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Content Knowledge Project on The Woman's Suffrage Movement in America: Important People and Events

Kataryna Flowers

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**Please choose ctrl + click your mouse on the URL below- to view my**

**Digital Museum Website**

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My paper follows- along with chosen screen-shots of my website.

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In 1776 Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, this document has served as a symbol of liberty, justice, and Democracy in the United States for over 200 years. Jefferson wrote a list of grievances against the King of England and articulated the beliefs and philosophies of the newly formed American citizenship when he stated "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." He further laid out the framework for the future Democracy by writing, "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed" (US, 1776). While these statements were monumental in the formation of the future United States, they left a vacancy that would take generations to fill. The founders of this nation made sure to define their citizens as white, landowning, men; and that definition would be one that would tear the nation apart on more than one occasion. Women and people of color would be forced to sit on the sidelines as the nation was built around them. They would watch as the men that ran the country made decisions that would change their lives with no anticipation of their voices being heard. Lyndon B. Johnson once stated, "a man without a vote is a man without protection," (Woods, 2007, p. 330) for the first half of this nation's life, it's women were women without protection and it took generations of women fighting a losing battle to secure the liberty that should have been theirs from the beginning.

When John Adams went to Philadelphia in 1776 to attend the meeting of the Continental Congress and draft the Declaration of Independence, he received a letter from his wife which may have been the first lobbying performed in the United States. In her letter Abigail Adams implores her husband to "remember the ladies." Adams could already see that the possibility of being shackled into another tyranny was high. Although the Declaration was meant to free Americans from the tyranny of English rule, if men wrote the rules women would simply be handed from one tyrant to another. Knowing this Adams wrote, "do not put such unlimited power into the hands of husbands...remember all men would be tyrants if they could" (Adams Family Papers). Although John Adams did not take his wife's letter seriously, the Declaration did allow some gender-neutral language that would later help the suffrage movement take hold. The phrase "the consent of the governed" is one that would later be used by the early suffragists to lay the groundwork for their movement**.**

In the newly formed United States, women's rights were determined largely on whether or not they were married. An unmarried woman could live where she wanted and hold any occupation, that was allowed to her sex. She could also buy and sell real estate, sue and be sued, accumulate personal property, act as a guardian, and write wills. Colonial laws also changed the old English law of primogeniture, or the custom of a parent's estate passing automatically to the eldest son. Estates could now be divided equally among siblings which gave daughters another level of independence. While unmarried women found they had more rights under the new Democracy, once married a woman was once again no more than property. Once married, women were completely dependent on their husbands under the law of coverture. Coverture was based on the idea that the husband was the head of the household and that the family functioned best if he controlled all of the assets. Under coverture, all assets a woman brought into the household, including wages and previously owned property, became the property of her husband, he could use it as he chose without consulting her. The English jurist William Blackstone summarized this relationship in his *Commentaries on English Law* by stating " By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in the law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs everything" (Salmon). Under these laws women, even unmarried women who were allowed some rights, were classified as second-class citizens. Even the rights afforded them were given, as if to a whining child, by men who saw them as weak, simple-minded, and frivolous.

The laws regarding women in post-Revolution America were better than they had been under English law, but, because women had no political representation, they had no way to affect the changes needed for equality. Simply because they couldn't vote, however, does not mean that women weren't involved in the nations politics. In fact, the suffrage movement's history can be traced back to a different political issue that women were fighting for alongside men. This movement was the abolition movement, it was through this movement that the first suffragists met and formed the groundwork for their battle. In 1840, delegates from around the world convened in London to attend the World Anti-Slavery Convention. Among the delegates from the United States was a young Elizabeth Cady Stanton with her new husband, Henry. Stanton was one of eleven children, and had seen all of her five brothers die before reaching adulthood. She recalled that her father often expressed the desire that she had been a boy and she promised, "I will try to be all the boy my brother was" (Clift, 2003, p. 9). Stanton spent her life living up to that promise, she rebelled against society's rules for her gender and when married, convinced her husband to omit the wife's obedience vow from the ceremony. For these reasons Stanton was livid when she was told that the female delegates would be seated behind a curtain at the convention, where they could hear what was going on but would not be seen. Her contempt for the treatment of the women at the convention led her to find an ally in Lucretia Mott, a Quaker activist from Philadelphia. The two immediately bonded over their mutual anger towards the male delegates and agreed to organize a women's rights convention when they returned to America (Clift, 2003).

Stanton and Mott's pledge did not come true immediately. Both returned to their lives in America and did not revisit the issue until, by chance, they both ended up in the small town of Seneca Falls, New York at the same time in 1848. While there they met up with like-minded Quaker women and set about organizing the first American women's rights convention. The leaders of the convention drafted the program and decided to use the Declaration of Independence as their model stating "we hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal" and laying out a list of grievances of men toward women. They wrote, " The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her" (Stanton, 1848). They called their document the Declaration of Sentiments and in it called for, among many things, equal education, equal treatment under the law, and the right to vote (Mayo, 2007) The convention attracted over 300 men and women. One of the most notable attendees was Frederick Douglass, the well-known former slave turned lecturer. Douglass' presence helped to offset the considerable amount of derision aimed at the women holding the convention. One newspaper wrote that the women were "divorced wives, childless women, and some old maids" (Clift, 2003, p. 13). The widely held view at the time was that any woman who argued for equal rights were disgruntled outcasts of society. Women's sole responsibility of the time was to have and care for children. The idea that women who fought against this idea were failed women worked to deter many away from openly supporting more radical ideas. In fact the women of the Seneca Falls Convention disagreed over whether they could legitimately argue for the right to vote without being dismissed as completely fanatical (Clift, 2003). When drafting the Declaration of Sentiments, Stanton and Douglass voted for including the right to vote as a resolution, while Mott and many others were against it. Stanton and Douglass' side won by a small majority but this division of the convention delegates was a mirror of the larger division among society. Even among women's rights activists it would take years before the right to vote was seen as something necessary for women's liberation.

After the Seneca Falls Convention, the suffrage movement was largely put on hold until the end of the Civil War. It was at this time that Elizabeth Cady Stanton teamed up with Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone to form the American Equal Rights Association (AERA), which they defined as being dedicated to enfranchising African Americans and women together (Mayo, 2007). Stanton and Anthony had both worked to help pass the 13th Amendment which abolished slavery and had hoped that the gains made by African Americans could be shared with women. When the war ended, however, the 14th Amendment defined "citizens" as all people born and residing in the United States and declared that no state could pass laws that denied rights to citizens; and the 15th amendment stated that voting rights could not be denied on account of race (Cornell). Anthony and Stanton fought to extend suffrage to women through one of these amendments but when they turned to their former African American allies they were told "this is the Negro's hour" (Clift, 2003). Anthony and Stanton were furious at this betrayal and vowed not to support the 15th Amendment unless voting rights were extended to black and white women. Their views were not shared by all members of the AERA, Lucy Stone and her husband Henry Blackwell felt that suffragists should support the enfranchisement of black men. This division eventually led to a split among the suffragists and the formation of two groups; Stanton and Anthony formed the more radical National Suffrage Association (NSA) and Lucy Stone headed the American Women Suffrage Association (AWSA), which was seen as more moderate (Clift, 2003). For twenty years the two groups differed not only on the 15th Amendment, but also on the fundamentals of what they were fighting for. The NSA aimed their debate directly at Washington, fighting for a Constitutional Amendment that would guarantee women's suffrage along with a variety of other women's rights issues. The NSA also initially denied participation in the organization to men, still angry over what they saw as a betrayal from the men they fought alongside during the Civil War, Stanton and Anthony preferred to fill their ranks with dedicated women (Clift, 2003). On the other side, the AWSA took a more moderate approach. Led by Lucy Stone and her husband, the AWSA supported the 15th Amendment and encouraged male support in the organization. They petitioned state-by-state on the issue of women's suffrage, preferring to work to amend individual state constitutions (Mayo, 2007).

After the passage of the 15th Amendment, the NSA tried numerous tactics to get their voices heard in Congress. In 1870 a group of delegates from the NSA appeared before the Senate Committee to persuade the committee to report out a bill to extend suffrage to women, they were met, however, with contempt and ridicule. Judge Cook of Illinois who was chair of the House committee scolded the women for wasting Congress's time (Clift, 2003). Two years later, as the reelection of Ulysses S. Grant loomed, the women of the NSA tried to use the wording of the 14th Amendment to find a loophole in the law. The specific wording states "all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." Anthony decided to use this justification at the polls. Anthony and several other women went to the registrars and demanded to register to vote under the basis of the 14th Amendment. She was committed and threatened to sue each of the men there if they did not register her. Her plan worked and on Election Day she voted a straight Republican ticket (Clift, 2003). Anthony was arrested and given a trial date. In the weeks leading up to the trial she went on a public-relations tour during which she successfully gained the sympathy of men and women ensuring that there would be no way to find an unbiased jury. All her work did not pay off, however, as the trial turned out to be rigged from the start. Anthony was not allowed to testify on her own behalf, the judge wrote his decision before hearing any evidence, and ordered the jury to find her guilty. During the trial Anthony delivered a powerful speech and requested that her sentence reflect "the full rigor of the law." The judge fined her $100 which she refused to pay and which the government never collected. Although the trial was never a fair or unbiased one, one newspaper reported the truth of it, stating "she has voted and the American Constitution has survived the shock. Fining her one hundred dollars does not rule out the fact that...women voted, and went home, and the world jogged on as before" (Clift, 2003, p. 58). Through her arrest and trial, Anthony garnered more support than ever for the suffrage movement.

The arrest of Susan B. Anthony was just one incident that showed that the suffrage movement was beginning to gain traction among citizens and had started to gain the attention of lawmakers. Starting in 1866, groups of women had been petitioning every session of Congress for the right to vote. In 1878, Aaron A. Sargent, a California senator, introduced a 16th Amendment that had been drafted by Stanton and Anthony. The amendment stated "the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged based on sex." The amendment was reintroduced every year until it was finally voted on in 1887. The measure was voted down 34-16, 25 senators had not even bothered to show up to vote. This set back added to the fact that the state campaigns by the AWSA had not gained much momentum. At the time of the vote only Utah and Wyoming had enfranchised women and each had done so merely to attract more families to settle in their territories (Clift, 2003).

Although the progress had slowed, the hostility between the two factions of the suffrage movement had begun to subside. In 1890, Under the direction of Susan B. Anthony, the AWSA and NSA merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). A new leader emerged in the form of Carrie Chapman Catt and under her direction the NAWSA pursued suffrage on a state-by-state level. By 1896 Idaho and Colorado had joined the list of states that had fully enfranchised women (Mayo, 2007). As the nineteenth century closed, the suffrage movement also began to shift. The older suffragists began to pass the torch and new leaders took their places. NAWSA continued working for suffrage on a state-by state level and the suffrage movement began to spread. As the twentieth century began a new generation of female activists emerged who were passionate about many social issues including urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. These women wanted to reform societies problems and soon became aware that the best way to enact reform would be through the vote. As the women of the reform movement became committed to winning the right to vote, the suffrage movement changed from a small, local organization, to a mass political movement for the first time (Mayo, 2007).

Under Carrie Chapman Catt, NAWSA grew to become a highly effective organization. Catt was a highly intelligent and motivated woman. She had worked as a teacher, librarian, and dishwasher to pay her way through Iowa State College and, after graduating, became a high school principal and eventually superintendent of schools in Mason City, Iowa, a rare job for a woman. She was the president of NAWSA twice, first, as Susan B. Anthony's successor from 1900-1904; and was elected again in 1915 (Meller). As president, Catt unveiled what she called her "Winning Plan" which laid out a plan by which NAWSA would win suffrage on a state-by-state level and, at the same time, would put in place the mechanisms to influence voters, lobby Congress, and eventually pass a federal amendment (Mayo, 2007). Catt was an excellent tactician and was called by Eleanor Roosevelt "the most organized woman I know." She distributed a pamphlet called *Organizing to Win* which gave women a step-by-step guide to creating a political operation (Clift, 2003). While Catt was organizing women across the country, another movement was forming, one that was more radical than any in the past.

The new radical movement in the US was headed by Alice Paul. Paul was a Quaker and extremely educated for a woman of the time, she held a bachelor's degree as well as a master's degree and Ph. D. from the University of Pennsylvania. She also held a degree in Philanthropy and had studied social work in England as a graduate student since 1907. While in England she met, and became a disciple of Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst. Mrs. Pankhurst, along with her two daughters, was at the head of the militant suffrage movement in Britain. The Pankhursts did everything they could to gain recognition for their fight ,along with their followers they crashed government meetings, harassed public officials, were arrested multiple times, and participated in hunger strikes while in jail. Alice Paul was immediately enraptured by their militant style and was soon arrested along with them. While in jail she met Lucy Burns, another American, and the two quickly bonded. They were arrested twice together and were eventually force-fed when they refused to eat out of protest (Clift, 2003).

When Paul returned to America and attended her first NAWSA meeting, she was disappointed with the tedious and polite debates that were held among delegates. The slow-paced, legal battle toward enfranchisement stood in contrast to her experiences in England (Clift, 2003). Even so, Paul and Lucy Burns joined NAWSA's Congressional Committee and helped to organize a massive women's rights march to coincide with Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. On March 3, 1913 over eight thousand women marched from the Capitol to the Hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington D.C. It created such a spectacle that when Wilson arrived for his inauguration he found the streets empty, everyone in town had gone to watch the suffrage parade. The parade featured women from countries where suffrage had already been granted, sections honoring the work of women in society, twenty floats, nine bands, and at the head of the procession Inez Milholland Boissevain, an exceptionally beautiful woman, rode a white horse and carried a banner of purple, white, and gold. Purple to signify the royal glory of women, white for purity in the home, and gold for the crown of the victor (Clift, 2003). While the parade was said to have been outstandingly beautiful event, the crowd of male onlookers did not appreciate the connotations. The women were physically and verbally abused without protection from the on looking police. The violence became so bad that troops had to be called in from Fort Meyer to restrain the crowd and over a hundred marchers were taken to the emergency room (Clift, 2003).

The suffrage parade was exactly the type of attention grabbing events that Paul and Burns wanted to create. The leaders at NAWSA, however, worried that the image portrayed by these radical young women would hurt the progress they had made. Paul and Burns continued to work under NAWSA for a short time while organizing visits to the White House to pressure President Wilson into accepting women's suffrage. When they received no support from Wilson, Paul organized a march on the White House and received a promise from Wilson that he would support the creation of a Committee on Suffrage in the House of Representatives. However, when the time came for him to address Congress he made no mention of a committee. Paul began plans for retaliation but was rebuked by Catt and others at NAWSA who feared offending lawmakers and diminishing their chances at passing a bill. This tension eventually led to Paul breaking away from NAWSA. Together with Burns and other radicals, she formed the Congressional Union (CU) (Clift, 2003).

As the 1915 elections loomed, Paul, along with the newly founded CU traveled to the nine states that had legalized suffrage for women and fought a campaign of protests against the Democrats of those states for not passing the suffrage amendment. Leaders of NAWSA were horrified at this because it meant fighting against suffragists, however, the CU managed to defeat 20 suffrage supporting Democrats. This furthered the divide between NAWSA and the CU, Anna Shaw, a NAWSA leader, remarked, "they have lost our amendment for us; I shall never forgive them" (Clift, 2003, p. 102). As the rift between the two factions grew, Paul began plans for a new era of the suffrage movement. She had grown tired of the existing suffrage organizations and their routine pleas for justice, she believed that lawmakers had grown impervious to these methods as well and decided that the country needed a new political party, "she wanted to 'terrify' the men in Congress with a new party that could rival the clout of Teddy Roosevelt's Bull Moose or Progressive party" (Clift, 2003, p. 107). With this in mind, the CU organized a meeting in Washington where they formally announced the new National Woman's Party (NWP) and scheduled a convention in Chicago, where Paul knew there would be plenty of publicity. Almost immediately, state groups for the new Woman's Party were formed and envoys were dispatched to the West to unite the women who had the vote behind the NWP. Paul's principle behind the NWP was to "hold the party in power responsible," by denying support to the existing parties until women had gained suffrage(Harrington)**.** The "party in power," in this case meant President Wilson's Democratic Party. The Chicago convention attracted over fifteen hundred delegates from around the country. The NWP scheduled it to correspond with the Republican and Progressive conventions which meant plenty of publicity for the suffragists (Clift, 2003).

After the Chicago convention the NWP worked nonstop to keep suffrage on the minds of the politicians in Washington and of the American people. Envoys traveled throughout the country speaking on behalf of suffrage in nearly every state in the Union. None worked harder than Inez Milholland Boissevain, the same beautiful young woman who had led the parade in Washington; she had a speaking schedule that traveled over 12 states. She, along with Paul, had a determination and stubbornness to continue despite warnings from friends and her physician. She sustained her grueling schedule, sometimes "taking a train at two in the morning to arrive at eight, then a train at midnight to arrive at five in the morning" (Clift, 2003, p. 113). Maud Younger, an envoy that traveled with Boissevain stated, "she would come away from audiences and droop as a flower" (Clift, 2003, p. 113). Finally, at a rally in Los Angeles, her strength gave out. As she delivered another fiery speech saying passionately, "Mr. President, how much longer must women wait for liberty?" she collapsed to the floor and died ten weeks later, on November 25, 1916 (Clift, 2003). The death of Boissevain shocked the nation and provided even more motivation for her fellow suffragists, who saw her as the first martyr for the cause.

In 1917 the NWP began a silent picket at the White House, becoming the first political group to employ this tactic (Mayo, 2007). The picketers did not attract much attention at first, however, as days went by and the women remained stationed at the gates to the White House people began to take notice. Lawmakers and anti-suffragist scoffed at the women, but as time went on their humor evaporated into annoyance and anger. This attention was exactly what the suffragists wanted, as Doris Stevens, a picketer, states in her memoir of this time, "no wonder these gentlemen found the pickets irritating...here were American women before their very eyes daring to shock them into having to think about liberty. And what was worse-liberty for women...yet, of course, we enjoyed irritating them. Standing on the icy pavement on a damp, wintry day in the penetrating cold of a Washington winter, knowing that within a stone's throw of our agony there was a greater agony than ours-there was joy in that!" (Stevens, 1976, p. 64).

While the NWP was picketing and fighting to raise awareness about the suffrage campaign, Carrie Chapman Catt, the new leader of NAWSA, and others were working on their own. The two groups were still firmly divided over how to best win support for the cause. In 1915, Catt and Paul had met at the Willard Hotel in Washington in a last effort to bridge their divide but the meeting ended without either side having made any concessions. Paul was firm in her belief that they must put pressure on the party in power, while Catt was in favor of a state-by-state strategy with tactical alliances being formed with the leading powers. Catt had come up with what she called her "winning plan," but she refused to reveal its details to the younger woman. In the end both sides remained staunchly opposed to the other's ideas. Catt, as the leader of NAWSA, worked in the years following WWI to strategically gain allies among the leading political parties. She enacted her secret "winning plan," which focused on both working for a federal suffrage amendment, while also campaigning at the state level (Mayo, 2007). Catt was an excellent strategist and by 1916 NAWSA had convinced both the Republican and Democratic parties to adopt suffrage as a plank in their platforms. Catt had also developed a relationship with President Wilson and was gently pressuring him to support woman suffrage (Mayo, 2007). The support of the major political parties was important, however, both platforms were firm in the individual states' rights to have the ultimate decision. The Republican platform stated, " The Republican party, reaffirming its faith in government of the people, by the people, for the people, as a measure of justice to one-half the adult people of this country, favors the extension of the suffrage to women, but recognizes the right of each state to settle this question for itself"(Republican Party Platform, 1916).

With NAWSA carefully gaining support and the NWP picketing daily outside the White House, there was no way for legislators to look the other way. The 1916 elections were evidence of how far women had come and of the growing rift between the two factions of the suffrage movement. President Wilson was invited, and attended the NAWSA convention in September of 1916 and gave a speech expressing his view that the victory of the suffrage movement was inevitable. He stated, "I have not come to ask you to be patient, because you have been, but I have come to congratulate you that there has been a force behind you that will...be triumphant" (Weatherford, 1998). His opinion was good news to the women of NAWSA, however, he was unclear as to whether or not he believed success would happen during his term. The threat of war had loomed over the United States since WWI began in 1914, and it was this issue that eclipsed woman suffrage during the 1916 campaign. In contrast to NAWSA's approach of making alliances, Alice Paul and the NWP continued to campaign against those in power that they held responsible for keeping their rights from them. They picketed against Wilson and urged women that did have the vote to use it against the Democratic party. Even as Catt and other leaders at NAWSA reasoned that all the state-level rejections of suffrage had been in states with Republican majorities, Alice Paul was determined to keep the focus on Washington (Weatherford, 1998). By 1917, twelve states had fully enfranchised women and, in the 1916 elections, Montana elected Jeannette Rankin as a Republican representative to Congress making her the first woman ever elected to the House of Representatives (Lopach and Luckowski, 2005). Rankin's election meant that the suffragists finally had an ally within the legislation with whom they could place their trust. Even with Rankin in office, however, and the majority of politicians, including President Wilson, coming out in support of woman suffrage, the political climate was not favorable to the suffragists.

As the winter of 1917 came to a close, the nation turned its full attention to the war in Europe. On April 7, Congress officially declared war on Germany. Many suffragists also focused their attention on the war effort, as men left for the front women took up the jobs left vacant. As women demonstrated how important they could be to the country, New York became the first eastern state to pass a suffrage amendment (Clift, 2003). The women of NAWSA saw this as a huge victory and a testament to the changing attitudes of the American people. The idea of suffrage for all was finally being looked upon, not in disdain, but with acceptance and respect. The only thing the women of NAWSA saw standing in their way now was the continued militancy of the NWP. Catt and other leaders of NAWSA met with Alice Paul and implored her to end the pickets for the duration of the war (Clift, 2003). They saw her actions as being the only thing now that diminished the reputation of the movement. The women of the NWP had become more outspoken since the reelection of Wilson, Alice Paul burned an effigy of the President in an act of protest and several leading members had already been arrested on charges of disturbing the peace. With the country at war many Americans did not look favorably on these activities and many more conservative suffragists feared that their activities would diminish the reputation of the movement as a whole. In contrast, Alice Paul and her supporters felt that it was precisely these actions that had led to the shift in the attitudes of the American people. They felt that Catt and other mainstream women were simply following the routine of those that had come before them and that a new approach was exactly what was needed to change the dynamics of the fight (Weatherford, 1998).

As public interest in the movement increased, so did interest in the picketers at the White House. Many came to see the spectacle with both positive and negatives opinions of the women. Many visitors to the White House, including former president Teddy Roosevelt, smiled approvingly at the suffragists as they passed through the gates and some even changed their views of the movement upon seeing the women's fortitude and perseverance. As the war intensified, however, so did the public's disapproval of the women. They were seen as creating an embarrassment for the President during a time of war and international negotiations. The NWP's main focus was to speak out against the President, who they saw as denying them their rights through inaction, therefore, they frequently used their banners to call attention to Wilson's hypocritical speeches promoting democracy. When a delegation of Russian diplomats arrived, having been told of America's universal and equal suffrage, the women held a banner that read "tell our government it must liberate its people before it can claim free Russia as an ally" (Clift, 2003). Wilson had been shamed in front of foreign diplomats who would make a difference in the war effort; this humiliation pushed him take action against the picketers. Throughout the summer of 1917, picketers were arrested regularly. Phony charges of "obstructing traffic" were filed and the women were given the choice of a $25 fine or three days in jail. Contrary to Wilson's hope, the arrests did nothing to discourage the protesters. As more and more women were arrested, the public became involved as well. Protests became violent when onlookers ripped the banners from the women's hands but every day the picketers returned with fresh banners and more enthusiasm. One group of women was sentenced to sixty days in the workhouse for "obstructing traffic," when they paraded in front of the White House on Bastille Day carrying a banner that had the French national motto on it. The media, with help from Alice Paul, immediately began running stories that described life in the workhouse and shocked the upper-class Americans who recognized themselves in the women that had been arrested. As the media backlash increased Wilson knew he must back down and eventually pardoned all of the women in the workhouse (Clift, 2003).

The first trip to the workhouse was a preview of what was to come for many women of the NWP. After the pardon by President Wilson, things did not improve for the picketers. Protests became more violent, with onlookers attacking the women who, in turn, received no help from the police. Women had their clothes torn; banners ripped to shreds, and were thrown to the pavement, but with every violent riot came another wave of protesters (Stevens, 1976). Finally, on October 20, 1917, Alice Paul, along with other members of the NWP, was arrested and sent to the Occoquan Workhouse. Conditions in the workhouse were extremely bad. Most of the guards did not hide their contempt for the suffragists and they were not gentle in their handling of them. The women were given little to no privacy and the food was barely edible, often raw salt pork, coffee, and a crust of bread (Clift, 2003). The women in the workhouse, led by Alice Paul, demanded to be given the status of “political prisoners,” this would have entitled them to lawyers, books, writing materials, and better food, however, their requests to speak to a lawyer or to send a message to the authorities were denied by the prison superintendent, Mr. Whitaker. At this, the women conspired to start a hunger strike, deciding that this was the only form of protest they would be able to carry out (Ford).

Led by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, the suffragists refused food for several weeks. Lucy Burns was said to have gone without food for three weeks. Finally, believing Alice Paul to be the leader, prison authorities removed her to a psychiatric ward and began force feeding her, and the other women three times a day (Weatherford, 1998). Paul was moved to the psychiatric ward to attempt to discredit and intimidate her. She was subjected to violent force feedings and was treated as less than human. In her account of the events Paul recounts a time that she protested having a blood sample taken and the doctor told her “you know you’re not mentally competent to decide such things.” She recalls being woken up every few minutes throughout the night by a harsh light in her face to “observe” her and being made to feel that she was meant to be there. She stated, “everything possible was done to make me feel that I too was a ‘mental patient’” (Stevens, 1976, p. 223).

With Alice Paul gone Lucy Burns and Mrs. Lawrence Lewis took up positions of leadership among those left at Occoquan, continuing to argue for their right to be treated as political prisoners and maintaining that their hunger strike would continue until their demands were met. Their treatment by the guards, who were given free reign over the women, became more and more brutal, finally, in a night known as “The Night of Terror,” the women were woken and forcibly removed from their cells, they were violently shoved down a narrow set of stairs into a dark, stone basement; each woman was thrown into a dirty, stone cell. Many were bruised and bloodied and none were given any information about what was going on. Mrs. Lewis recalled a quote from a guard as he jerked her into her cell, “Damned Suffrager! My mother ain’t no Suffrager! I will put you through hell!”(Stevens, 1976, p. 197). She was knocked unconscious as her head hit the iron bed she was thrown onto, another woman suffered a heart attack when she was thrown into her cell. The women pleaded for medical attention but were ignored and told they would be put in straightjackets if they were not quiet. Finally, Lucy Burns, the loudest of the protesters, was handcuffed to the bars of her cell with her arms above her head. The other women assumed the same position out of support for Burns' suffering, she, and the other women were left in the dark, with no food or water for the entire night (Clift, 2003). The "Night of Terror," is just one incident that shows how much the prison authorities feared the suffragists. Throughout their imprisonment authorities made every attempt to discredit them and dissuade them from their convictions. They were separated from each other and then each was told that the others had given up their strike (Stevens, 1976); when this did not work, the guards switched to a tactic of fear and intimidation. The Occoquan Workhouse incident was proof that the suffrage movement was gaining traction. The only reason for the guards terrorism toward the women was their own fear that the movement might be successful.

The women remained in prison, in this nightmarish scenario for weeks, until information began to leak out about the terrible acts of torture being practiced there. The superintendent, Mr. Whitaker, feared the retributions if the public were to see the state of the suffragists. He would not allow any visitors to them, eventually, a lawyer for the National Women's Party forced his way in and was appalled at what he saw; afterwards, he immediately began working on plans to get the women out of prison. Finally, he was able to force the government, through a writ of habeas corpus, to bring the women to trial and show evidence for why they were arrested. When the trial commenced everyone in the courtroom was shocked by the condition of the women. They had not eaten in weeks and most were too weak to stand unaided, many still had bruises and scars from “The Night of Terror,” and it was obvious that all had been victims of terrible treatment. Upon seeing their states the judge took almost no time to rule that their sentences were illegal. He sent them to the district jail where they resumed their hunger strike until the government finally acknowledged defeat and, on November 27, released all the suffragists (Clift, 2003).

The treatment of the suffragists in prison had increased the public's support for their cause. Finally, due to the combined pressure from both the NWP and NAWSA, President Wilson abandoned his apathetic attitude toward suffrage and came out in full support of it (Mayo, 2007). In a 1918 speech to the Senate, he appealed to lawmakers to pass a comprehensive suffrage amendment. In his speech he cited the importance of women in the war effort and said that equal suffrage was needed to win the war. He asked, "we have made partners of the women in this war, shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil, and not to a partnership of privilege and right?" (Flexner, 1996). When the Senate voted in 1918 they were only two votes short of those necessary to pass the amendment. The change in attitude of the American people was reflected by the President's words which ended up being the turning point the movement needed.

The suffragists and their supporters were energized by the President's support and both the NWP and NAWSA continued to campaign ceaselessly until the day of the next vote in 1919. Almost a year after its two-vote defeat, the Nineteenth Amendment was passed in Congress by just two votes (Clift, 2003). The only hurdle left was getting the amendment ratified by three-quarters of the states. After the amendment was passed in Congress suffragist immediately sprang into action contacting state leaders to pressure them to call their legislators to session and ratify the amendment. Throughout the summer and fall of 1919 the amendment moved through state legislatures, and, by February of 1920, 32 out of the necessary 36 states had ratified the Nineteenth Amendment (Weatherford, 1998).

The last votes were the most difficult, suffragists had always known that ratification in the more conservative, southern states would be complicated and so they had sent extra delegates to those states with messages of support for the pro-suffrage legislators. In the end it came down to a very heated debate in the Tennessee legislature. The official tally came out to 48-48, which meant defeat for the amendment, however, Representative Harry Burn changed his vote at the last minute making the final count 49-47 in favor of ratification. When accused of accepting bribes, Burn responded by saying, "I know that a mother's advise is always safest for her boy to follow and my mother wanted me to vote for ratification" (Weatherford, 1998, p. 243). Even after the votes were counted the opposition fought desperately to suspend ratification, going so far as to leave town to try to suspend a decision while the Speaker of the House tried to sway one of those voting in favor. In the end, however, the oppositions tricks ran out and Tennessee became the final state needed for ratification. Finally, on August 26, 1920, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the proclamation that made the Nineteenth Amendment a part of the US Constitution (Clift, 2003). The Amendment states, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex" (Weatherford, 1998). This wording was not changed from the original Amendment, that would have been the Sixteenth, that was drafted by Susan B. Anthony in 1878.

It took 72 years, from the Seneca Falls Convention, until full suffrage was finally granted to American women. In the end Carrie Chapman Catt tallied up a count of the battles: "480 campaigns in state legislatures; 56 statewide referenda to male voters; 47 attempts to add suffrage planks during revisions of state constitutions; 277 campaigns at state party conventions and 30 at national conventions; and 19 biannual campaigns in 19 different Congresses" (Weatherford, 1998, p. 244). That count does not include the thousands of women and men who were harassed, imprisoned, and tortured for speaking out against inequality; the millions of people who spent their lives fighting for the cause only to depart this life without seeing the fruit of their labors; or the countless women who lived and died under a government that treated them as second class citizens. At the time of the passage only one of the founding suffragists who attended the convention at Seneca Falls was still living. Charlotte Woodward Pierce had been the youngest signer of the Declaration of Sentiments, at nineteen, and was ninety-one at the time of the ratification (Clift, 2003).

The struggle for freedom did not end with the passage of a law. In the years that followed women would have many issues to combat, activists such as Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt continued to work to improve the lives of women. Paul who lived into her nineties, wrote the first draft of the controversial Equal Rights Amendment in 1921 and campaigned for its passage until her death in 1977. Catt, who was a generation older than Paul, died in 1947. She continued to speak out, until her death, about the magnitude of the rights of citizens and stressed the desire that women not take their freedom for granted. She stated, "women have suffered an agony of soul which you can never comprehend that your daughters might inherit political freedom. That vote has been costly. Prize it" (Clift, 2003, p. 209). Her comment sums up the overall importance of what the suffragists did and why we should never forget. The right to vote is fundamental to being a citizen of this country. It is, therefore, crucial that we remember the fact that this right has not always been granted freely. It took hundreds of years to ensure this basic right to all and it must never be taken for granted.

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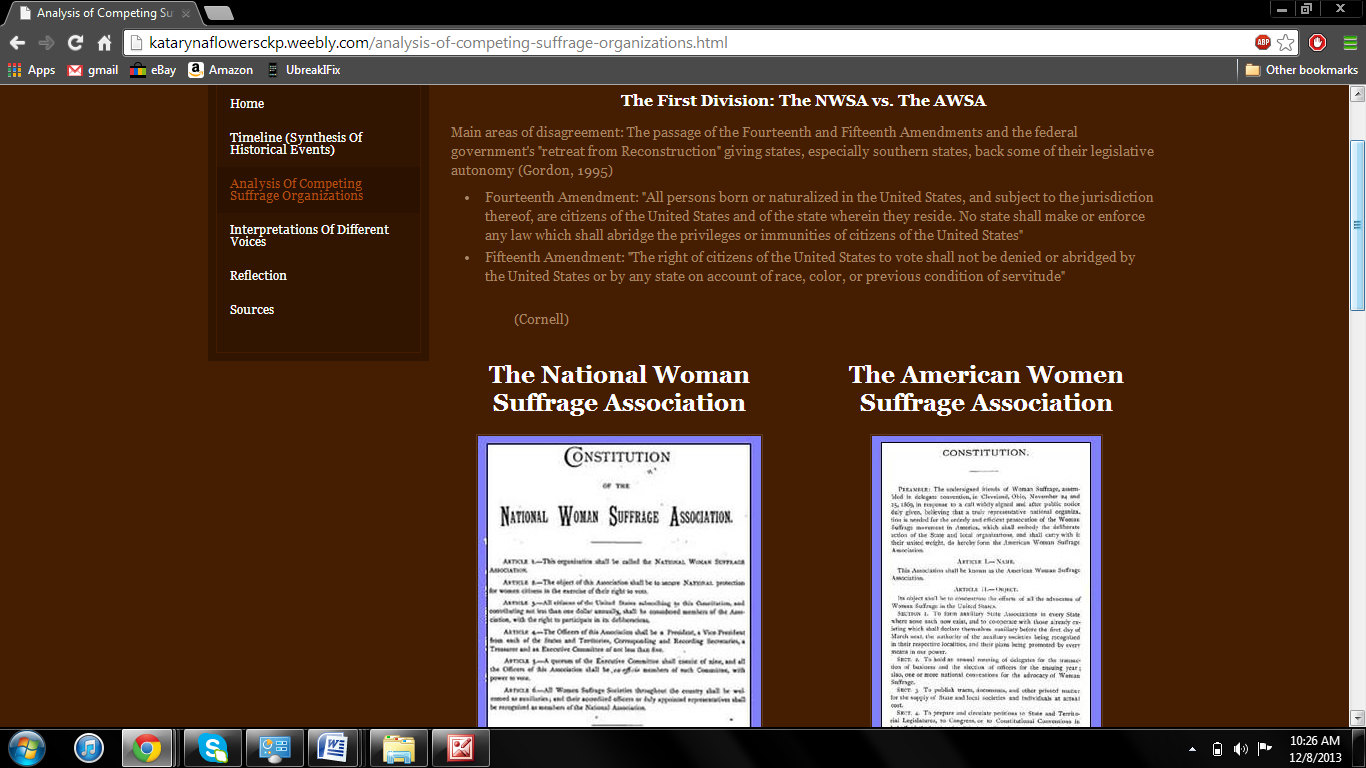
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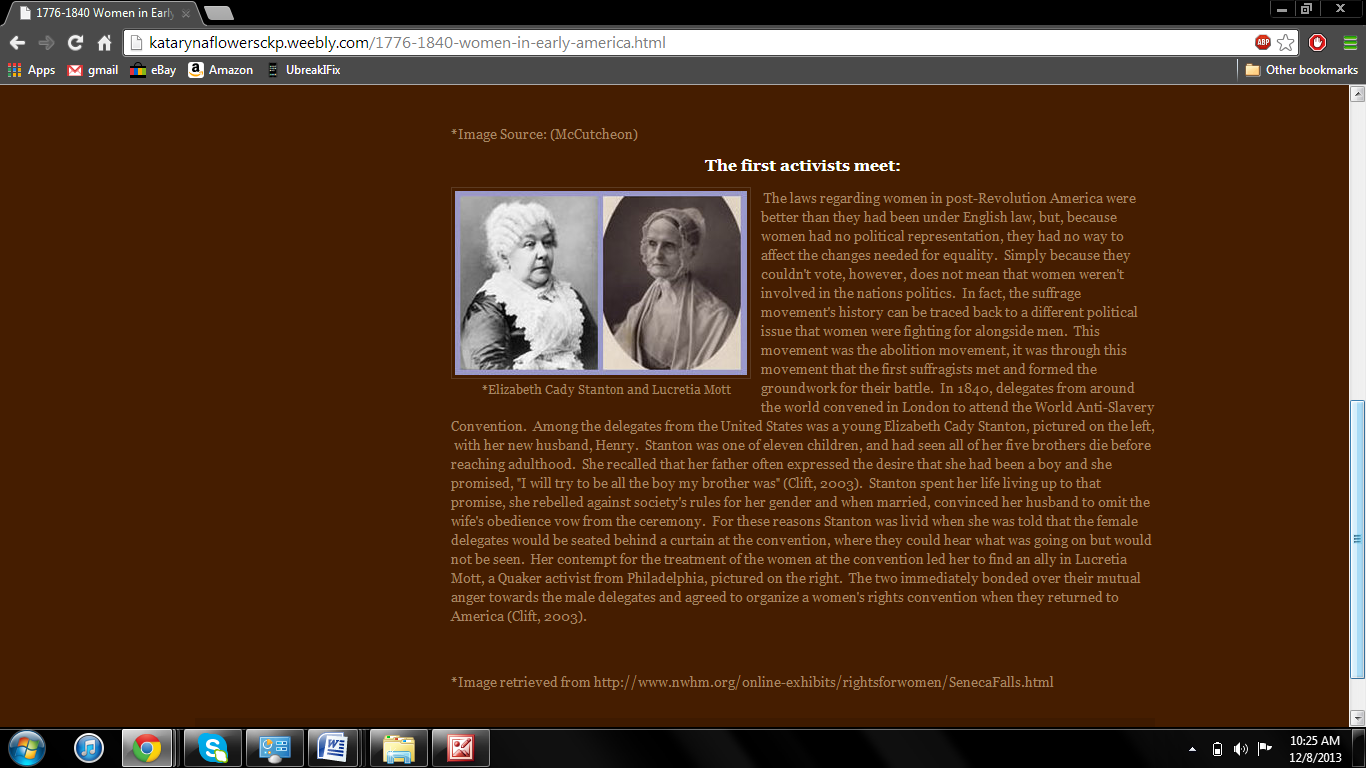
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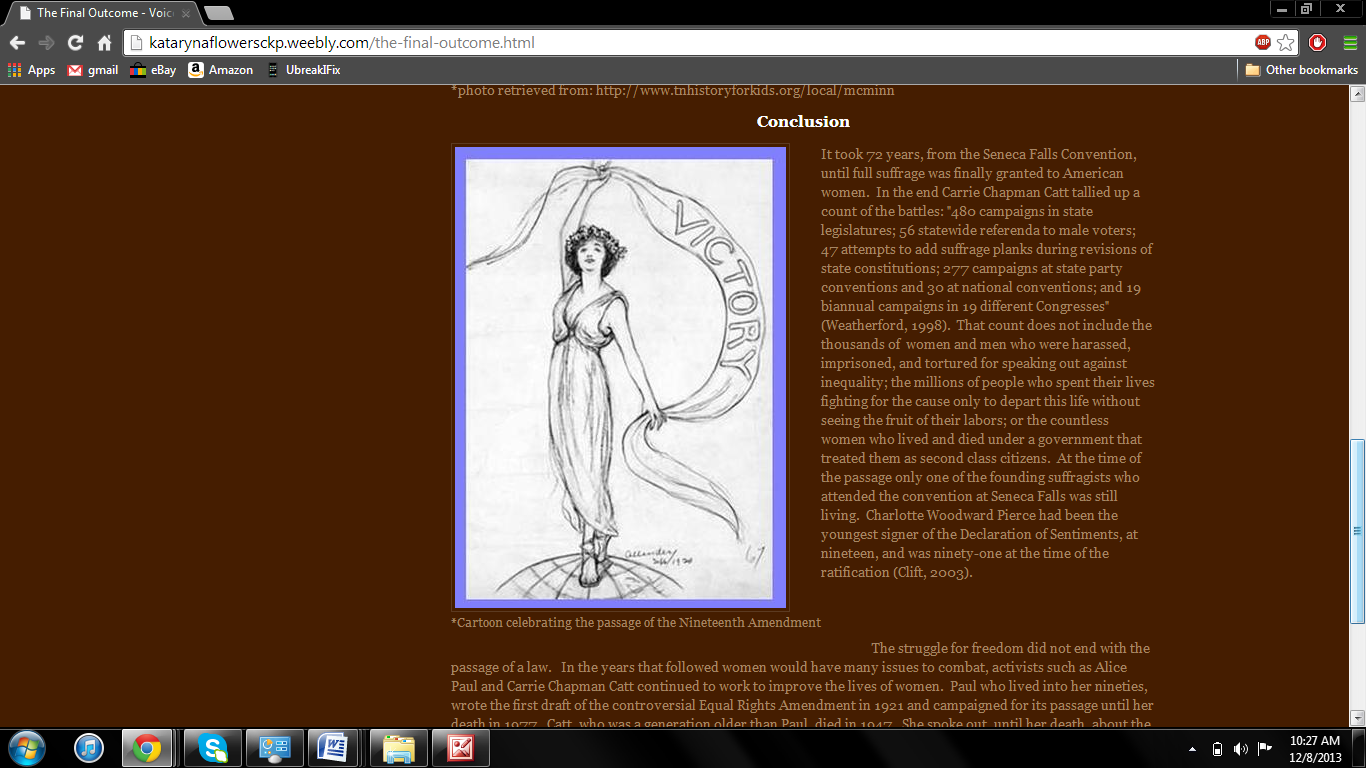
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