



## Condensed Women's Suffrage Presentation Speaker's Notes

### Slide 1: 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial logo

#### Slide 2:

The women's suffrage movement was born of our country's original sin: slavery. Quakers were the first to oppose slavery in America and among the most active in the abolitionist movement. Unlike other Christian sects, Quakers also believed in equality among men and women. This painting of the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London depicts the delegates debating. If you look closely, you'll notice that only the men are debating, and the women are seated behind a screen. They were not allowed to speak on the convention floor. (Britain abolished slavery in 1833.)

#### Slide 3: Lucretia Mott

Sitting behind that screen was Mrs. Lucretia Mott. She and her husband, both Progressive Quakers, were leaders in the abolitionist movement. She was an eloquent Quaker minister herself. So ardent in her beliefs, she refused to wear cotton clothing or serve sugar in her home since both were produced with slave labor.

#### Slide 4: Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Another woman attending that convention was the young, newly married Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Both she and her husband were abolitionists as well. Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Stanton sat together behind that screen in London and fumed over the constraints placed upon them by the men at that convention. Before they returned home, they had resolved to hold a women's rights convention in America.

#### Slide 5: Seneca Falls Convention

Eight years later, Elizabeth Cady Stanton found herself living in the small town of Seneca Falls, New York. She and Lucretia Mott made good on their intention and organized the first women's rights convention. They placed a notice in the newspaper, and to their great surprise, one week later 300 people arrived at the small Wesleyan Chapel.

#### Slide 6: The Declaration of Sentiments

The main event of this convention was what Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the primary author, called "The Declaration of Sentiments." She modeled it after the Declaration of Independence written 72 years earlier. Interestingly, women's suffrage was finally achieved 72 years later in 1920.

### **Slide 7: The signature page**

In addition to the Declaration of Sentiments, 11 resolutions were also presented. Only one was controversial: the idea of giving women the right to vote. Lucretia Mott was initially opposed. As a Quaker and a pacifist, she felt voting was participating in an illegitimate government that sanctioned slavery and engaged in war. Others felt that giving women power over laws that would govern men was a bridge too far. It wasn't until the esteemed abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, rose to speak in favor of it that enough were persuaded to give the resolution the slim margin it needed to pass.

### **Slide 8: Matilda Joslyn Gage**

So, where did these early suffragists get these reformist ideas? They lived in a society in which women were completely subservient to their husbands under the law. They had no property rights, no right to divorce, no right to their children, and no control over their own bodies. But they weren't the only women in America at the time. Seneca Falls was in the territory of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) nation, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and most notably Matilda Joslyn Gage all had contact with Indigenous women. Gage wrote extensively about them and must've spent a lot of time with them because she was admitted into their Wolf Clan and their Council of Matrons. She discovered that for over a thousand years, Indigenous women had had political voice in this land.

### **Slide 9: Comparison of Indigenous / European women's rights**

Take a minute to compare the political rights of Indigenous and European American women. (Read through the points.)

### **Slide 10: Joining Forces**

At the time of the Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, brimming over with reformist ideas, was also tied down with her growing family. She would eventually have 7 children. She needed a partner to take her ideas out into the world. She found one in Susan B. Anthony. Stanton said, "I forged the thunderbolts. She fired them." They were unlikely allies. Stanton had been raised in a conservative upper middle-class family and chose the path of marriage and family. Susan B. Anthony was a Quaker, accustomed to the idea of the equality of men and women. Like Stanton, she had begun her activism as an abolitionist. Although she had many suitors, she refused to marry and relinquish her rights to a husband. Over the next 50 years, Stanton and Anthony would lead the women's rights movement. They had some profound disagreements but remained life-long friends.

### **Slide 11: Civil War**

When the Civil War broke out, these two women leaders made a strategic decision: they would suspend their campaign for women's rights and focus all their efforts on the first great cause they had both fought for: the abolition of slavery. They formed the Women's Loyal National League which grew to over 5000 members and conducted the largest petition drive in the nation's history, gathering over 400,000 signatures in support of abolition. This work provided its leaders with a blueprint for the women's rights movement that would follow. And the women believed that once the Civil War was over, a grateful nation would reward them with the achievement of the right to vote. They were wrong.

**Slide 12: The reconstruction amendments**

The 14<sup>th</sup> amendment used the word “male” for the first time in the Constitution. Stanton and Anthony were outraged and refused to support it. Anthony said, “I would rather cut off my right hand than ask the ballot for the black man and not the woman.” They also lobbied to add the word “sex” to the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment, but to no avail.

**Slide 13: Split in the movement**

As a result, Stanton and Anthony parted ways with other women’s rights advocates such as Lucy Stone who supported the reconstruction amendments. Two organizations emerged from this controversy: The National Woman Suffrage Association led by Stanton and Anthony, and the American Woman Suffrage Association led by Stone. This was a significant setback to the movement until the late 1800’s when the two groups merged to face a new century, becoming the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

**Slide 14: The West lead the way**

Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several western states joined the union and granted women the right to vote in their state constitutions. It seemed the natural order of things where the rigors of frontier life required women to work alongside their husbands. Wyoming was the first state to enter the union with full women’s suffrage in 1890. Colorado followed in 1893 after a successful state-wide referendum. By 1918, women had full voting rights in 15 states.

**Slide 15: New energy for a new century**

At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women’s roles in society were rapidly changing. World War I brought urgent demands for women’s labor. Membership in unions was surging and becoming integrated with the women’s rights movement. Across the pond, British suffragists were inspiring a new generation of American women’s rights leaders to adopt more militant tactics.

**Slide 16: The radical wing**

Alice Paul had been to England and experienced firsthand the radical movement there, including an arrest, a prison hunger strike, and force feeding. She returned to the U.S. intent on kicking the American activists into high gear, although as a Quaker, she rejected violence in favor of civil disobedience. Paul resolved to devote her energy and her impressive Ivy League credentials to the cause of women’s rights. (Women’s suffrage in England was achieved in 1928.)

**Slide 17: 1913 Parade in Washington D.C.**

In just nine weeks, Alice Paul organized a Woman Suffrage Parade to be staged in Washington D.C. on the eve of Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration. The parade was intended to be a dignified affair, but the crowd became unruly and soon dissolved into chaos. As a result, when Wilson arrived at the train station that afternoon, there were scant crowds there to greet him. Not surprisingly then, when Alice Paul met with Wilson a few days later requesting his support for a women’s suffrage constitutional amendment, she was rebuffed.

**Slide 18: The silent sentinels**

In January 1917, Paul led an effort to picket in front of the White House. With American soldiers fighting “over there” in World War I, this act of civil disobedience was often met with public scorn. After the women were arrested, cast in prison, tortured, and force-fed, however, public sentiment turned in their favor.

**Slide 19: The General: Carrie Chapman Catt**

On the more moderate front was the National American Woman Suffrage Association led by Carrie Chapman Catt, personally chosen to lead the organization by Susan B. Anthony. Catt disapproved of Alice Paul’s campaign of civil disobedience, although both women proved to be savvy political lobbyists.

**Slide 20: The Winning Plan**

Carrie Chapman Catt, always the shrewd and dignified activist, had a strategic plan. It was unveiled in 1916 and called for simultaneously working for suffrage in state legislatures as well continuing to lobby for a federal constitutional amendment. The logic was that once a critical mass of enfranchised women was achieved by individual states, a federal amendment would be inevitable. The plan worked just as Catt had envisioned.

**Slide 21: Exclusion**

But there were casualties. For the white middle and upper-class women who led the women’s suffrage movement, Black women’s suffrage was a thorny problem. Most viewed Black women’s suffrage as a race rather than a gender issue. There was overt racism throughout the movement. For example, in the 1913 suffrage parade in Washington D.C. the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority of African American women were told to march at the back of the parade. This, despite the fact the Black women’s clubs had been working even harder because they had to face TWO daunting obstacles to equality. As the time drew near to final ratification, white suffragist leaders made a devil’s bargain with white southern male legislators: they argued that women’s suffrage would help perpetuate Jim Crow laws by providing more white voters.

**Slide 22: Meanwhile in Wisconsin**

Just like those states west of the Mississippi, Wisconsin debated the idea of including women’s suffrage in its state constitution. Those questions proved too difficult to resolve, so Wisconsin entered the Union as the 30<sup>th</sup> state in 1848 with white male suffrage only, the same year as the Seneca Falls Convention.

**Slide 23: Oshkosh Suffragist Float**

As early as 1855, national suffrage leader Lucy Stone spoke throughout Wisconsin urging women to petition for the right to vote. In 1856, three suffrage petitions were introduced in the Wisconsin Senate. The first universal suffrage convention was held in Janesville in 1867, and the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association was formed in 1869. This picture is of the Oshkosh Equal Suffrage League in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July float made to look like a sailboat.

### **Slide 24: 1886 Election**

In 1886, a referendum allowing Wisconsin women to vote in “any election pertaining to school matters” was approved. The following year, Rev. Olympia Brown decided to put the new law to the test, and attempted to vote in a municipal election, arguing that it would impact school matters. She was turned away.

### **Slide 25: 1888 Brown V. Phillips**

Brown filed suit to argue her right to vote in the municipal election. The result was that the Wisconsin Supreme Court narrowed the focus of the new law to avoid any further ambiguity.

### **Slide 26: The Wisconsin Suffragist Leaders**

These are some of the accomplished women who led the Wisconsin women’s suffrage efforts:

**Rev. Olympia Brown** was the first woman ordained by an organized church in the U.S. and served Universalist churches in Racine and for a brief time in Neenah. She served as president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association and was also one of Alice Paul’s “Silent Sentinels”. She lived to cast a vote at age 85 in 1920.

**Belle Case LaFollette** was the wife of Robert “Fighting Bob” LaFollette. She worked side-by-side with her husband as he served as a U.S. Congressman, Senator, and Governor of Wisconsin. She traveled the country from 1915-1919 to work for women’s suffrage and was in the Senate gallery when the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed. She was offered the opportunity to succeed her husband as U.S. Senator when he died in 1925, but she declined.

### **Dr. Laura Ross Wolcott**

Dr. Wolcott was the first female physician in Wisconsin and the third in the U.S. She was the first president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association and served the organization for twelve years. She organized meetings in Milwaukee where she met Susan B. Anthony. She did not live long enough to cast a vote.

### **Jesse Jack Hooper**

Although she was born in Iowa, Jesse Jack Hooper lived most of her life in Oshkosh. Her causes were many: school reform, public health, advocacy for Native Americans and the Menominee Tribe in particular. She became the first president of the Wisconsin League of Women Voters. She ran as a Democrat for U.S. Senate in 1922 against Robert LaFollette and earned a remarkable 16% of the vote. She also worked tirelessly for world peace and two years before her death in 1935, she presented a petition signed by a million Americans to the World Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

### **Ada James**

Ada James was born to reform-minded parents who were both active in the women’s suffrage movement. She served as president of the Wisconsin Political Equality League. After the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, she remained involved with many causes: temperance, pacifism, birth control advocacy, and labor and prison reform.

### **Theodora Winton Youmans**

When the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment passed, Theodora Youmans was president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association. She worked as a journalist, and her writing provides some of the best accounts of the struggle for women's suffrage in Wisconsin. A life-long Republican, she remained politically active until her death.

### **Slide 27: Meanwhile in Appleton**

There is not much in the historical record concerning what was going on in Appleton during the years leading up to the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Some Post-Crescent articles from those years shed a little light on the prevailing sentiment of the day locally. An article dated April 3, 1909 observed, "It is doubtful, however, if many Appleton women are in favor of so-called women's rights principles and the possibilities are that even in the not expected event of full suffrage being extended to them, not one in ten women would go to the polls on election day."

Not many years later, however, it seemed that the tide had begun to turn. An article from January 4, 1912 noted the organization of the Political Equality League of Wisconsin and reflected, "If any city can boast of an intelligent and progressive womanhood, Appleton is that city." Twice during that year, the newspaper reported on suffragists coming to Appleton to speak.

In 1914, it was noted that Mrs. Rush Winslow was president of the Outagamie County Political Equality League. Minna Rogers Winslow appears to have been the most prominent Appleton woman sympathetic to the women's suffrage cause. She was married to Dr. Rush Winslow who served two terms as Appleton mayor and was one of the founders of St. Elizabeth's hospital. Mrs. Winslow served as Superintendent of the Appleton Schools from 1893-1894. During her tenure, Columbus School was built, and being the first "modern" school at that time, she named it after the Columbian Exhibition that was held in Chicago in 1893. Mrs. Winslow was one of the founders of the Appleton AAUW chapter.

### **Slide 28: 1912 Referendum**

In 1911, Ada James' father, Wisconsin Senator David James, introduced a bill that would grant women full suffrage. The bill passed two sessions of the legislature, was signed by the governor, and put before the male voters as a referendum in 1912. It was defeated by a 2 to 1 margin.

### **Slide 29: The Susan B. Anthony Amendment**

But Wisconsin women wouldn't have to wait much longer, although the final push to pass a federal amendment was a dramatic, 18-month long effort.

The first vote was taken in the House on June 10, 1918. The margin was so close that some representatives had to be summoned from their sickbeds. One was carried in on a stretcher, and one left his wife's deathbed (at her urging) to cast their votes. The bill was passed. The Senate proved a much tougher fight. The vote did not achieve the necessary 2/3 support. At that point, Carrie Catt put in motion a "plan for making trouble". The NAWSA would cast aside its non-partisan mantle, and actively work to unseat Senators who opposed women's suffrage.

Meanwhile Alice Paul's National Women's Party shifted its public protests into high gear culminating with a nationwide campaign to sway public opinion called "The Prison Special". Women who had been jailed for protesting traveled across the country by train, speaking to over 50,000 people. The result was an avalanche of letters of support sent to Congress from constituents. By the time the 66<sup>th</sup> Congress took up the question again in June of 1919, public support was overwhelming, and it easily passed both houses of Congress.

### **Slide 30: First to ratify!**

On June 5, 1919, state legislatures received the official papers from the U.S. Congress for the proposed 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. The amendment now had to be ratified by  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the states in order to become law. The legislatures in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin all ratified the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment five days later on June 10, 1919. Illinois was the first to vote by a half hour, but before the votes could be certified, the official papers had to be hand-carried across the country to the Secretary of State's office in Washington, D.C. The 76-year old former Wisconsin Senator David James (father of Ada), was chosen to be the messenger. He arrived in the nation's capital on June 13 and presented Wisconsin's official papers. Minutes later, the messenger from Illinois arrived in the same office, but due to an error on the Illinois papers another vote had to be taken a week later, and Wisconsin's papers were certified first.

### **Slide 31: Victory at last!**

As state ratifications progressed, Alice Paul began sewing her "victory banner" adding another star for each new state. Wisconsin was the first. Delaware was supposed to be the final state to ratify, but unexpectedly, the effort failed there. The next target was Tennessee.

By the summer of 1920, the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was one state short, and the entire political apparatus of the country, the "suffs", the "antis", the special interest lobbyists, the Republicans and the Democrats in the midst of a presidential election campaign, all descended on Nashville, Tennessee for the final push. When the fateful day arrived for the vote, the red rose of the "antis" dominated in the lapels of the state assemblymen. It looked as if the suffragists were one vote short. As the roll call proceeded, a freshman legislator named Harry Burn switched his vote at the last minute, following the admonition of his mother: "Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt put the RAT in ratification." That one vote on August 18, 1920 changed the lives of half the population of the United States, and Alice Paul was able to add the 36<sup>th</sup> and final star to her victory banner. The amendment was certified on August 26, 1920, Women's Equality Day. Despite the fact that Alice Paul and Carrie Chapman Catt had devoted their lives to the cause of women's suffrage, they were never able to see eye-to-eye about how to achieve it, so in order to avoid a public spectacle, neither was invited to the final signing ceremony on that day. All fifty states did eventually ratify, but, unbelievably, it took until 1984 for the last one: Mississippi.

**Slide 32: Alice Paul's "Jailed for Freedom" pin**

The final struggle for women's suffrage was characterized by two distinct and often antagonistic approaches. Alice Paul's National Women's Party took the more confrontational path. She proudly presented this pin to the women who were "jailed for freedom" in the course of their service to the cause. Carrie Chapman Catt and the National American Woman Suffrage Association chose to work within the political system. Which approach was more effective in achieving women's suffrage: the radical or the moderate? Historian Judith Wellman argues, "You need a united movement. A movement that loses its radicalism loses its vision and its future. A movement that is only radical loses its mass base."

**Slide 33:**

These were the most important leaders of the women's suffrage movement and the distinct roles they fulfilled:

Lucretia Mott was its moral force.

Matilda Joslyn Gage inspired it.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton put it into words.

Susan B. Anthony put it into action.

Alice Paul was its passion.

Carrie Chapman Catt was the political strategist who made it happen.

**Slide 34: (Women's March 2017)**

The suffragists were disappointed with the numbers of women who voted in that first 1920 election: only 1 in 3. It took until the 1960's and the "second wave of feminism" for the number of women voting to equal the number of men. Not until 1980 did the percentage of women voters surpass men. In the 2018 midterm elections, women voted in greater numbers than ever recorded. Are we now living in the midst of the next wave of feminism and the FINAL ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment?