

Women's Rights and Citizenship Throughout US History (/)

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Women's suffrage

The 1800's started out having men leaving the farms and ranches and had them breaking out into the world of business in shops, offices and the like. This left the women at home in charge of their own little world. Instead of constantly being under a man's authority the women now had the day to be in charge of the home, children, hired help and a little personal time. As the century moved on women got a little lonely at home and realized that they had some degree of impact in church areas. This excited them and they grew hungry for more say and influence. The clergy had a time trying to put that fire out, but at last the women further realized that they could do what men do: think, do business, work, provide and still be women. These ideas came full force during the Civil War. The men went off to fight, leaving the shops, offices, farms and mills to be tended to by the women. After the Civil War the men returning didn't take nicely to the women and their new found positions. This women's empowerment movement became the beginning of suffrage. Suffrage was the women's movement to gain the right of equal pay for equal work, the right to vote and the right to work in the jobs that she was capable. Not all women agreed with this concept, and many men didn't support it at all.

Education

Education for women in the 1800s was minimal during that period. Schooling was for the male gender, and if a woman wanted to go to school, she was looked down upon. The woman's role was in the house. In the home the women took care of the children and she was the one who set the atmosphere for her offspring. She was the one who would teach them or "train" them in their roles in life. Over time, many were starting to see that women needed some sort of education because they were the ones who raised the children in the home. As a result, many women began to educate themselves in order to better their lives and the lives of their offspring. This was the beginning of all female colleges. These colleges were created to educate the woman and to better themselves in the home environment.

Abolition and The Woman's Movement

The 1800's were a pinnacle time for women. Changing social conditions for women during the early 1800's, combined with the idea of equality, led to the birth of the woman suffrage movement. For example, women started to receive more education and to take part in reform movements like abolition, which involved them in politics. Slavery was not uncommon in the United States in the 1800s, especially in the south. Slavery was a way of life for people of this time. However, it was a controversial subject. The treatment of slaves was harsh for trying to escape or for slacking off. It was encouraged for black women slaves to have many children so there will be more labor available for the owner. Slaves often had no rights at all, and they were not even considered human in many cases. It was during the 1800s, however, when certain people, including women, stood up and voiced their opinions about the abuses and hardships slaves have to live with their whole lives.

Voting rights

As a result of their work in abolition, women started to ask why they were not also allowed to vote. The National Women's Suffrage Association was started in 1869 by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. There were other interests of the women's suffrage movement such as equal pay and legal equality. Suffrage quickly became the chief goal of the women's rights movement. Leaders of the movement believed that if women had the vote, they could use it to gain other rights. The suffragists faced strong opposition; The Society Women of Beacon Hill were among the list of oppositions. They saw politics as corrupt, and if women gained the right to vote, then the women themselves would also become corrupt. The Democratic Party was also against the NWSA and other suffrage groups mainly because they were afraid that if women gained the right to vote then soon the black women would follow. Many others who opposed the movement were the alcohol brewers, husbands and the media. The nineteenth amendment, which gave women the right to vote, was added to the constitution in May of 1919.