

Seneca Falls: The Fight Continues?

Guiding Question: To what extent did the women of the Seneca Falls convention achieve their goals?

Instructions: The following is a timeline of some of the major events and responses to the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls in 1848. As you read through or examine each, respond to the corresponding questions on a separate page before moving on to the next box.



RESPONSE FROM THE PRESS

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, therefore, under the influence of the most serious "sober second thoughts," are resolved to maintain their rights as Wives, Belles, Virgins, and Mothers, and not as Women.
-Philadelphia Public Ledger and Daily Transcript

This is all wrong.... Society would have to be radically remodeled in order to accommodate itself to so great a change.

-Mechanics' Advocate, Albany, New York

The women folks have just held a Convention up in New York State, and passed a sort of "bill of rights".... They should have resolved at the same time, that it was obligatory ... upon the "lords" ... to wash dishes, scour up, be put to the tub, handle the broom, darn stockings, patch breeches, scold the servants, dress in the latest fashion, wear trinkets, look beautiful, and be as fascinating as those blessed morsels of humanity whom God gave to preserve that rough animal man, in something like a reasonable civilization.

-Lowell (Massachusetts) Courier

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON'S RESPONSE TO THE PRESS

"For those who do not yet understand the real objects of our recent Conventions at Rochester and Seneca Falls, I would state that we did not meet to discuss fashions, customs, or dress, the rights or duties of man, nor the propriety of the sexes changing positions, but simply our own inalienable rights, our duties, our true sphere."

-published in the *National Reformer*, Rochester, N.Y.,
Sept. 14, 1848

Discussion Questions

1. Was the press' reaction to the convention surprising? Why or why not?

2. Was Stanton's response to the press convincing? Why or why not?

1849

- Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the first woman to earn a medical degree in the United States and go on to become a physician.
- Though she became a doctor, she died without the right to vote.



1869

- Wyoming territory passes America's first woman suffrage law. It was a territory, became a state in 1890



1869

- Susan B. Anthony & Elizabeth Cady Stanton found the National Woman Suffrage Association



1895

"It's a long time, near half a century, since a few persons met in 1848, in a little Methodist church in Seneca Falls, to discuss the status of women under the laws of New York. . . But the majority of women ridiculed the idea of political rights for themselves, the press caricatured the convention, the pulpit denounced it, and some who took part withdrew their names, and appeared no more on our platform. . . Women are now in the trades and professions, everywhere in the world of work. . . They are close on the heels of man in the arts, sciences, and literature. . . We now have full suffrage in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. . ."



- "Women's Imperative Duty" an address by Elizabeth Cady Stanton on her 80th birthday

Discussion Question 1849-1895

3. Based on Stanton's recollections in 1895, do you think progress had been made since the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls in 1848? Why or why not?

1912

- Women's March, New York
 - At 16 years old, Mabel Ping Hua Lee, already a prominent activist in the suffrage movement and a Chinese immigrant, helped lead the Women's March in New York on horseback.
 - "For no nation can ever make real and lasting progress in civilization unless its women are following close to its men, if not actually abreast with them." -Mabel Ping Hua Lee



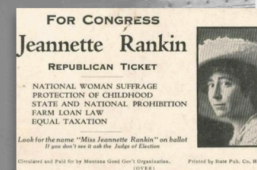
1916

- Margaret Sanger opens the first birth control clinic in the U.S., advocating for women to choose when and if to have children.
- After the clinic is raided by the police and threatened with legal action, she closed the clinic and founded the American Birth Control League in 1921.



1916

- Jeannette Rankin of Montana, a longtime NWSA member, became the first woman elected to congress (before women could vote in most states).
- Women had gained the right to vote in Montana in 1914; this was six years before all American women could vote.
- She was a fierce advocate for National women's suffrage and committed pacifist, she voted against the U.S. entering WWI and WWII.



Discussion Questions 1912-1917

4. What were some advancements women made during this time period?

5. Why do you think the fight was accelerating?

1917



- Picketing the White house
 - Alice Paul, Lucy Burns and other suffragists began picketing the white house in protest of women not having the right to vote.
 - This was the first time anyone had protested at the White House.
 - This coincided with the U.S.'s entrance into WWI, and the protest was very unpopular.
 - The women were harassed and beaten, and repeatedly jailed on charges of "obstructing traffic."



- In October 1917, suffragists went on a hunger strike in protest of awful prison conditions. Prison guards restrained and force-fed them through a tube.
- The prison superintendent ordered over forty guards to attack the women. Battered, choked, and beaten, the women described it as the "Night of Terror."
- Suffragist leader Lucy burns spent more time in prison than any other American woman suffragist.

1920

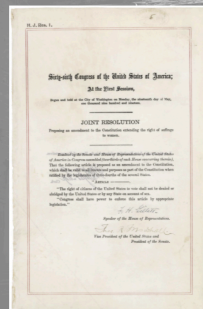
- Ratification of the 19th Amendment: The Susan B. Anthony Amendment to the Constitution officially gives all American women the right to vote.



- Native American women were excluded, and though technically this amendment included Black women, in practice they were still excluded from voting.

19TH AMENDMENT

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.



Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

1924

- President Calvin Coolidge signed the Indian Citizenship Act making Native Americans U.S. citizens.
 - Many believe the president did this to break up the power of Indian nations and assimilate them to American society.
- The Act gave Native Americans, including Native women, the right to vote.
 - The right of Native Americans to vote was not *enforced* by states until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



1920



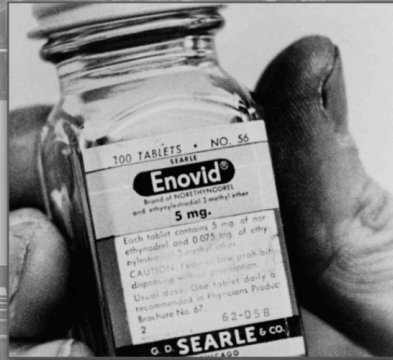
- It became illegal for husbands to beat their wives in all U.S. states.

Discussion Questions 1920-1924

6. Was the 19th Amendment a victory for all women? Why or why not?

1960

- FDA approves first commercially produced birth control pill, allowing women to decide when and if they have children.
 - Increase in women's pay, graduation from college, attainment of advanced degrees, and a decrease in teen pregnancy are tied to the mass availability of birth control.



1960's

- Gender neutral custody awards became more commonplace as divorce rates increased; men did not automatically have custody of the children.



1963

- President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act which prohibits sex-based wage discrimination between men and women performing the same job in the same workplace.



1972

- Title IX, authored and sponsored by Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color elected to Congress, was signed into law by President Richard Nixon.
- Title IX says that any school or education program that receives federal funding cannot discriminate on the basis of sex.



1973

- The U.S. Supreme Court decided the major court case Roe V. Wade that protects a woman's legal right to abortion.



1975

- Nebraska became the first state to make marital rape illegal.
- It became illegal in all 50 states by 1993.



Discussion Questions

1944-1975

7. What rights or protections did women gain during this period?

8. Did any of them surprise you? Why or why not?

1994

- Violence Against Women Act, signed by President Bill Clinton, was signed into law.
- It provided funding for programs that help victims of domestic violence, rape, assault, stalking & other gender-related violence.



Discussion Questions 1981-2013

9. How did the political landscape change for women during this period?

10. What effect might this have had on women across the country? Why?

1981



- Sandra Day O'Connor was first woman sworn in as a Supreme court justice, nominated by President Ronald Reagan.
- Since the beginning of the supreme court, five justices out of 115 have been women.



1993-94



- President Clinton nominated the first female Attorney General Janet Reno, and the first female Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

2007



- Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi became the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives.

2013



- The U.S. military removed the ban against women serving in combat positions.

2016

- Hillary Clinton became the first female nominated for president by a major political party.



2021

- Kamala Harris was sworn in as the first female Vice President.



WHAT ARE WOMEN FIGHTING FOR NOW?

78 cents

Women still make just 78 cents for every dollar earned by men. Black women earn only 64 cents and Latinas only 54 cents for each dollar earned by white men.

1 in 4

The U.S. Department of Justice reports that approximately one in four homeless women is homeless because of violence committed against her.

Over 1,000

Over 1,000 public K-12 schools in the United States have single-sex education programs. Many rely on discredited science and gender stereotypes.

In the employment realm, laws and workplace policies that exclude women from certain job sectors and allow them to be forced out of the workplace when they become pregnant or return to work after having a baby cause persistent disparities in women's income, wealth, and economic security.

Survivors of gender-based violence face discrimination when police, schools, landlords, and other institutions fail to adequately address and prevent violence and also when laws and policies penalize them, impeding the ability of women and girls to live safely and with dignity.

Resource: [aclu.org](https://www.aclu.org)

Discussion Questions

11. What do you predict could be the next event in women's history? Why do you think so?

2022 AND BEYOND



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