ELIZABETH CADY STANTON, SUSAN B. ANTHONY, AND ALICE PAUL: WOMAN SUFFRAGE AND GENDER BIAS IN THE AMERICAN IDEAL

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ABSTRACT

The woman suffrage movement in the United States was a reaction to gender bias in the American ideal. This protracted struggle started in Seneca Falls, New York, with the Women’s Rights Convention of 1848 and ended with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. The suffragists encountered many obstacles both outside and inside the movement. Outside tensions grew out of the inherent masculinity of a society that subscribed to the sentiment that women should be excluded from the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the equal rights of American democracy and citizenship. Inside tensions reflected differences in ideology, philosophy, and methodology among various suffrage factions. The years of the woman suffrage movement saw many social and political events and technological advancements. However, the development that led to perhaps the greatest challenge to the cultural tradition of female inferiority was the rise of radical feminist suffragists, particularly Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Alice Paul. These women were true agents of change who rebelled against gender-based injustice to demand a political voice for women. Using the work of these three women as a basis, this thesis will consider two questions: 1. Why was the fight for suffrage so prolonged? and 2. Why was suffrage achieved in 1920 and not any other time?

This examination of the American Woman Suffrage Movement will begin with a review of the status of women in American society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the establishment and evolution of the major suffrage organizations: the
National Woman’s Suffrage Association, the American Woman Suffrage Association, The National American Woman Suffrage Association, and the National Woman’s Party. These events will be investigated in the context of the rise of radical feminist suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Alice Paul; the impact of social, political, cultural developments and seemingly inexorable gender bias; the push for inclusion in the American ideal, and the work that ultimately resulted in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution insuring the right to vote for all citizens.
To my parents, Thomas F. and Alice M. Shaw Harkin
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We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness – That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

--Declaration of Independence

These words, among the most important in the history of the United States, express the rationale behind the concept of American democracy. When Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, he drew on the Enlightenment values of rationality, science, and logic. Jefferson believed in equality as a natural right. He was sincere in his sentiments; however, those sentiments were not truly universal. Despite his lofty rhetoric, Jefferson’s outlook was restricted: natural, social, and political rights were applicable only to certain members of society -- male property owners of Euro-American ethnicity. Those to which Jefferson’s sentiments were not applicable possessed natural rights but were not imbued with social or political equality. Notable among the excluded were women.

American women have been the objects of a cultural bias that is a fundamental component of American society. One of the salient manifestations of this cultural bias was to exclude women from the principles of the Declaration of Independence, particularly participation in political affairs and government. Women were expected to fulfill many responsibilities of citizenship, including payment of taxes and obedience...
to the law, but were afforded none of the rights and responsibilities that men enjoyed by assumption, including a voice in the political structure and the right to vote.

Historian Linda Kerber summarizes the ideas of Enlightenment *philosophes*, particularly those to whom Jefferson looked in the development of his notions of the proper political order for the nascent United States, including Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Locke. Kerber concludes that these authors’ use of the word “man” in describing the rights and responsibilities of political affairs was not generic or inadvertent. Rather, woman’s impact on the structure of society was a function of her influence in the domestic sphere. “Women were included, presumably, among ‘the People,’ but an individual woman had no political mechanism for expressing her own will.” Women were valued for, and should be satisfied with, indirect political involvement through creating a loving home, insuring that husbands were free from domestic worries that might interfere with public responsibilities, inculcating daughters to accept a subordinate position in the family and society, and rearing patriotic sons. In fact, effeminacy was often mentioned as one of the worst social curses, along with corruption, ignorance, foppishness, and vice. Women lacked the intellectual and logical aptitudes necessary for political participation.

From the earliest days of the republic, women chafed at being left out of the processes that shaped customs and laws, and expressed discontent in the same terms that men used to justify the break from Britain to become a sovereign nation. In a letter to her husband on March 31, 1776, Abigail Adams presciently used some of the very language that Jefferson later echoed in the Declaration, “in the new Code of
Laws . . . I desire you would Remember the Ladies . . . If particular [sic] care and attention is [sic] not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Revolution, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.” Adams foresaw not only a system in which true equality would not exist, but also a time when women would lay claim to, and demand full inclusion in, Jefferson’s unalienable rights.

As American culture matured, the Enlightenment values at the core of society found expression in a variety of reform movements. In the early nineteenth century, the anti-female bias assigned women to the home and the role of moral gatekeepers. Although some women succeeded in extending the expectations for feminine good works into the public arena by advocating social reforms, particularly temperance and abolition, women continued to be marginalized even within the early reform movements, with men taking the lead, giving the speeches, and controlling funds. Despite opposition from some male organizations, abolition gave women the first real opportunity to display public leadership ability. Women enjoyed the independence of community work, the satisfaction of working toward social uplift, and feelings of self-respect. However, this burgeoning self-respect engendered resentment when women were excluded from important abolition work and meetings simply on the basis of sex. This resentment simmered until the late 1840s, when a new movement emerged, a movement for women’s rights.

A critical factor in the rise and tenacity of the women’s rights movement was the advent of leaders unafraid to challenge the anti-female cultural bias. Strong women
had been instrumental as social reformers, but few were bold enough to take the crucial step outside the confines of the home to pursue community activism. Throwing off deeply entrenched, restrictive customs required a surfeit of discontent, a streak of rebelliousness, a disregard for public opposition, a quick wit, a prolific pen, an understanding of politics and government, and a steadfast belief in justice and equality. These attributes describe two women who, with a chance meeting in 1851, became friends and partners in radical feminism – Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

For several years Stanton and Anthony worked for a variety of women’s causes, although both early on recognized that true women’s reform had one requirement that had always been so far removed from possibility that even to utter the words was considered ridiculous: true women’s reform required the right to vote. Stanton and Anthony repeatedly insisted that women shared equal citizenship with men and an equal right to consent to the American system of government. When women’s exclusion from the spirit of the Declaration of Independence was reinforced with the passage in 1870 of the Fifteenth Amendment giving the right to vote to African American men but not to women, Stanton and Anthony drew away from the piecemeal methods of women’s rights work and focused on the one goal that would precipitate the achievement of all the other goals. Stanton and Anthony turned away from the men who had encouraged work for women’s rights and suffrage, writing:

While we hold in loving reverence the names of such men as Charles Sumner, Horace Greeley, William Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith, Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass, and would urge the rising generation of young men to
emulate their virtues, we would warn the young women of the coming
generation against man’s advice as to their best interests, their highest
development. We would point for them the moral of our experiences: that
woman must lead the way to her own enfranchisement, and work out her own
salvation with a hopeful courage and determination that knows no fear nor
trembling. . . . standing alone we learned our power; we repudiated man’s
counsels forevermore.6

For Stanton and Anthony the women’s rights movement became a women’s suffrage
movement, independent of male leadership. Women would claim the right to alter the
law of the land. The movement’s ultimate objective was a Constitutional amendment
guaranteeing to women the right to vote.

Stanton and Anthony worked tirelessly for the next thirty years, traveling,
speaking, writing, educating, lobbying, staging public protests, arguing in court, and
demanding the vote as a natural right of citizenship in American democracy. By the
turn of the twentieth century, the two octogenarians were still radical in thinking but
were forced to acknowledge a painful truth: neither would live to see the passage of the
long sought Constitutional amendment. Also, both watched with dismay as the radical
momentum of the work dissipated under what became the ineffectual leadership of the
second generation of woman suffragists. With Stanton’s death in 1902 and Anthony’s
in 1906, the movement lost the federal focus and became mired in seemingly never-
ending rounds of trying to achieve the ballot through state referenda. The desire for the
vote persisted, but the radical spirit had drained out of the movement. By the mid
1910s an infusion of new enthusiasm was needed to revive the force of the suffrage
dynamo fueled by Stanton and Anthony. That infusion was embodied in Alice Paul.
Alice Paul, a third generation woman suffragist, was the heir to the radicals Stanton and Anthony. Paul, too, worked through traveling, speaking, writing, educating, lobbying, staging public protests, arguing in court, and demanding the vote as a natural right of citizenship in American democracy. However, as a highly educated New Woman of the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century, Paul brooked no debate on the best way to achieve suffrage. As had Stanton and Anthony, Paul asserted that women shared equal citizenship with men and an equal right to consent to the American system of government; Paul demanded female political self-determination, and insisted that women must claim the right to alter the law of the land; Paul believed in the Constitutional amendment and would not be deterred until that goal was achieved.

Paul’s radical tactics were shocking for the times – women confronting the president, working in election campaigns, keeping a constant presence in the halls of Congress, forming a political party, picketing, and going to jail – but Paul deemed these methods necessary and justified. Like Stanton and Anthony, Paul would not be distracted, but would work relentlessly for a Constitutional amendment confirming women’s right to vote.

The woman suffrage movement was overwhelmingly comprised of white, educated, middle and upper class women. However, the advantages of superior socio-economic status did not protect either the women or the movement from the anti-female cultural bias or exclusion from the rights of American democracy. Despite remarkable advances for women including higher education; protective legislation
regarding marriage, divorce, and child custody; and participation in community service and reform movements; suffrage remained unattainable. Some anti-suffragists were women, who, although educated and politically minded, adhered to the traditional ideals of women’s subordinate roles and claimed that women wielded sufficient power over society from a non-partisan, behind-the-scenes position.

The ballot in the hands of women was incredibly threatening to men, who would go to great lengths to forestall sweeping social changes and loss of political control. This attitude pervaded male thinking, including those who were self-proclaimed women’s rights advocates and elected officials vested to uphold rights for all Americans. Stanton, Anthony, and Paul experienced dismissal from many United States Presidents, the men presumed to hold paramount the rights of every American citizen, and to hold sacred the lofty ideals of the Declaration of Independence. When asked to support woman suffrage, the presidents were universally polite, but evasive, condescending, and non-committal:

Grant: “Ah, I can’t do quite as much as that for you. . . . I can’t put votes into the hands of women, but it may comfort you to know that I have just appointed more than five thousand postmistresses.”

Arthur: “We should probably differ upon the details of that question.”

Cleveland: “[Woman suffrage would have] a dangerous, undermining effect on the character of wives and mothers.”

Theodore Roosevelt: “[I am] not an enthusiastic advocate of [woman suffrage] because I do not regard it as a very important matter.”

Taft: “I will do nothing for a proposition which adds more voters to our electorate.”
Wilson administration appointee and future President Hoover: “can give no
time whatsoever to the consideration of your question. . . . This is final.”

Wilson: “I would be without excuse to my own constitutional principles if I lend my support.”

Comments such as these from the highest and, presumably, most trustworthy
champions of American democracy; frustration with social restrictions and political marginalization; but most importantly, exclusion from the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the American ideal spurred first Stanton and Anthony, and later, Paul, to radical measures. All three of these women had lived through times of unprecedented female advancements. All three recognized that these very advancements posed the greatest threat to male supremacy, and, therefore, the greatest obstacle to suffrage. All three had witnessed and rebelled against the persistent anti-female cultural bias. All three persevered in spite of stubborn opposition, belittlement, and dismissal. Seventy-two years elapsed between Stanton’s first call for woman suffrage in 1848 and the 1920 ratification of the Nineteenth Constitutional Amendment validating women’s right to vote. All three of these women believed that the goal was worth the fight.

This thesis will examine the struggle for woman suffrage through a focus on the lives and work of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Alice Paul, and gender bias in the American Ideal. Two main questions will be considered: 1. Why was the fight for suffrage so prolonged? and 2. Why was suffrage achieved in 1920 and not any other time? Chapter One will explore the cultural bias toward women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Social, legal, and political barriers to equality
will be discussed, including but not limited to English common law, women’s sphere, education, reform movements, and exclusion from the electoral franchise. Chapter Two will examine the development of the woman suffrage movement from the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 through the deaths of Stanton and Anthony in the early years of the twentieth century. This study will include the impact of the ongoing cultural bias toward women and the exclusion of women from the ideals of American democracy, the intellectual and ideological differences within the movement, and the philosophy of the turn of the century suffrage movement -- all of which at various times served to fragment the vision and prolong the struggle while moving ever closer to achieving suffrage. The lives and work of Stanton and Anthony will be used to illustrate not only the importance of a single minded focus on a goal, but also the conflicts that such single mindedness engendered both within the movement and the larger society.

Chapter Three will discuss the marginalization of the suffrage movement in the context of Progressive Era reforms and the rise of Woodrow Wilson prior to the U.S. involvement in The Great War. Chapter Four will examine the life and work of Alice Paul and the formation of the radical National Woman’s Party (NWP); the attitude of the American public, up to and including President Wilson, that reinforced the persistent cultural bias toward women; and the relentless agitation for inclusion of women in the full rights of citizenship as described in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution that helped to precipitate the passage by Congress of the suffrage amendment. Chapter Five will analyze the passage and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, certifying the right to vote without regard to sex. The
chapter will focus on the social, political, and cultural environment of the decades-long suffrage quest and the post-Great War years in an attempt to show why the amendment was passed in 1920 rather than any other time. Finally, the Conclusion will restate the research questions and synthesize the thesis with respect to human values and cultural growth as engendered by and demonstrated in the work of the radical feminist suffragists Stanton, Anthony, and Paul.
CHAPTER ONE

WOMAN’S PLACE IN SOCIETY, 1800-1920

I have sometimes been ready to think that the passion for Liberty cannot be equally [sic] Strong in the Breasts of those who have been accustomed to deprive their fellow Creatures of theirs. Of this I am certain that it is not founded upon that generous and christian [sic] principal of doing to others as we would that others should do unto us.

--Abigail Adams, The Adams Papers

An overview of the events and philosophies of American society from the Revolutionary Era through the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment reveals a deep seated and persistent bias against women. Embedded in American culture, this bias formed the foundation of restrictions imposed upon women ranging from expectations for acceptable behavior, to limitations in opportunity, to attempts at control of women’s lives. At the heart of the cultural bias was the concept of the woman’s sphere. From the earliest days of the new republic, women were consigned to a life of separateness, and the nucleus of this circumscribed existence was the home. Women’s proper role was to be concerned only with domestic affairs, home, family, health, and morals. A woman was seen as weak, unprepared to exercise a meaningful role in the larger community, and unable to cope with the harsh realities of business and politics; her strength lay in her ability to make a home into a kind of sanctuary, sheltered from the tumult of the outside world – a place of peace, purity, and piety.¹ The women’s sphere has been a topic of some controversy among the women whose lives were affected, either for better or for worse; among contemporary nineteenth century observers; and among modern historians. Alternately extolled and reviled, the women’s
sphere has a place in American history as both an important component and a symbol of the anti-female cultural bias.

Historian Linda Kerber considers the women’s sphere a “metaphor for complex power relations in social and economic contexts.” She claims that women were confined to the home not because of some biological predisposition or intellectual inferiority, but by design to distinguish authoritative masculinity from impotent femininity. Historian Aileen Kraditor views women’s sphere as a phenomenon at odds with the spirit of the American ideal: in a society in which the individual was transcendent, half the population were stripped of individuality and defined by an assigned characteristic of dependence. Women were deemed as less than full persons, as “females who happen to be human [not as] humans who happen to be female.” The imposed subordination of sphere did not create the significance of the family. Rather, the family became the vehicle through which female subordination was accomplished and perpetuated. The seeds of women’s sphere can be detected in the very beginnings of American society, seeds that grew and flourished, finally taking root as the gender based cultural bias.

The concept of women’s sphere in the first half of the nineteenth century gave rise to what historian Barbara Welter termed the cult of true womanhood. A true woman possessed “four cardinal virtues – piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.” Only through the constant exercise of these virtues could a woman achieve her rightful place in society, and only within the confines of the home, marriage, and motherhood. As the moral gatekeeper of the family, the pious wife and
mother was charged with shielding her family from base, immoral influences and behavior. Female piety was ordained by God, and only woman could save those around her from worldly temptation and sin. Purity in body, spirit, and intentions was critical to happiness; wives were expected not only to be personally pure, but also to promote pure motives and honorable actions among others, particularly husbands. Submissiveness was perhaps the greatest of all feminine virtues. A woman must conform to customs, obey her husband, and bear any and all hardships with passivity and acceptance. All of these virtues must be embedded in a perfect sense of domesticity.

Alexis de Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, wrote of his observations of women in American society in the early nineteenth century. Although he did not use twentieth century terminology, Tocqueville’s account reads as the perfect description of both women’s sphere and cult of true womanhood. He noted “two clearly distinct lines of action for the two sexes . . . two pathways which are always different.” Women “attached a sort of pride to the voluntary surrender of their own will” after marriage, and “although the women of the United States are confined within the narrow sphere of domestic life, and their situation is . . . one of extreme dependence, I have nowhere seen women occupying a loftier position.” Tocqueville’s observations epitomized the cultural bias against women – male-centered, obliviously demeaning, and couched in praise for assigned attributes that often have little basis in the reality of human nature.
Women’s sphere was the home, and marriage the basic social relationship within that home sphere. The primary domestic institution, marriage was fundamental to a woman’s role in society, and, as such, to the anti-woman cultural bias. One of the earliest manifestations of the inequality of marriage was the concept of couverture. Carried over during colonial times from English common law and persisting well into the nineteenth century, couverture is defined by historian Eleanor Flexner as “civil death” after marriage: a woman had no property rights, no legal rights, no title to any earned wages, no right to sue for divorce, and no custody rights. Kerber points out that couverture was often touted as a means of protecting women from the predations of unscrupulous husbands and male relatives. A woman living in a state of enforced powerlessness would lack the resources to shelter whatever wealth, land, or possessions that she may inherit or bring into a marriage, leaving her at the mercy of a male-dominated “Western political tradition that defined all women as politically and legally irresponsible.” Couverture was incorporated into law and acknowledged as the natural order of marriage and the status of married women in American society.

Beyond couverture, nineteenth century marriage was in many other ways an instrument of social control over women. Tocqueville matter-of-factly wrote of his observations of American marriage: “In America, the independence of woman is irrecoverably lost in the bonds of matrimony. . . . a wife . . . lives in the home of her husband as if it were a cloister.” He also observed that economic dependence “obliges a wife to confine herself to the house.” His perception of marriage was non-judgmental and completely accepting; he went on to note that an American woman
submitted to the restrictions of marriage “without a struggle and without a murmur . . .
She voluntarily and freely enters upon this engagement [and] supports her new position
with courage, because she chose it . . . and follows it to the end without seeking to turn
back.”¹³ Perhaps as a man Tocqueville was unable to view marriage from a woman’s
perspective. Had he been able to do so, he may have anticipated the emergence of
attitudes later in the century that challenged the earlier conventions of marriage.
Seemingly so entrenched in American culture since the beginnings of the new nation,
unquestioned by a large segment of society, and extolled as illustrative of the virtue of
American womanhood, by mid and late century the confines of marriage had become
anathema to a growing number of women determined to dismantle the cultural and
legal inequality of the sexes.

Starting in the late 1830s, a number of states passed legislation limiting the
economic control of husbands and acknowledging the right of wives to keep property.
Historian Nancy Woloch reports that in 1839, Mississippi enacted a Married Women’s
Property Law allowing married daughters to keep inherited property out of the control
of sons-in-law. New York State, in 1836, 1848, and 1860, gave women rights to real
and personal property and to retain wages. Such laws spread quickly, with 29 states
enacting similar statutes by 1865.¹⁴ Even with these advancements in legal status,
however, women continued to experience the cultural bias endemic to marriage, as
evidenced by a number of vocal females’ commenting on the expectations for married
women and the persistent inequality of the marriage relationship. As always, women
had differing opinions about whether and how women should conform to or rebel against the prevailing social constructs.

Activist Lucy Stone, together with her husband Henry Blackwell, drew up in 1855 a prenuptial statement of protest condemning laws that gave a husband custody of his wife, sole control and guardianship of children, ownership of all the wife’s assets and wages, and a system that stripped a wife of all legal and inheritance rights. Stone and Henry Blackwell essentially rebelled against entrenched customs, asserting “that marriage should be an equal partnership, and so recognized by law; that until it is so recognized, married partners should provide against the radical injustice of present laws, by every means in their power.”

Expressing a somewhat opposite point of view was Stone’s sister-in-law Antoinette Brown Blackwell. Writing in 1873, Antoinette Brown Blackwell, while validating the desires of women to engage in public life, supported the conventional notion that “to women preeminently has been committed the happiness, the usefulness, and the dignity of the home.”

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in 1898, viewed a woman’s position in marriage from the standpoint of economic subjugation. She asserted that a woman was unable to do her duty to her husband and children without economic independence. Such a condition reduced a woman to the level of a domestic servant, “a creature without economic usefulness.” Gilman claimed that total economic dependence in marriage belonged to an earlier time, when women were subjected to strict couverture, not to the approaching twentieth century. Kraditor summarizes Gilman’s thinking: “the personal power of women bore but too close a relation to their power to win and hold the opposite
sex. . . . But when [society] saw the same economic relationship made permanent, established by law, sanctioned and sanctified by religion, covered in flowers and incense and sentiment, they thought it innocent, lovely and right. The transient trade was called evil, the bargain for life good.”¹⁸ Gilman saw the economic domination of women as practiced in marriage as little more than legalized prostitution.

The nineteenth century saw a remarkable evolution of attitudes toward the status of married women in society. By century’s end, women were outspoken about, and eager to combat, the cultural bias. Women used differing tactics, some relatively accommodating and conciliatory, others blunt and confrontational. However, whatever the approach, women universally sought a route to equality and social recognition as individuals.

Early American and nineteenth century attitudes toward marriage and the home of necessity encompassed family duties, particularly motherhood. Within the confines of marriage women were assigned motivations and responsibilities intended to reinforce the idea that feminine contributions could be made in an environment of socially sanctioned and legalized inequality. One such contribution was Republican Motherhood. In the Revolutionary Era women were thrust into the maelstrom of war and exposed first-hand to political life. With men off fighting, women of necessity ran family farms and businesses, and managed financial accounts. Patriotic American women organized boycotts of British goods, policed local merchants to insure that none engaged in commerce with the British, and defended homesteads from invasion and attack.¹⁹ After the war, women grappled with a conflict between the desire to
maintain the modicum of independence borne of war work and the social restrictions that relegated a woman to the home. A woman’s contributions to the war effort proved her ability to understand political affairs and to function as an individual.\textsuperscript{20} Her role in the household acquired a new value, one that acknowledged her influence in the larger society. She became the Republican Mother, the purveyor of education, morals, and patriotic values to her children, especially her sons. Kerber explains that “the model republican woman” took on a “restrained, deferential, but nonetheless political role.” The Republican Mother was the literate, virtuous, sensible, and the keeper of civic duty. Republican Motherhood gave women a venue for involvement, albeit indirect, in the public affairs of the community.\textsuperscript{21}

The idea that motherhood fitted women for social and political engagement, and combined the domestic and public spheres, persisted throughout the nineteenth century. However, women were in disagreement about the proper degree and method of public exposure. Some women advocated a more separate female role, important but secondary to that of a man. In a treatise on women’s rights written in 1818, Hannah Mather Crocker acknowledged women’s political abilities, but maintained that, “It must be woman’s prerogative to shine in the domestic circle and her appropriate duty to teach and regulate the opening mind of her little flock . . . [but] the surest foundation to secure the female’s right, must be in the family government . . . and on this depends very much the safety and happiness of a free republic.”\textsuperscript{22} Emma Willard, arguing in 1819 for the higher education of women, claimed that duty dictated that a government should promote social prosperity through character development dependent upon the
work of mothers. Antoinette Brown Blackwell asserted that women may combine
private and public, motherhood and community, but the home must be the top priority.
Writing in 1873, she stated that a mother is the “natural custodian of the home.” but
that women also “need a purpose” outside the family, “not at the sacrifice of the best
family claims, but still in obedience to the highest home instincts.”

Late in the century, some politically minded women saw motherhood as a
vehicle for female debasement. Harriot Stanton Blatch, writing in 1891, issued a
scathing indictment of involuntary motherhood as an obstacle to a woman’s
participation in community life. She dismissed men who talk of the “sacredness of
motherhood, but “have degraded the woman in her maternity . . . the woman who bears
unwelcome children is outraging every duty she owes the race.” Blatch stated that the
contributions of mothers must be truly valued, not merely through lip service, but with
respect and encouragement for independence among women. Gilman, in 1898,
reinforced and expanded on Blatch’s sentiments, asserting that motherhood is “the
noblest and most important of all human work . . .” but insisted that women be
prepared for motherhood and not forced into the condition through social convention.
Motherhood was both liberating and restrictive. Motherhood should not be a
mechanism for confinement to the home, a barrier beyond which women should not
venture, a condition designed to camouflage the hypocrisy of a culture that hid the need
to control women behind a veneer of esteem. Motherhood should be a choice made by
a woman, an honorable commitment to society and an opportunity for a woman to
contribute to the success of future generations.
By mid-century, some women developed growing frustration and restlessness with the limits of domesticity. Women began to recognize and assert that the assigned attributes of the domestically appropriate woman were not a set of inherent qualities, but the result of socialization. Women began to agitate for more and better education, on a par with that available to men. Although some women justified demands for education with assertions that an educated woman would make a superior wife and mother, others pressed for education purely for personal improvements. Kraditor marks this call for feminine “self-discovery and self-development” as the first step toward turning “females who happen to be human into humans who happened to be female.”

The early advocates of women’s education operated within the context of the cult of true womanhood. Among the many women who called for better female education, Emma Willard was one of the earliest and most vocal. The founder in 1821 of the Troy Female Seminary in New York, the first women’s school to offer a college-level course of study, Willard recognized the role of education in the cultural bias against women: lack of education kept women confined to the hearth, while more education was critical to realizing full female potential. However, Willard did not take her students too far away from the home, with a curriculum focused more on the arts and social skills than the sciences, business, or politics. Her sketch of a female seminary outlines instruction “under four categories: religious and moral, literary, domestic, and ornamental . . . [including] ‘drawing and painting, elegant penmanship, music, and the grace of motion.’” Mary Lyon was another pioneer of female education and the founder in 1837 of Mount Holyoke Seminary in Massachusetts.
Lyon’s goal was to elevate women from a life of “empty gentility” to participate in social service. Mount Holyoke’s curriculum was academically rigorous, but also emphasized domesticity and piety. Many Mount Holyoke graduates went on to become teachers and missionaries, vocations that combined education, community work, and domesticity. In fact, teaching was an acceptable choice for many women to fill the interim between completion of school and marriage. Despite extending the cultural bias through low wages and expectations for moral behavior, teaching afforded a level of independence previously unavailable to large numbers of women.29

Although female seminaries provided expanded educational opportunities for women, true higher education did not emerge until the 1830s, with the founding of Oberlin College. However, even this progressive, racially inclusive, coeducational institution created a separate curriculum for women. Woloch explains that college administrators believed that the presence of women would bring a sense of morality and decorum to the campus and encourage more socially acceptable behavior among the male students.30 That expression of the persistent female-inspired cultural bias notwithstanding, Oberlin was the first college to graduate women; among the most notable were orator Lucy Stone, and Antoinette Brown, the first female ordained minister in the United States. Other antebellum female educational achievements included Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman medical school graduate.31

After the Civil War higher education for women took on a new importance. The persistent resistance among established colleges to coeducation spurred the founding of several women’s colleges dedicated to providing programs of study equal
to those available to men. Starting with Vassar in 1865, a group of independent and male affiliated colleges became known as the Seven Sisters, with large endowments and rigorous academics aimed at preparing women for professional careers. The cultural bias dogged these schools, with claims that college education would make women unfit for marriage and motherhood, lead to de-feminization, and place the middle class in danger of extinction.\footnote{32} Women flocked to colleges in such numbers that by the turn of the twentieth century, male enrollment was in danger of being eclipsed. Some coeducational colleges and universities altered curricula to attract more male students; others placed a quota on the number of females admitted.\footnote{33} However, women continued to defy the cultural bias, to seek and achieve college degrees, and to use those degrees as professionals or, increasingly, as reformers.

By the turn of the twentieth century, women had a toehold in a few historically male professions. Even so, as Woloch explains, highly educated and qualified women were marginalized in the professions of law, ministry, and medicine. Women began to gravitate toward more acceptable, female professions, such as teaching, nursing, librarian, and social work.\footnote{34} Particularly teachers and social workers also found expression in various reform movements. The roots of the late-century reform movements were in antebellum abolitionism. Flexner points out that working for the abolition of slavery allowed women to develop skills in organizing, public speaking, and petitioning lawmakers. Women abolitionists moved out of the home, “won the right to speak in public, and began to evolve a philosophy of their place in society and their basic rights.” Engaging in such pursuits showed a new female courage and
willingness to take a stand for strong beliefs despite the prevailing customs against female outspokenness. Woloch describes abolition work as risky: women were exposed to “social ostracism, loss of reputation, and outright persecution,” as well as physical attack from proponents of slavery. However, abolition was a stepping stone for women to community service and public involvement on a scale previously unavailable; female participation in abolition was a clear violation of the cultural bias.

Temperance was a major reform movement that emerged in the 1840s and stretched through the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century. Alcohol had a direct impact on women, who prior to the 1850s were unable to escape from marriages wracked by the domestic violence and economic ruin wrought by drunken husbands. The founding of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1873 solidified the link between the temperance movement and women’s sphere. Historian Rebecca Edwards explains that temperance work gave women an opportunity to influence society, to put free time to good use, and to show alcoholic husbands the way to self control. Temperance work was at once “effective and womanly.” Women flocked to temperance work, especially after Frances Willard took the lead of the WTCU in 1879; the organization became the largest women’s group in United States history with a membership of 245,000 in 1911. The temperance movement was both a validation of the cultural bias, in that women worked to preserve the sacredness of the home, marriage, motherhood, and family; and a means of transcending the cultural bias through public agitation and self-assertiveness.
Social work was another avenue open to reform minded women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With a clear emphasis on traditional female attributes of compassion, moral fortitude, and domestic preservation, social work provided women with wide ranging societal influence. The social worker was the natural outgrowth of what Woloch terms the “New Woman of the 1890s.” The New Woman was likely to be college educated, single, employed in one of the women’s professions, living alone if unmarried, working from within the home if married. Her “special mission in life was to purify, uplift, control, and reform; to improve men, children, and society; to extend the values of the home.” The New Woman who became a social worker applied her interests, talents, and desire to serve to promote the uplift of the lower socioeconomic classes. Edwards notes the focus of social work on the family through advocating such programs as mothers’ pensions to assist widows living in poverty to stay home and care for the family rather than leave the home for wage work. A federal Children’s Bureau was established with teams of social workers assigned to help struggling mothers to develop child care skills. Edwards claims that although “reformers alleviated much suffering, promoted health, and undertook large-scale projects of rescue and charity” for individual families, the “most influential and enduring” community social reform establishment was the settlement house.

One of the best known settlement houses was Hull House, founded in Chicago in 1889 by social worker and pacifist Jane Addams. With a primary mission of improving working conditions for women wage earners, Hull House was a haven for poor mothers and disadvantaged children. Addams and her associates lived at the
settlement, the better to experience life in a low status neighborhood and to witness the challenges of the working mother. Among the services available to the residents were classes in parenting, health care, and nutrition; nursery schools and kindergartens; and community outreach. Some of the Hull House social workers moved into government positions and were instrumental in pressing for legislation to protect women and children. Just as temperance agitators did, social workers and settlement workers functioned within the anti-female cultural bias to leave a positive mark on society.

In the early twentieth century middle class women became more involved in political issues. As in previous generations, wives and mothers were seen as making a positive contribution to society simply by virtue of motherhood. However, some women desired a more active public role, and because the cultural bias dictated that women should not be directly involved in politics, women found alternative ways to impact public policy. Woman’s role was still that of reformer, and many women believed that reform could best be accomplished by moral suasion and setting a good example. Non-partisan women’s groups emerged, providing women with a forum for public work within the confines of women’s sphere. Increasingly, women actually left the home to work for reform of female and child labor laws or to help establish health clinics for women and children. With the start of The Great War, women became patriots, supporting the war effort, filling occupations and government clerical positions vacated by fighting men. Women were visible, active, and vocal citizens whose work had a lasting benefit on society. The cultural bias was still in force, but by necessity was evolving with the times.
For many middle class women of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the overarching social phenomena were women’s rights and, later, the woman suffrage movement. Born of the enduring frustration with women’s status that had been brewing since Revolutionary times, the women’s rights and suffrage movements worked toward negating the anti-female cultural bias and including women in the American ideal. Women were citizens, women paid taxes, and yet women were political non-entities. Women needed a vehicle through which to effect lasting change -- the ballot was that vehicle. Suffrage supporters often participated in other reforms, and all reforms would be easier to achieve and more effective if women could vote. The nineteenth century women’s rights and suffrage movements were initially poorly organized, with no clear vision or strategy for achieving success. However, at mid-century, with a chance meeting on a street corner in Seneca Falls, New York, the movements would be changed forever. Two women -- intelligent, dedicated, goal-oriented, activist, and radical -- came together to form a lifelong friendship and partnership, a formidable, unstoppable force for social and political reform that would challenge the cultural bias and ultimately secure full and equal citizenship for all women. Those two women were Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.
CHAPTER TWO
THE WOMAN SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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.

--Susan B. Anthony Amendment

The nineteenth century was an era of reform for the United States. As the nation founded on Enlightenment ideals grew and evolved, several progressive philosophies took root and gained widespread support among middle class reformers. A primary example was a belief in natural rights, expressed in the Declaration of Independence as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Two of the most important reform movements of the century, both of which championed an entire class of people who were denied natural rights on the basis of rank prejudice, were abolition and women’s rights. Although promoted from the outset by middle class white males, the abolition movement ironically provided an opportunity for women to exercise the role of society’s moral gatekeeper while moving beyond the sphere of home and family. Women abolitionists often came from families where fathers, brothers, and husbands were active in the cause. Thus, women could engage in civic forums, give speeches, host planning sessions, and organize meetings, all with the consent of male family members and society at large. Female antislavery agents travelled to conventions, circulated petitions, and raised funds for the cause. These women were immersed in the politics of slavery, witnessing firsthand the debates and the processes behind legislation and relishing participation in social reform. By mid-century women abolitionists were well versed in, and identified with, the plight of the Negro slave --
the lack of rights, the restrictions on behavior, and the subservience to the white male. Women became focused on gender-based injustice, a focus which sparked a movement for equal rights for women, and later, woman suffrage. Some of these women rejected the traditional female sphere in favor of a fervent pursuit of women’s rights that was single-minded, goal oriented, logical, and politically savvy. Two of these radical feminists were Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

Elizabeth Cady was born in Johnstown, New York, on November 12, 1815. Her mother, Margaret Livingston Cady, was the daughter of a Revolutionary War hero, state education leader, and assemblyman. Margaret Cady was politically liberal, community minded, antislavery and pro-women’s rights. Elizabeth Cady Stanton would credit her mother’s interest in liberal politics in her own penchant for public service. Daniel Cady, Elizabeth’s father, subscribed to the conventional values of the day and to political conservatism. He served in Congress as a Federalist, and was later a circuit court judge and associate justice on the New York Supreme Court. Judge Cady, although theoretically sympathetic to women’s second-class social position, believed in the sanctity of women’s sphere and did not advocate an active pursuit of women’s rights. His disapproval engendered in Elizabeth a rebellious streak that would cause her to question anti-female bias, inform her work for women’s rights, and keep father and daughter at odds until his death in 1859.

The Cadys had eleven children, including three sons; none of the sons lived to adulthood. After the death of Elizabeth’s brother Eleazar, Judge Cady was inconsolable. Determined to ease her father’s suffering and gain his admiration, the
eleven year old Elizabeth vowed thenceforward to excel in academics and sports, trying to be “all my brother was.” Throughout her adolescence, her efforts were met by Judge Cady’s invariable lament, “Oh, my daughter, I wish you were a boy!”Her father’s attitude contributed to her already developing perplexity about the cultural bias against girls and women in society. At age fifteen Elizabeth wanted to continue her studies at Union College, but in 1830 no college in America admitted women. Furthermore, Judge Cady, true to his belief in the sanctity of women’s sphere, rejected the idea of higher education for his daughter and all women who could simply marry and be supported by a husband. Elizabeth persisted, and her father reluctantly allowed her to attend Emma Willard’s Troy Female Seminary, at the time the only school for women with a rigorous program of study comparable to that offered to men. When not at school, Elizabeth spent many hours in her father’s law office, where she saw and heard anguished women seeking protection from unjust, cruel, or dissolute male relatives. Judge Cady could offer these women no legal recourse: by law married or widowed women had no right to earnings, property, or custody of children. When Elizabeth repeatedly protested the unfairness and questioned the justice of such laws, her father suggested that when she reached adulthood and finished school she should lobby legislators to pass new laws. Elizabeth later concluded: “Thus was the future object of my life foreshadowed and my duty plainly outlined by him who was most opposed to my public career, when, in due time, I entered upon it.” These early encounters with culturally and legally sanctioned abasement of women contributed to Elizabeth’s resolve to overcome and eliminate sex-based social and political bias.
In 1840, Elizabeth Cady married Henry Stanton, an abolitionist, politician, and lawyer.* The couple’s wedding trip included attendance at the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London. The convention brought about two unexpected and life-altering events for Stanton. First, she found herself witness to a contentious debate over the role of women delegates. Ultimately the assembly voted to exclude women from any active participation in the convention proceedings; women were relegated to the gallery, to be observers only. Stanton remarked on the “narrow-minded bigots, pretending to be teachers and leaders of men, so cruelly remanding . . . womankind to absolute subjection to the ordinary masculine type of humanity. . . . The action of this convention . . . stung many women into new thought and action and gave rise to the movement for women’s political equality.” The other momentous occurrence was Stanton’s acquaintance with Lucretia Mott, “a broad, liberal thinker on politics, religion, and all questions of reform. . . . I embraced every opportunity to talk with her.”10 As a result of the events at the World Anti-Slavery Convention, Stanton and Mott vowed to organize a women’s rights convention upon returning to the United States. Although life circumstances intervened in the immediate fulfillment of this vow, these two women had unknowingly entered upon a compact to overcome gender-based cultural bias and launch a seventy-two year quest for women’s rights that would culminate in inclusion in the American ideal and the passage of the Nineteenth

*Henceforth the name Stanton will refer to Elizabeth Cady Stanton unless otherwise specified.
Amendment for woman suffrage.¹¹

Upon returning from England the Stantons settled in Boston. Stanton reveled in associating with the leading liberal literary and political leaders of the day, including William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Weld, Bronson Alcott, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Within five years the Stantons had three sons and a middle class lifestyle that allowed for household help and leisure time to pursue intellectual and reform activities.¹² In 1847, with Henry Stanton’s political prospects dimming and his health deteriorating, the family moved to Seneca Falls, New York. Stanton’s life changed in the small, rural mill town. Her husband was often away on business, leaving her to run the house and the ever increasing family with scant, unreliable help.¹³ She was active in her community, developing a reputation for common sense and dispensing advice to her neighbors on health, nutrition, and child care. She saw close up “the wearied, anxious look of the majority of women” that strengthened her conviction that “some active measures should be taken to remedy the wrongs of society in general, and of women in particular.”¹⁴ Spiritually, Stanton was moving closer to a philosophy that would define the rest of her life; physically, she was on the verge of turning that philosophy into a course of action to rebel against the cultural bias that defined women’s reality.

Eighteen forty-eight was a fateful year for Elizabeth Cady Stanton. She had been living in Seneca Falls for one year, growing increasingly discontented. On July 13, 1848, Stanton was invited to a gathering at the home of Mary Ann McClintock, a friend of Lucretia Mott’s. Sitting around a table with McClintock, Mott, and two others, Stanton “poured out . . . the torrent of my long-accumulating discontent . . .
stirred myself, as well as the rest of the party, to do and dare anything.” The group determined to hold a convention for women’s rights on July 19 and 20, 1848, the first such convention in United States history. Only women could attend the first day, but on the second day the meeting would be open to all. With no prior experience, the women had six days to find a location, organize, and set an agenda. Mott’s husband James was asked to preside, but Stanton was chosen to write and present the issues and grievances to be addressed. The result was the Declaration of Sentiments, a manifesto that marked the beginning of the American women’s rights movement. Modeled on the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of Sentiments shocked an audience to which the familiar words were sacred; the use of these words to expose the anti-female cultural bias and demand equality was sacrilege. Stanton went on to enumerate thirteen Resolutions asserting the rights to equality under the law, social equality, spiritual and religious equality, political education, equal punishment for crimes, speaking in public, determining sphere according to personal desires, recognition of human rights, protection from denial of rights, and that both men and women should work to realize these Resolutions. The ninth and most controversial Resolution was the demand for the “sacred right to the elective franchise.” Although all the Resolutions were adopted, the demand for the vote was the only one that was not unanimous.

Stanton also delivered her first public speech at the Seneca Falls convention. She presented the case for equality of rights for women, denouncing the self-ordained ascendancy of men. She called for female self-determination, asserting that, “woman herself must do this work; for woman alone can understand the height, the depth, the
length, and the breadth of her own degradation. Man cannot speak for her.” Stanton stated that in denying to women a voice in the government; in imposing on women taxation without representation; in enacting laws that deprived women of wages, property, and custody rights the United States invalidated the claim to republican government true to the ideals of the Declaration of Independence. She addressed arguments attempting to defend the legally abased but unjust position of women, answering each accusation cogently and with impeccable logic, and summarized as follows:

- Women should be protected from the vulgarity of the polls
- the vulgarity of the polls will be reduced by the female presence
- Women will be expected to go to war
- women have demonstrated courage in the field of battle, but war would be unnecessary under women’s influence
- Women would gain nothing by voting, already being represented adequately by fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons
- man does not have the best interest of woman at heart in enacting laws designed to keep her in a degraded position
- Women do not want to vote, and would not vote if given the right
- women are kept ignorant of the consequences of disfranchisement, but given appropriate education would raise an active voice in legislative decisions
- Woman suffrage will lead to the demise of domestic tranquility
- a woman would be a better wife and mother if elevated beyond male subjection and given a measure of control over her own destiny

Stanton’s speech was revolutionary, modern in composition, defiant in tone, and true to her conviction that women, as human beings, deserved the same natural rights as men.
After the Seneca Falls convention, Stanton continued to read, write, and offer advice and support to women organizing other rights conventions, but stayed behind the scenes tending to her growing family. In 1851, fate would give her yet another life-changing event: her first meeting with Susan B. Anthony.

Susan Brownell Anthony was born in Adams, Massachusetts on February 15, 1820. Her mother, Lucy Read Anthony, was a fun-loving, considerate woman with a penchant for singing and a devotion to her husband and family. Mrs. Anthony was raised a Baptist, but after her marriage she followed the teachings of her husband’s religion. Daniel Anthony, Susan’s father, was a Quaker, a successful mill owner and businessman of strong morals and belief in social reform. The Anthonys had eight children, two of whom died before the age of two years.

The Anthony household was different in many ways from that of the Cadys. Throughout childhood, Susan Anthony was exposed to progressive causes and reform. Mr. Anthony was a firm proponent of temperance who encouraged the employees at his mill to sign abstinence pledges. Employees who broke such pledges were forgiven and encouraged to try again. Mr. Anthony was anti-slavery, refusing to use materials in his mill that had been produced through slave labor. He practiced Hicksite Quakerism, which held that men and women were equal in the eyes of God and expected to participate equally in services and other religious events. He generalized his belief in equality of the sexes to all social and political contexts. Unlike Judge Cady, Mr. Anthony believed that women should receive education comparable to that of men. Concerned that his daughters were not receiving education equal to that of their male
classmates, Mr. Anthony home schooled his children. Also in contrast to Judge Cady’s attitude, Mr. Anthony believed that women should learn self-sufficiency and be active outside the home and family. The Anthony daughters were encouraged to become teachers, to be independent, and to earn a living and be self-supporting.\textsuperscript{22}

However, all of Mr. Anthony’s good intentions and efforts could not shield his daughters from the pervasive gender-based bias of the times. Susan Anthony became a teacher at age fifteen, and by age twenty-six was the head of the female department at a school in Canajoharie, New York. She enjoyed teaching, but grew resentful of the salary discrepancy between male and female teachers; male teachers were paid up to four times the females’ salary, regardless of the quality of job performance or effectiveness of the instruction.\textsuperscript{23} Her resentment combined with dissatisfaction with the restrictive life of the classroom, and a growing desire to engage in reform work led Anthony gradually to reduce her time in the classroom and, by 1852, to leave teaching completely.\textsuperscript{24}

Anthony* threw herself into the temperance movement. Influenced by her father’s beliefs, Anthony joined the Daughters of Temperance, organizing suppers and festivals as a means of raising the funds necessary to promote the cause.\textsuperscript{25} Anthony would later trace her feminist roots to her work in temperance. The indignity of women with drunkard husbands, unprotected by law against the dissipation of assets and wages, and harassment by creditors, “illustrate a condition in which women had no

*Henceforth the name Anthony will be refer to Susan B. Anthony unless otherwise specified.
rights and no privileges; where, in fact, they hardly had a soul to call their own. The thing struck me so forcibly . . . that I determined to enter public life and battle for my sex.”

Anthony also became immersed in the anti-slavery cause. On a return trip from the Syracuse Anti-Slavery Convention of 1851, Anthony stopped to visit friends in Seneca Falls. While out walking with friends, Susan B. Anthony was introduced to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who recalled the meeting: “There she stood, with her good, earnest face and genial smile. . . . I liked her thoroughly.” This meeting was the beginning of a life-long association that mingled friendship with radical feminist activism. These two women functioned as a powerhouse of reform, setting into motion a movement that would have profound impact on the lives of women through the unrelenting quest to obliterate the anti-female cultural bias, to agitate for equal rights and inclusion in the American ideal, and demand woman suffrage.

From the outset Stanton and Anthony viewed women’s rights and woman suffrage within the larger context of natural rights. Each made frequent references to the unalienable rights of the Declaration of Independence – life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The resolutions in the Declaration of Sentiments were claims to women’s equality at creation, a right that no man-made law could override. Women and men were equal in citizenship, and therefore in the natural rights of citizenship, including suffrage. The quest for recognition of natural rights was not a ploy to declare female superiority. Rather, the women simply expected the rights deserved as members of the human race and citizens of the United States, and to be treated justly.
manifestations of unjust treatment were taxation without representation and having no voice in the government; the manifestation of just treatment was the right to vote. Suffrage meant social and political equality, self-determination, and independence. Stanton and Anthony early understood that the successful achievement of natural rights required tireless work, or, as Stanton noted, “acts, not words are what is needed to push this woman suffrage question to the fore.” One of the earliest ways in which to take this action was the women’s rights convention.

The years between 1851 and the onset of the Civil War were formative for the women’s rights movement. Conventions were held in states and localities throughout the northeast and Midwest. These conventions allowed the women participants an opportunity to meet, discuss, and resolve about the injustices facing women. The conventions also were the perfect proving ground for women to develop skills in logic and public speaking, and to become versed in anti-woman legislation. Attendance at the conventions grew over the years, from a few hundred to several thousand, as women took advantage of the chance to engage in activities outside of the home sphere, in a secure, non-threatening environment. In the antebellum years, the conventions were the heart of the women’s movement. However, the movement had yet to develop a strict focus, with many of the participants, including Anthony and Stanton, also devoting time and energy to temperance and anti-slavery work.

Anthony and Stanton played complementary roles in the many meetings and conventions of the 1850s. Stanton was increasingly tied to her home and family – she would give birth to her seventh and last child in 1859. Anthony was free to attend
meetings, but lacked confidence in her writing and speaking abilities. Thus began a pattern wherein Stanton wrote the speeches that Anthony delivered. Henry Stanton remarked to his wife, “You stir up Susan, she stirs the world.” Stanton elaborated:

In thought and sympathy we were one, and in the division of labor we exactly complemented each other. In writing we did better work than either could do alone. While she is slow and analytical in composition, I am rapid and synthetic. I am the better writer, she the better critic. She supplied the facts and statistics, I the philosophy and rhetoric. . . . Our speeches may be considered the united product of two brains.

Or, more succinctly, “I forged the thunderbolts, she fired them.”

On April 12, 1861, rebel soldiers fired upon the Union Fort Sumter, an event that is generally recognized as the start of the Civil War. The war years were active ones for anti-slavery agitators, including Anthony and Stanton, who turned efforts toward the passage of a Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution to abolish slavery. The male leaders of this quest urged the females to suspend separate women’s rights conventions and to focus all energy on the new amendment. Stanton believed that women who worked for the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment would be rewarded with suffrage. Anthony dissented; she believed that work for women’s rights should continue separate from anti-slavery, and cautioned that in placing the women in a lesser position, the women’s rights cause would be devalued and years of hard work would be lost. Anthony expressed her fears:

Well, well; while the old guard sleep [sic] the young “devils” are wide-awake, and we deserve to suffer for our confidence in “man’s sense of justice,” and to have all we have gained thus snatched from us. But nothing short of this can rouse our women again to action. All our reformers seem suddenly to have grown politic. All alike say, “Have no conventions at this crisis.” Stanton, etc., say, “Wait until the war excitement abates;” which is to say, “Ask our
opponents if they think we had better speak, or, rather, if they do not think we
had better remain silent.” I am sick at heart but I cannot carry the world against
the wish and the will of our best friends.36

Anthony relented, and in 1863, the abolitionist National Women’s Loyal League was
formed, with Stanton elected president and Anthony secretary. For fifteen months, the
League members wrote letters, organized meetings, and circulated petitions in favor of
the Thirteenth Amendment.37 By August, 1864, 400,000 signatures had been collected,
far short of the goal of one million, but sufficient to demonstrate to Congress
widespread support for the amendment, which was ratified on December 6, 1865.38

In the months following the end of the war, a fourteenth amendment to the
Constitution was proposed. For the first time, the word “male” was incorporated into
the nation’s highest legal document. The amendment defined the rights of citizens to
representation in government, prohibited the denial of “the right to vote . . . to any of
the male inhabitants” and stipulated that representation would be based on “the whole
number of male citizens.”39 Women were officially excluded from direct government
representation, one of the basic tenets of the American ideal. Stanton wrote, “Miss
Anthony and I were the first to see the full significance of the word ‘male’ in the
Fourteenth Amendment, and we at once sounded the alarm. . . . the time had come to
begin vigorous work again for women’s enfranchisement.”40

The Fourteenth Amendment would have unintended consequences for
American society in general, and women in particular. Up to that time, the women’s
movement was a conglomeration of various women’s rights issues with no clearly
defined path to achieving goals. Whatever the obstacles thrown up by the anti-female
cultural bias, women had always claimed citizenship. However, the blatant exclusion of women from the primary right of citizenship exposed in shocking starkness the true position of women as subject to a government created and enacted solely in the interests of men. The only mechanism by which women could expect equality would be to win the right to vote. Thus did the women’s rights movement evolve into a woman suffrage movement. Anthony and Stanton would begin work on a sixteenth constitutional amendment for woman suffrage.

The first women’s rights convention of the Reconstruction era was called in New York City on May 10, 1866. This convention saw the formation of a new organization, the American Equal Rights Association (AERA), dedicated to equal rights for all citizens, irrespective of race or sex. The association board was comprised of prominent proponents of anti-slavery and women’s rights, including Stanton, Anthony, Wendell Philips, Theodore Tilton, and Lucretia Mott. Anthony offered a list of resolutions, culminating in a call for “the women of the several States to petition their Legislatures to take the necessary steps to so amend their constitutions as to secure the right of suffrage to every citizen, without distinction of race, color or sex.” However, in a special meeting of the AERA board, from which Stanton and Mott were absent, the male board members put into action a plan to work for the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment as written. The Fourteenth Amendment was ratified July 9, 1868; six months later, a Fifteenth Amendment was proposed specifically aimed at securing voting rights for Negro men. Anthony and Stanton
argued to modify the wording of the new amendment to include woman suffrage, and determined to use all available resources and methods to achieve this goal.

One tactic was to establish a newspaper, *The Revolution*. The paper’s motto was “Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less.” Stanton wrote the editorials, using this forum as an opportunity to air her grievances and present arguments for the defeat of the Fifteenth Amendment. *The Revolution* was a source of contention within the AERA. The organization’s leadership disapproved of the newspaper’s benefactor and criticized Anthony and Stanton for accepting funds from a political and social pariah. The women would not abandon the newspaper, further irritating AERA membership. Anthony and Stanton were unable to garner support for the modification or of blockage of the Fifteenth Amendment, and came to realize that the Republican Party, with support of the male members of the AERA board, had no intention of supporting women suffrage: political expediency clearly dictated that the sure vote of the Negro freedmen was of more value than the possible votes of enfranchised women. The women were told again and again, “This is the Negro’s Hour.” In fact, *The Revolution* summarized the proceedings of an AERA meeting in which the male leaders:

> with one consent, bid the women of the nation stand aside and behold the salvation of the negro. Wendell Phillips says, “One idea for a generation,” to come up in the order of their importance. First, negro suffrage, then temperance, then the eight-hour movement, then woman suffrage. Three generations hence, woman suffrage will be in order! What an insult to the women.
In a debate at the 1869 AERA meeting, Anthony “protested against the
Fifteenth Amendment because it wasn’t Equal Rights. It put two million more men in
position of tyrants over two million women who had until now been the equals of the
men at their side.”

The women’s arguments were ignored. The Fifteenth Amendment
was ratified on February 3, 1870. Shortly thereafter, Anthony was forced to sell the
failing Revolution; she was left with a debt of $10,000, which she vowed to repay in
full.

As a result of this humiliating and painful dismissal, Anthony and Stanton
severed ties with the AERA, forming a new organization, the National Woman
Suffrage Association (NWSA). Men were welcome to join, but not to hold positions of
leadership. Anthony claimed that excluding men from decision making posts made a
“live” society, one in which women established policies and agenda, always in the best
interests of women. The primary goal was the passage of a sixteenth constitutional
amendment for woman suffrage. The tenor of the NWSA rhetoric was too radical for
some of the members of the AERA, who formed a separate, more conservative group,
the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which allowed men to serve as
officers and advocated a state by state approach to gaining woman suffrage rather than
a constitutional amendment. The two groups would remain at odds for more than
twenty years.

The decades of the 1870s and 1880s were active for Anthony and Stanton. The
two spent several years, together and separately, crisscrossing the country giving
lectures and speeches to gain support for woman suffrage. These travels were
liberating, particularly for Stanton, who, with her youngest children approaching adolescence, was finally able to promote her cause in person rather than through Anthony. For Anthony, the lectures were a means of establishing herself as a speaker and of making money to repay her Revolution debt.

During these years Stanton and Anthony sought to achieve suffrage through the judiciary, primarily by engaging in behavior that would force the authorities to bring suit against women, thereby creating the opportunity to argue in court that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments taken together guaranteed for women the right to vote. This tactic was the new departure theory, which held that all American citizens were entitled to equal rights under the Constitution. To this end, women in several jurisdictions nationwide attempted to register and vote in the 1872 presidential election. Of those who were arrested, the most high-profile was Susan B. Anthony. Anthony and four other women voted in Rochester, New York. Anthony returned home and wrote to Stanton, “Well, I have been & gone & done it!! – positively voted the Republican ticket – strait [sic]—this A.M. at 7 o’clock.” Anthony then waited for the repercussions. Three weeks later she was arrested and charged with “knowingly, wrongfully and unlawfully vot[ing] for a representative to the Congress of the United States.” The trial date was set for June 17, 1873. Anthony used the interim to travel throughout the county relating her experience and defending her actions on the basis of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. She invoked the Declaration of Independence, asserting that as a citizen of the United States, she had a natural right to a voice in the government and to rebel against taxation without representation. She
stated that for women, “this government is not a democracy; it is not a republic . . . but [an] oligarchy of sex which makes the father, brothers, husband, sons the oligarchs over the mother and sisters, the wife and daughters. . . . The moment you deprive a person of his right to a voice in the government, you degrade him from the status of a citizen . . . to that of a subject.” Anthony then went on the point out that the wording of the Fourteenth Amendment does not exclude women from citizenship, and that as citizens, women were included in the voting rights guarantees of the Fifteenth Amendment. She closed her speech with a prescient warning:

If once we establish the false principle that United States citizenship does not carry with it the right to vote in every State in this Union, there is no end to the petty tricks and cunning devices which will be attempted to exclude one or another class of citizens from the right of suffrage. . . . Establish this precedent, admit the State’s right to deny suffrage, and there is no limit to the confusion, discord, and disruption that may await us. There is and can be but one safe principle of government – equal rights to all.  

Anthony’s speech was so effective that the prosecution requested a change of venue. Anthony promptly traversed the new venue with her speech.  

Anthony had obtained the legal counsel of Henry R. Selden, who cogently argued that Anthony’s only crime had been that of womanhood, that the same act performed by a man was legal. He reported that Anthony voted in good faith, in the belief that her right to do so was insured by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.  

Prosecuting attorney Richard Crowley countered that regardless of Anthony’s intentions, “she did not have a right to vote . . . there is no question but what she is guilty of violating a law of the United States.” The presiding Judge Ward Hunt declared Anthony incompetent to testify in her own behalf, patiently listened to the
arguments of the defense and the prosecution, and then ordered the jury to bring a verdict of guilty. Prior to sentencing, Judge Hunt asked Anthony if she had any words to offer in her defense. Anthony promptly claimed that, “your denial of my citizen’s right to vote . . . is the denial of my sacred right to life, liberty, and property.” She went on to protest “forms of law all made by men, interpreted by men, administered by men, in favor of men and against women” and Judge Hunt’s “ordered verdict of guilty . . . simply because that citizen was a woman and not a man.” Anthony ended by asserting that she “shall earnestly and consistently continue to urge all women to the practical recognition of the old Revolutionary maxim, ‘Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God.’” Anthony was fined $100.00, and released. She never paid the fine.

The press coverage of Anthony’s trial was universally condemnatory of her treatment and of Judge Hunt’s violation of her citizen’s right to a fair trial by jury. However, Anthony’s trial was less influential than the 1874 trial of Virginia Minor, another participant in the wave of female voting in the 1872 election. Argued before the Supreme Court, the Minor v. Happersett defense was predicated on the philosophy of new departure, which held that the Fourteenth Amendment defined citizenship, thus making woman suffrage a nationally guaranteed right. Francis Minor, Virginia’s husband and the defense attorney, offered arguments that went to the very core of the American ideal, invoked the unalienable rights identified in the Declaration of Independence, and claimed that the states may enact requirements and qualification for voting but may not deny voting rights to citizens. The Supreme Court disagreed in a
decision that declared that suffrage was not a natural right of citizenship, and that the states’ jurisdiction over voting rights could extend to disfranchisement of women.65 This decision marked a turning point in the woman suffrage movement: no longer could the right to vote be effectively argued in the courts; a federal amendment would be necessary.66

Stanton and Anthony continued to work trying to gain support for the woman suffrage amendment. As early as 1868 Stanton declared that “woman suffrage was not a party question, we hoped that all parties would favor the measure.”67 Later, the NWSA promised to support any party that came out publicly in favor of woman suffrage. Stanton and Anthony considered this stance the natural and logical way to pursue the vote; the opposition considered the NWSA politically fickle. Anthony recalled with pride that the NWSA was never officially aligned with either Republicans or Democrats, caring only that a party believe in full equality for women. However, Anthony also recognized sardonically that disfranchisement rendered women’s support meaningless to any party.68 An example is the treatment the organization received from the 1872 Republican Party Convention in Philadelphia. Rather than come out with a platform in full support of female enfranchisement, the convention claimed to owe a debt of gratitude for the loyalty and patriotism of American women, and asserted that “the honest demand of any class of citizens for equal rights should be treated with respectful consideration.”69 Stanton snidely referred to this statement as “the Philadelphia splinter,” but even in her bitterness acknowledged that the mere mention
of women’s rights in a statement of a major political party was progress for the movement.\textsuperscript{70}

Another event that the suffragists determined to use to advantage was the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial exposition. Stanton drafted a Woman’s Declaration of Rights, and sent a letter to the organizers of the celebration requesting seats for the NWSA on the convention platform and time on the agenda to read the document. When the request was denied, the women planned to attend the meeting uninvited and to read the new Declaration. A parade of women led by Anthony entered the convention hall, approached the stage, handed a copy of the Declaration to the presiding officer, then turned to exit, all the while distributing copies of the document to outstretched hands in the audience. Anthony climbed the platform reserved for musicians and read the Declaration to a cheering crowd.\textsuperscript{71} The press coverage of the event was mixed, with many newspapers denouncing the women’s actions as rude, sensational, and doing nothing to advance the suffrage cause.\textsuperscript{72} Nonetheless, the spectacle did serve to keep the suffrage fight in the public eye.

Indeed, keeping the suffrage struggle in the public eye was critical to the progress of the movement. From the 1848 Seneca Falls convention through the end of the nineteenth century Stanton and Anthony acknowledged the protraction of the fight, often expressing frustration, sometimes becoming discouraged, but never giving up. In speeches, letters, articles, and interviews the two women presented the case for the vote using a number of different tactics. The primary approach was to educate the public about the inviolability of natural rights for all human beings, both male and female. To
the extent that a woman was an individual and a citizen, she was naturally included in
the principles of the Declaration of Independence; she was entitled to the same
unalienable rights as a man. Stanton wrote that many American women simply had not
been given the opportunity to understand fully the ideals of republican government;
men, including ordinary citizens as well as members of Congress and other prominent
public figures, either denied or disregarded or deliberately kept women ignorant of the
same ideals. Another approach was moral suasion, pointing out that men who lived
by the Golden Rule would be unable in good conscience to deny female
enfranchisement. Anthony exhorted men to imagine the feelings of women deprived of
the right to vote. Stanton exclaimed that if oppression and injustice spurred men “to a
lifelong struggle for liberty and independence, then know that what you feel, the mass
of women feel also.” Stanton and Anthony also declared that women, and not men,
know what is best for women. Stanton thought that men socialized to believe in the
inferiority of women could never effectively work for women’s rights, because men
were incapable to taking a women’s viewpoint. Anthony believed that a major goal of
her work was to change society’s attitude from one that placed women at men’s
disposal and mercy to one that acknowledged that “women were created for
themselves, for their own happiness.”

Also throughout these years, Anthony, Stanton, the women’s rights movement,
and later the woman suffrage movement were subjected repeatedly and relentlessly to
the blatant expression of the anti-female cultural bias. The basis of the cultural bias was
Blackstone’s interpretation of English common law: “The husband and wife are one,
and that one is the husband.” The application of this philosophy was at the root of the abuse heaped upon the quest for women’s rights. The press, politicians, and other public figures criticized, ridiculed, and dismissed the women and the work. As early as 1848, in response to the Declaration of Sentiments, the Philadelphia *Public Ledger and Daily Transcript* declared that women’s true political clout was in the home, in the influence on husbands, sons, and brothers. Drawing a distinction between a woman and a lady, the newspaper editorialized, “A woman is nobody. A wife is everything. A pretty girl is equal to ten thousand men, and a mother is, next to God, all powerful. . . . The ladies of Philadelphia . . . are resolved to maintain their rights as Wives, Belles, Virgins, and Mothers, and not as Women.” The New York Tribune claimed the ludicrousness of woman suffrage “when she rules the world by a glance of her eye.” *The Free Press* opined that woman should be content to be “bashful [and] modest.” The Richmond, Kentucky, *Herald* stated that “Men are not to blame that women are women, for there is not a man in this whole land who wouldn’t rather have a boy baby than a gal baby. . . . It will have come to a strange pass . . . when the mothers [of sons] . . . are unwilling to trust in their hands of their own offspring the destinies of the nation.”

The press also engaged in personal attacks against Anthony, who, as an unmarried woman, was viewed as the antithesis of true womanhood. She was variously described as having a face which reflected “masculine strength,” as paying “no special attention to feminine graces,” and as being “No longer in the bloom of youth – if she ever had any bloom – hard featured, guileless, cold as an icicle.” She was accused of
having “a lawless way of talking and acting, which men think wonderfully fascinating in a belle, but utterly unforgivable in a plain, middle-aged woman.” She was pitied for “striv[ing] long and earnestly to become a man. . . . She has never done any good in the world. . . . She is sweet in the eyes of her own mirror, but her advanced age and maiden name deny that she has been so in the eyes of others.”

Stanton and Anthony had ready answers for the cultural bias, always in terms of women’s rights and often in terms of suffrage. Stanton claimed that women’s social position was the result of men’s domination, that “Our religion, laws, customs, are all founded on the belief that woman was made for man” and that denying political equality to women was “tyranny and abuse of those who have no voice in government.” Anthony decried a political system that continually debased the ability of women to use sound judgment, remarking that “what woman is today, is the result of man’s handiwork.” The cultural bias was pervasive, but Stanton and Anthony had the resources and wherewithal to fight back. A true testament to this ability was this statement of Theodore Tilton:

These two women . . . have, for the last thirty years, been diligent forgers of all manner of projectiles . . . often to the bewilderment and prostration of numerous victims; and . . . to the gnashing of angry men’s teeth . . . this noise-making twain are the two sticks of a drum, keeping up what Daniel Webster called ‘The rub-a-dub of agitation.’

The female suffragists were faced with the formidable obstacle of trying to change political, legal, and social constructs without the political, legal, or social power to do so. The rhetoric of the movement’s speeches, treatises, and lectures often had undertones of supplication. In 1860, Stanton, in a speech before the New York State
legislature decried a government that forced women to “plead our cause.” In 1869, Stanton and Anthony testified at a Congressional hearing; the two sent an “appeal . . . to Congress praying that women should be recognized” in the Fifteenth Amendment. Even toward the end of her career, Anthony talked of “men noble enough to admit women to the ballot-box” and her “outrage” that women should be “compel[led] . . . to work and beg for the privilege of getting their rightful inheritance.” These pleas usually were ignored or ridiculed by the intended male audience. Men had no reason to take the women’s arguments seriously; disfranchised women posed no threat to anyone’s political career or special interests.

Despite the obviously prolonged process of the campaign, Stanton and Anthony kept faith that the movement was moving ever closer to the suffrage goal. Neither would entertain the slightest doubt about eventual success -- time and again throughout the years, that success was deemed to be “almost . . . won,” that women would win the vote “very soon,” “quickly,” “sooner than most people think,” and “within a generation.” These expressions of confidence were offset by moments of realism, as evidenced by that fact that, “We cannot bring about a moral revolution in a day or year,” that fifty years after Seneca Falls, the women wondered about the “advance in another fifty years,” and that in 1877 Anthony “speculate[d] . . . on the chances of living long enough” to accomplish the goal. Notwithstanding the discouragement that accompanied the glacial progress and frequent setbacks, neither woman relented. Anthony declared that only after the passage of a woman suffrage amendment would “Susan B. Anthony stop work – but not before.” Stanton noted that, “we are sowing
wheat . . . which other hands than ours will reap and enjoy.\textsuperscript{92} Each knew that the fight would extend beyond her own lifetime, and yet each continued to work and agitate for the rights and equality of future generations of women.

In 1876, Anthony convinced Stanton to join her in working on a history of the suffrage movement. The two enlisted the help of suffrage colleague Matilda Joslyn Gage, and began work compiling the vast collection of letters, speeches, articles and other writings that had amassed over the years since the 1848 Seneca Falls convention. The \textit{History of Woman Suffrage} was monumental and eventually filled six volumes. The first three volumes were published in 1881, 1882, and 1886.\textsuperscript{93} Anthony, Stanton and Gage were criticized for presuming to write the history of a movement that was still alive and functioning.\textsuperscript{94} However, the three considered the work too important to leave to future generations. Stanton enjoyed the research and writing, comparing the publication Volumes I, II, and III to the satisfaction of bearing a healthy child.\textsuperscript{95} By contrast, Anthony despised the seemingly endless toil -- each of the countless hours spent hunched over papers was one less hour devoted to active suffrage work. She remarked that she was “just sick to death of the whole of it – I had rather wash or whitewash or any possible hard work than sit here & go through digging into the dirty records of the past – that is rather make history than write it –”\textsuperscript{96} However, despite her aversion to the tediousness of the work, Anthony, ever mindful of her quest for the vote, secured financing, arranged for publication, and saw to the donation of the finished products to schools, libraries, and anyone with political power who might be
persuaded after reading the history to support the cause. The *History of Woman Suffrage* became and remained the seminal chronicle of the movement.

In 1878 the NWSA lobbied for the introduction into Congress of the Anthony Amendment, which would be introduced into each session of Congress for the next forty years: “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.” Stanton often spoke before congressional committees to press the suffrage cause; she was discouraged and disgusted by the arrogance and rudeness of the members in response to her always well written and delivered orations. Nevertheless, Stanton and Anthony continued to work for the federal amendment, holding the annual NWSA conventions in Washington, DC, to facilitate access to Congress. In the meantime, the AWSA worked to gain the vote through state referenda, a long, laborious, and usually unsuccessful endeavor. By 1890, a few states had adopted various limited forms of suffrage, but many more resisted.

Both the NWSA and the AWSA recognized the detriment that two organizations working at cross purposes would have on the success of the work, and after protracted negotiations, the groups merged in 1890 to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), the organization that would take the struggle into the twentieth century. With both Stanton and Anthony septuagenarians, a new generation of suffragists was emerging – still middle or upper class, often college educated, and with little to no personal experience of the challenges that the older woman had encountered, these new suffragists were more conventional, conservative, and less likely to use radical means to an end. Anthony came to acknowledge these
new women as the future of the movement and determined to leave her mark through mentoring the younger suffragists in effective strategies. Anthony summed up the passing of the torch in a letter to Stanton:

We little dreamed when we began this contest, optimistic with the hope and buoyancy of youth, that half a century later we would be compelled to leave the finish of the battle to another generation of women. . . . These strong young women will take our place and complete our work. . . . There is an army of them, where we were but a handful.

And we, dear old friend, shall move on to the next sphere of existence – higher and larger, we cannot fail to believe, and one where women will not be placed in an inferior position, but will be welcomed on a plane of perfect intellectual and spiritual equality.
CHAPTER THREE

MOVING INTO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The whole effort of the woman movement has been to destroy obedience of woman in the home. . . . Yet before the attainment of equal rights for men and women there will be years of struggle and disappointment. We of a younger generation have taken up the work where our noble and consecrated pioneers have left it. We in turn, are enlisted for life, and generations yet unborn will take up the work where we lay it down. So, through the centuries, if need be, the education will continue, until a regenerated race of men and women who are equal before man and God shall control the destinies of the earth.

--Carrie Chapman Catt, “Presidential Address,” 1902

The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) headed by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) headed by Lucy Stone had different ideologies and approaches to the fight for the vote for women. The NWSA eschewed male participation in making policies and deciding tactics; the AWSA had men serving as board members and officers. The NWSA believed that the only effective route to suffrage was a federal amendment; the AWSA leaned toward a state by state strategy. Nevertheless, both groups acknowledged that after twenty years of antagonism, the time had come to settle differences and join forces in a concerted effort to achieve the common goal. With the 1890 merger of the NWSA and the AWSA into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) the woman suffrage movement became national in focus, with local chapters and conventions attended by delegates from state suffrage associations. However, the NAWSA also took a conservative turn, in keeping with the changes in women’s status since the Civil War and the character of the rising cadre of younger leaders. Largely middle and upper class and often college educated, the second
generation of suffragists had come of age with opportunities and advantages that had been unavailable to the earlier women. Although many of these opportunities had evolved because of the work of the earlier generation, the new suffragists forged a path that led away from the ideology of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony and developed a philosophy more in line with the persistently restrictive anti-female cultural bias. Gone was the radical edge that had been the legacy of Seneca Falls. The second generation advocated suffrage through social acceptance. The issue of suffrage was widely recognized and appreciated as one of importance for women, the work of the suffragists was well known, the methods were commonplace and predictable. The woman suffrage movement had become respectable. The younger women demanded voting rights, but not gender equality. To achieve the vote on these new terms, the suffragists needed to devise a strategy to cultivate an aura of decorum. The first step in this process was to exalt Anthony and reject Stanton.

When the NAWSA was established in 1890, Stanton was elected president and Anthony vice-president. Stanton and Anthony were radical feminists. Both were ardent suffragists. Stanton was the nineteenth century’s foremost voice for women’s rights. Anthony was the most recognized name and face of the nineteenth century woman suffrage movement. Both believed in equality as a natural right, that women as human beings were equal to men, and that women as individuals were entitled to the same social, legal, and political status and protections as men. Both had lived lives dedicated to the obliterati of the cult of true womanhood. Both had reservations about collaborating with the faction of conservative suffragists. However, both
understood that the time had come to prepare to pass the completion of the work on to the next generation. Anthony befriended and mentored many of these younger women, who became “nieces” to “Aunt Susan.” Stanton had no such close ties to the younger generation of the NAWSA leadership, whom she saw as undirected and conciliatory.

The new suffragists viewed Stanton with suspicion, as an unnecessarily confrontational troublemaker more concerned with promoting a personal agenda than in working in the best interests of the organization. The smoldering animosity drove Stanton away from the NAWSA and she relinquished the presidency to Anthony in 1892. The rift was deepened with the publication of Stanton’s *The Woman’s Bible*, which prompted the NAWSA members to pass a resolution at the 1896 convention: “This association is non-sectarian, being composed of persons of all shades of religious opinion, and has no official connection with the so-called ‘Woman’s Bible’ or any theological publication.”

Anthony defended Stanton, exclaiming:

> I shall be pained beyond expression if the delegates here are so narrow and illiberal as to adopt this resolution. You would better not begin resolving against individual action or you will find no limit. This year it is Mrs. Stanton; next year it may be I or one of yourselves who will be the victim.
>
> This resolution adopted will be a vote of censure upon a woman who is without a peer in intellectual and statesmanlike ability; one who has stood for half a century the acknowledged leader of progressive thought and demand in regard to all matters pertaining to the absolute freedom of women.

Stanton left the NAWSA; the conservative suffragists subsequently engaged in promoting a revisionist history that virtually removed Stanton from the movement she had founded and nurtured for over fifty years.
Anthony, too, disagreed with some of the tactics of the new generation, particularly the shift held over from the AWSA to a state by state strategy rather than a consistent push for a federal amendment. Also, ostensibly to spread awareness of the movement and to mitigate the expense and stress of a long journey, the NAWSA’s younger members voted to move the annual convention out of Washington, D.C. Anthony believed that doing so would remove the organization from the attention of Congress and “lessen our influence and power.” Indeed, although the Anthony Amendment was introduced into each session of Congress, without the consistent pressure of woman suffrage activists between 1896 and 1915, the amendment never moved out of committee. Nevertheless, Anthony abided by this and other decisions as the choice of the NAWSA membership with the approach of the twentieth century.

With the upheavals inherent in the formation of the NAWSA, the departure of Stanton, the retirement of Anthony, the increasingly conservative trajectory of suffrage work, the ideological changes of the new organization, and the interrupted leadership, the years from 1896 to 1915 have been called the doldrums. Despite the work of the NAWSA members to achieve suffrage through state referenda, by 1896 success had been achieved in only four states: Wyoming (1890), Colorado (1893), and Utah and Idaho (1896). Not another state passed a suffrage referendum until 1910. During the doldrums years the NAWSA leadership set a new agenda, one that emphasized the differences between women and men. The justification for woman suffrage changed from one of natural rights among equals to one of social impact: women did not need the vote to express individuality or independence, but to promote badly needed social
reforms. The ballot was a way for reform-minded women to work legitimately to improve society. Instead of rejecting the anti-female cultural bias the new suffragists embraced traditional female roles as proof that women could engage in political activity as long as that activity had a positive social outcome. As such, woman suffrage became less threatening and more accepted. Female influence was needed by a society that lacked morality and peace. This philosophy was perfect for the Progressive Era of the early twentieth century, when people were amenable to a variety of reforms.14

However, the cultural bias against women continued to be an obstacle. As women gained full or partial voting rights in several states, anti-female sentiment evolved from a generalized argument about the sanctity of the woman’s sphere to specific attacks on the suffragists and the act of voting. One basis for this new twist of cultural bias was the gospel of St. Paul. In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul wrote:

34. Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.
35. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.15

Proponents of the cultural bias extended St. Paul’s injunction to include public speaking of any kind, particularly speaking in favor of woman suffrage. In counterpoint, future movement leader and Anthony protégé Carrie Chapman Catt argued that although Christians may believe in the infallibility of the Bible, many commands, including those made by St. Paul, should not be interpreted as literal guides to nineteenth century customs and behavior. Previous literal interpretations had been used to justify a wide variety of anti-social and immoral philosophies, including
slavery and intemperance. Catt opined that if St. Paul were alive in modern times he would adjust his attitude toward the status of women in favor of public speaking, democracy, and suffrage.¹⁶

The anti-female bias was also expressed in more secular forms and attaining suffrage did not lessen the breadth or intensity of these sentiments. Even in the western suffrage states, deep seated prejudice influenced social attitudes toward women. Politicians worried that women would not adhere to party loyalty and that blocs of women would vote for reform legislation that might hurt party status and result in lost elections. Women were not taken seriously in the press, with reporters often commenting on the appearance and attire of women speakers rather than the content of the speeches. Women were expected to participate in political rallies only as silent observers that could draw a crowd but would not be heard.¹⁷ Suffragists countered these attitudes by pointing out the benefits to society, governments, and political parties that female enfranchisement would bring. Women voters were educated, intelligent, socially aware, and politically active. These qualities prepared women to understand issues and make informed decisions about elections and legislation that would have positive effects not only on public policy at large, but also on family life and the very underpinnings of society. Women likened involvement in politics to housekeeping, not just for isolated homes, but for the cities, states, and nation.¹⁸ This tension created by the anti-female cultural bias affected the suffrage movement well into the twentieth century.
Two women emerged as leaders of the NAWSA at the turn of the twentieth century. Carrie Chapman Catt and Anna Howard Shaw were dedicated suffragists, and friends and “nieces” of Susan B. Anthony. Both were conservative in outlook, and believed that suffrage could be attained not through the arguments about equality and natural rights that had been espoused by Stanton and Anthony, but by emphasizing the social benefits that woman suffrage would engender.  Catt was a college educated prohibitionist and former school teacher. She displayed single-mindedness and organizational ability reminiscent of Anthony’s youth, qualities that the older suffragist had seen diminishing in many of the younger women. Catt was able to strategize and to see far-reaching consequences of the NAWSA policies and tried to shape those policies toward the most effective use of the talents and interests of supporters of woman suffrage. Shaw was also highly educated, an ordained minister, and physician who learned from her work with disadvantaged women the need for empowerment that the ballot would provide. However, Shaw was a noted orator but poor administrator who, through her verbal skills was influential in spreading the suffrage message nationwide and attracting support to the cause, yet did not inspire suffrage supporters to action.  

Upon Anthony’s retirement in 1900, Catt, the better organizer and activist, assumed the NAWSA presidency. Catt rose to the NAWSA presidency twice, in 1900 and again in 1916. Catt’s initial tenure was short-lived due to family obligations that compelled her to step down in 1904. After Catt’s departure, Shaw was elected president, a position she held until 1915.
Although Carrie Chapman Catt acknowledged the natural rights argument that had fueled the suffrage movement in the nineteenth century, she interpreted the implications of denial of women’s natural rights in a context that moved beyond the political to the social and personal. Catt described a more insidious and formidable obstacle to woman suffrage in what she referred to as sex prejudice. She defined sex prejudice as “a pre-judgment against rights, liberties and opportunities of women . . . the chief hindrance in the rapid advance of the woman’s rights movement.” She claimed that woman’s humanity was recognized only in relation to the ascendancy of man and the dependence of woman. She pointed out that society assigned social roles and restrictions to women and then criticized women for shortcomings resulting directly from these social restrictions: women denied education were accused of low intellectual skills; women stripped of personal responsibility were weak; women who behaved and dressed according to male-imposed standards were vain. Catt praised the New Woman who rose above societal barriers “to destroy the obedience of woman in the home,” to attain education, demand respect, and set into motion reforms for the betterment of society, especially woman suffrage. She worked to incorporate her philosophy into the suffrage movement and to bring that movement into the mainstream of Progressive Era reform.

Carrie Chapman Catt’s priority as the NAWSA president was to build support for suffrage and a constituency for the movement. Her goal was to increase the number of active women members; her target was middle and upper class women with the interest, time, and resources to work for reform. Catt devised a society plan wherein
women of means -- educated, professional, politically minded, and socially aware women – could be recruited to join the NAWSA ranks. Catt’s plan encouraged the NAWSA members to join community groups, charitable and civic organizations, religious societies, and clubs to attract women accustomed to public life, giving speeches, and fund raising. Also recognizing the existence of an untapped population of more traditional potential supporters, Catt conceived the parlor meeting. Held in a host home, these meetings sought to draw out women who might otherwise shy away from public gatherings, to educate these women in the benefits of suffrage, and to spur interest in social and political issues. Despite some protests that the society plan was elitist and exclusionary, most of the NAWSA members lauded the idea as innovative and effective.\textsuperscript{24}

Anna Howard Shaw’s approach to achieving woman suffrage was very different from Catt’s. Shaw was an orator. Her primary emphasis was on education of the public about the rightness of woman suffrage. As a speaker Shaw put forth an image of common sense and logic, but with a sometimes jocular twist. Her arguments in support of woman suffrage were designed to answer point by point the arguments of those against the cause. However, Shaw was an ineffective leader who upheld the NAWSA method of suffrage by state referendum despite the constant losses and setbacks such an approach suffered. Shaw presided over an organization that saw only seven successful, but thirteen unsuccessful, state referenda during her term.\textsuperscript{25} She endured criticism from within the NAWSA that mounted until she announced her retirement in 1915.\textsuperscript{26} Although Shaw stepped down reluctantly, she recognized that,
“my day except for speaking and ‘inspiring’ has gone by.” Catt resumed the NAWSA presidency, a post that she held until the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Despite the stagnation of the suffrage movement during Shaw’s presidency, she was generally acknowledged as a dynamic speaker and personable woman whose words attracted many newcomers to the suffrage ranks. Her talents were especially evident in one of the final speeches of her tenure, “The Fundamental Principle of a Republic,” which she delivered in 1915. Shaw’s message was that a true democracy could not exist while excluding half of the adult citizens from the right to vote. She pointed out the inconsistencies of male-generated anti-suffrage arguments, which seemed to flip between opposing viewpoints and justifications without regard to logic or common sense. Shaw concluded:

we women do not want the ballot in order that we may fight, but . . . to keep men from fighting . . . in war or in peace . . . in the home or in the state . . . [women] are needed everywhere where human problems are to be solved, and men and women must go through this world together. . . . [I]t is God’s way and it is the fundamental principle of a Republican form of government.

Shaw’s strength was speaking. She supported the movement of women into public life and she continued to work tirelessly for suffrage even after stepping down as the NAWSA president. She focused on education to inspire interest in the cause, and left the activism and agitation to Catt and the emerging younger generation.

Toward the final years of Shaw’s NAWSA presidency the third generation of woman suffragists became active. Frustrated by the decades of fruitless work of the first two generations, these young women were determined to achieve the suffrage goal before another generation died out. This third wave epitomized the New Woman of the
twentieth century -- middle and upper class, many with advanced university 
educations, and community service minded. Additionally, these new suffragists were 
organized, not afraid of confrontation, and deeply committed to female inclusion in the 
American ideal and the passage of a federal woman suffrage amendment. The leader of 
this militant group was a young Quaker woman of conviction, a radical feminist who 
combined the single-minded tirelessness of Susan B. Anthony with the courage and 
directness of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. This woman’s name was Alice Paul, and her 
work would be the culminating force of the woman suffrage movement.
CHAPTER FOUR

RADICALISM REVIVED: THE NATIONAL WOMAN’S PARTY

WE DEMAND AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES ENFRANCHISING THE WOMEN OF THE COUNTRY
-- Great Demand Banner of the National Woman’s Party

The crusade for woman suffrage became stalled in the first few years of the twentieth century. After Idaho enfranchised women in 1896, no state took the same action until Washington in 1910. During those years progress on a federal level was completely stagnant, with neither house of Congress even debating the issue after 1887. The NAWSA under the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw continued to focus on achieving suffrage state by state, waging numerous unsuccessful campaigns for state referenda. By the 1910s an undercurrent of discontent with the NAWSA’s methods was gaining momentum, particularly among the younger women. This third generation of suffragists was well educated, articulate, logical, resentful of being excluded from the American ideal, and disdainful of the seemingly never-ending futility of pursuing suffrage at the state level. These young women were determined to expedite the passage of a federal suffrage amendment but lacked a leader willing and able to use daring tactics in a single minded quest to attain the ballot. Such a leader emerged in 1912 when Alice Paul moved to Washington, D.C.

Alice Stokes Paul was born on January 11, 1885, the eldest of four children, in Moorestown, New Jersey. Her family was one in a long heritage of Hicksite Quakers, a sect that promoted inner strength, pacifism, and equality between the sexes. Her father, William Paul, was a farmer who supplemented his income during the non-growing
season as a banker. Her maternal grandfather was among the founders of Swarthmore College. Alice’s mother, Tacie Parry, was active in the Friends meeting and had been educated at Swarthmore.

The Pauls worshiped at the local Quaker Meeting House and the children attended The Hicksite Friends School. Alice was a good student and an avid reader of Quaker tenets who thrived in her life circle of home, meeting, and school. As she grew older, Alice developed a drive to perform good works and be active in community service. Her Quaker background supported her belief in women’s rights which extended into her later suffrage activism.

As a young adult, Paul pursued education as a means of exposure to new experiences, improving her mind, and acquiring formal training in the helping professions.* She enrolled at Swarthmore and majored in biology for the intellectual challenge, but did not wish to pursue a career in science. Like many young women of her time, Paul considered teaching but later came to feel that despite the influence she may have on her students, working in a classroom restricted her desire for a greater social impact. In 1905, Paul won a yearlong fellowship from the College Settlement Association of America, moved to New York City, lived at the Rivington Street Settlement, and enrolled in the School of Philanthropy at Columbia University to pursue a certificate in social work. In 1906, Paul entered the University of

*Henceforth the name Paul will refer to Alice Paul unless otherwise specified.
Pennsylvania, where she combined the study of sociology, political science, and economics to earn a master’s degree. Her thesis, titled “Towards Equality,” focused on the legal subordination of women in early twentieth century Pennsylvania.

Even with her advanced education Paul continued to rely on her Quaker roots and sought a life of activism. In 1907, she was awarded a scholarship to the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in England, while simultaneously studying sociology at the University of Birmingham, and at the London School of Economics. Although she enjoyed learning and practiced social work to support herself, Paul continued to search for a more meaningful outlet for her activist leanings.

While in England, Paul’s attention was drawn to that country’s campaign for woman suffrage, and she became an acolyte of radical British suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst. Paul joined the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU), participated in public protests, and was arrested. She came to appreciate the effectiveness of public displays in promoting a cause and would later use many of the Pankhurst tactics in crusading for American woman suffrage. Paul stayed in England until 1910, when she returned to the United States, re-enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1912, earned a Ph.D. in sociology with her dissertation “The Legal Position of Women in Pennsylvania.” However, Paul’s dissatisfaction with social work persisted; she came to realize that her true interest and calling was to work for equal rights for women as she had done in England. In December 1912, Paul moved to Washington, D.C., to become involved with the NAWSA’s quest for suffrage for American women.
In many ways the life and work of Alice Paul followed a trajectory similar to that forged by Susan B. Anthony. In fact, Paul idolized Anthony as the most important and effective of all woman suffragists in the United States movement. Both Paul and Anthony were Hicksite Quakers, and were inculcated from childhood with the idea of equality between the sexes. Both chose not to marry but rather to focus all energy on elevating women. Both were dedicated social activists and reformers; both tried various careers and causes before discovering a life mission devoted to women’s rights and suffrage. Both were considered radical. Paul was perceived by her followers as almost a latter day incarnation of Anthony. Suffragist, author, and Paul contemporary Doris Stevens noted the stagnation of the suffrage movement after Anthony’s death. The leaders had “lost sight of [Anthony’s] aggressive attack and her objective,” were “confined in a narrow circle of routine propaganda,” and “lacked generalship.” However, “Susan B. Anthony’s fundamental objective, her political attitude toward attaining it, and her militant spirit were revived . . . when Alice Paul . . . entered the national field as leader of the new suffrage forces in America.” Paul’s tactics reflected Anthony’s influence: Paul decried the “pleading, wheedling, proving [and] praying” of the NAWSA leadership and maintained, as had Anthony, that women had a right to vote equal to that of men. Historians Katherine Adams and Michael Keene note Paul’s belief that only through the ballot could women effect any real and lasting social change and that working for that goal should never flag, but should take precedence over all other women’s rights concerns. Anthony had held similar views, displayed similar single minded determination, and was similarly convinced of success.
Paul’s motivation for her work was resolute and clear: she believed that the right to vote belonged to women. She would not be distracted from her resolve. She fostered the idea that women should demand the ballot. She encouraged women to believe in the rightness of the cause and to reject limiting social customs that might interfere with success. She refused to read about or engage in any activities that were not directly related to suffrage. Her stamina was legendary and she consistently devised new tactics to keep her followers interested and prevent the slightest staleness from encroaching on the movement. She persisted until even the staunchest opponent to suffrage must at least acknowledge her point of view. She did not pursue unsuccessful actions, but rather cultivated her followers’ abilities and dedication to the movement. She did not waste time duplicating work that had already been completed. She understood the role of optimism in accomplishing goals.

Alice Paul evinced a charisma that captivated her supporters. According to historian Inez Haynes Irwin, Paul was an astute judge of character and recruited “young, fresh, convinced, inspiring, and inspired spirits” to the cause. Historian Christine Lunardini notes that Paul was “idolized and idealized by her suffrage followers,” who “were lavish in their praise.” Lunardini’s conclusion is epitomized by Stevens’s assertion, “how abundantly we feel her power, her will and her compelling leadership. . . . countless women who came in touch with her . . . remain under her leadership to the end.” However, perhaps the most striking example of Paul’s charisma is the sentiment at the opening of Stevens’s book, Jailed for Freedom:
TO

ALICE PAUL

THROUGH WhOSE BRILLIANT
AND DEVOTED LEADERSHIP
THE WOMEN OF AMERICA HAVE
BEEN ABLE TO CONSUMMATE
WITH GLADNESS AND GALLANT
COURAGE THEIR LONG STRUGGLE
FOR POLITICAL LIBERTY,
THIS BOOK IS AFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED.24

When Paul arrived in Washington, DC in 1912 she found a NAWSA on what she considered to be an ineffective track. The organization under the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw had virtually discontinued efforts at achieving suffrage through a federal amendment, focusing instead on a state by state process that was protracted, demoralizing, and fruitless. The NAWSA did have a Congressional Committee (CC) charged with insuring that the issue would be placed on the roster for House and Senate hearings, but this committee consisted of one woman with an annual budget of $10.00; at the end of the year unspent change was returned to the NAWSA coffers. Paul saw here an opportunity to infuse new life into work on the federal level, and volunteered to assume the administration of the CC.25 Her services were accepted, with the proviso that the group could expect no funding from the NAWSA. Paul realized that to raise the woman-power and money necessary to lobby Congress the CC would need help from the NAWSA state affiliates. With the NAWSA’s approval, she organized the Congressional Union (CU) to move into the states as “a group of women in all parts of the country who have joined together in the effort to secure the passage of an Amendment to the United States Constitution enfranchising women.” The CU would
become instrumental in bringing suffrage to the fore as a campaign issue in state elections, while the CC, as the executive board of the CU, would concentrate on Congress. The CU chose white, purple and gold as signature colors – “purple for the royal glory of women, white for the purity at home and in politics, gold for the crown of the victor.” The CC set to work promoting a federal amendment, with Paul masterminding tactics designed to achieve the goal by the most expedient means possible.

Almost from the beginning, the NAWSA and the CC were at odds. The NAWSA was influenced by and appeared to place inordinate value on social acceptance. Historian Janice Law Trecker notes that the NAWSA and the CC had differing viewpoints about suffrage – the NAWSA wanted to imbue an aura of politeness into the work, believing that diligent but unobtrusive behavior would be rewarded. The CC saw the work as a crusade, in which suffrage was only the beginning of total emancipation for women. These incongruent attitudes naturally led to friction and the CC became a constant “irritant” to the mother organization. Adams and Keene claim that the NAWSA saw the CC as impatient and radical, as pushing for change before change could be accommodated. The actions of the CC would reflect poorly on the NAWSA, and threaten the progress that had been made in state campaigns. The fact that the CC questioned exactly how much progress the NAWSA had made was immaterial. Lunardini points out that at this time the NAWSA saw no legitimacy in working for a federal amendment and did not appreciate the power of women to effect change in the political system. Ford suggests that the NAWSA gave
the CC no direction and no specific instructions, but rather left the younger organization free to improvise, a situation which allowed the CC to grow in effectiveness but which eventually led to a permanent rift between the two groups.\textsuperscript{31}

The radical Alice Paul consistently chose the most public arena for her crusade. Lucy Burns, whom Paul had met in England where both were involved in the British suffrage movement, helped to implement the schemes that Paul devised. Lunardini describes Burns as “the better diplomat of the two. . . . Paul [was] much more businesslike.”\textsuperscript{32} The two developed methods fashioned after the work of British radical feminists, including parades, cross-country automobile and train trips, delegations to the president and Congress, involvement in state elections, lobbying, petitioning, picketing, and being arrested.\textsuperscript{33} Furthermore, the CC/CU followed the example of Anthony and Stanton and established a newspaper dedicated solely to the issue of woman suffrage. \textit{The Suffragist} began publication on November 15, 1913, charged with a mission to disseminate information, educate the populace, and garner publicity through mainstream legitimacy. Paul used \textit{The Suffragist} to advertise CC/CU events; Burns wrote many of the editorials.\textsuperscript{34}

One of the first public pro-suffrage events of the CC was, according to Irwin, “a monster demonstration [in Washington, D.C.] in the shape of a procession . . . on March 3, 1913, the eve of President Woodrow Wilson’s first inauguration.” A parade of eight thousand women marched down Pennsylvania Avenue to call the new President’s attention to woman suffrage. At this parade the “Great Demand” banner was first displayed: \textbf{WE DEMAND AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION}
OF THE UNITED STATES ENFRANCHISING THE WOMEN OF THE COUNTRY.  
As often happened, what was intended as an uplifting and jubilant demonstration clashed with the anti-suffrage sentiments of a few vocal troublemakers. Inauguration festivities had attracted visitors from all over the country, and a large crowd of increasingly rowdy onlookers blocked the parade route, heckled the marchers, and physically attacked several suffragists. District police “seemed oblivious” to the mayhem, and the Secretary of War called out local troops to quell the violence.  
Despite the unfortunate riot, the parade successfully fulfilled the CU’s intention to generate exposure and public attention for the suffrage amendment. Also, this parade sent a message to the new President Wilson. Upon arriving at Washington’s Union Station, he noted that the station and streets were unusually empty. His request for an explanation elicited a surprising and, unbeknownst to Wilson, ominous reply: everyone was “over on the Avenue watching the Suffrage Parade.”

After Wilson’s inauguration, the CC wasted no time in appealing directly to him for action toward a suffrage amendment. Wilson had made no secret of his opposition to woman suffrage. Ford states that Wilson “held a chivalrous, condescending view of women.” Certainly he was patronizing, and as Adams and Keene point out, “the plain truth was that he preferred not to give women the vote.” Paul knew of Wilson’s unfavorable record but believed that, as a reasonable man, he could be educated to understand the importance of the issue. Convinced that the President would see the logic in the suffragists’ arguments, appreciate the women’s desire for inclusion in the American political process, and understand the urgency of
the vote for women, Alice Paul organized eight deputations between March, 1913, and January, 1915. The deputations, composed of women from different geographic regions and backgrounds, ranged in number from four to one hundred fifty delegates. However, the deputations shared a common experience: each learned that President Wilson, behind his exceedingly polite facade, was uninterested in suffrage or in a federal suffrage amendment, and intransigent in his determination to leave the suffrage question to the states. Wilson initially, and incredibly, claimed that “Suffrage had never been brought to his attention, that the matter was entirely new,” leaving one to wonder how he could have come of age as a university professor and politician in the nineteenth century United States and never heard of Susan B. Anthony. To a later deputation he declared, “I am not at liberty to urge upon Congress . . . my private views on any subject.” Still later: “I am tied to a conviction . . . that changes of this sort ought to be brought about State by State.”

According to Trecker, Paul may have overestimated Wilson’s power to influence the actions of Congress. In any case, the CU finally realized the futility of relying solely on discussion, persuasion, and pleas, no matter how cogent. The deputations were courteous, within the bounds of acceptable behavior for women, and completely ineffective. The CC needed a new, radical strategy for pressing for the federal amendment.

Between 1913 and 1916 Paul orchestrated several events designed to keep suffrage in the public eye and promote the passage of a federal amendment. In 1913 the CU solicited names on a petition from women all over the country and succeed in collecting 250,000 signatures in five weeks. The group then engineered an automobile
parade from Hyattsville, Maryland, to Capitol Hill to present the petition to the Senate suffrage committee. In 1915 Paul secured a booth at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, where the CU compiled 500,000 names on a petition that was then transported by car to Washington, D.C. While her colleagues were driving across country, Paul was busy renting a house across Lafayette Square from the White House to serve as CU headquarters and project an image of “equal players on the national scene.”

In 1916, she instituted a system of cards to keep data about various members of Congress, including age, birth date, family information, education, religion, work experience, voting record, and stance on woman suffrage. Paul and the CU used this information for lobbying and keeping suffrage in the forefront of the minds of senators and representatives.

Paul encouraged CU members to attend President Wilson’s December message to the 64th Congress, a speech in which he advocated suffrage for Puerto Rican men. Just as Wilson was making his argument, the CU unfurled from the balcony a banner on which was printed, “MR. PRESIDENT, WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE?” Wilson calmly finished his speech amid the hubbub of disgruntled politicians. Although such behavior, the constant presence of women in the halls of the Capitol, holding forth at international expositions, on the streets, and behind the wheels of cars were considered radical by the standards of the times, Paul saw these methods as invaluable in publicizing woman suffrage.

In January 1914, the CC decided to emulate the tactic of the British suffragists to hold the party in power responsible for failing to pass the amendment. Thus, in the
states that had already instituted woman suffrage the CU launched campaigns against election of Democratic Party candidates. Two delegates were sent to each of the nine suffrage states to educate and organize women voters “to withdraw their support from the Democrats nationally until the Democratic Party nationally ceases to block suffrage.” This move, that illustrated the CU’s radical policy of public confrontation, was adamantly opposed by the NAWSA. To the NAWSA, the CU’s action smacked of partisan politics and was antithetical to the NAWSA philosophy. In contrast, Paul considered the CU eminently non-partisan, and believed that the NAWSA and other critics simply misunderstood the CU’s motives. In working in the suffrage states, the CU did not advocate voting for any particular candidate or party. Rather, in keeping with the group’s focus on the federal amendment, the CU placed a single, strong emphasis on opposing any Democratic candidate regardless of his views on suffrage or any other issue. She contended that Democrats in danger of losing elections and, thereby, power over the national government, would come to appreciate the voting power of women and take seriously the demand for the ballot. Also, in this way women voters would express solidarity with those women from whom the vote was still being withheld. In response to charges that the CU’s methods were unfair, that for women to vote as a bloc was political coercion, and that such activities proved that women were not capable of understanding important issues or of using the vote effectively, Paul replied, “We cannot see any reason why the women voters should not use their vote to further the suffrage question just as many of them use their votes to further their views on the tariff or the currency or other subjects.” The outcome of the elections saw the
defeat of twenty-three Democratic candidates, and although proof was lacking that the
CU’s actions had caused these defeats, the anti-Democrat campaign had certainly
attracted attention and respect for female influence at the ballot box. The NAWSA
was appalled at the CU’s behavior and insisted that these radical methods hurt the
cause by working to unseat pro-suffrage Democrats. The CU and the NAWSA were
at loggerheads over philosophies, and neither side would back down.

The rift was exacerbated by the NAWSA’s support for the Shafroth-Palmer
Resolution. Introduced into Congress in March 1914, the bill proposed that states could
have “a referendum on woman suffrage if more than 8% of the legal voters in the last
election . . . signed a petition for it.” In keeping with the organization’s state-by-state
approach, the NAWSA supported Shafroth-Palmer; the CU vocally opposed the bill as
another tactic through which women suffrage was subjected to the control of men, and
through which Congress could delay immediate action on the federal level and divert
attention from the more inclusive, less cumbersome Susan B. Anthony Amendment.
The NAWSA saw Shafroth-Palmer as an enticement to senators who might vote for
suffrage on the state level but opposed a federal amendment as interfering with states’
rights. The CU saw Shafroth-Palmer as the harbinger of unending state referenda, each
of which would have to be won separately. Even within the NAWSA Shafroth-
Palmer caused dissension as numerous members opposed the bill; however, the
organization’s leadership under Dr. Shaw, determined to cast an unfavorable light on
the CU, stubbornly refused to reconsider policy and blamed the CU for the internal
strife. The animosity proved insurmountable. When the CU persisted in defying
national organization policy, and in anticipation of similar CU tactics being employed in the upcoming national elections of 1916, the NAWSA severed the groups’ affiliation. Indeed, the official histories of the two groups reflected the depth of the mutual disdain: CU/NWP historian Irwin ignored the NAWSA after recounting the events preceding the split; the NAWSA twentieth century historian Ida Harper Husted rarely mentioned the CU/NWP, and then in mostly negative terms. However, Paul, although regretful about the circumstances of the split, was not inclined to dwell on past events. She looked to the future and to the work that lay ahead. The newly independent CU was free to implement radical policy and more than ever dedicated to achieving a Constitutional suffrage amendment as quickly as possible.

The nature of the conflict between the CC/CU and the NAWSA lay not in the goals but in the differing fundamental philosophies of the two groups. Under the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw, the NAWSA had pursued a policy of suffrage by state referendum, with little or no focus on the federal amendment. Although Shaw led one of the deputations to President Wilson in 1913, exhorting the president to speak to Congress on behalf of suffrage, she persisted in her belief in the expediency of a state by state approach. In fact, the older members of the NAWSA had grown accustomed to thinking of the work for suffrage in terms of a lifelong endeavor, a perspective that the younger women sought to change. However, a larger conflict between the two groups was the threat that the CC/CU posed to the NAWSA. This ill-will evolved into a one-sided power play in which the NAWSA took sometimes
extreme steps to discredit Paul; although the CC/CU ignored the NAWSA, the newer group could not completely escape the negative repercussions of this smear campaign.

The NAWSA opposed almost every one of the CC/CU tactics. Shaw spoke out against holding the Democratic Party responsible for the lack of a suffrage amendment, believing that such methods would alienate solid suffrage supporters. The NAWSA claimed that suffrage was a non-partisan issue, and that no single political party held more sway than any other. Votes for the passage of suffrage, either by state referenda or by federal amendment would have to come from all sides of the political system; supporting pro-suffrage legislators regardless of party affiliation was a positive approach that would be more productive than a negative, defeat-the-party-in-power method. In fact, Shaw accused Paul of trying to cast a bad light on the entire suffrage movement, with the aim of stepping in and taking over the NAWSA.

After Carrie Chapman Catt assumed the NAWSA presidency in 1916, the animosity of the NAWSA toward the CC/CU persisted. According to Lunardini, Catt brought to her presidency feelings of resentment toward Paul that dated back to the earliest CC/CU days. Despite the NAWSA’s stipulation that the CC/CU could depend upon no financial support from the mother organization, and despite the fact that Paul kept meticulous records of every asset and expenditure, Catt questioned the propriety of Paul’s fundraising achievements and why none of the CC/CU money was being channeled into the NAWSA treasury. This behavior was a clear attempt to bring the CC/CU more strictly under the NAWSA control. The NAWSA disapproved of Paul’s importation of tactics practiced by the British suffragists; Catt and others believed that
those tactics were too radical and projected an image in conflict with that of the ladylike NAWSA leadership. The NAWSA tried to disband the CU because the group’s work to raise state support for the federal amendment was perceived as counterproductive to the NAWSA’s states’ rights stance. When this effort met with resistance from CU members, the NAWSA insisted that Paul resign as the CU chair. Paul refused, citing her concern that the work for the suffrage amendment would languish without her strong leadership. Despite this unconcealed ill will, Paul was reluctant to sever completely the CU’s relationship with the NAWSA, believing that the two groups working together, as independent but cooperative entities, would have more success than either separately. However, when some members of both groups wanted to reestablish the CU/NAWSA affiliation, Paul refused, knowing that such a move would serve to restrict the CU and revive old conflicts. The rebuffed Catt left Paul with these bitter last words, “All I wish to say is, I will fight you to the last ditch.”

One of Catt’s first actions upon reassuming the NAWSA presidency was to drop the organization’s support for Shafroth-Palmer and to implement her Winning Plan. Catt had chafed at the waste of time and effort that had been expended pursuing Shafroth-Palmer under the tenure of Anna Howard Shaw. Speaking at the 1916 NAWSA convention, Catt proposed that pushing for suffrage through state referenda and attempts to amend state constitutions should happen only in states where such tactics could be expected to have a reasonable chance of success. Otherwise, the NAWSA state affiliates should lobby state legislators to commit to support of the
federal amendment; those state officials would then be urged to influence Congress to pass the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. Catt had calculated that the persistent pressure that widespread state support would bring to bear on Congress would result in the major political parties’ including suffrage planks in the platforms of the presidential election of 1920. With the national parties in favor of suffrage, the Anthony Amendment would be sure to pass, regardless of which party’s candidate should be elected. Catt stipulated that the state affiliates would be under strict NAWSA control, and used military rhetoric in her presentation. She declared the “national fight” would require a “mobilization of at least thirty-six state armies.” She went on to say:

> those who enter on this task should go prepared to give their lives and fortunes for success, and any pusillanimous coward among us who dares to call retreat, should be courtmartialled [sic]. Any other policy than this is weak, inefficient, illogical, inane, and ridiculous. Any other policy would fail of success.\(^\text{52}\)

Catt’s remarks were aimed at the CU’s method of working against the Democratic Party. Her animosity toward Paul was barely concealed in the venom of Catt’s dismissal of any ideas other than her own. Catt’s use of military language belied her pacifist tendencies and was calculated both as a show of strength and fearlessness, and to distance the NAWSA from Paul’s Quaker philosophies. The irony of Catt’s proposal was the similarity of her Winning Plan to the methods of the CU. To disavow Shafroth-Palmer, to combine state and national work, to use the power of the women’s ballot in states where woman suffrage had already been achieved, to urge state officials to influence Congress, were the very methods that the CC/CU had pursued since the groups’ formation. Catt also exposed her fear of being eclipsed by the younger
suffragists and of the potential loss of her stature as the voice of the woman suffrage movement. Catt’s acrimony only served to cement the split between the two groups.

Nineteen sixteen was a pivotal year for the CU. The upcoming presidential election gave the CU a second opportunity to launch an anti-Democratic Party campaign in the western suffrage states. To begin this crusade the CU workers boarded a train dubbed the Suffrage Special and bedecked in white, purple, and gold to travel to the west making whistle stop speeches along the way. The traveling suffragists were also charged with recruiting women voters to support the formation of a new political party that would convene in Chicago on July 5, 6, and 7, immediately before the conventions of the Republican and Progressive Parties. The new group was called the Woman’s Party (WP) and consisted of enfranchised women from the western states. In her initial prospectus, drawn up several weeks earlier, Paul had declared that the formation of an independent political party comprised solely of women “gives us a position of wonderful power, a position that we have never had before.” She went on to state, “We now have to demonstrate to the Administration, to the majority Party on Congress, that the organization in the Suffrage States does exist and that it is a power to be feared” and “it will make Suffrage an issue – the women voters at once become a group which counts; whose votes are wanted.”

In the convention’s keynote speech suffragist Maud Younger declared that the WP “has no candidates and just one plank, the enfranchisement of the women of America through a federal amendment.” The convention generated resolutions to “achieve the enfranchisement of women,” “hold responsible . . . any [dominant] party
which refuses to [place women] on a plane of equality with men in the Constitution of the United States,” and “call upon President Wilson . . . [to] influence . . . political freedom for women.”

Despite the common sentiment that women had no business creating a political party, the WP was generally favorably acknowledged in the national press, as demonstrated by supportive coverage in the Wisconsin State Journal, the Detroit Times, and Collier’s. However, journalistic anti-suffrage sentiment was also evident in articles such as one published in the Chattanooga Times that stated the WP could:

have their little woman’s party; and let them swear not to support anybody who will not breach the constitution for their especial benefit . . . to arouse the millions of women . . . opposed to suffrage . . . to occupy the honorable field they have held so . . . helpful to the progress of civilization and the advancement of the race toward better things.

The WP set to work discrediting the Democratic Party. Parodying Wilson’s re-election slogan in reference to the Great War that had been waging in Europe since 1914, “He kept us out of war,” the WP declared, “He kept us out of suffrage.” The women persisted in making a circuit of western states, giving pro-suffrage/anti-Democratic party speeches in any venue that became available, including places of business, restaurants, churches, county fairs, mining camps and street corners. The WP staged parades, rented billboards, and hung banners in main thoroughfares. In response to insistence from male politicians that the WP should discontinue the campaign to avoid being humiliated throughout the country, Paul replied, in a statement reminiscent of Susan B. Anthony’s sentiments during the Civil War, “No. If we withdraw our speakers from the campaign, we withdraw the issue from the
campaign. We must make this such an important thing in national elections that the Democrats will not want to meet it again.” However, unlike Anthony sixty-five years earlier, Paul’s resolve was unbreakable. The campaign continued without regard for negative public sentiment or political pressure. When Wilson was re-elected, the WP refused to acknowledge failure, stating in a *Suffragist* editorial:

> We were not concerned with the result of the election. Ours was a campaign in which it made no difference who was elected. We did not endorse any candidate. We did not care who won. We were not pro-Republican, pro-Socialist, pro-Prohibition – we were simply pro-woman. We did not endeavor to affect the results in the non-Suffrage States. What we did try to do was to organize a protest vote by women against Mr. Wilson’s attitude towards Suffrage. This we did. Every Democrat who campaigned in the West knows this. The Democratic campaign in the West soon consisted almost entirely of an attempt to combat the Woman’s Party attack.

The WP had entered the national political scene, had an effect on election politics, had drawn attention to suffrage, had argued in defiance of popular sentiment to oppose the Democratic Party so long as that party opposed a suffrage amendment. The national stage was set for the WP to begin a radical and daring campaign for woman suffrage.

The WP leadership determined to put the most public pressure possible on President Wilson to convince him to come out in support of a federal suffrage amendment. To that end, the party organized a program of picketing in front of the White House. On January 10, 1917, a line of twelve women carrying banners bearing pro-suffrage slogans left party headquarters and crossed the street to take positions at the White House gates. Two women were stationed at each gate, each holding a banner, one that read, “MR. PRESIDENT WHAT WILL YOU DO FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE?” and the other “MR. PRESIDENT HOW LONG MUST WOMEN
WAIT FOR LIBERTY?” Never before had anyone picketed the White House. The WP women came daily, in shifts, to keep a constant presence before the president and the public. The women, who calmly and quietly took up positions, were called silent sentinels. Paul orchestrated the picketing to create a spectacle – the symbolism of women keeping guard at the seat of government, kept on the outside, was powerful. She drew in the interest of not only the local citizens, but also woman suffragists from other regions and backgrounds with special themed days for various states, College Day, Teachers’ Day, Patriotic Day, Lincoln Day, and Susan B. Anthony Day.

If questioned by passersby or newspaper reporters about motives, the picketers pointed out that lobbying Congress, petitions, and presidential deputations had so far failed to bring the suffrage amendment any closer to reality. Furthermore, President Wilson had told the picketers to present proof of the desire among women for the ballot. The pickets considered this radical, public display to be the best way to convince the public and the president of the seriousness of the issue.

During this time Alice Paul called a joint convention of the Congressional Union and the Woman’s Party in March 1917. In her keynote address she explained that the time had come to merge the two groups into one political party. The idea that women voters should work separately from disfranchised women had made sense during elections to show the power of the women’s ballot. However, with the election over, the focus of the work would be to pressure the Democratic Party to pass the suffrage amendment or suffer the political consequences. The new party would be called the National Woman’s Party (NWP), “because it stands for political power.”
One of the first acts of the new NWP was to pass a resolution to keep the work for woman suffrage paramount, even as the fighting in Europe escalated and the United States was moving ever closer to entering the combat. Paul acknowledged that some NWP members might want to support the war effort; however, she insisted that such work remain a private choice completely outside of the NWP push for suffrage. This votes-for-women-first policy declared that the NWP was “organized for the sole purpose of securing political liberty for women, [and] shall continue to work for this purpose until it is accomplished.” Paul’s motivation for drafting and supporting this resolution was her desire to avoid a situation similar to that which had occurred during the Civil War, when feminists suspended the women’s rights work, investing energy in the war effort under the misconception that such work would be rewarded with full woman suffrage. This area was one of the few in which Paul chose not to emulate Susan B. Anthony. Paul knew how the earlier women had been brushed aside in the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and was determined not to commit the same mistake that Anthony’s movement had made. Paul’s decision would soon propel the NWP into the midst of a political maelstrom that would characterize the remaining years of the radical suffrage movement.

These events of 1917 engendered new conflict between the NAWSA and the NWP. The older suffragists vehemently opposed the younger women’s picketing. The NAWSA viewed such a confrontational tactic as foolish and the blatant criticism of President Wilson as self-defeating. The rift was widened when the NAWSA gave public support to the Great War effort. Catt did not share Paul’s single focus on
suffrage, but saw the vote as a means for women to become involved in many societal reforms. Although many of the NAWSA members, including Catt, professed to be pacifist, officially the organization believed that to support the war would be the best way to gain respect and to demonstrate the patriotism of women who deserved to be enfranchised. The NWP viewed the NAWSA’s policy as hypocritical, immoral, and indefensible. The two groups, although working toward the same goal and occasionally expressing grudging respect for one another, would never come to reconciliation, but would continue to pursue suffrage through idiosyncratic means.

Meanwhile, the White House pickets continued to take position daily. For the first few weeks, the pickets were objects of curiosity, drawing small crowds but generally unmolested. President Wilson regarded the women with tolerant amusement, tipping his hat as he was chauffeured off the White House grounds and inviting the pickets into the White House for hot coffee on frigid days. Wilson’s good humor soon evaporated, however, as the specter of involvement in Europe’s Great War loomed ever closer. With the United States’ declaration of war against Germany on April 7, 1917, the pickets’ experiences changed. The pickets were suddenly viewed as unpatriotic, disloyal troublemakers. When the suffragists started taking phrases from Wilson’s speeches to point out the hypocrisy of fighting a war for democracy in Europe when at home millions of women were disfranchised, previously friendly passersby became angry mobs, attacking the women and destroying the offending banners. The police did not intervene in the molestation of the picketers, and in fact often participated in the attacks. The suffragists did not stop the picketing; rather the
words on the banners were carefully chosen to create the greatest possible public and administration reaction. One banner displayed shortly after the United States entered the war was unveiled to coincide with a visit to Wilson by the chief of the British foreign mission. The banner featured a passage from Wilson’s war address to Congress: “WE SHALL FIGHT FOR THE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE ALWAYS HELD NEAREST OUR HEARTS – FOR DEMOCRACY, FOR THE RIGHT OF THOSE WHO SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY TO HAVE A VOICE IN THEIR OWN GOVERNMENTS.” Another banner was used to mark the visit to Wilson by the representative of the new Russian Republic. The banner protested denial of the franchise to American women and exhorted the Russians, who had recently passed woman suffrage, to influence the United States toward the same goal. The banner ended with the plea, “HELP US MAKE THIS NATION REALLY FREE. TELL OUR GOVERNMENT THAT IT MUST LIBERATE ITS PEOPLE BEFORE IT CAN CLAIM FREE RUSSIA AS AN ALLY.”

A third set of banners was created to compare the president to Kaiser Wilhelm. These were the most shocking and perceived as a direct attack on Wilson:

KAISER WILSON, HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR SYMPATHY WITH THE POOR GERMANS BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT SELF-GOVERNING? 20 MILLION AMERICAN WOMEN ARE NOT SELF-GOVERNING

HE RULES OVER THEM BY SHEER AUTOCRATIC POWER – THE VERY TYPE OF POWER HE DENOUNCES IN AUSTRIA AND GERMANY
A PRESIDENT IS A DULY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE. FOR 20,000,000 AMERICAN WOMEN WILSON IS NOT A PRESIDENT. A KAISER IS AN AUTOCRATIC RULER. FOR 20,000,000 AMERICAN WOMEN WILSON IS A KAISER

Paul argued that these banners were not intended to insult the president, but merely to keep before the government and the public the true status of women in American society.83

This type of radical, confrontational behavior was extremely embarrassing to the Wilson administration. By June, Paul was informed that the picketing must stop, or the picketers would be arrested. Paul questioned the legality of arresting women who were doing nothing more than exercising the right to freedom of speech guaranteed in the First Amendment. She insisted that the NWP lawyers assured her that the picketing was legal. On June 22, 1917, the first arrests were made. The picketers were tried in court on charges of obstructing traffic and sentenced to short terms in the District jail. The administration believed that carrying out the threat of arrests would spur the NWP to stop the campaign to discredit the president before the country and the world. However, the administration underestimated the determination of the NWP to achieve suffrage even when faced with the harshest punishments.84

The women of the CC/CU/WP/NWP were accused of engaging in militant behavior. In reality, these suffragists were pioneers of nonviolent direct action. Alice Paul was a master at calling attention to her cause; although she preferred positive attention, she did not care if the attention was negative or violent. Her primary goal was to keep the issue of votes for women in the public eye.85 The women were armed only with words, banners, and resolve. In the eight years of the struggle, the women
had committed no crime, destroyed no property, and showed no resistance to attack or arrest. These suffragists were believers in the American ideal and simply sought inclusion in the principles of the Declaration of Independence. The women considered themselves ““liberty-loving . . . descend[ants of] revolutionary ancestors [and] some of the greatest libertarian statesmen this country has produced.”

Paul was dedicated to a life of pacifism, but also believed in the power of activism to promote change and justice. For her, radical feminine expression was both nonviolent and peaceful, and in defiance of male authority. She believed in the equality of women and that she could, through education, training, and demonstrations, convince society of that equality.

Paul carefully orchestrated a number of nonviolent techniques. The silence of the White House picketers, use of the press in disseminating her message, acts of passive resistance, willingness to submit to humiliation and physical abuse, use of irony and exposure of hypocrisy -- all were remarkably effective and eminently non-violent.

For Alice Paul the time had come for women to take positive steps toward self-determination, to stop begging men for the vote. She sought to rekindle the sense of urgency that had permeated the work of Susan B. Anthony. She urged women to challenge the restrictive social and political system that existed in the United States, and to claim identity as independent, intelligent, and valuable citizens. This citizenship should also be free of preconceived expectations for moral or social reforms. Just men enjoyed the unalienable rights of citizenship, women deserved full citizenship by birthright, not in exchange for bringing purity or piety to society or government. Paul’s founding of the NWP was a nonviolent assertion of the political
power of women. The NWP public demonstrations showed that women could rebel against the full power of the American government, and do so in a nonviolent way. 

Paul’s followers reveled in participating in the nonviolence. These women proved that goals could be achieved without resorting to the male tactics of fighting and war. However, the suffragists also exhibited the profound courage that by necessity accompanies any program of nonviolent direct action. The women were not deterred by arrests, trials, and jail sentences. Most of the NWP activists were from the upper strata of society, yet these women exploded the assumption that mistreatment would be an effective obstacle to nonviolent expression. The simple truth was that the women could be as strong as any man, and as persistent in pursuing a goal; “the women would not stop going to prison until something had been done which promised passage of the suffrage amendment through Congress.” In fact, the arrests and imprisonment were unexpected benefits for the NWP. Paul could not have devised better publicity for the cause than the violent political reaction to the NWP nonviolent protests.

The accusations of militancy were grounded in the socially acceptable roles for women. As had every group fighting for women’s rights throughout American history, the NWP had to endure the anti-female cultural bias and exclusion from the American ideal. Women had made great strides in cultural and social roles since the 1848 Seneca Falls convention. However, women were still barred from political equality, and the nature of the cultural bias reflected this situation. One of the more striking manifestations of anti-woman sentiment was the patronizing attitude of male
politicians. Requests for interviews with senators or representatives were often denied owing to the politician’s sudden illness or out of town trip. When succeeding in obtaining an appointment, the women were consistently told that suffrage was an unimportant issue, one that could be quickly dispatched, but always after some upcoming election or in some future session of Congress: “Of course, you women don’t know anything about politics. We told you not to bring up Suffrage. Next December, after election, we may do something for you” or “I’ve got some bills of my own to get out of this committee. I won’t get them out if you keep bringing up Suffrage.” One exasperated senator tersely pointed out that the men “don’t like being nagged anymore.” Another expressed surprise at the tenacity of the suffragists: “You women are in earnest about this.”

President Wilson was particularly patronizing to the suffragists. His demeanor was always of the utmost courtesy combined with unequivocal dismissal. In greeting one of the early suffrage deputations to the White House, Wilson listened politely, then ended the interview by thanking the women for the visit with the hollow pledge that, “The subject is one in which I am deeply interested, and you may rest assured that I will give it my earnest attention.” To another deputation he thanked the women for the visit, and then went on to say, “I have been called on several times to say what my position is in the very important matter that you are so deeply interested in. . . . [I] admire the tenacity and the skill and the address with which you try to promote the matter that you are interested in.” When presented with a suffrage petition, he replied with, “I hope I shall always have an open mind, and I shall certainly take the greatest
pleasure in conferring in the most serious way with my colleagues at the other end of
the city with regard to what is the right thing to do at this time concerning this great
matter.” These statements were evasive tactics, designed to give the women just
enough attention to be respectful while simultaneously brushing the issue aside.

Wilson considered women to be incapable of logical or political thought; therefore, he
doubted women’s ability to understand or exercise the rights of citizenship. He did
not believe in the equality of the sexes. He had a talent for smooth talking, hollow
promises, and stalling. Stevens summed up the NWP’s characterization of Wilson:

There has persisted an astounding myth that he is an extraordinary man. Our
experience proved the contrary. He behaved toward us like a very ordinary
politician. Unnecessarily cruel or weakly intolerant, according as you view the
justice of our fight, but a politician, not a statesman.

What took Wilson years to appreciate was that Paul and the NWP would not be
deterred, postponed, or stopped. The women meant to achieve a federal suffrage
amendment during Wilson’s administration, with or without his help.

Wilson’s patronizing attitude was also expressed in his thinking about the
proper pace with which the movement should progress. Wilson had no desire to preside
over a nation in which women had the right to vote. He encouraged the women in the
work, so long as the work did not impinge on him or the duties of his office. He
believed that women should be busy taking care of the home and social matters and
leave politics to the men. He saw nothing wrong with the indefinite prolongation of the
suffrage effort; after all, had not the women already been pushing for the vote for sixty-
five years? If the women continued to work at this deliberate pace, suffrage would be
achieved – eventually. He excused his inaction on the suffrage question by explaining apologetically, “that my mind moves slowly.” Wilson likened the progress of the suffrage movement to a glacier, slow but with permanent effects. He questioned the validity of the NWP’s choice to work for suffrage by federal amendment rather than through the states, exhorting the women to “be patient, and continue to work in the admirable way they have worked in the past.” He claimed the women would be “triumphant,” but could “afford a little while to wait.”

He expressed admiration for the movement in a most backhanded way:

The astonishing thing about this movement which you represent is not that it has grown so slowly, but that it has grown so rapidly. No doubt for those who have been a long time in the struggle . . . it seems a long and arduous path that has been trodden, but when you think of the cumulating force of this movement in recent decades, you must agree with me that it is one of the most astonishing tides in modern history.

Wilson saw only rightness in the fact that women should work for decades for a basic right of citizenship and inclusion in the American system of democracy.

Patronizing attitudes were also prevalent in the homes and family relationships of the suffragists. When women wanted to join in the NWP activism, even husbands who for years had paid lip service to women’s equality reacted with shock and dismay. Why did a wife need to travel? Why did a wife need to participate in public demonstrations? Why could a wife not support the work from home, with donations or through local organizations? Upon watching firsthand or reading news of NWP events, perplexed men would ask each other “what the whole thing is about anyway.”
Another way in which the anti-female bias was expressed was in accusations of non-ladylike behavior. The simple act of participating in activities designed to place women in the public eye was anathema to many men. Stepping out of the home and onto the front page of the newspaper was so unfeminine. The women were characterized as “silly,” “unsexed,” “pathological,” and “crazy.” One member of Congress derisively called the women “Iron-jawed angels,” and another “militant Amazons.” The *New York Times* called the White House picketing “silly” and “monstrous,” a tactic that would only be attempted by clearly inferior mentalities. The NWP/NAWSA feud contributed to the anti-female sentiment directed towards the younger suffragists. Men wondered why the NWP women could not be more like those of the NAWSA, more accommodating, more retiring, more suppliant, noting that the radical NWP methods were outside the realm of even the most progressive political reforms. The NWP dismissed such questions, insisting that women knew what was best for women; asking men for help was only a last resort. Despite the obvious public presence and widespread awareness of and fascination with NWP events, men attributed suffrage victories to the NAWSA.

Still others believed that the NWP suffragists must be in need of psychiatric care. Clearly any woman who would behave in the NWP manner must be mentally unbalanced. Some maintained that such “unstable” or “less sane” women would be likely to slip into violence. Surely women who would submit to arrest and jail terms must be “mad.” What these many displays of the anti-female cultural bias failed to acknowledge, or more accurately denied, was the magnitude of the organization, the
logic, and the resolute sense of purpose that was driving the NWP. These women were determined to gain suffrage, and no obstacle was too great, no criticism too biting, no societal attitude too compelling to interfere with the achievement of that goal.

As the number of arrests, court dates, and sentencing increased, Paul insisted that the suffragists be conferred political prisoner status. She claimed that the picketers had been arrested not for blocking sidewalks or streets, but for opposing the government. Of course the administration could not acknowledge political prisoner status without admitting that the picketers had broken no laws. Paul orchestrated this confrontation from start to finish to the advantage of the suffragists. She claimed that the disfranchised, unrepresented women were not subject to laws, could not be arrested and held on invalid charges, and were under no obligation to obey the court, to be sworn to testify, or even to speak.115

When the NWP pickets remained undeterred through the summer and into the fall, the arrests escalated and harsher prison terms of up to seven months in the Occoquan Workhouse were imposed.116 Conditions at Occoquan were deplorable. The suffragists were treated as common criminals, confined to damp, filthy cells and given spoiled, vermin-infested food. When some of the suffragists staged hunger strikes to protest the mistreatment and the lack of political prisoner status, the disobedient inmates were subjected to violent force feedings.117 The prison Superintendent Whitaker seemed to relish the mistreatment of the women, as exemplified by the November 17 “Night of Terror,” when the women were assaulted and terrorized for hours by groups of prison guards under Whitaker’s direction.118 Paul, who had started a
hunger strike after being arrested and sentenced to Occoquan in October, was transferred to a psychiatric ward at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital for several weeks, deprived of sleep, force fed, and questioned repeatedly about her attitudes toward Wilson in attempts to prove she had a personal vendetta against the president. When the NWP lawyers succeeded in obtaining a writ of habeas corpus to bring the suffragists to court for a new trial, the appearance of the women shocked even the staunchest opponent. The judge decreed that the arrests, charges, and sentencing had been illegal, and ordered the women removed from Occoquan. By this time, the White House had received numerous letters and petitions protesting the suffragists’ plight. On December 3, 1917, all prisoners were suddenly released.

Shortly thereafter, President Wilson reversed his position and came out in support of the Anthony Amendment. He vigorously lobbied members of Congress to muster the support required to push the legislation out of committee and onto the floors of the House and Senate for a vote. However, the process became bogged down in the offices of recalcitrant legislators, and by August, 1918, the amendment was no closer to passage. The NWP’s patience was running out. Paul devised and launched another series of demonstrations. Protesters stationed in Lafayette Park across the street from the White House took turns reading from, and then burning, Wilson’s speeches. Suffragist Lucy Branham announced the protesters’ intentions to “take these empty words, spoken by President Wilson . . . and consign them to the flames.” In October, groups of banded women picketed the Senate. The women were detained for several hours and the banners destroyed. In January, 1919, the NWP lit watch fires in front
of the White House, determined to stage an around the clock vigil, undeterred by the catcalls and attacks of jeering crowds and police, until passage of the amendment was accomplished. The NWP staged protests and were arrested in both Boston and New York as President Wilson passed through those cities after a trip to post-war Europe. A “Prison Special” train was chartered to take the suffragists around the country to speak on, and remind the public of, the experiences in jail. On February 9, the women burned in effigy a portrait of Wilson, “even as the Revolutionary fathers had burned a portrait of King George.” Finally, the Anthony Amendment passed the House on May 21, 1919, and the Senate on June 4. The last phase of the NWP’s work would begin immediately to achieve the goal of swift ratification.

For fifteen months, the NWP appealed to President Wilson to use his influence on the states, lobbied state legislators, and picketed the Republican National Convention. Finally, with the vote of Harry Burn, a Tennessee state representative, the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution making woman suffrage the law of the land was ratified on August 18, 1920. Upon hearing the news, Alice Paul unfurled a banner at the NWP headquarters that displayed thirty-six stars, one for each of the ratifying states. Alice Paul and the NWP’s relentless labors paid off when for the first time, all American women, at last included in the American ideal, had the right to vote in the election of 1920.

The National Woman’s Party’s eight years of suffrage activism was but a small fraction of the time that had elapsed since the 1848 Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention. Alice Paul led the party in the fight for the Nineteenth Amendment with
inner strength and radical power that had been modeled after those of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Paul’s charisma, leadership, and vision revived the NAWSA movement that had lost direction under Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt. Paul’s NWP was reminiscent of Stanton and Anthony’s NWSA. Even so, a number of social and political forces impinged on the NWP, some to try to derail and others to spur the work. Certain questions remain: Why was Paul able to accomplish in eight short years what Stanton and Anthony had been unable to accomplish in half a century? How had society come to accept the changing status of women? Why did some groups persist in opposing woman suffrage? What was the role of the NAWSA in the final push for federal suffrage? Were the radical tactics of Stanton, Anthony, and Paul necessary to the achievement of the goal? Most importantly: Why, and how, was the Nineteenth Amendment passed and ratified in 1919 and 1920 instead of at any other time?
CHAPTER FIVE

VICTORY

Hurrah! And vote for suffrage and don’t keep them in doubt. I notice some of the speeches against. They were very bitter. I have been watching to see how you stood, but have noticed nothing yet. Don’t forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt put “Rat” in Ratification.
--Letter from Mrs. Burn to her son, Harry Burn, Tennessee State Representative

The struggle for woman suffrage came to a head in the first two decades of the twentieth century. These years were noted for progressive social, economic, and political reforms, the most significant of which was woman suffrage. Despite opposition and frustrating setbacks, the suffragists believed that the prolonged fight for the ballot and inclusion in the principles of the Declaration of Independence was soon to end in victory. The circumstances and cultural climate of the times fueled what became the last leg of the suffrage movement, creating a formidable force that converted President Wilson from an opponent to a proponent of federal, universal suffrage; persuaded Congress to pass the bill; and convinced three-fourths of the states to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment. At the center of the struggle, opportunistic suffragists took advantage of any situation that might further the cause.

The two suffrage organizations, National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and the National Woman’s Party (NWP), shared a common goal: the passage of a Constitutional amendment that would validate a woman’s right to vote. However, the two groups used different tactics and often appeared to be working at cross-purposes. From 1904 to 1916 the NAWSA concentrated on gaining suffrage state by state, with minimal effort going toward federal work. This philosophy
was a stark departure from that of the earlier radical suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, both of whom believed exclusively in gaining suffrage through constitutional means. With Carrie Chapman Catt’s rise to the NAWSA presidency and the implementation of her Winning Plan to combine the quests for state and federal suffrage, the NAWSA focus shifted closer to the course charted by Stanton and Anthony in the late nineteenth century. However, the NAWSA under Catt was circumspect in outlook and tactics, always keeping in mind, and careful never to overstep, the restrictions on female activism. The NWP under the leadership of the radical suffragist Alice Paul extended the Stanton/Anthony fight for political equality and against the anti-female cultural bias to show that female activism could be effective and should be expected whenever prejudice and injustice prevailed. The NWP supported state suffrage work, but always with the understanding that achieving the federal amendment was paramount. After 1917, both the NAWSA and the NWP witnessed events in society and politics that would signal changes in the attitudes toward votes for women. Even when confronted with equally resolute opposition, these groups showed unwavering resolve in working for the passage and ratification of the Nineteenth Constitutional Amendment.

Up to 1916, nine state constitutions had been modified to allow full woman suffrage -- all of these states were west of the Mississippi River. With the passage of full woman suffrage in the state of New York in 1917, the movement took on new vitality as the Eastern political establishment recognized the inevitability of a federal amendment.
However, the major political and social development of 1917 was the United States’ entry into the Great War. Both the NAWSA and the NWP saw the war as an opportunity to press for a swift passage of woman suffrage. Yet the different philosophies of the NAWSA and the NWP were apparent in the attitudes of the two organizations towards the type of involvement in the war effort that might advance the suffrage cause. The Call to the 1917 Convention of the NAWSA noted the actions of other warring nations in instituting woman suffrage as a harbinger of similar action in the United States. The convention passed a resolution to:

reaffirm this organization’s unswerving loyalty to the Government in this crisis, and while struggling to secure the right of self-government to the women of America, pledge anew our intention gladly and zealously to continue those services of which the Government has so freely availed itself in its war to secure the right of self-government to the people of the world.  

The assembly went on to declare and resolve that, “Whereas, the war is demanding from women unprecedented labor and sacrifices and women by millions are responding with utmost loyalty and devotion . . . we urge Congress, as a war measure, to submit to the States an amendment to the United States Constitution providing for the nation-wide enfranchisement of women.” The NAWSA leadership believed that the organization’s support for the war would compel President Wilson to urge Congress to pass the suffrage amendment.

In contrast to the NAWSA announcements, the NWP policy stated that the organization would devote all energies to the continuation of the suffrage fight; members could engage in war work if desired, but outside of the NWP activities.
This difference in outlook would deepen the already entrenched animosity between the two organizations.

A source of contention among the NAWSA, the NWP, and President Wilson was the NWP picketing. The picketing occurred throughout 1917, at the very time when the attention of the president was focused on foreign affairs. The NWP saw the picketing as an effective means of keeping the suffrage issue in the public eye and prevent overshadowing by war news. In official documents the NAWSA “condemned” and “protest[ed]” against the picketing, and believed that such radical tactics served to strengthen the opposition to woman suffrage. To President Wilson the picketing and the treatment of the pickets were a constant irritant and embarrassment, precipitating such politically humiliating events as the resignation of Dudley Field Malone, the Collector of the Port of New York and a respected advisor to the president. In his letter or resignation Malone wrote:

[T]he present policy of the Administration, in permitting splendid American women to be sent to jail in Washington, not for carrying offensive banners, nor for picketing, but on the technical charge of obstructing traffic, is a denial even of their constitutional right to petition for, and demand passage of, the Federal Suffrage Amendment. . . . if the men of this country had been peacefully demanding for over half a century the political right or privilege to vote, and had been continuously ignored or met with evasion by successive Congresses . . . you, Mr. President . . . would be the first to forgive their inevitable impatience and righteous indignation. . . . I think it is high time that the men in this generation . . . stood up to battle for the national enfranchisement of American women.

Ultimately, the combination of the war, the NWP picketing, and the efforts of the NAWSA spurred Wilson, in January 1918, to declare support for the federal amendment.
The Susan B. Anthony Amendment passed the House of Representatives on January 10, 1918, one year to the day that the NWP pickets first appeared at the White House gates. President Wilson immediately set to work appealing to the Senate and publicizing the rationale for his reversal from opposition to support for the amendment. He declared repeatedly that woman suffrage should be granted as a war measure, as a sort of reward for the untiring work and sacrifices that women had offered to the war effort. In letters to Carrie Chapman Catt and several senators Wilson made claims that granting suffrage was an expression of “gratitude,” that “the morale of this country and the world” depended upon woman suffrage, and that “passage of the Amendment at this time was an essential psychological element in the conduct of the war for democracy.” However, Wilson’s urgings met with stiff opposition in the Senate and in society at large, with many people, both ordinary citizens and politicians, dedicated to the defeat of the amendment. This opposition was merely the latest of the persistent and recurrent efforts to derail the quest for woman suffrage. Indeed, anti-female-suffrage sentiment had existed from the beginnings of the movement, and was instrumental in prolonging the suffrage fight.

The earliest known group of anti-suffragists emerged in 1871, just after the formation of Stanton and Anthony’s National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA). The anti-suffrage group, led by the wives of General Sherman and Admiral Dahlgren, wrote letters to major newspapers and testified before Congressional committees to further the anti-suffrage cause. An anti-suffrage committee was formed in Massachusetts in the 1880’s, succeeded in 1895 by the Massachusetts Association
Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women. In New York, several local committees merged in 1895 to form the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. Nineteen other states and the District of Columbia boasted female anti-suffrage groups. These groups worked primarily on the local level.

Historian Aileen Kraditor characterizes the male-driven anti-suffrage movement as a “sentimental vision of Home and Mother, equal in sanctity to God and the Constitution.” Kraditor views the anti-suffrage arguments as expressions of theology, biology, and sociology. The theological justification for denying the ballot to women comes from the divinely ordained difference between men and women. Men were intended for public intercourse; women were intended to care for home and family. The Gospel of St. Paul, so pointedly interpreted in Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *The Woman’s Bible* as evidence of man’s need to control woman, was held up by the anti-suffragists as evidence of the rightness of separate spheres for the sexes. Far from subordination, a woman’s acceptance of her rightful place proved her superiority to man, who was incapable of creating and maintaining a pure and pious home environment. Suffrage would tempt a woman away from this rightful place, and destroy her opportunity to contribute to society through rearing socially responsible sons.

Kraditor identifies physiology and psychology as the biological justifications for anti-suffragist arguments. Women who were overloaded with domestic tasks did not have the stamina to perform the duties required to cast an informed vote. Furthermore, women’s innate emotionalism and poor logical reasoning skills would
preclude thoughtful decisions on political issues. The sociological injunction against woman suffrage claimed that the ballot would change the fundamental unit of society from the family to the individual. Wives and husbands might vote in conflict with each other, a situation that could easily and rapidly lead to the demise of the family and an increase in divorce and orphaned children. The rightful order of society was for the husband to make all decisions that affect a family, especially the political. As such, women would not be “deprived” of the right to vote, but “exempted” from the burden of the ballot.

As western states granted partial or full suffrage to women, opposition forces became more organized and vocal about the dangers of votes for women. Historian Eleanor Flexner explains that partial suffrage actually strengthened the anti movement because the issues that women were allowed to vote on were often not personally pertinent, a situation which resulted in low female voter turnout. In full suffrage states, women were subjected to verbal and physical abuse and harassment at the polls and consequently avoided voting. Suffrage opponents pointed to the resultant low numbers of women voters as proof that women were not interested in having or using the ballot. Historian Nancy Woloch explains that anti-suffragists believed that women did not have the intellectual capacity to understand complex political issues, and therefore would not be able to decide how to vote independently, but instead would vote as instructed by male family members. Also, anti-suffragists feared the influx of undesirable voters, such as immigrants and African-Americans, that universal suffrage would generate. Woloch dates the appearance of women’s state anti-suffrage
organizations to the 1890s. She describes these organizations as led by women of the same upper social class, advanced educational level, and reform minded outlooks as the pro-suffrage women. However, the anti-suffrage women saw the vote as an obstacle to effective community work because of the influence of and loyalty to political parties that the ballot would engender. Furthermore, in logic contradictory to previously noted woman-generated anti-suffrage arguments but ironically similar to the reasoning of men described by Kraditor, some female anti-suffragists feared the destructive impact on the family that voting might precipitate: wives might vote differently from husbands, leading to domestic strife and upheaval. Besides, the antis contended that women with trustworthy husbands did not need the vote, because those husbands would vote in the best interests of every family member, including wives.  

Historian Manuela Thurner, in her study of the anti-suffrage movement of the early twentieth century Progressive Era, points out the contradiction in the anti-suffragist women’s claims that the vote would lead women away from the home and have a negative impact on family life. In fact, most of the anti-suffragists’ work was done outside the home, in attempts to convince the public that the vote would interfere with women’s most important work – social reform. Thurner credits the work of the female anti-suffragists with forestalling by several years the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. In response to the increasing number of suffrage states, the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) was founded in 1911. Thurner characterizes the typical NAOWS member as upper class, well educated, and socially conscious. Many would have been recognized as New Women of the Progressive Era,
“deeply committed to women’s public activism and social reform.” These women took pride in community service without regard for political affiliation or personal gain. The anti-suffragists considered a community presence essential to a woman’s fulfillment, but care must be taken to make that presence non-partisan; furthermore, whatever public work a woman might perform should also have benefits for home life. Women who were appropriately attentive to family and active in community service, church and other philanthropic organizations, and reform movements risked becoming overburdened by the political responsibilities associated with voting. The NAOWS was appalled when the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (GFWC) came out in 1914 in support of the suffrage amendment. The NAOWS believed that the GFWC could be more effective in a completely non-political role.16

Thurner explains that the driving force behind the Progressive Era anti-suffragists was not the divide between female domesticity and male politicalization. The anti-suffragists were concerned with the proper public role for women. Unlike radicals Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Alice Paul, who maintained that women should have the right to vote because the two sexes were equal in natural rights and therefore deserving of equality in political matters, the NAOWS emphasized the differences between the sexes. Men were political beings concerned with the mechanics of society and familiar with the corrupt, base world of back room deal making; women aspired to lofty goals, social uplift, and enlightened reforms. Having the vote would distract women from social callings and sully righteous ideals. These distinctions must remain inviolate and reinforced by women’s complete isolation from
direct involvement in the political realm. The NAOWS did not ignore political crises or civic duty. When the United States entered the Great War the NAOWS endorsed the war effort, participated in relief work, and donated financially to demonstrate that patriotism did not need the ballot. Thurner notes the irony of women’s being granted the vote in gratitude for war work, the very result that the NAOWS was trying to avoid.\[^{17}\]

New York social reformer and lecturer Emily P. Bissell summarized and defended the female anti-suffragists’ views. In her 1909 essay, “A Talk to Women on the Suffrage Question,” Bissell claimed that women must consider the efficacy of voting rights from the standpoints of the individual, the family, and the state. She attributed the prolonged suffrage debate of the previous sixty years to women’s lack of desire for the ballot. She stated that woman suffrage is “a reform against nature,” and, as such, a danger to the natural order of society. Bissell claimed that a woman’s desire to vote was the highest form of selfishness, for any woman who devoted the time and effort necessary to make informed political decisions surely did so in neglect of family duties. Voting was a man’s rightful responsibility – a woman could never presume to impinge on or usurp that right.\[^{18}\]

Bissell identified three ways in which women would misuse or abuse suffrage. The indifferent vote would be cast by women after the novelty of a political voice abated. Those women would lose interest in the ballot issues and would either go to the polls with insufficient preparation to cast an informed vote, or would simply stay at home. The corrupt vote would be cast by unscrupulous women of questionable morals
who would vote against social reforms in favor of legalizing social ills such as
gambling and prostitution. The unorganized vote would be cast by women who were
too busy to become completely immersed in the political process, to attend caucuses
and conventions, to campaign for candidates in primary and general elections, or to
remain unswervingly dedicated to politics after the election returns were tallied.\textsuperscript{19}

Bissell’s essay was a popular publication of the New York State Association Opposed
to Woman Suffrage, and was widely read and quoted in anti-female suffrage circles.

The NAOWS was vociferous in criticizing the NWP, particularly the work
against Democratic Party candidates and the White House picketing. The NAOWS
decried the importation of British militancy in electoral politics.\textsuperscript{20} The NAOWS
ridiculed the NWP banners and implied that the pickets would attract the attention of
social misfits, including someone who might try to assassinate the president.\textsuperscript{21}

Several male anti-suffrage organizations also emerged after 1913. The Man
Suffrage Association of New York, the Men’s Anti-Suffrage League of New Jersey,
the League for State Defense of Maryland, and groups in West Virginia and Tennessee
were a few of the organized efforts working doggedly against woman suffrage until
stopped by the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.\textsuperscript{22} Flexner, in an exploration
of male anti-suffrage sources, identifies the liquor and business interests, and political
machines as the primary backers of such groups. Recognizing that woman suffrage
organizations were traditionally also proponents of temperance, owners of breweries
and distilleries opposed woman suffrage out of fear that female voters would support
prohibition or other legislation restrictive to the manufacture and sale of alcoholic
beverages. These manufacturers sought to maintain anonymity in opposing woman suffrage, working through saloon keepers to generate male hostility to women’s voting rights. Even up to the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment prohibiting the “manufacture, sale, and transportation of intoxicating liquor,” the liquor interests expended time and energy in opposing woman suffrage. Political machines opposed woman suffrage out of fear of exposure of corruption and mandated social and public works reforms. Business interests were anti-woman suffrage because women supported progressive causes such as child labor laws, work place sanitation, the eight hour work day, and equal pay for equal work. Flexner contends that of all the monetary donations in support of anti-woman suffrage organizations, four-fifths came from men.\textsuperscript{23} The societal opposition to woman suffrage was broad and vocal. The anti-woman suffrage sentiment in the United States Senate reflected that of society at large, even after passage, and up to ratification, of the Nineteenth Amendment. Fortunately for the suffragists, the time had come for women to vote, to become accepted and respected members of American democracy -- the opposition, although entrenched and unwilling to give in, was soon to be vanquished.

After the Susan B. Anthony Amendment passed the House of Representatives on January 10, 1918, the suffragists focused on winning passage in the Senate. Both the NAWSA and the NWP appealed to President Wilson for help, asking him to make personal requests to senators to support the amendment. The president repeatedly expressed his support for the amendment, and gave numerous speeches, made telephone calls, and sent letters to resistant members of the Senate. The president’s
efforts were less effective than the suffrage organizations had anticipated, with some senators steadfast in opposition to the amendment regardless of presidential appeals. Delegates from the NAWSA and the NWP haunted the halls of the senate office buildings. Senators avoided the suffragists, insisted that a previous vote against the amendment precluded a change to a favorable vote, or were unwilling to go back on campaign promises not to support the amendment. One senator trimmed his beard while the NWP asked for his support; another said that “loyalty to both constituents and principle” compelled him to speak against the amendment, although he intended to give a favorable vote.\textsuperscript{24} Finally the hopes for quick passage in the Senate were dashed when Senator Reed of Missouri held the floor in filibuster. The amendment was tabled until the Sixty-sixth Congress, in 1919.

Both the NAWSA and the NWP reacted swiftly to the senate defeat. In a move reminiscent of the NWP election tactics of 1914 and 1916, tactics that NAWSA had condemned under the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw, Catt declared:

\begin{quote}
If the Sixty-fifth Congress fails to submit the Federal Amendment before the next congressional election this association shall select and enter into such a number of senatorial and congressional campaigns as will effect a change in both Houses of Congress sufficient to insure its passage. . . . Our opposition to individual candidates shall not be based on party considerations, and loyalty to the Federal Amendment shall not take precedence over loyalty to the country.\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

The NWP set to work picketing the Capitol, demonstrating at Lafayette Square to burn the president’s words, burning the president’s picture in effigy, keeping the “Watchfires of Freedom,” and confronting the president in Boston and New York upon
his return from his post-war trip to Europe.* With the convening of the Sixty-sixth
Congress in 1919, the suffrage amendment was again proposed for debate. In the mid-
term elections of 1918, Republicans gained majorities in both the House of
Representatives and the Senate. Many of those newly elected officials were pro-woman
suffrage. The new Congress had to vote on the issue in both houses. The House passed
the amendment on May 21, 1919. When the amendment came to the floor of the
Senate, the debate lacked the intrigue of the previous year. The suffrage supporters said
little, wishing to bring the issue to a vote without undue delays. The anti-suffragists
attempted to prolong the process, making speeches demonizing the amendment’s
usurpation of states’ rights and proposing modifications to the amendment. However,
the overarching sentiment was one of yielding to an inevitable outcome. The Senate
quietly passed the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution on June 4, 1919.26 The
suffragists’ work for ratification began immediately. The ratification process took
fourteen months. Catt kept the NAWSA state affiliates active to work with state
legislatures for ratification.

Contrary to expectations, the western suffrage states were not among the first to
ratify. Wisconsin was the first to ratify, on June 10, 1919. Several states delayed a vote
out of reluctance to call special sessions of the legislatures. Such sessions carried a
financial burden that the states were unwilling to accept. Some legislators traveled to
the special sessions at personal expense.27 The states that defeated ratification were

* See Chapter Four of this thesis for complete details of these events.
concentrated in the South, primarily motivated by a desire to withhold the vote from African-American women. By March 22, 1920, thirty-five states had ratified – one more was needed for the amendment to become law. In a last ditch effort to kill the amendment, anti-suffrage forces brought a case before the United States Supreme Court seeking to allow state referenda on ratification of constitutional amendments. The Court’s unanimous decision to invalidate such referenda eliminated the final litigable recourse of the anti-suffragists, and focused the push for ratification on the state of Tennessee. The state constitution contained a provision that would require a special session to consider ratification. In response to the combined pressure from President Wilson, the United States Department of Justice, state and national elected officials, the NAWSA, and the NWP, Governor Albert Roberts called the special session for August 9, 1920.

The attention of the entire country was riveted on the Tennessee legislature. Opposition forces, particularly from the liquor industry, courted legislators. Catt described a scene in which lawmakers, “both suffrage and anti-suffrage men, were reeling through the halls in an advanced state of intoxication. . . . In an agony of soul suffragists went to bed in the early morning, but not to sleep!” The following day the state Senate passed the amendment. The bill then went to the House for a harrowing ten days of debates, wrangling, and lobbying on both sides of the issue. Going into the final vote, the suffragists were most concerned with two representatives, Banks Turner and Harry Burn. Both men had to vote to approve the amendment to insure ratification. In a tense two-round roll call, both men voted “yes.” The Nineteenth Amendment to
the Constitution was ratified on August 18, 1920. American women’s right to vote and inclusion in the democratic process was at last recognized throughout the nation and the world.

The question remains: Why was the Nineteenth Amendment passed in 1920 and not at any other time? Several forces converged to bring about the passage of the amendment. The status of women had improved over the years since the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention. Higher education and a voice in public affairs among middle class, white women were commonplace. Most people were familiar with the issue of woman suffrage, particularly in the first two decades of the twentieth century when the NAWSA and the NWP were active. The Progressive Era of the early twentieth century brought the idea of social reforms and government regulation to the attention of the general population; woman suffrage was seen by many not only as an important reform measure but also as a mechanism by which larger social reforms and legislative protections could be achieved. In fact, to the suffragists and suffrage supporters, the ballot was the only true means through which lasting reform could be accomplished.

Women had been told for decades to be patient. From the Negro’s Hour of the post-Civil War years to President Wilson’s admonition to women to wait a while longer, women suffragists had been marginalized by men of influence, lawmakers, and political leaders. Repeatedly and continually woman suffrage had been placed at lower priority than other issues, and although men had paid lip service to the cause, too few had taken meaningful action. However, by the 1910s the climate had changed. With each state that adopted woman suffrage, women’s political voices became more
powerful. Elected officials and hopeful candidates for office recognized the impact of 
women’s ballots and sought the support of women voters. In Congress, even 
representatives and senators from non-suffrage states understood that party majorities 
could be changed, legislation passed or defeated, political careers sustained or ended 
depending on how women voted. When democracy became a world-wide rallying cry 
of industrialized nations during the Great War, with President Wilson one of the most 
vocal ideologues, women suffragists saw an opportunity. Since American political 
leaders resisted woman suffrage; denied that votes for women was a natural right of 
citizenship; ignored pleas, lobbying, testimony, and education persuasion -- the 
suffragists determined to force the issue. President Wilson, and by extension the United 
States, could be embarrassed into passing a suffrage amendment.

Although the NAWSA rhetoric grew more forceful, with greater emphasis on 
federal work and threats to influence election results, the radicals of the NWP believed 
in direct, but non-violent, confrontation. For Alice Paul, the ends justified the means. 
International humiliation was a valid method to precipitate passage of a suffrage 
amendment. A president who sought to promote global peace, cooperation, and 
democracy should be held accountable on a global scale for the denial of democracy at 
home. By 1919 all of the industrialized countries in Europe had enacted woman 
suffrage. Of the nations that had been involved in the Great War, the United States was 
alone in withholding the vote from women. Wilson could not speak with credibility, 
could not be a world leader, while American women remained disfranchised. Eager to 
distance himself from the shadow of international hypocrisy, willing to engage in
political expediency to further his own agenda, and amazed at the tenacity of the NWP and the NAWSA, Wilson framed suffrage in terms of gratitude for women’s contributions to society and the nation. Although some members of Congress remained recalcitrant, social and political pressure combined with suffrage activism to achieve the goals that woman had been seeking for seventy-two years – political equality, inclusion in the American ideal, and the Constitutional amendment guaranteeing to women the right to vote.
CONCLUSION

It is the very essence of civil liberty that a people shall have the right to change their laws from time to time, and not be compelled to live under laws enacted in previous centuries by their ancestors which may have become totally unsuited to their changed conditions.

--The Limitation Upon the Amending Power, quoted in Bruce Williams, “The Popular Mandate on Constitutional Amendments.”

Patriotism signifies loyalty to one’s nation and implies the obligation to serve and defend it.

--Frank Hamilton Hanks, “Patriotism and Peace”

But militancy is as much a state of mind, and approach to a task, as it is the commission of deeds of protest. It is the state of mind of those who in their fiery idealism do not lose sight of the real springs of human action.

--Doris Stevens, Jailed for Freedom

Throughout the woman suffrage movement the radical suffragists were on a collision course with the anti-female cultural bias. Much scholarly discussion has been devoted to the social manifestations of this bias such as women’s confinement to the home, being stripped of basic human rights, and subjection to men in family and personal business affairs. However, the gender based bias was also ingrained in American political processes related to the inherent masculinity of the American ideal and with direct impact on the woman suffrage movement. From the earliest days of the republic, the Founding Fathers’ vision of government and equality excluded women, not out of malice, but because in the context of the times men were the foundation and structure of society -- women were simply not important enough to be included. This notion arose repeatedly in American political discourse and analysis, and dogged the woman suffrage work into the early twentieth century. When Thomas Jefferson wrote, “My conscience tells me I have on
every occasion acted up to that declaration according to its obvious import and to the understanding of every candid mind,” and “the good of preserving the inviolate fundamental principle that the people are not to be taxed but by representatives chosen immediately by themselves,” he was not referring to women.¹ When James Monroe wrote, “a Government . . . under which every citizen may by his merit obtain the highest trust recognized by the Constitution . . . a Government which protects every citizen in the full enjoyment of his rights,” he was not referring to women.² When Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, “In the United States, except slaves, servants, and paupers . . . there is no class of persons who do not exercise the elective franchise, and who do not indirectly contribute to make the laws,” he was not thinking of women.³ When Woodrow Wilson wrote, “governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . . Let each man see to it that . . . the high purpose of the nation [is] in his own mind,” he was not referring to women.⁴ These sentiments exemplify the depth, breadth, nature, and intransigence of the opposition to equal rights, including suffrage.

As radical leaders of a radical movement, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Alice Paul encountered persistent, generation-spanning obstacles, not only social, but also political. Among the most frustrating, and seemingly immovable, of these political obstacles were arguments over states’ rights, patriotism, and militancy -- arguments that grew out of gender bias, questioned the suffragists’ understanding of basic points of American law, cast doubt upon the suffragists’ loyalty to American democracy, and condemned the suffragists’ tactics as proof of being unworthy of the ballot. These arguments, with deep roots in anti-female bias, were resurrected repeatedly to at least
hinder, at worst derail, and certainly prolong the progress of the suffrage campaign. The greatest testament to the legitimacy of the movement was Stanton, Anthony, and Paul’s ability to infuse into the work the resilience, fortitude, and vitality to overcome these obstacles and achieve success.

A recurring hurdle for the suffragists was the issue of states’ rights. Legislators and political leaders invoked states’ rights as a justification for denying to women the right to vote, and, in fact, states’ rights was an important component of the American system of government. Several of the early presidents referred to states’ rights as proof of the enlightenment of American democracy, as evidenced in the inaugural addresses of Jefferson, who in listing the “principles [that] form the bright constellation” of the American system included “the support of the State governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrations for our domestic concerns and the surest bulwarks against the antirepublican tendencies. . . .”; James Madison, who declared that “to respect the rights and authorities reserved to the States and to the people [was] essential to the success of the general system. . . .”; and James Monroe, who noted that “the States . . . enjoying within their separate spheres . . . a just proportion of the sovereignty . . . are the best proofs of wholesome laws well administered.”

Alexis de Tocqueville noted the importance of states’ rights to American democracy: “each of the different States which composed the Union should continue to govern itself in all that concerns its internal prosperity.” States’ rights was a concept critical to American democracy. The task of the suffragists was to convince legislators that acknowledging women’s right to vote required national action. This conviction was at the heart of the woman suffrage movement.
The suffragists encountered entrenched opposition from members of Congress and presidents who insisted that woman suffrage was a states’ rights issue that had no place on a national agenda and certainly did not justify amending the Constitution. The arguments of these elected officials did have a basis in fact, as a careful reading of the Constitution reveals. The framers of the Constitution and Bill of Rights did not regulate or even mention suffrage. Therefore, suffrage would be an issue subject to the Tenth Amendment: “The Powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” However, these same anti-suffrage elected officials ignored Article Five: “The Congress . . . shall propose Amendments to this Constitution . . . valid to all Intents and Purposes, as part of this Constitution when ratified by the Legislatures . . . of the several States.” Clearly the framers recognized that the need may arise to amend the Constitution. The problem with the question of woman suffrage was a function of the anti-female cultural bias.

The first mention of suffrage in the Constitution is in the Fourteenth Amendment. The amendment was very much a reflection of the political climate of the times. Proposed shortly after the Civil War, the amendment was supported by Radical Republicans who sought unequivocally and irrevocably to insure equal rights for emancipated slaves. These men recognized the futility of relying on the individual states to legislate political equality for African-Americans, and that states’ rights would have to be removed from consideration by taking the issue to the federal level. The wording of the amendment, which decreed that Congressional representation would be reduced to any state that denied the right to vote to “any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of
age eighth jolted the woman suffragists. Stanton wrote, “If that word ‘male’ be inserted as now proposed it will take us a century to get it out again.”

The passage of the Fifteenth Amendment cemented the exclusion of women from access to the vote as a right of citizenship. The amendment declares, “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 race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” Historian Ellen Carol Dubois points out that the purpose of the Fifteenth Amendment was to ensure federal enforcement of African-American male suffrage, once again to take the issue out of the realm of states’ rights. Stanton and Anthony wasted no time in exposing the underlying expression in the amendment of the anti-female cultural bias. Anthony deplored the hypocrisy of the politicians’ claims that the amendment insured equal rights, when the true effect was to reinforce women’s inferior social and political position. Stanton derisively called life under the new amendment “an aristocracy of sex,” in which maleness takes supreme precedence over femaleness without regard to any other attributes or circumstances. Stanton asserted, “So long as there is a disfranchised class in this country, and that class its women . . . the condition of the politically ostracized is more hopeless and degraded.”

For Stanton and Anthony the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments was both a bitter dose of the cultural bias and a lesson in political expediency. Watching congressional lawmakers bypass women in the rush to enfranchise African-American men was a rude reminder of the depth and strength of the opposition to equal rights for women. Watching congressional lawmakers transform what had traditionally been a states’ rights
matter into a federal issue engendered in these two suffragists a sudden realization: given the proper impetus, the laws of the land could be changed. The dilemma was that the desired change and the currency required to effect such a change were one and the same – the vote. This dilemma would persist beyond Stanton and Anthony’s lifetimes and become a recurring point of contention between successive generations of suffragists and anti-suffrage elected officials.

By the early twentieth century the suffragists were no closer to attaining a Constitutional amendment. The cultural bias was the underpinning of the persistent argument put forth by political leaders that the suffrage was a states’ rights issue. This argument was clearly a stalling tactic, a convenient retort to any reasoning offered by the suffragists. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) president Carrie Chapman Catt repeatedly pointed out the fallacy of the claim that a Constitutional amendment that required ratification by three-fourths of the states could be considered a violation of states’ rights. Furthermore, by 1919 the Constitution had already been amended eighteen times, so an nineteenth amendment was hardly unprecedented. Alice Paul took every opportunity to call public attention to the hypocrisy of male politicians and the need for and justice of the suffrage amendment. And yet, senators, representatives, and even the president continued to balk at the idea of nationwide votes for women. Up until 1918, President Wilson voiced the sentiments of states’ rights advocates by saying he was “tied to a conviction” that woman suffrage should be won at the state level. Only when woman suffrage became politically expedient as part of his post-Great War peace plan and plea for world-wide democracy did Wilson become a supporter of the federal
amendment. Wilson was forced to suppress his personal negativity toward the issue and to challenge the societal anti-female cultural bias for political gain.\textsuperscript{16}

Even after the Nineteenth Amendment had been passed and ratified, the cultural bias was still evident in debates about the appropriateness of the federal vs. states’ rights approach, the justification for amending the Constitution, and the very constitutionality of the amendment. In an article published in the 1921 \textit{Virginia Law Review}, Bruce Williams presented a theory that constitutional amendments such as the Nineteenth Amendment violate the nature of the American system of government. In a debate that echoed the one between the pre-amendment suffragists and anti-suffragists, Williams pitted Supreme Court decisions against popular opinion to examine the states’ rights argument. On one side of the debate Williams placed a number of cases dating back to the mid-nineteenth century in which Constitutional protections were called into question, and in which the Supreme Court decisions invoked the intention of the framers to allow for constitutional amendments as evidenced by Article Five. On the other side of the debate Williams placed the sentiment that a constitutional amendment forced upon the entire society laws with which many of the states may disagree, and, therefore, negated the principle of government by the people. As in the states’ rights excuses that had been put forth by politicians seeking to stall the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, Williams did not question the validity of votes for women. Rather, he presented his case in terms of the validity of changing the Constitution for political expediency. Williams claimed that the Nineteenth Amendment was an unnecessary law imposed on the people by elected officials jockeying for position and political parties engaging in one-upsmanship.\textsuperscript{17} Articles such as Williams’s, no matter
how well-documented and cogently argued, exemplified the lack of acceptance of woman
suffrage even after women had already voted in a presidential election.

The anti-female cultural bias extended into broader political questions, including
patriotism. Patriotism as expressed in American society is a powerfully male concept.
Jefferson described the “honest patriot” as a man who upholds the ideals of the American
government, “the world’s best hope.” Tocqueville saw patriotism as the obligation of a
man to “participate in all that is done in his country . . . to defend whatever may be
censured in it,” and to place “national pride” above “personal vanity.” Writing in 1915,
minister, philosopher and Princeton University President John Grier Hibben claimed that
“The Higher Patriotism” would compel “a man [to] serve his country according to the
degree and extent of the idea which he has conceived of his country’s mission” although
Hibben warned that this patriotism must not infringe on “the rights of others for the sake of
a nation’s glory.” In 1922, sociologist and anthropologist Frank Hamilton Hankins
pointed out that extreme patriotism demands unquestioning national loyalty. First
Amendment rights to free speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly were
often discarded in the effort to protect one’s country from even justifiable criticism, and
prison was often seen as a necessary deterrent to unpatriotic behavior. Hankins went on to
write that good citizenship and patriotism were often mutually exclusive – to escape a label
of unpatriotic, a person will engage in deceit and mob violence in the name of nationalism
and devotion to country. In counterpoint to these male perspectives on patriotism was the
viewpoint of Jane Addams. A social worker, pacifist, and pioneer of the settlement house
movement, Addams decried the traditional interpretation of patriotism, which she wrote
amassed to little more than “group morality” and antagonism toward those perceived as outside a favored faction or nation, in favor of what she called progressive patriotism. She believed that true patriotism was rejection of legislated injustice and support for social and political equality. She asserted that only through disavowing violent and oppressive expressions of patriotism could society gain strength and become truly progressive and responsive to the needs of all citizens. These ideas have clear implications for the anti-female cultural bias as leveled against the woman suffrage movement.

The concept of patriotism was used against the suffragists: women who were steadfast in working for the vote regardless of changing political climates obviously showed a lack of respect for American ideals and did not deserve to enjoy this ultimate right of citizenship. The irony is that the suffragists sought merely to be an equal part of the American political system, to have the right to express patriotism in the most respected manner possible. Stanton and Anthony initially escaped the unpatriotic epithet by suspending suffrage work during the Civil War. However, Stanton and Anthony’s allegiance to the post-war political agenda was questioned when these two radical suffragists opposed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments because these amendments excluded women. Despite this early controversy, Stanton and Anthony’s careers were relatively free from allegations of unpatriotic motives. Alice Paul and the National Woman’s Party (NWP), on the other hand, were the targets of nationalistic hostility because of a seeming lack of support for President Wilson and the United States’ entry into The Great War. The NWP activists suffered all of the manifestations of ultra-patriotic animosity delineated by Hankins: denial of First Amendment rights, mob attack with little
or no police intervention or protection, and incarceration on false charges. The fact that the NWP was a women’s organization fueled the enmity toward the suffragists. Patriotic women did not purposefully embarrass the president and the country in front of the entire world.* The proper role for women was in the home, supporting husbands, sons, and brothers who might be sent off to war. The fact that the NAWSA leadership came out strongly behind the president’s war policies made the NWP seem all the more disloyal. Acceptable war activism for women included working for relief agencies, visiting the wounded, and filling critical jobs vacated by soldiers. Any causes not directly related to prosecuting and winning the war were unimportant. Woman suffrage could wait.24

Unpatriotic was not the only label assigned to the women of the NWP. These vocal, single-minded suffragists were also called militant. In characterizing the tactics of the NWP, the question must be raised as to the meaning of militancy. The word militant evokes an attitude of belligerent aggression, a lack of respect for social mores, and a determination to achieve ends without regard to the legality of the means. Alice Paul and the NWP suffragists were called militant. Indeed, some of these women adopted the label as a badge of pride. However, the use of the word militant to describe this group smacks of the anti-female cultural bias. The NWP was an organization dedicated to the passage of a Constitutional amendment assuring a woman’s right to vote. These women were relentless in pursuit of that goal, but the means employed were nonviolent exercise of the principles of the First Amendment. As a Quaker, Alice Paul shunned violence. As a leader,_________________________

*See Chapter Four of this thesis for a complete discussion of the events of the NWP.
she was careful to set strict limits on tactics, and was transparent in her behavior. The NWP resisted no authority, broke no laws, destroyed no property, made no threats. The problem was that the NWP’s methods ran afoul of the anti-female cultural bias. Public protesting, lobbying, petitioning Congress and the president, participating in political campaigns, organizing parades, publishing articles and letters, and giving speeches were tactics generally acknowledged to be effective means of accomplishing political change. However, engaging in these activities had always been a male endeavor. For women to exhibit such behavior was anathema to prevailing social sensibilities. Paul responded to accusations of militancy by asserting, “It [the NWP actions] is militant only in the sense that it is strong, positive, and energetic.” The NWP historian Doris Stevens claims that the group’s tactics were “dramatic acts of protest.” Historians Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene point out that Paul’s dramatic action served a purpose – publicizing the woman suffrage debate in stark terms of injustice and denial of basic political rights – but that action “drew its power from the principles of nonviolence.” Paul’s behavior and her leadership of the NWP ignored gender bias. Her message was simple: women, as citizens of the United States, had the right to vote. Her goal was simple: passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. These notions, like those of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, may rightly have been considered radical departures from tradition, but not militant.

The woman suffrage movement was a long struggle; the end of the struggle was a triumph over injustice. The seventy-two years from the 1848 Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention at which Elizabeth Cady Stanton first called for the vote for women, through the decades of collaboration between Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, to the 1920
ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment commemorated by Alice Paul and the NWP’s thirty-six star suffrage flag, represented a protracted battle against the anti-female cultural bias. The very fact that these women were considered radical underscores the magnitude and intransigence of gender prejudice. Stanton, Anthony, and Paul were not anarchists out to destroy a government or a way of life. Each of these women believed in American democracy, the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and the power of the Constitution. Each devoted a lifetime of work to obtain inclusion in these ideals. In so doing, each rebelled against the unfair restrictions, injustice, and oppression that kept women in an inferior social and political position, and each ignored public opposition to remain focused on the suffrage cause. Each strove for acceptance on an equal footing with men, and none would rest until women’s right to vote, the most important natural right of a democratic government, the most important expression of self-determination, the most important right of citizenship, was irrevocably achieved.
NOTES

INTRODUCTION


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12 Grover Cleveland, quoted in Woloch, Women and the American Experience, 232.


15 Herbert Hoover, quoted in Stevens, Jailed for Freedom, 266.

16 Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Inez Haynes Irwin, The Story of the Woman’s Party (1921; repr., Charleston, South Carolina: Bibliobazaar, 2007), 64.
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6Ibid., 154-161.


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13Ibid., 236-237.


21 Ibid., 58-61.


27 Kraditor, Up From the Pedestal, 17.

28 Woloch, Women and the American Experience, 82.

29 Ibid., 82-85.

30 Ibid., 186.

31 Flexner, A Century of Struggle, 30, 69, 116.

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33 Ibid., 191.

34 Ibid., 194.

35 Flexner, A Century of Struggle, 41-42.

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37 Flexner, A Century of Struggle, 181.


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40 Ibid., 181.

41 Edwards, Angels in the Machinery, 152, 161-165.
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5Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 5.

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8Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 17.

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14Stanton, *Eighty Years*, 148.

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Ibid., 71.

Stanton et al., History of Woman Suffrage, 1:748-749.

Flexner, A Century of Struggle, 110.
38 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 112.

39 U.S. Constitution, amendment 14, section 2.


42 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 125.


44 Ibid., 150.

45 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 125.


48 Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 201.

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50 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 137, 139.


52 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 160-161.

53 Ibid., 148, 154.

54 Susan B. Anthony to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, November 5, 1872, in Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 110.


57 Flexner, *A Century of Struggle*, 166.


59 Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 113.


61 Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 117.

63 Griffith, *In Her Own Right*, 155.


66 Minor, “Petition in the Circuit Court,” in *Up From the Pedestal*, ed. Kraditor, 231.

67 Stanton, *Eighty Years*, 254.

68 Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, 8, 94.


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78 Sherr, *Failure is Impossible*, xviii.


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5Barry, *Susan B. Anthony*, 289.


151 Cor. 15: 34-35 (AV).


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8Ibid., 17.

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10Ibid., 10-11.
11Ibid., 17.
15Stevens, Jailed for Freedom, 13; Ford, Iron Jawed Angels, 245.
16Adams and Keene, Alice Paul, 18.
17Ibid., 36, 40.
18Irwin, Woman’s Party, 12, 23, 126.
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22Lunardini, Equal Suffrage, 9-10.
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46 Irwin, *Woman's Party*, 74-75.


48 Alice Paul, quoted in Adams and Keene, *Alice Paul*, 141-142.


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71 Irwin, *Woman’s Party*, 197.


74 Ibid., 214.

75 Ibid., 206.

76 Alice Paul, quoted in Irwin, *Woman’s Party*, 199-201.


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89 Ibid., 11, 21, 39, 137, 175.


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100 Woodrow Wilson, quoted in Irwin, *Woman’s Party*, 41, 64, 115-116.


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7 Ibid., 349, 352, 353.


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28 Ibid., 314.


31 Ibid., 322.

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**CONCLUSION**


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7 U.S. Constitution, article 5, amendment 10.

8 U.S. Constitution, amendment 14, section 2.

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