

Washington

1871—Susan B. Anthony travelled to Olympia, becoming the first woman to address the Washington Territorial Legislature. One week later, local suffragists held a convention in Olympia, where they founded the first suffrage association in the state, the Washington Woman Suffrage Association (WWSA). Soon afterward, territorial legislators passed a bill expressly stating that women would not be permitted to vote until the Legislature took action.

1883—The Washington Territorial Legislature passed a suffrage bill, and Governor William Newell signed the bill into law on November 23, 1883. Throughout the state, churches rang their bells in celebration, signaling a new era where women could vote.

1884—Roughly 8,000 women cast their ballots in the election.

1887—The Washington Territorial Supreme Court overturned the law, claiming it conflicted with federal territorial law. A repeat of this scenario took place in 1888, when the Legislature passed a suffrage bill and the Territorial Supreme Court vacated the measure. When legislators included suffrage on the 1889 ballot, Washington voters roundly defeated suffrage by a two-to-one vote.

1905—Emma Smith DeVoe, as president of the Washington Equal Suffrage Association (WESA), revived the state's suffrage movement by encouraging suffragists to remain “womanly” and cheerful while campaigning. DeVoe published a popular suffrage cookbook to show that women would not shed their traditional roles. She also organized WESA chapters statewide, held chapters financially accountable, and ensured that they remained bipartisan.

1910—Prior to a suffrage referendum, WESA held small meetings with church groups, labor unions, and farmers across the state. WESA encouraged suffragists to speak face-to-face with voters. With a strategy of quiet campaigning, DeVoe and WESA managed to avoid attention from opposition groups.

November 8, 1910—Voters approved the referendum (52,299 to 29,676). The Washington State Constitution added its fifth amendment, granting women the right to vote in all elections.

March 22, 1920—Washington ratified the 19th Amendment.

References:

1854-1912: The Road to Suffrage. (n.d.). Women in the Legislature.

<https://web.leg.wa.gov/womeninthelegislature/1854-1912.htm>

Andrews, M. (2003, February 16). *Arthur Denny Proposes White-Women Suffrage Amendment in the Territorial Legislature's First Session on February 28, 1854.* HistoryLink.

<https://www.historylink.org/File/5211>

Andrews, M. (2003, September 27). *Susan B. Anthony addresses territorial legislature on October 19, 1871, then helps found Washington Woman Suffrage Association.* HistoryLink.

<https://www.historylink.org/File/5557>

Cooney, Robert. (2005). *Winning the Vote: The Triumph of the American Woman Suffrage Movement.* American Graphic Press.

Emma Smith DeVoe. (n.d.). National Women's Hall of Fame.

<https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/emma-smith-devoe/>

Gibson, E. (2006, March 7). *First Washington Constitutional Convention convenes in Walla Walla on June 11, 1878.* HistoryLink. <https://www.historylink.org/File/7648>

Territorial Timeline. (n.d.). Washington State Archives

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/timeline/detail.aspx?id=114>

Washington State and the 19th Amendment. (2019, August 22). National Park Service.

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/washington-state-women-s-history.htm>

Washington Women's Suffrage Centennial. (n.d.). Washington State Archives.

<https://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/1254631/Washington-Womens-Suffrage-Centennial/>