

# Votes for (Some) Women: A Timeline

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(Updated June 2019)

## 1700's

**1776:** During the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, John Adams receives a letter from his wife asking him and the men working on the Declaration of Independence to “remember the ladies.” (“Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March 1776,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, accessed April 30, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/04-01-02-0241>.)

Despite the Declaration’s provision stating that “all men are created equal,” voting rights are limited to land-owning white men of the predominant religion after the founding fathers leave the decisions about who gets to vote up to the states. New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Connecticut are the exception, allowing free African American men to vote.

**1790:** Naturalization is limited to “free white persons of good character” through the passage of the [Naturalization Act](#) (1 Stat. 103).

This same year, the New Jersey Legislature amends their voting law language to read “he or she.” Because married women do not have property rights, only single women are allowed to vote. The law also states that qualified voters must be “free inhabitants of this state, of full age, who are worth fifty pounds, proclamation money, and have resided within the county in which they claim a vote, for twelve months immediately preceding the election...” (1800 N.J. Laws 229, 231.)

## 1800's

**November 24, 1805:** In what is considered to be Washington’s first election, Lewis and Clark hold a vote among all members of the expedition when it reaches the place where the Columbia River meets the Pacific. The vote is to decide where to settle for the winter. The votes of Sacagawea and Clark’s “manservant” York, an African American slave, are treated equally to those of everyone else, including Lewis and Clark. It is because of these election results that they stay near Astoria, Oregon for the winter of 1805-1806. (*Sacagawea*, PBS, <https://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/inside/saca.html>.)

**1832:** Maria W. Stewart, an African American feminist, abolitionist, author and educator, speaks to a public gathering of black and white men and women about women’s rights and politics. She is the first woman to do so. “Stewart is known for four powerful speeches she delivered in Boston in the early 1830s - a time when no woman, black or white, dared to address an audience from a public platform.” (Maggie MacLean, *Maria Stewart*, The Ohio State University e-history (2013), <https://ehistory.osu.edu/biographies/maria-stewart>.)

**1837:** Quaker abolitionist Lucretia Mott helps organize the first National Female Anti-Slavery Society convention in New York City. Mott often wore clothing she made herself as a demonstration of wearing something that was not the product of forced labor. (Kate C. Lemay & Martha S. Jones, *The Bold Accomplishments of Women of Color Need to be a Bigger Part of Suffrage History*, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE (March 19, 2019), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/bold-accomplishments-women-color-need-be-bigger-part-suffrage-history-180971756/>.) “Before the Civil War, women in the United States were actively involved in the abolitionist movement to end slavery. It was through their involvement in this issue that women began to confront their own inferior political status.” (LARRY SABATO & HOWARD R. ERNST, ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS 441 (2006).)

**1840:** In Article 1, Section 4 of the US Constitution, the founding fathers leave it up to states to determine who has suffrage rights. By this year, most states have eliminated the requirement that someone must be a property owner to vote, securing suffrage for white males over the age of 21.

During this year, Abolitionists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott are denied participation as American delegates in the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London.

**1848:** The first women's rights convention is held in Seneca Falls, NY, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, who "...began drawing parallels between the condition of the enslaved population and their own condition as prisoners within a patriarchal society." (*Parading for Progress*, National Women's History Museum (March 1, 2018), <https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/parading-progress>.)

While Frederick Douglass is in attendance, no women of color are present. During the convention, a [Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions](#) is introduced. Historian Lisa Tetrault states that without Douglass' oratory, the resolution may have failed. (Brent Staples, *Opinion: How the Suffrage Movement Betrayed Black Women*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, July 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/28/opinion/sunday/suffrage-movement-racism-black-women.html>.)

This same year, African-American women win the right to preaching licenses in the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, paving the way for a decades-long campaign of women lobbying for religious voting rights, office holding and control of funds they raised. This event is a landmark moment in the African American suffrage movement.

This same year, the US signs the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending the Mexican-American war and establishing full rights to Mexican property owners established in ceded areas. However, historians note that the treaty failed to actually protect their property and voting rights. (Researchers, *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo*, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (Oct. 26, 2017), <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/guadalupe.html>.)

**1851:** Stanton and fellow abolitionist Susan B. Anthony are introduced and quickly begin collaborating on the women's suffrage movement. Their life's work includes fighting for both an end to slavery and property ownership for women.

However, Anthony has become a controversial figure in recent years as she is quoted as saying that women deserved the vote more than black men. "[I will] cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work for or demand the ballot for the negro and not the woman." Stanton too has been criticized for her views on extending voting rights to African Americans. She echoed Anthony's resentment that black men were allowed to vote before women. "[It is] better to be the slave of an educated white man than of a degraded black one." Historian Martha S. Jones stated, "Stanton stands for an impoverished vision of equality that never admitted that black Americans, male and female, were her equals." (Brigit Katz, *Women's Rights Monument in NY.C. Approved Amid Accusations of Whitewashing*, Smithsonian (March 25, 2019), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/nyc-approves-womens-rights-monument-amid-accusations-whitewashing-180971774/>). Historian Lori Ginzberg "argues persuasively that racism and elitism were enduring features of the great suffragist's makeup and philosophy." (Brent Staples, *Opinion: How the Suffrage Movement Betrayed Black Women*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, July 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/28/opinion/sunday/suffrage-movement-racism-black-women.html>.)

Stanton and Anthony's views create a split between the two suffragists and Sojourner Truth, who delivers her famous "Ar'n't I a Woman?" speech during the 1851 Ohio Women's Rights Convention. (The Faith Project, Inc., *Sojourner Truth*, PBS (2003), [https://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/sojourner\\_truth.html](https://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/people/sojourner_truth.html))

**1853:** 102 years before Rosa Parks is asked to move to the back of an Alabama bus, African American Sarah Parker Remond and her two companions refuse to sit in the segregated balcony at the Boston opera. After poor treatment from the officers sent to arrest her, Remond successfully sues for \$500. Remond would continue to be an activist for people of color. (*Sarah Remond Ejected from Boston Theater*, MASSMOMENTS, <https://www.massmoments.org/moment-details/sarah-remond-ejected-from-boston-theater.html>.)

**1854:** The Washington Territorial Assembly passes its first law – creating rules for elections which include qualifications of voters: “white male inhabitants over the age of twenty-one years.” (*Statutes of the Territory of Washington, Chapter 1 § 1*.) The law is not as specific for voters in school district elections.

During this session, an attempt is made by Representative Arthur Armstrong Denny to get the legislature to grant women the full right to vote and it fails. (Charles K. Wiggins, *John P. Hoyt and Women’s Suffrage*, 43 WASHINGTON STATE BAR NEWS 1, 17-20 (January 1989).)

**1855:** Connecticut amends their state constitution and becomes the first state to require a literacy test to vote. (Caleb Crain, *The Case Against Democracy*, THE NEW YORKER (Oct. 31, 2016, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/11/07/the-case-against-democracy>).

**1856:** North Carolina becomes the final state to end property ownership as a qualification for voting, resulting in what some historians call universal white male suffrage. (John V. Orth, *North Carolina Constitutional History*, 70 N.C. L. REV. 1759, 1773 n. 101 (1992).)

At this time, African Americans are only allowed to vote in six states: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont and New York. New York require African Americans to own \$250 in “freehold property” to qualify to vote. This is not a requirement for white men. These six states “...contained only 6 percent of the northern black population...” (Susan Cianci Salvatore, et. al, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Voting Rights*, National Park Service (2007, Revised 2009), [https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/upload/CivilRights\\_VotingRights.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/upload/CivilRights_VotingRights.pdf).)

**1857:** US Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Taney rules that slaves are the property of their owners and lack standing to be US citizen in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1857).

**1864\*:** Asa Mercer (Mercer Island), dismayed by the lack of women in the Washington Territory, embarks on a recruiting mission. The women he brings back are known as the “Mercer Girls.”

While the government took a sympathetic, but basically inactive approach to this problem, one man by the name of Asa S. Mercer made it his personal mission to bring women to the territory. Asa Mercer was in the territory only a little while when he was named president of the territorial university. After serving a second term as president, Mercer was commissioned to go east (where there was a surplus of young women) to recruit women to come west and settle in the predominantly male logging community. Although the territorial governor at the time encouraged Mercer, there were not enough funds in the public treasury to help him in his efforts. Instead, private contributions made by male citizens of the territory financed his trip. Mercer made his first trip back east in 1864. He reportedly held a meeting in Lowell, Massachusetts where there was a large population of Civil War widows and orphans. At that meeting, he emphasized to the women the good pay to be made in Washington Territory as teachers and seamstresses. According to most accounts, Mercer made no mention of the matrimonial purpose of his trip. Eleven women agreed to travel west with Mercer and they arrived in Seattle close to midnight on May 16, 1864. Even at that late hour, they were given what was described as "a royal reception, with such music as the town afforded and a plenty of refreshments thought suitable for New England ladies." When asked to describe the kind of reception awaiting them, one woman commented that the welcoming party looked like "a pack of grizzlies in store clothes." Despite such first impressions, records indicate that ten of the eleven girls married shortly after their arrival. Mercer planned a second trip in 1865.

Kelly M. Cannon, *Beyond the "Black Hole" – A Historical Perspective on Understanding the Non-Legislative History of Washington Community Property Law*, 39 GONZAGA LAW REVIEW 1, 25 (2003-2004).

**1865:** The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution is ratified, making slavery illegal unless used as a punishment for someone convicted of a crime.

**1866:** American Equal Rights Association (AERA) is formed by suffrage supporters.

This same year, President Stanton and Secretary Anthony of the National Woman's Rights Committee hold the first post-war Woman's Rights Convention. It is the 11<sup>th</sup> such convention.

At this convention, it was proposed that the Woman's Rights Societies be merged with those attempting to secure the vote for the "Negro" under the name "The American Equal Rights Association." This pamphlet contains addresses by Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. Francis D. Gage, Francis Ellen Watkins Harper, Lucretia Mott, as well as Henry Ward Beecher, Wendell Phillips, and Theodore Tilden. There are also interesting letters regretting inability to attend the convention, given at the end, including those of Lydia Maria Child, Caroline Maria Severance, Frances Ellen Burr, Anna E. Dickinson, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglass.

The Dobkin Family Collection of Feminism, *Proceedings of the Eleventh National Woman's Rights Convention, Held at the Church...Parkurst*, Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, [http://www.glennhorowitz.com/dobkin/proceedings\\_of\\_the\\_eleventh\\_national\\_womans\\_rights\\_convention\\_held\\_at\\_the\\_c.](http://www.glennhorowitz.com/dobkin/proceedings_of_the_eleventh_national_womans_rights_convention_held_at_the_c.)

More about Frances Ellen Watkins Harper:

Here's a woman born before the Civil War in a slave-holding state who was orphaned at a young age. She emerges onto the public stage as a poet. She goes on to be an Underground Railroad and anti-slavery activist. She is present at the Women's Convention of 1866 and joins the movement for suffrage.

Kate C. Lemay & Martha S. Jones, *The Bold Accomplishments of Women of Color Need to be a Bigger Part of Suffrage History*, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE (March 19, 2019), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/bold-accomplishments-women-color-need-be-bigger-part-suffrage-history-180971756/>.

**1867:** The Washington Territorial Legislature changes the language of the election statutes to "all white American citizens 21 years of age" in an attempt to deny voting rights to former Confederate soldiers. Because the language of the phrase does not specify males, Rep. Edward Eldridge argues that it grants women the right to vote. (Wiggins, at 17).

Note: The phrase is not the complete language of the law.

That all white American citizens above the age of twenty-one years, and all American half-breeds over that age who can read and write and have adopted the habits of the whites, and all **other white male** inhabitants of this Territory above that age who shall have declared on oath their intention to become citizens at least six months previous to the day of election, and shall have taken an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the organic act of this Territory, and who shall have resided six months in the Territory and thirty days in the county, and who have not borne arms against the United States of America or given aid or comfort to its enemies, unless pardoned, and none others shall be entitled to hold office or vote at any election in this Territory. ([Laws of Washington 1866-67 § 8](#)).

**1868:** The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution is ratified, granting full citizenship rights to former slaves and reversing the Supreme Court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1857). Discrimination based on sex remains legal.

**1869:** Wyoming becomes the first state to allow women to vote. The language of the law does not specify a race. It states: “every woman of the age of twenty-one years, residing in this territory...” (Law Library of Congress, *An Act to Grant to the Women of Wyoming Territory the Right of Suffrage and to Hold Office* (1869), <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.03000/>.) However, Wyoming historian Tom Rea points out that an amendment to include women of color and Native Americans in the new law failed during the legislative session. Rea also describes how race played a factor in the support for the law, saying that some Wyoming legislators felt that if African Americans and Chinese residents were going to be given the right to vote, women might as well have it, too. Lawmakers in the state also felt that women would reward those that got them the right to vote by always voting for their party. (Tom Rea, *Right Choice, Wrong Reasons: Wyoming Women Win the Right to Vote*, Wyoming State Historical Society (Nov. 8, 2014), <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/right-choice-wrong-reasons-wyoming-women-win-right-vote>.)

Women in [the west] generally made up only a small portion of the population, but their scarcity actually worked to their political advantage in terms of gaining rights. Because these women were needed for companionship and to raise children, they tended to be more highly valued and therefore granted more rights, including voting rights. (Sabato & Ernst, at 441.)

It is said that this is one of the reasons why women in Washington State are given property rights in the state in 1869. (Cannon, at 22). The 1869 statute does not specify race. ([Laws of Washington 1869, 318](#).)

**1870:** African American men are granted the right to vote with the ratification of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

Section 1 of the amendment extends voting rights to all [men] regardless of race, color or previous condition of servitude. Section 2 grants Congress the authority to enact legislation needed to enforce the amendment. (Sabato & Ernst, at 440.)

However, poll taxes, literacy tests, fear, intimidation and later Jim Crow laws are used in former slaveholding states to keep them from exercising it. Literacy text exemptions are allowed for anyone with a grandfather who was eligible to vote in 1860, meaning that the exemptions apply only for white men. Poor white men are often subjected to literacy and “good citizenship” tests at this time, but because the tests are given at the discretion of the poll workers, their tests are generally much easier than those given to African American voters. In the following years, African American women’s organizations mobilize to fight against these barriers. Poll taxes and literacy tests also created barriers for Latino voters.

Historians note that suffragist Elizabeth Cady Stanton was fiercely and publicly opposed to the passage of the amendment. “Historian Faye Dudden wrote that Stanton “dipped her pen into a tincture of white racism and sketched a reference to a nightmarish figure, the black rapist,” and lashed out from the pages of the suffragist paper that she and Anthony published.” (Brent Staples, *Opinion: How the Suffrage Movement Betrayed Black Women*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, July 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/28/opinion/sunday/suffrage-movement-racism-black-women.html>.)

Due to divisions over “tactics, aims, and personalities,” the AERA splits into two groups. Stanton and Anthony found the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). “The NWSA wanted a constitutional amendment to secure the vote for women, but it also supported a variety of reforms that aimed to make women equal members of society.” (*Parading for Progress*, National Women’s History Museum (March 1, 2018), <https://www.womenshistory.org/exhibits/parading-progress>.)

This same year, the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) is established. The AWSA believes in a state by state approach to achieving woman suffrage. Unlike Stanton and Anthony’s group, the AWSA supports the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution. The NWSA’s objection to the amendment is that it does not include women.

These affiliations are important in distinguishing the approach to woman suffrage adopted by individual Black suffragists.

African American women were in a difficult position. Sometimes they worked in their own clubs and suffrage organizations, sometimes with white suffragists. Black women did not accept their exclusion from white suffrage organizations or the racist tactics employed by white suffragists. In the twentieth century, more and more Black women joined the ranks of suffragists as the movement progressed.

Edith Mayo, *African American Women Leaders in the Suffrage Movement*, Suffrage Memorial, <https://suffragistmemorial.org/african-american-women-leaders-in-the-suffrage-movement/>.

This same year, notorious free-love activist and businesswoman Victoria Claflin Woodhull sends a letter to the *New York Herald*, announcing her intention to run for president:

I am quite well aware that in assuming this position I shall evoke more ridicule than enthusiasm at the outset. But this is an epoch of sudden changes and startling surprises. What may appear absurd today will assume a serious aspect tomorrow.

Danny Lewis, *Victoria Woodhull Ran for President Before Women Had the Right to Vote*, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE (May 10, 2016), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/victoria-woodhull-ran-for-president-before-women-had-the-right-to-vote-180959038/>.

In Washington Territory, Olympia suffragist Mary Olney Brown holds a picnic in the location of the June 6<sup>th</sup> election and casts votes, along with six other women. They are counted thanks to an election inspector who is married to one of the voters. When women of a nearby town receives a message that women are voting, eight of them show up to cast their own ballots. A group that Brown later takes to vote at the Olympia courthouse is not as successful. (Stevenson, at 8.)

**1871:** Oregon suffragist Abigail Scott Duniway starts a women's rights newspaper called *The New Northwest* in May. In autumn of that year she is joined on a tour of the Pacific Northwest by Anthony. After finding out that Anthony had taken a sip of alcohol during her stay in Oregon, the churches of Walla Walla refuse to admit her. (Shanna Stevenson, *Susan B. Anthony's Visit to Washington*, Washington State Historical Society <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/research/whc/milestones/suffrage/anthony/>).

During this trip, Duniway and Anthony present at a suffrage convention in Olympia. "The object of this convention is to arrange some plan by which to secure concert of action among the woman voters of the Territory." In attendance are three of the famed "Mercer Girls." (Shanna Stevenson, *Here Come the Suffragists: The Role of the Mercer Girls in the Washington Suffrage Movement*, WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/files/library/HereCometheSuffragists.pdf>)

This same year "...the United States District Court for Oregon holds that "An Indian... who is a citizen of the United States... cannot be excluded from the [voting] privilege on the ground of being an Indian, as that would be to exclude him on account of race. ' (*McKay v. Campbell* (1871) Fed. Cas. No. 8840, 16 Fed. Cas. 161, 166.) (N. D. Houghton, *The Legal Status of Indian Suffrage in the United States*, 19 CALIF. L. REV. 507 (1931).

**1872:** Sojourner Truth is arrested in Grand Rapids, MI for demanding a ballot at a polling booth and Susan B. Anthony is arrested in Rochester, NY for attempting to cast a vote for Ulysses S. Grant.

This same year, the Equal Rights Party nominates Victoria Woodhull as their presidential candidate. Frederick Douglass is nominated as the vice-presidential candidate – something that he did not publicly accept or acknowledge. As a result of the nomination, Woodhull is evicted from her home and is forced to withdraw her daughter from school so that she does not influence other children with her "radical" ideas. (Danny Lewis, *Victoria Woodhull Ran for President Before Women Had the Right to Vote*, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE (May 10, 2016),

[https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/victoria-woodhull-ran-for-president-before-women-had-the-right-to-vote-180959038/.](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/victoria-woodhull-ran-for-president-before-women-had-the-right-to-vote-180959038/))

**1874:** The US Supreme Court rules in *Minor v. Happersett*, 88 U.S. 162 (1874) that the St. Louis registrar of voters did not violate any laws when barring Virginia Minor from registering to vote, opining that simply being a citizen doesn't qualify.

This same year, the Women's Christian Temperance Union is founded and becomes a voice in the fight for woman suffrage. Fearing that women may use the vote to end the sale of spirits, the liquor lobby becomes a strong opponent of granting women the right.

**1875:** Territorial Legislator Elwood Evans of Olympia makes an unsuccessful attempt to pass a suffrage bill. (Stevenson, at 13).

**1877:** The Territorial Legislature grants women (taxpayers who have lived in the district for three months) the right to vote in school board director elections in their local districts. ([Laws of Washington 1877, 268](#)).

**1878:** Anthony introduces an amendment to grant women the right to vote. (Anthony and Stanton did not live to see the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution.)

This same year, delegates assemble in Walla Walla for the drafting of a constitution to be submitted to Congress in Washington's petition for statehood.

Though the convention heard from Abigail Scott Duniway, a prominent Oregon suffragist, and [Edward] Eldridge moved to delete the word "male" from voter qualification requirements, the delegates rejected extension of the franchise. However, the delegates voted overwhelmingly to submit women's suffrage as a separate proposition for a direct vote by the electorate. The voters ratified the Walla Walla constitution, but rejected women's suffrage by a margin of almost 3 to 1, and the whole effort came to naught because Congress declined to grant statehood in 1878. (Wiggins, at 17).

**1879:** Omaha "Friends of the Indian" group member Inshta Theumba ("Bright Eyes") (Susette La Flesche (later Tibbles)) testifies on behalf of the Ponca Tribe and serves as the interpreter for Standing Bear in *U.S. v. Cook*, 5 Dill. 453 (1879). La Flesche, newspaper reporter and sister of the first licensed Native American woman doctor, is said to be the first woman to speak out for the rights of Native Americans. (Berger, at 1208.)

**1882:** US Senate Select Committee on Suffrage is created.

This same year, the US government passes the Chinese Exclusion Act (22 Stat. 58), barring certain people of Chinese descent from becoming citizens, thus excluding them from voting. "Congress...refused State and Federal courts the right to grant citizenship to Chinese resident aliens, although these courts could still deport them." (National Archives, *Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)*, <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=47>.)

**November 1883:** The Washington Territorial Legislature grants women the right to vote and serve on juries. The amendment to the previous law eliminates the word "male" and states that "his...shall be construed to mean "his or her," as the case may be," but keeps the language about race. ([Laws of Washington 1883, 39-40](#).)

This same month, the Legislature also passes a Memorial (*Praying the Abolition of Indian Reservations*), that states in part:

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives, of the United States of America, in Congress Assembled: That the continuance of race distinction by segregating a particular class of our native population, and confining them to reservations, treating them as inferiors and dependent, whether they be regarded as wards of the government, or prisoners upon such reservations is inconsistent with the

progressive spirit of the age, and the grand achieved doctrine of the republic, that all humanity are equal before the law. Discrimination on account of race which ignores manhood or equality and uniformity of right as men and women, is at variance with the theory of Democratic government, and surely native born humanity of the United States cannot longer be regarded as aliens, nor can communities of such be treated as foreign nations. That the time has arrived when the Indian should be treated as other men are treated, with the same right to enjoy property, the same right to pursue happiness. That race should not be confined as prisoners upon, or be limited to reservations; nor should they enjoy rights to acquire or hold land superior to, or different from the American citizen. An Indian is human, he is neither more nor less than a native of our country, and your memorialists believe that a policy which recognizes his humanity and manhood should be adopted. ([Laws of Washington 1883, 434.](#))

Not everyone agrees with the idea of women serving on juries. Critics claim that a woman's presence in the courtroom is "...a misguided experiment that violated the laws of nature and would lead to dire consequences for family and society." (Aaron Caplan, *The History of Women's Jury Service in Washington*, WASHINGTON STATE BAR NEWS 13 (Mar. 2005), <http://www.washingtonhistory.org/files/library/WomenJurors.pdf>.)

The implication was tested when one Mollie Rosencrantz appealed her conviction for keeping a house of ill fame on the ground that a married woman had served on the grand jury which had indicted her. (*Rosencrantz v. Territory*, 2 Wash. Terr. 267 (1884)). [Supreme Court] Judge Hoyt, writing for himself and concurring Judge Wingard, upheld the conviction on the ground that the law was valid, and women were therefore eligible to sit on juries. (Wiggins, at 17.)

In his dissent in *Rosencrantz*, Judge Turner writes:

Legislative enactment would not make white black, nor can it provide the female form with bone and sinew equal in strength to that with which nature has provided man. No more can it reverse the law of cause and effect, and clothe a timid, shrinking woman, whose life theater is and will continue to be, and ought to continue to be, primarily the home circle, with the masculine will and self-reliant judgment of man. (Caplan, at 13.)

This same year, the Woman's Club of Olympia forms – the first of its kind on the West Coast and possibly in Washington. The club and its original meeting house still exist today.

**1884:** The National Equal Rights Party nominates another woman candidate for president, attorney Belva Ann Lockwood, who receives over 4,000 votes from six states.

**1886:** The Washington Territorial Legislature amends the 1883 "his or her" language to "male and female." The language about race remains.

"That all citizens of the United States, male and female, above the age of twenty-one years, and all American half-breeds, male and female, over that age, who have adopted the habits of the whites, and all other inhabitants, male or female, of this territory, above that age, who have declared on oath their intentions to become citizens of the United States at least six months previous to the day of election, and shall have taken an oath to support the constitution and government of the United States at least six months previous to the day of election, and who shall have resided six months in the territory, sixty days in the county, and thirty days in the precinct next preceding the day of election, and none other, shall be entitled to vote at any election in this territory..."

[Laws of Washington 1885-86, 113-114.](#)

**1887:** The Territorial Supreme Court declares the 1883 statute invalid in *Harland v. Territory*, 3 Wash. Terr. 131 (1887). Women are no longer allowed to vote or serve on juries.

This same year, [The Dawes Act](#) (also known as the General Allotment Act) is passed, granting citizenship to Native Americans who reject their tribal affiliations. (24 Stat. 388.) Susette La Flesche Tibbles is credited with helping to get the act passed, “at the time considered a progressive law of benefit to the tribes.” (National Women’s Hall of Fame, *Inductee: Susette La Flesche*, <https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/susette-la-flesche/>). However, the intent of providing additional rights to Native Americans through this act was not realized and is considered to be a disaster. “...the need to prepare Indians for citizenship helped justify federal boarding schools and subjection to American law.” (Bethany R. Berger, *Birthright Citizenship on Trial: Elk v. Wilkins and United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, 37 CARDOZO L. REV. 1185, 1190 (2016).)

**1888:** The Territorial Legislature reenacts the right to vote for women following the *Harland* decision. The legislation comes after a suffragist campaign that included a petition to Congress that read, in part, “We are disenfranchised; stripped of our rights and our liberties, and reduced to equality with the squalid savage and the heathen Chinese.” (Stevenson, at 26.) One Seattle judge opposes the legislation, imploring Governor Eugene Semple not to sign it as it could hurt Washington’s chances of becoming a state. (Stevenson, at 27.)

However, women again lose the right to vote and to serve on juries when the Territorial Supreme Court declares the statute unconstitutional in the case *Bloomer v. Todd*, 3 Wash. Terr. 599 (1888). Suffragists would later use this case in their campaign to claim that women were tricked out of their right to vote. Mrs. Geo. A. Smith of Spokane writes in a piece for *The Spokane Press* that Mrs. Nevada Bloomer was part of a scheme intended to end suffrage for women, created by the bootleggers and other criminals that female voters had driven out of the Territory. Mrs. Smith also declares that women had voted so much between 1883 and 1888, they would make it impossible for suffrage to be revoked. Thus, Mrs. Bloomer was called in to get the case into court. (Mrs. Geo A. Smith, *How Washington Women Were Tricked Out of Their Right to Vote*, THE SPOKANE PRESS July 8, 1909.)

See: *Bloomer v. Todd*, 3 Wash. Terr. 599, 611 (1888) and Chapter 51, Laws 1888.

**1889:** Washington becomes a state on February 22nd with the passage of “The Enabling Act” and holds its constitutional convention.

[Soon to be Justices] Dunbar and Hoyt were in serious contention for the honor of being presiding officer of the convention. However, their strong support for the women's vote was a hindrance. According to *The Seattle Daily Times*: “Hoyt is objected to by the antisuffragists, but his views upon the subject are mild, compared with those of Dunbar, consequently Dunbar's changes for the coveted honor have melted away like snow in the sunshine.” *Seattle Daily Times*, July 3, 1889, at 1, col. 4.

Charles H. Sheldon; Michael Stohr-Gillmore, *In the Beginning: The Washington Supreme Court a Century Ago*, 12 U. PUGET SOUND L. REV. 247 (1989).

The question of woman suffrage is raised on three separate days during the convention and debate covered the inclusion of it in the constitution and statutes. It is argued for by Rep. Eldridge, who spends over an hour explaining the history of the Washington movement to delegates. His motion is defeated 50-8. Eldridge is also unsuccessful in convincing the delegates to allow a vote on suffrage by the people in the future. (Wiggins at 20.) The convention is attended by Massachusetts suffragist Henry B. Blackwell, who writes to his wife of the proceedings:

Here I am fighting against odds – both the party conventions and leaders having dropped woman suffrage in order to conciliate the whiskey interest & the very general opposition which the men have manifested since the judges have overthrown the women’s right of suffrage. It is a most discouraging & perplexing condition of things. (Wiggins, at 19).

Suffrage for women is defeated at the convention 16, 527 to 34, 513. (Wiggins at 20).

Article 6 of the new State Constitution reads:

All male persons of the age of twenty-one years or over, possessing the following qualifications, shall be entitled to vote at all elections: They shall be citizens of the United States; They shall have lived in the state one year, and in the county ninety days, and in the city, town, ward or precinct thirty days immediately preceding the election at which they offer to vote; **Provided, that Indians not taxed shall never be allowed the elective franchise**; Provided, further; that all male persons who at the time of the adoption of this Constitution are qualified electors of the Territory, shall be electors.

WASH. CONST. art. 6, § 1 (1889).

This same year, the Colored Ladies' Society (aka Ladies' Colored Social Circle) is formed in Seattle. African American, Native American and Chinese American women would continue to organize in Washington in the following years with the formation of several other clubs. (Shanna Stevenson, *WOMEN'S VOTES WOMEN'S VOICES: THE CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL RIGHTS IN WASHINGTON* 23 (2009).)

**1890:** The NWSA and AWSA unite to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

During this same year, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr found Hull House, a settlement house project in Chicago's 19th Ward. Within one year, there are more than a hundred settlement houses--largely operated by women--throughout the United States. The settlement house movement and the Progressive campaign of which it is a part propels thousands of college-educated white women and a number of women of color into lifetime careers in social work. It also makes women an important voice to be reckoned with in American politics.

*One Hundred Years Toward Suffrage: An Overview*, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS,  
[https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/076\\_vfw\\_timeline.html](https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/076_vfw_timeline.html).

**1892:** After an invitation to the upcoming Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Washington women (race not specified) are allowed to hold and vote in an election to determine the state flower, to be displayed there. After balloting closes in August of this year, the majority of the 14, 419 female-only votes are cast for the rhododendron, which is later confirmed in the state Senate. (Stevenson, at 32.)

**1893:** African American women's organizations are denied participation in the Women's Pavilion at The Columbian Exposition, an incident that galvanizes more African American women to take their movement beyond their home cities. (Nancy F. Cott, *An Experiment of Women*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (July 19, 1981),  
<https://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/19/books/an-experiment-of-women-1893.html>).

They came out of many movements: the anti-slavery movement, their own church communities, self-created clubs. African-American women were oftentimes at odds with their white counterparts in some of the mainstream organizations, so they continued to use their church communities as an organizing base, to develop ideas about women's rights. The club movement, begun to help African-American women see one other as political beings, became another foundation. By the end of the 19th century, many of these women joined the Republican Party. In cities like Chicago, African-American women embraced party politics and allied themselves with party operatives. They used their influence and ability to vote at the state level, even before 1920, to affect the question of women's suffrage nationally.

Kate C. Lemay & Martha S. Jones, *The Bold Accomplishments of Women of Color Need to be a Bigger Part of Suffrage History*, SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE (March 19, 2019), <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/bold-accomplishments-women-color-need-be-bigger-part-suffrage-history-180971756/>.

**1894:** The issue of racial integration of women's clubs on a local level is first presented when Fannie Barrier Williams is rejected from membership in the Chicago Women's Club because of her race. The decision is reversed "after fourteen months of debate and agitation." (BLACK WOMEN IN WHITE AMERICA: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY 447 (Gerda Lerner ed., Vintage Books 1972).)

**1895\*\*:** Boston hosts the First National Conference of Colored Women of America. Organized by Suffragist Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin (founder of the Women's New Era Club of Boston), the conference is attended by representatives of African-American women's clubs from 14 states. It is at this conference that the National Federation of Afro-American Women (NFAAW) is founded.

Speakers included Margaret Murray Washington (the wife of Booker T. Washington), author and former slave- Victoria Earle Matthews, anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells, scholar Anna J. Cooper, civil rights leader T. Thomas Fortune, and social reformers Henry B. Blackwell and William Lloyd Garrison. The National Federation of Afro-American Women, which became the National Association of Colored Women the following year, was organized during the conference.

Walter Opinde, *The First National Conference of the Colored Women of America*, Black Then (July 16, 2017), [https://blackthen.com/first-national-conference-colored-women-america/.](https://blackthen.com/first-national-conference-colored-women-america/))

This same year, Elizabeth Cady Stanton publishes *The Woman's Bible*. From this point forward, she is deemed too radical and no longer invited to sit on stage at NAWSA conventions, an organization she served as president of before she stepped down in 1892.

**1896\*\*:** The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) is founded with the motto of "Lifting as We Climb."

They advocated for women's rights as well as to "uplift" and improve the status of African Americans. For example, black men officially had won the right to vote in 1870. Since then, impossible literacy tests, high poll taxes, and grandfather clauses prevented many of them from casting their ballots. NACW suffragists wanted the vote for women and to ensure that black men could vote too.

Allison Lange, Ph.D, *National Association of Colored Women*, Women's History Museum (2015), <http://www.crusadeforthevote.org/nacw>.

This same year, an English speaking requirement is added to the voter qualifications in the Washington State Constitution. "They shall be able to read and speak the English language." (WASH. CONST. art. 6, § 1 (amended 1896.)) "The enactment of this voting restriction was a response to a growing nativist opposition to immigration." (Stevenson, at 33.)

**1898:** An attempt to amend the Washington State Constitution to grant women the right to vote again fails. Seattle suffragist Adella Parker blames the saloon lobby for the defeat. (Special Collections, *A Ballot for the Ladies*, University of Washington Libraries, [http://content.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/suffrage/.](http://content.lib.washington.edu/exhibits/suffrage/))

### 1900's

**1900:** In what is known as "The Ruffin Incident," African American suffragist Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin's Women's Era Club has its admission to the General Federation of Women's Clubs rescinded at the Wisconsin biennial convention when it is discovered that the club contains African American members. (Lerner, at 448.)

Upon arriving in Milwaukee, Mrs. Ruffin was forced into a humiliating position for which she was wholly unprepared. The Massachusetts delegation was immediately notified that the Board had met and would not receive an application for membership of the Woman's Era Club. Mrs. Ruffin was informed that she could not enter the convention representing a 'colored club' but would be received as a delegate from a

'white club,' and to enforce this ruling an attempt was made to snatch from her breast the badge which had been handed her on the passing of her credentials.

H. F. KLETZING, A.M. & W.H. CROGMAN, A.M., PROGRESS OF A RACE 222 (1903).

Ruffin is then banned from the convention when she refuses on principle to sit on behalf of any club she had planned to represent. At this same convention, Mary Church Terrell from the National Association of Colored Women is denied permission to extend greetings on behalf of her association. However, she addresses two white groups later this year about the needs of black women and the prejudice and lack of sympathy shown by white women. (SHARON HARLEY & ROSALYN TERBORG-PENN, THE AFRO AMERICAN WOMAN: STRUGGLES AND IMAGES 23 (1997).)

"Black women's suffrage clubs that sought formal affiliation with the national white suffrage movement were discouraged from doing so on the grounds that admitting them might anger white Southerners. It has since become clear that this was a ruse Northern whites used to obscure their own discriminatory policies." ((Brent Staples, *Opinion: How the Suffrage Movement Betrayed Black Women*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, July 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/28/opinion/sunday/suffrage-movement-racism-black-women.html>.)

**1903:** Susan B. Anthony and other noted suffragists sign a prepared statement at the NAWSA meeting in New Orleans, endorsing the organization's states' rights position, "which was tantamount to an endorsement of white supremacy in most states, particularly in the South." Moves such as this one cause African American suffragists to feel that prominent white suffragists are sympathetic in words only. (Harley and Terborg-Penn at 24.)

During the convention week, Susan B. Anthony visited the black Phyllis Wheatley Club in New Orleans. In presenting flowers to Anthony on the occasion, Sylvamie Williams, president of the club, indicated that black women were painfully aware of their position among white suffragists. She compared black women to flowers "trodden under foot," stating: "When women like you, Miss Anthony, come to see us and speak to us it helps us believe in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man, and at least for the time being in the sympathy of women."

Harley and Terborg-Penn at 24.

**1905:** Following their 1898 defeat, Washington suffragists revive their efforts get the vote by attending the Lewis & Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland – an event that is part of the NAWSA Convention. Anthony and Duniway are among the attendees. NAWSA president Anna Howard Shaw and Anthony seize upon the dedication of a statue of Sacagawea by deeming her "a symbol to western women campaigning for the vote and cast her as an example of the partnership of women and men in settling and prospering in the West." (Stevenson, at 38-39.)

**January 1909:** Washington legislators introduce a bill providing the right to vote to women with one child. "It is intended to head off the women's suffrage bill, which has no end of friends in the legislature." (Staff Writer, *No Votes for Old Maids*, THE TACOMA TIMES, January 23, 1909.)

The bill is so controversial that the author does not make their identity known and swears the clerk to secrecy. In response, suffragist leader Emma Smith DeVoe states that she will present a substitute bill requiring any man holding office to prove paternity. Among other qualifiers, her bill would also require Supreme Court judges to have six children each and governors an even dozen.

**January 29, 1909:** Washington State's Women's Suffrage Bill ([HB 59](#)) passes the House by a vote of 70 to 18. (Staff Writer, *Suffrage Bill Passes House*, THE SPOKANE PRESS, January 29, 1909.)

**Feb. 4, 1909:** Washington Women's Suffrage Bill passes the Senate Committee and the suffrage movement begins to gain a lot of ground in the state. The Spokane Press reports, "Every day finds fresh addition to the suffragist lobby until now it is difficult from a glance in the capitol corridor to tell whether there is a legislature in session or a woman's book club." (Staff Writer, *Suffragists Make a Killing in the Senate*, THE SPOKANE PRESS, February 6, 1909.)

**Feb. 23, 1909:** Suffrage Bill passes the Senate in WA “without a ripple,” 30-9. (Staff Writer, *Suffrage Bill Passed Today*, SPOKANE PRESS, February 23, 1909.) It will now be up to Washington voters to decide to include suffrage in the state constitution.

**April 19, 1909:** The Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women, (an organization of over 14,000 women) makes a statement to the Massachusetts legislature, expressing the fear of what they feel suffrage would mean for them:

We are here in behalf of our own association and of all other women who wish to retain their existing, rights and exemptions, and who prefer to intrust the politics of the state to men rather than to women. The men of Massachusetts have always considered the welfare and wishes of her women. Our laws have been changed again and again for their protection and benefit, and they stand today as a proof that the interests of women can safely be intrusted to those who now enact our legislation. Indeed, our only fear is that the generosity toward women which so distinguishes American men may induce some legislature to listen too favorably to such petitions as are presented here today, simply because the petitioners are women. We ask you, therefore, to remember the wishes of the women throughout the state who would be injured by the change proposed. These women have no desire to secure the rights of men; neither do they wish to assume their duties. If you doubt this, we ask you to consult the women in your own homes and in your neighborhood. Do the women you know wish to attend town meetings? Are they anxious to go to caucuses? Do you believe they desire to take their share in jury service? Do they believe it is for the welfare of the state that they should assume your present duties while still retaining their own?

*Equal Suffrage: Massachusetts Women Oppose Extension of Suffrage.* THE ABERDEEN HERALD, April 19, 1909.

In the printing of the statement, Washington’s *Aberdeen Herald* newspaper acknowledges that the anti-suffrage movement is not organized, nor is it making any headway in stopping the momentum of the national tide.

**April 17, 1909:** Four women from Washington State participate in the Convention of the International Suffrage Societies in London, to celebrate the release of British suffragist Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence from jail. *The Wenatchee Daily World* proclaims, “Spokane’s float the finest in the largest women’s parade ever held in London.”

In a message sent by cable to be delivered at a meeting of the Spokane Equal Suffrage Association, Washington resident La Reine Baker writes:

One of the various objections advanced against granting women political liberty is that if the women have the ballot, the home and babies may be neglected and that the publicity at the polls may mar her chief charm - modesty. The fact that Election Day rolls around once in two years, or once each year at most, and that an opinion can be written and placed in a box in about five minutes does not seem to consume much of the years’ time. This duty of voting is less arduous than some that have fallen to the lot of women. And yet another objection. Women might have to sit on juries if they voted. I think that women who stand behind counters or in factories at the cook stove, washtub, ironing table, dish sink and baby crib would be mighty glad to sit on almost anything for a rest.

*Participate in Demonstration,* THE WENATCHEE DAILY WORLD, April 21, 1909.

**June 1909:** A train called the “Washington Suffragette Special” arrives in Seattle in late June, with suffragists from across the country, escorted by Mrs. Emma Smith DeVoe. Arriving on a different train are 300 delegates sponsored by the Tacoma Suffrage Club. They are there to attend the National American Woman Suffrage Association Convention, held from July 1 – 7, 1909.

During the convention in Seattle, major conflict strikes when the Washington Association plans to oust the Spokane delegation, whom they believe to be opposed to the association presidency of Smith DeVoe. (*Effort to Oust Spokane Suffrage Delegation*, SPOKANE PRESS, June 29, 1909). The Spokane group is labeled “the insurgents”

after they are ousted. Once rumor spreads that they will try to take their seats by force, the “insurgents” are locked in a room in the church hosting the convention and the police are called. However, with the help of prominent Seattle attorney Mrs. Leonia Browne, the members of the National Association vote to give seats to two women from the Spokane delegation. The news reports that while Association members are not able to get them a vote, they can at least get them a voice. (*“Outs” Score Point and Mrs. DeVoe and Friends are Peeved*, THE SEATTLE STAR, July 2, 1909)

As a result of what happens at this convention, the National Equal Suffrage Association Convention “adopts a motion depriving the Washington delegates of the right to vote, but granting them all other rights.” This strips the Washington women of having any say in the deliberations of the national body. The two organizations make peace after they agree to have separate but equal branches on their respective sides of the state.

**September 1909:** Female workers at the Leiserson Company, Rosen Brothers & Triangle Shirtwaist (NY) Companies stage a strike for union representation and to protest against unsanitary conditions, sexual harassment, long working hours and low wages and endless fines for everything from laughing to crooked stitching. It is estimated that between 10,000 and 40,000 women from NY and PA participate in the strike. The women are helped out financially during the strike by women’s labor unions, including the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Women’s Trade Union League and suffragists. The cause gains much needed media attention when it is supported by JP Morgan’s daughter Anne and Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, referred to as the “mink brigade.” Magistrates of the court tell the women that they are on strike against “God and Nature.” The strike ends in February of 1910. (Global Nonviolent Action Database, *Triangle Shirtwaist Factory women strike, win better wages and hours, New York, 1909*, Swarthmore University (2014), <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/triangle-shirtwaist-factory-women-strike-win-better-wages-and-hours-new-york-1909>.)

**1910:** In the final months leading up to the passage of woman suffrage in Washington State, the topic can be found heavily covered in the newspapers of the region, particularly in the editorial section. Dueling opinion pieces appear frequently that generally pit the “votes for women” column written by an older woman against the anti-suffrage side penned by a younger woman. Arguments include:

- We don’t mind if women have the vote, but do they really want it?
- Government is a home and every home needs a mother. (Mrs. Harriet Taylor Upton)
- Suffrage will destroy the institution of marriage.
  - To counter this argument, the editor of the *Women’s Tribune of Portland* presents statistics showing that the number of marriage licenses increased after women were given the municipal ballot in Kansas. *Suffrage Means More Homes, Think Leaders*, THE SEATTLE STAR, July 6, 1909.
- Women don’t need the vote in order to make change for women.
- Women don’t want to vote and the right should not be granted because it is something that will only be done by the lower class.

**See also:**

*Do the Women of Tacoma Want to Vote?*, TACOMA TIMES, April 29, 1910.

*Only Dregs of Womankind Vote, Says Chancellor*, THE TACOMA TIMES, July 20, 2009.

*Preacher Knocks Woman Suffrage*, THE SPOKANE PRESS, March 8, 1909.

**April 5, 1910:** WA Governor Hay is asked whether or not he will vote for suffrage:

I haven’t seen Mrs. Hay for a few days, but I will tell you what, I am going to leave that question to her. If she votes for woman suffrage then they get my vote and if she sees fit to vote against the cause, I will vote with her. I don’t believe that woman suffrage will do the real good which is claimed by the enthusiasts of

the cause; neither do I think it will do the harm those who are greatly opposing it claim. We have a young lady in the office who is a radical suffragist. We generally fight against the question before her. She is an excellent office woman, though, if that counts for anything in their favor. But I am really going to vote with Mrs. Hay.

*If Mrs. Hay Wants Suffrage Governor Will Vote For It*, THE SPOKANE PRESS, April 5, 1909.

**May 14, 1910:**

*Women don't want to vote and the right should not be granted because it is something that will only be done by the lower class.*

This sentiment was shared by President Taft, who expressed his opinion to the non-receptive delegates of the National Women Suffrage Association Convention. "He said he thought one of the dangers in granting suffrage to woman was that women, as a whole, were not interested in it and, the ballot, as far as women are concerned, would be controlled by the 'less desirable class.'"

President Taft: "There is another qualification, which is that the class which has suffered should care enough for their interests to take part in the exercise of political power if conferred upon them. If they do not, then it seems to me that the danger is, if the power of suffrage is granted, it will be exercised by that part of the class which is less desirable."

*President Insulted by the Suffragettes*. THE EVENING STATESMAN, April 15, 1910.

Several newspaper articles describe the reaction from the suffragists as "hissing."

During 1910, a New York Suffragist named Mrs. Clarence H. Mackay comes to Seattle to organize a branch of the Equal Franchise Society, whose mission is to get high society/"fashionable" women on board with suffrage, much like the "influencers" of today's social media. *The Spokane Press* also reports in 1910 that "society cowgirl" Hazel Philip will take to the roads in her home state of South Dakota to promote the idea that if you own property and pay taxes, you should have the right to vote regardless of sex. Philip promises that if her campaign is successful, she will drive a herd of buffalo from her father's ranch to lead the local suffragist parade. (*Society Cowgirl to Stump State for Suffrage*, THE SPOKANE PRESS, May 13, 1910.)

**October 28, 1910:** *The Seattle Republican* posts a full page article dedicated to the results of a circular that was sent to ministers, religious publication editors and Sunday School Superintendents in all equal suffrage states. Questions posed to the ministers include "Has equal suffrage demoralized the women? Has it made less good wives and mothers? Do the immoral women control the elections? Has it made it harder for women to secure desired legislation? Is there any likelihood that woman suffrage will be repealed?" *Jury of Six Hundred Find for Woman Suffrage*, THE SEATTLE REPUBLICAN, Oct. 28, 1910.)

Of the 624 answers received from the religious sector, 516 are fully in favor of suffrage. As to the question of whether or not suffrage is likely to be repealed, one replies, "When the pyramids are obliterated." The results of this circular are of big importance to the cause as the opinions of ministers are considered to be more "weighty" than others.

Shortly after this piece is published, the *Republican* posts a full page editorial with a statement from Wyoming Governor Bryant B. Brooks about the benefits of suffrage to the family. The paper states that no other quote about the matter has been so widely distributed as this one:

In the first place, let me say that nothing can be so far from the truth as that woman suffrage has the slightest tendency to disrupt the home. Indeed, it has the very opposite effect. As a result of it, politics is talked freely in the family circle, and political questions are settled by intelligent discussion. This has a great and good influence on the growing generation. The children grow up in an atmosphere that encourages

intelligent consideration and debate of public problems, and are thus better equipped to deal with public questions when they reach voting age.

*Equal Suffrage Benefits the Family*, THE SEATTLE REPUBLICAN, Nov. 4, 1910.

**November 8, 1910:** Suffrage passes in Washington State by a two to one margin and the State Constitution is amended to read, “There shall be no denial of the elective franchise at any election on account of sex.” Washington is the first state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the fifth state in the union to pass voting rights for women. However, “Indians not taxed” remains in the State Constitution, as does the requirement that qualified voters must be able to read and speak English. Persons with developmental disabilities and mental illness are also disqualified from voting. (WASH. CONST. art. 6, § 1 (amended 1910).)

The front page of the *Seattle Star* states that “All day long yesterday women stood in the rain at every precinct poll and canvassed conscientiously. From Tacoma, Spokane and other large cities, similar victories are reported.” (*Suffrage Wins*, SEATTLE STAR, Nov. 9, 2010.)

**March 25, 1911:** The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory burns down, killing nearly 150 people, a majority of which are women under the age of 20. Following a trial, one of the factory owners is acquitted and the other is charged a \$20 fine, said to be about three week’s pay for a single worker. The event plays a critical role in the women’s labor suffrage movements. In a speech to Congress in 1912, New York social worker Leonora O’Reilly testifies:

The world to-day knows that the women in industry are making good. But we working women maintain that the rest of the world are not keeping faith with us, in that they are driving us like mad, burning us alive, or working us to death for profits. We, of New York, remember the Triangle fire cases; we saw our women burned alive, and then when our people appealed to the courts and tried to get justice we got instead the same old verdict from the courts, “Nobody to blame.” The ballot is a matter of necessity with working women. We want you to put behind you all your prejudice against votes for women; we ask you for fair play.

Macy Halford, *To the Woman It Is a Real Tragedy*, THE NEW YORKER (March 25, 2010), <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/to-the-woman-it-is-a-real-tragedy>.

This same year, Washington becomes the first state in the US to authorize female jurors by statute. ([Washington State Session Laws 1911, Ch. 57 § 2.](#)) Nationally, a group of wealthy, influential women and high ranking members of the Catholic Church form the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS).

**1912:** New York suffragists hold a parade in New York City, attended by 10,000 people. Helping to lead the parade on horseback is 16-year old Mabel Lee, who emigrated with her parents from China in 1900. As a student at Barnard College in New York City, Lee joins the Chinese Students’ Association, where among the feminist essays she pens is “The Meaning of Woman Suffrage.”

“The extension of democracy (through voting) and “equality of opportunities to women” was, she stated, the hallmarks of true feminism. In 1915, the Women’s Political Union started a Suffrage Shop and invited Lee to give a speech. Covered by the *New York Times*, her speech “The Submerged Half” urged the Chinese community to promote girls’ education and women’s civic participation.”

National Park Service, *Mabel Ping-Hua Lee*, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PEOPLE (August 8, 2018), <https://www.nps.gov/people/mabel-lee.htm>.

Lee becomes the first Chinese woman to earn a PhD in economics at Columbia University. Women in New York are granted the right to vote in 1917, but this right does not extend to Lee because of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

This same year, Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party becomes the first national political party to adopt a woman suffrage platform.

**1913:** After being forced to leave Memphis because of an 1892 exposé she wrote about a lynching, Ida B. Wells-Barnett starts the Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago, one of the first and most influential African American suffrage groups in Illinois. The group immediately sets out to mobilize and register black men and women voters and ensure that women were aware of their rights.

In order to draw the most attention, the Women's Suffrage Procession is organized and held in Washington, D.C. to coincide with the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson and is said to have been another major turning point in the woman suffrage movement. Present at the march are Helen Keller and journalist Nellie Bly. At the suggestion of suffrage leader Alice Paul (who is worried about losing the support of Southern suffragists), African American women, including members of the Alpha Suffrage Club, are asked not to march with the white Chicago delegation and are forced to walk in the back of the procession. Paul had previously expressed her sympathy for African American woman's suffrage. (Harley & Terborg-Penn at 25.)

Ida B. Wells refuses Paul's suggestion. When the group of women from her state march in the procession, she is among them. (Lorraine Boissoneault, *The Original Women's March on Washington and the Suffragists Who Paved The Way*, Smithsonian Magazine (January 21, 2017), [https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/original-womens-march-washington-and-suffragists-who-paved-way-180961869/.](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/original-womens-march-washington-and-suffragists-who-paved-way-180961869/))

In June, Illinois Governor Edward Dunne signs limited voting rights for women into law. Through this law, women are allowed to vote for most local offices such as mayor and alderman. They are taught how to use voting machines and ballots by members of the Alpha Suffrage Club. "The group helped elect the city's first Black alderman and defeat a candidate supported by white suffragists." (Elyssa Ford, *Woman Suffrage in the Midwest*, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (Apr. 10, 2019), <https://www.nps.gov/articles/woman-suffrage-in-the-midwest.htm>.)

**1914:** The Washington Secretary of State issues Washington's first statewide voters pamphlet.

**1915:** African American women organize the Banner State Woman's National Baptist Convention. In attendance is Nannie Helen Burroughs, daughter of former slaves and founder of the National Training School for Women and Girls, built from small donations from black women and children in her community. "Civil rights leader Booker T. Washington did not believe African Americans would donate money to found the school. But Burroughs did not want to rely on money from wealthy white donors."

Despite her academic achievements, Burroughs was turned down for a Washington D.C. public school teaching position. Some historians speculate that the elite black community discriminated against Burroughs because she had darker skin. Undeterred, Burroughs decided to open her own school to educate and train poor, working African American women.

In addition to founding the National Training School for Women and Girls, Burroughs also advocated for greater civil rights for African Americans and women. At the time, black women had few career choices. Many did domestic work like cooking and cleaning. Burroughs believed women should have the opportunity to receive an education and job training. She wrote about the need for black and white women to work together to achieve the right to vote. She believed suffrage for African American women was crucial to protect their interests in an often discriminatory society.

National Park Service, *Nannie Helen Burroughs*, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PEOPLE (March 19, 2019), <https://www.nps.gov/people/nannie-helen-burroughs.htm>.

This same year, Zitkala-Ša (Red Bird) (born Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) joins the editorial board of *American Indian Magazine* and uses this platform to call for enfranchisement of Native Americans. Her activism is the result of

being separated from her mother when she was sent to White's Indiana Labor Institute, a Native American boarding school where children are assimilated using English-only instruction and manual labor.

The daughter of a Lakota mother and a white father, Gertrude Bonnin spent her early childhood on a reservation in South Dakota. As she pursued her education opportunities outside the reservation, she was increasingly troubled by pressures from the white world to disassociate herself from her ethnic heritage. In reaction, she turned to compiling an anthology of Native American lore, published in 1901 as *Old Indian Legends*. But the ultimate resolution of her identity crisis lay in her activism.

National Portrait Gallery, *Zitkala-sa*, Smithsonian, [https://npg.si.edu/object/npg\\_S\\_NPG.79.26?destination=edan-search/default\\_search%3Freturn\\_all%3D1%26edan\\_q%3DZitkala%2520Sa](https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_S_NPG.79.26?destination=edan-search/default_search%3Freturn_all%3D1%26edan_q%3DZitkala%2520Sa).

**1916:** Washington Suffragist/UW alum Jeannette Rankin becomes first woman elected to Congress. Her suffrage activism helped secure the right to vote for women in Montana. It was granted to non-Native women in that state in 1914.

**1917:** The Washington State Federation of Colored Women (WSFCW) is founded in Spokane and becomes affiliated with the National Association of Colored Women. Their motto is "Today is Ours for United Service."

**1918:** On September 30<sup>th</sup>, President Woodrow Wilson becomes only the second president to personally appear before the Senate. He is there to appeal to Senators to pass the constitutional amendment that will grant women the right to vote. The President feels that the failure to pass the amendment has become a political liability. He implores the Senate to "Give justice to women."

The president's words did not fall on deaf ears. In the fall of 1918, a bipartisan majority of senators supported the proposal, though they fell just short of the two-thirds majority required for constitutional amendments. Perhaps the president's speech would win the support of senators known to oppose the measure, a coalition of Southern Democrats and Northeastern Republicans known as the "unholy alliance." Collectively, they opposed woman's suffrage for a variety of reasons. "Do not force upon [the states] the enfranchisement of those women who are not of our race," implored one opponent. Others argued that women possessed neither the intellectual nor emotional capacity to make reasoned decisions. Still others chaffed at the thought of relenting to the demands of the so-called "petticoat brigade."

*A Vote for Women*, US SENATE, [https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/A\\_Vote\\_For\\_Women.htm](https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/A_Vote_For_Women.htm).

**1919:** The United States Congress passes a [joint resolution](#) to extend the right to vote to women – the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Until the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, suffragists held protests, hunger strikes and vigils to plead their case. For their efforts, they were jailed and physically and verbally abused. However, despite their role in the suffrage movement, women of color and immigrants are not granted equal voting rights with the passage of the amendment. (See sources throughout the remainder of the timeline.)

This same year, Congress enacts legislation granting citizenship to Native American veterans of WWI. (H.R. REP. NO. 222 (1919).)

**1920:** Tennessee becomes the 36<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

**1922:** The US Supreme Court rules in *Takao Ozawa v. US*, 260 U.S. 178 (1922) that people of Japanese heritage are not allowed to become citizens.

In Washington, "Inducing Certain Indians to Vote" is a crime punishable by a fine of up to \$500 and three months in the county jail. (RRS § 5391.)

**1923:** "...the Supreme Court holds in *Bhagat Singh Thind v. United States*, 261 U.S. 204 (1923) that Asian Indians are considered Caucasian, but not white. At this time, naturalized citizenship extended only to "free white persons" and those of African descent. Therefore, defining Asian Indians as Caucasian, but not white, barred naturalization applications by Asian Indians." (Wendy K. Tam Cho & Albert H. Yoon, *Pan-Ethnicity Revisited: Asian Indians, Asian American Politics, and the Voting Rights Act*, 10 ASIAN PAC. AM. L.J. 8 (2005).)

**1924:** Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 is passed.

States such as California adopt provisions in their constitutions to deny voting rights to Native Americans who are not "civilized," while others declare that residents living on reservations are not citizens. Also, like African Americans, Native Americans are subject to poll taxes, literacy tests and intimidation tactics designed to prevent them from voting. (Sabato & Ernst, at 446.)

After the passage of the 1924 citizenship bill, it still took over forty years for all fifty states to allow Native Americans to vote. For example, Maine was one of the last states to comply with the Indian Citizenship Act, even though it had granted tax paying Native Americans the right to vote in its original 1819 state constitution. As reported by Henry Mitchell, a resident of that state, Native Americans were prevented from voting in Maine in the late 1930s.

...[T]he Indians aren't allowed to have a voice in state affairs because they aren't voters. .... Just why the Indians shouldn't vote is something I can't understand. One of the Indians went over to Old Town once to see some official in the city hall about voting. I don't know just what position that official had over there, but he said to the Indian, 'We don't want you people over here. You have your own elections over on the island, and if you want to vote, go over there.'

Library of Congress, *Voting Rights for Native Americans*, Elections...The American Way (2019), <https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/elections/voting-rights-native-americans.html>

While black Americans faced poll taxes, literacy requirements, gerrymandering, violence, at-large elections, and other devices which denied them the franchise, Indians, because of their extraconstitutional political status faced some similar discriminatory measures but also encountered a variety of unique obstacles placed before them by state officials. McCool found that states have devised a number of strategies to keep Indians from voting. He grouped them in three categories: 1) constitutional ambiguity, 2) political and economic factors, and 3) cultural and racial discrimination. Evidence of constitutional ambiguity is found in several states-Idaho, New Mexico, and Washington-which denied Indians the vote because of a specific provision in their constitutions regarding "Indians not taxed." Such Indians, according to the Idaho Constitution, could not vote or serve as a juror if they were considered to be non-taxable because they had not "severed their tribal relations and adopted the habits of civilization."

David Wilkins, *An Inquiry into Indigenous Political Participation: Implications for Tribal Sovereignty*, 9 KAN. J.L. & PUB. POL'Y 732, 738 (1999).

This same year, the US passes the Immigration Act (ch. 190, § 4, 43 Stat. 153, 155). "Although the 1924 quota act freely admitted white immigrant wives seeking to join their citizen husbands, it completely barred Asian wives from joining theirs." (Berger, at 1251.)

**1926:** Zitkala-Ša and R.T. Bonnin found the National Council of American Indians, an organization "interested in helping Indians secure the right to vote." Due to lack of tribal support and funding, the organization closes down in the 1930's. (Wilkins, at 743.)

**1928:** The Supreme Court of Arizona rules in *Porter v. Hall*, 34 Ariz. 308, 271 Pac. 411 (1928) that Native Americans living on reservations in Arizona are ineligible to vote. "This decision appears to be the first one involving the right

of the newly made Indian citizens to vote.” The court reasons this because the tribes are considered to be under guardianship of the federal government. Per the Arizona state constitution, persons under guardianship are excluded from voting.

The majority of the court, and the dissenting Chief Justice, as well, were strongly affected by the legitimate question as to whether it would be good public policy to permit large numbers of tribal Indians living on reservations in the state, and entirely immune from the laws and governmental authority of the state, so long as they remain on the reservations, to participate in the formulation of state governmental policy and the election of state and local officials. The Chief Justice, however, considered the proper function of the court to be that of applying the law as it stands, leaving to the political departments of the government the duty of changing the law, or making new law, when that may be necessary in order to declare and maintain sound public policy. He pointed out that it might be possible that tribal Indians on reservations ought not, as a matter of public policy, to be allowed to vote, but he expressed the opinion that further legal or constitutional action was necessary in Arizona in order legally to disqualify them.

N. D. Houghton, *The Legal Status of Indian Suffrage in the United States*, 19 CALIF. L. REV. 507 (1931).

**1942:** Following the US entry into World War II, “120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast are forcibly interned in 10 American concentration camps.” (Japanese American Citizens League, *History*, <https://jacl.org/about/history/>.) In April, Washington State Attorney General Smith Troy receives a letter in reply to a telegram that he sent to US Attorney General Earl Warren requesting confirmation that Warren had issued an opinion “to the effect that Japanese-American citizens, who had been evacuated from their homes, would retain the right to vote by absentee ballot at the time of the election...” In the letter, AG Warren repeats the view of Deputy AG Jess Hession that was given in a newspaper interview – if Japanese Americans had voluntarily evacuated and established residency in their new county, they would be eligible to vote. Warren further explains that determining whether evacuation had been voluntary and residency acquired would need to happen on a case by case basis. However, Warren concludes that he cannot present a formal opinion on the matter as none had been issued. (Letter from Earl Warren to Smith Troy (April 17, 1942), in Office of the Attorney General, “Correspondence on Absentee Voting,” *California State Archives Exhibits*, accessed May 1, 2019, <http://exhibits.sos.ca.gov/items/show/10218>.)

In August of this year, the Wartime Civil Control Administration releases a policy clarifying absentee voting rights for Japanese Americans living in internment camps.

If the laws of the state of the evacuee’s legal residence permit absentee voting by citizen evacuees in their present circumstances, and the evacuee is a fully qualified voter under these laws, the right of franchise by absentee ballot may be exercised without interference. Qualified citizen evacuees occupy the same position in regard to the exercise of their right of franchise by absentee voting as does any other citizen who for any reason is absent from his voting precinct, or is physically unable to go to his polling place on the day of the election.

*Voting Clarified*, TULARE NEWS (Aug. 12, 1942), <https://ddr.densho.org/media/ddr-densho-197/ddr-densho-197-29-mezzanine-4c8abd369a.pdf>.

Any Washington or Oregon resident who had not voted in an election after November 29, 1940, had his registration cancelled by operation of state law. (This was undoubtedly just about everyone, because there had been no election of any great significance between that date and the spring of 1942, when they were all evacuated.) Registration by mail from Heart Mountain was not possible. For California voters, the situation was not much better. Unless they voted in the 1942 primary election--something that was quite difficult, because they were all behind barbed wire at the time of that election--they had to register for the

November 1942 general election by early October of 1942, which was a major logistical challenge due to their incarceration. See War Relocation Authority, *Offer Aid in Application for Ballots*, 26 GENERAL INFORMATION BULLETIN 1 (Oct. 15, 1942). There were undoubtedly some intrepid Japanese American citizens who managed to keep their California, Oregon, or Washington voter registration intact. But it must have been quite a small number.

Eric L. Muller, *Apologies or Apologists? Remembering the Japanese American Internment in Wyoming*, 1 WYO. L. REV. 473, 486 n. 49 (2001).

**1943:** The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed and while prohibitions on naturalization of immigrants begin to lift, the US government places a quota on the number of Chinese immigrants to the United States. (Terry Ao Minnis & Mee Moua, *50 Years of the Voting Rights Act: An Asian American Perspective*, AAJC (August 4, 2015), <https://www.advancingjustice-aaajc.org/report/50-years-voting-rights-act-asian-american-perspective.>)

Despite her notoriety in the suffrage movement of the early 1900's, Mabel Lee had been barred from voting until 1943 by the Chinese Exclusion Act. However, there is no record of Lee becoming a citizen or participating in an election during her lifetime. She devoted her life to the Chinese community and passed away in 1966.

This same year, Wyoming Governor Lester Hunt signs a law providing that any citizen "brought into . . . Wyoming by the WRA" and "interned in a relocation center or concentration camp . . . shall be prohibited from voting in any election in the State of Wyoming." "Thus, in practical effect, the Wyoming statute stripped most of the citizen internees of their only realistic chance to vote." (Muller, at 486). (See 2 Wyo. Comp. Stat. § 31-113 (1945).

**1944:** The US Supreme Court declares the "white primary" unconstitutional in *Smith v. Allwright*, 321 U.S. 649 (1944).

**1952:** All immigrants of Asian descent are allowed to become citizens with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (McCarran-Walter Act), which eliminated race-based naturalization requirements. Japanese immigrants become eligible for American citizenship. (Grace Panetta & Olivia Reaney, *The evolution of American voting rights in 242 years shows how far we've come – and how far we still have to go*, BUSINESS INSIDER (Feb. 15, 2019, 1:15 PM), <https://www.businessinsider.com/when-women-got-the-right-to-vote-american-voting-rights-timeline-2018-10.>)

**1957:** Congress passes the Civil Rights Act of 1957. It is "the first significant measure to address African-American civil rights since 1875—established the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights for two years, created a civil rights division in the U.S. Justice Department, and authorized the U.S. Attorney General to seek federal court injunctions to protect the voting rights of African Americans." (Historical Highlights, *The Civil Rights Act of 1957*, US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, [https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1951-2000/The-Civil-Rights-Act-of-1957/.](https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1951-2000/The-Civil-Rights-Act-of-1957/))

**1962:** New Mexico becomes the final state to grant voting rights to Native Americans. Barriers still remain in other states: "even today, North Dakota disenfranchises Native-Americans by insisting that they have a physical address rather than a P.O. Box." (National Portrait Gallery, *Suzette LaFlesche Tibbles*, SMITHSONIAN (2013), [https://npg.si.edu/object/npg\\_NPG.2013.3.](https://npg.si.edu/object/npg_NPG.2013.3.))

**1964:** The 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment is ratified, prohibiting the use of poll taxes in state and federal elections.

**1965:** The Voting Rights Act passes, granting African Americans full voting rights. However, exclusions for "language minorities" still exist. (See 1975 Voting Rights Act Extension.)

The Act consisted of two major provisions: Section 2 created a cause of action for any “denial or abridgment” of the right to vote on the basis of race; Section 5 required that electoral jurisdictions with a history of discriminatory voting practices submit for approval by the U. S. Attorney General any proposed procedural changes with respect to voting. While Section 5 is arguably the centerpiece of the Act, Section 2 provides the mechanism by which voters can seek redress through the drawing of voting districts. (Tam Cho & Yoon at 24.)

This same year, Shirley Chisholm becomes the first African American woman elected to Congress and then run for President.

**1966:** The US Supreme Court ends the use of poll taxes in all elections with their decision in *Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections*, 383 U.S. 663 (1966).

**1971:** The voting age is lowered to 18 from 21 to ensure that those old enough to fight in the Vietnam War are also old enough to vote.

**1974:** The Washington State Legislature amends Article 6 § 1 of the State Constitution, striking the phrase “Indians not taxed” from 1889 and eliminating the English language requirement from 1896. ([WASH. CONST. art. 6, § 1 \(amended 1974\).](#))

**1975:** An extension of the Voting Rights Act is signed into law by President Gerald Ford. “...the extension ended discrimination against so-called “language minorities,” the Mexican Americans of Texas and California, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Alaskans, Hawaiians and others who continued to be kept from voting for at least a decade after the Voting Rights Act became law.” (Suzanne Gamboa, *For Latinos, 1965 Voting Rights Act Impact Came a Decade Later*, NBC News (2015), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/latinos-1965-voting-rights-act-impact-came-decade-later-n404936>.)

This provision is the result of legislation sponsored by African American Congresswoman Barbara Jordan. (History, Art & Archives, *Jordan, Barbara Charline*, United States House of Representatives, [https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/J/JORDAN,-Barbara-Charline-\(J000266\)/](https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/J/JORDAN,-Barbara-Charline-(J000266)/)).

**1983:** Washington allows special election votes to be cast by mail.

**1984:** Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act is passed.

**1991:** For the first time, Washington allows the registration of absentee voters.

**1993:** Voter registration becomes easier with the passage of the National Voter Registration Act. The act provides for registration at the DMV and public assistance centers. This is also referred to as the “Motor Voter” law.

## **2000's**

**2000:** A federal court rules that citizens of US territories such as Puerto Rico and Guam cannot vote in federal elections in *Igartua de la Rosa v. United States II*, 113 F. Supp. 2d 228 (D.P.R.), *rev'd*, 229 F.3d 80 (1st Cir. 2000).

**2013:** The US Supreme Court holds that the coverage formula in the Voting Rights Act is unconstitutional in *Shelby County, Ala. v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013).

**2018:** Women make up more than half of the population and according to the [Center for American Women and Politics](#), every presidential election since 1980 has seen a higher female voter turnout than men. Women are also increasing their number on the ballot, with a [record number running for office this year](#), including [an historic number of women of color](#).

In November of this year, Florida voters approve a ballot measure restoring voting rights to 1.5 million former felons.

**2019:** A Florida legislator introduces a bill that would require that all court costs and fees be paid before allowing the vote. Former gubernatorial candidate Andrew Gillum and others liken the legislation to poll taxes.

“Amendment 4 was expected to re-enfranchise 1.5 million Floridians, but the new state legislation will disenfranchise *more than a third* of them.” (Rachel Maddow, *Are Florida Republicans really pursuing a new ‘poll tax’?*, MSNBC (March 21, 2019), <http://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/are-florida-republicans-really-pursuing-new-poll-tax>.)

See also: The Editorial Board, *The Return of the Poll Tax in Florida*, New York Times (March 22, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/opinion/voting-rights-florida.html>.

**March 2019:** Washington Governor Jay Inslee signs the Native American Voting Rights Act into law, adding “Indian reservation” or “Indian lands” into the definition of non-traditional address. ([S.B. 5079, 66<sup>th</sup> Leg., Reg. Sess. \(Wa. 2019\)](#).)

This same month, Senators Udall and Merkley introduce the *For the People* Act which includes provisions for extending provisions of the Voting Rights Act to eliminate barriers to voting that still exist today. (Senator Tom Udall, *For the People Act Summary*, US SENATE (Mar. 27, 2019), <https://www.tomudall.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/For%20the%20People%20Act%20Summary.pdf>.)

#### **ADDITIONAL REFERENCE AND NOTES:**

\*The intent of including the Mercer story is to provide an example to potentially support the later theory that women were given rights in the Washington territory (and throughout the west) as a means of recruiting them to move here.

\*\*I found conflicting dates for these two events, but consensus seems to put them in that order.

#### **Washington State had many women’s suffrage groups, including:**

Aberdeen Equal Suffragette Society

Equal Suffrage Club of Spokane

King County Equality Club

Washington Equal Suffrage Association

Central Equal Suffrage Club

National Park Service, *Did You Know? Suffragist v. Suffragette*, NPS Articles (July 3, 2018), <https://www.nps.gov/articles/suffragistvsuffragette.htm>.