

Womans suffrage in the nineteenth century history essay



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In the early 19th century, women were treated like second class citizens and were limited to caring for the children and household chores. They had no rights. When women got married, they were not allowed to own property, earn wages, sign a contract or vote. They were expected to obey their husbands. A woman was not allowed to have an independent opinion and it was improper for them to travel alone or speak in public.

The fight for women's rights began in 1848 with the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York. After being forbidden to enter a convention in London on world slavery because they were women, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton decided to have their own convention to discuss the rights of women.

They used the Declaration of Independence as a guide and presented the Declaration of Principles which asked for changes in the treatment of women. Resolution 9 demanded the right to vote and sexual equality. After the convention, the right to vote became one of the major points of the women's rights movement.

Unfortunately, the Civil War changed the focus from the women's rights movement to the abolition of slavery. However, women like Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Stanton and Susan B. Anthony requested from the government the emancipation of slaves with the thought that once the war was over both slaves and women would be granted the same rights. They wanted the same rights as men. The government treated each issue separately. They felt that the Negro vote would benefit the politicians but the women's vote would not benefit them at all.

Women activists became very angry and created the American Equal Rights Association which was established by Elizabeth Stanton and other women. In 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified and clearly excluded women as citizens, voters or men. Ms. Stanton and Ms. Anthony worked hard to successfully establish the radical National Woman Suffrage Association in New York while Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe and Henry Blackwell worked and organized the conservative American Woman Suffrage Association in Boston. They later came together in 1890 to become the National American Woman Suffrage Association which was led by Elizabeth Stanton.

Susan B. Anthony, was arrested for trying to vote for Ulysses S. Grant during the 1872 presidential election. Six years later, the Woman's Suffrage Amendment was introduced to Congress. By this time, there were many women's groups already formed and the fight for their rights became stronger. Even before women were allowed to vote, some states allowed women to vote in local and school board elections but no elections that were important. However, World War I and the U. S. involvement, slowed down the movement because women began to pitch in for the war effort. On May 4, 1913, about 5, 000 women paraded for woman suffrage up Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC. In 1919, after many years of petitioning and fighting for their cause with parades and picketing, the Nineteenth Amendment was passed by Congress. On August 26, 1920, it became ratified. The amendment forbid the denial of voting due to the sex of the person and gave women the right to vote. Mrs. Marie Ruoff Byrum was the first woman to vote in the State of Missouri and the first woman to vote in the United States under the Suffrage Amendment.

After this victory, the National American Woman Suffrage Association split up and a new group formed called the League of Women Voters. The right to vote was not enough for women. Women wanted equal rights. Alice Paul founded the National Woman's Party and fought to get equal rights for women. She proposed the Equal Rights Amendment to Congress in 1923. However, it did not pass. The fight continued and another group called the National Organization for Women was created during the 1960s. After many debates and protests, Congress passed it in 1972 but it has never been ratified.

The women's suffrage movement was not just in the United States but worldwide. Between the years of 1850 and 1879, the Prussians prohibited women from joining or participating in any political meetings or organizations. Britain gave unmarried women who owned their homes the right to vote in local elections only. The same was with Swedish women.

From 1880 through 1899, New Zealand granted women the right to vote. Women in Australia got the right to vote but with restrictions in 1901. Finland adopted woman suffrage. Norway adopted full woman suffrage in 1913 as well as Germany, Austria, Latvia, Poland, and Estonia in 1918. It is clear that the world supported the Women's Suffrage movement.

Even though women have the right to vote, they are still fighting for equal rights. Many people believe that women already have equal rights. This is not true. There is no equal pay for equal work. There are so many ways that women are not given the equality or respect they deserve. Instead they are faced with discrimination each day. Society has a way of hiding this fact. This

is why women are still fighting for those rights and will continue to fight until they achieve their goal. It took them many years to get the right to vote and to be considered by the government as citizens. Women will not stop fighting until they reach the victory they are seeking.