

## A Long Time Coming: The Nineteenth Amendment

When, on August 18, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified, many of the women who would be casting their ballots for the first time the following November did not know the names of the women to whom they owed an enormous debt of gratitude. Only the very oldest of them remembered their names, or knew anything of the long and inspiring history of the Women's Suffrage Movement.

The turn of the century ushered in a new era, and within the first few years of it, the two women who were most responsible for getting women the vote, and so much more, had both died. With their passing, much of the memory of those early and crucial struggles began to fade away. Women today know little of their own history. Many women don't even know what "Suffrage" means, or what the movement of so long ago means to them today. And sadly, almost none of them know who put the "rage" in "suffrage."

*This is no accident.*

Men have long made and written history. For just as long, they have tried to dictate "Her-story" as well. History has always been more subjective than objective, and what was included, rewritten, or excluded, had, until about the turn of the century, been left entirely up to men. The fact that this ever changed at all is due in a large part to the women who gave birth to the women's suffrage movement. It's ironic that the very women who made the history were very nearly written out of it.

When women were finally given the vote in 1920, many of both sexes thought that they wouldn't know what to do with it, for even though it was the "modern" twentieth century, it was still very much a man's world. Now, even eighty years later, women still have a long way to go. Women still are not considered equal, not only by men, but also by many of their own gender. Old attitudes die hard, if they die at all. If women were ever to fully realize their own power, they could change the world. That they don't know their own power is evidenced by the large percentage of women who do not vote.

Maybe, if women everywhere knew the history of how they got the vote, they all would treasure not only the right to it, but the women who won it for them, as well.

The two women who strategized and fought, not only for the vote, but for every basic civil right for women, for the entire last half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, were Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony.

These two women, who were radically different in not only looks, but also in their personalities and backgrounds, were also a perfect compliment to one another. They were an unbeatable team, and even though neither one of them lived long enough to cast a legal vote, no man, no matter how powerful, was ever able to intimidate them, or to logically refute any of their arguments.

As different as they were, there were also many similarities in what they felt, thought, and believed, not only about the treatment of women, but of all people.

Both women were active in the anti-slavery and temperance movements. In fact, it was their involvement with these movements that awakened their determination to fight for women's rights.

Born a little more than four years apart, Stanton was born in late 1815 and Anthony in early 1820, at a time when "women in America had fewer rights than a male inmate of an insane asylum. Women were prevented from attending college...no woman could serve on a jury and most were considered "incompetent" to testify in court. They could not sign contracts, keep or invest earnings, own or inherit property; they had no rights in divorce, including the custody of the children they bore...women were the property of their husbands, who were entitled—by law—to their wives' wages and bodies." (1) Long before the right to vote was finally won for women, the team of Stanton and Anthony had led the successful fight to win women their most basic of rights. That these women accomplished this at a time when women had no legal standing whatsoever is astounding, and a testament to their tenacity, courage, and strength.

When they met in 1851, they began a deep and powerful friendship that lasted for fifty-one years. Their love and respect for each other was the glue that held them together through disappointments, disagreements over strategy and tactics, in-fighting and lost loyalties.

Three years before, in 1848, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had made real a pledge they had made to each other eight years earlier in London. They organized and hosted the first ever Woman's Rights Convention. It was held on July 19-20 in Seneca Falls, New York. For this convention Stanton, Lucretia and James Mott, and Richard and Jane Hunt drafted "The Declaration of Sentiments," an eloquent and touching document modeled after the Declaration of Independence.

Stanton had met Lucretia Mott for the first time in 1840, at the international Anti-Slavery Convention in London, which she had attended with her Abolitionist husband, Henry Stanton. Mott was a Quaker who was so dedicated to the cause of abolition that she would not wear cotton or consume sugar. (2)

Much to the dismay of the many women who attended that convention in London, only men were allowed to speak. The women were not even allowed to sit in the same room with the men. Those who organized the convention used the Bible to justify the silence and segregation they imposed on the women. (3) Stanton was so impressed with Lucretia Mott, her demeanor, her principles, her sense of humor (at the expense of the men who discriminated against women) that she later said of her: "Mrs. Mott was to me an entire new revelation of womanhood." (4) Meeting and befriending Mott was a turning point for Stanton, for it was Mott who set her on the path of women's rights.

After the first Woman's Rights Convention in 1848, and the partnership that Stanton and Anthony formed soon after, it was only a matter of time. Only a matter of time, before the pleas of advocates, such as Sarah Grimké, who wrote "All I ask of our brethren is that they will take their feet from off our necks and permit us to stand upright on the ground that God has designed us to occupy." (5) would be answered. Only a matter of time...

If all of the women and the few good men who attended that first convention in Seneca Falls and signed that Declaration of Sentiments (among them Frederick Douglass)(6) in 1848 had known then that the matter of time would amount to seventy-two years, they might well have taken hostages!

As it was, they didn't know of the struggles that lay ahead; of the rocky road that would break strong alliances and try their patience and friendships. The only constant in the turbulent times that were to follow was the steadfast determination and partnership of two women: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

In 1854 Stanton spoke at the Woman's Rights Convention in Albany, New York, but her address was really directed at the State Legislature, just a few blocks away. "How could man ever look thus on woman? She...who gave the world a savior, and witnessed alike the adoration of the Magi and the agonies on the cross. How could such a being, so blessed and honored, ever become the ignoble, servile, cringing slave...Would to God you could know the burning indignation that fills woman's soul when she turns over the pages of your statute books and sees there how like feudal barons you freemen hold over your women." (7)

For her part, Anthony circulated petitions six weeks prior to the convention. One was to expand the Married Woman's Property Act that had passed after the 1848 convention, allowing women to inherit money. The amendment would allow women to keep their own wages. Amazingly, she managed to get six thousand signatures. The second petition was to give women the vote. For this one, she got four thousand signatures. Immediately after Stanton's speech, Anthony had fifty thousand copies of it printed up and distributed, personally seeing to it that a copy appeared on each and every legislator's desk. (8) At first

the legislators rejected every demand the women made, but soon they amended two laws, allowing women to keep their own wages and have a say in the custody of their own children. They ignored the voting issue and its accompanying petition. (9)

After the victories in Albany, Elizabeth Cady Stanton went home to the five of her eventual seven children, where she continued to use her pen as a sword in the war for women's rights.

On Christmas Day of 1854 Susan B. Anthony had begun a tour of each of the fifty-four counties in New York, to spread the word about women's rights. She chose to travel in winter so there would be less competition from other speakers. Along the way she gathered signatures for her various petitions on women's issues, including the ones she gathered prior to the convention in Albany. She did not end the tour until she had visited every county. It took her a total of five long hard frigid months that would have killed a weaker woman. Anthony was so driven, so consumed by her causes, that she let nothing stop her or get in her way. And she didn't think a thing about demanding of her friend, Elizabeth Stanton, the same devotion. That in 1856 Stanton was nursing her sixth child, while minding the house and everything in it without help from her typically absent husband, meant very little to Anthony. She had never married, and she felt that those who had were traitors to the cause, but when she needed a speech, she always knew which traitor to beg it from. What follows is a bit of a frazzled letter, written to Stanton from Anthony, while she was on yet another speaking tour, as it appears in Geoffrey C. Ward's book:

#### Private

Home getting along toward 12 O'clock

Thursday Evening 5th June

And Mrs Stanton, not a word written on that Address for Teachers Con.—This week was to be leisure to me-- & lo, our girl, a wife, had a miscarriage on Tuesday—at eve one Lady Visitor came & to day a man & the mercy only knows when I can get a moment—& what is worse, as the Lord knows full well, is, that if I get all the time the world has—I can't get up a decent document, so for the love of me, & for the sake of the reputation of womanhood, I beg you with one baby on your knee &—another at your feet & four boys whistling buzzing hallooing MaMa set yourself about the work—it is of but small moment who writes the Address, but of vast moment that it be well done—I promise you to work hard, oh, how hard, & pay you whatever you say for your time & brains—but oh Mrs. Stanton don't say no, nor don't delay it a moment, for I must have it all done & almost commit it to memory.

And Stanton, as always, complied, but with strings—Susan, as always, would come and “hold the baby and make the puddings” while Elizabeth worked on the speeches.

Stanton would later write: “Whenever I saw that stately Quaker girl coming across my lawn, I knew that some happy convocation of the sons of Adam was to be set by the ears...Night after night by an old-fashioned fireplace we plotted and planned the coming agitation, how, when, and where each entering wedge would be driven, by which woman might be recognized and her rights secured.” (10)

And so it went; not for five, or ten, or twenty years—oh no—Stanton and Anthony plotted and planned for *fifty years*, and still never saw the women they fought so hard for, ever get the vote. During the course of this time they employed everything from civil disobedience and getting arrested to suing the government and its agents, and taking their case to the Supreme Court. As always, there was also the endless returning to the legislature, year after year after year. And when their own years had run out, other women would continue to return, again and again and again until the men finally gave in.

Much progress was made between 1856 and 1920, not only in this country, but elsewhere as well. What started out as a handful of women eventually became an angry mob, mobilized to do battle without any swords—no swords, just words, and deeds, and persistence.

In 1863 Stanton and Anthony organized the Women’s Loyal National League and collected 300,000 signatures on a petition demanding that the Senate abolish slavery by constitutional amendment. They were ignored.

In 1867 Lucy Stone, along with Stanton and Anthony addressed a subcommittee of the New York State Constitutional Convention and requested that a revised constitution include women’s suffrage. They were ignored.

The same trio of women, that same year, canvassed the entire state of Kansas, to speak in favor of a referendum on whether to enfranchise Negroes and/or women. They were ignored.

1868 saw the passing of the Fourteenth Amendment, and then the Fifteenth, which granted the vote to former male slaves, but not to women. (11)

The Fifteenth Amendment gave black males the vote, but in doing so it shattered the women’s suffrage movement, for many within its ranks, including Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, bitterly resented the inclusion of the word “male,” in the Constitution. The result was that women who for most of their lives had fought against slavery were forced to make a choice; some chose to back the amendment, some chose to oppose it. Stanton and Anthony opposed it with frustration and angry words. In doing so they lost some old allies for a time. Lucy Stone and Frederick Douglass supported it, and went one way, while Sojourner Truth opposed it, and with Anthony and Stanton, went another.

It was a time of turmoil and trouble, and the suffrage movement was split in two. It would be twenty years before the damage that was done by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments would be repaired, and the two opposing camps would finally merge again.

While women's suffrage was stymied, split, and suffering in the States, real progress was being made in the Territories. In 1869 Wyoming granted suffrage to women, followed by Utah in 1870. (12) In 1872 Susan B. Anthony and a handful of other daring suffragettes intimidated three young male registrars in Rochester, New York and managed to register to vote. Then, on Election Day, she and six other women actually voted.

Seven days later she was arrested.

During her trial in 1873 she was not allowed to testify, and the Judge, who had written out his opinion *before* the trial even began, ordered the jury to find her guilty. (13)

Stupidly, before passing sentence, the Judge asked the prisoner, who had not been allowed to speak on her own behalf, if she had anything to say.

Yes, she did have something to say. She had a lot to say. More than the poor Judge could ever have imagined, and once she began to say it, he was unable to control her, though he ordered her several times to stop. Each time she would refute him with her razor-sharp words, and continue her verbal slicing and dicing, stabbing and jabbing at the injustice of it all, the mockery of it all. Her words left the judge gutted, and still she continued to speak.

When finally she sat down, he ordered her to stand up. He then passed sentence: She would pay \$100 and court costs.

Again she spoke, this time telling him that she would never pay a cent of the money. And she never did. (14)

On January 10, 1878, Representative Aaron A. Sargent, of California, introduced a new amendment, written by Stanton and Anthony, which would grant women the vote. It never made it out of committee. It had taken them three years to find a Congressman who would introduce their amendment. It would be reintroduced in every session for the next forty-five years before passing. (15)

In 1882, the House of Representatives and the Senate, *finally*, appointed Select Committees on Woman Suffrage. (16) Unfortunately, they did little about changing or improving the status of women, though certainly, this was a step forward.

It wasn't until 1890 that the two organizations that had been formed as a result of the split in the movement after the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were finally reunited. It only happened after two years of negotiations, when it had become clear that the cause needed unity to succeed. The National Woman Suffrage Association, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton as President, was and had been by far, more radical than the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA,) which was led by Lucy Stone.

The two once-warring factions merged to form The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). It was one of the most important turning points in the struggle for suffrage. Stanton became President, Anthony Vice (though it was really she who ran the new organization) and Lucy Stone was the head of the Executive Committee. (17) It was also around this time that a new voice, a younger voice, was being heard and listened to. The voice belonged to Carrie Chapman Catt, who would eventually be handed the reins of leadership of the NAWSA.

Carrie Chapman Catt was born on January 9, 1859, in Ripon, Wisconsin. When she was seven her family moved to Charles City, Iowa, and it was here that she spent the rest of her childhood.

In 1880 she was not only the only woman in her graduating class from what is now Iowa State University, she was also the only woman in it. She would continue to break ground in both her personal life and within the growing woman's movement.

She became one of the first and few women in the nation to be appointed superintendent of schools in 1883, and in 1886 she became San Francisco's first woman newspaper reporter. She had married Leo Chapman in 1885, but he died a year later of Typhoid, while in San Francisco seeking work. Carrie arrived in San Francisco a few days after Leo's death, and decided to stay for a while.

She returned in 1887 to Iowa and became involved in the Suffrage movement, and from 1890-1892 she served as the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association's state organizer.

Carrie had married again in 1890, this time to George Catt, who was supportive of her work in the fight for Suffrage. It was in this same year that she began to work with NAWSA on a national level, speaking in Washington D.C. at their convention. Following the convention, her writing, speaking engagements and dedication gained her a reputation as a new leader. (18) 1890 was an exciting time for women. The West, peopled from the start with free thinkers, had blazed forward with suffrage for women when the rest of the country was dragging its feet. Wyoming and Utah Territories had granted it

twenty years earlier, and in 1890 Wyoming joined the Union as the first state where women voted. (18)

In 1892 Carrie Chapman Catt was asked by Susan B. Anthony to address congress on the proposed women's suffrage amendment, and Anthony succeeded Stanton as president of NAWSA. (19)

In 1895 Stanton, always the radical, but even more so as she aged, published "The Woman's Bible," infuriating just about everyone but her old and dear friend Anthony, who had known her long enough to know what to expect from her. The book was a scathing criticism of Christianity, for its treatment of women. Though Anthony understood her friend's frustration, she gently urged her to "stop hitting poor old St. Paul, and give your heaviest raps on the head of every maybob, man or woman, who does injustice to a human being for the crime of color or sex..." But the other members of NAWSA were furious, and embarrassed by her; the *nerve* of attacking THE BIBLE! It was just too much...

A resolution was proposed to censure her and to disassociate from her entirely. Anthony spoke passionately in her friend's defense, but it was no use. Worse, not only did the resolution pass, but two of Anthony's protégés, Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt, voted for the proposal.

Stanton was hurt and angry, and demanded that Anthony resign in protest. Poor Susan was torn in two. She agonized over her decision for three weeks, but in the end she did not resign. Her decision to remain in office was a knife in the heart of her oldest and dearest friend, and though this put a terrible strain on their relationship, it did not end it. (20)

Meanwhile, progress had been steady in the West, and by 1900 women had full suffrage in Utah, Colorado, and Idaho. (21)

1902 was to be an important year for women, for it was in that year the women of an entire nation, Australia, were enfranchised. (22)

It was also to be marked by sadness for those who knew and loved Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

In June of 1902 Anthony went to see Stanton. When the time came for her to go, Anthony embraced her friend and wept. "Shall I see you again?" she cried. Stanton replied "Oh yes, if not here, then in the hereafter, if there is one." They agreed that Susan would return in November for Stanton's 87th birthday.

But it was not to be. By October of 1902 Stanton was nearly blind and immobile, but still her pen could not be silenced. Two days before her death, she wrote a letter to Teddy Roosevelt, urging him to include suffrage in his

State of the Union address. The next day she wrote one to Eleanor, asking her to see to it that he would. Stanton died on October 26th.

Anthony received a telegram from Harriet Stanton the next day to tell Susan of her mother's death.

Anthony sat in her room, alone, and spoke to no one.

The headlines said it best: "HEARTS SEVERED BY DEATH ALONE." Their friendship had endured for fifty-one years.

Anthony remained active until she was too weak to continue. Even so, in 1906 she was determined to attend the annual NAWSA convention, which was in Baltimore. She caught a cold on the train and was too ill to participate in most of it, but the last day of it, February 15th, was her 86th birthday, and the convention was turned over to the celebration of it. So weak and sick that she could not get to the stage without help, she nevertheless made what she knew would be her last speech.

She died on March 13th, 1906, and the church overflowed with the thousands of weeping women who attended her funeral.

Before their deaths, both Stanton and Anthony remarked on the cruelty of all the years fighting for a vote that they'd never get to cast themselves. (23)

After their deaths, progress was slow but steady, and it was no longer a question of *if* women would get the vote, but *when*, for even as the United States continued to drag its feet, 1906 saw the women of Finland become enfranchised. (24)

More and more women were organizing, marching, attending meetings and rallies, and writing to congress to demand the vote. No longer was suffrage just a ridiculous idea entertained by a handful of uppity women. Women wanted to become involved in their own destinies, and owners of their own souls and minds.

In 1912 Arizona, Kansas and Oregon passed suffrage referendums, followed in 1914 with Montana and Nevada granting the vote to women.

In 1915, New York failed to pass a suffrage referendum, while Denmark enfranchised its women.

Women were getting bolder, and more frustrated, as all around them states and countries were forging ahead, while the men in Washington D.C. *still refused to do what was right.*

In 1917, members of the National Woman's Party took their boldness and frustration to the White House, and picketed. Ninety-seven suffragists were arrested and jailed. To show their contempt and defiance, they went on a hunger strike, and had to be force-fed.

That same year, women in Arkansas, Ohio, Indiana, Rhode Island, North Dakota, Nebraska, Michigan, and New York won the right to vote.

1918 saw the women of Austria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Scotland, and Wales getting the vote, as the House of Representatives passed a resolution in favor of a woman suffrage amendment. It was defeated in the Senate.

Like a wheel rolling down a hill, in 1919 the women of Azerbaijan Republic, Belgium, British East Africa, Holland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Rhodesia, and Sweden were enfranchised.

And *finally*, in that same year, the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, granting at long last the vote to women, was adopted by a joint resolution of Congress and sent to the states for ratification. (25) *The wording for the amendment was exactly the same as what had been written by Stanton and Anthony some forty-five years before.* (26)

The amendment had been submitted to, and rejected by, Congress, for forty-five consecutive years. Submitted and rejected, submitted and rejected, while first the western territories, then some of the western states, then more of the western states, then one country, and then another, granted the vote to women. As this most basic of rights was at long last being granted to women first here, then there, then here and there, the Congress of what claimed to be the most progressive country in the world still arrogantly defied reason and righteousness to nearly half of its citizens. By the time they could no longer hold back the sea of women demanding the vote, the tide had already changed the minds of good men in seventeen states and twenty countries.

But the amendment still needed ratification by thirty-six states. By the summer of 1920 thirty-five had ratified, leaving Tennessee the one state which would make or break this amendment. Victory for the Suffragists came swiftly in the senate, but what would happen in the house?

On August 18th, the day the deciding votes would be cast, roses filled the house chamber. Yellow was for suffrage, red for those opposed. The opposition moved to table the amendment, but was defeated. The tension mounted. As the role was called and the votes were cast one by one, the amendment needed only one more vote. No one knew where it might come from, or if it would come at all.

Harry Burn, at just twenty-four, was the youngest man in the legislature. He came into the chamber with a red rose in his lapel: opposed. But young Harry Burn, from McKinn County, came into the chamber with something else as well—a folded note in his pocket, from his mother:

Dear Son...

Vote for suffrage and don't keep them in doubt. I notice some of the speeches against. They were very bitter. I have been watching to see where you stood, but have not seen anything yet.

Don't forget to be a good boy...

With lots of love,  
Mama

When the roll call reached Harry with the red rose in his lapel, he voted to ratify. Cheers exploded from the suffragists, who had been holding their breaths in the balcony. Seventy-two years of frustration and struggle had ended!

When asked to explain his vote later, Harry Burn only said, "I know that a mother's advice is always safest for a boy to follow." (27)

Imagine the suspense of that day, that moment, in that rose-filled room, as those that were there in the flesh waited for their answer. The very air in the room must have been vibrating with their hopes, the possibilities, of what that day would decide. I imagine the presence of more than just hopes and dreams in that room that day. I imagine the presence of Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and all the other good and dedicated women who had worked so hard and waited so long to taste the sweet fruit of their long labors, *finally!*

But wait! Even after Harry Burn's historic vote, those opposed to suffrage still managed to delay ratification with dirty tricks, like fleeing the state to avoid a quorum, while their associates held massive rallies to try to persuade the pro-suffrage legislators to change their minds. Finally, after another eight days, Tennessee reaffirmed its vote for ratification, and the Nineteenth Amendment was officially added to the Constitution on August 26th, 1920. (28)

On November 2nd, 1920, more than eight million American women went to the polls to vote. (29)

The impact that suffrage has had on this country cannot be overstated. Certainly suffrage has had a huge impact on the dynamics of politics and policy-making in this country. That women could finally begin to steer their own ships, so to speak, to advance feminine interests, themselves, without having to rely on men to "take care of things," gave them a bit of the power that men had, for centuries, kept carefully to themselves.

Many men, for their part, did not want to see the balance of power shift, even though they must have realized that it was only a matter of time.

They tried to keep the status quo of slavery in place for as long as possible, because it suited them. Likewise, the concept of *women as equals* was not very appealing to the vast majority of men. The litany of complaints from women regarding their own lack of standing had to be repeated many times before the logic of what they were saying began to make any sense to many men.

When it became apparent that women would someday vote and have equal citizenship, the majority of men were determined to resist the changes that were sure to come, just as men in the South resisted the changes there.

That many ministers openly opposed and preached against both emancipation and suffrage only served to give a sense of righteousness to unjust systems, and slow the progress made against them.

For these reasons, there were those that truly believed that suffrage was the beginning of the end of the proper order of things. There are those even today that feel that very same way. Many men, and some women, honestly thought that women were not capable of voting intelligently.

On February 14th, 1920, NAWSA became the League of Women Voters, with Carrie Chapman Catt as its president. From the start, the League has been a politically active, though non-partisan, organization, which lobbies for reforms of all kinds, and works to enfranchise citizens by streamlining voter registration. Their current and future goal is passage of comprehensive campaign finance reform. The League takes positions on politics, social policies, civil rights, environmental issues, and international relations. (30)

From the time that women cast their first votes, they took the hard-won right very seriously. Women soon became as interested in politics as men, and before long they were taking over the polling stations.

These days, more women register and more women vote than men. I don't know if this is because it was withheld from them so long or due to some other factor unrelated to the long struggle for suffrage, but the statistics are consistent in every state, and some of the margins are quite striking. In the 1996 Election, for instance, 61.6% of registered women voted, versus 55.2% of registered men. This statistic is overall—there were wide variations within the states. It seems that women and men in the Southern states care much less about voting than much of the rest of the nation, though even in these southern states, women out-vote men. The states with the highest percentages of women voting were Minnesota, with 72.9% (8% above the men there,) Montana, with 71.5%, and Maine, with 70.2% (31) According to the Center for the American Woman and Politics, in every presidential election since 1980, the

proportion of eligible women who voted has exceeded the proportion of eligible men. The number of women voters has exceeded the number of male voters in presidential elections since 1964, when records on gender voting were first compiled. In 1996, 56.1 million women voted, versus 48.9 million men. (32)

If more women registered and voted, this country could be vastly different, and much improved, from what it is today. I think it's a shame that more women don't bother to vote, especially given the struggle and sacrifice of so many women who dedicated their lives to suffrage. Of course, given that most of today's women know almost nothing of suffrage's story, I can hardly blame them. Perhaps if Suffrage were a required course for college freshmen (and freshmen,) more women (and men) would be inspired to vote.

There are differences, too, in *how* women vote. Women are much more likely to vote Democrat than Republican, sometimes by as much as twelve percentage points (33) This "Gender Gap," with women tending to vote Democrat, also has dramatic implications for the direction that this country might go, if more women were to vote and lead it in its direction.

An example: A few days after my LAST (keyword) husband and I were married, as we were driving into town, he casually but cautiously told me that he was a *Republican*. "WHAT?" I squeaked. "You're kidding. Tell me you're kidding." "No," he said. "It's true." *Then the attempt to justify it.* "I didn't tell you before because I knew you'd never marry me if you knew. And besides, I used to be a Democrat. They used to say that if you weren't a Democrat, you didn't have a heart. Now they say that if you're not a Republican, you don't have a brain." "Oh, really," I replied, smiling sweetly. "Well, my brain tells me that if I had to make a choice between being remembered for having a heart or a brain, I'd choose a heart."

Just imagine what a difference a multitude more of smart women with hearts could make in this country, if they voted. I am not a registered Democrat, or member of any party, but I have seen the voting records of both Democrats and Republicans on issues concerning women, children, old people, and animals, and I see many Republicans as neither kind nor smart.

Did suffrage change women, and the proper order of things? Is suffrage in any way responsible for any of the serious social problems we see in our society today? And regardless of what the causes may be, are there solutions that women, as voters, can participate in, to repair some of the damage that has been done?

The problem, as I see it, is not that women were finally able to make their own decisions and have a say in the making of laws, and which people would govern them. That they were finally granted full citizenship in the democracy

where equality was supposed to have been the very foundation upon which this democracy was built, is not the problem.

The problem is that women, and men of color, were ever denied it in the first place. That both men of color and women were eventually enfranchised is a triumph. Freedom that ought to be everyone's birthright, but often isn't, must be won, if a person is to attain all that is possible for him or her to attain. And there is no doubt that freedom fought for and won after hard battles, be they with words or swords, is held more dearly. But if freedom, hard-won after a long battle, is held so dearly, so too is bitterness and resentment for the former enemy or oppressor. The human mind harbors a strong memory for history, and commemorates each humiliation and injustice. Can anyone *really* "forgive and forget?"

Consider race relations in this country today. The Emancipation Proclamation may have freed the slaves, but it could not free the minds or erase the memories of either the former slaves or their former masters. All our troubles today between the races grow from seeds planted long ago. So it is too, with attitudes and rivalries between the sexes.

In a very real way, the issue of suffrage made enemies of men and women.

I blame the sexual revolution and the modern "Women's Liberation" movement of the sixties and seventies for intensifying the mistrust and resentment between the sexes. Too often women were led to believe that to "make it" in a man's world a woman must take on the traits of men, and leave her femininity outside the office door. Women were encouraged to make a career outside the home their first priority. Climbing to the top of that career, stepping on as many toes as necessary along the way, and putting in as many extra hours as any man who was climbing beside her was, became common. Family life was sure to suffer, but women were getting the message from all around them that families came second. Women's liberation came first.

Suddenly, "housewife" became a dirty word; a synonym for "lazy," "unenlightened," and "incompetent." Women were told that unless they were fulfilled themselves, they would have nothing to offer a family. Being fulfilled meant working outside the home, competing with men, and winning. Raising sweet, generous, happy children no longer counted for much. Daycare could do that, except that it couldn't. Families began to shatter, and the next generation of children, both boys and girls, was taught that there were no differences between them except for the physical ones, and girls should act like boys and women should act like men.

We have now a society of men who feel threatened by women and women who don't know how to trust men. The competition between the sexes is fierce, with both sides thinking "me first."

Is it any wonder that so many of our young people are angry, selfish and violent?

This is not what the early suffragists had in mind.

Somewhere along the way, femininity got dragged through the mud. Women were given the mistaken idea that in order to live as an equal in a man's world, a woman should prepare herself to play by a man's rules. This concept was all wrong.

It was the rules that were all wrong, not the women. The sexual revolution of the sixties and the women's lib movement of the seventies should have demanded that the rules be changed, not the women. People today, of both sexes, are feeling the strain of living by skewed rules, and, as always, it's the children who suffer the most.

This is not what the early suffragists had in mind. They envisioned a world where a woman could receive the same quality education as a man, could be appreciated as having as much intelligence as a man. They saw women as capable of becoming professionals if they so desired; they saw women as judges, and senators, and representatives. What they didn't see was that women would be made to think that to accomplish all this, it would be necessary to bury their femininity, and play by the same old, tired rules.

Men and women need to work together to change the rules, so that both men and women can honor each other's strengths and weaknesses and families can regain their place at the top of the list of priorities.

Women need to receive the same rate of pay for the same job. According to MSNBC's Weekend Magazine, which aired on December 5th, 1999, women are paid just 74¢ on the dollar for the same job. The justification is often that men need more money because they are supporting families. This is blatant sexist thinking, because women are supporting families too. Both men and women need to demand that employers pay men and women equally for the same job, and that both men and women be allowed to structure their hours in a more flexible manner, to allow them to fulfill the needs of their families. For instance, say a woman is paid dollar for dollar what a man doing the same job is. She works for a company that appreciates the value of a strong family unit, so she can work for six hours a day, rather than eight, or work three eight-hour days, and one six-hour day. Her take-home pay is the same amount of money she had when she was working for forty hours a week at ¼ less. She can give roughly 500 more hours a year to her family. Men should have the same options. The early suffragists never dreamt of shattered families and the sexes at war with one another.

Until we change the rules rather than the roles, we won't attain the dream they had for us, and that's a shame, because their dream was a powerful one.