

Alaska

1912—Congress granted Alaska the right to form a Territorial Legislature with passage of the Second Organic Act.

1913—Cornelia Templeton Hatcher advocated for temperance throughout her life, and was drawn to Alaska, where the exceedingly difficult life for men often led to excessive drinking. In addition to delivering temperance speeches across Alaska, Hatcher devoted herself to the suffrage fight by partnering with temperance colleagues, Fanny Pedersen, Ida Green, and Ada Browell. Together, they gathered 400 petition signatures in favor of suffrage, which they presented to the Alaska Territorial Legislature. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) also took special interest in Alaska, as the territory lacked an organization solely devoted to the woman's suffrage movement. NAWSA sent mail and telegrams to Alaska's legislators urging them to support a suffrage bill.

1913—Representative Arthur Shoup introduced Alaska's first suffrage bill, which he drafted with NAWSA. The bill required voters to be at least 21 years old, have American citizenship, and prove at least one year of Alaskan residency. Alaska's legislators excluded Alaskan Native women by only allowing indigenous voting if a person had renounced "tribal customs and traditions." Ultimately, the House of Representatives rejected legislators' delaying tactics, and the bill passed.

Within less than two weeks of introduction, Governor Walter E. Clark signed the suffrage bill into law on March 21, 1913, officially granting non-Native Alaskan women the right to vote, making Alaska the tenth state or territory to do so.

1925—After passage of the Indian Citizenship Act which gave Native Alaskans citizenship rights, the Territorial Legislature passed the Alaska Voters Literacy Act that re-established voting barriers by requiring voters to be able to speak and write English.

1965—The Voting Rights Act eliminated voting restrictions such as literacy tests, which broadened voting rights for Native Alaskan women and men.

Resources:

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