

Massachusetts

1850—Massachusetts held its first National Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester where abolitionists Sojourner Truth, who had escaped slavery, and Lucy Stone spoke.

1869—Lucy Stone, the first Massachusetts woman to earn a bachelor's degree, founded the American Woman Suffrage Association.*

1893—Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, born into a wealthy Boston family, founded the Woman's Era Club (WEC) to promote suffrage for Black women, and the Kansas Relief Association, which offered assistance to Black settlers seeking a new life out West. St. Pierre Ruffin also founded *The Woman's Era*, the country's first newspaper by and for Black women.

1895—Massachusetts permitted women to vote in a suffrage referendum. With only 4% of eligible women participating, voters soundly rejected suffrage (32% of men and 96% of women participating in the election voted in favor).

1909—Suffragists rallied at parks, street corners, and factory gates, reaching immigrants with Italian, Yiddish, and Arabic interpreters. In 1910, Margaret Foley made news by riding in a hot air balloon holding a *Votes for Women* flag high and dropping suffrage flyers to the crowd below.

1915—The Legislature passed a suffrage bill by a wide margin, and Boston suffragists held a Victory Parade before the next referendum (in which only men could vote). Half a million spectators watched 15,000 suffragists, including trade union, professional women, and many men, march through Boston's Back Bay. Following the march, suffragists distributed 600,000 flyers, and roughly 8,000 women stood outside their local polling places on election day to generate last-minute voter support. The state's anti-suffragists came out in force, and in a surprise rout, voters rejected the referendum.

1919—The National Woman's Party of Boston, inspired by D.C. suffragists, burned paper snippets of President Wilson's democracy speeches at Parkman Bandstand on Boston Common. After police arrested 19 suffragists for loitering and speaking on the Common without a permit, two women had their cases dismissed, four women paid fines, and the remaining 13 served jail sentences.

June 25, 1919—Having failed to enfranchise women through state measures, Massachusetts ratified the 19th Amendment.

* AWSA supported passage of the 15th Amendment, which gave Black men the vote.

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