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Cara Capozucca Core 191: Global History since 1914 Mrs. Sandra Kase
November 15, 2012 Women in the Twentieth Century It started on May 2,
1914 according to Jessica Jenkins: “ women, men, and children across the
United States celebrated ‘ National Suffrage Day.’ Parades, speeches, and
demonstrations in support of the proposed women suffrage amendment to
the United States Constitution took place in every state and territory in the
country" (131). It started in Connecticut, where more than 531 districts from
all over the country gathered and contemplated on the women’s suffrage
movement that was spreading across the nation and what was going to
come out of this, if there was no action taken place (Jenkins, 2011). The
nineteenth- century was a turning point in many aspects of life such as social
reform movements; these included health care, antislavery, education and
labor reforms (Jenkins, 2011). At the beginning of the twentieth century,
women were outsiders to the formal structures of political life, voting,
serving on juries, and holding elective office; they were subject to wide-
ranging discrimination that marked them as secondary citizens (Todd, 1972).
“ Over the course of the century, however, women in America moved
dramatically into all aspects of public life, politics, labor-force participation,
professions, mass media, and popular culture. Deeply divided by race, class,
religion, ethnicity, and region, women do not always identify with one
another, and as a result women’s collective identity, their sense of solidarity
as women, has waxed and waned" (Freeman, 2000) . Women came out of
the woodwork and started actively becoming involved in the world. This
made the women want to fight for a voice of thing they disagreed on or
wanted. A significant wave of feminist activism generated a surge of change

in women's status. Each wave continued in less visible ways into subsequent decades. The story of these changes is a story of persistent activism, sometimes louder and more unified, sometimes quieter and dispersed (Pois, 1999). It is also a story of dramatic change, as women have staked their claim to full participation in American public and political life. In 1900 women's legal standing was fundamentally governed by their marital status (Pois, 1999). They had very few rights. "A married woman had no separate legal identity from that of her husband. She had no right to control her biological reproduction and no right to sue or be sued since she had no separate standing in court. She had no right to own property in her own name or to pursue a career of her choice" (Todd, 1972). Since the women had no right to much, the husband or "man" in her life controlled everything that happened. If the men wanted something accomplished throughout the house, it was the women's job to take care of it. The men were only for providing money and going to work and had all the control. If the women spoke out they could have received punishment for doing wrong. "Women could not vote, serve on juries, or hold public office. According to the Supreme Court, they were not "persons" under the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees equal protection under the law" (Freeman, 2000). Women who were outspoken, fought for their right to be a unique individual instead of just being that person or number to the legislatures. The women wanted more out of themselves instead of just being the "house-wife", they wanted to be able to make judicial decisions, speak their own mind, hold a job, and contribute to society. As the twentieth-century brought along many parades and reforms, "the parades allowed

women to present themselves to onlookers as serious spokeswomen for suffrage (Jenkins 2011). They also demonstrated the courage it took to appear in the public to demand equal voting rights. These events symbolized a universal desire among women to vote by having working-class women march with professional, college, and society women as one unified group" (Jenkins, 2011). Jenkins stated that California became the first state to hold a suffrage parade, and by 1914 seven states held their own suffrage parade (Jenkins, 2011). " At the march from Pratt Street to the legislative meeting on Capitol Hill, the women ' armed themselves with their banners and suffrage colors of purple, white and green,' and also held outdoor meetings for those unable to attend the demonstration at the legislature" (Jenkins, 2011). Most women would be discouraged to stand up in front of the country and demand and protest for equal rights against man and women. Thankfully there were women who did, stand up and push the limits to give women their freedom they have today. Across the country many other women were thinking of their own way to contribute to get their freedom and the right to vote. In the movie *Iron Jawed Angels*, directed by Katja von Garnier, women formed groups to hopefully get the right to vote and do anything that would make that occur. In 1912 Philadelphia, young suffragist activists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns have a meeting with Carrie Chapman Catt and Anna Howard Shaw of National American Woman Suffrage Association, formed in 1890 by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. They begin planning their first big event, a parade to promote women's suffrage, and recruit a team of volunteers, including Alice's college friend Mabel Vernon, Polish factory worker Ruza Wenclawska and social worker Doris Stevens. World War I

begins, and President Wilson seems headed for victory in the reelection campaign. Catt tries to convince Paul and Burns to withdraw from the campaign feeling it would be better to be friends with someone in the white house rather than have no connections or influences. Wartime is a heated situation among many of the suffragettes, who are feeling they are being neglected due to many people's main concern of winning the war. When Paul and Mrs. Leighton join the picket line, they are attacked by a mob, and subsequently imprisoned themselves. Thrown into solitary confinement for breaking a window for fresh air, Paul goes on a hunger strike. She is then denied counsel, placed in a straitjacket, and subjected to examination in the psychiatric ward. They do this to Paul to make an example to show the other women that none of the actions will be accepted. The warden begins force-feeding them, and a sympathetic guard sneaks Paul pen and paper. This is where Paul begins to write everything that has happened to her and the other women while in prison fighting for their lives and the future of women's lives. Word of the force-feeding leaks out, and public opinion shifts in favor of the suffragettes, now known as the "iron jawed angels." Catt seizes the moment to press President Wilson into supporting the suffrage amendment, and the women are released from prison as he comes out in its favor in a Congressional speech. Catt does this because President is up for re-election and he feels as if many of the husbands of the wives that are in prison for this movement may not re-elect him due to the imprisonment of their wives. By 1920, 35 states have ratified the amendment, but one more state is needed. On Aug. 26, 1920, the Susan B. Anthony Amendment becomes law, and 20 million American women win the right to vote. The 19th amendment

guarantees all American women the right to vote. Achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation and protest. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the Constitution (Freeman, 2000). Few early supporters lived to see final victory in 1920. “ Beginning in the 1800s, women organized, petitioned, and picketed to win the right to vote, but it took those decades to accomplish their purpose. Between 1878, when the amendment was first introduced in Congress, and August 18, 1920, when it was ratified, champions of voting rights for women worked tirelessly, but strategies for achieving their goal varied” (Freeman, 2000). Standing up for a right to vote, caused many problems for women. Some women went on hunger strikes to prove a point, which were then led into prison and were forced fed by intubation to discourage other women standing up and fighting against the legislature. Some pursued a strategy of passing suffrage acts in each state, nine western states adopted woman suffrage legislation by 1912 (Todd, 1972). “ Others challenged male-only voting laws in the courts. Militant suffragists used tactics such as parades, silent vigils, and hunger strikes. Often supporters met fierce resistance. Opponents heckled, jailed, and sometimes physically abused them” (Pois, 1999). By 1916, almost all of the major suffrage organizations were united behind the goal of a constitutional amendment (Freeman, 2000). “ When New York adopted woman suffrage in 1917 and President Wilson changed his position to support an amendment in 1918, the political balance began to shift. On May 21, 1919, the House of

Representatives passed the amendment, and 2 weeks later, the Senate followed. When Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment on August 18, 1920, the amendment passed its final hurdle of obtaining the agreement of three-fourths of the states. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the ratification on August 26, 1920, changing the face of the American electorate forever" (Freeman, 2000). Acknowledging women and changing the right to vote to only men and having both men and women vote at the same time, did not only increase popularity for President Wilson on his upcoming term, but it also increase the well-being of each individual in the United States. More occupations were opened to women during the 20th century. In 1910 the first policewoman was appointed in Los Angeles (Kaplan, 2000). In 1916 the first policewoman was appointed in Britain. " The 1919 Sex Disqualification Removal Act allowed women to become lawyers, vets and civil servants; also in 1922 Irene Barclay became the first female chartered surveyor" (Pois, 1999). " In 1917 the Women's Royal Naval Service was formed. So was the Women's Royal Air Force. In 1938 the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the female branch of the British army was formed. Nevertheless in the early 20th century it was unusual for married women to work, except in wartime" (Pois, 1999). However in the 1950s and 1960s it became common for them to do so, at least part-time. By the end of the century it was normal for married women to have their own careers. In 1970 the law was changed so women had to be paid the same wages as men for doing work of equal value (Todd, 1972). " In 1973 women were admitted to the stock exchange. From 1975 it was made illegal to sack women for becoming pregnant; also in 1975 the Sex Discrimination Act made it illegal to

discriminate against women in employment, education and training. In 1984 a new law stated that equal pay must be given for work of equal value" (Kaplan, 2000). In the late 20th century the number of women in managerial and other highly paid jobs greatly increased. Meanwhile during the 20th century new appliances made housework much easier. By the 1920s vacuum cleaners and washing machines were available but only rich people could afford them. They became more common in the 1930s, though they were still expensive (Kaplan, 2000). By 1959 about two thirds of British homes had a vacuum cleaner, however fridges and washing machines did not become really common till the 1960s (Kaplan, 2000). " In 1921 Dr Marie Stopes opened the first birth control clinic in England. Contraceptive pills went on sale in Britain in 1961. They gave women new freedom. Among many firsts in the 20th century in 1930 Amy Johnson became the first women to fly from Britain to Australia" (Kaplan, 2000). " In 1963 Valentina Tereshbova became the first woman in space. Famous female scientists of the 20th century include chemists Dorothy Hodgkin Edith Flanigen and Helen Free and pharmacologist Gertrude Elion. In 1903 Mary Anderson invented windscreen wipers" (Kaplan, 2000). In 1900 women wore long dresses. It was not acceptable for women to show their legs. From 1910 women wore hobble skirts (Fisher, 1995). They were so narrow women could only 'hobble' along while wearing them, however during World War I women's clothes became more practical (Kaplan, 2000). " Meanwhile in 1913 Mary Crosby invented the bra. She used two handkerchiefs joined by ribbon. In 1915 lipstick was sold in tubes for the first time" (Kaplan, 2000). In the early 1920s women still wore knickers that ended below the knee. However during the 1920s

knickers became much shorter. By the late 1920s they ended well above the knee (Kaplan, 2000). In the mid-20th century younger women wore briefs. A revolution in women's clothes occurred in 1925. At that time women began wearing knee length skirts (Fisher, 1995). " In the mid and late 1920s it was fashionable for women to look boyish. However in the 1930s women's dress became more conservative. During World War II it was necessary to save material so skirts were shorter. Clothes were rationed until 1949. Meanwhile the bikini was invented in 1946" (Pois, 1999). " In 1947 Christian Dior introduced the New Look, with long skirts and narrow waists giving an 'hour glass' figure" (Kaplan, 2000). " During the 1950s women's clothes were full and feminine; however in 1965 Mary Quant invented the mini skirt and clothes became even more informal" (Kaplan, 2000). With the invention of new clothing, it gave women an outlook of a fresh and strong different look. Many would never have thought to wear clothing like they did, and for it to be fashionable. This also gave workers more jobs including women to design clothing that many other women like themselves would see them in. Women of the twentieth century did turn the way of the world women today live their own lives. Many women would not be able to hold a job, speak at a political event, and vote to make a difference in the world. Having people like Susan B. Anthony curve the path set forth for women of the entire country to become free and independent, changes the way women think of how they would grow up living in the United States. If never gaining the 19th Amendment, women today would not be able to hold a position in local or state official government. This in fact would change many positions that are carried by powerful, strong women hoping to create a better place for both

men and women of the United States. Between hunger strikes and suffrage marches it granted women a way of life that many would have never dreamed of. Within the last 100 years, women's clothing has complete turned into an inventive design and has become what we call fashion today. Creating clothes with a twist on becoming inventive and producing a bold look for women on the twentieth century, let women of today take clothing to a different level like hosting fashion shows just on what women are wearing by specific designers. In the end, you can say women of the twentieth century changed the way women of the twentieth-first and future upcoming centuries are and will be. They set a path for women to take and create their own along the way. Thankfully they sacrificed their lives and their family's lives so that our families and our families' family will not have to worry about the things like not being able to speak out or be given the right to vote. Works Cited Freeman, J. (2000). "'One Man, One Vote; One Woman, One Throat': Women in New York City Politics, " 1890-1910. *American Nineteenth Century History*, 1(3), 101. Fischer, G. (1995). " The Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Woman Suffrage in the United States. " *Journal Of Women's History*, 7(3), 172. Garnier, K. V. (Director). (2004). *Votes for Women* [Motion Picture]. Jenkins, J. D. (2011). " Marching Shoulder to Shoulder: New Life in the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Movement. " *Connecticut History*, 50(2), 131-145. Kaplan, T. (2000). " Women of the world. " *Diplomatic History*, 24(1), 165. Pois, A. (1999). " Perspectives on Twentieth-Century Women's International Activism: Peace, Feminism, and Foreign. " *Journal Of Women's History*, 11(3), 213. Todd, J. (1972). *Women's Rights*. New York: Arno Press.