

March is Women's History Month





Women's Rights Movement

- The beginning of the American women's suffrage movement is often marked by either the 1848 women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, or the earlier 1840 World Antislavery Convention in London.
- The women's suffrage movement took nearly 100 years to win the right to vote.
- On August 1920 the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote throughout the United States.

- Suffragists were ridiculed, patronized, and dismissed by opponents, yet they persisted. Some were assaulted and endured the harsh confines of prison for daring to claim rights equal to men, but they would not be denied.
- Rats ran in and out of the unlit cells. The prisoners held contests to count the number of maggots in their food. And the prison denied the women a most basic human dignity – their privacy. Many began hunger strikes.



American Women



- Carrie Chapman Catt served president of the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and founded the League of Women Voters. In 1916, Catt proposed her “Winning Plan” to campaign simultaneously for suffrage at both the state and federal levels making her a critical factor in the federal victory for women
- Carrie worked as a law clerk after graduating college, then she became a teacher. In 1883 she was appointed Mason City school superintendent, one of the first women to hold such power.

History: Long Island



Starting in 1913 Long Island women played an essential role during the suffrage movement. Depicted in the picture is peace activist, Edna Buckman Kearns from Rockville Centre, who organized a wagon parade known as the “Spirit of 1776” that took place from Long island to NYC.

Suffragist Ida B. Sammis from Huntington NY was one of the first two women to be elected to the New York State Assembly on January 1919.

In 1913 the suffragist "Army of the Hudson" marched 250 miles from New York to Washington in sixteen days, gaining national publicity

World War I 1914-1918



- During WWI American women participated in a wide variety of home front activities such as munitions production and other defense industry work, performing non-traditional jobs usually handled by men.
- The suffragists decided to focus on the nation's needs during the time of crisis. Their efforts in support of the war helped convince President Woodrow Wilson that all of the country's female citizens deserved the right to vote.

Highlight: Elizabeth Guanill (1924-1994)



- Elizabeth is a community leader who moved to Bay Shore, NY from Brooklyn in 1942. Her family was among the first wave of Hispanic families to settle in Suffolk County paving the wave for others to follow her path.
- Elizabeth became a spokeswoman for the people of color while raising her own family. She helped new-comers find real estate agents, get real jobs at large employers, and speaking out in cases of alleged police brutality.



Resources

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/womenshistory/index.htm>

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibitions/women-fight-for-the-vote/about-this-exhibition/#explore-the-exhibit>