

North Carolina

1894—Helen Morris Lewis held the first public suffrage meeting in Asheville. Lewis served as President of the new Equal Suffrage Association.

1897—A suffrage bill was introduced in the Senate, but it was referred to the Committee on Insane Asylums where it died.

1913—Barbara Henderson and Gertrude Weil led the Equal Suffrage League of North Carolina (ESLNC) with branches in Raleigh, Goldsboro, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and Asheville. The ESLNC orchestrated lectures and speaker tours and lobbied state legislators on the need for suffrage.*

1915—The General Assembly considered a limited municipal suffrage bill but the bill did not progress beyond committee consideration. The process repeated itself two years later.

1919—The General Assembly considered three different suffrage bills: municipal voting, primary election voting, and full voting rights for women. All three failed. Strong opposition came from the textile industry, which feared that women voting would result in child labor restrictions, and white supremacists believing that Black women voting would upend Jim Crow restrictions on Black voting in the state.

1920—Following passage of the 19th Amendment, the North Carolina State Senate prepared to vote on ratification on August 17th. If successful, North Carolina would become the 36th and final state needed to ratify the amendment. State Senator Lindsay Warren convinced the Senate to postpone its vote until the next legislative session.

Tennessee provided the 36th, and final vote needed to amend the U.S. Constitution just nine days later.

1971—North Carolina ratified the 19th Amendment as a symbolic gesture.**

*After passage of the 19th Amendment, the ESLNC transformed itself into the League of Women Voters to urge North Carolina's women to exercise their new right to vote.

** Jim Crow laws were enforced in North Carolina until passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and Black women were not able to vote post-1920.

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