861 and afterwards paid a visit to Union soldiers,

encamped in Virginia. When they heard soldiers singing the rowdy "John Brown's Body," a minister in the company suggested that Julia write more dignified words for the song.

Julia Ward Howe returned to her room in Washington's Willard Hotel and the next morning wrote the words to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." "I went to bed that night as usual," she recalled, "and slept, according to my wont, quite soundly. I awoke in the gray of the morning twilight; and as I lay waiting for the dawn, the long lines of the desired poem began to twine themselves in my mind. Having thought out all the stanzas, I said to myself, 'I must get up and write these verses down, lest I fall asleep again and forget them.'" Union soldiers adopted the song, and Howe became famous.

Howe became interested in women's suffrage, an idea she formerly had ridiculed, according to a biography by her daughters, after the Civil War. She was asked to lend her famous name to the "call" for a suffragist gathering and, when the day came, planned to slip in and observe unnoticed. But the famous author of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was called to join the dignitaries on stage, among them the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and others already friends of the Howes.

It was a turning point. Her daughters describe it: "These men and women had been the champions of the slave. They now asked for wives and mothers those civil rights which had been given to the negro; 'that impartial justice for which, if for anything, a Republican Government should stand.' Their speech was earnest; [Julia Ward Howe] listened as to a new gospel. When she was asked to speak, she could only say, 'I am with you.'"

And, indeed, she was with them for the rest of her life. "During the first two thirds of my life," she would recall, "I looked to the masculine idea of character as the only true one. I sought inspiration, its inspiration, and referred my merits and demerits to its judicial verdict . . . The new domain now made clear to me that of true womanhood—woman no longer in her ancillary relation to her opposite, man, but in her direct relation to the divine plan and purpose, as a free agent, fully sharing with man every

human right, and every human responsibility. This discovery was like the addition of a new continent to the map of the world."

Howe met Lucy Stone at the first gathering, and she was forever afterwards to ally herself with Stone instead of the more radical Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. The two factions had different ways of approaching women. Even the names of their publications indicated these differences. The Women's Journal, the magazine of the Stone-Howe group, had a broader, more mainstream audience than The Revolution, the more overtly politicized newspaper of the Stanton-Anthony faction. The Women's Journal featured news about debates and conventions but also carried lighter fare such as poems and short stories and even a column called "Gossips and Gleanings." Howe served as primary editor until 1893.

Howe founded the New England Woman Suffrage Association, whose sole purpose was obtaining the vote for women. It remained in existence until the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote was ratified in 1920. In 1889 the rift between the Stone-Howe and Stanton-Anthony wing of the suffrage movement was healed and they came together to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Elizabeth Cady Stanton was elected the first president.

The two factions had different ways of approaching women.

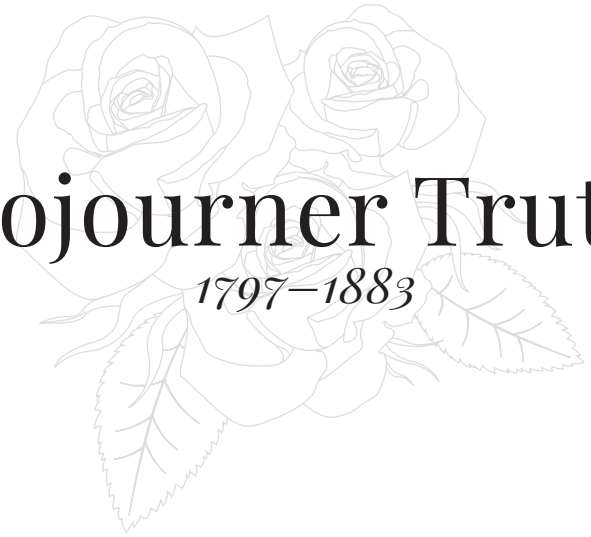
In addition to working for women's suffrage, the author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" became active in the cause of pacifism. In 1870, she wrote a Mother's Day Proclamation for Peace in which she urged mothers to stop war. It might be described as a militant cry for peace: "Arise, then, women of this day! Arise all women who have hearts, whether our baptism be that of water or of tears!... We women of one country will be too tender of those of another country to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs. From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says 'Disarm, Disarm! The sword of murder is not the

balance of justice.'" Howe's proclamation is considered a precursor to the establishment of Mother's Day as a holiday.

Samuel Gridley Howe died in 1876. On the day after his funeral, Julia Ward Howe wrote in her diary: "Began my new life today." She did write a flattering biography of her late husband, and then she went on to have quite a life. She lectured, often on behalf of the Unitarian Church, and was widely published. Howe was the first woman elected to the American

Suffragist and author of the famous American poem "Battle Hymn of the Republic," Julia Ward Howe writes at a desk near a window.

Academy of Arts and Letters. Julia Ward Howe died in 1910 at the age of 91. Known as "the Dearest Old Lady in America" at the time of her death, Julia Ward Howe had provided the suffrage movement an alternative to the more radical element that developed in the fight over the Fifteenth Amendment and was therefore instrumental in the eventual passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.



Sojourner Truth

1797–1883

In 1851 Sojourner Truth, former slave, evangelist, and crusader for abolition and the women's vote, delivered a powerful speech at a woman's suffrage convention in Akron, Ohio. Rising to address the crowd, Truth was an unforgettable sight: gaunt, nearly six feet in height, and with a deep, almost masculine, voice. She was probably in her fifties.

The speech she gave that day has had incredible resonance from then until the present. Its famous refrain–'"Ain't I a Woman?"—supplied the title of radical writer bell hooks' 1980s book on black feminism. It has been performed countless times.

It is unlikely, however, that Truth actually uttered the words, "Ain't I a woman." The popular version of the speech with those words was the work of abolitionist Frances Dana Gage. Gage published it a dozen years later, and had Truth speaking in Southern dialect. Sojourner Truth was born in Dutch-speaking New York, sometime around 1797, and would never have spoken in the dialect of southern slaves.

But just as George Washington was a great man even if he never chopped down that mythical cherry tree, Sojourner Truth was a remarkable

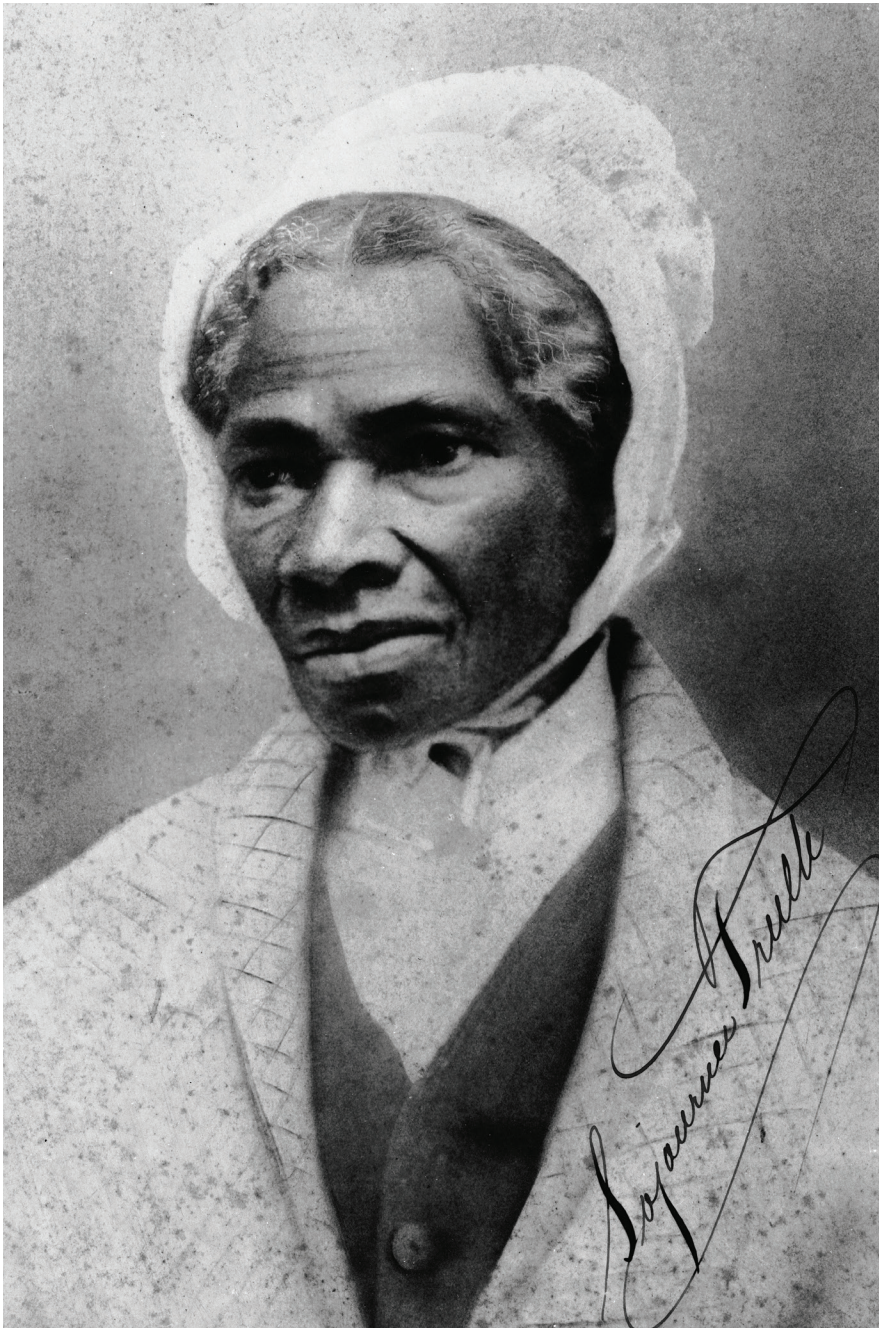
and complex woman even if the speech she gave that day in Akron was quite different from Gage's embellished version that has since entered the annals of American rhetoric. Unlike the mostly well-educated and well-connected women who became leaders of the suffragist movement, Truth was poor and illiterate. She supported herself doing housework, and, after she became famous by selling small pictures of herself with the slogan, "I Sell the Shadow to Support the Substance."

Yet she somehow had the confidence and courage to overcome daunting circumstances to become one of the most prominent speakers on the suffragist circuit. She was admired by Lucretia Mott, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, all of whom became her friends. Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," left behind an article in The Atlantic describing the impression Truth made when Truth paid an unannounced visit to Stowe in her home in Andover, Mass. Stowe wrote:

> *When I went into the room, a tall, spare form arose to meet me. She was evidently a full-blooded African, and though now aged and worn with many hardships, still gave the impression of a physical development which in early youth must have been as fine a specimen of the torrid zone as Cumberworth's celebrated statuette of the Negro Woman at the Fountain. Indeed, she so strongly reminded me of that figure, that, when I recall the events of her life, as she narrated them to me, I imagine her as a living, breathing impersonation of that work of art.*

The woman whom we know as Sojourner Truth was born Isabella Baumfree, or Bomefree, in Ulster County, New York. Her parents, James and Elizabeth, were slaves who belonged to a Colonel Hardenbergh. After the colonel died, his son, Charles, sold nine-year-old Isabella at auction.

She fetched $100 as part of a package that included a flock of sheep. A man called John Neely bought her. Isabella remembered Neely as a cruel and abusive man, who inflicted terrible beatings on her, the physical scars of which she bore the rest of her life. She recounted in her autobiography



Portrait of African-American orator and civil rights activist Sojourner Truth (1797—1883), 1860s.

(which was dictated) that her "trials in life" started with Neely. "Now the war begun," she recalled. She prayed that her father would find a way to rescue her, and somehow James was able to help by arranging for somebody else to purchase her.

> *Unlike the mostly well-educated and well-connected women who became leaders of the suffragist movement, Truth was poor and illiterate.*

Later, Isabella would wish desperately that she could return the favor and assist her elderly father. But it was not to be. James, by the time of his death, blind and lame, died "chilled and starved." Isabella's mother had died a few years earlier.

Isabella's next owners were a family who owned a tavern and with whom she remained less than two years. At the age of twelve of thirteen, Isabella was sold for the third time. Her new owner was John Dumont, and she would remain with the Dumonts for sixteen years. John Dumont would praise Isabella, saying that she "could do as much work as a half dozen common [white] people, and do it well, too." Dumont's wife, who made life miserable for Isabella, claimed that was only because the tasks were only "half performed." Isabella was beaten by Dumont from time to time, but she nevertheless developed a lifelong fondness for him.

While at the Dumonts, Isabella fell in love with a slave called Robert, property of the artist Charles Catton, Jr. Catton beat Robert savagely when he learned about the relationship. Catton did not condone his slaves having relationships with those on other properties, as the progeny of such unions might end up belonging to the other property-owner. Robert vanished from her life, though she was haunted by his memory for the rest of her life. She subsequently married a slave named Thomas. She had five children, one of whom was believed to be the daughter of Dumont, who had raped Isabella.

The state of New York inaugurated a gradual abolition process in 1799. The children of slave mothers born after that date would be free but were

required to work as indentured servants for their former masters until their late twenties. All New York slaves would be free by July 4, 1827.

Dumont had agreed to free her a year before the 1827 deadline if she would work hard during her remaining time. However, when Isabella hurt her hand, he reneged on the deal, claiming that he was unable to get enough work from her after the injury to justify the early release from slavery. Instead of simply leaving on July 4, 1826, the agreed-upon date, she determined to work long enough to feel she had satisfied her end of the deal. She set her departure date for November or December 1826.

A biographer stressed that Isabella was not passive in the project of becoming free. "She left slavery with the Dumonts when she thought the time was right," Nell Irvin Painter wrote in "Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol." Painter adds that Isabella "heard the voice of her God instructing her when to set out on her own as a free woman." She walked off the Dumont farm before dawn on the day she herself had chosen, carrying only her baby daughter Sophie and her worldly belongings, paltry enough to be wrapped in a handkerchief. "I did not run off, for I thought that wicked, but I walked off, believing that to be all right," she said. It was the end of her life as a slave.

However, after her own walk to freedom, Isabella learned that her son Peter had been sold into slavery in Alabama.

However, after her own walk to freedom, Isabella learned that her son Peter had been sold into slavery in Alabama. Being sold to a master in the deep south was every slave's dread. Peter's sale was illegal under the laws of New York. In a remarkable show of courage, Isabella took the matter to court, becoming one of the few black women in the antebellum era to win a legal battle. Peter was returned to her and lived with his mother in New York, where she worked as a domestic. He would later ship out on a Nantucket whaling ship, never to return, his fate unknown.

1862: Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) reading the Bible with former slave and abolitionist Sojourner Truth (1797-1883), originally Isabella Van Wagener, in a print presented to the President by the black community of Baltimore to commemorate the Emancipation Proclamation.

Isabella Baumfree would not adopt the name Sojourner Truth, with its religious overtones, until 1843. She was, however, a religious seeker and sojourner all her life. She lived in a Methodist community in New York, and later for a while on a utopian farm in Massachusetts. Truth was at one time attracted to the Millerites, who set the date for the Second Coming for some time in the 1840s and lost followers after this did not happen. "Without a doubt, it was Truth's religious faith that transformed her from Isabella, domestic servant, into Sojourner Truth, a hero for three centuries at least," Nell Irvin Painter wrote.

The women's suffrage movement split in 1869 over ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, which guaranteed former slaves the right to vote.

Sojourner Truth became a regular speaker at women's suffrage gatherings. There are two versions of the "Ain't I a Woman?" speech. Marius Robinson, who heard the speech and reported on it a few weeks later for his newspaper, the Anti-Slavery Bugle, provided a sober version that lacks the signature phrase. Frances Dana Gage was also there, but she did not publish an account until 12 years later. Gage's account was published in the *New York Independent* in April of 1863. It is the Gage speech that has lent itself to dramatic readings and become a part of suffragist legend.

The openings of the speech give you a sense of how they will differ. In the Gage version, some in the noisy audience didn't want Sojourner to speak. Taking note of this, she begins, "Well, chillen, whar dar's so much racket dar must be som'ting out o'kilter." Robinson's version does not include opposition to Sojourner's addressing the assembled; it begins, "May I say a few words? I want to say a few words about this matter." "I am a woman's rights" is the closest she gets to Gage's defiant "Ain't I a woman?" in Robinson's version.

One of the themes of the speech, in either version, is that black women worked as hard as black men but were not paid as much. Sojourner also

compares the lot of the white woman with that of the black woman. The Gage version is the more memorable. "Dat man ober dar say dat women needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have de best place ebery whar," Sojourner says in the Gage version of the speech. "Nobody eber helps me into carriages or ober mud-puddles, or gives me any best place. And ar'n't I a woman?" If you would like to compare the speeches, there is a website devoted to doing so: https://www.thesojournertruthproject.com/

As a staunch supporter of women's suffrage, Sojourner Truth, as might be expected of a woman who had experienced life as a slave, was especially concerned about the rights of black women. In a statement that has not received as much attention as the 1851 speech, Truth said, "If colored men get their rights, and not colored women theirs, you will see colored men be masters over the women and it will be just as bad as it was before." This remark might be construed to foreshadow the anti-male impulse in later feminism, or it might simply have reflected her belief in the paramount importance of voting rights.

The women's suffrage movement split in 1869 over ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, which guaranteed former slaves the right to vote. The amendment declared that 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." Missing of course were women.

One faction, led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, opposed any amendment that did not give the right to vote to women. A more moderate group, under the leadership of more moderate women such as Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe, supported voting rights for former slaves, even if women had to wait. Both groups ardently wanted Sojourner Truth's support. Sojourner Truth tried to avoid the conflict but ultimately sided with the moderates who backed the Fifteenth Amendment. Like many suffragists, Sojourner Truth attempted to vote for Ulysses S. Grant in the 1872 presidential election but was turned away.

Although Sojourner Truth traveled and spoke around the country, she settled in Battle Creek, Michigan. She died there on November 26, 1883, at the age of around 86, nearly six decades since she had walked to freedom–and helped reshape the world.

Frances Willard

1839–1898

Although almost forgotten today, the temperance movement played a powerful role in the quest for women's suffrage.

Frances Willard, the second president of the once mighty Women's Christian Temperance Union (WTCU), who was early on dedicated to the cause of women's suffrage, saw to this.

Willard's career of activism looked forward to two amendments to the U.S. Constitution—the Eighteenth—prohibition, since mercifully repealed—and the Nineteenth—women's right to vote, whose centenary we are happy to celebrate this year.

Annie Wittenmyer, the first president of the WCTU, opposed linking temperance with other issues. Willard, however, who was already friendly with Susan B. Anthony and other suffragists, was determined that the WCTU adopt women's suffrage as a part of its platform.

In a way, Willard was a Phyllis Schlafly figure of her day in that she mobilized ordinary women. Women who might have regarded prominent suffragists such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton or free thinker

Matilda Joslyn Gage as too radical for their tastes, were only too happy to join Willard's crusade for the vote.

"Willard's ability to stress womanly techniques for a changing society was a major factor in her ability to attract devotion from the forces she led," writes her biographer Ruth Bordin. Willard herself combined a gentle manner with fervent oratory, which can seem flowery in style to the modern reader.

> *In a way, Willard can be seen as a Phyllis Schlafly figure of her day in that she mobilized ordinary women.*

The name Willard gave to her distinctive approach to women's suffrage was "home protection." The vote, as Willard explained, was essential if women were to usher in reforms that protected the family. This approach was comfortable for many women who otherwise might have held back.

As the website of the Frances Willard Museum and Archives explains, "WCTU members were generally conservative, and in order to persuade them that women's suffrage was a necessary tool towards achieving the organization's goals for social reform, Willard framed women's suffrage as part of the campaign for 'Home Protection.'"

With the WCTU adoption of a "Home Protection" measure in 1881, "woman suffrage, cloaked in womanliness and linked to temperance, had become acceptable to thousands of mainstream American women, and Frances Willard had articulated the change of view," according to biographer Ruth Bordin.

Like many suffragist leaders, Frances Willard came from a serious-minded, abolitionist family. Willard was born in Churchville, New York in 1839 to Josiah Flint Willard and Mary Hill Willard. Charmingly, the Willards named their new baby for the English novelist Fanny (Frances) Burney.

The family moved to Oberlin, Ohio when Frances was small so that Josiah could pursue studies for the ministry at Oberlin College. Changing his mind, Josiah Willard uprooted the family and settled in Janesville,

American reformer, campaigner for prohibition and president of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Frances Elizabeth Caroline Willard (1839—1898)

Wisconsin, where he became a prosperous banker, farmer, and state legislator. Frances grew up in Janesville, where she was primarily taught at home by her mother.

Frances attended North Western Female College, a Methodist secondary school, and after graduation began a teaching career. She met fellow educator Kate Jackson and the two women embarked on what was in effect a two-year Grand Tour, financed by Jackson's wealthy father. They spent six months in Paris polishing their French. "Willard's European and Middle Eastern travels were her finishing school and graduate degree program," wrote Bordin.

> *Though Willard had to fight in the early years to make women's suffrage a part of the WCTU's agenda, women's suffrage shortly became inseparable from the WCTU.*

Returning to the U.S., Willard continued her career in education, and in 1871, at the age of 32, Willard was named president of the Evanston College for Ladies, a newly-founded institution. She was made Dean of Women of the Women's College after the Ladies College merged with Northwestern University. The president of Northwestern was Charles Henry Fowler, to whom Willard had briefly been engaged to marry. They clashed and Willard resigned her post.

Fowler, notes biographer Ruth Bordin, was one of the few serious relationships Willard had with a man. Willard's most intense relationships were with women. Anna Gordon, whom she met in 1877 and who served as her loyal personal secretary, moved into Willard's home. Willard's mother lived with them until her death. Given the times, the nature of their relationship is unknown, though it seems likely that Willard was a lesbian.

At any rate, the historian Judith M. Bennett called Willard's relationships with other women "lesbian-like," and Willard herself wrote in her autobiography: "The loves of women for each other grow more numerous each day, and I have pondered much why these things were.

That so little should be said about them surprises me, for they are everywhere.... In these days when any capable and careful woman can honorably earn her own support, there is no village that has not its examples of 'two hearts in counsel,' both of which are feminine."

Willard's dear friend, Susan B. Anthony, never expressed reservations, at least publicly, about Willard's twinning of suffrage and temperance.

With her educational career in tatters, Willard cast about for a new path. She worked briefly, and not happily, with the evangelist Dwight Moody before settling on the burgeoning temperance movement. The temperance movement was a massive and militant movement that propelled thousands of women into the streets and saloons to protest and pray.

In 1874, Willard was among the founders of the WCTU. Though Willard had to fight in the early years to make women's suffrage a part of the WCTU's agenda, women's suffrage shortly became inseparable from the WCTU, along with other social issues such as child-labor, anti-prostitution legislation, sanitation and international peace, all of interest to Willard, who in her later years became a Fabian Socialist. Willard was also a fan of the utopian novelist Edward Bellamy and his statist beliefs. Bordin believes that Willard was comfortable with the coercive methods to achieve utopia that Bellamy advocated, as long as such methods were not violent.

A self-described loyal and orthodox Methodist, Willard saw her crusade for suffrage as having religious roots. In 1876, praying alone before delivering a lecture in Columbus, Ohio, she sensed a directive "borne in upon my mind, I believe, from loftier regions," which declared to her, "You are to speak for woman's ballot as a protection to her home and tempted loved ones from the tyranny of drink."

Willard's dear friend, Susan B. Anthony, never expressed reservations, at least publicly, about Willard's twinning of suffrage and temperance—

Anthony, according to Ruth Bordin, considered Willard, who had an enormous following, quite a catch for the women's suffrage movement. Some suffragists, however, were not so supportive.

At one point, Carrie Chapman Catt, then president of the National American Women's Suffrage Association, which had been founded by Anthony, Cady Stanton, and Catt herself, begged Willard to step back from the suffrage movement. Catt insisted that, because of the WCTU and Willard, some men viewed suffrage merely as "a strategic move to secure prohibition through women voters." In other words, Catt viewed Willard as a branding problem.

Willard, as you might expect, was unimpressed with Catt's argument and never for a moment considered dropping out of the suffrage movement. She always held decidedly ecumenical views of the suffrage

Frances E. Willard's 'Rest Cottage', Evanston, Illinois, USA, 1889. Frances Willard (1839-1898) was an American educator, temperance reformer and campaigner for women's suffrage. Her home was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1965.

movement, seeing that there was room for many different views. "A difference of opinion on one question must not prevent us from working unitedly in those on which we can agree," Willard maintained.

Sadly, Willard also came into conflict with Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a black suffragist who also crusaded against lynching. Of course, Willard condemned lynching, but she seemed to believe that the horrendous practice arose because of lawlessness on the art of black men. It was another blot on the suffragist movement's history with race.

Willard was close to many suffragist leaders, including Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone, Mary Livermore, and of course Susan B. Anthony. But there was one with whom she had a cool relationship, the firebrand Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She was appalled by Cady Stanton's radical *The Women's Bible* and the two women had a longstanding personality conflict.

Yet, Willard saw a suffrage movement with room enough for both of them, despite their differences. In a famous speech, she said:

Our friends have said that, as President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Mrs. Stanton leads the largest army of women outside, and the largest one inside, the realm of a conservative theology. However this may be, I rejoice to see the day when, with distinctly avowed loyalty to my Methodist faith, and as distinctly avowed respect for the sincerity with which she holds to views quite different, I can clasp hands in loyal comradeship with one whose dauntless voice rang out over the Nation for "woman's rights" when I was but a romping girl upon a prairie farm.

When Willard died in 1898, it was an occasion for national mourning. In Chicago, women joined an honor guard escorting her coffin and singing the old Protestant hymn, "Rock of Ages." Willard had enlarged the suffrage movement and brought in ordinary women who saw the vote as a way to improve the lives of women and men like them.

Therese A. Jenkins

1853–1936

When Therese Jenkins, a young woman from Wisconsin, arrived in the Wyoming Territory in 1877, about to become a bride, women already had the right to vote in the territory. Jenkins happily availed herself of this right, becoming a civic leader and force in Republican politics. In 1892, Jenkins was the first woman to serve as a delegate to a Republican National Convention, where she participated in drafting the party's platform. She would be called upon to defend her right to vote.

In 1869, Wyoming became the first U.S. Territory to grant women the right to vote. Suffragist Susan B. Anthony was ecstatic. "Wyoming is the first place on God's green earth which could consistently claim to be the land of the free!" she declared. Other territories followed suit in rapid succession. Utah granted women the right to vote in 1870, Washington in 1883, and Montana in 1887. Colorado women gained the right to vote through a referendum in 1893.

However, the right was not yet sacrosanct. In 1889, when Wyoming was seeking statehood, it was felt by some that women's suffrage might be an impediment. After all, the 19th Amendment, granting women in

the U.S. the right to vote, would not be ratified for another thirty years. Delegates to Wyoming's statehood convention entertained a resolution to end women's suffrage.

> *In 1889, when Wyoming was seeking statehood, it was felt by some that women's suffrage, granted in territorial days, might be an impediment.*

This is when Therese Jenkins made her mark on history. Knowing that Jenkins and her husband, James F. Jenkins, Cheyenne businessman and political insider, were fierce advocates of women's suffrage, a delegate to the convention, newspaperman W. E. Chapin, rode to Jenkins' store to alert him to what was happening. The couple's daughter, Agnes Metcalf, recounts what happened next:

"So Dad went home for his noon meal and told my mother," she recalled, "and he hitched up the horse and buggy and she made a door-to-door canvass of all of the prominent women of town to get down to that meeting that afternoon and use their influence to not let that resolution pass—not giving the women the right to vote. So, they all went, and the man who had introduced the resolution withdrew it because he didn't want to face the opposition of all of the ladies of the town."

Although it was Therese Jenkins who had mobilized the women, she didn't quite make it to the convention. The buggy ride to rally supporters was rough, and Mrs. Jenkins went into labor. The baby was named Agnes Wyoming Jenkins. Wyoming was admitted to the Union, women's suffrage and all, on July 10, 1890. Two weeks later, Therese Jenkins was prominently on stage for the celebration. She took the occasion to address the matter closest to her heart.

"Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty enlightening the world," Jenkins noted on that historic day, "is fashioned in the form of a woman and placed upon a pedestal carved from the everlasting granite of the New England hills, but the women of Wyoming have been placed upon a firmer foundation and hold a more brilliant torch."

Therese A. Jenkins, circa 1893. Source: United States public domain

Although she already had the right to vote, Therese Jenkins would become a leader in the national movement for women's suffrage. A sketch of Jenkins in A *Woman of the Century*, a collection of biographies of prominent women, edited by suffragists Frances Willard and Mary Livermore, described Jenkins as "a thoroughly educated woman," whose writings were "clear and forcible." She was an in-demand orator who traveled extensively to promote voting rights for women.

When the 19th Amendment was being debated in state legislatures, Jenkins, at the urging of Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Women's Suffrage Association, asked the governor of Wyoming to call a special session of the legislature to ratify the 19th Amendment. He was glad to do so.

> *Giving women the right to vote had been regarded as a joke in some quarters.*

"Mrs. Jenkins," Governor Robert Carey replied, "if for no other reason than that you have asked me to do this I would call this session, for I know that if you did not think it the right thing for me to do you would not have asked it. I am, however, very anxious to see this amendment ratified and will do all in my power to have this state one of the first to go on record along this line." In January of 1920, Wyoming became the 27th state to vote to ratify the 19th Amendment. In August of the same year, Tennessee voted for ratification, becoming the 36th state to do so. Ratification required approval of 36 out of 48 states.

Therese Jenkins was born in Lafayette County in Wisconsin in 1853, the daughter of a prominent pioneer family—her father "Badger Pete" Parkinson, was a decorated veteran of the Black Hawk War. At the age of 24, Therese left behind a job as a school teacher when she went to the Wyoming Territory to marry James Flood Jenkins, who would go on to become a wealthy merchant.

Cheyenne was a rough and ready railroad town that had grown up around a Union Pacific terminal that stopped there in 1867. According

to local histories, Cheyenne was not unlike the Wild West as portrayed in westerns. Gambling and saloons were everywhere. Not surprisingly, Therese Jenkins was appalled by conditions in Cheyenne.

Jenkins "immediately became interested in anything of civic welfare, education, and social environment for the betterment of women and children," her daughter, Agnes Wyoming Jenkins, would write. Jenkins helped establish and pay for a public reading room, which she hoped would prove an attractive alternative to the town's many alluring saloons and dance halls. She was a charter member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and a stalwart of Cheyenne's First Presbyterian Church.

A popular speaker, she had a novel way of practicing a speech: she would go out into the outskirts of town and practice making a speech. James Jenkins and baby Agnes would wait nearby in a buggy. They would move farther from the orator, testing how Therese's voice carried. She learned to address large audiences with clarity. Jenkins spoke without notes and it was said that she could be clearly understood from the distance of four blocks.

In 1889 Jenkins became embroiled in a fierce debate with Professor Edward Drinker Cope, a paleontologist who argued against women's suffrage. Cope published an article in the *Popular Science Monthly* entitled "The Relation of the Sexes to Government." Cope asserted that "being free from the disabilities imposed by maternity, the male could acquire a greater mastery over his environment than the female," and that "women would be irresponsible voters, as they can not assist in the execution of the laws that they help make."

Cope feared that women, if given the vote, would simply vote the way their husbands told them to (similar slurs were made against conservative women voters in the wake of the 2016 presidential election). Cope held similarly regressive and discredited views about race.

Jenkins was furious. She responded with an article in the same journal entitled "The Mental Force of Woman." Jenkins not only argued for women's mental capacity, but she believed that women's suffrage would

"raise politics out of its filthiness, corruption, and ignorance . . . and bring in the reign of purity, patriotism, and intelligence."

She argued that women would not use the ballot to enhance their own importance, but to transform society. "I wish that women everywhere would study the one argument that can be brought against woman suffrage" she wrote. "It is this: Woman may reform man. He has shown us clearly that he will not reform himself. . . . But woman in asking for the ballot ought to say to man[:] We will make better use of it than you have. This is the ground on which we must demand the suffrage."

The cause of women's suffrage advanced earlier in several western territories than in the United States proper, possibly because the social strictures of the east were not as strong. The territories also needed to attract women. In Wyoming, for example, men outnumbered women six to one. Suffrage might bring more women into the territory.

When the 19th Amendment was being debated in state legislatures, Jenkins asked the governor of Wyoming to call a special session of the legislature to ratify the 19th Amendment.

Still, giving women the right to vote was regarded as a joke in some quarters. According to *Harper's Weekly*, "Wyoming gave women the right to vote in much the same spirit that New York or Pennsylvania might vote to enfranchise angels or Martians if their legislatures had time for frivolous gaiety."

William Bright, the legislator who introduced the original bill in the 1860s for women's suffrage in the Wyoming Territory's legislature, did not have entirely pure motives. Bright appears to have been at least partially motivated by the hope that women would counterbalance newly-enfranchised former slaves. A Democrat, Bright also hoped to embarrass the Republican governor, who, he assumed, would veto suffrage. Governor John Campbell, who had been appointed by Republican President Ulysses S. Grant, however, did no such thing.

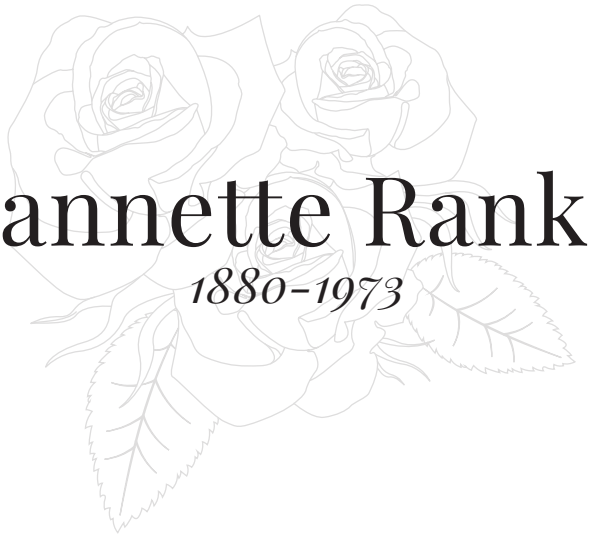
He signed the bill immediately. The first bill to grant women the right to vote read simply: "Every woman of the age of twenty-one years, residing in this Territory, may at every election to beholden under the law thereof, cast her vote."

Because of the 1869 law, ably defended by Jenkins and her army of women, Wyoming is the place where a woman cast the first documented legal vote in the United States. Louisa Swaine of Laramie cast this vote in 1870. In 1870, Governor John Campbell named Esther Hobart Morris as the first female Justice of the Peace in the U.S. Wyoming's Nellie Taylor Ross, inaugurating the practice of widows running for their late husband's offices, became the first female governor of a state in 1924.

"It all began in Wyoming," was the headline of a 1973 article in *American Heritage* by Wyoming-native Lynne Cheney. Cheney recalled the early female office holders, but lamented that there were few contemporary female office holders in Wyoming. The Equality State, as Wyoming is known, ironically currently ranks low in the number of women serving in public office. However, Liz Cheney, Lynne Cheney's daughter, was elected to the House of Representatives from Wyoming in 2017. Cheney is chairman of the House Republican Conference, the third woman to hold this powerful position.

Therese Jenkins helped preserve the right to vote in Wyoming but her influence is not limited to one state. Carrie Chapman Catt said that Jenkins, Esther Morris, and educator Grace Raymond Hebard, were the three women from Wyoming who had meant the most for the cause for women's suffrage. She, according to *A Woman of the Century*, was a recognized power in Wyoming among those who are interested in purifying and elevating society, and in bringing about the absolute recognition of the equality of the sexes before the law."

Therese Jenkins died February 28, 1936 and is buried next to her husband in Cheyenne's Lakeview Cemetery. Therese Jenkins is not as well remembered as many American suffragists, but we can hope that she is given due recognition in 2020, both in her beloved state of Wyoming and by the nation at large.



Jeannette Rankin

1880–1973

When Jeannette Rankin came to Congress in 1917, she found herself casting votes on crucial national issues three years before other American women gained the basic right to vote.

Rankin's home state of Montana was one of ten western states that by then had granted women the right to vote, even though the 19th Amendment would not be ratified and passed until 1920. An iconoclastic Republican, Rankin was the first woman elected to Congress: She was elected in 1916 and sworn in in 1917.

Rankin already was a famous suffragist. She had worked for voting rights in Montana, which extended the franchise to women (excluding Native American women) in 1914, and several other states. She was also a leader on a national level, whose speaking and organizing skills were widely recognized. A committed pacifist, Rankin is also the only U.S. Representative who voted in Congress against entry into both World War I and World War II. The second vote ended her political career.

"I may be the first woman member of Congress," Rankin noted upon winning her election. "But I won't be the last." Thirty-six at the

time of her victory, Rankin, the daughter of a Montana rancher and a schoolteacher, set about to ensure that other American women would win the right many western women already enjoyed. She argued for the creation of a special Committee on Woman Suffrage. The Committee was established and Rankin was appointed to it.

In 1918 Rankin sent a telegram to the National Women's Party saying she would reintroduce the measure that ultimately became the 19th Amendment in the House. She was the first to rise to speak in its favor. "How shall we explain to [women] the meaning of democracy if the same Congress that voted for war to make the world safe for democracy refuses to give this small measure of democracy to the women of our country?" she asked. The measure passed the House by one vote, only to be defeated in the Senate.

> *"I may be the first woman member of Congress, but I won't be the last."*

Jeanette Rankin was born in 1880 near Missoula, Montana, the oldest daughter of seven children. She would reflect that, while she did chores and even helped keep the machinery running on the ranch, she did not have the right to vote. The Rankins were a family that would produce a number of political leaders. Jeannette's career was always supported (including financially) by her brother Wellington Rankin, four years her junior, and a Rhodes Scholar, Harvard graduate, Montana attorney general and associate justice on Montana's Supreme Court.

Jeannette graduated from the University of Montana in 1902 with a degree in biology. When her father, John Rankin, died in 1904, she took on a number of jobs to help support the younger children. She was able to go to New York to study at the New York School of Philanthropy (which became the Columbia University School of Social Work). Social work was then a relatively new field and Rankin was excited by its promise.

Rankin worked briefly as a social worker in Spokane, Washington, and then enrolled in the University of Washington in Seattle. While

Jeanette Rankin (1880-1973), the first woman member of the House of Representatives, and an active suffragette and social worker.

there, she became attracted to the suffragist movement. She signed on as a professional lobbyist for the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and became active in the campaign for women's suffrage in the state of Washington. After Washington granted women the right to vote in 1910, Rankin returned to Montana to work for suffrage there.

Rankin was extremely visible in the national movement. She led women from western states to join women from all over the country to demonstrate for the vote in Washington, D.C. in 1913. This "pilgrimage," as some suffragists called it, was organized by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, who had recently returned to the U.S. from working with British suffragettes. Memorably, the parade was led by a female lawyer in a white cape riding on a white horse.

When Rankin decided to run for Congress, some suffragists were worried that if she lost, it would be a setback for the cause. Rankin was determined, however. Her official congressional biography states that she enjoyed two distinct advantages: "her reputation as a suffragist and her politically well-connected brother, Wellington, who financed her campaign." Rankin was nominated to run for one of two of Montana's at-large congressional seats.

During the campaign, Rankin made no secret of her intention of furthering the cause of women's suffrage, or of her opposition to war. In notably blunt language, she said, "If they are going to have war, they ought to take the old men and leave the young to propagate the race." Rankin came in second state wide, thus claiming one of the two Montana at-large seats. It was the first time the women of Montana had voted in a federal election.

Hyperbolically, a Montana newspaper blamed the suicide of one of the losing candidates, reportedly tormented by the jibe "beat by a woman," on Rankin's victory. "The sting of defeat, administered by a woman—Miss Jeannette Rankin, congresswoman from Montana—made Jacob Crull, prominent Montana politician, commit suicide," North Platte's Semi-Weekly Tribune declared.

The first swearing in of a woman attracted attention. According to Rankin's official biography, "Escorted by her Montana colleague, Rankin looked like 'a mature bride rather than a strong-minded female,' an observer wrote.'" However, "When her name was called the House cheered and rose, so that she had to rise and bow twice, which she did with entire self-possession."

Although her real love was the women's cause, Rankin paid ample attention to the needs of her constituents in Montana, representing them on the Committee on Public Lands, which was of particular importance to the western states. She also supported more moderate unions in a strike, unsuccessfully urging the Woodrow Wilson administration to come to their aid. She expected this to make her unpopular with mining companies. "They own the State," she noted. "They own the Government. They own the press."

> *Hyperbolically, a Montana newspaper blamed the suicide of one of the losing candidates, reportedly tormented by the jibe "beat by a woman," on Rankin's victory.*

However, it was her advocacy for women's suffrage that made her a heroine for her fellow suffragists. She seems to have practiced this advocacy with good humor, always eager to jump into the fray, never refusing to answer a question.

"There is a whimsical light in her eye, and a quiver of good humor about her mouth," Winifred Mallon, an early woman reporter in Washington, wrote in "An Impression of Jeannette Rankin." The author continued, "If in the time to come any honorable Member may rise in his place to ask, 'Will the Lady from Montana yield for a question?' let him not doubt for an instant that the lady will."

On the evening of Rankin's first day in Congress, President Woodrow Wilson spoke to a special joint session. Germany was engaging in unrestricted submarine warfare. The Germans had sunk four U.S.

Merchant Marine ships the previous month. Although originally neutral, Wilson now asked for a declaration of war to "make the world safe for democracy." Since Rankin was a pacifist, it was expected that she would vote no. Suffragists were worried about the effect such a vote from the first woman in Congress might have. Rankin rejected advice to be cautious. "I want to stand by my country, but I cannot vote for war," she said. The vote was 373 for the war resolution and 50 against.

As anticipated, Rankin was roundly denounced. Even though her mail from Montana was heavily against war, the Helena (Montana) *Independent* compared Rankin to "a dagger in the hands of the German propagandists, a dupe of the Kaiser, a member of the Hun army in the United States, and a crying schoolgirl." While NAWSA tried to distance the organization from Rankin's vote, others such as Congressman Fiorello LaGuardia of New York stood up for her.

The Montana state legislature redistricted the state before Rankin's next election. Instead of two state-wide seats, there were two districts.

Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin (1880—1973) is presented with the flag that flew at the House of Representatives during the passage of the suffrage amendment.

Rankin would now have to run against an incumbent in a heavily Democratic district. She chose instead to run for the U. S. Senate, with the promise that she would help prosecute the war she had opposed. Stung by rumors that the Republicans had tried to bribe her to get out of the race, Rankin quixotically decided to run as a third-party candidate. "If Miss R. had any party to back her she would be dangerous," her opponent said. As was expected, she lost.

After loss, Rankin bought a farm in Georgia and moved there, where she established the Georgia Peace Society. She was the most prominent lobbyist for the National Council for the Prevention of War from 1929 to 1939. She attended international conferences on ending war. When not advocating for pacifism, Rankin engaged in lobbying Congress for such causes as a ban on child labor.

> *She voted her conscience, even if it meant twice being turned out of Congress, and lived a fulfilled life devoted to her causes.*

With World War II becoming increasingly likely, Rankin thirsted for another stint in Congress. She returned to Montana and, emphasizing her historic role as the first woman elected to Congress, launched her campaign. She hoped to defeat an outspoken anti-Semitic incumbent. She won the Republican nomination and went on to win the general election. "No one will pay any attention to me this time," Rankin said. "There is nothing unusual about a woman being elected." But Jeanette Rankin being Jeanette Rankin, she was bound to attract attention.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt seemed to be moving closer and closer toward a declaration of war. In 1941, Rankin put forward an amendment to the FDR's Lend Lease Act, aimed at shoring up the Allies. Her amendment stipulated that no troops could be sent abroad unless Congress granted specific approval. The amendment failed. Rankin subsequently introduced an unsuccessful resolution condemning any move "to send the armed forces of the United States to fight in any

place outside the Western Hemisphere or insular possessions of the United States."

She was heading to Detroit to deliver a speech when she received news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Rankin immediately returned to Washington. President Roosevelt delivered his immortal "date that will live in infamy" speech, asking for a declaration of war. Rankin was unpersuaded. The war resolution passed in the House 388 to 1. Rankin was the one. The Associated Press reported that there was "a chorus of hisses and boos" when she cast her vote. "As a woman I can't go to war, and I refuse to send anyone else," she said.

It was even too much for supportive brother Wellington, who telegraphed Rankin from Montana that "Montana is 100 percent against you." Rankin had a police escort to protect her as she returned to her office. When she opted not to run again, she was replaced by a young internationalist Democrat named Mike Mansfield.

Rankin lived her post-congressional life in Georgia and Montana, studying the nonviolent philosophy of Gandhi. She returned to Washington in 1968 to lead a protest against the Vietnam War. She proudly led the Jeannette Rankin Brigade, 5,000 strong, to present a peace petition to Speaker of the House John McCormack.

Two years later, on the occasion of her 90th birthday, Jeannette Rankin was honored with a birthday reception and dinner in the Rayburn House Office Building. She died in Carmel, California in 1973, reportedly—and perhaps predictably—contemplating a third campaign, on an anti-Vietnam War ticket. At 91, according to a New Yorker story, she was still interested in dressing stylishly, and still feisty.

When towards the end of her life a journalist asked her what, if she had to do her life over again, she would change. She said she'd do it the same, only qualifying, "But this time, I'd be nastier." But Rankin was not nasty. She voted her conscience, even if it meant twice being turned out of Congress, and lived a fulfilled life devoted to her causes. Jeanette Rankin's leadership deserves to be remembered as we celebrate the amendment for which she worked so hard.

SUFFRAGIST NINE

Henrietta Wells Livermore

1864–1933

If you happen to spend the night anytime soon at the Women's National Republican Club in New York, you'll have a chance to meet a once-famous suffragist who might be new to you.

She is Henrietta Wells Livermore, prominently featured in the club's exhibit, "Women's Suffrage and the Founding of The Women's National Republican Club."

A review of the exhibit called Livermore a "one-woman juggernaut" who helped launch "the final push for suffrage" in New York and nationally. Livermore, founder of the WNRC, was hailed as a leading suffragist of her day by the New York Times, when she died in 1933.

Henrietta Livermore has been almost forgotten, which is a pity. She has plenty to say to us today, especially when it comes to educating voters on the issues. She was an 1887 Wellesley graduate, clubwoman,, wife of a New York lawyer, and activist for education. Honoring Livermore's commitment to education, WNRC sponsors the Henrietta Wells Livermore School of Politics, which hosts a lecture series and organizes volunteers to participate in campaigns.

Livermore was active in Republican politics and the first woman appointed vice-chair of the New York Republican State Committee. She was a good friend of President Calvin Coolidge, a longtime supporter of women's suffrage, who embraced the cause long before he became president. When the club opened its second headquarters in 1924, the Coolidges did the formal honors. The club subsequently moved to its present location, a Frederick Rhinelander King building at 3 West 51st Street.

Henrietta Wells was born in 1864 in San Francisco, but the family moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where her father Judge Henry Jackson Wells served as a member of the state House of Representatives and Senate. Henrietta Wells attended Harvard Grammar School and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Wellesley. She and her husband, Arthur L. Livermore, lived their entire married lives in Yonkers, New York, on the Hudson River in Westchester County.

> *Starting in 1910, Henrietta Livermore held meetings in her house to organize women to work for suffrage in the state of New York.*

Livermore for years managed the Fairview Garden School, part of a movement to introduce gardening into schools, which was under the auspices of the Russell Sage Foundation. In a book on the Fairview Garden, Livermore called school gardens "a happy mingling of play and work, vacation and school, athletics and manual training, pleasure and business, beauty and utility."

Livermore worked closely with Carrie Chapman Catt, who was Susan B. Anthony's handpicked choice to become president of the National American Women's Suffrage Association's (NAWSA), in which Anthony had been a dominant figure during the 1890s. Livermore held a string of positions in NAWSA: she was chair of the Literature Committee, which created and distributed pamphlets, and was in charge of NAWSA's Suffrage Schools, which taught organizing and advocacy. Suffrage Schools were held all over the country.

Henrietta Wells Livermore [between ca. 1910 and ca. 1915]. Source: United States Library of Congress

Catt developed what she called her "Winning Plan". It would rely on victories in the states to build pressure for extending the franchise to women on a national level. New York was pivotal to Catt's plans. New York had been a focus of suffragist hopes since the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. Catt "set out to build a women's equivalent of Tammany Hall," according to a Gotham Center profile of the suffrage movement in New York. Catt pulled together almost all the suffrage groups in the city. "While a substantial minority of the new organization's leadership were Social Register ladies, the cadre also included numerous union organizers and settlement house workers and constituted a virtual Who's Who of Gotham's feminist political community."

Livermore was a good friend of suffrage supporter Calvin Coolidge.

Henrietta Livermore held several positions in the New York State Woman Suffrage Association. Livermore was a prolific pamphleteer, whose works included both philosophical arguments for suffrage and practical pamphlets such as "How to Raise Money for Suffrage."

Starting in 1910, Henrietta Livermore held meetings in her house to organize women to work for suffrage in the state of New York. A 1915 referendum to give New York women the vote failed, but two years later, on November 6, 1917 another referendum passed. New York became the first state east of the Mississippi River to guarantee women the right to vote. A few days after the 1917 referendum was passed, the Yonkers Herald praised Mrs. Livermore's "brilliant leadership" in the crusade.

New York was a milestone. "Woman suffrage is inevitable. Suffragists knew it before November 6, 1917; opponents afterward," Catt stated in an open address to Congress. She never actually delivered the speech before Congress but frequently made use of it when speaking publicly. Catt saw women's suffrage as rooted in America's history. "Woman suffrage became an assured fact," she declared in the open address, "when the Declaration of

Independence was written. It matters not at all whether Thomas Jefferson and his compatriots thought of women when they wrote that immortal document. They conceived and voiced a principle greater than any man."

New York guaranteed women the right to vote in 1917.

At the March 1919 fiftieth convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) shortly before the House and Senate voted for the 19th Amendment and sent it to the states for ratification, the federal amendment dominated discussion. Livermore delivered a talk billed as, "Well, then what is the matter!" in which she chastised the national legislators for thus far failing to pass the federal amendment. But it wouldn't be long before U.S. suffragists could claim national victory.

In May of that year, saying that "The time is ripe, the people are ready and the beneficiaries of this amendment are eager, willing and able to perform the duties of citizenship," Republican Congressman James R. Mann of Illinois introduced on the floor of the House what would become the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. It passed the House 304 to 89 votes: Democrats voted 104 to 89 for, with Republicans 200 to 19 in favor.

When the amendment came before the Senate in June of that year, 37 Republicans voted for it, while only 19 Democrats approved. In other words, 76 percent of Republican Senators voted for the bill and 60 percent of Democratic Senators voted against it. The 19th Amendment had the required votes for ratification when Tennessee voted on August 18, 1920.

In 1920, by now a member of the Republican National Committee, a gratified Henrietta Livermore said to American women, "You have it in your hands to win. You have new ideas, new methods in politics, and I cannot impress upon you too strongly the part you have to play in the coming campaign. You must cooperate with the men and have confidence in your own ability. The greatest work of the campaign will be the overcoming of the inertia and indifference of those who have a vote."

In 1921, Livermore founded the National Women's Republican Club. She "conceived of a national club for Republican women as a meeting place for the spreading of political knowledge to women voters." "Livermore decided that women needed to be educated so they could vote," Judy McGrath, the exhibit curator, told Marlo Safi on a tour of the show. "She was disappointed that there was very low female turnout in the first election that women could vote in, so she wanted to create a place where women could meet other women and become educated on the matters they'd be voting on."

Henrietta Livermore founded the National Women's Republican Club in 1921.

As we think about women's suffrage this year, we can hope that someone will be inspired to delve into the archives and produce the much-needed and much-deserved biography of Henrietta Wells Livermore.

Ida Wells-Barnett

1862–1931

Although the Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago was only a few months old, it managed to scrape together the money to send a representative to Washington, D.C., to march in the 1913 women's parade, which would come to be regarded as a milestone in the history of the 19th Amendment.

Chosen for the honor was Ida Wells-Barnett, the club's founder and the fearless African-American journalist who had made a name for herself as a reporter investigating lynching in the deep South. Wells-Barnett had taken up residence in Chicago after things got too hot for her in Memphis.

Organized by suffragists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, the parade took place the day before President Woodrow Wilson's first inauguration—it was a protest against Wilson who was not yet willing to accept women's suffrage. Paul, who had spent time in England learning disruptive strategies from militant suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst and others, later bedeviled Wilson by posting Silent Sentinels, their term for suffragists who protested silently, in front of the White House.

On March 13, there were 8,000 marchers, floats, women mounted on horses, bands, and even tableaux featuring allegorical characters on the steps of the U.S. Treasury Building. As the Illinois delegation began preparing to march, word came down: the march was to be racially segregated, as it was feared that Southern women might otherwise refuse to march. The African-American suffragists would be allowed to bring up the rear, after the parade was almost ended. Virginia Brooks and Belle Squire, two white suffragists associated with Chicago's Alpha Club, protested. "If women of other states lack moral courage," Brooks is quoted as saying in Susan Ware's book *Why They Marched*, "we should show them that we are not afraid of public opinion. We should stand by our principles. If we do not the parade will be a farce."

> *"Either I march with you or not at all," Wells-Barnett said.*

Wells-Barnett was equally adamant against allowing the parade to be segregated and to be separated from her fellow marchers from Illinois: "Either I go with you or not at all," she said. "I am not taking this stand because I personally wish for recognition. I am doing it for the future benefit of my whole race."

It appeared that Wells-Barnett had either withdrawn from the march or submitted to going last as the Illinois delegation stepped forward to march down Pennsylvania Avenue. Those who assumed she was at the back of the parade, walking with the other black women, however, didn't know Ida Wells-Barnett. Out of nowhere, Wells-Barnett emerged from the crowd and took her rightful place beside Belle Squire. *The Chicago-Tribune* featured a photo of the two women marching together a few days later.

Those who knew Wells-Barnett were not surprised. Few women (or men) had more courage than Wells-Barnett. Courage was part of her family heritage. Ida Wells was born July 16, 1862 in Holly Springs, Mississippi, the daughter of slaves (and herself briefly a slave). Wells-

Portrait of Ida B. Wells, 1920.

Barnett biographer, Paula Giddings, tells the story about Wells' father, a skilled carpenter. After emancipation, James Wells was told by a white employer not to vote for Republican candidates. He did anyway, and, when he lost his job, simply went to town and bought a new set of tools and set up in business for himself. He went on to become a trustee of what became Rust College, a historically black college in Holly Springs. Ida lost both her parents in the yellow fever epidemic of 1878 when she was sixteen. She assumed responsibility for the five surviving of the eight Wells children.

"The psychological idea that I came across that did seem to fit her best, was that after the death of her parents, you know, Wells prays over her anger," biographer Giddings told an NPR interviewer. "She is very self conscious. This is another interesting thing about her, but she worked so hard to turn that anger into something that is positive, and she does have a sense of injustice, social injustice, that stays with her, but I think the combination of the history that is going on, of her life experiences and of her own persona, creates this incredible courageous being."

> *In an 1884 incident that anticipated Rosa Parks in 1955, Wells-Barnett refused to accede to a conductor's demand that she give up first-class ticket.*

After her parents' deaths, Wells found work in Memphis, Tenn., as a teacher and moved the family there. Wells studied in the summer at Fisk College in Nashville and Lemoyne-Owen College in Memphis, two historically black colleges. (She had been expelled from Rush College after quarreling with the president.) In an 1884 incident that anticipated Rosa Parks' 1955 refusal to move to the back of the bus, Wells refused to accede to a conductor's demand that she give up a first-class ticket, for which she had paid, on a Chesapeake & Ohio train so that a white woman could have the seat. Wells was dragged out of the car. Wells didn't just

let it drop. She penned a story for an African-American newspaper and enlisted a lawyer. Wells won the first round in a local circuit court, but the railroad appealed to the state Supreme Court and won there.

The Alpha Suffrage Club became an important Chicago institution.

Wells became drawn to journalism, a good thing, as she lost her teaching job after criticizing how schools for black youths were operated. She held a number of editorial jobs with black news outlets before becoming, in 1889, part owner of a newspaper, *The Free Speech and Headlight*, sponsored by the Memphis' Beale Street Baptist Church, which had been organized by freed slaves.

Wells devoted her career to the unfairness of Jim Crow laws and investigating lynching. Lynching became her thrust after an 1892 lynching of three black men in Memphis. Wells-Barnett wrote a pamphlet headlined *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, in which she maintained that the men had been murdered for economic reasons. They were shop owners whose businesses were competing with white-owned businesses. She did extensive reporting, often visiting the sites of lynching, and interviewing people.

Wells-Barnett came to the conclusion that the claim that black men were lynched because they had raped white women was often a cover. On the basis of her reporting, Wells came to the conclusion that many of these supposed rapes were actually consensual sex. This was deeply shocking to white sensibilities at the time, and Wells faced death threats. "A Winchester rifle should have a place of honor in every black home, and it should be used for that protection which the law refuses to give," she once said.

It was time to leave Memphis. Wells moved to Chicago, where she continued her career as a crusading journalist. She continued to write and speak about lynching and turned her attention towards broader

Journalist, educator and activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett, lived in this home from 1919-1930 in Chicago, Illinois.

civil rights issues, in 1893, joining Frederick Douglass in boycotting the World's Columbian Exposition. They charged that it excluded the achievements of African-Americans. She made two speaking tours to Britain to speak out about lynching. She wrote about her experiences in England for the *Daily-Inter-Ocean*, a Republican newspaper that, unlike the city's leading Democratic newspapers, adopted an anti-lynching stand. She may have been the first black woman to be paid to write for a white-owned newspaper.

> *The Illinois Equal Suffrage Act, for which Wells-Barnett had campaigned, was passed in June of 1913.*

In 1895, Wells had married another journalist, Ferdinand Lee Barnett, founder of *The Chicago Conservator*, Chicago's first black newspaper, and the third African-American lawyer to qualify as a member of the Illinois bar association. The Barnetts had four children, who joined his two from a previous marriage (his first wife died). Susan B. Anthony, who was miffed when her suffragist colleagues married—she felt it hindered their ability to throw themselves heart and soul into working for the cause—claimed that Wells-Barnett was sometimes "distracted" by the challenge of what today we would call work-life balance.

Wells-Barnett had been a member of the Illinois Women's Suffrage Association before she founded the Alpha Suffrage Club, which she saw as a vehicle for preparing black women in the Chicago area to vote. Illinois was a trendsetter, granting women the right to vote before the 19th Amendment. The Illinois Equal Suffrage Act, for which Wells-Barnett had campaigned, was passed in June of 1913. It was not full-fledged suffrage: women could vote in presidential elections, for mayor and other local jobs, but not for governor or seats in Congress. There were separate ballot boxes for a while.

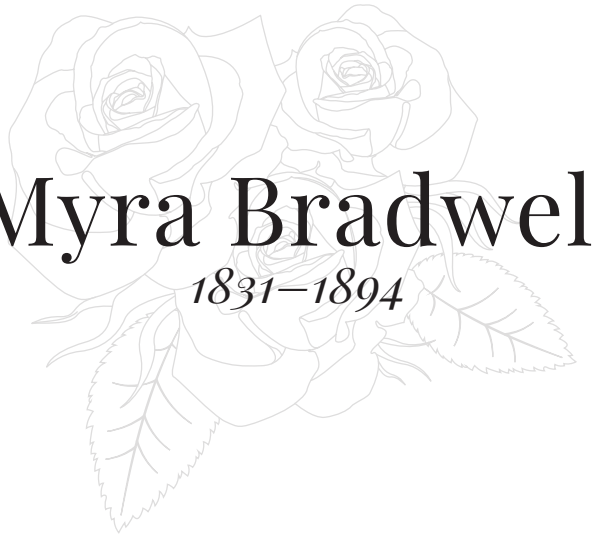
However, it was hailed as a great move forward. Carrie Chapman Catt of the National American Woman Suffrage Association said that

because of the Illinois vote "suffrage sentiment doubled over night." There was no opposition when Wells-Barnett marched in the Chicago parade to celebrate the act. Illinois, by the way, would go on to become the first state to ratify the 19th Amendment.

The Alpha Suffrage Club became an important Chicago institution. It developed a block-by-block canvassing system to register black women to vote, adding thousands to the voting rolls, and worked for specific candidates. The Alpha Club was instrumental in the election to Congress of Oscar De Priest, a Republican, the first African American elected to serve in Congress in the twentieth century. *Why They Marched* author Susan Ware said that women like Wells-Barnett "fervently believed that political engagement was a key tool for African American women to improve conditions for their communities and for their race. As a flier for an Alpha Suffrage Club meeting stated, 'If the colored women do not take advantage of the franchise they may only blame themselves when they are left out of everything.'"

Wells-Barnett continued to be a force in Illinois politics. She campaigned for Republican presidential candidate Herbert Hoover in 1918 and made an unsuccessful run for the U.S. Senate in 1930. Ida Wells-Barnett was a founder of the National Association of Colored Women's Club, a civil rights organization, and was on hand in Niagara Falls when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded. Some consider it a slight that she was not listed as a founder.

Full of honors, Ida Wells-Barnett died March 25, 1931, at the age of 68, in Chicago. She and her husband share a tombstone with the epitaph "Crusaders for Justice," a play on the title of her autobiography. The National Association of Black Journalists offers an annual award named in her honor, a fitting memorial for a woman who believed in the power of information and was willing to risk her life to bring it to the public.



Myra Bradwell

1831–1894

When Myra Bradwell, already the editor of a respected law journal in Chicago, applied for membership in the Illinois bar in 1869, she was rejected.

Following the practice of the day, Bradwell had been examined on her knowledge of the law by a judge, who found her qualified for admission to the bar. Hard to believe today, but Bradwell was denied membership solely because she was a woman.

The Illinois Supreme Court invoked the English common law upon which state law was founded, and according to which, as a married woman, Bradwell would not be able to enter into contracts on her own.

Even if she had not been married, however, the application would have been denied. "That God designed the sexes to occupy different spheres of action, and that it belonged to men to make, apply, and execute the laws, was regarded as an almost axiomatic truth," the Court said.

Bradwell appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which sided with the Illinois Court. Bradwell would prove that axiomatic truth wrong. She

never petitioned for membership again, but the wrong was righted and the Illinois bar conferred membership on her decades later in 1890.

Despite this setback, Bradwell had an outstanding career editing the reform-minded Chicago Legal News, which printed news about court opinions and ordinances and also pushed for women's suffrage, among a number of other causes. She helped write an 1869 bill that ensured married women the right to hold onto their own earnings. She and her husband helped found the American Woman Suffrage Association.

> *"[Myra Bradwell] probably contributed more to the women's rights movement than any other woman in the 19th Century," her biographer Jane M. Friedman told the Chicago Tribune.*

She was not embittered by her failure to become a member of the bar and believed that women's suffrage would not be gained by denigrating men. "You ask us, how shall this great privilege be obtained for women? We will tell you," she wrote. "Not by the class who term man 'a tyrant'—but by the sensible and devoted mothers, wives and daughters of the state unifying together, we mean those who have the respect and love of their fathers, husbands and brothers, and asking them that they give to women the right to vote."

"[Myra Bradwell] probably contributed more to the women's rights movement than any other woman in the 19th Century," her biographer Jane M. Friedman told the Chicago Tribune. "People like Susan B. Anthony were one-issue people. The issue was women's suffrage. But Myra was a multi-issue person. She entirely changed the course of women's legal rights."

Friedman's well-reviewed book is entitled America's First Woman Lawyer, which is a bit of a stretch. Arabella Mansfield, for example, was admitted to the Iowa bar in 1869, the same year Bradwell's application was rejected. But if Bradwell wasn't the first, she was part of an emerging

American publisher and lawyer Myra Bradwell (1831—1894), the first woman to be admitted to the bar in Illinois, circa 1870.

group of early women lawyers. Among them were prominent Chicago suffragists Mary Ahrens and Catherine Waugh McCulloch.

Born in Vermont in 1831, Myra Colby was the daughter of abolitionist parents. The family moved to Illinois when Myra was 12. Very little is known of her early years. She married James Bradwell in 1852, and the couple lived in Memphis, Tenn., where he was headmaster and she was a teacher at a private school. The Bradwells moved to Chicago in 1855, where James became a lawyer and ultimately a judge. He served in the Illinois General Assembly.

> *Myra and James Bradwell were the prime actors in getting Mary Todd Lincoln, the President's widow, released from an insane asylum.*

Myra became fascinated with the law. She taught herself law while serving in an apprenticeship in her husband's office. Her denial of bar membership came even though a federal judge from the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals judged her qualified. She continued to edit the Chicago Legal News (a special charter, granted by the legislature, was required for a woman to start a business). She promoted women's suffrage and other reforms in the paper.

Myra was one of the three founders of the Chicago Sorosis Club (Mary Livermore and Kate Doggett were the others), one of the country's early women's clubs. It met for discussions and to hear speakers. Like many suffrage organizations, the club split over whether to support the Fifteenth Amendment, which enfranchised newly freed slaves but did not mention women. Myra went with the Lucy Stone faction, which, while disappointed that women were not given the vote, supported the Fifteenth Amendment.

Bradwell served as an officer in the Illinois Suffrage Association, which in 1870 petitioned the state convention drafting a new constitution to include woman suffrage. The move failed, not at all helped by nearly 400 women from Peoria who strenuously objected to having the ballot

"thrust upon them." Myra and James Bradwell, joined by lawyer Alta Hulett fought for laws expanding women's rights. Hulett had also originally been rejected for bar membership because of her sex, but later was accepted and practiced law. Myra was often involved in the drafting of legislation. "A lot of the country's initial women's legal rights legislation came from Myra Bradwell's pen," biographer Friedman told the Chicago Tribune.

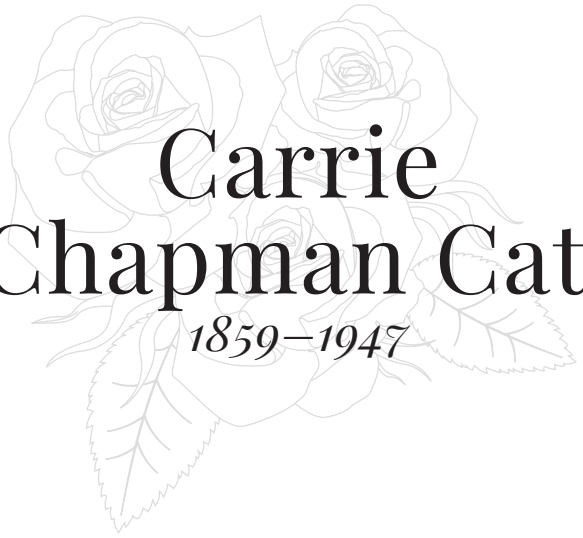
With the support of the Bradwells and Hulett, laws were passed that granted women the right to control their property after marriage and equal guardianship of children in the case of divorce. An 1872 law opened all professional fields—including the law—to women. Only the military was now off limits to Illinois women. Hulett was admitted to the bar the next year, becoming the first female member of the Illinois bar. Though Myra Bradwell never applied again to the bar, she was retroactively admitted in 1890. The U.S. Supreme Court gave her a license to practice law in 1892.

Myra was often involved in the drafting of legislation.

In telling the story of Myra Bradwell, one adventure cannot be omitted. James and Myra Bradwell were the prime actors in getting Mary Todd Lincoln, the President's widow, released from an insane asylum. When Mary Todd Lincoln, who had been institutionalized against her will by her son, Robert Todd Lincoln, appealed to the Bradwells, old friends of the Lincolns, they accepted the challenge. Mrs. Lincoln wrote the Bradwells from Bellevue Place, an asylum in Batavia, Illinois.

The Bradwells, who judged Mrs. Lincoln eccentric but not insane, waged a public campaign, but the real turning point was Judge Bradwell's decision that Mrs. Lincoln should simply pack up and go to live with some of Myra's relatives. When Robert Todd Lincoln tried to stop it, Judge Bradwell threatened to sue Bellevue. Mrs. Lincoln was released. The Lincoln family tried to suppress the letters Robert Todd Lincoln's mother wrote to the Bradwells, but a Bradwell descendant discovered them and wrote a book about the episode.

Myra Bradwell died in 1894 and is buried in Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago. Despite a life of achievement, biographer Friedman noted that Bradwell had once been so thoroughly forgotten that teachers at the Myra Bradwell Elementary School in Chicago had no idea who she was. Friedman, whose 1993 book helped rescue Bradwell from complete obscurity, attributes Bradwell's obscurity to having tangled over issues with Susan B. Anthony. Anthony thus neglected Bradwell's contributions in her history of the suffragists. She deserves to be remembered in August as we celebrate the 19th Amendment.



Carrie Chapman Catt

1859–1947

Carrie Chapman Catt was the suffragist leader who, after years of strategizing and campaigning, got to lead her army of women into the promised land.

Catt was president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, long led by Susan B. Anthony, when the Nineteenth Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote, was ratified on August 18, 1920. "The final triumph [of suffrage] was in large part a tribute to Catt's imaginative and tactful leadership," her Encyclopedia Britannica entry notes.

Catt developed a strategy she called her "Winning Plan," introduced at a NAWSA convention in 1916, that relied on passing suffrage, or partial suffrage, in the states and then using this to pressure legislators to pass a national amendment. Catt, a wealthy and cultured widow, was also instrumental in winning the support of one recalcitrant but very important ally, President Woodrow Wilson (who was ill-at-ease with more overtly radical suffrage leaders), over to the cause of women's suffrage.

Though Wilson came late to the cause, his 1918 speech before Congress, his first public avowal of suffrage, was a milestone. "We have made partners of the women in this war," Wilson said. "Shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right?"

"Someday the history of these last few months will be written and if the writer catches the real spirit it will be a thrilling story," Catt said in a speech delivered February of 1920, when ratification was clearly imminent.

> *She would later say that the realization that her mother could not vote, while her father could, was a turning point.*

"Suffragists were never dismayed when they were a tiny group and all the world was against them," she said. "What care they now when all the world is with them. March on, suffragists—the victory is yours."

Carrie Clinton Lane was born into a farming family in Ripon, Wisconsin in 1859 but the family moved to Iowa when she was a child. Her girlhood home in Charles, Iowa, now a museum listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a charming brick Victorian with a porch and adjacent apple orchard. She would later say that the realization that her mother could not vote, while her father could, was a turning point. Catt's father, Lucius Lane, was initially skeptical about her going to college, but he eventually accepted it, though he would not defray the entire cost. Carrie enrolled in Iowa State Agricultural College (which evolved into Iowa State University), where she washed dishes and taught school to earn money to help support herself. She was the only woman in her class and graduated with a BS degree. She was a law clerk and teacher, rising to be the first female school superintendent in her district.

In 1885 she married newspaper man Leo Chapman. She accompanied him to California and adopted his line of work. Chapman died a year later of typhoid fever. Carrie stayed on for a while, becoming the first female

Portrait of Carrie Chapman Catt (1859–1947), American suffrage leader, 1914.

reporter in San Francisco. Returning to Iowa, she helped organize the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association.

Four years after Chapman's death, she married prominent engineer and Iowa native George Catt. Their prenup marriage contract featured an unusual clause. Carrie got four months off a year to do her own thing, which of course was working for woman suffrage. George Catt encouraged her in her suffragist work, and, when he died in 1905, left her a wealthy woman able to devote herself fulltime to the cause without financial worries.

Catt became close to Susan B. Anthony, who handpicked Catt to lead NAWSA. Catt served two terms as president of NAWSA, from 1900 to 1904, when she took time off to nurse a dying husband, and from 1915 to 1920. As part of the "Winning Plan," Catt organized women's groups in New York to lobby for the 1917 referendum that gave New York women the right to vote. It was after the referendum passed that Catt could declare suffrage "inevitable."

Portrait of American suffragist leader Carrie Chapman Catt (1859—1947) sitting at her desk, ca.1920s.

Catt tended to steer clear of the firebrands. When Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the original firebrand of the movement, published her radical Women's Bible in the 1890s, Catt lobbied for a NAWSA resolution disassociating itself from Stanton's highly unorthodox book. The resolution passed, over the objections of Susan B. Anthony, who regarded it as unnecessary. Anthony previously had joined Catt in asking Stanton to make changes, a thankless task. Stanton begged Anthony to resign from NAWSA in protest, but in the end neither Stanton nor Anthony left the organization.

Their prenup marriage contract featured an unusual clause. Carrie got four months off a year to do her own thing, which of course was working for woman suffrage.

Alice Paul was another of those firebrands, and Paul and Catt were often at daggers drawn. Alice Paul had lived in England and was impressed by the militant tactics of the colorful English suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst. Paul and her friend Lucy Burns—the two Americans first encountered each in a London police station after being arrested at a suffragette demonstration—organized the 1913 women's march that greeted President Wilson when he arrived in Washington, D.C., for his inauguration.

Paul organized the Silent Sentinels to stand in front of the White House. "At first, Wilson seemed bemused by the picketers. He tipped his hat and smiled. He even invited them in for coffee." But as time went on, the tide turned. According to PBS, "Wilson was repelled by the militant suffragists outside his gate. To him, their methods were insulting, unfeminine, and unpatriotic." (Wilson was, however, horrified at the tactics, including force feeding, endured when Sentinels were taken to jail.)

Catt rejected Paul's militant tactics. Catt was active in the international peace movement. Nevertheless, Catt threw her support behind the war, a hotly contested decision. But she did not waver. As

PBS put it, Catt "embraced the war as an opportunity for women to earn the vote through their patriotism." She also met with Wilson privately.

Her strategy worked. In June 1918, Wilson sent a typewritten note from the White House to Catt. "I have read your letter with deepest interest," Wilson wrote, "and I welcome the opportunity to say without reservation that the full and sincere democratic reconstruction of the world for which we are striving, and which we are determined to bring about at any cost, will not be completely or adequately attained until women are admitted to the suffrage, and that only by that action can the nations of the world realize for the benefit of future generations the full ideal force of opinion, or the full humane forces of action." Wilson appears to have typed the letter himself.

Catt tended to steer clear of the firebrands.

Catt and Paul never reconciled. Paul established the National Woman's Party. As an older lady, still active but living at Juniper Lodge, her home in New York, Catt placed 14 plaques honoring leaders of the suffrage movement in trees on the property. One famous activist, Alice Paul, was conspicuously absent.

Catt traveled to Nashville in 1920, when the 19th Amendment was up for a vote in the state legislature. Catt organized the campaign for ratification in Tennessee. The vote was deadlocked, when a young state legislator named Harry T. Burn changed his vote at the behest of his mother. Thus Tennessee became the 36th and final state to vote for ratification. Catt went on to found the League of Women Voters.

After she became a widow, Catt lived the rest of her life with Mary Garrett Hay, a suffragist from New York. When Catt died in 1947, at the age of 88, she was buried next to Hay in New York's historic Woodlawn Cemetery. She was the strategist who steered the 19th Amendment into port, bringing to fruition the crusade for woman suffrage in the United States.

Portrait of Carrie Chapman Catt (1859–1947), American suffrage leader, 1914.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charlotte Hays is IWF's senior editor and director of cultural programs.

Hays gets up most mornings and blogs for Independent Women's Forum. She is also the author of IWF's popular Champion Women series which highlights women across the country—and world—who are accomplishing amazing things. Hays joined Independent Women's Forum in 1999 as editor of *The Women's Quarterly.* When the quarterly evolved into our web operation, Hays became a senior editor.

Known for her quick and irreverent sense of humor, Hays has appeared on cable television programs such as *Politically Incorrect*, C-Span's *Washington Journal*, and PBS's *To the Contrary*. A former correspondent for the *National Catholic Register* and a feature writer at *The Washington Times*, Hays has been fascinated by politics since covering local politics for alternative weeklies in New Orleans. She is co-author of three humorous books on southern culture, the first of which was the best-selling *Being Dead Is No Excuse: The Official Southern Ladies Guide to Hosting the Perfect Funeral*. She is also author of *Fortune Hunters*, a book on what it takes to make a Midas marriage. Her work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal, New Yor*k magazine, the *Washington Post's* "Book World," and the *Weekly Standard*.

Hays formerly served as editor of In Character, A Journal of Everyday Virtues, which was published by the John Templeton Foundation.

About Independent Women's Forum

Independent Women's Forum (IWF) is the leading national women's organization dedicated to developing and advancing policies that aren't just well-intended, but actually enhance people's freedom, opportunities, and well-being.

As a 501c3 non profit organization, IWF works every day to engage and inform women about how policy issues impact them and their loved ones. IWF celebrates women's accomplishments and fights to expand women's options and opportunities..

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