



# Why It Matters

## Photo Gallery

### Raising the Status of Women

## The Seneca Falls Convention

Throughout the nation's history, women had fought side by side with the men to build a new nation and to ensure freedom. Even though the Declaration of Independence promised equality for all, the promise rang hollow for women.

Female reformers began a campaign for their own rights. In 1848 Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the Seneca Falls Convention. One of the resolutions demanded suffrage, or the right to vote, for women. This marked the beginning of a long, hard road to gain equal rights.

Lucretia Mott (below) and Susan B. Anthony were leaders in the effort to allow women a greater role in American society.



"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal."

—Declaration of the Seneca Falls Convention, 1848

#### Gaining the Right to Vote, 1848–1920

The Seneca Falls Convention led to the growth of the woman suffrage movement.



also helped fugitive slaves and organized the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. At the world antislavery convention in London, Mott met **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**. There the two female abolitionists joined forces to work for women's rights.

### The Seneca Falls Convention

In July 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and a few other women organized the first women's rights convention in **Seneca Falls, New York**. About 200 women and 40 men attended.

The convention issued a Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions modeled on the Declaration of Independence. The women's document declared: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal."

The women's declaration called for an end to all laws that discriminated against women. It demanded that women be allowed to enter the all-male world of trades, professions, and businesses. The most controversial issue at the Seneca Falls Convention concerned **suffrage**, or the right to vote.

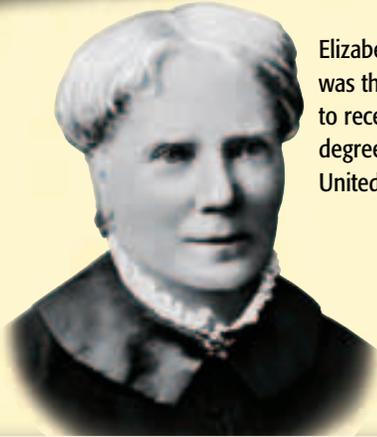
Elizabeth Stanton insisted that the declaration include a demand for woman suffrage, but delegates thought the idea of women voting was too radical. Lucretia Mott told her friend, "Lizzie, thee will make us ridiculous." Frederick Douglass stood with Stanton and argued powerfully for women's right to vote. After a heated debate the convention voted to include the demand for woman suffrage in the United States. (See page 617 of the Appendix for excerpts of the Seneca Falls Declaration.)



Maria Mitchell gained world renown when she discovered a comet in 1847. She became a professor of astronomy and the first woman elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



Mary Ann Shadd Cary was the first African American woman in the nation to earn a law degree.



Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States.



Helen Keller overcame the challenges of an illness that left her deaf, blind, and mute to help others with similar disabilities.



Susette La Flesche was a member of the Omaha tribe and campaigned for Native American rights.

**1893** →  
Colorado adopts woman suffrage

**1896** →  
Utah joins the Union, granting women full suffrage

**1910–1918** →  
States including Washington, Kansas, and Michigan adopt woman suffrage

**1919** →  
House and Senate pass the federal woman suffrage amendment

**1920** →  
Tennessee ratifies the Nineteenth Amendment, called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. It becomes law on August 26, 1920.

## The Movement Grows

The Seneca Falls Convention paved the way for the growth of the **women’s rights movement**. During the 1800s women held several national conventions. Many reformers—male and female—joined the movement.

**Susan B. Anthony**, the daughter of a Quaker abolitionist in rural New York, worked for women’s rights and temperance. She called for equal pay for women, college training for girls, and **coeducation**—the teaching of boys and girls together. Anthony organized the country’s first women’s temperance association, the Daughters of Temperance.

Susan B. Anthony met Elizabeth Cady Stanton at a temperance meeting in 1851. They became lifelong friends and partners in the

struggle for women’s rights. For the rest of the century, Anthony and Stanton led the women’s movement. They worked with other women to win the right to vote. Beginning with Wyoming in 1890, several states granted women the right to vote. It was not until 1920, however, that woman suffrage became a reality everywhere in the United States.

**Reading Check** **Explaining** What is suffrage?

## Progress by American Women

Pioneers in women’s education began to call for more opportunity. Early pioneers such as Catherine Beecher and Emma Hart Willard believed that women should be educated for