

# American Government and Politics Today

## Chapter 5 Civil Rights



## Women's Struggle for Equal Rights

- Early Women's Political Movements
  - Activism for women's rights began with the Seneca Falls convention in 1848.
- Women's Suffrage Associations
  - This struggle would continue until the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution that 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."



## Early 19c Women

1. Unable to vote.
2. Legal status of a minor.
3. Single --> could own her own property.
4. Married --> no control over her property or her children.
5. Could not initiate divorce.
6. Couldn't make wills, sign a contract, or bring suit in court without her husband's permission.

## "Separate Spheres" Concept

Republican Motherhood evolved into the "Cult of Domesticity"

- III. A woman's "sphere" was in the home (it was a refuge from the cruel world outside).
- III. Her role was to "civilize" her husband and family.
- III. An 1830s MA minister:

*The power of woman is her dependence. A woman who gives up that dependence on man to become a reformer yields the power God has given her for her protection, and her character becomes unnatural!*

## Cult of Domesticity = Slavery

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening inspired women to improve society.



Angelina Grimké



Sarah Grimké



Lucy Stone

- American Women's Suffrage Assoc.
- edited *Woman's Journal*

➤ Southern Abolitionists

## Women's Rights Movement

When abolitionists divided over the issue of female participation, women found it easy to identify with the situation of the slaves

1848: Feminist reform led to **Seneca Falls Convention**

Significance: launched modern women's rights movement

Established the arguments and the program for the women's rights movement for the remainder of the century

## What It Would Be Like If Ladies Had Their Own Way!



## Women's Rights

1840 --> split in the abolitionist movement over women's role in it.

London --> **World Anti-Slavery Convention**



Lucretia Mott



Elizabeth Cady Stanton

1848 --> **Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments**

## SENECA FALLS

The first Woman's rights movement was in Seneca Falls, New York in 1849.....

- Educational and professional opportunities
- Property rights
- Legal equality
- repeal of laws awarding the father custody of the children in divorce.
- Suffrage rights

## SENECA FALLS



•The following is an excerpt from the **Seneca Falls Declaration** written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

•Notice that the language and wording is similar to the **Declaration of Independence**.

## SENECA FALLS

*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, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.....*

## SENECA FALLS

*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. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world....*

- He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.*
- He has taken from all right in property, even to the wages she earns.*

## SENECA FALLS

*He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband.*

*In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master; the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.*

## Susan B. Anthony on Marriage and Slavery

*"The married women and their legal status. What is servitude? "The condition of a slave." What is a slave? "A person who is robbed of the proceeds of his labor; a person who is subject to the will of another..."*

*I submit the deprivation by law of ownership of one's own person, wages, property, children, the denial of right as an individual, to sue and be sued, to vote, and to testify in the courts, is a condition of servitude most bitter and absolute, though under the sacred name of marriage.*

## Preparing the Way for Suffrage

- American women activists first demanded the right to vote in 1848 at the **Seneca Falls Convention** in New York.
- The movement eventually split into two groups:
  - The National Woman Suffrage Association** fought for a constitutional amendment for suffrage.
  - The American Woman Suffrage Association** worked to win voting rights on the state level.
- In 1890, **Wyoming** entered the union and became the first state to grant women the right to vote.
- In 1872, in an act of **civil disobedience**, a suffrage leader, Susan B. Anthony, insisted on voting in Rochester, New York. She was arrested for this act.

## Suffragist Strategies

### NWSA

#### Constitutional Amendment

- Winning suffrage by a constitutional amendment
- The first federal amendment was introduced in Congress in 1868 and stalled.
- In 1878, suffragists introduced a new amendment.
- Stalled again, the bill was not debated again until 1887. It was defeated by the Senate.
- The bill was not debated again until 1913.

### AWSA

#### Individual State Suffrage

- Winning suffrage state by state
- State suffrage seemed more successful than a constitutional amendment.
  - Survival on the frontier required the combined efforts of men and women and encouraged a greater sense of equality.
- Western states were more likely to allow women the right to vote.

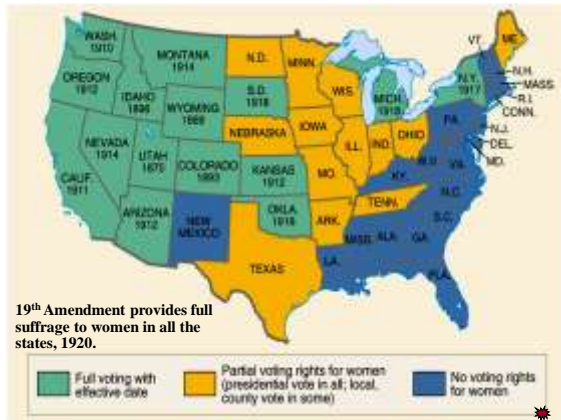
## A New Generation Women's Suffrage



- Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, leaders of the suffrage movement, died without seeing the victory of women's suffrage.
- At the turn of the century, **Carrie Chapman Catt** became the leader of the **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)**.
- She led the movement from 1900 to 1904 and again after 1915.
- In March 1913 Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organized a parade of 5,000 women in Washington, D.C.

## A New Generation Women's Suffrage





## Feminist Victories and Defeat

1. During the 1970s, the feminist movement became energized and took a decidedly aggressive tone.
2. **Title IX** prohibited sex discrimination in any federally funded education program.
  - It's largest impact was seen in the emergence of girls' sports in public schools.
3. The Supreme Court strongly entered the fray in the feminist movement.
  - The Court's decisions challenged sex discrimination in legislation and employment.
  - The super-controversial **Roe v. Wade** case legalized abortion, arguing that ending a pregnancy was protected under a right to privacy.



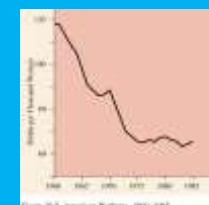
Even more ambitious was the **ERA (Equal Rights Amendment)** to the Constitution.

- The ERA sought to guarantee gender equality through the written word.

- Phyllis Schlafly** led other women against ERA. Schlafly said ERA advocates were, "bitter women seeking a constitutional cure for their personal problems." She used the following arguments against the ERA amendment:

- It would deprive a woman's right to be a wife.
- It would require women to serve in combat.
- It would legalize homosexual marriage.

- 38 state legislatures adopted the amendment, but 41 were necessary for ratification. Thus, the ERA ended.



## The Modern Women's Movement

- The Equal Rights Amendment
- Additional Women's Issues
  - domestic violence
  - abortion rights
  - pornography (divided the movement rather than united it).
- Discrimination in the Courts
- Expanding Women's Political Activities

## Women in Politics Today



- Women in Congress
- Women in the Executive and Judicial Branches
- Continuing Disproportionate Leadership

## Gender-Based Discrimination in the Workplace

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - This title prohibits gender discrimination in employment.
- Sexual Harassment
  - The Supreme Court also has held that Title VII includes prohibitions on sexual harassment.

## Gender-Based Discrimination in the Workplace (cont.)

- Wage Discrimination
  - Recent figures show a woman earns 76 cents for every dollar made by a man.
  - The Equal Pay Act of 1963.
  - The Glass Ceiling.