

### The Role of Women

#### Definition: the Prohibition Era (Temperance)

The Prohibition Era (1920 to 1933) was instituted with ratification of the 18th Amendment and enacted by the Volstead Act. During the Prohibition Era the manufacture and sale of alcohol was banned. This was viewed as the solution to the nation's poverty, crime, violence, abuse towards women and children and other problems. Women took action to ensure the 18th Amendment passed, hoping to reduce violence toward women and children, as well as abandonment by fathers. It was repealed by the 21st Amendment because the 'Noble Experiment' simply did not work. Prohibition not only failed to prevent the consumption of alcohol, but led to the development of organized crime, increased violence, unregulated and untaxed alcohol and massive political corruption. Gangsters dominated various cities and provided bootleg alcohol for speakeasies. Each major city had its own gangster element.



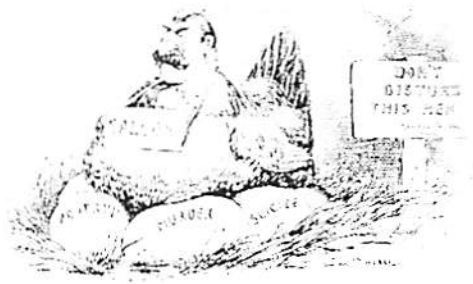
#### Source 1:



1. What is the man cutting down? Why?

2. How is he cutting down the tree (using what)?

#### Source 2:



3. What does the hen represent?

4. Hens create eggs, what did this hen create? What does this symbolize?

#### What Was the Seneca Falls Convention?

What would you do if you saw a group of people being treated unfairly? This was the question facing many men and women in the early 1800s. The Declaration of Independence, written in 1776 when the United States first became a country, says that "all men are created equal". But back then, the law, schools, business, and society did not treat every person equally. Many African American men and women were slaves and treated like property. And all women could not vote - a married woman couldn't even own a house or land (they were her husband's)! Over time, more people began to feel this was wrong and came together to do something about it. On July 19 and 20, 1848, over 300 men and women met at the Seneca Falls Convention in Seneca Falls, New York. This was the first large meeting focused on women's rights, and it started a movement that grew and helped make real changes.

In 1840, a woman named Elizabeth Cady Stanton traveled to London to attend a meeting of abolitionists, which were people who fought against slavery. While there, she met Lucretia Mott. They realized they could not speak out in the meeting because they were women. So Stanton and Mott started working to organize a women's rights movement. In 1848, Mott and Stanton along with Mary Ann M'Clintock, Jane Hunt, and Martha Coffin Wright put together the Seneca Falls Convention at the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Stanton was living in Seneca Falls at the time.

The meeting lasted two days; only women participated on the first day, while men could also get involved on the second. Frederick Douglass, a well-known African American writer and speaker and a leader of the abolitionist movement, was there. A newspaper article from the Seneca Falls Convention said that there was a lot of "spirited discussion" at the meeting.

#### Declaration of Sentiments

The women approved the Declaration of Sentiments, which uses some of the same language from the Declaration of Independence. It states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal." Notice that it adds the words "and women." It then lists the different ways that women were treated unfairly. Two examples were that women could not teach law or medicine or attend college. At the end, it says they will work hard to make things change.

Thirty-two men and sixty-eight women signed the Declaration of Sentiments, and soon it was printed as a pamphlet and sent all over the country. It has taken many years, but women have gained many of the rights outlined in the Declaration. Only one of the women who signed it was still alive in 1920 when women got the right to vote.

## What is the 19th Amendment?

The U.S. Constitution guarantees basic rights for Americans, but since it was put into place in 1787, it has required some additions and changes over time. That's where amendments come into play. Amendments are articles that were added to the Constitution later on, and there are 33 of these amendments. A very important one that has had a profound impact on the lives of all Americans is the 19th Amendment, which said that people could not be denied the right to vote based on sex.

Imagine that you turned 18 and wanted to vote for president. Before 1920, if you were a woman, you weren't allowed to. It was not until the 19th Amendment was ratified, or officially put into place, on Aug. 18, 1920, that women in the United States were granted their right to vote. It's hard to imagine today, but only 100 years ago, only half the U.S. population had a say in who ran our country.

Women's right to vote didn't just happen on its own. It was the outcome of a decades-long movement called the women's suffrage movement, whose participants were called 'suffragettes.' Women's suffrage gained momentum after the Civil War ended, but the fight for the right to vote really went back much further. Initially, female leaders tried to include language that would protect their right to vote in earlier constitutional amendments, including the 13th, 14th, and 15th. However, none of these efforts were successful.

At this time, the United States was still growing and expanding westward. As new states were formed, several included women's suffrage in their state constitutions. Still, women could not vote on a national level. Two major leaders in the suffrage movement, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, tried a new approach, challenging laws in court to earn equal rights. Again, their attempts failed. Then, they tried yet another approach and began the process of introducing a constitutional amendment.

The about 30 words that would eventually become the 19th Amendment were actually written by a senator named Aaron A. Sargent. Senator Sargent had been a supporter of women's rights and a friend of Susan B. Anthony, who he met by chance on a train. Together, they worked on the amendment, and Sargent first introduced it to Congress in 1878. Unfortunately, the wheels of government turn very slowly, and it took several decades for the 19th Amendment to become ratified. In 1919, President Wilson called for a special session of Congress to consider the amendment again, and it passed! The 19th Amendment was officially added to the United States Constitution in 1920.

## Source 2

### Excerpt from *the Declaration of Sentiments* (1848)

*This excerpt is from the Declaration of Sentiments, which was created and signed at the first conference held to specifically address the issue of woman's rights. The conference took place in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848.*

We hold these truths to be self-evident: 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; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, getting their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries . . . on the part of man toward woman. . . .

[I]n view of this entire dis[en]franchisement<sup>1</sup> of one-half of the people of this country . . . in view of the unjust laws . . . and because women do feel . . . deprived of<sup>2</sup> their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of these United States.

[W]e shall use every instrument within our power to effect our object[ive]. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts<sup>3</sup>, petition the state and national legislatures, and . . . enlist the pulpit<sup>4</sup> and the press on our behalf. . . .

<sup>1</sup>disenfranchisement: denying someone the right to vote

<sup>2</sup>deprived of: denied

<sup>3</sup>circulate tracts: distribute persuasive pamphlets or flyers

<sup>4</sup>pulpit: religious leaders

### Source 3

#### Quotations from Female Reformers

*The first quotation is from Sojourner Truth, an African American abolitionist and woman's rights supporter. She was born into slavery in New York, but escaped to freedom in 1826. The second quotation is from Lucretia Mott, a white abolitionist from Pennsylvania who also was active in the woman's rights movement.*

#### Quotation from a *Speech Delivered in Ohio* (December 1851) by Sojourner Truth

[W]here there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter<sup>1</sup>. I think that 'twixt<sup>2</sup> the Negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. . . .

[T]hese women together ought to be able to turn . . . [the world] right side up again!

<sup>1</sup>kilter: balance

<sup>2</sup>'twixt: between

#### Quotation from a *Speech Delivered in Pennsylvania* (October 1860) by Lucretia Mott

I have no idea of submitting<sup>1</sup> tamely to injustice inflicted<sup>2</sup> either on me or on the slave. I will oppose it with all the moral powers with which I am endowed<sup>3</sup>. . . .

<sup>1</sup>submitting: accepting the authority or will of another person

<sup>2</sup>inflicted: put upon or forced

<sup>3</sup>endowed: gifted

### Source 4

#### Excerpt from *United States v. Susan B. Anthony* (1873)

*This excerpt is from a conversation between Susan B. Anthony and the judge overseeing her sentencing hearing. In 1872, Susan B. Anthony was arrested for illegally voting in a presidential election. In 1873, she was tried, convicted, and ordered to pay a \$100 fine. Susan B. Anthony was a social reformer and leading figure in the women's suffrage movement.*

Anthony: "Your denial of my citizen's right to vote, is the denial of my right of consent as one of the governed, the denial of my right of representation as one of the taxed, the denial of my right to a trial by a jury of my peers as an offender against law, therefore, the denial of my sacred rights to life, liberty, property. . . ."

Judge: "The Court must insist. The prisoner has been tried according to the established forms of law."

Anthony: "Yes. . . . but by forms of law all made by men, interpreted by men, administered by men, in favor of men, and against women, and hence, your honor's ordered verdict of guilty [is] . . . simply because that citizen was a woman and not a man. . . . [T]he same man made forms of law, declared it a crime . . . for you, or me, or any of us, to give a cup of cold water, a crust of bread, or a night's shelter to a . . . fugitive [slave]. . . . And every man or woman in whose veins coursed a drop of human sympathy violated<sup>1</sup> that wicked law . . . and was justified in so doing. As then, the slaves who got their freedom must take it [despite] unjust forms of law . . . so now, must women, to get their right to a voice in this government, take it. . . . I have taken mine, and mean to take it at every possible opportunity."

<sup>1</sup>violated: broke

Using Source 2, which statement explains how the Declaration of Independence most likely motivated the people who attended the Seneca Falls Convention?

- (a) The Declaration of Independence encouraged women to take over and lead the institutions of the government.
- (b) The Declaration of Independence was a model of how to call for change and identified rights that all citizens should have.
- (c) The Declaration of Independence reminded women that the government was created in response to a foreign ruler.
- (d) The Declaration of Independence was an example of why gaining property rights for women was extremely important.

2. Using Source 2 and Source 4, which actions were taken by women in order to secure more democratic rights for themselves and others during the early 1800s?

- (a) They staged violent protests.
- (b) They boycotted large businesses.
- (c) They voiced their opinions in court.
- (d) They refused to pay income taxes.
- (e) They sued the government for discrimination.
- (f) They sent letters to politicians and legislators.

3. Based on Source 4, which statement best explains why Susan B. Anthony believed that she was being unfairly accused of breaking the law?

- (a) She believed the Constitution allowed punishments that were too harsh.
- (b) She argued the Constitution gave women the right to help enslaved people escape from slavery.
- (c) She wanted the Constitution to include amendments that protected the accused.
- (d) She believed the Constitution gave women equal rights to participate in the democratic process.

4. Using Source 3 and Source 4, which statement explains how the abolitionist movement most likely influenced the woman's rights movement?

- (a) Female abolitionists developed skills that they also used in the fight for woman's rights.
- (b) Buildings used for abolitionist rallies were also used for woman's rights conventions.
- (c) Abolitionist leaders persuaded businesses to fund the woman's rights movement.
- (d) Opponents of the abolitionist movement supported legislation for woman's rights.