

Women's rights and the great awakening

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In the 1820's and 1830's white males enjoyed nearly universal suffrage, while women of all colors were continually neglected by politicians. They had no right to vote or hold political office. Furthermore, women were neglected socially. Women had limited educations and could not attend college. They had unfair working conditions and were considered intellectually and physically inferior to males.

They also were not allowed to control their own property. Beginning in the mid-1850's, however, women began to battle for their rights, particularly the right to vote. The Second Great Awakening generated this battle. The Second Great Awakening was a religious revival movement during the 19th century that was challenging women's traditional roles in religion. Out of the religious fervor many were inspired to purify the country. It fueled the women's rights movement, the abolitionist movement, and the temperance movement alike, three events that are closely tied together.

Women, when fighting for the equal right to vote, sometimes based their belief on God's word. During the antebellum period many women fought for their rights, a battle fought mainly as a result of the Second Great Awakening doctrines of progress and faith in social reform. In July of 1848 the first women's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York. Elizabeth Cady Stanton had the task of drawing up the Declaration of Sentiments that would define the meeting. Taking the Declaration of Independence as her guide, Stanton submitted a document including that, "all men and women had been created equal." Following 2 days of discussion, 100 women and men signed the Declaration of Sentiments.

This was the beginning of a fight for change. 1850 marks the first annual National Women's Rights Convention, which continued to take place each year through 1860. With an attendance rate of over 1, 000 people this was one of the most successful series of conventions during the women's rights movement. Conventions were a main way that the women's rights movement gained momentum. They attracted a wide bade of support including temperance advocates and abolitionists.

They combined both male and female leadership. Speeches were given at the conventions on equal wages, expanded education, property rights, marriage reform, and temperance. The convention in Seneca Falls was the starting point of the women's rights movement while the annual National Women's Rights Convention helped the movement to move forward and gain momentum and support. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were two of leaders of the Women's Rights Movement.

In 1869 they formed the National Woman Suffrage Association, it's primary goal being to achieve voting rights for women by the Congressional amendment to the Constitution. That same year Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and others formed the American Woman Suffrage Association. This grouped focused on gaining voting rights for women through changes to individual state constitutions. This was the first split within the movement. Later that year, the two groups were able to see success when the territory of Wyoming passes a women's suffrage law allowing women to serve juries in the territory. Over 20 years later the two groups merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association and soon after they gained more and more rights for women.

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Anthony and Stanton are often cited as the leaders of this success. They both fought hard for their rights. In 1872 Susan B. Anthony was even arrested for voting in the national election. Nevertheless, she would continue to struggle for women's suffrage for the rest of her life. By speaking out against injustice, publishing newspapers, and helping slaves escape freedom, they were able to make accomplishments that were unparalleled by women at the time.

Both white and black women advocated for women's rights. One example of this is Sojourner Truth. After being freed from slavery in 1827, Sojourner Truth became a speaker for both abolitionism and women's rights. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Sojourner Truth built the pathway towards women's rights during the Antebellum Period. The women's rights movement had a great success overall, though it was not achieved until 1920 when the 19th amendment was passed.

The 19th amendment prohibits any United States citizen to be denied the right to vote based on sex. It was ratified on August 18th, 1920. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were not alive to see the amendment they had first drafted be ratified, but that did not change the fact that the decades of dedication they put into the movement had been rewarded. The overall effect of the movement, both during and after, caused a lot of change in the United States. It changed the way people viewed women.

Women had forever been inferior to men. While white men had universal suffrage women could still not vote at all. Women had unfair work conditions and could not own land. The effect of the Women's Rights Movement was

that women were no longer viewed as an “ inferior race” but instead as a equal to males politically and socially. The women’s rights movement, the temperance movement, and the abolitionist movement were all closely intertwined. Many conventions for women’s rights brought all these groups together.

Also, they were all fueled by the Second Great Awakening doctrines. During this time in the Antebellum period, people were inspired by the Second Great Awakening, and this is what brought the three groups together. Many of the advocates for the abolitionist movement were also advocates for women’s rights and suffrage. This support would eventually lead to success for the women’s rights movement in 1920. In conclusion, the support that the women’s rights movement got from the temperance movement and abolitionist movement was one of the reasons it succeeded, and all three of these movements were fueled by the Second Great Awakenings doctrines of progress and faith in social improvement.