

Women Win New Rights

MAIN IDEA

Women became leaders in social reform movements and won the right to vote during the Progressive Era.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Today, American women enjoy the right to vote because of women reformers in the Progressive Era.

TERMS & NAMES

Susan B. Anthony
Carrie Chapman Catt
Nineteenth Amendment

ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

In the 1890s, Lillian Wald was teaching a home nursing class at a school for immigrants in New York City. One day a child asked Wald to help her sick mother. Following the child home, Wald was shocked by what she saw.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Over broken asphalt, over dirty mattresses and heaps of refuse we went. The tall houses reeked with rubbish. . . . There were two rooms and a family of seven not only lived here but shared their quarters with boarders.

Lillian Wald, quoted in *Always a Sister*

Inspired to help such poor immigrants, Wald founded the Nurses' Settlement. This was later called the Henry Street Settlement. The program mainly helped poor women and children. In this section, you will read about others like Wald who worked to make life better for all women.



(Above left) Lillian Wald. (Above) A visiting nurse takes a shortcut between two tenements.

Taking Notes

Use your chart to take notes about problems faced by Americans and their attempted solutions.

PROBLEM

Political: patronage; limited suffrage and des

Social: poverty; alcohol abuse

Economic: power of big corporations; unemploy

Environmental: impure food and water; diminishing

New Roles for Women

The social reform movements of the Progressive Era were led by educated, middle-class women. At the turn of the century, women like Wald were looking for new roles outside the home. The growth of industry had changed many urban, middle-class homes. These homes now had indoor running water and electric power for lamps and vacuum cleaners.

In addition, factories produced the products that women once made in the home, such as soap, clothing, and canned goods. Such technological advances reduced some of the unpleasant work of homemaking. At the same time, families were becoming smaller as women had fewer children.

As a result, the homemaker's role began to change. High schools, colleges, and women's clubs offered courses in home economics and domestic science. In these courses, women were encouraged to apply the latest methods to running their homes.

Other women responded to changes in the home by taking jobs in factories, offices, and stores. Women worked as telephone operators, store clerks, and typists. Those who gained a college education could pursue a profession. The choices were limited to such fields as teaching and nursing. Women who could afford to were expected to quit their jobs when they married. In 1890, approximately 30 percent of women between the ages of 20 and 24 worked outside the home. However, only about 15 percent between the ages of 25 and 44 did so.

ReadingHistory

A. Finding Main Ideas How and why did women's roles begin to change around the turn of the century?

Women Progressives

The social reform movements that many middle-class, college-educated women took part in were focused on helping people. These included the settlement house and prohibition movements. A settlement house is a community center providing assistance to residents—particularly immigrants—in a slum neighborhood.

Jane Addams was a good example of the progressive female leader. After graduating from college, Addams sought a meaningful way to participate in society. She was financially independent. A visit to a settlement house in a London slum inspired her to start a similar program in Chicago. She was helped by her friend Ellen Starr.

With donations from wealthy Chicagoans, Addams and Starr rented an old mansion. Hull House was located in a poor, immigrant neighborhood. Within just a few years, they organized a full program of services, classes, and clubs. These were run by a group of young women residents and over 90 volunteers. Hull House served as an information bureau for new immigrants. It also helped the unemployed find jobs. It offered a kindergarten, a day nursery, after-school youth clubs, nutrition classes, and a concert program. Workers also pressured politicians for improved city services for the neighborhood.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

One function of the settlement to its neighborhood somewhat resembled that of the big brother whose mere presence in the playground protected the little ones from bullies.

Jane Addams, quoted in *Women and the American Experience*

The young women residents of Hull House received no salary and had to pay for their room and board. This meant that they had to be financially

Connections TO LITERATURE

WOMEN OUTSIDE THE HOME

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (shown below) was an influential writer on women's rights. She wanted to free women from housework to pursue careers. In *Women and Economics* (1898), Gilman argued that a wife's dependency on her husband limited her personal development.

In *Concerning Children* (1900) and *The Home* (1903), she proposed that families live in large apartments. These would have centralized nurseries and a staff devoted to cooking, cleaning, and child-care. This support would free women to work outside the home.



independent. For some, Hull House provided training for other public service. Florence Kelley, for example, worked at Hull House from 1891 to 1898. She later became secretary of the National Consumers' League. This group promoted better working conditions in factories and stores.

Another prominent but controversial progressive leader was Carry Nation. She campaigned for prohibition. Nation had once been married to an alcoholic. Tall and strong, she adopted dramatic methods in her opposition to alcoholic beverages. In the 1890s, she smashed saloons with a hatchet. This caused law enforcement officials to arrest her for disturbing the peace. Although some people criticized Nation, her efforts helped bring about passage of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919.

Suffrage for Women

Many women progressives were active in the struggle for woman suffrage, or the right to vote. American women fought longer for the right to vote than they did for any other reform. Some leaders in the fight died before realizing their goal.

In 1890, two separate woman suffrage groups merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Elizabeth Cady Stanton served as its first president. Two years later, in 1892, **Susan B. Anthony** became president. She held the position until 1900. Expressing their frustration over the difficulty of gaining suffrage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony wrote, "Words can not describe the indignation, the humiliation a proud woman feels for her sex in disfranchisement [being deprived of the right to vote]."

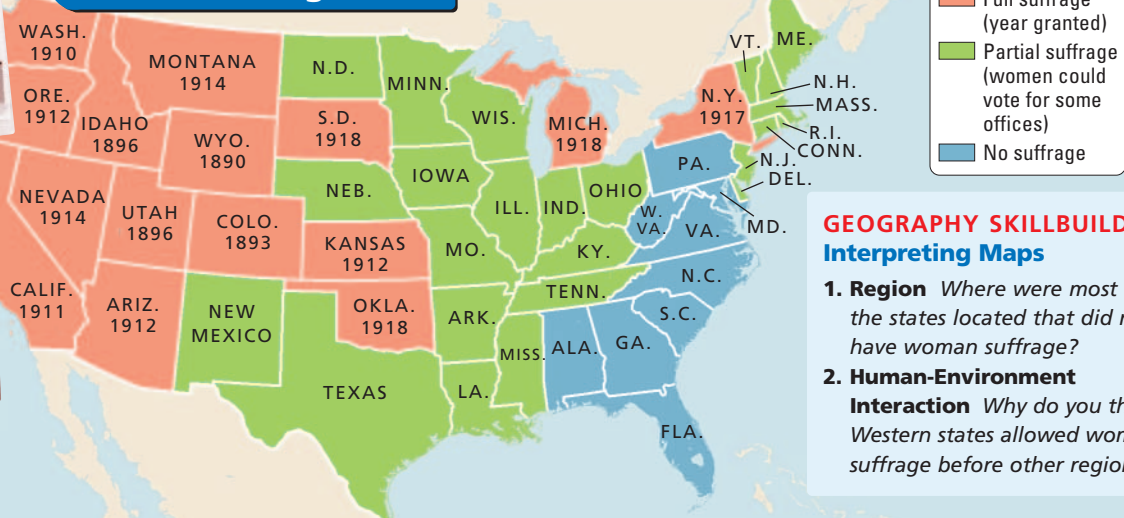
NAWSA at first focused on state campaigns to win the right to vote, since earlier efforts at passing a federal amendment had failed. But by 1896, only four states allowed women to vote. These were Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, and Colorado. Between 1896 and 1910, women did not gain the right to vote in a single state. Then, between 1910 and 1914, seven more Western states approved full suffrage for women.

Background





Because she helped organize the woman suffrage movement, Susan B. Anthony became the first woman to be pictured on a U.S. coin.



Woman Suffrage, 1919



The Progressive Amendments, 1909–1920

Number	Description	Passed by Congress	Ratified by States
16th	Federal income tax 	1909	1913
17th	Senators elected by people rather than state legislatures 	1912	1913
18th	Manufacture, sale, or transport of alcohol prohibited 	1917	1919
19th	Woman suffrage 	1919	1920

SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Charts

- For which amendment was there the longest gap between passage by Congress and ratification by states?
- What do the dates 1909 and 1920 represent in this chart?

The Nineteenth Amendment

The Western successes turned the tide in favor of woman suffrage. The United States' entry into World War I in 1917 made the final difference. During the war, membership in NAWSA reached 2 million. **Carrie Chapman Catt**, president of NAWSA, argued that the nation could no longer deny the right to vote to women, who were supporting the war effort by selling war bonds and organizing benefits. President Wilson urged the Senate to pass a women's suffrage amendment. He called passage "vital to the winning of the war."

In 1918, the House passed the **Nineteenth Amendment**, which gave women full voting rights. The Senate approved the amendment in 1919. In 1920, the states ratified it. In the final state campaigns, women staged marches, parades, and rallies around the country. Charlotte Woodard had attended the first women's rights convention in 1848 at Seneca Falls as a teenager. In 1920, the 91-year-old Woodard voted in a presidential election for the first time.

ReadingHistory

B. Recognizing Effects What factors helped women gain the right to vote?

Section 3 Assessment

1. Terms & Names

Explain the significance of:

- Susan B. Anthony
- Carrie Chapman Catt
- Nineteenth Amendment

2. Using Graphics

Use a chart to record the achievements of some women leaders of the era.

Progressive Achievements	
Lillian Wald	
Jane Addams	
Florence Kelley	

Which achievement seems greatest and why?

3. Main Ideas

- How did women's roles expand near the turn of the century?
- What was the background of many women who became leaders in social reform movements?
- How did World War I influence the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment?

4. Critical Thinking

Comparing and Contrasting In what ways was the struggle for woman suffrage similar to and different from African Americans' struggle for equal rights?

THINK ABOUT

- the restrictions that both groups faced
- how long they struggled for basic rights

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

LANGUAGE ARTS TECHNOLOGY

Research one of the women reformers discussed in this chapter. Then write the script for the first 10 minutes of her documentary or design her Web page.