DEFINING MOMENTS
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Jeff Hill

Omnigraphics

615 Griswold, Detroit MI 48226

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CONSERVATIVES AND RADICALS

The essence of the campaign … is opposition to the government.

—Alice Paul

As the level of disenchantment increased among NAWSA members, so did criticism of the suffrage organization's president, Anna Howard Shaw. Shaw was famous for her oratorical skills, but critics began to feel she was more interested in making speeches to the membership and staging pageant-filled conventions than in formulating a viable plan for winning the vote. Most of the innovative ideas that emerged between 1905 and 1916 came from outside the NAWSA leadership. In many cases these plans were initiated by activists who had grown frustrated with the inability of the president and her closest advisors to advance the suffrage cause.

One of the new ideas involved bringing the message of suffrage to the working class—particularly to working-class women. Organizers of the movement had largely ignored this group throughout the 1800s—with one notable exception. In the late 1860s Susan B. Anthony had helped form the Workingwoman's Association in New York City, which lent support to women engaged in such work as typesetting and sewing. As part of this effort, Anthony tried to form an alliance with the National Labor Union, but the relationship ran into problems and did not last long. From that point on, the suffrage movement distanced itself from labor groups and kept its focus on the more affluent levels of society. This was especially true in the late 1800s, when Anthony, Lucy Stone, and other suffrage leaders

Anna Howard Shaw drew criticism from fellow suffragists during her tenure as president of NAWSA.

made winning the vote their central aim and ignored such issues as women's pay and workplace conditions. In addition, racial and ethnic bigotry and language barriers made it difficult for the white middle-class activists to reach out to those workers who had immigrated to the United States from southern and central Europe.

Several suffragists worked to bridge this divide in the early 1900s. One example is Jane Addams, a well-known social reformer who had founded Hull House in Chicago—a "settlement house" that offered classes, child care, and other services to poor immigrants. Addams strongly supported women's suffrage, and her rapport with working women and immigrants helped to spread the message among these groups. She also published essays that explained why women deserved the vote and how working-class women could use it to improve their lives.

Harriot Stanton Blatch, the daughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, also helped attract working-class women to the suffrage movement. Blatch returned to the United States in the early 1900s after living in England for twenty years. Britain experienced its own women's suffrage movement during this period, and activists there made a concerted appeal to the working class. Blatch decided to adapt the English tactic to the United States. She formed the Equality League of Self-Supporting Women in 1907, which actively promoted female voting rights among working women.

These sorts of efforts had the potential to reach a lot of people. According to Alexander Keyssar in *The Right to Vote*, women made up one-fifth of the American work force in 1900. In New York City, where Blatch based her efforts, 50,000 women worked in the garment industry alone. The Equality League proved innovative in its organizing tactics, holding large outdoor rallies and also staging the nation's first suffrage parade. The group's membership climbed to 20,000 in the space of a decade.

Grassroots Victories

In 1910 the suffragists broke their long drought and began winning state referenda that gave women the vote. As before, the victories came in western states, and in most cases they resulted from local campaigns that had little to do with the national organization. In fact, many of the western activists turned down assistance from NAWSA's main office, feeling that it would be more harmful than helpful. Some of this antagonism grew out of events in Oregon in 1906, when NAWSA had taken a large role in the campaign for a suffrage referendum only to see it fail.

Second-generation activist Harriot Stanton Blatch voices her disapproval during a 1915 anti-suffrage rally.

The first suffrage battle of the 1910s took place in Washington State, where women had been allowed to vote for four years during the territorial period. In order to get the referendum on the ballot, suffragists needed the support of state legislators. They gained this support through lobbying efforts that were both traditional and innovative. One of the new approaches involved sending young, attractive women to visit male politicians, with instructions to remain pleasant and "never bore a legislator by too much insistence." Newspaper reporters described these visitors as "a constant wonder to the legislators …[who] had expected another type [of woman and] arguments."

Once they succeeded in placing the measure on the ballot, state organizers formed coalitions with other progressive groups—such as labor unions and farmers-rights organizations—and kept the issue of prohibition in the background. The measure passed by a wide margin, making Washington the first state to approve women's suffrage in the twentieth century. The following year California gave women the vote. During that campaign, activists repeated some of the tactics used in Washington and also pioneered new techniques, such as billboard advertising.

After California, suffragists registered a succession of other triumphs at the state level: Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon approved women's suffrage in

Alice Paul introduced radical protest methods to the campaign for women's suffrage.

1912; Montana and Nevada followed suit in 1914; New York became the first eastern state to adopt the measure in 1917; and Michigan, Oklahoma, and South Dakota granted women the vote in 1918. Women in fifteen states enjoyed the right to vote by the end of the 1910s.

These victories proved immensely important in the eventual passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. First, they demonstrated a definite trend toward enfranchising women. Second, and more importantly, they created a sizable population of women voters who could exert pressure on the national political parties. Now neither the Democrats nor the Republicans could afford to dismiss the issue of women's suffrage, because doing so might cost them the votes of angry female voters in the suffrage states.

Getting Radical

Up until the 1910s, the methods suffragists used to pursue the vote had mostly been polite and uncontroversial: they held meetings, circulated petitions, published newspapers, and called on politicians. But some activists began to feel that the movement was a little too polite, and argued that they could only achieve the goal of nationwide suffrage through more aggressive action. The person who spearheaded this approach was Alice Paul, who became one of the key figures in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment (see biography on Paul, p. 122).

Paul's introduction to militant politics came in England, where radical suffragettes (the English term for suffragists) used disruptive demonstrations in seeking the vote. After arriving in Great Britain as a graduate student, Paul joined the protests, went to jail on numerous occasions, and engaged in

Thousands of protesters took to the streets of Washington, D.C., in March 1913 for this famous women's suffrage parade.

hunger strikes while behind bars. She returned to the United States in 1910, at the age of twenty-five. That same year she attended the NAWSA convention, where she explained the British approach to winning the vote. Paul soon began to advocate a similar approach in America. Her strategy—borrowed from the suffragettes—encouraged women to openly oppose the president and his party until he agreed to promote the enfranchisement of women.

Paul did not attempt to implement her plan immediately. Instead she asked the NAWSA leadership to send her to Washington, D.C., to lobby Congress. Anna Howard Shaw and her colleagues agreed to this plan, but they made it clear that Paul was responsible for raising her own money. Paul proved to be a tireless and extremely effective fundraiser, and she assembled a group of dedicated and relatively young activists to help her. Among them was Lucy Burns, a close friend of Paul who had also taken part in British suffrage protests.

Paul and her followers were particularly good at gaining publicity. In the early 1910s, suffragists had adopted the tactic of staging large-scale marches, and in March 1913 Paul's group put on the biggest parade of all. They jammed the streets of Washington with 8,000 female marchers from all across

the country. But the procession turned out to be less notable for its size than for the violent altercations that took place. It was common for suffrage parades to be greeted by crowds of jeering men, but in Washington the insults turned to shoving, spitting, and physical assaults. Hundreds of participants suffered injuries. The inability or unwillingness of the police to protect the women resulted in a congressional investigation that cost the chief of police his job. The controversy provided the suffragists with lots of free publicity, most of which was positive. The Washington parade had coincided with the inauguration of President Woodrow Wilson. It turned out to be the first of many interactions between Alice Paul and the president.

Turmoil in the Movement

Paul's organization became known as the Congressional Union (CU), and it grew steadily in size. Though still a part of NAWSA, the CU began to steal attention away from its parent organization. This situation caused some bad feelings between the two groups, and the strain worsened when the two camps clashed over finances and tactics. In 1914 NAWSA and the CU formally separated. Paul's group then moved forward with her "opposition" plan for the congressional elections of 1914.

Because President Wilson was a Democrat, the Congressional Union actively opposed all Democratic candidates in the election—even those who had supported suffrage in the past. The CU focused on the nine western states where women then had the vote, which gave their message a real impact at the polls. Their colorful whistle-stop railroad campaign contributed to a number of Democratic losses, including twenty congressmen who had been considered friendly to the female vote.

The election results angered the leaders of NAWSA, who saw the Congressional Union's tactics as shortsighted and destructive to the suffrage cause. Paul and her group dismissed the criticism, declaring that politicians would never take suffrage seriously until they paid a political price for opposing it. They asserted that the Democrats' losses in Congress would force Wilson to explicitly support the suffrage cause.

In December 1915 Anna Howard Shaw resigned the presidency of NAWSA. She was replaced by Carrie Chapman Catt, who had served as NAWSA's president from 1900 to 1904 and later rejoined the association's leadership. Catt had a proven record as an organizer and innovator, and most

Dangerous Work

On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out at the Triangle Waist Company in New York City, a garment factory largely staffed by young immigrant women. As the workers attempted to flee the flames, they found the stairwell doors locked—a measure employed by factory owners to prevent theft. An outdoor fire escape collapsed under the weight of those trying to get away, leaving hundreds of workers trapped in the burning building. Some were killed directly by the smoke and flames. Others died when they leapt from the windows to escape the intense heat. More than 140 people lost their lives, almost all of them women. The tragedy helped convince many female workers that they needed the right to vote in order to help ensure their safety. A woman who survived the Triangle fire later remarked that "working women must use the ballot to in order to abolish the burning and crushing of our bodies for the profit of a very few."

members were happy to see her take the helm. Like her predecessor, however, Catt was on bad terms with Alice Paul and the CU. In early 1916 the two groups held a summit to discuss reuniting, but the divisions proved too wide to overcome. The meeting ended on a bad note. "All I wish to say is, I will fight you to the last ditch," Catt told Paul as she departed. The suffrage movement was now permanently divided into two groups.

In some ways the division of the suffrage movement seemed like a replay of the split between the NWSA and AWSA back in the 1800s. This time, however, it proved beneficial to the cause. Though the two groups did not plot strategy together, their actions ended up complementing one another. The CU soon evolved into the National Woman's Party, and its members became the militant wing of the suffrage movement. They were willing to employ controversial tactics and endure great discomforts to draw attention to the cause.

Under Catt, meanwhile, NAWSA became a highly efficient, centralized organization with a well-plotted strategy for winning the vote. In addition, its more reasonable tone and more respectable image kept the suffragists from being dismissed as extremists. For all their differences, the two groups had a similar organizational structure: both were led by powerful women who

sometimes faced criticism for being autocratic but also inspired strong devotion from their followers.

The Winning Plan

In the late summer of 1916, the members of NAWSA gathered in Atlantic City, New Jersey, for their annual convention. Some of the delegates may have arrived expecting to enjoy the boardwalk and beaches, but this turned out to be the most serious NAWSA gathering in years. Just nine months into her term as president, Carrie Chapman Catt was about to outline a new course of action for the association. Its ambitious goals were clear in the name that Catt gave it: "the Winning Plan."

NAWSA's preparation for the new push had begun months earlier. Catt had replaced the group's executive board with members she personally selected for their sharp political skills. Then she settled the question of tactics. For years, NAWSA's focus had wavered between the state campaigns for suffrage and the nationwide passage of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. From the 1890s until the early 1910s, the group had placed more emphasis on the state activities. Now, however, Alice Paul's congressional lobbying had re-energized the fight for the amendment. In fact, the Susan B. Anthony Amendment had come up for votes in the Senate in 1914 and in the House in 1915, but it had fallen far short of the necessary two-thirds majority in both instances. Catt decided to put NAWSA "securely on the Amendment trolley," believing that the federal mandate was the quickest way for all American women to achieve the vote. In a letter to a colleague, Catt noted that, until that point, NAWSA "never really has worked for the Federal Amendment…. If it should once do it, there is no knowing what might happen."

NAWSA rolled out an arsenal of new weapons to aid in the fight for the amendment. The group overhauled its Congressional Committee in Washington, D.C., placing it under the direction of Maud Wood Park. Known as the Front Door Lobby, Park's group took over a mansion, dubbed Suffrage House, where the lobbyists lived as well as worked. The association also moved its publicity campaign to Washington. This effort, controlled by the Leslie Bureau of Suffrage Education, boasted a staff of twenty-five journalists and public-relations specialists.

The key to all of these new efforts was money. The NAWSA treasury, which had been building gradually over the previous decade, was now

The Woman on the Horse

Inez Milholland

The famous 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., was led by a striking woman in a white cloak atop a white horse. This conspicuous figure was Inez Milholland (also known as Inez Milholland Boissevain), a lawyer with socialist political beliefs who had begun working with Alice Paul the year before. As memorable as she was on horseback that day, Milholland went on to play a larger role in the fight for suffrage.

An electrifying public speaker, Milholland became a vital part of many rallies. During the 1916 election campaign, she embarked on a grueling tour of the western states—despite the fact that she was suffering from tonsillitis and pernicious anemia. In late October, Milholland collapsed while speaking before a crowd in Los Angeles. According to legend, she had just uttered the phrase, "How long must women wait for liberty?" when she fainted.

Milholland died a month later, and she quickly became a martyr for women's suffrage. Supporters held an emotional memorial service in her honor in December 1916. "We got up this memorial meeting in the capitol and sent a message from the memorial meeting to President Wilson urging that no more sacrifices like this be made necessary in the effort to get the enfranchisement of women," Alice Paul remembered in *Conversations with Alice Paul: Woman Suffrage and the Equal Rights Amendment*.

The memory of Milholland's sacrifice galvanized the radical suffragists in their 1917 protests. Fellow suffragist Ruth Fitch immortalized Milholland and the romantic glory she came to symbolize in the following poem:

> Your gallant youth,
> Your glorious self-sacrifice—all ours!
> Inez, vibrant, courageous, symbolic,
> Death cannot claim you!

brought into play. The organization also received several important new sources of funding. For example, when Mrs. Frank Leslie, widow of the founder of Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, died in 1914, she gave Catt more than $900,000 in cash and property for the suffrage cause. Leslie's jewelry collection alone was worth nearly $35,000, and the proceeds from its sale were used to finance the suffrage education bureau that was named after her. Catt claimed that NAWSA spent a total of one million dollars a year in the late 1910s, which was a sizable amount at the time.

Under the Winning Plan, Catt and her executive board concentrated the organization's power in their own hands, and they decided how and where suffrage battles would be fought. They did not abandon campaigns for state suffrage—several were waged in the late 1910s, and four states (including New York) enfranchised women during this period—but the national organization called the shots. The executive board also directed most of the lobbying and publicity efforts carried out by local chapters. Their detailed plans and professionally produced written materials created a unified message all across the country. Continuing the trend that had started in the late 1800s, NAWSA once again narrowed its focus. Amending the Constitution became the group's single goal. As Catt declared, "We do not care a 'ginger snap' about anything but that Federal Amendment."

Carrie Chapman Catt (1859-1947)
President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association

Born Carrie Clinton Lane on February 9, 1859, in Ripon, Wisconsin, Catt was the second of three children born to Maria (Clinton) Lane and Lucius Lane, who ran their own farm. Catt's father had previously been a gold prospector in California and was known for his stubborn personality and hard work. Her mother had attended college (then a rare accomplishment for a woman), where she had been influenced by feminist thought. When Catt was seven the family relocated to a farm near Charles City, Iowa. Catt's inquisitive intelligence showed itself early on, and after completing high school, she decided to attend the newly opened Iowa State Agricultural College (now Iowa State University). Though her father harbored doubts about the need for any woman to have a college education, he gave his daughter $25 per year toward her room and board. Catt earned the rest of the money she needed by teaching school. While at the university, Catt sought and won new opportunities for female students, including the right to deliver speeches before the literary society. She promptly used that right make a speech on behalf of women's suffrage. When she received her degree in science in 1880, she was the only female in her graduating class.

Catt became a high school teacher in Mason City, Iowa, soon advancing to the position of superintendent for all of the town's schools. She gave up her education career for marriage, wedding Leo Chapman, a journalist and ardent suffragist, in 1885. Their time together was short: Chapman contracted typhoid fever the following year while visiting California. By the time Catt arrived in San Francisco, her husband was dead.

Catt remained in San Francisco and supported herself by working as a journalist and public speaker. During this period she developed the commanding stage presence and thundering voice that would serve her well in the decades to come. Though suffrage was still important to her, most of her

speeches focused on her conviction that the masses of foreigners arriving in the United States during that era were undermining American values—a view she would later renounce.

In 1887 Catt returned to Iowa where, in addition to continuing her speaking career, she devoted time to the causes of temperance and women's suffrage. In 1890, following her marriage to George Catt, a well-paid engineer, she was able to devote all of her energies to women's voting rights. "He was as much a reformer as I," Catt said of her husband. "What he could do was to earn a living enough for two … and thus I could reform for two." After joining the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), Catt made a positive impression on Susan B. Anthony and other suffrage leaders during the failed South Dakota suffrage campaign of 1890. Two years later she was appointed the head of NAWSA's business committee.

In 1893 Catt agreed to campaign on behalf of Colorado's suffrage referendum after other NAWSA officials refused to aid the state's activists. "Remember I am not coming to be *bossy* but only to help," she wrote to the head of Colorado suffragists. Her help included detailed directives on how to organize the precincts, and two months of lectures and speeches from one end of the state to the other. When the referendum won by a large margin, Catt became one of the rising stars of the suffrage movement. She cemented her reputation by overseeing a second win for pro-suffrage forces in Idaho in 1896 and by founding NAWSA's Organization Committee, which vastly improved the association's methods of creating and educating local chapters.

Becomes President of NAWSA

In 1900 Susan B. Anthony named Catt as her successor as president of the NAWSA. During her first tenure as president, Catt stepped up efforts to modernize the organization and, most importantly, to grow its membership and treasury. She also began her entry into international affairs by helping found the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) in 1902. All of Catt's work came to a stop in 1904, however, after her husband was beset by serious health problems. His death the following year from a perforated ulcer was a serious blow to Catt. Her own health lapsed, and she withdrew from activism for many months.

When she returned to action, Catt devoted much of her energy to the IWSA. Working as a global ambassador for the suffrage cause, she spent a lot

of time in Europe and completed an around-the-world voyage in the early 1910s, with extended stops in South Africa, India, and China. Her travels gave her a new perspective on the world. "Once I was a regular jingo," she said, "but that was before I visited other countries. I had thought America had a monopoly on all that stands for progress, but I had a sad awakening." Catt's internationalism was a factor in her decision to help found the Woman's Peace Party after the beginning of World War I, but she did not take a large role in the organization, and within a few years both she and NAWSA threw their official support behind the U.S. war effort.

When Anna Howard Shaw resigned as president of NAWSA in December 1915, Catt was pressured to take the job. She did not welcome the idea, but she finally relented. "It will kill me," she said, "but I will do it." Despite her reservations, Catt immediately went to work. In the ensuing months she unveiled her "Winning Plan," a new political strategy that proved instrumental in securing passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Even before final ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, Catt was transforming NAWSA into the National League of Women Voters (NLWV). In describing the new group, Catt said that it would be dedicated to "the education of women citizens, piloting them through the first years of political participation." The NLWV also set out to "support improved legislation" but refrained from promoting particular candidates or parties.

Peace Advocate

With the suffrage fight over, Catt again turned her attention to international affairs. She resumed her activities with the IWSA, but increasingly focused on the larger issues of war and peace. Following the end of World War I, she believed that women could play a key role in avoiding future bloodshed. In 1921 she told the NLWV convention that "the people in this room tonight could put an end to war" and proclaimed that "God is calling to the women of the world to come forward and stay the hands of men." In 1925 she formed the Committee on the Cause and Cure for War. The group held annual conferences up until 1939, when it became clear that if there was a cure, it was not going to arrive in time to prevent World War II.

During World War II, Catt helped publicize the atrocities committed against the Jews and served as an advocate for Jewish refugees. By this point, her years of global travel were behind her, and she spent most of her time in

her home in New Rochelle, New York. She died there of a heart attack on March 9, 1947, at the age of eighty-eight.

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Elizabeth Cady Stanton Addresses the 1869 National Woman Suffrage Convention

After the Civil War ended, reformers became locked in a heated debate about expanding the right to vote. Women's suffrage pioneers felt that it was an ideal time to enfranchise women. But abolition leaders argued that women should wait until voting rights had been secured for African American men. In the following excerpt from a speech made on January 19, 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton urges a new constitutional amendment to enfranchise women. She also maintains that educated women are more deserving of the vote than certain groups of uneducated men, particularly the "lower orders of foreigners" and former slaves.

I urge a speedy adoption of a Sixteenth Amendment for the following reasons:

1. A government, based on the principle of caste and class, can not stand. The aristocratic idea, in any form, is opposed to the genius of our free institutions, to our own declaration of rights, and to the civilization of the age. All artificial distinctions, whether of family, blood, wealth, color, or sex, are equally oppressive to the subject classes, and equally destructive to national life and prosperity. Governments based on every form of aristocracy, on every degree and variety of inequality, have been tried in despotisms, monarchies, and republics, and all alike have perished. In the panorama of the past behold the mighty nations that have risen, one by one, but to fall. Behold their temples, thrones, and pyramids, their gorgeous palaces and stately monuments now crumbled all to dust. Behold every monarch in Europe at this very hour trembling on his throne. Behold the republics on this Western continent convulsed, distracted, divided, the hosts scattered, the leaders fallen, the scouts lost in the wilderness, the once inspired prophets blind and dumb, while on all sides the cry is echoed, "Republicanism is a failure," though that great principle of a government "by the people, of the people, for the people," has never been tried. Thus far, all nations have been built on caste and failed. Why, in this hour of reconstruction, with the experience of generations before us, make another experiment in the same direction? If serfdom, peasantry, and slavery have shattered kingdoms, deluged continents with blood, scattered republics like dust before the wind, and rent our own Union asunder, what kind of a government, think you, American statesmen, you can build, with the mothers of the race crouching at your feet, while iron-heeled peasants, serfs, and slaves, exalted by your hands, tread our

inalienable rights into the dust? While all men, everywhere, are rejoicing in new-found liberties, shall woman alone be denied the rights, privileges, and immunities of citizenship?… Of all kinds of aristocracy, that of sex is the most odious and unnatural; invading, as it does, our homes, desecrating our family altars, dividing those whom God has joined together, exalting the son above the mother who bore him, and subjugating, everywhere, moral power to brute force. Such a government would not be worth the blood and treasure so freely poured out in its long struggles for freedom….

2. I urge a Sixteenth Amendment, because "manhood suffrage" or a man's government, is civil, religious, and social disorganization. The male element is a destructive force, stern, selfish, aggrandizing, loving war, violence, conquest, acquisition, breeding in the material and moral world alike discord, disorder, disease, and death. See what a record of blood and cruelty the pages of history reveal! Through what slavery, slaughter, and sacrifice, through what inquisitions and imprisonments, pains and persecutions, black codes and gloomy creeds, the soul of humanity has struggled for the centuries, while mercy has veiled her face and all hearts have been dead alike to love and hope! The male element has held high carnival thus far, it has fairly run riot from the beginning, overpowering the feminine element everywhere, crushing out all the diviner qualities in human nature, until we know but little of true manhood and womanhood, of the latter comparatively nothing, for it has scarce been recognized as a power until within the last century. Society is but the reflection of man himself, untempered by woman's thought, the hard iron rule we feel alike in the church, the state, and the home. No one need wonder at the disorganization, at the fragmentary condition of everything, when we remember that man, who represents but half a complete being, with but half an idea on every subject, has undertaken the absolute control of all sublunary matters.

People object to the demands of those whom they choose to call the strong-minded, because they say, "the right of suffrage will make the women masculine." That is just the difficulty in which we are involved to-day. Though disfranchised we have few women in the best sense, we have simply so many reflections, varieties, and dilutions of the masculine gender. The strong, natural characteristics of womanhood are repressed and ignored in dependence, for so long as man feeds woman she will try to please the giver and adapt herself to his condition. To keep a foothold in society woman must be as near like man as possible, reflect his ideas, opinions, virtues, motives, prejudices, and vices….

We ask woman's enfranchisement, as the first step toward the recognition of that essential element in government that can only secure the health, strength, and prosperity of the nation. Whatever is done to lift woman to her true position will help to usher in a new day of peace and perfection for the race.... If the civilization of the age calls for an extension of the suffrage, surely a government of the most virtuous, educated men and women would better represent the whole, and protect the interests of all than could the representation of either sex alone. But government gains no new element of strength in admitting all men to the ballot-box, for we have too much of the man-power there already. We see this in every department of legislation, and it is a common remark, that unless some new virtue is infused into our public life the nation is doomed to destruction. Will the foreign element, the dregs of China, Germany, England, Ireland, and Africa supply this needed force, or the nobler types of American womanhood who have taught our presidents, senators, and congressmen the rudiments of all they know?

3. I urge a Sixteenth Amendment because, when "manhood suffrage" is established from Maine to California, woman has reached the lowest depths of political degradation. So long as there is a disfranchised class in this country, and that class its women, a man's government is worse than a white man's government with suffrage limited by property and educational qualification, because in proportion as you multiply the rulers, the conditions of the politically ostracised is more hopeless and degraded. John Stuart Mill, in his work on "Liberty," shows that the condition of one disfranchised man in a nation is worse than when the whole nation is under one man, because in the latter case, if the one man is despotic, the nation can easily throw him off, but what can one man do with a nation of tyrants over him? If American women find it hard to bear the oppressions of their own Saxon fathers, the best orders of manhood, what may they not be called to endure when all the lower orders of foreigners now crowding our shores legislate for them and their daughters. Think of Patrick and Sambo and Hans and Yung Tung, who do not know the difference between a monarchy and a republic, who can not read the Declaration of Independence or Webster's spelling-book, making laws for Lucretia Mott, Ernestine L. Rose, and Anna E. Dickinson. Think of jurors and jailors drawn from these ranks to watch and try young girls for the crime of infanticide, to decide the moral code by which the mothers of this Republic shall be governed? This manhood suffrage is an appalling question, and it would be well for thinking women, who seem to consider it so magnanimous to hold

their own claims in abeyance until all men are crowned with citizenship, to remember that the most ignorant men are ever the most hostile to the equality of women, as they have known them only in slavery and degradation….

Now, when the attention of the whole world is turned to this question of suffrage, and women themselves are throwing off the lethargy of ages, and in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, and Russia are holding their conventions, and their rulers are everywhere giving them a respectful hearing, shall American statesmen, claiming to be liberal, so amend their constitutions as to make their wives and mothers the political inferiors of unlettered and unwashed ditch-diggers, boot-blacks, butchers, and barbers, fresh from the slave plantations of the South, and the effete civilizations of the Old World? While poets and philosophers, statesmen and men of science are all alike pointing to woman as the new hope for the redemption of the race, shall the freest Government on the earth be the first to establish an aristocracy based on sex alone? to exalt ignorance above education, vice above virtue, brutality and barbarism above refinement and religion? Not since God first called light out of darkness and order out of chaos, was there ever made so base a proposition as "manhood suffrage" in this American Republic, after all the discussions we have had on human rights in the last century. On all the blackest pages of history there is no record of an act like this, in any nation, where native born citizens, having the same religion, speaking the same language, equal to their rulers in wealth, family, and education, have been politically ostracised by their own countrymen, outlawed with savages, and subjected to the government of outside barbarians. Remember the Fifteenth Amendment takes in a larger population than the 2,000,000 black men on the Southern plantation. It takes in all the foreigners daily landing in our eastern cities, the Chinese crowding our western shores, the inhabitants of Alaska, and all those western isles that will soon be ours. American statesmen may flatter themselves that by superior intelligence and political sagacity the higher orders of men will always govern, but when the ignorant foreign vote already holds the balance of power in all the large cities by sheer force of numbers, it is simply a question of impulse or passion, bribery or fraud, how our elections will be carried….

Would those gentlemen who are on all sides telling the women of the nation not to press their claims until the negro is safe beyond peradventure, be willing themselves to stand aside and trust all their interests to hands like these? The educated women of this nation feel as much interest in republican institutions, the preservation of the country, the good of the race, their own

elevation and success, as any man possibly can, and we have the same distrust in man's power to legislate for us, that he has in woman's power to legislate wisely for herself.

4. I would press a Sixteenth Amendment, because the history of American statesmanship does not inspire me with confidence in man's capacity to govern the nation alone, with justice and mercy. I have come to this conclusion, not only from my own observation, but from what our rulers say of themselves….

Source: Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds. *History of Woman Suffrage*. Vol. 2, *1861-1876*. New York: Fowler & Wells, 1882.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE, PLACES, AND TERMS

Adams, Abigail
Wife of American patriot and U.S. president John Adams who advocated better treatment for women

Addams, Jane
Social activist and suffragist who served as a leader in the National American Woman Suffrage Association in the early 1900s

American Equal Rights Association
Organization formed in the mid-1860s to promote the rights of both women and African Americans

American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA)
Organization founded by Lucy Stone and other women's rights activists in 1869

Anthony, Susan B.
Women's suffrage pioneer who headed the National Woman's Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)

Beecher, Henry Ward
Popular minister who served as president of the American Woman Suffrage Association in the early 1870s

Blackstone, Sir William
Eighteenth-century British legal scholar whose views on the legal status of women were influential in North America

Blackwell, Alice Stone
Suffragist and daughter of Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell

CHRONOLOGY

1840

June 1840 – Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are among the American women who travel to London to attend the World Anti-Slavery Conference. After being prevented from taking part in the proceedings because of their sex, Mott and Stanton vow to hold a women's rights convention in the United States. *See* p. 15.

1848

July 19-20, 1848 – The Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention takes place in western New York State. *See* p. 17.

August 2, 1848 – A second convention takes place in Rochester, New York. *See* p. 19.

1850

April 19-20, 1850 – A women's convention is held in Salem, Ohio. *See* p. 22

October 23-24, 1850 – The first National Woman's Rights Convention is held in Worcester, Massachusetts. *See* p. 22.

1852

September 8-10, 1852 – The third National Woman's Rights Convention takes place in Syracuse, New York; Susan B. Anthony joins the suffrage movement at this event. *See* p. 24.

1854

Massachusetts becomes the first state to reform its property-rights laws, giving women more control over their money and property. Other states soon follow. *See* p. 27.

1861

April 12, 1861 – Confederate troops fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, beginning the Civil War. Women's rights groups suspend their activities. *See* p. 29.

1863

May 14, 1863 – Women's rights activists form the National Woman's Loyal League. *See* p. 30.

1865

April 9, 1865 – General Robert E. Lee surrenders to General Ulysses S. Grant, ending the Civil War.

SOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Books

Buhle, Mari Jo, and Paul Buhle. *The Concise History of Woman Suffrage: Selections from the Classic Work of Stanton, Anthony, Gage, and Harper.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978. A shortened and annotated version of the classic multi-volume historical study *History of Woman Suffrage,* which was put together by several of the legendary women's-rights pioneers.

Goldsmith, Barbara. *Other Powers: The Age of Suffrage, Spiritualism, and the Scandalous Victoria Woodhull.* New York: Knopf, 1998. Fascinating account of Woodhull's life that also discusses other prominent figures in the nineteenth-century suffrage movement and the historical and social factors that shaped them.

Gurko, Miriam. *The Ladies of Seneca Falls: The Birth of the Woman's Rights Movement.* New York: Macmillan, 1974. An interesting, easy-to-read chronicle of the early leaders of the women's suffrage movement.

Ward, Geoffrey C. *Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.* New York: Knopf, 1999. A photo-rich biography of Stanton and Anthony that serves as the book version of the documentary film of the same name (see below).

Video

Iron Jawed Angels (DVD). HBO Video. 2004. A dramatized but fairly accurate depiction of the National Woman's Party's crusade in the 1910s, focusing on the relationship between Alice Paul and Lucy Burns.

Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (VHS). PBS Home Video. 1999. A lengthy documentary by Ken Burns and Paul Barnes that traces the lives of these famed suffragists and their influence on the nineteenth-century suffrage movement.

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Irwin, Inez Hayes. *The Story of Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party*. Fairfax, VA: Denlinger's Publishers, 1977.

Keyssar, Alexander. *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

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(ill.) denotes illustration

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B