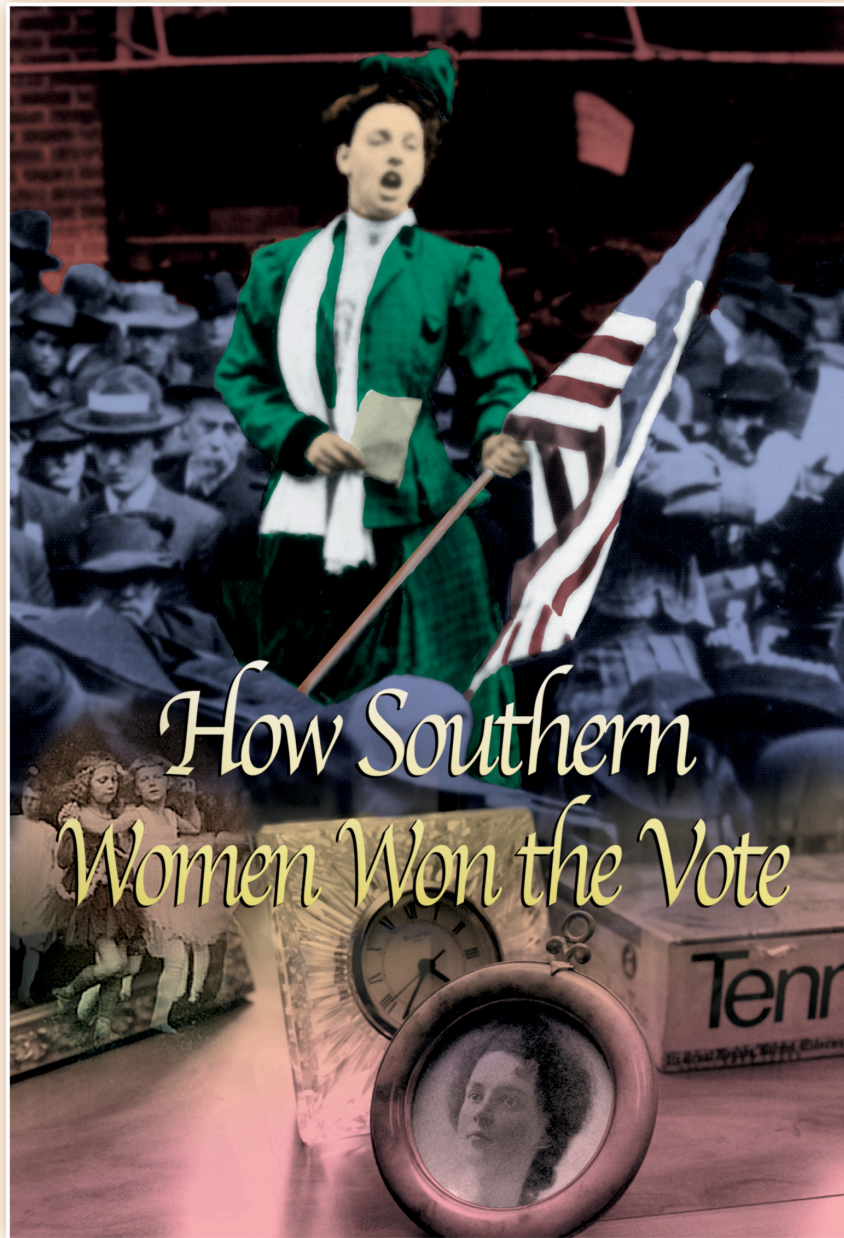


Lesson Plan for Teaching Tennessee Role  
in the Ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment  
by Dr. Carole Bucy

Companion Curriculum Guide for  
How Southern Women Won the Vote  
DVD and Script Package



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## Background Information:

Twenty years before Tennessee became a state, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, John, who was then in Philadelphia as a member of the Continental Congress and admonished him to, as she put it, "*Remember the Ladies.*"

She wrote, *".. in the new code of laws... I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestor. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."*

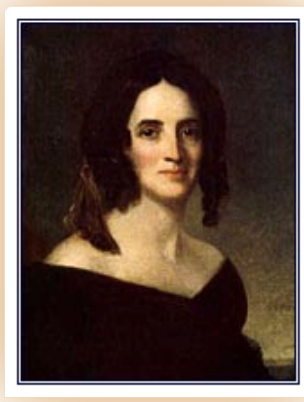


*Abigail Adams by Benjamin Blythe 1766*

Women who crossed the mountains with their families and settled Tennessee did not enjoy the same rights and freedoms that the men enjoyed when Tennessee became a state in 1796. They did not have that which Abigail Adams demanded: a voice in the making of the laws they were obliged to obey. Although the Declaration of Independence stated that "All men are created equal", women had no guaranteed political rights. One of the chief rights denied to women was the right to vote. Only white adult men who owned property could vote after the American Revolution. After the American Revolution, the Constitution gave the states the right to decide who could vote. The states gradually abolished the requirement that men must own property to vote, but still did not give women the right to vote. Abigail Adams' husband, John, became the second President of the United States, but she could not vote for her husband when he ran for the office of President. Neither did Tennesseans Rachel Jackson, Sarah Childress Polk, nor Eliza McCardle Johnston.



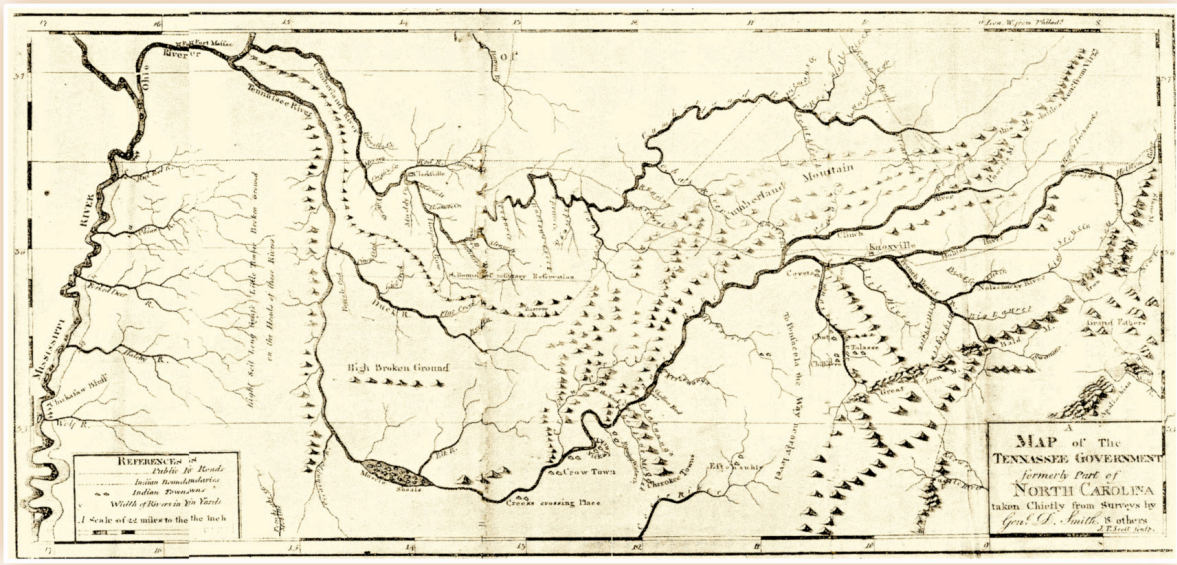
*Rachel Donelson Jackson*



*Sarah Childress Polk*



*Eliza McCardle Johnston*



*Early map of Tennessee in 1795*

Women came across the mountains to establish homes and settled Tennessee as partners with their husbands. Like Native-American women who were already living in Tennessee, these women had many responsibilities.



*Cherokee Re-enactors*



*Re-enactor*

Pioneer women worked on farms and took care of their families. Women often taught their own children to read and write when there was no school available. Women worked at home.

As cities and town developed in Tennessee, men began to work in occupations in these urban areas. The women continued to work at home, but the status of the woman of a family generally declined as her husband began to earn wages in trades. Women were responsible for food for the family and prepared all meals. Women made clothing for the members of their families and took great pride in their skill with thread and needle.

Women provided care and assistance to help the needy in their communities as towns developed in Tennessee. As early as 1817, the women of Nashville had organized the Female Bible and Charitable Society of Nashville which was the city's first welfare organization. These women provided services for the sick and the needy of Nashville.



*Re-enactors*

Similar groups began to organize in cities across the state. Women from individual religious congregations formed organizations to minister to those in need. In the 1850's, Jewish women of Memphis formed the Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society to provide social services for the poor of the city. Still, these women could not vote.

After the Civil War, women continued to work in groups to provide solutions to problems. The female network that had begun before the war in churches and synagogues spread, as women became interested in issues concerning the quality of life in their cities.

### **National Suffrage Leaders**

Women would work together for 70 years to win the right to vote. The revolution that would eventually take place was largely fought with words and not arms. The origin of the woman's rights movement is commonly dated from 1848, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and about 300 others - women and men - met in Seneca Falls, New York and drew up the first public protest in America against women's political, economic and social inferiority.



*Elizabeth Cady- Stanton & child*



*Lucretia Mott*

Mott, a Quaker minister, spoke forcefully, both for woman suffrage and the abolition of slavery. The people attending this convention adopted a *Declaration of Sentiments* that called for women to have equal rights with men. The declaration stated that "all men and women are created equal."



*Pro-suffrage illustration "The Ghost of Jefferson Looks On"*

The quest for woman's rights emerged primarily from their experiences in reform movements, especially abolition. The American Anti-Slavery Society, led by William Lloyd Garrison, had welcomed women into its ranks and introduced them to politics. Fervent campaigners like Lucretia Mott (founder of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society) and Mrs. Stanton (whose husband was a prominent abolitionist) served as organizers and lecturers. Their activism provoked disputes about women's role in public life. In city after city, they were harassed and physically attacked for engaging in an activity many Americans considered shocking and indecent. Certain of the righteousness of their actions, these women began to question whether they should continue to accept a restricted role in society.

The pivotal moment for them came when the American delegates to the World Anti-Slavery Convention arrived in London to find that the women delegates among them were excluded from participation. Mrs. Stanton and Mrs. Mott decided that it was time to fight for the rights of women. Accordingly, they called the meeting at Seneca Falls, New York.

The delegates at Seneca Falls based their program directly on the Declaration of Independence. Among their declared principles was "that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights: that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." They added, however, a denunciation of the "absolute tyranny of men over women" and presented resolutions demanding equal rights for women in marriage, education, religion, employment and political life.

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Throughout the 1850’s, national women’s rights conventions were held annually, as were numerous local and regional meetings. At these conventions, women promoted a diverse reform program including: establishing the right of married women to control their own property and earnings; guaranteeing custody of children in the event of divorce; ensuring women’s rights to sue or testify in court; and above all else, winning the vote for women. The right of suffrage was acknowledged to be “the corner-stone of this enterprise” because they did not seek to protect woman, but rather to place her in a position to protect herself.

Mrs. Stanton prophetically warned, the fight would not be easy. “*Depend upon it,*” she wrote, “*this is the point to attack. The stronghold of the fortress. The one woman will find the most difficult to take; the one man will most reluctantly give up...[But] have it we must.... Use it we will.*”

Gains were limited in the period before the Civil War, but the meetings and publicity widened the women’s participation. Still, it took a long time for women’s rights to win any popular support, even among women. Most people, male and female, supported female domesticity and separate spheres for women and men.



*Illustration of women's rights activists petitioning lawmakers*



*Susan B Anthony*

Nonetheless, the movement soon attracted one of its most gifted leaders, Susan B. Anthony.

A member of a Massachusetts Quaker family, Anthony had participated in moral reform and abolition. She had lectured on antislavery and religion and had recently resigned a teaching position in a bitter protest over discrimination against women. Her experience in reform had taught her, as she put it, “the great evil of woman’s utter dependence on man for the necessary means to aid reform movements.” She was arrested in 1872 and fined for voting illegally in New York.

At this time, suffrage was a radical idea. Many people believed that women were less able to make political decisions than men. Many people who were opposed to women voting believed that it would destroy American family life, but many people simply did not think. They accepted things as they were without questioning whether what they did was right or wrong.

Susan B. Anthony forged an enduring friendship with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the two leaders had a remarkable working relationship. While Mrs. Stanton was a gifted writer and a charismatic lecturer, Anthony was a consummate organizer and dedicated herself to creating an enduring feminist organization. The two established the National American Woman Suffrage Association (called NAWSA for short) with the motto: “Men their rights and nothing more; women their rights and nothing less.”

Working first to promote reforms in her home state of New York, Anthony set up a network of female political “captains” - one in each of the state’s counties. This network of women secured, time and again, thousands of signatures on petitions. This model of organization eventually was duplicated in every state.



*Susan B. Anthony & Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

It took six years of county canvasses, petition campaigns and memorials to the legislature for the feminists to secure the first comprehensive reform in women's legal status in New York state. They won full property, parental and widow's rights, but not enfranchisement, not the ultimate prize, the vote. Soon after, the Civil War intervened and the women suspended their activities on their own behalf and concentrated on the war effort and working to secure the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery. Stanton and Anthony organized a massive petition drive that collected almost 400,000 signatures in support of that Amendment, which passed in 1865.

These women then combined their demands for woman suffrage with black suffrage, believing that their male collaborators would support universal adult suffrage in the 14th Amendment. The Radical Republicans then in control of Congress were fearful that the link with woman suffrage would weaken the chance for passage of the amendment. As one leader told the women, "One question at a time. This hour belongs to the Negro." It was the 14th Amendment that wrote the word "male" into the Constitution for the first time and, in effect, sanctioned the denial of suffrage to women.

Disappointed but not discouraged, Stanton and Anthony concluded that feminists should develop a program independent of any political party and they threw their efforts into obtaining suffrage for women in the states.

Over the next few decades Anthony and Stanton launched numerous state campaigns, securing thousands of signatures on petitions, traveling over immense western distances in bad weather and with dreadful transportation, speaking again and again before voters and legislators. Anthony drafted the Suffrage Amendment and introduced it in Congress in 1879. From that time forward, it was introduced in every session of Congress until it finally passed both Houses of Congress in 1919. Ridicule and defeat after defeat rewarded their efforts.



*Susan B. Anthony*

After the first state referendum in Kansas in 1867, which failed, 55 more such popular votes on state woman suffrage amendments took place over the next 50 years. By 1910, after a total of more than sixty years of agitation, the women's rights movement had few victories - among them were several states that gave women greater control over their property, but women could vote in only four sparsely populated western states (Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and Idaho).



*National American Women Suffrage Association Parade c.1900*

During the intervening period changes were taking place in American society that made the later triumphs possible. These changes were taking place across the United States and they were also taking place in Tennessee. The major context for the reinvigoration of the suffrage movement in the decades around the turn of the century was the tremendous expansion of women's reform activities.

The temperance and suffrage movements gained support in Tennessee. Many reformers believed that the "petticoat vote" (votes of women) would improve the tone of politics. Political reform was a major dimension of the progressive era, and the suffragists continually maintained that women having the right to vote would aid the reformation process and purify politics. When the anti-suffragists said that women should stay home and clean house, Ladies Home Journal responded.

*"They can. And they will..." the Journal reported. "Let them shake the dust off from a few of our political fixtures and see what is underneath. Let them drive the rats out of the public pantry...Will American women clean our political houses for us? Heaven speed the day when they begin!" The legislative hall would be "made clean when woman is allowed to exercise that God-given right of equal suffrage."*



*Pro-suffrage cartoon*

## The Setting in Tennessee History

By 1900, women made up one-fifth of the work force of Tennessee. Many worked as domestics in private homes and many worked in the textile mills that were built in small towns across the state after the Civil War. The jobs in the mills were "sex segregated" with women hired only for the most unskilled jobs. Women and children worked as spoolers, feeding yarn into a high-powered, quick-whirling machine, and retrieving it once it had been wound. Some mills hired entire families - mothers, fathers, and children - who together could earn just enough to keep them working.



*Mother and children working c.1890*

Married women who worked in the mills had a second full-time job. In addition to working in the mill, they cooked, cared for children, and maintained their individual households. Often these women worked 10 to 12 hour days in the mills where working conditions were dirty and dangerous. Studies of working women at the turn of the century show that women received one-half to one-third the wages of working men. A seamstress in a mill might earn \$6.00 per week, compared to a male cutter's \$16.00



*Anti-child labor poster c.1910*

Even when men and women performed the same job, women were paid considerably less since employers justified unequal pay claiming that the salaries of women was a second or supplementary income.

In Memphis, in 1876, years before any state suffrage organizations were formed in Tennessee, Elizabeth Avery Meriwether rented the Memphis Theater and held a public meeting to discuss women's rights. More than 500 women attended. She led a delegation of women to ask the Memphis School board to give women teachers the same pay for teaching as male teachers. She believed that women should have "equal pay for equal work." Although Elizabeth Meriwether moved away from Memphis, her ideas spread across the state in a variety of ways.



*Elizabeth Avery Meriwether*

Middle and upper class women in Tennessee followed the efforts of women in the Northeast and created an extraordinary number of socially conscious, all-female organizations. The first women's club in Tennessee was the **Ossoli Circle** founded in Knoxville in 1885. The women present at Mrs. Lizzie Crozier French's first meeting of the group determined that the group should not be called a club since the term "club" could be interpreted to be exclusive. They preferred to use the term, "circle", which they believed to be more inclusive and less threatening to the men.



*Bust of author Margaret Fuller Ossoli*



*Lizzie Crozier French c.1890*



*Artists depiction of suffragist meeting c.1880's*

The Query Club of Nashville followed that same year. By 1890, Memphis had two women's clubs, the 19th Century Club and the Women's Club of Memphis and in 1892, Kosmos was founded in Chattanooga. By the turn of the century these women's clubs were appearing in every town across Tennessee. Their activities ranged from study and sociability to larger national reform organizations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Young Women's Christian Association.

These groups had different purposes and different constituencies, but they were alike in that they were free of male control and were assertive about women's capacity to do more than men expected of them. They developed techniques for encouraging women to gain wider interests and new skills. Eventually these new skills involved politics.

The WCTU, for example, concentrated on anti-liquor laws and municipal reform. They emphasized the necessity of political action to eliminate the evils of alcohol and clean up corruption in government. It followed, fairly logically, that to really make a difference, women needed the vote.



*Members of the National WCTU c. 1919*

Another Memphis woman, Elizabeth Lyle Saxon (1832-1915), an ardent suffragist, became vice-president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890, but suffrage organizations in Tennessee were unable to continue. Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt visited Memphis in 1895 and spoke in the lecture hall of the Young Men's Hebrew Association. During the early years of the 20th century, Memphis was the only city in Tennessee that could sustain a suffrage organization. When Nashville women founded a suffrage club in 1911, attention to the movement grew and the number of suffrage leagues rose across the state from 5 to 75. The Tennessee suffragists created a statewide organization and worked to increase public awareness on the issue.



*Pro-suffrage cartoon*

When the United States entered World War I, Tennessee suffragists temporarily abandoned their efforts for suffrage and focused their energies and organizational skills on the war effort. They organized themselves across Tennessee through the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense, selling bonds, saving food, and providing support for the troops. In Nashville, women worked at the Old Hickory Powder Plant which later became the DuPont Plant of Old Hickory.



*DuPont Powder Plant c. 1917 Old Hickory, TN*

With women already in the work force, World War I created new opportunities. As in the Civil War, when the men of Tennessee had left to serve in the army, women took their places in the labor force. Women worked during the war in Tennessee factories, supporting the war by assembling explosives, armaments, machine tools, and automobile and airplane parts. Many additional women were hired in the textile mills to produce uniforms for soldiers. When the war was over, those women who had moved into the better jobs of heavy industry were fired when the men returned home. These women were forced to return to the female-only, lower-paying jobs. In the years that followed World War I, women began to work together for equality. Women realized that real, substantive change in society would only occur when everyone participated in the political process. When women came to realize how society could be changed, every county of Tennessee became organized for suffrage.



*Images of the Three Graces  
Suffrage, Preparedness and Americanism  
c.1917*

The coalition of women supporting suffrage was a fragile one. The state organization split into two separate organizations in 1914 over a disagreement as to whether the national convention should be held in Nashville or in Chattanooga. (It was held in Nashville at the Ryman Auditorium with Anna Howard Shaw presiding and Jane Addams in attendance.)

Pro-suffrage speakers drew large crowds.



*Nashville Suffrage Parade*

The two groups worked separately for four years, and reunited in 1918 under different leadership at the end of the war. Actually, the split did not hurt the cause. The two organizations competed heavily and the numbers within each group grew dramatically. Women who wanted to vote as well as women who opposed voting held rallies, printed pamphlets, and wrote strong editorials for Tennessee's newspapers.



*Signing up Suffrage workers in 1918*

"Votes for Women" and "No Taxation without Representation" were heard across the state from Memphis to Nashville and from Knoxville to Chattanooga. Across the state women began to speak out. Fannie Moran Ezzell described the women of Tennessee who were the suffragists:

*"Like most Southern women, I was born and bred in the briar patch of politics. From childhood, we women of the South breathe an atmosphere of political interest, more or less intense.... No shirkers or slackers among the suffragists of Tennessee! When we asked a hundred women to the capitol, 200 came, then more and more...."*



*Pro-suffrage illustration c. 1918*

On the national level, Carrie Chapman Catt who had worked with Anthony assumed the leadership of NAWSA in 1916. Catt was a take-charge person and she had a “winning plan for suffrage, which she launched with a great deal of fanfare. It was a tightly centralized, coordinated effort to put pressure on legislators to secure the suffrage state by state.



*Carrie Chapman Catt c. 1916*

Another band of women, smaller and more militant, led by Alice Paul broke off from NAWSA to form the National Women’s Party. They decided that too much time was being wasted on state efforts. A more effective policy, they thought, was to focus on Washington and a constitutional amendment. Alice Paul had been to Great Britain to participate in their woman’s suffrage campaign, and she adopted their aggressive, confrontational techniques. It was necessary, Paul argued, to get people’s attention - she did that very well.



*National Women's Party members  
Alice Paul on far left*

The National Woman's Party, which included Tennessean Sue Shelton White, chained themselves to the White House fence and burned effigies of political leaders. They were hauled to jail where they went on hunger strikes. Their arrests and stories of their treatment certainly attracted attention, and some sympathy. At the same time, they also attracted the anger of more conservative women who considered them unladylike and provocative.



*National Woman's Party members picketing the White House c.1918*

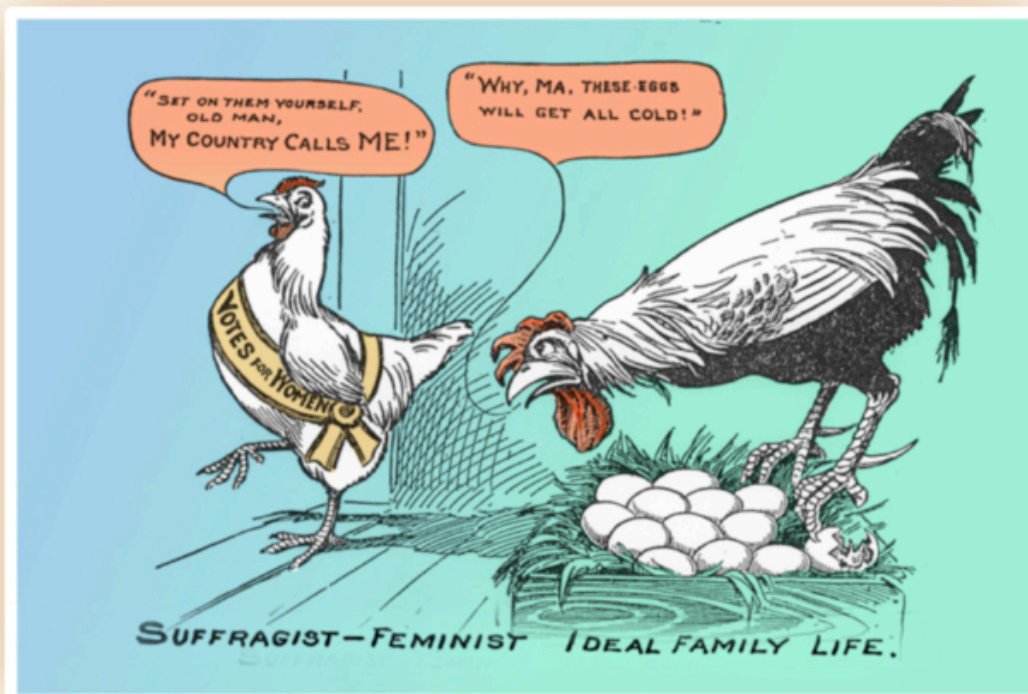
The radicalism of Alice Paul and her associates made the President and the Congress nervous about what they might do next. In comparison, Mrs. Catt's suffragists suddenly looked much more reasonable to government leaders.

It is important to note that some women, as well as men, did not want the right to vote. These women held traditional beliefs about the differences between men and women and the superiority of women's moral "influence" over political power, as well as fears for traditional family life and male authority. Anti-suffrage sentiments ran the gamut from self-serving to highly moral.



Photo c.1890

From the start, the suffragists fought the widespread fear that women voting would destroy family life. Newspaper editors portrayed "suffs" as spinsters and "she-males" with hen-pecked husbands. Cartoons with unflattering caricatures of the suffragists appeared in newspapers across the country.



anti-suffrage cartoon

The race issue was a complex problem for suffragists and anti-suffragists alike. The anti-suffragists openly opposed giving women the right to vote because it would give black women the right to vote as well. The prospect of black women's enfranchisement threatened to upset racial segregation and disfranchisement of black male voters. Suffrage had the potential to lead to demands for racial equality that most white Tennesseans were not willing to consider at this time. The race issue divided white and African-American suffragists from each other.



*Ida B. Wells*

Ida B. Wells of Memphis became a national leader and was well known around the country. She was a teacher, a civil rights leader and an outspoken critic of lynch laws, as well as a suffragist.

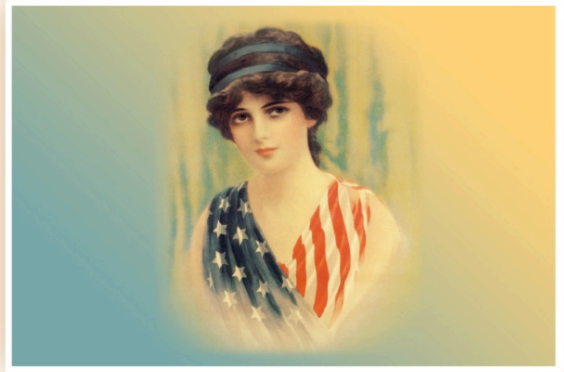
What was known about the suffragists, was that they were committed to issues such as health, education, and the protection of mothers and children. They would not have the same party loyalty that males did. Women were interested in reform.

When the war ended, Mrs. Catt seized the moment to petition President Wilson to support woman suffrage on the reasonable argument that women deserved a reward for their service in the recent war. President Woodrow Wilson urged Congress to pass a woman suffrage amendment with that same rationale, that women had been vital to winning the war. It proved to be a winning argument. By June, 1919, the amendment had passed both houses of Congress and was ready to go to the state legislatures for ratification. In order for women to vote, 36 of the 48 state legislatures had to ratify the amendment. Thirty-six separate state legislatures had to be convinced - once again - to vote in favor of woman suffrage.



*"Wilson for Suffrage" poster c. 1919*

Fortunately, many of these states had groups of highly organized women poised for the battle. They began sending out telegrams urging governors to call special sessions to ratify the 19th amendment. By this time, it was summer and most had adjourned. The suffragists thought it was imperative to secure passage as quickly as possible. By Susan B. Anthony's birthday, February, 1920, 32 states had ratified. Then Oklahoma, West Virginia and the state of Washington ratified. Where was number 36?



*Suffrage poster c. 1915*

Now six states, all Southern, had already rejected the amendment. Only seven states had not yet acted. Tennessee was among the seven, but Tennessee was a question mark. A border state, Tennessee had close southern ties, but she had also previously granted women voters partial suffrage - allowing them to vote in presidential and municipal elections - it was the first of the old Confederacy states to do so. It was at this point, that a voice could be heard in Tennessee, "Let us be the Perfect 36".



*Painting in Suffrage Color State by State c.1915*

The Tennessee suffragists had worked valiantly to raise public awareness across the state after the war throughout 1919 and 1920 even though few believed that the Tennessee General Assembly would vote on the amendment. Strong leadership came from the major cities: In Nashville, Anne Dallas Dudley, Catherine Kenny, Kate Burch Warner; in Memphis, Lulu Reese, Mrs. C. B. Allen, Mrs. Samuel J. Ellis, Charl Ormond Williams; in Chattanooga, Abby Crawford Milton, Margaret Erwin Ford; and in Knoxville, Lizzie Crozier French and Mrs. T. P. Miller.



*Anne Dallas Dudley*

Few, if any, women's causes or associations of that period had as broad an appeal or included as many constituencies as suffrage. Jewish and Catholic women joined women from most Protestant denominations. Women of color, organized in their own church societies and social clubs, added their profound concern for the power of the vote.



*Catherine Talty Kenny*

These women, and many others spoke in public at meetings in town squares and labor halls, marched in parades, wrote newspaper columns, convinced more and more women, and above all lobbied the men in the legislature. They made Woman Suffrage the question of the hour, one that had to be addressed.



*Abby Crawford Milton*

On May 18, 1920, the Tennessee Equal Suffrage League had its final meeting, Tennessee suffragists were already looking toward the future when women did have the right to vote. As the suffragists gathered in Nashville to replace the suffrage league with the League of Women Voters, they were confident that the Amendment would pass, but few had any thought that Tennessee would vote on the Amendment.

After hearing speeches from representatives of the Democratic and Republican parties, **Frankie J. Pierce**, an African-American Nashville woman, addressed the meeting. "What will the negro woman do with the vote?" she asked the suffragists. " We are asking only one thing - a square deal." Mrs. Pierce had worked with the Negro Woman's Reconstruction League for the establishment of a state vocational school for girls. She reminded the suffragists of the needs of African-American women. "We want recognition in all forms of this government. We want a state vocational school and a child welfare department of the state, and more room in state schools."



*Frankie J. Pierce*

The effort of Tennessee women to ratify the 19th Amendment marked an important step in cooperation among women. African-American women joined with other women from various religious and ethnic groups to work together for ratification. This was an important milestone in cooperation in a society that was completely segregated in 1920.



*African- American suffragist c.1919*



*Political cartoon 1920*

When the Tennessee suffragists began to call for ratification in May, 1920, the General Assembly had already completed its business for the year and was not in session. The Tennessee suffragists called for the Governor to call a special session. Governor Roberts was a nervous politician who was facing a difficult and uncertain reelection in his own party's August primary. After receiving a telegram from President Woodrow Wilson saying, "It would be a real service to the party and to the nation if it is possible for you... to call the special session of the Legislature of Tennessee to consider the Suffrage Amendment." Governor Roberts announced that he would call the special session right after his primary.



*Suffragist Sue Sheldon White and Governor Roberts*



*President Woodrow Wilson c. 1920*

## August, 1920 - Nashville, Tennessee

The suffragists went to work - making personal calls on every man who would be coming to Nashville on August 9 for the special session. Carrie Chapman Catt, the national leader of the suffrage association, arrived in Nashville in mid-July to provide additional leadership and moral support. She came for a week and stayed seven.

She described it this way:

*"The Southern summer heat was merciless, and many legislators lived in remote villages or on farms, miles from any town. Yet the women trailed these legislators by train, by motor, by wagons and on foot, often in great discomfort. They went without meals, were drenched by unexpected rains, and met with tire troubles, yet no woman faltered. I've been here a month. It is hot, muggy, nasty, and this last battle is desperate. Even if we win, we who have been here will never remember it with anything but a shudder. "*

There was significant opposition to suffrage in Tennessee. If women voted, the balance of power in Tennessee would be disrupted and, after all, many of the suffragists had been temperance workers.

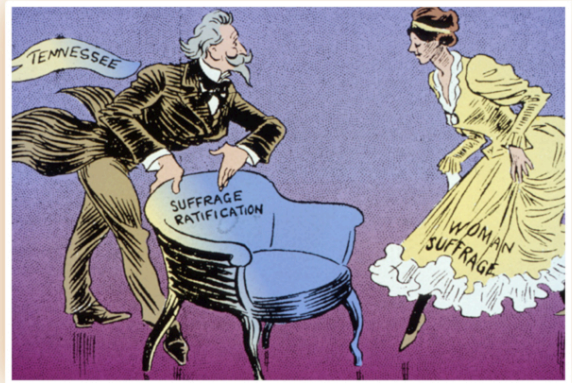
The antis, as the opponents were called, were led by Miss Josephine Pearson, a former girls' school head from Monteagle who was said to have promised her mother on her deathbed that "should the dreaded Susan B. Anthony amendment ever come to Tennessee" she would do whatever she could to stop it. Miss Pearson arrived in Nashville wearing a cluster of three red roses symbolizing her rank. Writer Louise Davis said that "no three-star general ever wore his stars more proudly." Davis described Pearson as a "melodramatic woman, swathed in Victorian sentimentality".

*"Emerging from a plump little pincusion of a world - all tufted and velvet and soft - she rose to new heights of oratorical power when she spoke to the Tennessee Senate and 'seemed to hear my voice through the Capitol Dome!"*



Josephine Pearson, Nashville 1920

Tennessee's traditional factionalism seemed to forebode trouble for the suffrage vote. First, there was the east-west division going back to the Civil War - western Tennessee had favored secession while east Tennessee had not wanted to secede and indeed, Tennessee had been the first to vote to re-enter the Union. Then there was the rural-urban split between the large cities of Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga, and what were then called the "red handkerchief boys" from the hills and hollows. There was also the wet-dry split which seemed to cut across the grain of all the other divisions. The Drys favored suffrage because they believed women would vote for prohibition. Many of the suffragists had been temperance workers. The liquor interests funded the antis.



*Political cartoon 1920*



*Tennessee women at political convention c. 1915*

Another significant factor were the railroads and major industries, who, it was rumored, were not eager to have to "buy" any more votes. If the new women voters turned out to be corruptible, they would cost a bundle. If they did not, then that was even worse - they could not be controlled at all.

The suffragists adopted the yellow rose as their symbol - and passed them out to mark their supporters. With Miss Pearson and the Antis wearing red roses, the debate quickly became known as the War of the Roses. When the members of the General Assembly arrived in Nashville, the stage was set for what would be one of the greatest dramas in Tennessee history.



*Suffrage rose*



*Anti-Suffrage rose*



*Tennessee newspaper account, 1920*

The Senate passed the amendment by a comfortable margin on August 13. Mrs. Catt wrote back to Washington, "We are now one half of one state away from the final victory." In the Tennessee House, numerous delays occurred to stall the amendment. Finally, on August 18, when the House prepared to vote, it appeared to the suffragists that there was a very uncertain tie. As the suffragists counted their votes, they believed that the House was evenly split between those supporting suffrage and those opposing the amendment.

After a vote to table the amendment failed, Speaker of the House Seth Walker of Lebanon began to call the roll for the amendment. The sixth name was that of Harry Burn, the youngest member of the House at 24, a Republican from Niota, Tennessee. Harry Burn wore the red rose of the anti-suffragists on his lapel as he stood and quickly cast his vote. When Harry Burn's "Aye" was heard in the House Chamber, the suffragists realized that they could win.



*Harry Burn c.1920*

Harry Burn's one vote made the difference. The vote was 50 to 46. It seems that his mother back home had been reading the newspapers about the debate. So she wrote her son a note:

*Dear Son:*

*Hurrah and vote for suffrage! I notice some of the speeches against. I have been watching to see how you stood but have not noticed anything. Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt put the 'rat' in ratification. Your Mother.*

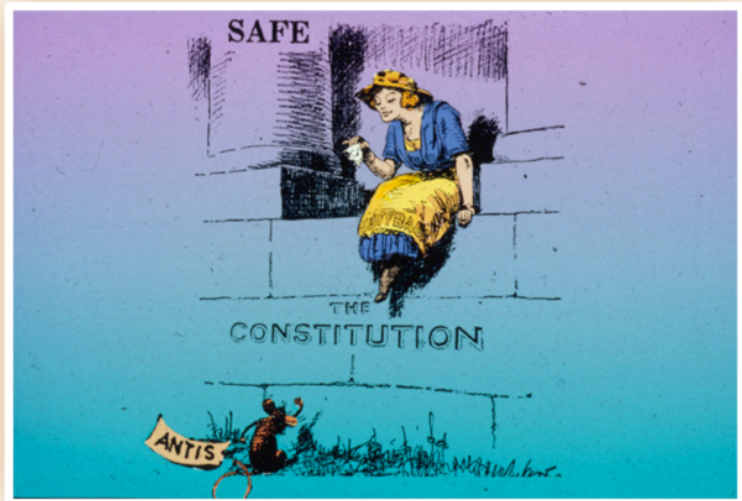
Young Harry Burn, whose decision had won voting rights for some 17 million women, was called upon to explain himself when the assembly reconvened the next day. He rose in the House chamber and said, "I know that a mother's advice is always safest for her boy to follow, and my mother wanted me to vote for ratification."



*"Approaching the Capitol"*

Burn had made up his mind that if the measure required only one extra vote, he would give it. After several unsuccessful attempts were made to stall the vote, the vote was taken. That letter was in Harry Burn's pocket and on his mind when he cast the decisive "aye" vote for ratification. Women had won by two votes, 49 to 47.

Seth Walker, the Speaker of the House, later changed his vote to "Aye" in a constitutional maneuver to attempt to have the amendment reconsidered, but the amendment had passed and the vote stood. Tennessee had become the 36th and deciding state.



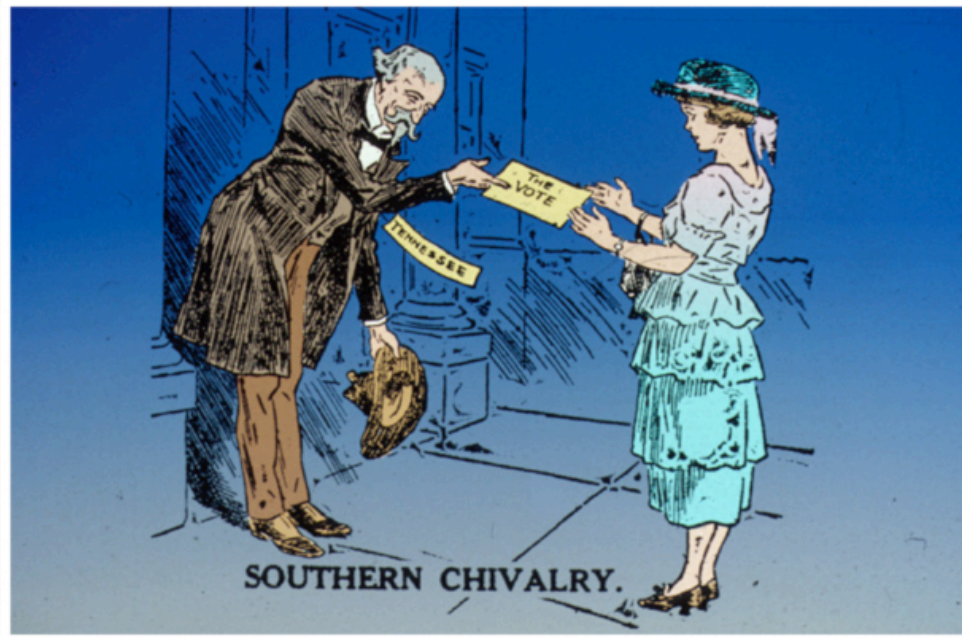
"Safe" 1920

The amendment was signed by Governor Roberts on August 24 and then sent to Washington for the final signature, that of the secretary of state. Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State, Bainbridge Colby signed the amendment as soon as it arrived, before breakfast on August 26, and after over 72 years of effort, women in every state could now vote.



Governor Roberts signing the 19th amendment.  
Anne Dallas Dudley (far left) and others observe

The 19th Amendment became a reality. Tennessee took its place in history as the "Perfect 36," the last state needed to make woman suffrage the law of the land. Women could now vote in Tennessee as well as across the United States.



*Political cartoon 1920*

After the passage of the amendment, the fragile coalition of women supporting suffrage again splintered. Women did not agree on what should be done after suffrage. Many wanted complete equality for women while others wanted to see special legislation passed that would protect women and children.

Many of the suffragists became frustrated and disillusioned after the elections of 1920. Carrie Chapman Catt had believed that if suffrage could be passed, within ten years, half of the U. S. Senate would be women. This did not happen. Women did not flock to the polls to vote and did not run for office. Anne Dallas Dudley became involved in Governor Roberts' campaign for re-election as governor and he lost. He blamed the women and his support of the suffrage amendment for his defeat. The struggle for women's rights in Tennessee and across the nation continued.



*Suffragists from Tennessee  
with " Uncle Sam "*



Political cartoon 1920

### Selected Bibliography of Books and Materials on Suffrage and Women's Rights

#### Books Available for Students, kindergarten - grade 12:

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grades 4-6 ( only a small part about suffrage)

Blumberg, Rhoda. *Bloomers!* New York, Bradbury Press, 1993.  
kindergarten-3 delightful picture book

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Colman, Penny. *Mary McLeod Bethune and the Power of Education*. Brookfield, Connecticut, Millbrook Press. grades 3-5

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- Connell, Kate. *They Shall be Heard: Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton*. grades 3-8
- Corbin, Carole Lynn. *The Right to Vote*. New York, Franklin Watts, 1985. [4-8]
- Cullen-DuPont, Kathryn. *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Women's Liberty*. New York, Facts on File, 1992. grades 7-12.
- Daffron, Carolyn. *Gloria Steinem*. New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1988. grades 5-9 [American Women of Achievement series]
- Duffy, James. *Radical Red*. New York, Schribner's, 1993. [4-7]  
novel about a young girl who meets Susan B. Anthony; set in New York
- Freedman, Suzanne. *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the Antilynching Crusade*. Brookfield, Conn., Millbrook Press, 1994. grades k-2
- Fritz, Jean. *Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Beecher Preachers*. New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994. grades 6-9
- Gehret, Jeanne. *Susan B. Anthony and Justice for All*. Fairport, New York, Verbal Images Press, 1994. grades 5-9; 50 page teachers guide to accompany this book is available]
- Gleiter, Jan and Kathleen Thompson. *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*. Austin, TX, Raintree Publishers, 1988. grades 3-5; good illustrations
- Hakim, Joy. *War, Peace, and All That Jazz*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1994. grades 5-9 good overview of 1918-1945 [A History of Us series]
- Haynes, Richard M. *Ida B. Wells: Antilynching Crusader*. Austin, Texas, Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1994.
- Johnston, Norma. *Harriet, The Life and World of Harriet Beecher Stowe*. New York, Four Winds Press, 1994. grades 7-12
- Levin, Pamela. *Susan B. Anthony*. New Hork, Chelsea Juniors. 1993. grades 4-8 [Junior World Biographies series]
- McKissack, Pat. *Ida B. Wells-Barnett: A Voice Against Violence*. Hillsdale, N. J., Enslow Publishers, 1991. grades k-2

McKissack, Pat and Fredrick McKissack. *Mary Church Terrell: Leader for Equality*. Hillside, N. J., Enslow Publishers, 1991. grades k-2

Meltzer, Milton. *Betty Friedan, A Voice for Women's Rights*. New York, Viking Kestrel, 1985. grades 4-6

Monsell, Helen. *Susan B. Anthony: Champion of Women's Rights*. New York, Aladdin Books, 1960. grades 4-8

Morin, Isobel V. *Women of the U. S. Congress*. Minneapolis, Oliver Press, 1994. grades 5-8

O'Neal, Zibby. *A Long Way to Go*. New York, Puffin Books, 1990. grades 2-5 [Once Upon America series]

Sawyer, Kem Knapp. *Lucretia Mott: Friend of Justice*. Lowell, Massachusetts, Discovery Enterprises, Ltd., 1991. grades 3-6; good illustrations, considerable text

Sherman, Janann, ed. *The Perfect Thirty-Six: Tennessee Delivers Woman Suffrage*. (Authors: Carol Lyn Yellin, Janann Sherman, and Ilene Cornwall). Memphis, Iris Press, 1998. grades 4-12. many photos, illustrations.

Smith, Betsy Covington. *Women Win the Vote*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Silver Burdett Press, 1989. grades 4-8 many photos, illustrations.

Stein, R. Conrad. *The Story of the Nineteenth Amendment*. Chicago, Children's Press, 1982. grades 3-5

Sullivan, George. *The Day the Women Got the Vote*. A Photo History of the Women's Rights Movement. New York, Scholastic, Inc. 1994. (excellent pictures) grades 5-9

Tedrow, T. L. *The Great Debate*. Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1992. grades 5-8 a novel

Van Steenwyk, Elizabeth. *Ida B. Wells-Barnett: Woman of Courage*. New York, F. Watts, 1992. grades 3-6

Weisberg, Barbara. *Susan B. Anthony*. New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 1988.

## Books Providing General Background on American Women's History for Adults:

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Banner, Lois. *Elizabeth Cady Stanton, A Radical for Woman's Rights*. Boston, Little, Brown, 1980.

Barry, Kathleen. *Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of A Singular Feminist*. New York, New York University Press, 1988.

Becker, Susan D. *The Origins of the Equal Rights Amendment: American Feminism Between the Wars*. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1981.

Chafe, William H. *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1992.

Covey, Alan, editor. *A Century of Women*. Atlanta. TBS Books, 1994. [based on documentary] numerous photos

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DuBois, Ellen Carol. *Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Correspondence, Writings, Speeches*. New York, Schocken Books, 1981. [published in 1992, Northeastern University Press, Boston]

Dykeman, Wilma. *Tennessee Women: An Infinite Variety*. Newport, Wakestone Books, 1993.

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Giddings, Paula. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. New York, Morrow, 1984.

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Hymowitz, Carol & Michaela Weissman. *A History of Women in America*. New York, Bantam Books, 1978.

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Kimmel, Michael & Thomas Mosmiller, eds. *Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776-1990*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1992.

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McHenry, Robert, ed. *Famous American Women: A Biographical Dictionary from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York, Peter Smith, 1984.

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### **Activities for the Classroom**

#### **Kindergarten through Grade Four**

1. Make signs to encourage people to support women's rights to vote.
2. Hold a suffrage parade in your school.
3. Visit a polling place (many are in schools) on an election day.
4. Ask an adult woman to describe her feelings about voting to the class.

#### **Grades Five through Eight**

1. Hold a "mock" election for a present-day elected official (governor, mayor, etc.) allowing only the male students in the class to vote. Hold a second election with all members of the class voting. Lead students in a discussion of the results.
2. Lead your class in a discussion about how members of society can bring about changes in that society.
3. Write a letter to a member of the Tennessee General Assembly in 1920 telling him why women should be given the right to vote.
4. Invite a grandmother to come to your class and tell the class how the lives of women have changed since she was a little girl.
5. Using a Tennessee Blue Book, make a list of the women who hold office in Tennessee today. Identify local women from your area who hold public office.
6. Write a letter to a present member of the Tennessee General Assembly supporting a particular bill.

7. Write a short story about a child your age whose mother has decided to become a suffragist.
8. Write a letter dated today thanking the men in the General Assembly in 1920 who voted for suffrage.
9. Dramatize Ida B. Wells' conversation with the suffragists in Washington, D. C. who told her that she could not march in the suffrage parade.

### **Grades Nine through Twelve**

1. Interpret Abigail Adams' words, "We are determined to foment a rebellion if the Constitution does not include women."
2. Teach students how to use newspapers on microfilm in the public libraries. Have the students look at a local newspaper for August 17 and 18, 1920.
3. Write a letter from Sue Shelton White to Anne Dallas Dudley defending her picketing of the White House.
4. Write an editorial opposing suffrage.
5. Draw a political cartoon opposing suffrage.
6. Discuss the arguments used by the anti-suffragists. How many of these arguments are still used today by those opposing women's rights?
7. For class discussion: Did women's suffrage "purify" American politics?
8. For class discussion: Many of the women who were the earliest suffragists had been abolitionists and saw a similarity between slavery they had been fighting against and the situation of women. What were the similarities? What were the differences?
9. What are the issues of the present women's movement?
10. For class discussion: "A Woman's Place is in the House ... and in the Senate." Some have argued that women should not hold high public office because they are not strong enough to do a good job. Who are the women in politics today? Consider women in Tennessee who have been elected to public office. What adjectives do the media use to describe them? What issues are of prime concern for them? Write to a specific woman from your area on an issue of importance to you today, asking her advice on action you can take toward the ends you'd like to see achieved.

11. Read the Constitution of the United States and the Amendments. Where do you first find any reference to gender (male, female, men, women)?

12. Discuss the divisions within Tennessee in 1920. Discuss the divisions within the state today. What divisions exist within your school? What are the positive aspects of these divisions. What are the negative aspects of these divisions?



*photograph of Tennessee suffrage enthusiasts 1919*