

Colorado

1876—The Colorado Woman Suffrage Association (CWSA) elected Dr. Alida Avery as its first president. Prior to her role in the CWSA, Dr. Avery was the first woman in the state to practice medicine and served as Colorado's Superintendent of Hygiene. The same year, CWSA petitioned that the new Colorado constitution include no gender distinctions, but the legislature dismissed this concept as too radical. The constitution did permit the state to hold a suffrage referendum and allowed women to vote in school board elections.

1877—As Colorado voters considered a suffrage referendum, Susan B. Anthony traveled to several Colorado towns to alleviate voter fears about suffrage. Colorado voters soundly rejected suffrage by a two-to-one margin.

1893—As another suffrage referendum arose for consideration, suffragists from across the nation arrived to assist. Notably, National American Woman Suffrage Association President Carrie Chapman Catt traveled throughout Colorado, and journalist Ellis Meredith argued for passage in the *Rocky Mountain News*. In 1910, Meredith would serve as Denver's first female Election Commissioner.

While suffragists traveled across Colorado to support the referendum, saloon owners and brewers warned that suffrage could result in women tipping the scales in favor of Prohibition.

As suffrage gained statewide support, Governor Davis Waite and former Governor John Routt endorsed women's right to vote. Despite his personal opposition, Thomas Patterson, publisher of the *Rocky Mountain News*, maintained his paper's neutrality and allowed columnists Meredith and Minnie Reynolds to write in support of the campaign.

The referendum passed with 35,798 votes in favor and 29,451 votes in opposition. With its success, Colorado became the first state to guarantee women the right to vote via referendum.

1919— Colorado became the 22nd state to ratify the 19th Amendment.

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