

Tennessee

1889—Lide Smith Meriwether, the Tennessee Woman's Christian Temperance Union (TWCTU) president, founded the state's first suffrage organization, the Equal Rights Association in Memphis (ERAM). Meriwether traveled throughout Tennessee giving speeches and helping communities form new suffrage groups. Meriwether also edited the regional *Appeal to Reason* newspaper, which advocated for women's rights.

1911—Anne Dallas Dudley founded the Nashville Equal Suffrage League (NESL) and served as Tennessee Equal Suffrage Association (TESA) president. TESA broadened the Tennessee suffragist base by opening branches across the state, including Nashville, Knoxville, Memphis, and Chattanooga.

1914—Dudley and other suffragists organized a suffrage automobile parade, and later led a suffrage procession through downtown Nashville to the State Capitol. The parade coincided with the National American Woman Suffrage Association convention in Nashville.

1919—The Tennessee Legislature passed a limited suffrage bill giving women the right to vote in presidential and municipal elections.

1920—After Congress passed the 19th Amendment, suffragists convinced Governor Albert Roberts to convene a special session to consider its ratification. The Senate passed the amendment, the House vote was very unclear. Twenty-four year old Representative Harry Burn changed history by casting the deciding vote. With his mother's note advising him to support suffrage, Burn changed his opposition into support for suffrage.

August 18, 1920—Tennessee became the needed 36th state to vote for ratification of the 19th Amendment.*

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

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