

SISTERS for SUFFRAGE

HOW UTAH

WOMEN WON THE VOTE







"The sure foundations
of the suffrage cause were
deeply and permanently laid on the 17th of March, 1842."

—SARAH M. KIMBALL



CHURCH HISTORY MUSEUM

This book is based on an exhibition at the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City titled *"Sisters for Suffrage: How Utah Women Won the Vote,"* on display from November 2019 to January 2021.

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Front cover image: Salt Lake City resident Lovern Robertson (fourth from the left) participated in a picket line in Washington, D.C., on November 10, 1917 (Courtesy Records of the National Woman's Party, Library of Congress)





Image courtesy of National Woman's Party

By **Tiffany T. Bowles**
and **Alan L. Morrell**

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Introduction

Latter-day Saint communities in present-day Utah were settled by pioneers—people who blazed trails across the United States in search of religious freedom. Their pioneering spirit carried over into politics. Having organized the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo in March 1842, Latter-day Saint women were accustomed to civic participation and action. Utah was the second territory in the United States to grant suffrage to its female populace, and on February 14, 1870, Utah women became the first to vote in a United States election under an equal suffrage law.

When the federal government rescinded Utah's female suffrage in 1887, the Relief Society provided a ready-made framework for distributing information and initiating action. Latter-day Saint women worked with national suffragists to see their right to vote restored. When Utah became the 45th state on January 4, 1896, suffrage was included in the state constitution. Twenty-four years before women throughout the country would gain voting rights, Utah's women had won the vote twice!



This story includes some unusual words:

suf•frag / 'səfrij /: The right to vote in political elections

suf•frag•ist / 'səfriɹɪst /: A person advocating the extension of suffrage, especially to women

suf•frag•ette / ,səfri'jet /: A woman seeking the right to vote through organized protest

fran•chise / 'fran,CHɪz /: The right to vote

en•fran•chise•ment / in'fran,CHɪzmənt,en,fran,CHɪzmənt /: The giving of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote

dis•en•fran•chise•ment / disin'fran(t)SHɪzmənt /: The state of being deprived of a right or privilege, especially the right to vote

We hope that you will be inspired by the stories of these forward-thinking Latter-day Saint women and the men who supported their cause. Whether by voting or volunteering, we can carry on their legacy of taking action for good in our homes, communities, and countries.

Turning the Key

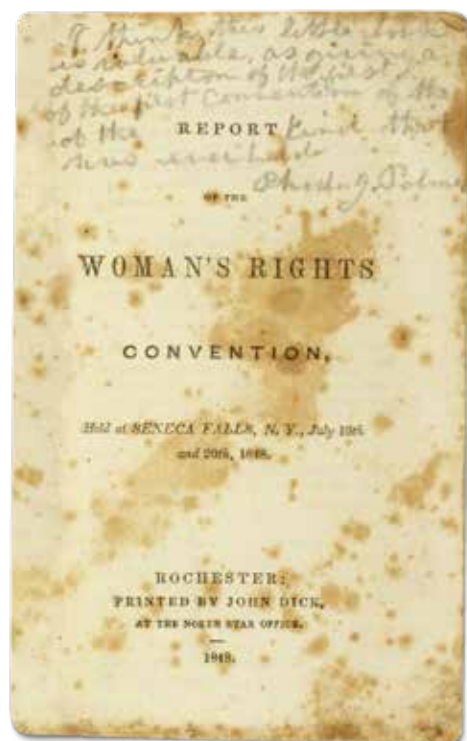
“The sure foundations of the suffrage cause were deeply and permanently laid on the 17th of March, 1842.”

—SARAH M. KIMBALL¹

On March 17, 1842, the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo was organized, laying the foundation for what would become one of the oldest and largest women’s societies in the world. With Emma Smith as their president, the intrepid women gathered money and supplies to help build the Nauvoo Temple and assist families in need. Addressing the society, Latter-day Saint Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “I now turn the key to you in the name of God and this Society shall rejoice and

knowledge and intelligence shall flow down from this time—*this is the beginning of better days.*”²

Latter-day Saints saw this as the beginning of better days, not just for women in Nauvoo, Illinois, but for women throughout the country. Just six years later, in July 1848, the first woman’s rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, beginning a 72-year campaign for woman suffrage.



Hiram and Sarah Kimball Home

Nauvoo, Illinois

Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball was born in Phelps, New York, just 14 miles from Seneca Falls—the birthplace of the woman suffrage movement. The idea for the Relief Society originated at her home in Nauvoo, Illinois, where women gathered to sew shirts for the men working to build the Nauvoo Temple.

Report of the Woman's Rights Convention held at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19 and 20, 1848

Courtesy of Library of Congress

Industry *and* Self-Sufficiency

Amid social turmoil in Nauvoo, the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo held its last meeting on March 16, 1844. In June the Prophet Joseph Smith was killed, and by 1845 the society had been officially disbanded. But women continued to help each other through the difficult years ahead as the Latter-day Saints were forced to leave Illinois. After finding sanctuary in the desert valleys of present-day Utah, Latter-day Saint women again began to organize.

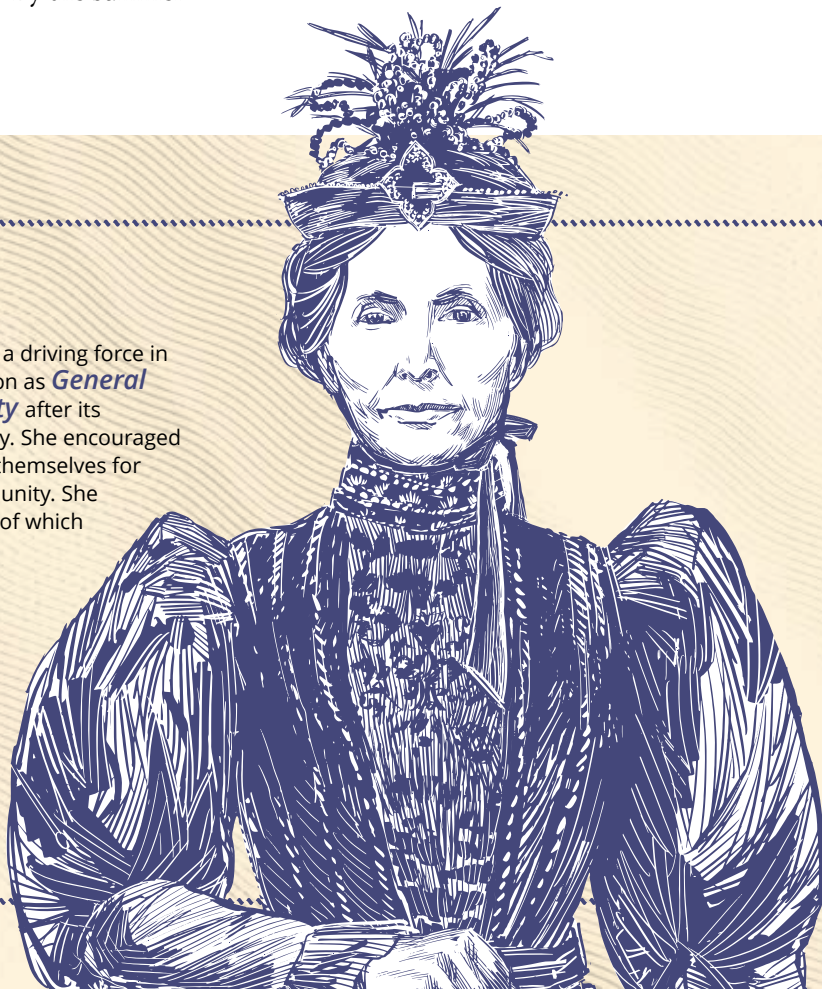
On February 9, 1854, a group of 17 women gathered in Salt Lake City and organized themselves for the purpose of “making clothing for Indian women and children.”³ By the summer

of 1854, Joseph Smith’s successor, Brigham Young, was encouraging women to meet in their own wards, although Relief Society activities were interrupted by the Utah War a few years later. The Relief Society was officially reinstated on a Churchwide level in 1867. Eliza R. Snow, the key leader in the reestablishment of the Relief Society, declared, *“United effort will accomplish incalculably more than can be accomplished by the most effective individual energies.”*⁴

Home industry was emphasized among the Latter-day Saints, and Relief Society sisters proved themselves to be talented and capable contributors to the self-sufficient Utah society.

Eliza R. Snow

Eliza Roxcy Snow (1804–1887) was a driving force in female advancement in her position as *General President of the Relief Society* after its reorganization in the Utah Territory. She encouraged Latter-day Saint women to better themselves for the good of the Church and community. She composed over 500 poems, some of which became Latter-day Saint hymns.





Photograph by George Edward Anderson, 1895

Silk Industry

In 1855 Brigham Young imported mulberry seeds and later silkworm eggs from France. Relief Society sisters were tasked with promoting sericulture throughout the territory. With the establishment of the Deseret Silk Association in 1876, women received instruction on growing and cultivating mulberry trees, raising silkworms, and producing silk.

Silkworm Cocoons
Louise G. Wintch, circa 1890s





Zina Young

Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Young (1821–1901) was the third General President of the Relief Society. Her husband Brigham Young asked her to oversee a cocoonery, which she did stoically, despite her fear of silkworms. She was president of the Deseret Silk Association and helped establish the Deseret Hospital.

Beaded Bag and Dress

Owned by Zina Young





Sarah M. Kimball

Sarah Melissa Granger Kimball (1818–1898) served as president of the Salt Lake Fifteenth Ward Relief Society for 41 years. She oversaw construction of the first Relief Society hall and of a grain storage facility. She attended several national suffrage conventions and was president of the Woman Suffrage Association of Utah for three years.

Relief Society Halls

Enterprising Relief Society sisters coordinated the construction of halls where they could hold meetings and sell handmade goods. Profits were used to help the needy and pay for public improvements, including the construction of granaries.



Salt Lake City Fifteenth Ward Relief Society Hall

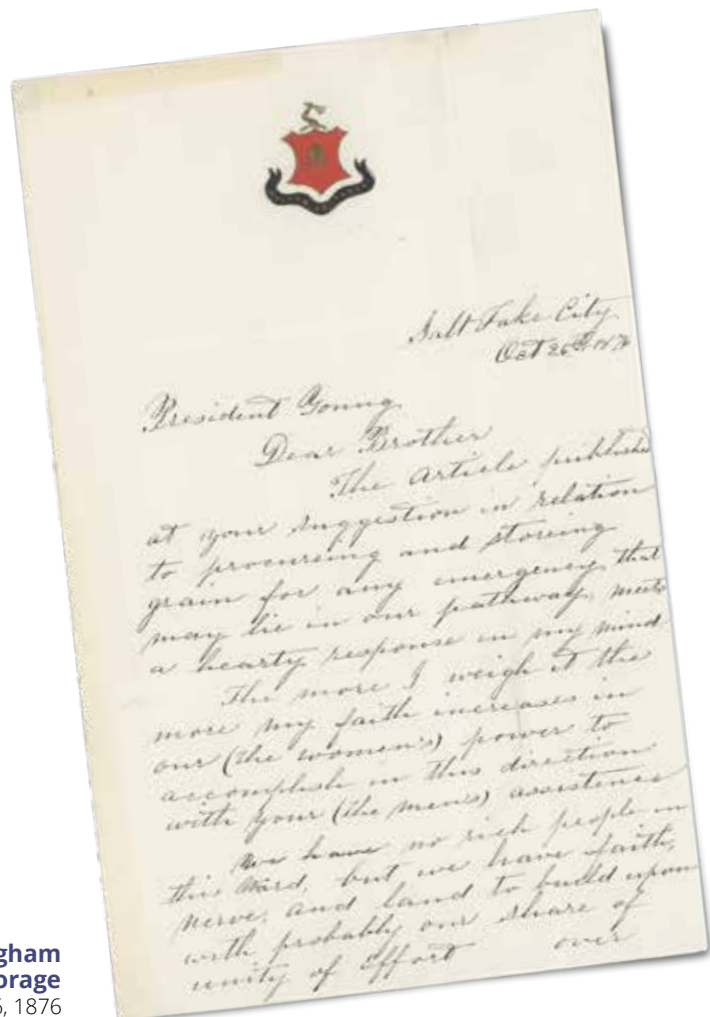


Salt Lake Fifteenth Ward Relief Society
1887



Sandstone Lintel Stone

This stone spanned the doorway of the Salt Lake Fifteenth Ward Relief Society granary, built in 1877 and located behind the Fifteenth Ward Cooperative Store at 340 West First South (now 100 South) in Salt Lake City.⁵



Letter from Sarah Kimball to Brigham Young regarding Grain Storage
October 26, 1876



Deseret Hospital Board of Directors
1882

Deseret Hospital

Latter-day Saint women were encouraged to receive an education, and several traveled east to receive medical training. On July 17, 1882, the Deseret Hospital opened in Salt Lake City, primarily funded by the Relief Society. Most of the staff were women.



Romania Pratt

Dr. Esther Romania Salina Bunnell Pratt Penrose (1839–1932) graduated from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1877, becoming the **first Latter-day Saint woman to receive a medical degree**. She was an eye and ear surgeon at the Deseret Hospital.



Deseret Hospital, circa 1885

Ellis Shipp

Dr. Ellis Reynolds Shipp (1847–1939) was one of Utah's first female doctors. She studied at the University of Deseret, the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, and the University of Michigan. She founded the School of Nursing and Obstetrics in Salt Lake City and served on the Deseret Hospital board. During her career she delivered more than 5,000 babies!



Medical Bag

This medical bag belonged to Dr. Mary Helen Barker Bates (1845–1924), who opened an obstetrics school for women in Salt Lake City.

Polygamy *and* Politics

Despite the success of blossoming communities in the Utah Territory, the practice of plural marriage attracted attention from the national government, even though many of the Latter-day Saints did not live the principle.⁶ In 1856 national politicians labeled slavery and polygamy as the “twin relics of barbarism,” and in 1862 Congress passed the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, which prohibited marriage to more than one person.⁷ But with the nation embroiled in the Civil War, this legislation was never enforced.

In 1869 Representative George W. Julian of Indiana proposed a bill “to discourage polygamy in Utah by granting the right of suffrage to the

women of that territory,” believing that women would vote off the oppressive chains of polygamy. Church leaders supported suffrage and were confident that, if given the right to vote, Utah women would not vote to end plural marriage.

Indeed, the Latter-day Saint women of Utah did not denounce polygamy but instead publicly spoke in support of plural marriage. They held a series of “indignation” meetings to demand their right to religious freedom and to protest federal antipolygamy laws.

The Latter-day Saint women represented themselves to the nation as decisive, strong, and free, committed to their religious beliefs. A reporter from the New York Herald wrote of speeches he heard in Salt Lake City, concluding, “In logic, and in rhetoric, the so-called degraded ladies of Mormondom are quite equal to the Women’s Rights women of the East.”⁸

Bathsheba Smith

At a “ladies mass meeting” on January 6, 1870, Bathsheba Wilson Bigler Smith (1822–1910) boldly declared, “We demand of the Gov the right of Franchise.”⁹ She was later the fourth General President of the Relief Society and served as a member of the Deseret Hospital Board of Directors.



Fichu

Worn by Bathsheba W. Smith,
circa late 19th century



First to Vote

As if in response to the Latter-day Saint women's gallant defense of their rights as citizens, the Utah territorial legislature passed an act giving the vote to women on February 10, 1870.

Two days later, the act was signed by Acting Governor S. A. Mann, making Utah the second territory to enfranchise women. Although Wyoming Territory had passed their suffrage legislation several weeks before Utah, the next Wyoming elections would not be held until September. Utah's municipal election was just two days away.

*“It is our duty to vote, sisters[;]
let no trifling thing keep you at home.”*

—ELIZA R. SNOW ¹⁰

On February 14, 1870, several women voted in the Salt Lake City municipal election, becoming the first women to legally cast a vote in a United States election under an equal suffrage law.

Sarah M. Kimball told her Fifteenth Ward sisters “that she had waited patiently a long time, and now that we were granted the right of suffrage, she would openly declare herself a woman's rights woman.”¹¹ In August, nearly 2,000 Utah women exercised their right to vote in the Utah territorial election.



Seraph Young

Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society

Seraph Cedenia Young Ford (1846–1938), Brigham Young's grandniece, was the first woman known to cast a ballot in the February 14, 1870, municipal election, making her the first woman with equal suffrage rights to legally vote in the United States.



City Hall (Council Hall)

Circa 1870s

Utah women cast their votes at City Hall in Salt Lake City, now called Council Hall.

Ballot Box

Circa 1860s

Utah women would have cast votes using a ballot box like this one used in territorial elections for the town of Lewiston, Utah, in the decades prior to woman suffrage.

An act in relation to Suffrage

An act in relation to Suffrage.

Sec 1 Be it enacted by the governor and Legislative assembly of the Territory of Utah: That ~~all~~^{male} citizens of the United States over the ~~age of eighteen years~~^{age of 18 years} ~~within male and female~~^{21 years} who have actually resided in the precinct one year next preceding any election, shall be entitled to vote for Territorial, County, precinct and Municipal officers in the precinct where they reside.

Sec 2 Be it further enacted, that so much of an act, entitled, "An act prescribing certain qualifications necessary to enable a person to be eligible to hold office, vote or serve as a juror approved Jan 21st 1889" as conflicts with this act is hereby repealed -

Woman Suffrage Act
1870

This document captures an important moment in the suffrage movement. In red ink are written the words "First sketch of a bill on Ladies Suffrage in Utah." The core message is clear:

"all citizens...over the age of 18 years and female...shall be entitled to vote."

George S. Bowen Letter to Brigham Young

June 10, 1871

George S. Bowen (1829–1905) was a prominent Chicago businessman. His letter to Governor Brigham Young introduced Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, who would be visiting Salt Lake City to see how Utah's suffrage experiment was progressing.

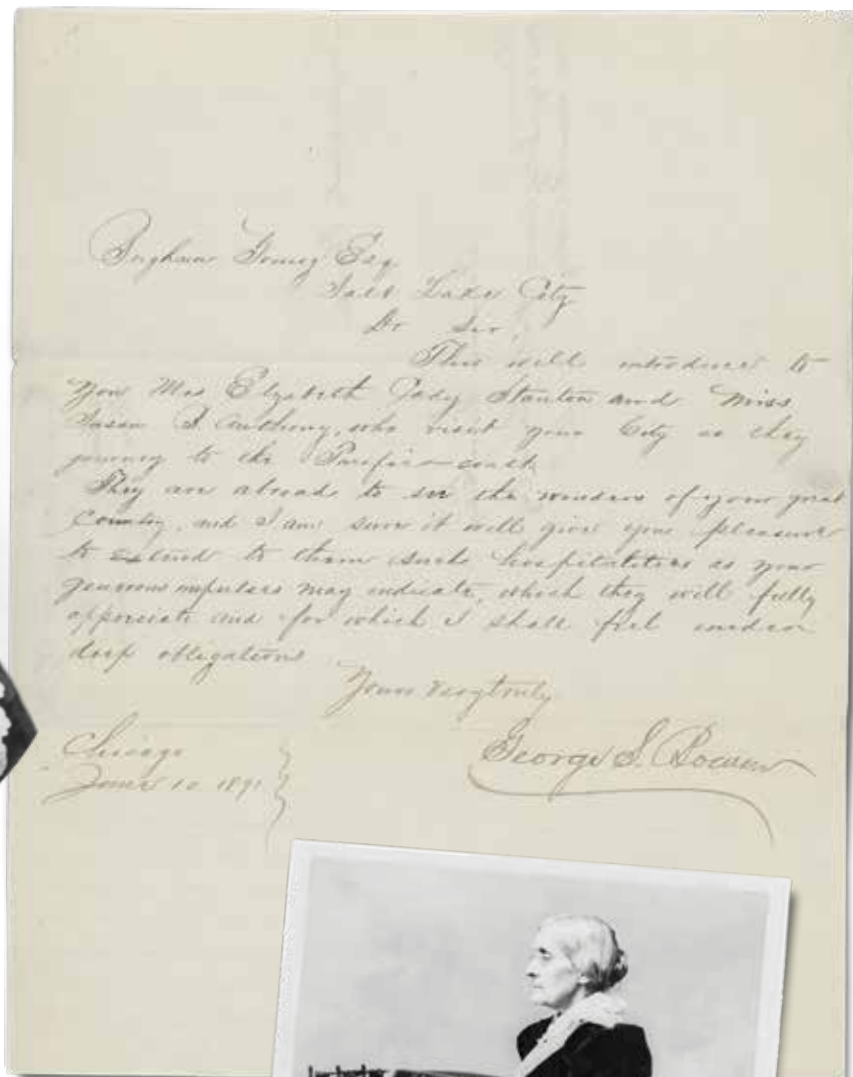


Elizabeth Cady Stanton

1854

Courtesy of Library of Congress

When suffragists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton visited Utah in 1871, they addressed a gathering of Latter-day Saint women, speaking against polygamy and admonishing the women to focus more on "quality rather than quantity" of offspring.¹² The audience considered their visitors' rhetoric to be extreme. But in later years, both women worked closely with Latter-day Saint suffragists.



Susan B. Anthony

Circa 1870

Courtesy of Library of Congress

Disenfranchisement

Because Latter-day Saint women did not use their newly won civic freedom to abolish polygamy, national lawmakers and Utah's growing non-Latter-day Saint population feared that granting suffrage to Utah women had merely strengthened the political reach of the Church. Outside politicians immediately began drafting legislation to disenfranchise the new voters. One newspaper concluded that "the surest way to reform Mormonism is to repeal the law allowing woman suffrage in this Territory."¹³

The 1882 Edmunds Act made polygamy a misdemeanor and disqualified polygamous men and women from voting or holding office. The 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act took antipolygamy legislation a step further, disincorporating the Church and confiscating its resources. The new law also disenfranchised all Utah women—regardless of whether they practiced plural marriage.

Some antipolygamists were happy to give up their voting rights if it led to the eradication of plural marriage. Ladies' clubs organized and voiced their support for antipolygamy legislation. But other Utah women and national suffrage leaders saw this as a setback to the suffrage movement.

Antipolygamy Autograph Quilt 1882

The Women's Home Missionary Society was a Methodist organization that trained teachers and nurses. Strongly against polygamy, members of the society in Ogden, Utah, supported the 1882 Edmunds Act. To show their gratitude for the new law, the society members gathered signatures from across the country and assembled this quilt for the bill's sponsor, Vermont senator George F. Edmonds.





George Franklin Edmunds

(1828–1919)

Edmunds was a Republican senator from Vermont. He opposed polygamy and authored the 1882 Edmunds Act. He was a cosponsor of the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act.



John Randolph Tucker

(1823–1897)

Tucker was a Democrat congressional representative from Virginia and cosponsor of the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act.



Belva Ann Bennett Lockwood

(1830–1917)

In the wake of disenfranchisement, Utah women found an outspoken advocate in Lockwood, one of the first female lawyers in the United States. On several occasions she drew national criticism for speaking in defense of the Latter-day Saints.

Woman Suffrage Association of Utah

In the aftermath of territory-wide female disenfranchisement, many Utah women—both Latter-day Saint and not—united their efforts to regain the right to vote despite plural marriage still being a polarizing factor. When the Woman Suffrage Association of Utah was organized in January 1889, polygamous Latter-day Saint women conceded that plural wives would not hold office within the new association. Latter-day Saint women who were not polygamous were elected to top positions. Branches of the WSAU were established throughout the territory.

After the 1890 Manifesto announced the beginning of the end of the Latter-day Saints' practice of plural marriage, tensions between Church members and nonmember suffragists eased. Women throughout the territory were encouraged to educate themselves about political and civic matters through the Woman Suffrage Association of Utah and in Relief Societies.



Embossing Seal

Circa 1889–1895

The Woman Suffrage Association of Utah was established in January 1889. This embossing seal was likely used to mark official association documents. The beehive was a popular 19th-century symbol for Utah, representing industry, hard work, and community.



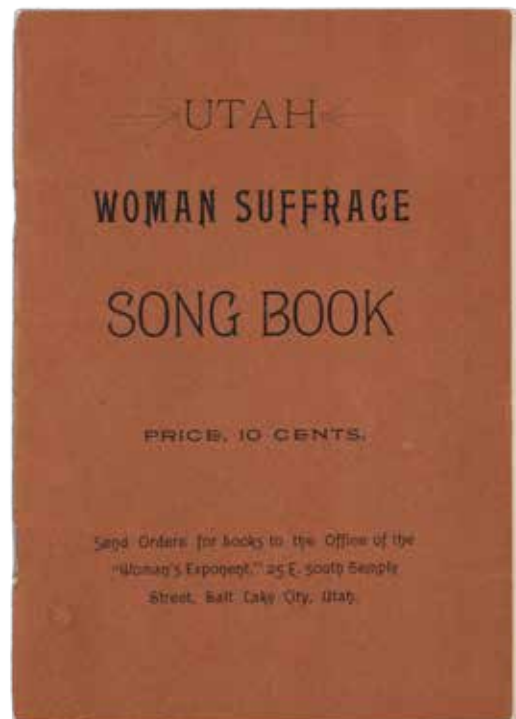
Salt Lake County Woman Suffrage Association Membership Ticket

Bathsheba W. Smith, 1891

Utah Woman Suffrage Song Book

Office of the Woman's Exponent, 1891

This songbook featured lyrics written by Latter-day Saint women set to traditional tunes. Its songs were sung at suffrage meetings and rallies throughout the territory.



Emmeline B. Wells

Emmeline Blanche Woodward Harris Whitney Wells (1828–1921) represented Utah at many national suffrage meetings. She edited the *Woman's Exponent* for 37 years and became friends with national suffragist Susan B. Anthony. She was instrumental in founding the Woman Suffrage Association of Utah and served as the fifth General Relief Society President.



Emmeline B. Wells, circa 1879



***Woman's Exponent*, Volume 1**

June 1, 1872

The *Woman's Exponent* newspaper was the first publication for Latter-day Saint women and served as a vehicle for spreading information. The first editor was Lula Green Richards. Emmeline B. Wells served as editor from 1877 until the paper closed in 1914.



Daughters of the Revolution Delegate Pin

Owned by Emmeline B. Wells, 1909

The Daughters of the American Revolution organized in Utah in 1897. Since they did not accept polygamists into their society, many Latter-day Saints joined a rival organization: Daughters of the Revolution. In 1909 Emmeline B. Wells represented Utah at the national conference in Boston.



Utah Republican State Convention Delegate Ribbon

1895

Several women attended the 1895 Utah Republican Party state convention, and three were nominated to represent the party on the ticket: Lillie R. Pardee, Emmeline B. Wells, and Emma J. McVicker.

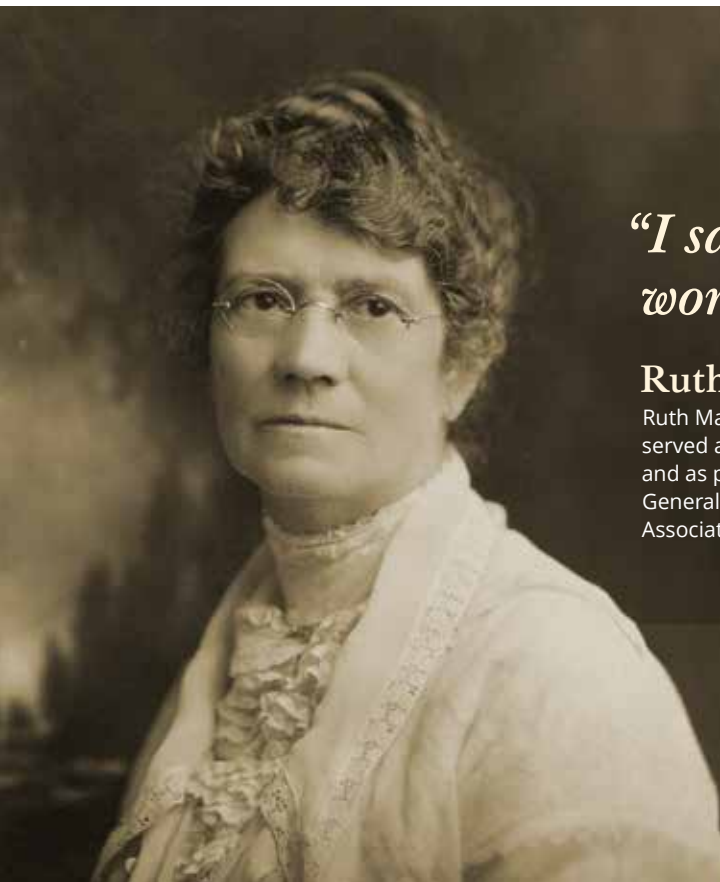
They had to withdraw after the Utah Supreme Court ruled that women could not vote or run in the upcoming election.



*"I say women to the rescue;
women to the front."*¹⁴

Ruth May Fox

Ruth May Fox (1853–1958) was mentored by Emmeline Wells. She served as the treasurer for the Woman Suffrage Association of Utah and as president of the Utah Woman's Press Club. She later became General President of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association (the precursor to the Young Women organization).



On the World Stage

The 1893 Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair, provided Latter-day Saints with an opportunity to share their stories and talents with the world. Held in conjunction with the World's Fair was a week-long convention called the World's Congress of Representative Women. Several Latter-day Saint women participated in the convention, strengthening ties with national allies.



Elmina S. Taylor

Anstis Elmina Shepard Taylor (1830–1904) was the first General President of what is today the **Young Women organization** of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1893 she attended the World's Congress of Representative Women held in concurrence with the World's Fair in Chicago.



Crazy Quilt

Emma Green Bull, 1893
Courtesy of Utah State Historical Society

Emma Green Bull (1828–1855) made this crazy quilt for the 1893 World's Fair. It features embroidered Utah landmarks as well as flora and fauna unique to the western region.



Chicago World's Fair Ticket

1893

Courtesy of Keith Beavers



Utahns at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair



Emily S. Richards

Emily Sophia Tanner Richards (1850–1929) represented Utah at national and international women's meetings. When Susan B. Anthony visited Utah in 1895, Emily and her husband, Franklin, hosted a reception for her at their Salt Lake City home. At the Chicago World's Fair, Emily was the hostess in charge at the Utah building. She also spoke at the World's Congress of Representative Women.



The Great Debate

With statehood on the horizon, delegates met on March 4, 1895, to frame Utah's constitution. The ensuing debate over whether to include suffrage in the new state constitution was surprisingly lengthy, lasting over two months.

FOR SUFFRAGE



FRANKLIN SNYDER RICHARDS (1849–1934) was the husband of suffragist Emily S. Richards. He fought against efforts to disenfranchise Utah women and participated in the 1895 Utah State Constitutional

Convention, speaking in favor of including woman suffrage in the new state constitution. He said, ***"Equal Suffrage will prove the brightest and purest ray of Utah's glorious star."***¹⁵



ORSON FERGUSON WHITNEY (1855–1931) was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During the 1895 Utah State Constitutional Convention,

he made several speeches in favor of including woman suffrage in the state constitution. He said, ***"I regard [woman's voice in government] as one of the great levers by which the Almighty is lifting up this fallen world, lifting it nearer to the throne of its Creator."***¹⁶

AGAINST SUFFRAGE



BRIGHAM HENRY ROBERTS (1857–1933) was a Latter-day Saint historian, writer, politician, and member of the First Council of the Seventy. As the Davis County Democratic delegate to the 1895

Constitutional Convention, he surprised and upset many of his constituents by opposing the inclusion of woman suffrage in the new state constitution, stating, ***"The adoption of woman suffrage is dangerous to the acquiring of statehood."***¹⁷



At age 25, **ANTHONY CANUTE LUND** (1871–1935) was the youngest member of the 1895 Constitutional Convention, where he argued against the inclusion of woman suffrage in the constitution, claiming, ***"Equal***

suffrage would disturb domestic tranquility."¹⁸

He later became a professor of music at Brigham Young University and director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Statehood and Suffrage

With Utah's admission to the United States as the 45th state on January 4, 1896, and having secured female suffrage in the new state constitution, *Utah women had won the right to vote for a second time.*

National suffragists celebrated Utah statehood. There were now three states in the country with equal suffrage.

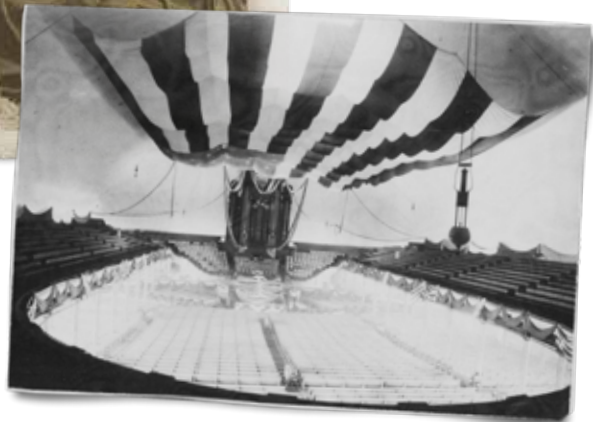


1895 National American Woman Suffrage Association Convention

The May 1895 National American Woman Suffrage Association regional convention was held in Salt Lake City. Among the attendees were national suffragists Susan B. Anthony and Reverend Anna Howard Shaw.

“Hurrah for Utah.”

—SUSAN B. ANTHONY ¹⁹



Salt Lake Tabernacle Decorated for Statehood Celebration

1896

Volunteers cut and sewed the flag that adorned the Salt Lake Tabernacle to celebrate Utah's statehood. It was 74 feet wide and 132 feet long. From 1897 to 1903 it hung once a year on the south wall of the Salt Lake Temple.



"The Awakening"

Courtesy of Library of Congress

In 1896 Utah became the third state in the country with equal suffrage (following Wyoming and Colorado). By 1915, when this cartoon by Henry Mayer was published, women had won the vote in eight additional states, as illustrated by the torch-bearing woman striding from west to east. Mayer's drawing symbolized the "awakening" of the nation's women to the desire for suffrage.



45-Star Flag

Circa 1896–1907

On January 4, 1896, Utah was admitted as the 45th state. The 45-star flag became obsolete with the addition of Oklahoma as the 46th state in 1907.



Pen

Millard County delegate Charles Crane (1843–1921) voted in favor of woman suffrage at the Utah State Constitutional Convention. On May 8, 1895, he used this pen to sign the new state constitution, which was ratified by Utah's citizens in the November territorial election.

UNITED EQUAL SUFFRAGE STATES OF AMERICA



UTAH
1896
THE THIRD
STATE TO
ENTER

THE UNION OF STATES AS THEY OUGHT TO BE



APPLIED FOR

THINK IT OVER

Woman, if granted the right of Equal Suffrage, would not endeavor to pass new laws for the benefit of WOMAN only. She would work and vote with MAN on all legislation.

For references apply to
WYOMING, COLORADO, UTAH and IDAHO.

An ounce of persuasion preceeds a pound of coercion

Suffrage Postcards

Circa 1913

Political Pioneers

Before the 1895 territorial election, several women were nominated to run on the Republican ticket. But the Utah Supreme Court ruled that because women could not vote, they could not run for office, and the women were compelled to withdraw their names.

Yet women achieved a victory in the November election: the proposed Utah State Constitution, which included female suffrage, was adopted by a large majority.

With full suffrage in place for the 1896 state election, more women ran for office, including Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon, who ran as a Democrat and became the first female state senator in the United States.



Combination Bookcase and Secretary Desk

Used by Martha Hughes Cannon, circa 1890s
Courtesy of Arline Brady

Mattie Cannon

Born in Wales, Dr. Martha Maria Hughes Cannon (1857–1932) received degrees from the University of Deseret, the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania, and the National School of Elocution and Oratory. She was the resident physician at the Deseret Hospital. In 1896 she was victorious over her husband, Angus, and other candidates in winning a Utah Senate seat and becoming *the first female state senator in the United States.*



Portrait of Dr. Martha
Hughes Cannon
John Hafen, circa 1896



Autograph Book

Martha Hughes Cannon, 1897
Courtesy of Arline Brady

The senators and employees of Utah's second Senate presented this autograph book to "Senator Mattie H. Cannon" to recognize her achievement of being "the first lady ever elected to the high office of State Senator, in the Great American Union."



Angus Munn Cannon
(1834-1915)

LEGISLATIVE TICKET		
For State Senators—Sixth District.		
[Vote for Five.]		
Angus M. Cannon	Independent Republican, Republican.	6534
John T. Caine	Democrat, People's Party.	8371
Mattie H. Cannon	Democrat, People's Party.	7868
John S. Daveler	Independent Republican, Republican.	6041
Benjamin A. Harbour	Democrat, People's Party.	8429
Ernest G. Rognon	Republican, Independent Republican.	6608
David O. Ridebut Jr.	Democrat, People's Party.	8272
A. V. Taylor	Republican, Independent Republican.	5801
Emmeline B. Wells	Republican, Independent Republican.	4796
George A. Whittaker	Democrat, People's Party.	9068

Sample Ballot

1896

Among the ten candidates running for five open positions in the state senate in 1896 were Martha H. Cannon and her husband, Angus M. Cannon. Martha was among the five who received the most votes, but Angus was not. The couple reported that no marital issues resulted from Martha defeating her husband in the election.

Suffrage for All

Although Utah women had won the vote (twice), women in most states still could not vote in local or federal elections by the time of Utah statehood. Utah's pioneer female voters, along with a new generation of enfranchised women, worked to help women across the country enjoy the right to vote. The national suffrage movement also saw a shift in leadership, as the aging Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony passed the suffrage leadership baton to Carrie Chapman Catt and Anna Howard Shaw.

After repeated rejections in both the United States Senate and House of Representatives, Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment on June 4, 1919. Also known as the "Anthony Amendment," the legislation would grant suffrage to women throughout the country. The amendment then went to the states, requiring ratification by at least 36 states before it could go into effect. On October 3, 1919, Utah became the 17th state to ratify the proposed amendment. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment, which officially became law eight days later. (It took more than 60 years for the rest of the states to ratify the amendment.)

On November 2, 1920, more than eight million women across the United States voted in elections for the first time.



Election Pin

1908

To legally vote for presidential candidates in the United States, women had to live in a state (not a territory) that had passed legislation allowing them to vote. At the time of the 1908 presidential contest between Republican William H. Taft (featured on the pin) and Democrat William Jennings Bryan, women in only four states (Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho) could vote.



Suffragists carried signs representing states where women had the right to vote as they marched in a suffrage hike from New York City to Washington, D.C., in 1913. (Courtesy of Library of Congress)



Salt Lake City resident Lovern Robertson (fourth from the left) participated in a picket line in Washington, D.C., on November 10, 1917. She was arrested later that day and sent to the Occoquan Workhouse, where, on November 14, she endured cruel treatment by prison guards during what suffragists named the "Night of Terror." (Courtesy of Records of the National Woman's Party, Library of Congress)



Pioneer Utah voter Emmeline B. Wells stands at the front of women voter envoys from San Francisco that arrived in Salt Lake City on October 4, 1915. (Courtesy of National Woman's Party)

Suffragists in front of Hotel Utah, October 4, 1915 (Courtesy of National Woman's Party)



Susa Young Gates

Susa Young Gates (1856–1933), a daughter of Brigham Young, was active in various women's organizations, representing Utah at the 1914 International Congress of Women held in Rome, Italy, and the 1920 Woman Suffrage Convention in Chicago, Illinois. She was an avid genealogist and founded magazines for the Young Women and Relief Society organizations.

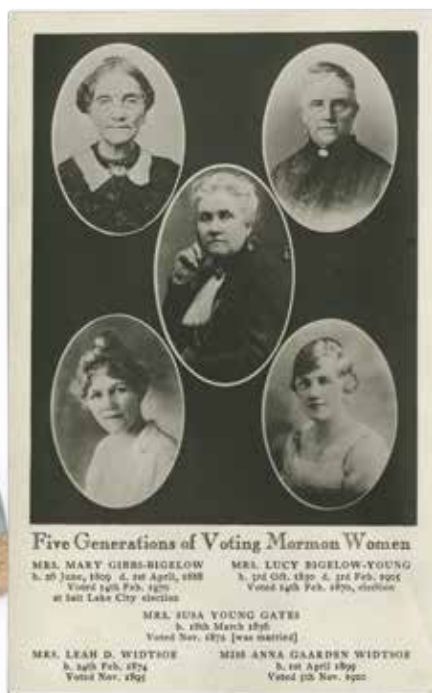


Dress sleeve fragment worn by Susa Young Gates, circa 1870s–1880s



Five Generations of Voting Mormon Women Postcard

Circa 1920



Dress

Worn by Josephine Booth, circa 1910

Josephine Diantha Booth Woodruff (left) (1877–1951) was one of the earliest single female missionaries for the Church. As a 22-year-old missionary, she attended the 1899 convention of the International Council of Women in London, where she met Susan B. Anthony and many other influential women.



Enduring Legacy

In their *History of Woman Suffrage* published in 1887, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton formally acknowledged the role of the Relief Society in the suffrage movement, stating, *“Women in Utah always have been conspicuous in organized work.”*²⁰

Even after the Nineteenth Amendment passed, Latter-day Saint women remained active in national organizations. The Relief Society had a close relationship with the National and International Councils of Women until 1987, when the Relief Society General Presidency shifted focus to the increasing needs of its own internationally expanding organization.

With over seven million members in nearly 200 nations, the Relief Society continues to be a force for good. In 2017 Relief Society General President



Jean B. Bingham addressing the United Nations “Focus on Faith” panel on April 13, 2017

*“When the Prophet Joseph Smith turned
the key for the emancipation of womankind,
it was turned for all the world.”* —GEORGE ALBERT SMITH²¹

Jean B. Bingham spoke on the world stage at a United Nations panel, echoing sentiments from her Relief Society predecessors: “While individually we can do great good, collectively we can accomplish so much more.”²²

Whether by voting or volunteering, Relief Society sisters today carry on the legacy of positive action in homes, communities, and countries throughout the world.

Silk for Susan

One of Susan B. Anthony's most prized possessions was a "beautiful dress pattern of black brocaded silk" from the Utah Silk Commission, given in honor of her 80th birthday. Miss Anthony said, "I had some fine jewels, and pretty things of both silver and gold, but none of them can equal in usefulness that dress made by the hands of women, women too, who are politically free and equal with men."²³



Susan B. Anthony (front row, middle) possibly wearing dress made of Utah silk, 1903 (PF-(bygone1) / Alamy Stock Photo.)



Susan B. Anthony's Dress Made of Utah Silk (Dress in the collection of the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House, Rochester, NY. Image used with permission.)



Banner

1905

The original banner from which this replica was created was made of Utah silk. It celebrated the relationship between the Relief Society and national organizations. The original banner may have been carried in parades or displayed at special events.



The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony, Volume 2

Ida Husted Harper, 1898

Susan B. Anthony's secretary sent these volumes of her biography to the Relief Society with a personal inscription: "To the women who were loyal and helpful to Miss Anthony to the end of her great work."

The 55-Cent Dress

Helen Gygi, circa 1970

From 1968 to 1970, Relief Society General President Belle S. Spafford also served as president of the National Council of Women of the United States. Upon being released from her NCW position, she asked her friend Helen Gygi if she could borrow this dress to wear at the ceremony. Thrifty Sister Gygi had made the dress from fabric remnants, estimating the value of all materials used to be 55 cents.



Belle S. Spafford
wearing the 55-cent dress



Suffrage Timeline

Before national suffrage was achieved in 1920, women in Utah had already won the right to vote—twice! Utah women voted fifty years before many other women in the country, enjoying that right until it was taken away by the national government 17 years later. They won the right to vote for a second time with Utah's statehood in 1896.

On March 17, 1842, the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo was organized at the Red Brick Store in Nauvoo, Illinois.



Utah

▼ MARCH 17
Female Relief
Society organized
in Nauvoo, Illinois

▼ MARCH 16
Last Relief Society
meeting in Nauvoo
held

▼ JULY 24
Latter-day Saint
pioneers reached
Salt Lake Valley

▼ SEPTEMBER 9
Utah Territory
organized

1842

1843

1844

1845

1846

1847

1848

1849

1850

1851

1852

1853

1846–1848
Mexican-American War

Nation
and
World



▲ JULY 19–20
First women's rights convention
held in Seneca Falls, New York
Gado Images / Alamy Stock Photo

Turning the Key 1842-1869



As Utah suffrage was being considered, a cartoon from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (October 2, 1869) questioned whether female suffrage would give Brigham Young and the Church too much political power. *Courtesy of Library of Congress*

JULY 8
Morrill Anti-Bigamy
Act became law

DECEMBER 8
Relief Society
officially reorganized

1856 1857 1858 1859 1860 1861 1862 1863 1864 1866 1867 1868 1869

1861-1865
Civil War

On May 10, 1869, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads joined at Promontory Summit, Utah Territory, completing the first transcontinental railroad across the United States.



MAY 10
Transcontinental Railroad
completed in Utah

DECEMBER 10
Wyoming Territory granted
women the right to vote

First to Vote 1870-1886

▼ JUNE 28-JULY 7
Susan B. Anthony and
Elizabeth Cady Stanton
visited Utah

▼ JANUARY 13
Great Indignation meeting
held in Salt Lake City

▼ FEBRUARY 12
Utah Territory granted
women the right to vote



▼ AUGUST 11
Primary
Association organized

▼ MARCH 23
Edmunds Act
disenfranchised
polygamous men
and women

▼ FEBRUARY 14
Utah women became
the first with equal
suffrage to vote in a
United States election



▼ MAY 27
Young Women
organization founded

▼ AUGUST 1
Around 2,000 women
voted in the Utah
territorial election

▼ JUNE 1
First issue of the
Woman's Exponent
published



▼ MARCH 15
Romania B. Pratt became the
first Latter-day Saint woman
to earn a medical degree



▼ JULY 17
Deseret Hospital
opened

1870 1871 1872 1873 1874 1875 1876 1877 1878 1879 1880 1881 1882

▲ FEBRUARY 3
Fifteenth Amendment
granted all men the right to
vote (regardless of race)

▲ SEPTEMBER 6
Wyoming women became
the next to vote in a United
States election

▲ NOVEMBER 18
Susan B. Anthony arrested
in New York for voting



"The Woman who Dared"

Illustration by Thomas Wust for
The Daily Graphic (June 5, 1873)
Courtesy of Library of Congress

After being arrested for voting in
1872, Susan B. Anthony was brought
to trial in June 1873. She was fined
\$100, which she never paid.

Disenfranchisement 1887-1895



JANUARY 10
Woman Suffrage Association
of Utah founded



MAY 12-15
Susan B. Anthony
and Anna Howard
Shaw visited Utah

MARCH 4-MAY 8
Utah State
Constitutional
Convention held



MAY 15-22
Latter-day Saint women
participated in World
Congress of
Representative Women

MARCH 3
Edmunds-Tucker Act
disenfranchised all
Utah women

OCTOBER 6
Manifesto
announced
intention to end
Latter-day Saint
plural marriage

1883 1884 1885 1886 1887 1888 1889 1890 1891 1892 1893 1894 1895

NOVEMBER 22
Washington Territory
granted women the
right to vote

AUGUST 14
Washington
Territory revoked
female suffrage

FEBRUARY 18
National American
Woman Suffrage
Association created

SEPTEMBER 19
New Zealand
granted women the
right to vote

JULY 10
Wyoming became the
44th state, the first with
equal suffrage for men
and women

NOVEMBER 7
Colorado became
the second state
with equal suffrage



The National American Woman
Suffrage Association, founded in
1890, traced its roots to the 1848
Seneca Falls Convention.

Gado Images / Alamy Stock Photo

Statehood and Suffrage 1896–1920

▼ JANUARY 4
Utah became the
45th state, the third
with equal suffrage

▼ NOVEMBER 3
Dr. Martha Hughes
Cannon elected as
first female state
senator



▼ FEBRUARY 15
Susan B. Anthony
received Utah silk for
her 80th birthday



1896 1897 1898 1899 1900 1901 1902 1903 1904 1905 1906 1907 1908

▲ NOVEMBER 3
Idaho granted
women the
right to vote

▲ APRIL 21–AUGUST 13
Spanish-American
War



▲ OCTOBER 26
Elizabeth Cady Stanton
died at age 86

▲ JUNE 12
Australia granted women
the right to vote



▲ MARCH 13
Susan B. Anthony
died at age 86

▲ JUNE 1
Finland granted
women the right
to vote

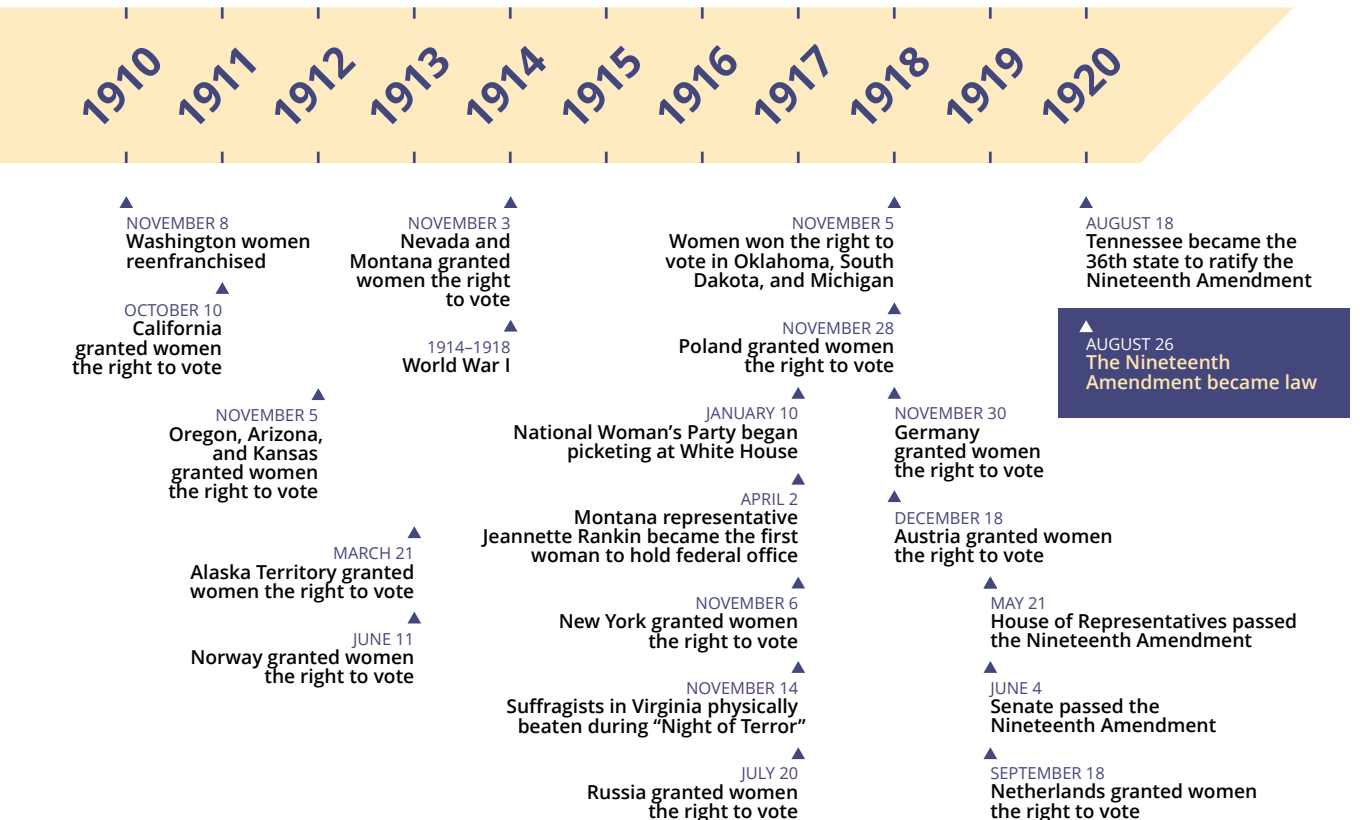


OCTOBER 4
Automobile suffrage envoy
arrived in Salt Lake City



NOVEMBER 10
Utahns Lovern Robertson and
Minnie Quay arrested while
picketing at White House


OCTOBER 3
Utah ratified the
Nineteenth Amendment



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Emmeline B. Wells (third from left)
and other suffragists in front of Hotel Utah
October 4, 1915
Courtesy of National Woman's Party



A group of approximately ten women, dressed in early 20th-century fashion with long white dresses and various styles of hats, are standing in a line on a sidewalk. They are holding a large, rectangular banner that reads: "WE DEMAND AN AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION ENFRANCHISING WOMEN". The banner is white with black text. The women are standing in front of a building with classical architectural features, including columns and a pediment. The scene is captured in a sepia-toned photograph.

**WE DEMAND AN
AMENDMENT
TO THE
U.S. CONSTITUTION
ENFRANCHISING WOMEN**

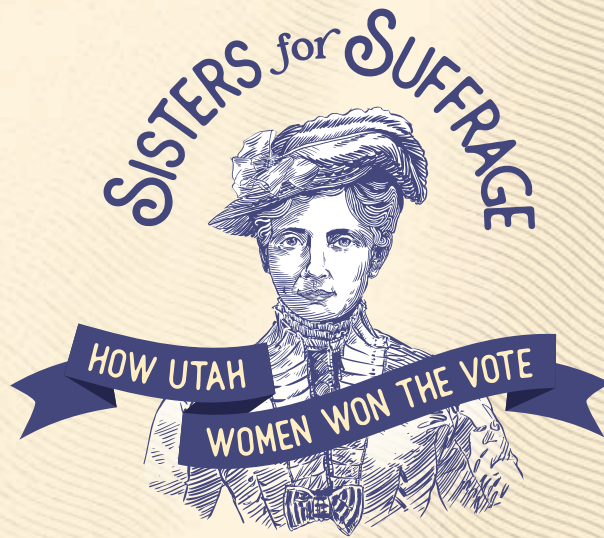
"The story of the struggle
for Woman's suffrage in Utah

is the story of all efforts for the advancement
and betterment of humanity."

—MARTHA HUGHES CANNON







Did you know that before most women in the United States could vote, Utah women had won the right to vote not just once, but twice? At the heart of Utah's unique suffrage story is the Relief Society—a charitable organization founded in 1842. An exhibition at the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City, Utah, *Sisters for Suffrage: How Utah Women Won the Vote*, highlights the pioneering role of the Relief Society in the local and national woman suffrage movements.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

CHURCH HISTORY
MUSEUM

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