

# Susan brownell anthony essay



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I. Susan B. Anthony : A Biographical Introduction Susan Brownell Anthony was

born on February 15, 1820 in Adams, Massachusetts to Daniel and Lucy Anthony.

Susan was the second born of eight children in a strict Quaker family. Her father, Daniel Anthony, was said to have been a stern man, a Quaker Abolitionist

and a cotton manufacturer born near the conclusion of the eighteenth century.

From what I read, he believed in “ guiding” his children, not in

‘ directing’ them. Daniel Anthony did not allow his offspring to experience the

childish amusements of toys, games, and music, which were seen as distractions

from the “ inner light.” Instead he enforced self-discipline,

principled convictions, and the belief in one’s own self-worth. Each of my

sources indicates that Susan was a precocious child and she learned to read and

write at the age of three. In 1826, the Anthonys moved from Massachusetts to

Battenville, New York where Susan attended a district school. When the teacher

refused to teach Susan long division, Susan was taken out of school and taught

in a "home school" set up by her father. The school was run by a woman

teacher, Mary Perkins. Perkins offered a new image of womanhood to Susan and her

sisters. She was independent and educated and held a position that had

traditionally been reserved to young men. Ultimately, Susan was sent to boarding

school near Philadelphia. She taught at a female academy and Quaker boarding

school, in upstate New York from 1846-49. Afterwards, she settled in her family

home in Rochester, New York. It was here that she began her first public crusade

on behalf of temperance (Anthony, 1975). II. The Struggle for Women's Rights

Susan B. Anthony's first involvement in the world of reform was in the

temperance movement. This was one of the first expressions of original feminism

in the United States and it dealt with the abuses of women and children who suffered from alcoholic husbands. The first women's rights convention had taken

place in Seneca Falls, New York, in July of 1848. The declaration that emerged

was modeled after the Declaration of Independence. Written by Elizabeth Cady

Stanton, it claimed that “ all men and women are created equal” and that “ the history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman” (Harper, 1993, vol. 1).

Following a long list of grievances were resolutions for equitable laws, equal educational and job opportunities, and the right to vote. One year later in 1849, Susan B. Anthony gave her first public speech for the “ Daughters of Temperance” and then helped to found the Woman's State Temperance Society

of New York, one of the first such organizations of its time. In 1851, she went

to Syracuse to attend a series of anti-slavery meetings. During this time Susan

met Elizabeth Stanton in person, became fast friends, and subsequently joined

her and another woman named Amelia Bloomer in campaigns for women's rights. In

1854, she devoted herself to the anti-slavery movement serving from 1856 to the

outbreak of the civil war in 1861. Here, Susan B. Anthony served as an agent for

the American Anti-slavery Society. Afterwards, she collaborated with Stanton and

published the New York liberal weekly, "The Revolution." (from

1868-70) which called for equal pay for women (Harper, 1993, vols. 1 & 2).

In 1872, Susan demanded that women be given the same civil and political rights

that had been extended to black males under the 14th and 15th amendments. Thus,

she led a group of women to the polls in Rochester to test the right of women to

vote. She was arrested two weeks later and while awaiting trial, engaged in highly publicized lecture tours and in March 1873, she tried to vote again in city elections. After being tried and convicted of violating the voting laws, Susan succeeded in her refusal to pay the fine of one hundred dollars. From then

on- she campaigned endlessly for a federal woman suffrage amendment through the

National Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) (from 1869-90) and the National

American Woman Suffrage Association (from 1890-1906) and by lecturing throughout

the country as well (Barry, 1988). III. After Anthony : The Struggle Continues

The struggle to eventually win the vote was a slow and frustrating one.

Wyoming

Territory in 1869, Utah Territory in 1870, and the states of Colorado in 1893

and Idaho in 1896 granted women the vote but the Eastern states still resisted

it. The woman-suffrage amendment to the Federal Constitution, presented to every

Congress since 1878, repeatedly failed to pass. Over a generation later, when

the United States entered World War I in April 1917, the NAWSA pledged its support. Thousands of suffragists folded bandages in their local headquarters and volunteered to work in hospitals and government offices. The suffrage leaders hoped that after the war American women would be rewarded with the vote

for their patriotic efforts. Some feminist leaders split with the NAWSA over its support of the war. Another woman named Alice Paul led the Congressional Union

for Women’s Suffrage, later called the National Woman’s party, in agitating for

the vote during the war. Another group, the New York branch of the Woman’s Peace

party, led by a woman named Crystal Eastman, refused to support the war “to

make the world safe for democracy” when American women did not have democratic rights. The national Woman’s Peace party, headed by Jane Addams,

supported a peace settlement but did not openly oppose the war (Meyer, 1987).

Congress finally did pass the women's suffrage bill in June 1919, and the 19th

Amendment to the Constitution became law on August 26 of 1920. With that one

occurrence, approximately twenty-five million women had won the right to vote

(Meyer, 1987). Following the suffrage victory, NAWSA members transferred their

allegiance to the newly created League of Women Voters, a non-partisan

organization dedicated to educating women on political issues. The National

Woman's party worked toward an amendment to the Constitution providing complete

equality of rights for women. The Woman's Peace party became affiliated with

another pacifist group, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

In Great Britain, as in the United States, woman-suffrage workers divided into



two camps—the moderate National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies and the

militant Women’s Social and Political Union, led by Emmeline Pankhurst and her

daughters Christabel and Sylvia. A bill conferring suffrage on women over 30 was

passed by the British Parliament in 1918. Ten years later the age limit was lowered to 21. Meanwhile, New Zealand had granted full suffrage in 1893, and

Australia in 1902. Women had won full suffrage in Finland in 1906 and in Norway

in 1913 and were voting in most countries by the time World War II broke out. In

1945, Japanese women also received the right to vote. Women voted for the first

time in France in 1945. Women in Italy won the right to vote one year later in

1946. (Meyer, 1987). IV. Conclusive Remarks Susan B. Anthony, along with Stanton

and Matilda Joslyn Gage had published “ The History of Woman Suffrage”

(in four volumes released from 1881-1902) In 1888, she organized the

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International Council of Women and in 1904 the International Woman Suffrage

Alliance (Harper, 1993, vol. 3). Although Anthony did not live to see the consummation of her efforts to win the right to vote for women, the establishment of the 19th amendment is deeply owed to her efforts. Susan B.

Anthony died of natural causes in 1906 but as was indicated within the previous

section, her dreams certainly did not die with her. Anthony is known to have always acknowledged Stanton as the founder of the women's rights movement. Her

own achievement lay in her inspiration and perseverance in bringing together

vast numbers of people of both sexes around the single goal of the vote.

Because

of Aunt Susan's love for women's rights and perseverance in her cause, women

today undeniably enjoy a great many more rights and privileges than those of the

previous century. For one hundred years ago, a woman was ruled by a government

and a law in which she had no voice and no say. If she felt herself wronged in any way, shape, or form- she had no way of making the fact known to the law, or

no way in which she might suggest a remedying solution for it. It was an unheard

of thing for a woman to speak out in public. None of the nation's colleges or universities admitted women as students. Females were barred from nearly all

profitable employments, and in those that we were permitted to pursue, women

received only one quarter of the man's compensation for the same work; females

could never become not become a doctor or lawyer, or, - except within the Society of Friends, - a minister (Lutz, 1976). If she was married any wages she

might earn were not hers, but must be handed by the employer to her husband, who

was in every way her master, the law even giving him the power to chastise or

punish her. The laws of divorce were so framed as to be wholly regardless of the

happiness of women, in every case the man always gaining the control of the

children- even if he were the offender in the case. A father could apprentice

his children without the leave of the mother, and at his death could appoint a

guardian for them, thereby taking them from the mother's control. Man

endeavored

in every way possible to destroy woman's confidence in her powers, to lessen her

self-respect and to make her willing to lead a dependent, subservient life. It

really seemed as if man had assumed the powers of the Lord himself in claiming

it as his right to tell woman what she might or might not do, and what was or

was not her place. For more than half a century, Susan B. Anthony had fought for

change in the form of women's rights. According to my research, many people

rudely made fun of her. Some insulted her. Nevertheless, she traveled from

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county to county in New York and other states making speeches and organizing

clubs for women's rights. She pleaded her cause with every president from

Abraham Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt. On July 2, 1979, the U. S. Mint

appropriately honored her work by issuing the well-known Susan B. Anthony dollar

coin (Barry, 1988).

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