

New York State's Women's Suffrage History

Votes for Women!

Celebrating New York's Suffrage

On November 6, 1917, New York State passed the referendum for women's suffrage. This victory was an important event for New York State and the nation. Suffrage in New York State signaled that the national passage of women's suffrage would soon follow, and in August 1920, "Votes for Women" were constitutionally guaranteed.

Although women began asserting their independence long before, the first coordinated work for women's suffrage began at the Seneca Falls convention in 1848. The convention served as a catalyst for debates and action. Women like Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joselyn Gage organized and rallied for support of women's suffrage throughout upstate New York. Others, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Amelia Bloomer supported the effort through the use of their pens. Stanton wrote letters, speeches, and articles while Bloomer published the first newspaper for women, *The Lily*, in 1849. These combined efforts culminated in the creation of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).

By the dawn of the twentieth century, the political and social landscape was much different in New York State than fifty years before. The state experienced dramatic advances in industry and urban growth. Several large waves of immigrants settled throughout the state and now more and more women were working outside of the home. Reformers concerns shifted to labor issues, health care, and temperance.

New reformers like Harriot Stanton Blatch and Carrie Chapman Catt used new tactics such as marches, meetings, and signed petitions to show that New Yorkers wanted suffrage. Anti-suffrage sentiment was so high that the New York State suffrage amendment was voted down in 1915.

Nonetheless, two years later, New Yorkers finally approved women's suffrage with 53% voting yes!

Although women had won the right to vote, suffrage leaders continued with reform efforts throughout the 20th century. African American women made progress for civil rights. First lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Secretary of the Department of Labor Frances Perkins made history on the state and national levels. Betty Friedan wrote "Feminine Mystique" in 1963 and then helped to found the National Organization of Women (NOW), a feminist organization whose leaders worked toward equal job opportunities and pay for women. In the 1970s, Gloria Steinem and others founded *Ms.*

Newspaper Activity:

Search through recent editions of the newspaper (print or online) and other news sources for articles about activists. Compare and contrast their techniques with those of either the earlier or later women's suffrage movements.

magazine which supported the feminist movement. In 1972, Shirley Chisholm became the first African American woman to run for the office of president and, more recently, New York women, including Bella Abzug, Geraldine Ferraro, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Kirsten Gillibrand have sought and were elected to positions in public office, continuing the work that began in Seneca Falls in 1848.

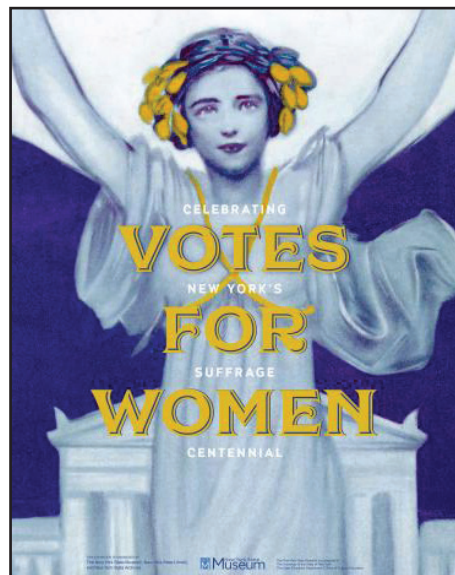
Additional Educational Resources:

NYS Museum - www.nysm.nysed.gov/votes-for-women

NYS Archives - <https://tinyurl.com/Petition1874>

Teaching Guide - <https://tinyurl.com/WomensTeachingGuide>

National Women's History Museum - www.crusadeforthetvote.org



This feature is just one part of this newspaper's Newspaper in Education (NIE) program.

A note of thanks to the NYS Museum for this content.