

Women's Suffrage Movement in the United States, 1821 – 1921

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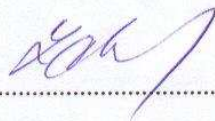
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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce se zabývá hnutím za volební právo žen ve Spojených státech amerických. Jejím cílem je objasnit nevyhnutelnost všeobecného volebního práva. Práce obsahuje stručný přehled historických období a událostí ve Spojených státech mezi lety 1821 – 1921 společně se státy, které udělily ženám právo volit před devatenáctým dodatkem k ústavě. V neposlední řadě jsou zde také zmíněny všeobecné argumenty, které podporovaly nebo oponovaly myšlence volebního práva pro ženy.

Klíčová slova: volební právo žen, hnutí, ženy, muži, právo, udělení volebního práva, volební lístek, nevyhnutelný, volit, stát

ABSTRACT

The thesis deals with women's suffrage movement in the United States. It aims at clarification of the inevitability of universal suffrage. The thesis contains a brief overview of historical periods and events in the U.S. between years 1821 – 1921 together with states which granted women enfranchisement before the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. At last but not least general arguments which were used to support or oppose the idea of women suffrage are mentioned as well.

Keywords: women's suffrage, movement, women, men, right, enfranchisement, ballot, inevitable, vote, state

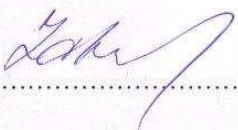
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and certify that any secondary material used has been acknowledged in the text and listed in the bibliography.

May 4, 2010


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INTRODUCTION

Four years ago when the Czech Republic held a national parliamentary election, my grandmother filled out my ballot for me and told me to go and place it into the election box. I do not even know which candidates my grandmother chose and for whom I voted. I took my right to vote for granted, and possibly for this reason, and because of my young age, I did not care. I did not realize, like my grandmother certainly did, that a hundred years ago a simple ballot in a woman's hands meant something impossible or unreachable.

Women in the United States fought for almost a hundred years to gain enfranchisement, to get involved in public life, to be officially accepted as citizens, and thus, to enjoy the same rights as men. Before women's suffrage was allowed, females were treated simply as men's servants and companions. They were not allowed to publicly express their own opinions or to own property, even though these rights were guaranteed by the U.S. Bill of Rights. Moreover as the Declaration of Independence states, all men are created equal and must have the same rights. As a result the U.S committed itself to being an independent, equal and democratic state. Women's suffrage, even if the struggle to achieve it was long and difficult, should be viewed as a byproduct of this democratic impulse. Universal suffrage was therefore inevitable, but the actions of women hastened its fruition.

Concerning allowing my grandmother to vote for me, I now recognize that it was a mistake, and I would never let that happen again. After all the research I have done, after reading about all the obstacles women had to overcome to become regular citizens of the states where they were born and gave birth to their children, after realizing how humiliated and oppressed they were and how strong they had to be in order to make sure they can participate and influence the environment in which their families and children were going to live, my action, or lack of action, appears as a terrific disrespect to the memory of all those women who fought for their rights that most women worldwide now enjoy.

1 BACKGROUND OF THE MOVEMENT

A long time before the official women's suffrage movement began there were sporadic protests in support of women's rights. In 1647 the first woman acquiring a seat in a colonial Legislature was an heir of Lord Calvert, Mrs. Margaret Brent from Maryland. This seating did not occur without protest however, and was not the norm.¹ In fact over a century later, women's rights had not improved, evidenced by Abigail Adams' 1776 letter to her husband in which she asked him not to forget about the ladies in the new code of law he was supposed to create for the new U.S. She begged him not to give such power and precedence to husbands.²

Between years 1691 – 1780 Massachusetts as a colony allowed women to vote only when owning some property. The only state permitting women to vote after the American Revolution was New Jersey which gave "all inhabitants worth \$250" the right to vote. New Jersey women held on to enfranchisement only until 1807 when a scandal concerning elections evoked an idea of relieving women of their voting rights.³

The fight for women's enfranchisement began mainly in English speaking countries. For much of the 19th century only white men could vote but this changed around the turn of 20th century when New Zealand gave women enfranchisement 1893, followed by Australia in 1902. However countries like Britain, the United States and Canada did not immediately follow suite.

In the United States women's suffrage could be achieved either on a state by state basis or by federal constitutional amendment.⁴ The whole process officially started with the Seneca Falls convention in 1848, organized by leading activists Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. There a declaration of sentiments was presented that was based on the Declaration of Independence. The document was signed and supported by a hundred men and women, and historically it is the first document publicly protesting women's current social status.⁵

¹ Frances Maule, *"The blue book"; woman suffrage, history, arguments and results* (New York: National woman suffrage publishing co., inc., 1917), 5.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 6.

⁴ Eileen L. McDonagh and Douglas H. Price, "Women's suffrage in the Progressive Era: Patterns of opposition and support in referenda voting, 1910-1980," *The American Political Science Review*, no. 79 (1985): 416.

⁵ Maule, *"The blue book"; woman suffrage, history, arguments and results*, 9.

1.1 U.S. Bill of Rights

The U.S. Constitution was not detailed enough evidenced by its lack of provisions for human rights which are essential for creating a liberal country. Therefore, amendments to the Constitution were recommended. Thomas Jefferson supported the creation of a Bill of Rights, because, as he said, it was “what the people are entitled to against every government on earth.” Ten amendments were soon enacted and ratified.⁶

The First Amendment guarantees all American citizens freedom of speech and of press, the right of people to assemble, and to petition the Government in case of adjust of grievances. The Fifth Amendment refers to property rights when stating that: no person can be “deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law”.⁷ Together with the rest of the amendments the U.S. committed itself to equal rights for all white men.

1.2 Injustice Towards women

Whereas white men had the chance to enjoy full rights women only found power through motherhood. They could not own property, sign a document, get a quality education, speak publicly or be politically active. Instead they were advised to be passive and quiet. It was the Second Great Awakening (1790-1840) that gave them the first chance to be publicly heard when women began to form church fellowship groups. Such groups were formed under the pretence of raising money for charity, but were soon active in educating children, establishing homes for orphans and encouraging women to gain their voice.⁸

Although some married women managed to earn a bit of money, they had no legal right to keep their wages as they were deemed as incapable of doing so. They were not allowed to make a will, sign a contract or sue. However, men were allowed to put their children into a guardian’s care without the mother’s agreement. In case of divorce women had no legal right to keep custody of their children and there was no chance at all for a

⁶ Roger A. Bruns, “Constitution of the United States - A History,” National Archives and Records Administration, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_history.html (accessed April 3, 2010).

⁷ “Bill of Rights Transcript,” National Archives and Records Administration, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/bill_of_rights_transcript.html (accessed April 3, 2010).

⁸ Elizabeth Frost and Kathryn Cullen-DuPont, *Women's suffrage in America: an eyewitness history* (New York: Facts on File, 1992), 2.

divorce for women living in the West and very little chance in the South. In case of the death of a husband who had no will his wife was allowed to inherit only one third of the total property. Widows in New York only had a right to a Bible, pictures, books and things valued at less than fifty dollars. Also they could get ten sheep, two pigs, a spinning wheel, clothes, bedding and some furniture. Moreover girls were normally omitted from their father's will.⁹

Through the women's suffrage movement women desired their admission to citizenship and further on to the public sphere. They were oppressed within the family and this was their chance to achieve power and get in touch with society at large. Family and social life were overlapped until the 19th century when it became more distinct. Family stopped being a sole unit although it still had a social function. In the 19th century there were two types of social organizations: the individual and the family, both identified as public and private spheres. Emergence of such spheres also meant the rise of new, gender-based roles. As individuals, women had a chance to gain a respect and be a part of society which is not formulated by their secondary position in the family. However, the public sphere became primarily men's place. Although women became part of the public sphere it was just for a short time in their life – usually as factory workers but this was a matter of a few years before they got married and private sphere became their domain again. The possibility to work and actively participate in the business world was brief lasting only until they got married and had to assume a familial role of wife and mother.¹⁰ Due to the distinction between private sphere for women and the public sphere for men sexual distinction also arose.¹¹

In the 19th century citizenship was framed as follows: “a direct relationship between the individual and his government.” Patriarchy was no more viewed as the official principle of democratic government, unlike in the 17th century when New England stated that person owning a property is its head and thereby a citizen as well. Even though the old patriarchal concept was gone women however still were not allowed to become citizens. The Fourteenth amendment approved in 1868, clearly states that U.S. citizens are males. The

⁹ Frost and Cullen-DuPont, *Women's suffrage in America: an eyewitness history*, 2.

¹⁰ Ellen DuBois, “The Radicalism of the Woman Suffrage Movement: Notes toward the Reconstruction of Nineteenth-Century Feminism,” *Feminist Studies*, no. 3 (1975), 64.

¹¹ Ellen C. DuBois, *Feminism and suffrage: the emergence of an independent women's movement in America* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1978), 26.

prohibition of women in the political world was accepted and “person” in politics was meant to be “male”.

2 HISTORICAL PERIODS

U.S. history can be divided into several periods that had more or less impact on the women's suffrage: the Victorian Era (1837 – 1903) during which women were genteel creatures. The Gilded Age (1865 – 1912) during which poor women went to work but were still in many ways governed by Victorian idealism and the Progressive Era (1890 – 1920) during which women of all classes united in the struggle for enfranchisement. Wars such as Civil War and World War I also influenced the movement.

2.1 Women in Victorian Society

In Victorian times women were sheltered by society. Young daughters from wealthy families did not go to schools; they had private teachers and were taught proper etiquette and a subordinate role. They studied subjects that would help them to raise children or to take care of the household. Women who wanted to be more educated most often saw their requests dismissed. In addition there was no way for them to work or stand out from the crowd. Women from upper class did not want to work since they considered it beneath them. Women who went to work actually gave up the chance for a good marriage and their social status decreased. Only women from the lower class took the chance and started to work in order to support their family but these were generally poor women, immigrants or blacks.

Marriage was extremely important during the Victorian era. If a woman did not find a proper husband she found herself on the fringe of society. However, once she got married her husband took over any property she brought to the union. Husbands were responsible for their wives and usually took control over everything. Any income they had belonged to men, they had absolute power over women's lives; any command they issued their wives should obey.

Florence Nightingale was a very important working-woman pioneer during the Victorian Era. Raised in a wealthy upper-class family she realized how little power women had and decided to become a nurse and start helping poor and ill people. This was definitely not what she was expected to do as nurses of that time were usually men or old, poor women. In 1854 when the Crimean War started, Florence left her job in a hospital and together with 38 chosen ladies left for Turkey to train female nurses and help soldiers.

After the war she returned as a national heroine. She continued working as a nurse and is remembered for her great contribution to the women's rights movement.¹²

2.1.1 Women in the Civil War

The campaign for women's right to vote started years before the Civil War as an offspring of the abolitionist movement, but during the four-year Civil War women contributed by manufacturing soldiers' equipment like weapons, uniforms or ammunitions.¹³ However women's merits were largely unrecognized by the patriarchal Victorian society reasons of women's social position. Women doing men's work were considered as odd and inconvenient, but when the Civil War started it offered them a chance to become a part of the men's world and thus the whole society. Hundreds of them joined the armies of the North and South while others became spies or nurses.¹⁴

To fight, women had to disguise themselves as men, and when their true gender was uncovered were immediately discharged. However many of them managed to learn to walk like men, behave and speak like men, they got themselves padded vests in order to hide their breasts and look more masculine. Old records estimate there were about 400 – 700 women fighting disguised as men.¹⁵

Other women chose to be so called "daughters of regiment" which included cooking, mending the uniforms, nursing or carrying the flag forehead of the regiment. Many women volunteers were also serving as doctors and nurses in hospitals, battlefields or regimental aid stations furthermore they were teaching, writing as well as doing relief agencies to help the soldiers.¹⁶

The Civil War basically gave women a possibility which allowed them to break through their traditional place in society. After the war, however, they had to return back to their Victorian home and family life. Nevertheless these years had an impact on them and gave them encouragement.

¹² "Introduction," Florence Nightingale, <http://www.florence-nightingale.co.uk/cms/index.php/florence-introduction> (accessed March 17, 0210).

¹³ "Women of the American Civil War Era," American Civil War History Timelines Battle Map Pictures, <http://americancivilwar.com/women/women.html> (accessed March 18, 2010).

¹⁴ Larry G. Eggleston, *Women in the Civil War: extraordinary stories of soldiers, spies, nurses, doctors, crusaders and others* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2003), 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

2.1.2 Gilded Age

Due to the disappointment for women when the Fifteenth amendment was approved in 1870 which allowed blacks to vote but did not mention women, the need for more active delegate for women's enfranchisement became apparent. As a result, two groups were formed in 1869. These were the National Women Suffrage Association in New York and the American Women Suffrage Association in Ohio. Both stood for the women's ballot but differed in the manner of achieving it. NWSA set the goal of a constitutional amendment and supported easier divorce (especially in the case of abuse) and better working conditions for women as well. Representatives of the group were also more militant and highly disagreed with the fifteenth amendment omitting women. On the other hand AWSA supported the Fifteenth Amendment and demanded enfranchisement state by state.¹⁷

During the Gilded Age many industrial towns and cities were built. These places with big factories became a target destination for immigrants from Europe or Americans desiring a job. Due to a modern economy and high industrialization, the U.S. soon became the world's business leader. In this context, women became a powerful working force most notably in the textile industry. This possibility enabled them to move away from their homes to mill cities like Lowell, Massachusetts and to live in boarding houses belonging to the factories. Most of the women who lived in these boarding houses were from New England and known as "Mill Girls". They were usually poor, single and wanted to support their family or enjoy a new way of financial independence. Boarding houses offered them low-cost living in units where about six women shared a room. Boardinghouse keepers watched them closely and morally and physically supervised the young women. They were not allowed to have relationships, any intemperance or disobedience was a cogent reason for dismissing them.¹⁸

Women constituted a great working force for new industrialists as they were working for less money, experienced terrible working conditions and due to their age and sex they did not represent any threat associated with a permanent working class. Women were expected to work for a few years, then return back home, get married and have children. As

¹⁷ Maule, *"The blue book"; woman suffrage, history, arguments and results*, 18.

¹⁸ "The Mill Girls & Immigrants Exhibit," Lowell National Historical Park, www.nps.gov/lowe/planyourvisit/upload/mgi_05.pdf (accessed March 18, 2010).

time passed, working women joined together and in 1836 became the first labor group to strike.¹⁹

Throughout the nineteenth century women immigrants from central Europe, Ireland, France or Canada, often supplemented with children, became laborers in factories providing terrible working conditions including 14 hour work days and heavy environmental pollution with little ventilation.²⁰

2.1.3 Progressive Era

The Progressive Era lasted from 1890 – 1920 and it was a time of great urbanization, industrialization and generally great changes. Lots of immigrants were arriving, which tended to displease Americans, as their presence was associated with increased disease, crime and corruption. These issues together with terrible working conditions, child labor or urban slums became topics for muckrakers, who gave these issues a wide audience.²¹ In the early 19th century the U.S. people moved into the cities in search of work. Women were active players in the market, as both producers and consumers. No laws restricted them in these regards; however issues concerning education, religion and law still subordinated them.²²

Concerning women, the Progressive Era meant a great upheaval after the Victorian period. Women's roles were rapidly changing as a result of their incorporation into society. They actively participated in volunteer organizations, and working women were fighting for better working conditions and raise of their salaries. Prompted by inventors, some new type of jobs appeared for women such as typists, telephone operators or clerks; department stores became a possible working place as well.²³ Due to such a break through women were finally able to be seen and heard outside of the home or factory, and they used this opportunity to appeal to the powers that be concerning the injustice and lack of rights they were undergoing. As a result and as it was not reasonable to have two associations

¹⁹ "Women at Work: Manual Labor," Baker Library Bloomberg Center, <http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/wes/collections/labor/> (accessed March 20, 2010).

²⁰ Harriet Robinson, "Modern History Sourcebook: Harriet Robinson: Lowell Mill Girls," Fordham.Edu, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/robinson-lowell.html> (accessed March 20, 2010).

²¹ "The Progressive Movement," United States History, <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1061.html> (accessed March 20, 2010).

²² Frost and Cullen-DuPont, *Women's suffrage in America*, 6.

²³ "Women in the Progressive Era," National Women's History Museum, <http://www.nwhm.org/ProgressiveEra/introwomenprogressive.html> (accessed March 20, 2010).

separately fighting for the same goal, in 1890 the two previously formed associations NWSA and AWSA joined together as a National American Women Suffrage Organization in order to more actively demand women's enfranchisement

An organization that gained the mainstream during the Progressive Era was the Woman's Christian Temperance Union founded in 1873. Women's crusades and temperance reform was their fight for saving and protection of their homes. Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs or running saloons deprived women of family income and family life. Amount of the money spent for alcohol consumption compared to other expenses is a clear proof of the situation's urgency. At the end of the nineteenth century money spent for alcohol in the U.S. reached more than one billion dollars in comparison with nine hundred million dollars spent for meat or more importantly only two hundred million dollars for education. Under the temperance propaganda women were also dealing with a number of other issues, suffrage including. As the U.S. appeared in chaos women tried to persuade that via the prohibition there would be a chance to put their lives together and regain control over people's lives.²⁴

The Women's Trade Union League was founded and operated by middleclass and working class white women in order to improve dangerous and terrifying working conditions for women. The union led women into several strikes most notably the Cloakmakers' Strike in 1910, and helped to establish standards for health and safety condition. Still, many factory owners ignored these standards. As a result, in March, 1911 tragedy occurred in which 146 out of 500 workers lost their lives. In the Triangle Waist Company in New York huge fire broke out where lots of women and even young children, mostly immigrants of Italian and European Jewish origin, were employed and were trying to make a better life for themselves in the U.S. Instead they found death in a place where obviously fire inspection or safety was omitted.²⁵ Clearly working class was used as a cheap working labor and due to inhuman conditions that apparently nobody wanted to improve it strengthened the suffrage movement in order to achieve power to put the things in order.

²⁴ "Early History," Woman's Christian Temperance Union, <http://www.wctu.org/earlyhistory.html> (accessed March 20, 2010).

²⁵ Leon Stein, "The Triangle Factory Fire," Cornell University-ILR School-Home, <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/narrative3.html> (accessed March 20, 2010).

World War I, which the U.S. entered in 1917, gave women much more power in working and self-improvement sphere. Men who had to go to the battlefield and fight left women at home together with children and their business. Women had to run the business for their husbands and start doing things they have never done before which brought them closer to the equality with men. In order to help during the war, women also were of use as nurses.

As the U.S. confusion and uncontrolled life direction was getting serious other remarkable issues were arising. The Ku Klux Klan established already after the Civil War and reached its second wave during the late Progressive Era, after the WWI preached racism, anti-Catholicism and together with their terror practices became a real threat for African-Americans, immigrants or any people who stood up for them.²⁶ Ku Klux Klan was a militant representative of patriotism and besides that managed to control politics in many of states as well.²⁷

Progressive Era was a reactionary time in lives of the U.S. people. Obstacles in this period were reactions to unsure time and stagnation in doubts. After the WWI and Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the U.S. appeared in a deep confusion and fear again. This time it was fear of communists which is known as the Red Scare. Fear of strikes which could lead to Communist revolution and change of everything became a national hysteria. The “red” hunting was out of control and led even to firing teachers at secondary schools for previous or current participation at any leftist organization.²⁸

Another example of the U.S. crisis might be seen in the case of *State of Tennessee v. John Scopes*, known as Monkey trial. The society appeared again in a chaos. On one side there were traditional Victorians, on the other side remained Modernist both fighting together whether to keep traditional view of the world or to give space to young, modern society which was impatient and revivalism was getting on strength. The process concerned whether to teach Darwin’s theory of Evolution at schools donated by state because it was in conflict with the Butler Act stating that it is unlawful to teach any other

²⁶ “Ku Klux Klan-Extremism in America,” ADL: Fighting Anti-semitism, Bigotry and Extremism, http://www.adl.org/learn/ext_us/kkk/default.asp?LEARN_Cat=Extremism&LEARN_SubCat=Extremism_in_America&xpicked=4&item=kkk (accessed April 10, 2010).

²⁷ “The Ku Klux Klan, A Brief Biography,” The Black Box/African American Registry, http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/ku-klux-klan-brief-biography (accessed April 10, 2010).

²⁸ Paul Burnett, “The Red Scare,” UMKC School of Law, <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/saccov/redscare.html> (accessed April 10, 2010).

theory than the one taught by Bible.²⁹ To conclude, over the number of events arisen the Progressive Era it is clear that the United States were in a great depression, people lost control over their life and to achieve the U.S. strength and confidence was very important. But the way how to get out of this misery and regain the control over people's life was by giving women right to vote and let them together with men start working on their country. Thus, a big amount of voices was needed and which is the reason why women should have been given the ballot and obtain the enfranchisement.

²⁹ Douglas O. Linder, "State v. John Scopes (Monkey) Trial," UMKC School of Law, <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/evolut.htm> (accessed April 10, 2010).

3 ANTI-SUFFRAGE ARGUMENTS

Arguments why women should not be allowed to vote were many. Women's enfranchisement represented an outstanding change that many did not want to accept. Some saw the ballot in women's hands as a threat for politics, family and the whole society. The oldest and probably most ridiculous argument against enfranchising women dates back to 1879 when Gustave Le Bon, a leading French scientist, founder of social psychology and a more misogynist presented his findings that a large number of women have brains more similar in size to those of gorillas than to more evolved male brains. Such dubious results were used as a powerful argument against women as they were deemed as unable to make correct decisions and intelligent opinions. Thus, a ballot for them would not be wise. This argument was also used to keep women out of universities.³⁰

Another great argument why women should not vote was their general role and placement in society with regards to their sex. In Washington D.C. in 1905 at a Mother's meeting President Theodore Roosevelt said: "The primary duty of the husband is to be the home-maker, the breadwinner for his wife and children; the primary duty of the woman is to be the helpmeet, the housewife and mother." This statement supports the argument of one of the leading female anti-suffragist Lyman Abbot who argued the absurdity of giving women the ballot. Abbot contended that women are not intended to vote due to their sex and familial commitments and that it is the responsibility of the husband (or father) to care for them and their rights. Lyman Abbot even stresses her indignation over women's argument that they need to protect themselves "from the injuries inflicted on them by men." She denounces women for setting sex against sex which is in her own words "degradation so deep that political polemics can no further go."³¹

Women were advised to stick with their natural predetermination of a spiritual and familial leaders and not to try to get involved in the man's world since this attempt was not about to work out. "Woman will get what she wants if she is woman in her way of getting it; but if she is man in her way of getting it she will not get more than half of what she wants." Anti-suffragists argued that women were put on the highest pedestal of the society

³⁰ Stephen Jay Gould, "Women's Brains," Mr. Gunnar's English 10/AP 11 Web Site, <http://www.mrgunnar.net/ap.cfm?subpage=510367> (accessed April 10, 2010).

³¹ Lyman Abbott, "Answer to the Arguments in Support of Woman Suffrage," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 35 (1910): 29.

and by getting the ballot their role would decrease and at that moment they would not be treated as gentle beings. They also worried that morality of the state would decline and that children would cease to be cared for properly. In short enfranchisement would degrade women and destroy the family.³²

An interesting fact is that some women simply did not want suffrage. Visibly, many anti-suffrage groups were led by women. In addition in some states where there was a high percentage of illiteracy, well-educated women rather joined men who argued that it is better to keep the ballot away from women as it would be dangerous to give illiterate people such power.³³ Furthermore, some of the most ardent activists within the suffrage movement were lesbian, prompting some women who did not want to be associated with such a liberal lifestyle choice.

General reasons why women were not supposed to vote were many and widely presented, but Southern made a special argument. The strongest claim stemmed from the opposition of whites against the enfranchisement of blacks. The opponents stated that women's suffrage meant black suffrage and that women desiring the ballot so passionately did not actually realize that such a thing would allow even their cooks and maids to vote. Black women were widely more aggressive when fighting for the ballot. If they were given the opportunity to vote they would definitely participate in large amounts. Moreover when enfranchised, black people would receive and hold a majority in many elections. The fact that black women were more aggressive and used to getting what they want might be predicated by their origins. African women were matriarchal and adored by their men. They supported them and therefore women naturally gained the voice and support of their already enfranchised husbands.³⁴

Women's suffrage represented a real threat for all men who enjoyed saloons and bars where they happily spent money they earned instead of bringing it home to support their families. Alcohol represented an outstanding threat to the relations within the family and its

³² Charles H. Parkhurst, "The Inadvisability of Woman Suffrage," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 35 (1910): 37.

³³ "Obstacles to Overcome - (Women in World History Curriculum)," Women In World History Curriculum, <http://www.womeninworldhistory.com/essay-06-04.html> (accessed April 17, 2010).

³⁴ Kenneth R. Johnson, "White Racial Attitudes as a Factor in the Arguments against the Nineteenth Amendment," *Phylon* (1960-), no. 31 (1970): 32, 33.

budget. Thus saloonkeepers together with representatives of liquor and brewing industry started to worry about their businesses since it was obvious that once women gained suffrage they would ban alcohol production and consumption. In addition in the U.S. there were many German-Americans who highly disagreed with prohibition as alcohol was a part of their traditional way of life; it represented their “Kultur”.³⁵

Textile and manufacturing industries also became ones of many opponents to women’s suffrage. Again the main role was money, as their factories mostly depended on the low-cost labor of women or even children, and women would definitely change as fast as they could.³⁶

³⁵ McDonagh and Price, “Women's suffrage in the Progressive Era: Patterns of opposition and support in referenda voting,” 418.

³⁶ Ibid.

4 WHY WOMEN SHOULD VOTE

Reasons why women should be enfranchised were many as well as the reasons why they should not. In fact most of the arguments against women's suffrage came up from those which represented the reasons why women felt the need of being enfranchised. For instance the alcohol consumption and men's attendance in saloons resulted in close cooperation between the suffrage and temperance movement, inequality between men's and women's wages became an outstanding argument in support of women's enfranchisement together with terrible working conditions which women wanted to improve. Support in favor of the universal suffrage also stemmed from well educated and middle class who endorsed more power for their wives and those who perceived women as potential confederates and supporters in case of more progressive or reform factors.³⁷

However, the effort women took in order to get the ballot has more simple and meaningful principles. All human beings shall have the same, equal rights with no regard to their sex or race. So the basic argument in support of the universal suffrage was indeed justice. Women were supposed to have the right to vote as well as men since this made them subordinated. However, they had to obey the laws men approved which means women should have participated on their making as well. Approved laws had an impact on both sexes regardless who made them.

Regardless how independent and educated women wanted to be they still were above all mothers who needed to protect their children and home. Within their enfranchisement came a remarkable improvement in laws; as Judge Lindsey from the Denver Juvenile Court stated: "We have in Colorado the most advanced laws of any State in the Union for the care and protection of the home and the children, the very foundation of the republic. We owe this more to woman suffrage than to any one cause."³⁸

Lots of women also argued that there were men with no education, poor origin and those were making decisions of the nation's life. It was seen as a terrific injustice with regard to the fact that many women were educated and intelligent. Equal suffrage had a

³⁷ McDonagh and Price, "Women's suffrage in the Progressive Era: Patterns of opposition and support in referenda voting, 1910-1980," 418.

³⁸ Julia Ward Howe, "Woman and the Suffrage: The Case for Woman Suffrage," *The American Journal of Nursing*, no. 9 (1909): 562.

positive impact on electing of political representatives. Women from the enfranchised states hampered nominations of improper people into politics like gamblers or liquor dealers. In support of this fact may be used again words of Judge Lindsey when said: "One of the greatest advantages from woman suffrage is the fear on the part of the machine politicians to nominate men of immoral character. While many bad men have been elected in spite of woman suffrage, they have not been elected because of woman suffrage."³⁹

At last but not least the process of voting united the family. It became an event when couples dressed well and together went to vote. It became a special social occasion which could have been experienced by both partners and so it was a topic for conversations as well. It was a new way of life for the family joining all members together. In consequence to these facts it was clear that the government and anti-suffragists could not resist the universal suffrage forever. The call for justice and equality was so loud that it was impossible to avoid it. Unless the United States made women officially essential parts of the nation the whole country could not present itself as a state of liberty. In addition arguments favoring the enfranchisement were of such strength that the suffrage became inevitable.⁴⁰

³⁹ Howe, "Woman and the Suffrage: The Case for Woman Suffrage," 563.

⁴⁰ Anna G. Spencer, "The Logical Basis of Woman Suffrage," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, no. 35 (1910): 10.

5 WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT LEADERS

There were thousands of women actively involved in the suffrage movement but a few of them stood out of the crowd, led the movements and even today they are honored for the merits and contributions to the women's enfranchisement. Namely, the most known were Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Alice Paul and Lucy Stone.

5.1 Conservative Susan B. Anthony

"Modern invention has banished the spinning wheel, and the same law of progress makes the woman of today a different woman from her grandmother." Susan B. Anthony⁴¹

Susan B. Anthony was actively campaigning woman who sacrificed her life to change women's role in the society and join it by achieving the suffrage. Born in 1820 and died fourteen years before women were enfranchised; she was not very radical on her way toward women's rights.⁴² She was giving around 45 to 100 speeches every year, she was always self-conscious in the way she presented and dressed herself, she was also well skilled in public speeches and therefore she probably became an icon of the whole Women's Suffrage Movement in the U.S. and the triumphal Nineteenth Amendment is being nicknamed as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. Moreover, she was honored as the first woman with her likeness on the U.S. Dollar coin officially released in New York in 1979.⁴³

Her suffrage involvement started in 1852 when Anthony participated in women's rights convention in Syracuse. About twelve years later together with Elisabeth C. Stanton she founded the American Equal Rights Association and later on they started publishing the newspaper *The Revolution*, with the known imprint "Men their rights, and nothing more; women, their rights, and nothing less," and with the target of "justice for all."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Simran Khurana, "Susan B Anthony Quote," Quotes Quotations, http://quotations.about.com/cs/morepeople/a/Susan_B_Anthony_2.htm (accessed April 10, 2010).

⁴² "Susan B. Anthony," Ideas for Women, <http://www.ideasforwomen.com/issues/susan-b-anthony.php> (accessed April 11, 2010).

⁴³ "Susan B. Anthony House: Dollar Coin," The Official Susan B. Anthony House: Home, <http://www.susanbanthonyhouse.org/her-story/dollarcoin.php> (accessed April 11, 2010).

⁴⁴ "Susan B. Anthony House: Suffragist," The Official Susan B. Anthony House: Home, <http://www.susanbanthonyhouse.org/her-story/suffragist.php> (accessed April 11, 2010).

She featured with her vigorous campaigning for suffrage in the West in 1870s and in 1887 she became a vice-president in the National American Woman Suffrage Association. When Elisabeth C. Stanton retired five years later from the presidential post Anthony became its president for the next eight years.⁴⁵

5.2 Militant suffrage with Alice Paul as the leader

“I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality.” Alice Paul⁴⁶

Alice Paul, born in 1885 - seven years after the victorious amendment was introduced for the first time to Congress; approved herself compared to Susan B. Anthony as a representative of the radical suffragists. She and her radical ideas also significantly contributed to the final triumph in 1920.

Paul's transfer to militancy and radicalism probably gained roots in England where she left to study in 1907. After her arrival back to the U.S. in 1910, she said: “The militant policy is bringing success. . . . the agitation has brought England out of her lethargy, and women of England are now talking of the time when they will vote, instead of the time when their children would vote, as was the custom a year or two back.”⁴⁷

In 1913, one day prior to President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration Alice Paul together with another suffragist organized a great parade in Washington D.C. in order to attract people's attention and further on their support for federal suffrage amendment allowing them to vote.⁴⁸ When President Woodrow Wilson arrived, very few people came to celebrate with him. They were instead watching a cleverly organized parade in Pennsylvania Avenue. The process evolved ugly – suffragists were attacked at first verbally, later on even physically while the police stood around and watched. However, the

⁴⁵ “Susan B. Anthony House: Suffragist,” The Official Susan B. Anthony House: Home, <http://www.susanbanthonyhouse.org/her-story/suffragist.php> (accessed April 11, 2010).

⁴⁶ Rebecca Carol, Kristina Myers and Janet Lindman, “Alice Paul biography,” Alice Paul Institute, <http://www.alicepaul.org/alicep3.htm> (accessed April 11, 2010).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

important fact was that the next day such violence made the headlines of most newspaper, people were shocked and the attention to the suffrage movement was ensured.⁴⁹

In 1916, Paul and other suffrage supporters founded a National Woman's Party and she began to introduce striking tactics taught in England for instance picketing, hunger strikes, demonstrations, suffrage watch fires, parades etc. and in the beginning of 1917 members of the party started picketing the White House, nicknamed as the Silent Sentinels as they stood quietly along the street and around the White House carrying purple, white and gold billboards with signs: "Mr. President, what will you do for suffrage?" or "Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?" which in the next eighteen months expanded into more than 1000 members picketing including Alice, which proceeded every and every night except Sunday; in the summer, in the winter. For the banners they also used president's own words for instance "Democracy Should Begin at Home." after the World War I started and consequently women raised a query how could the president fight to help disenfranchised people when he had disenfranchised people at home?⁵⁰

Picketing women were soon attacked by the spectators and police again did nothing against it moreover, in June 1917 they started arresting them for reason that they obstruct the traffic. To intimidate striking women even more as they did not stop their activities; Alice Paul was arrested as well in October 1917 and sentenced to seven months in jail. This event did not stop this controversial suffragist and she immediately started a hunger strike and many other suffragists supported her by joining as well. Alice Paul, still refusing to eat underwent brutal treatment and rough handling just like her imprisoned allied activists. Supportive newspaper *The Suffragists* later on printed a comment of Doris Stevens; another imprisoned and remarkable suffrage activists:

"No woman there will ever forget the shock and the hot resentment that rushed over her when she was told to undress before the entire company ... We silenced our impulse to

⁴⁹ Jone Johnson Lewis, "Women Marchers Attacked at Inauguration," *Women's History – Comprehensive Women's History Research Guide*,
<http://womenshistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa010118a.htm> (accessed April 11, 2010).

⁵⁰ "Alice Paul biography," Lakewood Public Library (Lakewood, Ohio),
<http://www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/paul-ali.htm> (accessed April 11, 2010).

resist this indignity, which grew more poignant as each woman nakedly walked across the great vacant space to the doorless shower ...”⁵¹

General indignation over suffering and humbled women in jails made the government to release imprisoned activists on November 27, 1917; Alice Paul was jailed for five weeks. Soon after that, the Nineteenth Amendment was passed but the long way in obtaining justice and better conditions for people which Alice Paul decided to take had not over for her. Despite the great success with women’s suffrage she continued working and became involved in other women’s issues.⁵²

⁵¹ “Alice Paul biography,” Lakewood Public Library (Lakewood, Ohio), <http://www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/paul-ali.htm> (accessed April 11, 2010).

⁵² Ibid.

6 TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

In 1840 The World Anti-Slavery Convention was held in London and it was attended by U.S. activists Lucretia Mott and Elisabeth Cady Stanton. These two women were barred from the meeting because of their sex, and this led them to organize a convention of women's rights upon their return to America. This event took place eight years later in Seneca Falls, New York. Elisabeth Cady Stanton presented the Declaration of Sentiments containing the agenda of the convention. Three hundred attendants participated and the declaration was adopted. Two years later a Women's Rights Convention was held in Salem, Ohio, and only women were allowed to speak. In the same year, The First National Women's Rights Convention took place in Worcester, Massachusetts and it became an annual event interrupted only by the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865).⁵³

In May 1866 The Eleventh National Women's Rights Convention was called to New York City and the American Equal Rights Association was formed by merging the American Anti-slavery Association and suffragists in order to work on universal suffrage. Two years later The Fourteenth Amendment was ratified which used the word "male" for citizens for the first time. The next year in 1869 due to disagreements concerning the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment, the suffrage movement divided into two parts: the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) formed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) formed by Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe and Josephine Ruffin which concerned the obtainment of the right to vote and did not want to get far too involved with other issues. Besides that this year is undoubtedly vital for the women's suffrage history as it is the year women were given the right to vote in the territory of Wyoming. Reason of their enfranchisement may be various however generally it was mainly in order to attract new citizens and increase the population.⁵⁴

In 1870 the problematic Fifteenth Amendment was also ratified which meant that black men could already vote and although it was gender neutral, women who went to vote

⁵³ "Seneca Falls," The National Portrait Gallery, <http://www.npg.si.edu/col/seneca/senfalls1.htm> (accessed May 9, 2010)

⁵⁴ "Woman's Rights Convention, New York City, May 10, 1866 including Address to Congress adopted by the Convention," Social Sciences - UCLA College of Letters and Science, <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/history/dubois/classes/995/98F/doc24.html> (accessed May 10, 2010).

were turned away and their ballots were not taken into account. The same year Utah enfranchised women for the first time due to obstacles associated with the issue of polygamy and Mormons. The state in order to show women do not suffer from bad treatment enfranchised its women who supported the church.

Two years later, Susan B. Anthony participated in presidential election and together with other women was arrested for illegal voting and one year later she was found guilty at the trial and the court fined her \$100 which she refused to pay.

In 1874 was founded Women's Christian Temperance Union by Annie Wittenmeyer and together with Frances Willard as its second president it concentrated on number of social issues like alcoholism, prostitution etc. but besides that it became a great support and help for women's suffrage as both of the movements led the same fight. Fight against men and as a result Women's Christian Temperance Union supported the suffrage movement for instance in organizing political meetings.⁵⁵

In year 1878 the Women's Suffrage Amendment was firstly proposed in the United States Congress by Senator A. A. Sargent. In 1883 Washington passed women's suffrage which meant that Wyoming and Utah obtained women's right to vote sooner than Washington but later in 1887 the Supreme Court again denied the suffrage in this territory.

In 1890 the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association merged as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) with Elisabeth Cady Stanton as its first president. Three years later, men voted for women's suffrage which made Colorado the second state, where women obtained full voting right.

In year 1900 National American Woman Association went through a change since this year Carrie Chapman Catt took over the presidency.

In 1907 an Equality League of Self Supporting Women was founded in New York by Harriot Stanton Blatch as she wanted the working class women to get involved also. Three years later, in 1910 the full right to vote in Washington State was finally obtained. The next year California also passed women's right to vote and the year 1912 was a success for women in Oregon, Arizona and Kansas and the following year was a year of

⁵⁵ "Welcome to WCTU," Welcome to WCTU, <http://www.wctu.org/> (accessed April 20, 2010).

enfranchisement for Alaska. This time Illinois adjudged only municipal and presidential suffrage for women, not the state one.⁵⁶

In the meantime during the year 1911 The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) was formed in New York. The association disagreed with women's suffrage and believed in no use of such right. The movement ceased after adoption of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

In 1916 was formed The National Women's Party (NWP) which separated out from National Women's Party and concentrated on adopting of a constitutional amendment. The next year in January 10th the NWP appeared in front of the White House carrying banners with supportive statements. Such action started arresting of almost 500 striking women, many were jailed, and some of them went hunger while imprisoned. Next year in 1917 New York granted the full right to vote.

In 1918 the jailed suffragists were released from prison and in January 9th US president Woodrow Wilson announced support to the Nineteenth Amendment which passed the U.S. House but at the end by only a few votes in the Senate. Michigan, South Dakota and Oklahoma joined the states with enfranchisement. On 21st May 1919 the House of Representatives passed the 19th Amendment and the next month Senate passed the Amendment. Consequently in August 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment was signed and added to the United States Constitution.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Jone Johnson Lewis, "Harriot Stanton Blatch," Women's History – Comprehensive Women's History Research guide, http://womenshistory.about.com/od/harriotstantonblatch/p/harriot_stanton.htm (accessed April 20, 2010).

⁵⁷ "Alice Paul biography," Lakewood Public Library (Lakewood, Ohio), <http://www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/paul-ali.htm> (accessed April 18, 2010).

7 STATES WHICH GRANTING THE SUFFRAGE BEFORE THE 19TH AMENDMENT

Although universal suffrage was achieved by the 19th Amendment in 1921 there were some states which, for some reasons, allowed women to vote a few years earlier. Achieving it state-by-state meant great successes for women. However, it was not enough and women felt the need for global suffrage and continued to fight for it. States which gave women full suffrage in advance were:

- 1869 Wyoming
- 1893 Colorado
- 1896 Utah, Idaho
- 1910 Washington
- 1911 California
- 1912 Arizona, Kansas, Oregon
- 1913 Alaska
- 1914 Montana, Nevada
- 1917 New York
- 1918 Michigan, Oklahoma, South Dakota

7.1 Wyoming

Wyoming women became a part of the political world in 1869 when Territorial Legislature of 20 members allowed women to vote by stating: "That every woman of the age of twenty-one years, residing in this Territory, may at every election to be holden under the law thereof, cast her vote."⁵⁸ There may be several reasons why they did so. One possibility is that the state wanted to attract more settlers; another might be a fear of newly enfranchised male African-Americans in the west. The fact that there was not a single parade or strike indicated that it might not have been mainly women who desired the ballot but it was more importantly a suitable solution for men.

Although the Bills supporter William Bright together with his feminist wife Julia and her friend Esther Morris are treated as representatives of the suffrage movement in Wyoming it is declared that the main reason for enfranchising women was a necessity to

stabilize a volatile population and make Wyoming a point of destination rather than to be only a stop for travelers on their journeys. In 1869 Wyoming consisted of less than ten thousand citizens and a ratio of six adult men for one adult woman. Because most women left to the west as their husbands were settled there or had some business concerns in the area, allowing women to vote efficiently doubled the vote of married males who were settled in the territory and compensated the votes of volatile mining population who was not really interested in the political happening.⁵⁹

When Wyoming urged to be admitted as a state it had to face a great opposition of the U.S. Congress which did not want to accept their law of women's enfranchisement. However, Wyoming Territory responded to Washington: „ We may stay out of the Union for hundred years, but we will come with out women. “⁶⁰ After that in October 1890 Wyoming became officially the first state which enfranchised women.

7.2 Colorado

Achieved suffrage in Colorado was a result of long struggle activated by desiring women and the Colorado Woman Suffrage Association founded in 1876 which makes it different from Wyoming. Moreover, the nation was undergoing a huge economic depression – the Panic. The whole process started by a referendum in 1877 which brought a great disappointment when it was defeated by two votes to one.⁶¹ During the next few years, activist women worked hard to establish a great network to support getting the ballot for women by giving public speeches, organizing door-to-door campaigns and petitioning which started to bear fruits.⁶² One of the major arguments was the point of blacks' right to vote. Women argued that if poor and uneducated black men can vote white women should

⁵⁸ “WOW Museum: Western Women's Suffrage – Wyoming,” Home/ Autry National Center, http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suffrage_wy.html (accessed April 15, 2010).

⁵⁹ Linda S. Peavy and Ursula Smith, *Pioneer women: the lives of women on the frontier* (New York: Smithmark, 1996), 136,137.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁶¹ Gordon M. Bakken and Brenda Farrington, *Encyclopedia of women in the American West* (California: Sage Publications, Inc.2003), 298.

⁶² “WOW Museum: Western Women's Suffrage – Colorado,” Home/ Autry National Center, http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suffrage_co.html (accessed April 10, 2010).

be given this right as well. The successful year was 1893 when the law was supported by a majority of 347 votes.⁶³

7.3 Utah

Utah represents a very controversial process aiming at woman's enfranchisement. It was a state settled by Mormons, a nation allowing and practicing polygamy. Again this state does not belong to those which gave women the ballot for reasons of their desire but because it became a useful support in their belief.

The first reason why women were given the ballot was to show to the rest of U.S. that living in Utah's polygamous society does not make women slaves of their husbands as this religion was not popular in the States at all. Secondly, the coming railroad was going to bring new non-Mormon people to the region, especially men who were supposed to work on newly found mining lodes. These mostly single men could constitute a real threat for the Mormons' legislative majority and therefore the enfranchisement of Utah women seemed to be a reasonable resolution.⁶⁴ For these reasons in 1870 Utah allowed to vote more than 17,000 female citizens which made them the biggest population of voting women in the world.⁶⁵

But later on this possibility was taken away by Edmund Trucker's Act (1887) which was passed by the Congress and disenfranchised all women in the territory in order to punish them for polygamy and hamper Mormons power over the territory. This led to an official abandoning of plural marriages by Mormon Church in 1890. After that Utah became the third state officially allowing women to vote when it was approved by Congress as statehood in 1896.⁶⁶

7.4 Idaho

Process of women's enfranchisement in Idaho contained similar issues as in the previous three states. The issue of Mormons just like in Utah was a complication in getting the

⁶³ Maule, *"The blue book"; woman suffrage, history, arguments and results*, 32.

⁶⁴ Peavy and Smith, *Pioneer Women: the Lives of Women on the Frontier*, 137.

⁶⁵ "WOW Museum: Western Women's Suffrage – Utah," Home/ Autry National Center, http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suffrage_ut.html (accessed April 14, 2010).

⁶⁶ "WOW Museum: Western Women's Suffrage – Utah," Home/ Autry National Center, http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suffrage_ut.html (accessed April 14, 2010).

ballot for women as well as interest in immigrants became a point of discussions just like in Wyoming. The allowance of black men to vote was another argument supporting women's enfranchisement alike in Colorado and together with support of Democrats, Populists and Republicans women were not far from their ballot. The fact that surrounding states already did enfranchise women became also a strong argument. Finally in 1896 Idaho approved women's suffrage.⁶⁷

7.5 Washington

Washington became the first enfranchised state in the twentieth century. In 1867 Washington Legislature passed a law which allowed voting "to all white citizens above the age of 21."⁶⁸ However, when women went to test their possibility to vote, their ballots were rejected. After several years of activists' agitation the first success was achieved. In 1883 women got the full right to vote from Washington territorial Legislature and during the next few years women brought in the politics several changes. They voted against "whiskey hells," which later on brought a respond from saloonkeepers who out-organized women and by 1888 it resulted in determining two measures which granted women the right to vote as unconstitutional. An attempt for women's suffrage came up with suffrage referendum in 1889 which was defeated and in 1898 Washington Statehood voters did not approve either the second referendum for women's ballot. Finally the third trial brought success on women's side when in 1910 full women's suffrage gained blessing.⁶⁹

7.6 California

The 1911's victory of Californian women was result of long campaigning for women's suffrage. Their first attempt in 1896 was defeated by The Liquor dealers League and years after the disappointment women joined together and formed formidable movement in order to achieve the suffrage. Beginning of 1900's was successful in forming many leagues and

⁶⁷ Gordon and Farrington, *Encyclopedia of Women in the American West*, 299.

⁶⁸ Shanna Stevenson, "WHC Themes - Brief History of Women's Suffrage," Washington Women's History Consortium, <http://www.washingtonwomenshistory.org/themes/suffrage/briefhistory.aspx> (accessed April 19, 2010).

⁶⁹ "WOW Museum: Western Women's Suffrage – Washington," Home/ Autry National Center, http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suffrage_wa.html (accessed April 19, 2010).

unions, for example Women's Socialist Union of California or the Woman's International Union Label League together with the main one - California Equal Suffrage Association. Women hoped to get the suffrage and be able to influence the situation, problematic issues and dirty politics. Working-class women together with Socialist spread the movement throughout whole California and from 1910 to 1911 the campaign gained mainstream. Leaflets in different languages in order to attract immigrant's attentions as well supporting and demanding the ballot flew around the state and in 1911 Californian men approved women's right to vote which made California the sixth state allowing women to vote.⁷⁰

7.7 Kansas

The first state referendum for suffrage was launched in 1867 but as usual, neither this state achieved the ballot for women for the first time. Reasons why it happened so are several, probably women were not ready yet and therefore they were not extremely active when supporting it or the problem might have been anti-liquor crusaders or the outside campaigners for defeat. In the early 1890s they were Populists who revived the enfranchisement desire and soon the grassroots stood up against rising fees for grain storage, prices of goods and railroad monopolies. All of that in hope that women's enfranchisement would help them to defeat economical and political injustice.⁷¹

Sequence of events in the neighboring Colorado in 1893 left an impact also on Kansas and one year later evoked a second referendum which again did not ensure women the voting right. Several years after that in 1912 when the situation in the U.S. remained different because of many reforms coming hand in hand with the Progressive Era, took place the third and finally successful referendum for women's enfranchisement. 1912 was written into Colorado's history as a year when women achieved full suffrage and became the eighth state which did so.⁷²

⁷⁰ "WOW Museum: Western Women's Suffrage – California," Home/ Autry National Center, http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suffrage_ca.html (accessed April 15, 2010).

⁷¹ "WOW Museum: Western Women's Suffrage – Kansas," Home/ Autry National Center, http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage/suffrage_ks.html (accessed April 16, 2010).

⁷² Ibid.

7.8 Alaska

Meeting of the U.S. Congress whether to enfranchise women of Alaska or not was held on January 24, 1912 just nine days after the sinking of the Titanic. Victor Berger, socialist senator and supporter of the enfranchisement pointed out at the debate: ““The time has gone by when all women looked after the kitchen and the dining room,””... “Now they go into offices, school rooms and factories, where they do a man's work, and they should have the same economic and political rights as men. . .””⁷³

Four months after the meeting in August 1912, the Congress instead of giving women the voting right approved the state as the Territory of Alaska. After that as soon as the first Territorial Legislature organized a meeting their main target was to grant women the enfranchisement. Reasons why this was a priority for them might be matter of debate when regarding the fact that there was not hold a single suffrage campaign. Legislators reasoned that women are citizens as well as men attributed to the Alaska's development on the other hand there are rumors that by women's enfranchisement the Territory wanted to strengthen the number of voters as they wanted to persuade government officials of its stable future and power.⁷⁴

All over the U. S. women's suffrage activists accepted this event with enthusiasm and number of states which granted women's suffrage was slowly increasing. That time, in 1913 when Alaska granted the enfranchisement, it was the tenth country which supported the universal suffrage before the victorious 19th Amendment.

7.9 Montana, Nevada

“I am not dissatisfied with the results in the West; we have ten States, not counting Nevada and Montana.” Said Carrie Chapman Catt for *The New York Times* published on November 5, 1914 just after referendum gaining the women's enfranchisement for Montana and Nevada. Although Montana and Nevada previously experienced returns when trying to approve the women's suffrage, the triumph for women came anyway. It was on the 4th

⁷³ “Alaska History and Cultural Studies - Governing Alaska -The Territory of Alaska,” Alaska History and Cultural Studies, <http://www.akhistorycourse.org/articles/article.php?artID=135> (accessed April 10, 2010).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

November 1914 and these two states succeeded that day in comparison to Missouri, Ohio, Nebraska, North and South Dakota and Illinois. Nevada won by 3,619 votes in support of women's suffrage opposed to 2,508 votes against the enfranchisement.⁷⁵

7.10 New York, Michigan, Oklahoma and South Dakota

These states became the last four which granted women enfranchisement before the universal suffrage was achieved by the approval of the Nineteenth Amendment. New York, where on May 10, 1913 women organized a vigorous annual parade down the Fifth Avenue which was attended by 10,000 marchers and notably one in twenty were men, attracted by almost 500 000 watchers; became the first eastern state enfranchising women. That happened in 1917 and Michigan, Oklahoma and South Dakota followed suit in 1918.⁷⁶

7.11 Conclusion

With regards to the fact that sixteen states enfranchised women before the Nineteenth Amendment, clearly there was a demand for change. The government apparently did not meet the needs of citizenry. As a result the states took women's suffrage upon their hands. Interestingly the West led the way thus it was actually Western movement which gradually influenced the other states. As they one after another enfranchised their women the inevitability of universal suffrage was growing stronger.

⁷⁵ "Two States Vote to Give Suffrage," *The New York Times* – Breaking News, World News & Multimedia, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9C0DE6D6113FE633A25756C0A9679D946596D6CF> (accessed April 5, 2010).

⁷⁶ Jone Johnson Lewis, "Women Marchers Attacked at Inauguration," *Women's History* – Comprehensive Women's History Research Guide, <http://womenshistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa010118a.htm> (accessed April 5, 2010).

8 BLACK WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Black women also became very active in order to gain suffrage. During the antebellum era the abolitionist movement and suffrage movement were interconnected, and many black women naturally supported both. One of the first black abolitionist and suffrage activists was Sojourner Truth, a former slave, who in 1851 made her famous speech "Ain't I a woman," at a convention in Ohio.⁷⁷

Despite the connection between the suffrage movement and the abolitionist movement black women were not welcome to join white women and the suffrage movement was racially separated. The Fifteenth amendment which gave black men the right to vote just poured more fuel onto the fire. White women became indignant over the fact that poor and uneducated people blacks reached the ballot before them.

During the Progressive Era lots of changes appeared in black women's lives. Hundreds of thousands of them started working in the factories, moved from the South to the North and from villages into urban areas. In addition, many of them still faced racial violence such as lynching. When southern white women started joining the suffrage movement, northern suffrage activists started to spread racist ideas. What made sense to them was the fact that in the South there were more white women than black men and women together which meant that if women were granted the voting right they could keep blacks from having too much power. In addition, some southern NAWSA activists proclaimed that suffrage should be only for white women. Many of the Ku Klux Klan members were white women.^{78 79}

However, African American women did not hesitate and formed their own clubs and organizations, led campaigns and collected petitions since they believed and hoped that the ballot would help them to improve their lives, to fight against injustice such as lynching, as well as to become equal not only to men but also the whole society. In 1896 many of the women's clubs merged into the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACW) and one of its departments worked tirelessly in support of women's suffrage. The main

⁷⁷ "Rights For Women," National Women's History Museum, <http://www.nwhm.org/RightsforWomen/AfricanAmericanwomen.html> (accessed March 10, 2010).

⁷⁸ "African American Women and the Suffrage Movement," Teaching Tolerance, <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/african-american-women-and-suffrage-move> (accessed March 15, 2010).

⁷⁹ "Women in the Progressive Era," National Women's History Museum, <http://www.nwhm.org/ProgressiveEra/africanamericanwomen.html> (accessed March 16, 2010).

leader for African American women's suffrage together with their rights as a whole was Ida B. Wells, a journalist and former slave. She lectured tirelessly against lynching, in favor of African American women's clubs and fighting for blacks' rights.⁸⁰

In 1913 when NAWSA with its leader Alice Paul organized a huge parade in Washington D.C., Ida B. Wells was chosen and asked to march in the parade but only at the back together with the rest of black suffragists. However, Wells refused to do so and after the parade started she escaped and joined her state's delegation. After that in 1916 she finally organized a separated parade for her club with almost 5 000 marchers through the streets of Chicago.⁸¹

African American women were granted enfranchisement in 1920 along with white women. However, that year was not the end of their struggle as many of them living in the South were disenfranchised again by state laws.⁸²

⁸⁰ "African American Women and the Suffrage Movement," Teaching Tolerance, <http://www.tolerance.org/activity/african-american-women-and-suffrage-move> (accessed March 15, 2010).

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² "Women in the Progressive Era," National Women's History Museum, <http://www.nwhm.org/ProgressiveEra/africanamericanwomen.html> (accessed March 16, 2010).

9 THE VICTORY

The Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution:

“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.”⁸³

The final victory came with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment which enfranchised all citizens regardless their sex. It was firstly proposed to the Congress in 1872 and as it was vetoed it became reintroduced for the next tens of years again. To the final passage foreran a great affair with jailed and humiliated picketing women which stirred the process up. A week after they were released the Congress assembled together and the House appointed a date of 10th January 1918 as a date of voting on the Nineteenth Amendment. The House of Representatives passed the Amendment but in the Senate it was vetoed by two votes. The National Women’s Party started to exert pressure on politicians demanding their support. As a result the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment was significantly supported by Democrats as their motif was to secure the presidency for the Democratic Party. Therefore, on June 4, 1919 Susan B. Anthony Amendment was added to the Constitution by a vote of 56 to 25.⁸⁴

The next step was to ratify it within each state but as Alice Paul, a Chairman of the National Woman's Party stated for *The New York Times* just after the passage: “There is no doubt of ratification by the States. We enter upon the campaign for special sessions of Legislatures to accomplish this ratification before 1920 in the full assurance that we shall win.”⁸⁵

Consequently on August 18, 1920 Tennessee became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the Amendment and therefore the same year women were officially allowed to attend their first presidential elections.

⁸³ “The Constitution of the United States: Amendments 11-27,” National Archives and Records Administration, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_amendments_11-27.html#19 (accessed March 23, 2010).

⁸⁴ “Alice Paul biography,” Lakewood Public Library (Lakewood, Ohio), <http://www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/paul-ali.htm> (accessed April 11, 2010).

⁸⁵ “Nytimes,” UMKC School of Law, <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/anthony/nytimes.html> (accessed March 15, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The fight for women's suffrage in the United States took almost a hundred years, but the most active period began in 1848 when the Seneca Falls Convention was held and ended in 1920 with the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Within this time in the United States, three wars were waged and eighteen presidents were elected, and the country went through multiple changes, including expansion, industrialization, urbanization, etc.

The Progressive Era overall was the time when the suffrage movement achieved its greatest results. The country found itself in a period of great uncertainty, and universal suffrage was viewed as a possible solution that might help bring order back to people's lives. Women, once granted the ballot, could help their husbands change the current situation and moreover ensure a better life for their children and their future families. Motherhood played an important role in the inevitability of suffrage, for who knows better what a family needs than a mother. Reference to universal suffrage had already been made in the Constitution where it is written that all men – understand mankind – are created equal, and everyone has a right to publicly express their opinion or own a property. However, until the suffrage movement started this was not entirely true. A just and democratic state can not afford to contradict its constitution, so the women's suffrage movement, as a byproduct of democracy, was inevitable.

Laws interact with all people. Women therefore had to be given the chance to participate in their creation and passage. Many well educated women had to watch immoral and irresponsible men deciding the state's issues. Yet despite their best efforts to gain suffrage, the federal government, run by men, dragged its feet. As a result, individual states took it upon themselves to right the federal government's wrong and one after another gave women the right to vote, starting with Wyoming in 1869 and ending with South Dakota in 1918. In all, sixteen states enfranchised women before the federal government finally followed suit in 1920.

Entering WWI, President Woodrow Wilson stated that "Democracy should begin at home".⁸⁶ However, American women were being denied democratic treatment. As a result the call for universal suffrage became so loud that it had to be answered. In 1920 when the

⁸⁶ "Paul biography," Lakewood Public Library (Lakewood, Ohio), <http://www.lkwdpl.org/wihohio/paul-ali.htm> (accessed April 11, 2010).

thirty-sixth state ratified the Nineteenth Amendment, the United States fulfilled its prophecy as set down in its founding documents by becoming, once and for all, fully democratic and equal.

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