

Timeline of Women's History

1776 Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John, who is attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, asking that he and the other men--who were at work on the Declaration of Independence--"Remember the Ladies." John responds with humor. The Declaration's wording specifies that "all men are created equal."

1837 Michigan becomes a state.

1846 Ernestine Rose, a reformer from New York, speaks to the Michigan Legislature "on the right and need of women to the elective franchise" but has little influence.

1848 The first Women's Rights Convention is held at Seneca Falls, New York. Catharine Fish Stebbins (who moves to Detroit in 1867) serves as the Secretary.

1849 A Senate committee, led by Senator Rix Robinson of Ada, proposes a universal suffrage amendment, but it is not acted upon because of the "unusualness" and "needlessness" of the franchise for women.

1852 The first women's club in Michigan, the Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo, is founded by Lucinda Hinsdale Stone*.

Livonia Benedict* is the first Michigan woman to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree, at Hillsdale College.

1855 Suffragists from Lenawee County present petitions for woman suffrage, signed by many state citizens, to the Michigan Legislature.

1857 The Michigan Legislature gives greater attention to woman suffrage petitions, but takes no action.

1859 A House committee considers the vote for black males but not for women, causing resentment among women.

1861-1865 The Civil War is fought in America.

1866 The state's first bill on woman suffrage is defeated by one vote.

1867 The Michigan Legislature grants women taxpayers the right to vote for school trustees, but rejects total woman suffrage.

1868 The Fourteenth Amendment is ratified, which extends to all citizens the protections of the Constitution against unjust state laws. This Amendment was the first to define "citizens" and "voters" as "male."

1869 The Fifteenth Amendment is passed by Congress, granting the vote to males regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton form the National Woman Suffrage Association.

Lucy Stone organizes the American Woman Suffrage Association.

1870 The Michigan State Woman Suffrage Association is formed at Battle Creek. The woman suffrage amendment is passed by the Michigan Legislature, but vetoed by the governor.

Madelon Louisa Stockwell* of Albion is the first woman admitted to the University of Michigan, the first state university to admit women. The University of Michigan medical school also accepts its first women students. Stockwell graduates in 1872.

1871 Nannett Gardner* of Detroit and Mary Wilson* of Battle Creek vote in city and state elections.

The Ladies Library Association of Kalamazoo builds the first clubhouse in the nation for a woman's organization. In 1879, Hannah Trask Cornell becomes its first librarian.

1874 The State Legislature puts a woman suffrage amendment on the ballot, but it is defeated, 135,957 to 40,077; the Michigan State Woman Suffrage Association disbands.

1875 The statewide Women's Christian Temperance Union is formed at Grand Rapids.

1878 A Woman Suffrage Amendment is introduced in the United States Congress. The wording is unchanged in 1919, when the amendment finally passes both houses.

1880 Anna Howard Shaw* of Big Rapids is the first woman in the nation to become a fully ordained minister in the Methodist Church.

1881 School suffrage is extended to parents and guardians of children of school age.

Emma Hall* of Tecumseh is the first woman to be head of a state institution, as superintendent of the Reform School for Girls at Adrian, the first girls' reformatory in the U.S. run by an all-woman staff and a board of directors consisting mainly of women.

1880s F. Elizabeth Palmer* of Albion is the first woman in Michigan elected to a board of education, under the new law granting school suffrage to women.

1884 The Michigan Equal Suffrage Association is formed in Flint with Mary Doe* of Bay City as the first president.

Michigan's Senator Thomas W. Palmer makes the first speech in the U.S. Senate in support of woman's suffrage.

1889 The Michigan Supreme Court upholds the right of Eva Belles* of Flint to vote in school board elections, after she was refused that right in 1888 (Belles vs. Burr).

The National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association merge to become the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

1893 The Michigan State Legislature passes municipal suffrage, but the Michigan Supreme Court declares it unconstitutional on the grounds that "the legislature has no right to create a new class of voters."

1895 A proposed constitutional amendment to grant women suffrage is defeated in the House.

1898 The Michigan Association of Colored Women's Clubs is founded by Mary McCoy* of Detroit and Lucinda Thurman* of Jackson, with Thurman as president and McCoy as vice president.

1899 The National American Woman Suffrage Association holds its annual convention in April at the St. Cecilia Society hall in Grand Rapids, the only time the convention is held in Michigan.

1904 Anna Howard Shaw* of Big Rapids is elected president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

1907-8 At the State Constitutional Convention, woman's suffrage is defeated 57 to 38, but women who pay taxes can vote on local bonding and tax issues.

1910-Ann Arbor Area Equal Suffrage Association is formed in October.

1911 The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) is organized. Led by Mrs. Arthur Dodge.

1912 Governor Charles Osborn successfully urges the Michigan State Legislature to put the suffrage question before the all-male electorate in November. Clara Arthur* of Detroit leads the campaign and the proposal appears to win. However, the opposition steals the election under suspicious circumstances.

Beginning in 1912, the Michigan State Grange, led by Jennie Buell of Ann Arbor and Ida Chittenden of Lansing, is the only state Grange to campaign actively for woman suffrage.

Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive (Bull Moose/Republican) Party becomes the first national political party to adopt a woman suffrage plank.

June- Ypsilanti Equal Suffrage Association is formed.

July-Michigan State Normal College Equal Suffrage Association and Men's College Equal Suffrage Association are organized.

Sept-Washtenaw Equal Suffrage Association is formed

1913 The Michigan Association Opposed to Equal Suffrage is formed. The suffrage proposal is again put on the ballot and again defeated.

College men (in and out state) granted the right to vote at their respective schools in Michigan. Michigan Supreme Court rules that traveling salesman and college male students do not have to travel home to vote.

Alice Paul and Lucy Burns founded the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage.

1916 NAWSA president Carrie Chapman Catt unveils her "winning plan" for **suffrage** victory at a convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Catt's plan required the coordination of activities by a vast cadre of suffrage workers in both state and local associations.

1917 The United States joins the Allies in World War I.

Governor Albert Sleeper signs a bill on May 8, granting Michigan women the right to vote in presidential elections.

Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage disbanded and the National Woman's party.

1918 Michigan male voters approve a state constitutional amendment granting suffrage to

1919 Michigan women vote for statewide offices for the first time.

The National Suffrage Amendment, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, is passed by Congress on June 5. Michigan is the second state to ratify the amendment on June 10.

The National American Woman Suffrage Association disbands and is replaced by the League of Women Voters. The Michigan League of Women Voters is led by Florence Belle Brotherton of Detroit.

1920 The 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting the vote to women, becomes law on August 26. Women vote for the first time in the presidential election on November 2.

Sources: Daily Times Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti Daily Press, Michigan State Normal College News, and the Michigan Women's Historical Center.