

The Right to Vote - Draft Notes

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Reforms against suffrage

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 - at-large rather than district voting
 - increased public accountability for office holders
 - state control over key aspects of municipal administration
 - remove public offices from the electoral sphere and make them appointive

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Reforms to strength democracy

- Other critics were more optimistic about the possibilities of changing the size and shape of the electorate
- Some advocated reinstituting property and tax qualifications or imposing literacy tests on prospective voters
- More subtle approaches also were proposed, including
 - longer naturalization periods
 - stricter naturalization laws
 - waiting periods before new citizens could vote
 - complex ballot laws
 - elaborate systems of voter registration

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Purifying the Electorate

- The laws governing elections in most states were revised often between the Civil War and World War I
- States held constitutional conventions that defined or redefined the shape of the electorate and outlined of the electoral process
- State legislatures drew up increasingly detailed statutes that spelled out electoral procedures of all types
 - timing of elections
 - location of polling places
 - hours that polls would be open
 - configuration of ballots
 - counting of votes
- Many of these laws were straightforwardly administrative, while other laws were more controversial, inspired by partisan interests, enacted to influence the outcome of elections

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- The apportionment of state legislative as well as congressional seats was a key issue
 - generated recurrent conflicts, particularly between urban and rural areas
- Linked to apportionment was the location of district boundaries in states and within cities
 - gerrymandering was a routine form of political combat
 - it was practiced by both major parties against one another and against any upstart political organizations
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- The most critical laws remained those that determined the size and contours of the electorate
- These were of two types.
 - First and most important were those that set out the fundamental qualifications that a man (or woman) had to meet in order to become an eligible voter
 - The second, of increasing significance, established the procedures that a potential voter had to follow in order to participate in elections
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Money and the Vote

- Economic requirements for voting were not a dead issue after 1850
- Economic qualifications continued to offer opponents of universal suffrage a direct and potentially efficient means of winnowing out undesirable voters
- The tax requirement had served two purposes:
 - It was an obstacle to poor people's voting
 - It was a drain on the treasuries of both political parties
- In the North, a poll tax was used by the Republicans to disenfranchise the poor, often immigrants, who more often than not supported Democrats

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- For example, in the late 1840s the Democratic Party in New York was heavily indebted to its supporters and thus needed financial resources to pay its bills. In 1848 it had \$20,000 in debt due to pay the poll taxes of its members.
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 - The Court found the law to be racially discriminatory in violation of the *Fifteenth Amendment*
 - however, it noted that economic discrimination in the form of a property requirement was presumed to be “free from constitutional objection”

Source: <https://www.fairhousing.org/2015/05/14/1915-supreme-court-decision-rejected-the-idea-that-property-tax-was-unconstitutional/>

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- Overtly class-based economic restrictions were accompanied by legal changes expressly designed to reduce the number of “undesirable” immigrants who could vote
- Beginning in the 1890s, the nation witnessed the growth of a significant movement to **restrict immigration altogether**
 - widespread middle-class anxiety about the impact of the foreign-born on politics, particularly urban politics
- The effort to keep immigrants from the polls was distinct from the movement for outright restriction
- As the ratio of immigrant workers to settlers soared and the need to encourage settlement diminished, granting the franchise to non-citizens seemed increasingly undesirable and risky.

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 - The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and the National Woman's Party (NWP) were among the few groups that supported the pathbreaking restriction and quota laws of 1921 and 1924
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 - beginning with Idaho territory in 1874, states that had permitted non-citizens to vote began to repeal their declarant alien provisions
 - picked up steam in the wake of the depression of the 1890s and the assassination of President McKinley by an immigrant in 1901
 - it accelerated again during and after World War I, when concerns about the loyalty of the foreign-born contributed to a rare instance of wartime contraction of the franchise.
- The last state to permit non-citizens to vote was Arkansas, which abolished the practice in 1926 Alien suffrage
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 - Required naturalized citizens to present their naturalization papers to election officials before registering or voting
 - Although not unreasonable on its face, this requirement, as lawmakers knew, was a significant procedural hurdle for many immigrants, who might easily have lost their papers or been unaware of the requirement
 - When coupled with provisions that permitted anyone present at the polls to challenge

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Reducing immigrant voting

- The concerns that prompted such efforts to keep immigrants from the polls also contributed to the tightening of federal immigration and naturalization laws between 1880 and the 1920s
- Beginning in 1882, Congress began to narrow the channels through which the flow of European immigrants passed
- Between 1906 and 1910, Congress codified the naturalization laws
eliminated the requirement that immigrants must be of a certain age
established limits on the number of immigrants of each nationality
required candidates for naturalization to write their own names and present sample proof (including witnesses) of their ability and continuous residence in the United States for the past five years

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- These laws were unabashedly aimed at making it more difficult for men and women to become citizens, and by all accounts they succeeded, reducing the proportion of immigrants who could vote
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- By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, most Americans –and especially those on the West Coast– wanted not only to keep the Chinese from voting but to halt Chinese immigration and even deport those who were already here
- Feared because of their willingness to work for low wages and despised for racial and cultural reasons, the Chinese had never been a significant political presence because they had almost always been treated as nonwhite and therefore ineligible for citizenship
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A knowledge of the language of our laws and the faculty of informing oneself without aid of their provisions, would in itself constitute a test, if rigorously enforced, incompatible with the existence of a proletariat.

– Charles Francis Adams, Jr. “Protection of the Ballot” (1869)

- Perhaps the most popular method of constricting the electorate was the literacy or education test
 - Massachusetts and Connecticut adopted tests in the 1850s
- Requiring voters to be literate, particularly in English, had a number of apparent virtues

It would reduce the ignorance of the electorate and weed out the ill-effects of the immigrant vote (considered the cause of the nation's problems) and ensure that only the 'worthy' (i.e. white, native-born, and literate) could vote.

It was more palatable than imposing restrictions on voting periods for the franchise.

It was also sold as a means of strengthening the ties between the state and the citizenry. Literacy tests were a very effective tool for

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Justifications for literacy tests

- ① illiterate men lacked the intelligence or knowledge necessary to be wise or even adequate voters
- ② (aimed at new immigrants) English-language literacy was essential for the foreign-born to become properly acquainted with American values and institutions
- ③ tying voting to literacy would encourage assimilation and education, which would benefit American society as well as immigrants themselves

- An indirect and limited means of promoting a literate electorate was the adoption of the secret or Australian ballot.
- For much of the nineteenth century, voters had obtained their ballots from political parties
 - since the ballots generally contained only the names of an individual party's candidates, literacy was not required
 - all that a man had to do was drop a ballot in a box
 - since ballots tended to be of different sizes, shapes, and colors, a man's vote was hardly a secret
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 - It was a standard ballot, usually printed by the city or state, containing the names of all candidates for office
- The voter (often in private) placed a mark by the names of the candidates or parties for whom he wished to vote
 - The Democratic Whigs of North Carolina were widely opposed
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Increasing literacy tests in the North

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 - Northern Democrats, who counted the urban poor among their constituents, generally voted against education requirements
 - So too did politically organized ethnic groups, regardless of their party affiliation, which helps to explain why no English-language literacy tests were imposed in the Midwest
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- Other sources suggest that in fact the figure was much higher
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Migrants and Residents

- The difficulty of defining or establishing residence was becoming more complex
 - in Boston, only 64% of residents who lived there in 1880 still lived there in 1890
- There was an increasingly accepted legal notion that sheer physical presence in a community for a specified length of time was not sufficient for a person to be considered a resident
 - Physical presence thus had to be accompanied by the intention of remaining in a community for what the courts came to describe as "an indefinite period"
 - Although the concept was reasonable, intention could be difficult to ascertain or prove
- Courts found themselves evolving criteria to gauge the intentions of both individuals and groups (such as ministers and railway workers, who were often on the move) as they tried to apply broadly stated laws to extremely varied situations.
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-The notion that legal residence was tied as much to intention as physical presence inexorably led states to consider mechanisms for absentee voting + for men and women who were temporarily away from home but intended to return - The Civil War and the desire to permit soldiers to vote during the war severed the link between voting and physical presence in a community - World War I added a new urgency to the issue, since nearly three million men were inducted into the army - By 1918, nearly all states had made provisions for men serving in the military to cast their ballots, at least in time of war

Absentee voting (i.e., mail-in ballots)

- By the end of World War I, more than twenty states had provided for absentee voting on the part of anyone who could demonstrate a work-related reason (and in a few cases, any reason) for being absent on election day.
- Concerns about fraud generally were alleviated by tight procedural rules and requirements that absentee ballots be identical to conventional ones
- A conservative estimate would be that 5–10 percent of the nation's adult population failed to meet the residency requirements at each election which was high enough to have potentially changed the outcomes of innumerable elections

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Keeping Track of Voters

- Before the 1870s in most states, there were no official preprepared lists of eligible voters
- Men who sought to vote were not obliged to take any steps to establish their eligibility prior to election day
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“The purpose of the law is to prevent fraud and to secure the proper and honest election of the people.”

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- The devil is in the details:
 - How far in advance of elections did a man or woman have to register?
 - When would registration offices be open?
 - Did one register in the county, the district, the precinct?
 - What documents had to be presented and issued?
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Political fights over the rules

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 - when the Republicans were able to, they passed laws closing the polls at sunset on the grounds that illegal voting was most likely to occur after dark
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 - the frequency of reapportionment
 - the inclusion or exclusion of certain groups of voters
 - the location of the location of polling places

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Early Nineteenth Century Democracy

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 - depending on the state or city in which he lived, a man could be kept from the polls because:
 - he was an alien
 - a pauper
 - a lumberman
 - an anarchist
 - did not pay taxes or own property
 - could not read or write
 - had moved from one state to another in the past year
 - had recently moved from one neighborhood to another
 - did not possess his naturalized citizenship
 - was unable to register on the third or fourth Tuesday before an election
 - could not prove that he had canceled a prior registration
 - been convicted of a felony, or been born in China or on an Indian reservation
- It can be no surprise, in light of this legal history, that turnout at elections dropped during the latter half of this period
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Root Causes of regression

- Those who wielded economic and social power in the rapidly changing late nineteenth century found it difficult to control the state (which they increasingly needed) under conditions of full democratization
- In the South, the abolition of slavery, coupled with the beginnings of industrialization and the com-pelling need for a docile, agricultural labor force, created pressures that overwhelmed fledgling democratic institutions
- In the North and West, the explosive growth of manufacturing and of labor-intensive extractive industries generated class conflict on a scale that the nation had never known
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- What transpired in the South seems unimaginable in the absence of racial hostility and prejudice
- The changes in voting laws in the North and the West were made possible, and shaped, by the presence of millions of immigrants and their children, indeed by the very foreignness of Jews and Chinese, of the Irish and Italian Catholics, of Indians and Mexicans
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North and South Differences

- The parallels between North and South, of course, ought not be overdrawn
 - What transpired in the southern states was far more draconian, sweeping, and violent
 - The disfranchisement was massive rather than segmented, the laws were enforced brutally, and they were always administered with overtly discriminatory intent
- In New York and Massachusetts, an illiterate immigrant could gain the franchise by learning to read; for a black man in Alabama, education was beside the point, whatever the law said
- That the redemption of the North was far milder than the parallel movement in the South was testimony not only to the significance of race but also to differences in the regions' social structures and political organizations

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As the South moved toward a new political order, the North moved toward a new social order. The North's social structure was more fluid, more open to change, and more responsive to the needs of the working class. The South's social structure was more rigid, more hierarchical, and more resistant to change. This difference in social structure was a major factor in the North's ability to implement a more comprehensive and lasting reform.

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 - Moreover, the existence of an already competitive party system, with elite and middle-class elements supporting each party, meant that efforts at wholesale disfranchisement (as was contemplated in New York in the 1870s) were certain to encounter fierce resistance and likely to meet defeat
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Legal Restrictions had an effect

- Both North and South, however, the legal contraction of the franchise made a difference
- Millions of people (most of them working class and poor) were deprived of the right to vote in municipal, state, and national elections
 - Their exclusion from the electorate meant that the outcomes of innumerable political contests were altered
 - different policies were put into place
 - different judges appointed
 - different taxes imposed
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Skipped pages 127-136

Women's Suffrage

Why woman should vote?

Women did not seem (to men) to be endangered by their inability to vote. Nowhere did the enfranchisement of women seem likely to vest Republicans or Democrats with any discernible partisan advantage.

Legal structure

- >- In 1872, Virginia Minor sued a St. Louis registrar who prevented her from registering to vote. She Claimed:
 - > + They infringed on Virginia Minor's right of free speech, which was protected by the First Amendment
 - > + they contravened the Fourteenth Amendment's command that states not abridge the "privileges or immunities" of citizens of the United States.
- >- Voting, the Minors claimed, was one of those privileges.
- >- Although the argument was a coherent one, the justices of the Supreme Court unanimously disagreed.
- >- **Upholding a lower court decision, they ruled in 1875 that suffrage was not coextensive with citizenship and thus that states possessed the authority to decide which citizens could and could not vote**

The era of maturity

- Suffragists lived in an era when a righteous cause—the abolition of slavery— that had triumphed over ferocious, entrenched opposition
- They had witnessed not only the end of slavery but also an extraordinary transformation of popular views and laws regarding Black suffrage
 - within a decade, an idea supported only by those on the fringes of politics had acquired the backing of the Republican Party and then been embedded in the Constitution

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In 1882, both houses of Congress appointed select committees on women's suffrage, each of which recommended passage of an amendment. The amendment was finally brought to a vote on the Senate floor, where, to the great disappointment of suffragists seated in the galleries, it was decisively defeated in January 1887 by a margin of thirty-four to sixteen (with twenty-six abstentions), a far cry from the two-thirds positive vote required for passage. No southern senator voted in favor of the amendment, while twenty-two voted against it. **After 1893, no congressional committee reported it favorably until late in the Progressive era**

Although the issue was debated in numerous constitutional conventions, and referenda were held in eleven states (eight of them west of the Mississippi) between 1870 and 1910, concrete gains were few. The territory of Wyoming enfranchised women in 1869, a policy affirmed at statehood in 1889; Utah did the same in 1870 and 1896 (interrupted by a brief period when the federal government stripped Utah's women of the suffrage as a curious step in its effort to rid the territory of polygamy); and Idaho and Colorado granted suffrage to women in the mid-1890s.

Partial enfranchisement

A significant number of locales—states, counties, and municipalities—where partial suffrage was adopted, permitting women to vote in municipal elections, on liquor licensing matters, or for local school boards and on issues affecting education. The most common form of partial enfranchisement involved schools: legislatures, recognizing women's responsibility for childrearing, as well as their education experience, responded to pressure from the suffrage movement by permitting women to vote on matters affecting schooling. Nearly all state legislatures considered adopting laws of this type, and by 1890, more than twenty states had done so.

Challenges for the Suffragists

Many women themselves were either opposed, or relatively indifferent, to their own enfranchisement. The demand for suffrage was most resonant among middle-class women, women from families engaged in the professions, trade or commerce, and educated women who lived in cities and developing towns. These were the women whose experiences and desires clashed most directly with traditional norms and who were most likely to seek the independence, autonomy, and equality that enfranchisement represented. Farm women, living in greater isolation and in more traditional social structures, were less responsive to calls for suffrage as well as more difficult to mobilize into collective action.

Additional challenges

The political pressure that suffragists could exert thus was limited by their numbers, too limited to overcome the entrenched ideological and psychological resistance of many male voters and politicians. The campaigns for suffrage generated organized opposition from some interest groups. Machine politicians also were dubious about women's suffrage—in part for cultural reasons and in part because they always sought to keep the electorate as manageable as possible. Conservative members of the economic elite who took seriously the proposition that women would promote egalitarian social reforms

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- But, the West was unusually receptive.
 - All of the states that fully enfranchised women in the nineteenth century were west of the Mississippi, as were most states that held referenda on the issue Western suffrage
- What seems to have tipped the balance in a handful of western states (as well, perhaps, as in western states that dominated the first twentieth-century wave of suffrage victories) was a combination of several additional ingredients.

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included a fairly sizable number of working-class transients who labored in mining, railroad and agriculture.

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- Some historians contrast the willingness of states to enfranchise women with the reluctance of states to extend suffrage to African Americans. One explanation is that the political benefits to the white population of the enfranchisement of women were more immediate than the benefits to the white population of the enfranchisement of African Americans.

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Most western states between 1850 and the 1890s did not experience the massive growth of an industrial working class that triggered such an antidemocratic reaction in the East and Midwest. The region's swing against democracy was more mild and emotionally focused on the largely male Chinese population.

- In October 1893, the *New York Times* declared in an editorial that “the cause of woman suffrage does not seem to have made the least progress in this part of the country in the last quarter of a century, if indeed it has not lost ground.”
 - Only a tiny portion of the nation’s women was fully enfranchised
 - interest was flagging in many states
 - most of the women who were entitled to vote in school board elections did not show up at the polls
- Organization National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) – combination of two organizations in 1890 By the end of the 1890s, NAWSA had created branches in every state, founded hundreds of local clubs, generated large quantities of literature, and was pressuring politicians everywhere NAWSA also began to target and raise funds from wealthy, upper-class women, some of whom for the first time were lending their support to the movement

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 - Mirroring the broader middle-and upper-class disenchantment with democracy, suffragists placed less weight on equal rights arguments, which implied that everyone, male and female, should possess the right to vote
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Essentialist emphasis was reinforced by the increasingly common claim that women had distinct economic and social interests that could only be protected by possession of the right to vote. White middle-class suffragists placed new weight on the argument that the enfranchisement of women would compensate for and counterbalance the votes of the ignorant and undesirable

In the South, of course, the American Republic was thought to be threatened not by immigrants but by Blacks. It was argued that “the medium through which to retain the supremacy of the white race over the African.” In both the North and South, the notion that women were the antidote to undesirable voters led many suffragists, including Stanton, to join the conservative chorus calling for literacy tests as a means of shaping the electorate. **Suffragists effectively abandoned the principle of universal suffrage in favor of increasingly popular class-based limitations on electoral participation**

“the doldrums”

The period from 1896 to 1910 came to be known among suffragists as “the doldrums” Although the issue was raised repeatedly in state legislatures and constitutional conventions, there were no new additions to the suffrage column. In the South, the statistical argument was simply no match for the frenzied political circus that was disfranchising Blacks and poor whites in one state after another In the North, the parallel push for suffrage for educated women collided head-on with the powerful middle-and upper-class desire to shrink the electorate

Whatever its statistical validity, the anti-Black, anti-immigrant, and anti-working class argument in favor of women's suffrage was inescapably weakened by its own *internal contradictions*. An **antidemocratic** argument in favor of enlarging the franchise could neither overwhelm nor outflank the simpler, more consistent conservative view that the polity should be as *narrowly circumscribed* as possible.

The first decade of the twentieth century proved to be less a period of failure than of fruitful stock-taking and coalition building. The movement became socially and ideologically more diverse, attracting both elite and working-class supporters to complement its middle-class base. Female workers: By 1900, roughly one fifth of the labor force was female, and many of these women held poorly paid, semiskilled jobs; in 1905, there were 50,000 women in New York's garment industry alone. New emphasis on working women had both ideological and pragmatic attractions for suffragists. Female workers were described as "exemplars of independent womanhood." They were also vulnerable and exploited victims of industrial capitalism whose plight readily tapped the broad impulses of Progressive-era social reform.

That suffrage would never be achieved until it had gained the electoral support of working-class men—which meant emphasizing class as well as gender issues Working women themselves, as well as their activist leaders, displayed new interest in acquiring the right to vote This arose in part because of their difficulty unionizing and winning workplace conflicts **They were convinced that state intervention could ameliorate their working conditions and that such intervention would be forthcoming only if they were enfranchised**

State-level Victories

Thanks in part to this convergence of working-class interest in suffrage with the suffragists' interest in the working class, the campaign for women's suffrage became a mass movement for the first time in its history after 1910. The movement also began to win some new victories. Washington permitted women to vote in 1910, followed by California in 1911, and Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon the following year; Illinois, in 1913, decided to allow women to vote in presidential elections and for all state and local offices not provided for in its constitution; and the next year, Montana and Nevada adopted full suffrage. In 1912, Congress expressly authorized the territory of Alaska to enfranchise women if its legislature so chose.

In 1910, President William H. Taft agreed to address the annual convention of NAWSA. That same year, a petition favoring a federal amendment, signed by more than 400,000 women, was presented to Congress. In 1912, the Progressive Party endorsed women's right to vote, and in March 1913, Woodrow Wilson's inauguration was partially eclipsed by a suffrage parade of 5,000 women in Washington. The following year, a Senate committee reported favorably on a federal amendment, and for the first time in decades a draft amendment was brought to the floor of Congress for a vote. But, opposition remained strong, particularly in the eastern half of the country.

By the latter years of the Progressive era, African Americans had been successfully disfranchised throughout the South, and most whites were intent on keeping it that way. Politicians were loath to tinker at all with electoral laws, and they feared that *Black women might prove to be more difficult to keep from the polls than Black men*—because Black women were believed to be more literate than men and *more aggressive about asserting their rights*, and also because women would be unseemly targets of repressive violence. Many Southerners were convinced that a federal amendment would open the doors to **Washington's intervention in elections, to enforcement—so glaringly absent—of the Fifteenth Amendment** and any subsequent amendment that might appear to *guarantee the voting rights of Black women*.

The Nineteenth Amendment

President Woodrow Wilson declined to endorse women's suffrage, evasively reiterating his view that suffrage was a state issue. The national Democratic Party was similarly unresponsive. The Republican platform of 1916, in contrast, endorsed the cause, albeit in watered-down language.

1916 election >- The 1916 elections set in motion two distinctive partisan dynamics that had surfaced periodically in suffrage struggles since the 1840s > + the first resulted from the partial enfranchisement of women: **some women already could vote in all elections, and many could vote in some elections** > + such circumstances gave women leverage to reward or punish politicians because of their (or their party's) stance on the Nineteenth Amendment > + The second dynamic was that of the "endgame," the dynamic of possible or impending victory: **once it seemed likely or even possible that women's suffrage eventually would be achieved**, either nationally or in an individual state, **the potential political cost of a vote against enfranchisement rose dramatically**.

In 1917, the United States entered World War I. The most critical impact of the war was the opportunity it gave suffragists to contribute to the mobilization. The age-old argument that women should not vote because they did not bear arms was no longer applicable. "essential to the successful prosecution of the great war of humanity in which are engaged. . . . We have made partners of the women in this war. Shall we admit them only to a partnership of sacrifice and suffering and toll and not to a partnership of privilege and of right? This war could not have been fought . . . if it had not been for the services of women."

Federal success The suffragists' able handling of the war crisis, coupled with continuing political pressure on Congress and the president, was rewarded in January 1918 The president, in an extraordinary address, announced his support of a federal suffrage amendment "as a war measure" The next day, the House of Representatives voted in favor of the Nineteenth Amendment: the victory was won by one vote, with the Democrats splitting almost evenly while more than 80 percent of Republicans voted favorably.

Convincing the Senate

The Senate, where antisuffragist southern Democrats constituted a proportionally larger bloc, took an additional year and a half to endorse the amendment. After months of relentless political pressure and careful targeting of Republican and Democratic holdouts, the Senate—by a large Republican majority and a small Democratic one—finally came on board in the summer of 1919. State Ratification depended on winning virtually every state outside of the South and the border states. Antisuffragists geared up for battle, denouncing the Nineteenth Amendment as a violation of states' rights and a giant step toward socialism and free love. To no one's surprise, the South remained recalcitrant. **On August 18, 1920, Tennessee, by a margin of one vote, became the thirty-sixth state to vote positively on the amendment; a week later, after ratification had been formally certified, the Nineteenth Amendment was law**

The Nineteenth Amendment

The Nineteenth Amendment Section 1: **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** Section 2: **Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation**

It is a well-known irony in American history that politics did not change very dramatically after women were enfranchised. The electorate nearly doubled in size between 1910 and 1920, but voting patterns and partisan alignments were little affected. **Women, moreover, did not rush out to vote in huge numbers: electoral turnout was even lower among women than among men.**

How things changed

Political life in the 1920s was not nearly as vibrant or energetic as it had been in the 1890s or the latter years of the Progressive era; despite the identification of women with social reform, reforms were few during the first decade that women could vote. New issues, particularly those affecting women and children, were injected into the political arena, even if concrete reforms were slow to materialize. The social welfare programs of the 1930s were colored by the concerns of the female electorate and often promoted by women who had cut their political and organizational teeth in the suffrage movement. Franklin Roosevelt's appointment of Frances Perkins as secretary of labor (and as the first woman to hold a cabinet position) would not have happened without the Nineteenth Amendment.

The suffragists' prediction that the enfranchisement of women would not jeopardize white supremacy in the South proved to be on the mark. Although some (but not many) Black women were able to register to vote, the Democratic Party remained firmly in power, segregation and Black disfranchisement persisted, and the federal government steered clear of voting rights issues for another four decades. **Sex, thus, did not prove to be a significant dividing line in the American electorate** : some gender gaps in voting did occur in the early years (as well as more recently), but they were not large, and few issues sharply divided men and women.

How life changed

Women certainly were empowered by enfranchisement, and their lives consequently (if gradually) may have changed in a host of different ways, but they tended to vote for the same parties and candidates that their husbands, fathers, and brothers supported. Class, race, ethnicity, and religion remained the more salient predictors of a person's voting behavior. Why was there opposition? The very absence of dramatic change after 1920 inescapably leaves one wondering what the adamant resistance was all about. Why, given the rather placid outcome, did so many men oppose women's suffrage for so long? Why did it take women seventy years after Seneca Falls to become enfranchised?

TOWARDS UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE – AND BEYOND THE QUIET YEARS

CHAPTER 7 TO BE ADDED: Racial Tensions. The South was a cauldron of racial tension in the 1950s. African Americans pressed forward against the boundaries of America's caste system, demanding an end to social segregation and second-class citizenship. Fighting for Rights. Black citizens marched, rallied, boycotted buses, wrote petitions, and filed lawsuits to challenge the Jim Crow laws that had kept them in their place for more than half a century. The widespread resistance to integration only underscored the Black community's need for political rights, but throughout the 1950s