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October 2020

Essay on Women's Voting Rights

In 1807 a law was passed, ensuring that only white males would have the right to vote and this was initially what sparked interest for women's suffrage movements. Many ideas and opinions quickly spread throughout the nation. However, the first formal woman suffrage event was the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the event and more than 300 men and women were attendees. There, the declaration of sentiments was signed by 68 women and 32 men from the convention. An even larger meeting took place two weeks later in Rochester, New York, and national women's rights conventions continued annually. In 1890 NAWSA (National American Woman Suffrage Association) was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone. Many of those same women traveled to states such as Washington and Colorado to give speeches and help with campaigns.

Finally, the first state to allow women voting rights was Wyoming in 1869. They didn't relent their position on women's suffrage even when it threatened their petition for statehood. Congress did, however, admit them as a state after Wyoming declared, "We will remain out of the Union one hundred years rather than come in without the women." Over the next thirty years Ohio, Utah, and Idaho joined the ranks and allowed women the vote. With passing time more and more states were joining the cause, meanwhile women kept working hard to promote their voting rights. They presented speeches, made various memorabilia, and traveled all across the nation to help and host events. California and New York also became supporters of women's suffrage and by 1919 women had some form of voting rights in 24 states. When popularity kept growing on the subject of women's rights, organizations such as NAWSA began to set higher goals for themselves and the nation as a whole.

With the belief that they were making a difference, women began to hope for a national suffrage amendment, that way women all over the nation would have the right to express their voices through the ballot. A story began to surface about a woman named Virginia Minor who attempted to register to vote in Missouri in 1872. After she was turned away, she decided to sue, and the case soon advanced to the supreme court. Her claim was unanimously rejected stating that, "the constitution of the United States does not confer the right of suffrage upon anyone." This verdict brought unease to suffragists and called to attention their desperate need for a constitutional amendment that stated no one could be denied access from the ballot on the basis of gender. Preparing for the 1916 vote, women began hosting parades and marches. Others walked from New York to Washington and took road trips across the country.

Unfortunately in 1916 the vote for the women's suffrage amendment didn't pass, so women continued to get involved for the dream of a world without inequality. Ultimately, in 1920 the 19th amendment was passed. This guaranteed that women could play a role in the nation by being included in several important decisions. Today, it's crucial that we have strong women

that aren't afraid to push for social and political equality, among other things. This is one of the major ways we are going to evolve as a people and nation.

-Clarene Collins

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