

The Women's Suffrage Movement

Part 1

The Women's Suffrage Movement began with the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. The idea for the Convention came from two women: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. Both were concerned about women's issues of the time, specifically the fact that women did not have the right to vote. Stanton felt that this was unfair. She insisted that women needed the power to make laws, in order to secure other rights that were important to women.

The Convention was designed around a document that Stanton wrote, called the "Declaration of Sentiments". Using the Declaration of Independence as her guide, she listed eighteen usurpations, or misuses of power, on the part of men, against women. Stanton also wrote eleven resolutions, or opinions, put forth to be voted on by the attendees of the Convention. About three hundred people came to the Convention, including forty men. All of the resolutions were eventually passed, including the 9th one, which called for women's suffrage, or the right for women to vote.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott signed the Seneca Falls Declaration and started the Suffrage Movement that would last until 1920, when women were finally granted the right to vote by the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

1. What event triggered the Women's Suffrage Movement?

2. Who were the two women that organized this event?

3. What does the term "suffrage" mean in this passage?

4. When were American women finally granted suffrage?

5. Which Amendment of the Constitution grants women this right?

The Women's Suffrage Movement Part 2

Elizabeth Cady Stanton met Susan B. Anthony in 1851. Elizabeth had started her career in reform by organizing the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. The Convention's purpose was to raise awareness about the inequities that women suffered at the hands of men. Susan B. Anthony began her reform career as a temperance activist. Her work involved encouraging men's abstinence from the use of alcohol, to protect women and families from poverty and violence. The two women began a lifelong friendship based on a shared goal of improving women's lives.

Susan was inspired by Elizabeth's knowledge of politics, law and philosophy, as well as her ability to write powerful speeches. Elizabeth appreciated Susan's thoughtful critiques of her ideas and the fact the Susan was able to travel and voice her ideas in public forums. This partnership worked well since Elizabeth was homebound with seven children and enjoyed her family life, while Susan enjoyed traveling to spread the word.

Together they fought many battles in the war for women's rights, but none harder than for the suffrage movement. They believed that women needed to have a say in the laws that governed the country, if they were ever going to be able to improve other conditions for women. Both women died before they could witness the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which gave women in the United States the right to vote.

1. What was the purpose of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848?

2. What does it mean to be a temperance activist?

3. What were Elizabeth's strengths?

4. What were Susan's strengths?

5. What did the women believe to be the most important battle in the fight for women's rights, and why?

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON (1815-1902)

Elizabeth Cady was born in Johnstown, New York on November 12th, 1815.

Her parents were Daniel Cady, a prominent judge, and Margaret Livingston. She grew up in a wealthy and privileged home, but in 1826, the death of her brother, Eleazar, changed her life.

In an effort to lessen the loss for her father, Elizabeth was determined to excel in all the areas her brother had. She graduated from the Troy Seminary in 1833, and was introduced to the idea of social reform by her cousin, Gerrit Smith. Through her cousin, she met and married Henry Brewer Stanton in 1840. Soon after, Elizabeth met Lucretia Mott. Lucretia became her mentor and friend, and had the greatest influence on her development as a feminist.

As Elizabeth became increasingly aware of the inequities between men and women, she resolved to transform women's place in society by winning the right to vote. In 1848, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton spearheaded the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York.

1. What event changed the course of Elizabeth's life?

2. What did Elizabeth do to gain acceptance from her father?

3. What does the term mentor mean in this passage?

4. Later in life, what was Elizabeth most concerned about?

5. What did she hope to accomplish through her reform work with Lucretia Mott?

SUSAN B. ANTHONY (1820-1906)

Susan B. Anthony was born on February 15th, 1820, near Adams, Massachusetts. She was the second of eight children born to Daniel and Lucy Read Anthony. Susan benefited from growing up in a Quaker community, where she was encouraged to express herself freely. Her father made sure that his daughters received excellent educations, equal to that of his sons.

Susan became a teacher and taught for ten years before she began her reform career as a temperance activist in 1848. She met Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1851. Her friendship with Elizabeth turned into a working partnership that lasted until their deaths. Susan was inspired by Elizabeth to fight for women’s suffrage.

Susan traveled extensively to campaign for women’s issues, but she was also interested in anti-slavery issues. In 1856, she was hired by the American Anti-Slavery Society to speak out against slavery. During the Civil War, Susan lobbied for the freedom of African Americans. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, Susan felt it was her duty to educate society about the importance of getting the vote for women. She continued traveling and lecturing, and even went to Europe to stimulate cooperation between U.S. and foreign women reformers.

Susan B. Anthony worked tirelessly throughout her life for the causes she supported. She died March 13th, 1906 at 86 years old. It would take fourteen more years for women to get the right to vote.

1. How did Susan benefit from growing up in a Quaker community?

2. How did Susan’s friendship with Elizabeth Cady Stanton influence her life?

3. Besides women’s suffrage and temperance, what other issue concerned Susan?

4. Why did Susan travel to Europe?

5. In this passage, what does it mean that Susan “lobbied for the freedom of African Americans”?

ANSWER PAGES

PAGE 1: The Women's Suffrage Movement, part 1

1. The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848
2. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott
3. The right or privilege to vote
4. 1920
5. 19th Amendment

PAGE 2: The Women's Suffrage Movement, part 2

1. To raise awareness about the inequities women suffered at the hands of men
2. Encouraging abstinence from the use of alcohol
3. Her knowledge of important topics and her ability to write speeches.
4. She provided thoughtful critiques and she was able to travel and speak in public forums.
5. Elizabeth needed to stay home with her children, so she wrote and Susan was able to travel to get the word out.
6. To get women the right to vote so that they could help make laws for the country that would protect women's rights.

PAGE 3: Elizabeth Cady Stanton

1. The death of her brother
2. She tried to excel in the areas her brother had.
3. A wise and trusted counselor or teacher
4. The inequities between men and women and winning women the right to vote
5. To transform women's place in society

PAGE 4: SUSAN B. ANTHONY

1. She was allowed to express herself freely and was provided a good education
2. She was inspired to fight for women's suffrage
3. Slavery
4. To stimulate cooperation between U.S. and foreign women reformers
5. She spoke out against slavery and tried to influence the thinking of others

PAGE 5: REPORT: NO ANSWERS NEEDED