

# Women's Right to Vote

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2020 marks the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the Women's Right to Vote. This four-talk set commemorates this significant event in American political history.

**Struggle for Suffrage:** Focus is on the 19<sup>th</sup> century, commencing with the Seneca Falls Convention. Same was followed by a series of National Women's Rights gatherings, convened to not only get the vote, but to raise the stature of women in American society and economy. An important boost for the Suffragette Movement was when it allied itself with the Abolitionists. A partnership that would eventually fracture after the Civil War and prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment giving the Black Man the right to vote. But women will struggle on, continuing their fight for acceptance in an era of profound political, social and economic change.

**Susan B. Anthony:** One of many emerging from the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a champion of Women's Rights. Ms. Anthony was not only a suffragette, but an abolitionist as well. Born into a Quaker family, she will become a relentless campaigner to make her gender the political equal of men. Susan B. Anthony can best be summed up with a motto from the short-lived weekly newspaper published by Anthony and her sidekick Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less."

**Helen Keller: American Socialist:** This remarkable individual is rarely, if ever, associated with the suffragette movement. But her political stance in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century bears scrutiny. Besides her inspiring story of overcoming blindness and deafness to become a world-class lecturer and author, she was an ardent Socialist. She would campaign for Eugene Debs in his runs for the presidency. She was anti-Capitalist and pro-Worker. A member of not only the Socialist Party, but the more radical International Workers of the World or Wobblies. She was anti-War and, a foe of Woodrow Wilson and America's entry into the global conflict in 1917. Helen Keller would support Lenin's revolution in 1917. And she was a prolific writer of the Socialist agenda. Truly one of the most fascinating women in American history.

**The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment:** This talk traces the history of the 19th Amendment, from when first brought forward in 1878, to its rejection by Congress in 1887. Thirty-two years later, June 4,

1919, it was passed by Congress followed by its ratification on August 18, 1920. Talk will include an analysis of the effect of the Great War on the women's political agenda.