

19TH AMENDMENT

History

The 19th Amendment guarantees American women the right to vote. Achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle; victory took decades of agitation. Beginning in the mid-19th century, woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered radical change.

Between 1878, when the amendment was first introduced in Congress, and 1920, when it was ratified, champions of voting rights for women worked tirelessly, but their strategies varied. Some tried to pass suffrage acts in each state—nine western states adopted woman suffrage legislation by 1912. Others challenged male-only voting laws in the courts. More public tactics included parades, silent vigils, and hunger strikes. Supporters were heckled, jailed, and sometimes physically abused.

By 1916, most of the major suffrage organizations united behind the goal of a constitutional amendment. 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 two weeks later, the Senate followed. When Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment on August 18, 1920, the amendment was adopted. While decades of struggle to include African Americans and other minority women in the promise of voting rights remained, the face of the American electorate changed forever.

Source

From the National Archives website:

<https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/featured-documents/amendment-19>

ADELAIDE A. CLAFLIN LETTERS

Source

Adelaide A. Claflin Letters, Ms1992-005

Date

November 11, 1884

November 14, 1884

Description

Two letters from Adelaide Avery Claflin to Mrs. Hollander discussing an upcoming speaking engagement for Claflin for the woman suffrage association. Claflin was a resident of Quincy, Massachusetts and began speaking publicly in support of woman suffrage in 1883. She became a member of the Quincy school committee in 1884 and was the first woman to hold an office in the town.

Transcription

Tues. Nov. 11, 1884,

Mrs. Hollander,

Dear madam,

I have received a note from Mrs. Stone, (giving me your name simply as above,) and asking me to communicate with you in case I were willing to speak for you in Somerville on Sunday, the 22d and on the same subject on which I lately spoke in South Boston. As the 22nd is Saturday, I am left in a little doubt as

to the real date desired, and I am also a little embarrassed in my writing by some other causes. I have a bad cold just now, but probably would be well enough to speak by that time, and would like to do so, as far as I know at present. But I did not speak, exactly, at So. Boston, I read a written essay upon "What women as a class owe to each other", and this essay, substantially, was read to the Somerville Woman's Club a year ago. I do not know whether that club is in the same part of Somerville, or whether that would be any objection. I should, therefore be

glad to hear further from you in regard to the circumstances, as Mrs. Stone's note was extremely brief.

Very truly yours,
Adelaide A. Claffin
21 Chestnut St.
Quincy
Maf.

Transcription

Friday, Nov. 14, 1884,

My dear Mrs. Hollander,

I am much obliged for your explanation in regard to the lectures and I am glad such a course is undertaken. With regard to myself, I only mentioned the So. Boston paper, because Mrs. Stone wrote to me about that. I have spoken for the Massachusetts Suffrage Association, upon that question, a good many times within the past two

years, and feel that I can always say something upon most aspects of the woman suffrage question. Mrs. Stone has often asked me to speak upon municipal suffrage because she liked my presentation of that subject - but some of the Somerville friends have very likely heard me speak upon it in Boston, and I would rather prefer myself to speak in a more general way. I have had some experience in regards to schools, having been teacher, mother, and school committee, and had some special advantages here in Quincy where educational matters have been much discussed, and I have been in the thick of it. How would you

like as subject "The need of the feminine influence in the school, the town, and the state"?

Or if that is too large - the first two leaving out the "state"? I think I could make some useful points in an address of that kind. But if there is any special branch of the suffrage, or woman question, which would be more desirable to you as a step in the unfolding of your scheme of lectures I think it would be safe enough for your President to announce it for me for the 23rd. I have studied the woman question all my life, and while I do not profess to have solved as great a problem, I feel pretty sure I can talk about most parts of it in a tolerably rational manner. I write thus because there is not time before Sunday for me to hear from you and write again as to subject, and I should like to meet the wishes of the committee in that respect. I should be glad to know how long an address is desired and whether it is to be in a parlor or a church, etc.

Very truly yours
Adelaide A. Claflin,
21 Chestnut St.,
Quincy

As an alternative subject I might suggest
"The reaction of equal rights upon woman and society."
A.A.C.

LILA M. VALENTINE LETTER TO J. D. EGGLESTON

Source

Records of Joseph Dupuy Eggleston, Record Group 2/7, Box 3, Folder 195

Date

April 2, 1915

Description

Letter from Lila Meade Valentine to Joseph Dupuy Eggleston arranging a speaking engagement. Valentine was co-founder of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia and served as its first president. Eggleston was the seventh president of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (now Virginia Tech).

Transcription

Dr. J. D. Eggleston. April 2, 1915
Blacksburg, Va.

My dear [cousin?].

Can you arrange for me
to speak any one of the following days,
April 21, 22, 23, 24, 26? I am to help
in the Pennsylvania campaign in ?? City
April 28. I should greatly appreciate
a prompt reply as I have several other
invitations to fill in, and only wait
your decision to readjust them because of
your May 1st limit.

Cordially yours
Lila M Valentine

P.S.

I regret very much that you felt compelled
to resign from our State Board of Education.
We can ill afford to do without your
valuable aid. L.M.V.

LETTER FROM EULALIE SALLEY TO MRS. FRANCES BEAR

Source

Eulalie Salley Letter, Ms2013-079

Date

January 12, 1974

Description

Typed letter from Eulalie Salley to Mrs. Frances Bear of Roanoke, Virginia. Salley was born in Augusta, Georgia in 1883 and lived on her grandparents' plantation in Louisville, Georgia, before moving to Aiken, South Carolina in 1892. Her education included a year each at Mary Baldwin College in Virginia and Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Around 1912, Salley organized the Aiken County Equal Suffrage League and served as its first president. She campaigned for suffrage by door-to-door canvassing, hosting fundraisers, and dropping leaflets from an airplane. The end of this letter mentions her efforts to elect Gilbert McMillan to office in South Carolina and his role in South Carolinas ratification of the 19th amendment in 1969.

STATEMENT IN REGARD TO THE SUFFRAGE

Source

Rare Books Collection, JK1896 .H49 1894

Date

1894

Description

Written by the Honorable Abram S. Hewitt and issued by The New York Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. This essay from 1894 argues against women's suffrage on the basis that government is men's work because government exists only when backed by force. It claims that men are fighters and women are not. It also notes that women's exemption from holding public office, jury service, and military service are privileges and that performing these duties cannot be done "without violating the proprieties and safeguards of female purity and delicacy."

It concludes "Taking a dispassionate survey, therefore, of the whole situation, it would appear that women have not grievances that cannot be redressed through existing agencies; and that the possession of the suffrage would not tend to enhance either the interests of woman or of society; but that, on the contrary, it would tend to degrade, by imposing a privilege which she could not exercise without confessing her inability to perform the corresponding duties which adhere to the responsibility of civil government; that the courtesies and amenities of life which are now felt to be due from man to woman would soon cease to exist, resulting in the practical unsexing of men and women by destroying the sanctity and privacy of the family circle and home life, upon which depend the virtue and the welfare of humanity."

LADIES' HOME JOURNAL ARTICLES

Source

Rare Books Collection, AP2 .L135

Date

July, August, and October 1920

Description

Ladies' Home Journal was an American magazine published from 1883 to 2016. The magazine published topics of interest to American women. During 1920, it published various articles on the topic of woman suffrage as the 19th amendment was proceeding through the process of ratification during a presidential election year. The articles discuss the role of women in American politics, including their place in the two-party system. They also provide information about political action and the role of women in the presidential election should the amendment be ratified before the November elections. The amendment received the final required state ratification when Tennessee ratified it on August 18, 1920, allowing women nationwide to vote in the 1920 election.

Included here is an article from October 1920. Articles from July and August, 1920 can be viewed in the exhibit cases near the Athenaeum.



SUFFRAGE COOK BOOKS

Source

Rare Books Collection
TX715 .K63
TX715 .B968 1886

Date

1886, 1915

Description

Two woman suffrage cookbooks from 1886 and 1915. These cookbooks include recipes from their contributors as well as discussion and analysis of the woman suffrage question. Similar to previous post-Civil War charity cookbooks, these books were a source of funding for woman suffrage associations as well as a means of spreading advocacy for suffrage.

A nice description of the history of these cookbooks is available from *The Salt* from NPR. View the article by visiting the web address or using the QR code below.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/11/05/454246666/how-suffragists-used-cookbooks-as-a-recipe-for-subversion>



WHAT WOMEN HAVE ACTUALLY DONE WHERE THEY VOTE

Source

Rare Books Collection, JK1896 .B37 1910

Date

1910

Description

Subtitled *A personal investigation into the laws, records and results of the four equal suffrage states: Colorado, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming*, this report by Richard Barry was originally printed in the November 1910 *Ladies' Home Journal* and was reprinted by The New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. The report is presented as a serious and impartial investigation of facts regarding the promises made by suffragists and whether they were fulfilled in those states where suffrage was in effect. After the presentation of Barry's report, there is an analysis of his findings and those of Dr. Helen L. Sumner's book *Equal Suffrage* published by the Collegiate Equal Suffrage League of New York. That analysis by the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage claims that both works provide evidence to support opposing woman suffrage. It cites observations in both works to support a narrative that women having the vote has not improved social ills nor reduced juvenile crime or divorce.