



SHE CHANGED THE WORLD

NORTH CAROLINA WOMEN BREAKING BARRIERS



RESOURCE TOOLKIT

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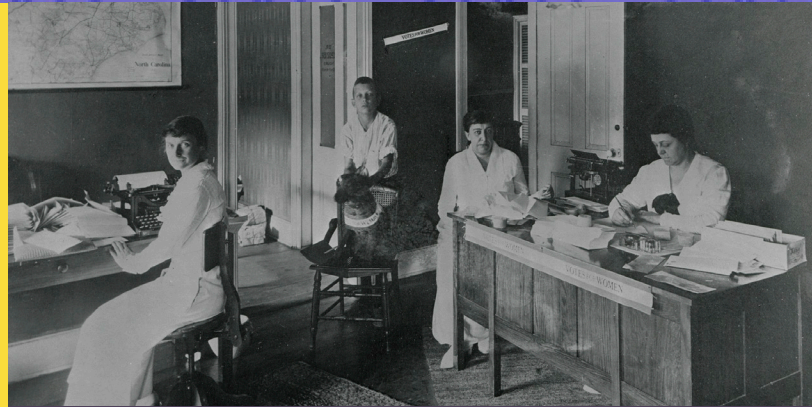
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THE YEAR 2020

marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women's constitutional right to vote. Despite decades of marches, petitions, and passage of the 19th Amendment, it did not grant voting rights for all, specifically women of color. The ongoing fight for equity continues today. While we celebrate the women who led the struggle, we also honor the women who inspired them. Projects and events throughout the United States are ongoing and underway to commemorate this historic milestone.

"She Changed the World: NC Women Breaking Barriers," an initiative by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, celebrates the achievements of North Carolina women and explores the diversity of their experiences and impact on our history.

We invite you to join us by sharing your story with **#SheChangedtheWorld** and **#NCHerstory**.



Office at the N.C. Equal Suffrage Association headquarters, 116 Fayetteville St., Raleigh, N.C., ca. 1910s. L-R: Gertrude Weil; Palmer Jerman (a page) with dog; Sallie Dortch, volunteer; and Cornelia Petty Jerman, chair of the state ratification committee. A "Votes for Women" banner hangs on the desk and around the dog's neck.

Image from the Gertrude Weil Papers, State Archives.

She Changed The World RESOURCES AND TOOLKIT

- I. The 19th Amendment
- II. Suffrage and North Carolina
- III. Resources
- IV. Centennial Activities



SHE CHANGED THE WORLD

I. The 19th Amendment

From 2019-2020, the United States will celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the 19th Amendment and women's constitutional right to vote.

Suffragists began their organized fight for women's suffrage (meaning the "right to vote") in 1848 when they demanded the franchise during the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. For the next 72 years, women leaders lobbied, marched, picketed, and protested for the right to the ballot. The U.S. House of Representatives finally approved the "Susan B. Anthony Amendment," which guaranteed women the right to vote, on May 21, 1919; the U.S. Senate followed two weeks later, and then the 19th Amendment went to the states for ratification. Thirty-six states needed to approve the Amendment for it to become part of the Constitution. On August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th and final state needed to ratify. U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby issued a proclamation declaring the 19th Amendment ratified and part of the U.S. Constitution on August 26, 1920, forever protecting American women's right to vote.

Today, more than 68 million women vote in elections because of the courageous suffragists who never gave up the fight for equality.

II. Suffrage and North Carolina

The women suffrage movement in North Carolina began in 1894 with the formation of the North Carolina Equal Suffrage Association in Asheville. Association president Helen Morris sought a state

amendment extending the vote to women, and Senator J. L. Hyatt of Yancey County introduced a bill to this effect in the 1897 legislative session. The Senate leader, however, reflecting the sentiment of his colleagues, referred it to the Committee on Insane Asylums, where it died. Little was attempted or accomplished during the next 15 years. The state's women suffrage movement lay dormant, as it did in much of the rest of the nation. Office of the North Carolina Equal Suffrage League, 1920. Gertrude Weil is at the far left. Courtesy of North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

The movement revived in late 1913 with Gertrude Weil's formation of the North Carolina Equal Suffrage League in Charlotte. Weil, a Smith College



The Battery Park Hotel, 1 Battle Square, at the corner of O. Henry St., Asheville, N.C. was the site of the second annual convention of the Equal Suffrage Association of N.C. held October 29, 1915. President Barbara Henderson and the other members discussed the growing interest in women's suffrage across the state.

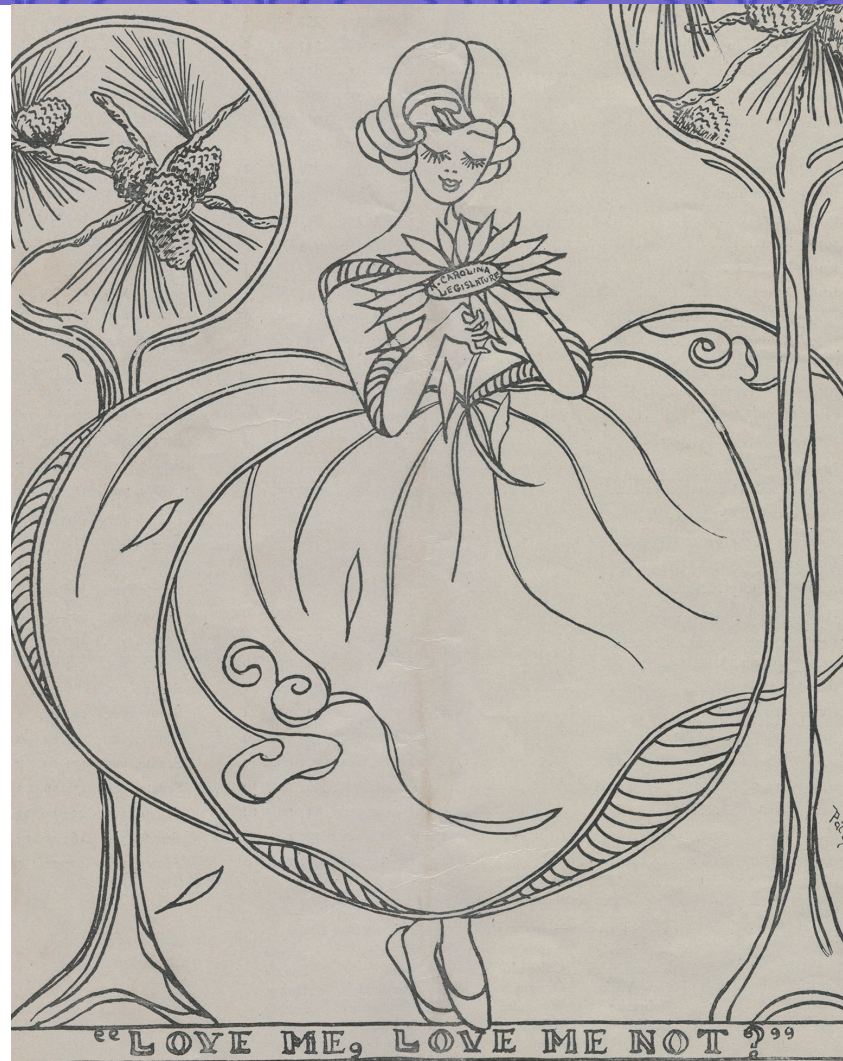
Postcard of Battery Park Hotel in Asheville, 1914, Western Regional Archives.



SHE CHANGED THE WORLD

(Massachusetts) graduate, was the daughter of a German Jewish immigrant who had settled in Goldsboro just before the Civil War. She was one of the South's "new women" who had acquired some postsecondary education, participated in a range of club activities, and enjoyed paid working experiences as the region began to modernize. The Equal Suffrage League helped develop local groups while lobbying legislators and publicizing its cause through pamphlets and speeches. In 1915 Lilian Exum Clement of Asheville started a branch of the Congressional Union, later renamed the National Woman's Party, a more militant group determined to obtain suffrage through a federal amendment. Still, the 1915 legislature voted down all attempts to grant women the vote; representatives from the agricultural counties with the largest African American populations led the opposition. Much of the controversy over women suffrage concerned race: antisuffragists feared that allowing women to vote would increase pressure to reverse laws that prevented African Americans from voting.

As they did elsewhere, suffragists stepped up their efforts in North Carolina after the outbreak of World War I, convinced that women's contribution to the war effort would compel President Woodrow Wilson and Congress to relent. But their activism gained little support in the General Assembly. Legislative initiatives aimed at allowing women to vote in the primaries, the municipal elections, or all elections were defeated as late as 1919. Suffrage activism, however, was more effective on the national stage. On 10 Jan. 1918 the U.S. House of Representatives approved the Nineteenth (or Susan B. Anthony) Amendment-with the affirmative vote of



This cartoon depicts a woman plucking petals from a daisy, a game where one person (usually female) tries to determine whether the object of her affection shares that feeling. She is trying to find out if the "N.C. Legislature" (written on the center of the flower) "loves," (i.e., supports) women's suffrage or not.

Image from *The Woman Citizen* magazine, August 21, 1920, Equal Suffrage Amendment Collection, State Archives.

only one North Carolina representative, Edwin Y. Webb. In the Senate, North Carolinians Furnifold M. Simmons and Lee S. Overman joined the minority opposition in the final tally on 4 June 1919.

Congressional adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment prompted antisuffrage



SHE CHANGED THE WORLD

organization in North Carolina in the summer of 1920, when Mary Hilliard Hinton of Wake County formed a state branch of the Southern Rejection League in Raleigh, assisted by the National Association Opposed to Women's Suffrage. The state's antisuffrage movement derived its strongest support from politicians eager to retain the control they had obtained after Reconstruction; the textile mill industry, which feared the impact of women's votes on child labor issues; and railroad officials, who worried that women would target them in the progressive attack on corruption in big business. Yet the Southern Rejection League in Raleigh was a small group of perhaps only 20 active members, although Raleigh men also organized the States' Rights Defense League at the same time. Moreover, North Carolina can claim the only southern antisuffrage journal, the *State's Defense*, but this too was a last-minute affair, published only four times before the ratification battle ended.

In August 1920 Governor Thomas W. Bickett called a special session of the General Assembly to vote the Nineteenth Amendment up or down. President Wilson sent Bickett a telegram urging ratification, but the governor responded with the hope that Tennessee, then also meeting in a special convention, would relieve the pressure on North Carolina by being the thirty-sixth and final state to vote for ratification. Bickett nevertheless encouraged the legislature to ratify the amendment, arguing for a graceful accession to the inevitable. On 17 August the State Senate, by a vote of 25 to 23, postponed consideration of women suffrage until the 1921 session. After the Tennessee legislature had

voted for ratification on 18 August, the North Carolina General Assembly met to consider the amendment the next day. Despite Tennessee's approval, the General Assembly still rejected the measure by a vote of 71 to 41, arguing that women suffrage would threaten the sanctity of the family, state rights, and white supremacy. With ratification a fait accompli and thus with nothing to gain nationally, legislators sought not to alienate the prevailing antisuffrage sentiment at home. Not until 1971 did the General Assembly of North Carolina endorse the Nineteenth Amendment.



The headquarters for the States' Rights Defense League, located at 118 Fayetteville St., was just a few doors down from the N.C. Equal Suffrage Association headquarters. Members opposed a federal amendment because it infringed on states' rights.

Image from the Albert Barden Collection, State Archives.



SHE CHANGED THE WORLD

III. Resources

| Resource | Website |
|---|---|
| She Changed the World Oral History Project | https://archives.ncdcr.gov/researchers/collections/oral-histories |
| Women in North Carolina 20th Century History Digital Collection | https://archives.ncdcr.gov/researchers/collections/oral-histories |
| Online Biographies of North Carolina Women | https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/women |
| North Carolina Historical Markers | https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program |
| Women's History Blog | https://www.ncdcr.gov/day-nc-history/womens-history |
| Women in North Carolina Library Guide | https://statelibrary.ncdcr.libguides.com/ncwomen |



SHE CHANGED THE WORLD

IV. Centennial Activities

Display a Suffrage Exhibit

Create an exhibit about your community's suffrage story using the archives of state and local historical societies, libraries, and museums. Display exhibits in state capitols, city halls, town halls, museums, or other community centers.

Performances by Orchestras and Ensembles

Hold a "Women's Vote 100" or "Suffrage Centennial" concert featuring female composers, patriotic pieces, or music from the suffrage movement, which can be found online through the Library of Congress. Record videos of full or impromptu performances to share on social media featuring women artists.

Film Screenings

Hold film screenings on capitol lawns or in parks throughout your state, featuring commercial films focused on women's empowerment, such as *A League of One's Own*, or historical dramas or documentaries focused on the women's suffrage movement, such as *Iron Jawed Angels* or *Suffragette*.

Suffrage Art Projects

Participate in the Susan B. Anthony House's 2020 Quilt Project, or start your own quilt or other textile project in your community. Visit the WSCC's "Suffrage Sisters" YouTube channel to find more suffrage centennial arts & crafts activities to do with students or with your family.

Wear Suffrage Gear to Parades

March in state and community parades wearing suffrage sashes, "Votes for Women" buttons, and yellow rose pins. Carry banners in celebration of the 19th Amendment.

Provide Suffrage Gear at Events

Distribute suffrage sashes, "Votes for Women" buttons, and yellow rose pins at state and local fairs and community events.

Start a Suffrage Book Club

Form a book club that reads and discusses books about the women's suffrage movement. Post photos of your book club group and share what you learn on social media

Share on Social Media

Highlight your state and local suffrage stories on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram using the hashtags #SheChangedtheWorld and #NCHerstory. Share historical photographs or post photos from suffrage centennial events.

Website: ncdcr.gov/shechangedtheworld

Facebook: [/SheChangedtheWorld](https://www.facebook.com/SheChangedtheWorld)

Twitter and Instagram: @NCCulture