

Wisconsin

1846— During Wisconsin's Constitutional Convention, suffrage proponents unsuccessfully argued for the enfranchisement of women, nothing came of these debates.

1884—The Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association (WWSA) formed and began lobbying for suffrage. Although the Legislature refused to consider full suffrage, it granted women the right to vote in school elections. Wisconsin courts overturned the law in 1887, but suffragists successfully lobbied the legislature to restore school voting rights for women in 1901.

1911—Ada James established the Political Equality League of Wisconsin (PELW) and served as PELW president for two years. James' father, David James, was a Wisconsin State Senator, and her mother, Laura Briggs James, helped found the Richland Center Woman's Club.

WWSA and PELW disagreed on organizing and campaigning tactics. PELW members were more politically engaged, lobbying legislators, leading automobile tours and street meetings, and assisting in the formation of a Black suffrage organization. In contrast, WWSA used more indirect tactics to advocate for suffrage such as speaking tours and parlor meetings.

1912—Voters considered a suffrage provision that the legislature had approved. Both suffragists and anti-suffragists—the latter largely liquor interests—ran an aggressive campaign. With 135,736 votes in favor and 227,054 in opposition, the amendment failed, with 63% of voters opposed.

1914—Suffragists held a "suffrage school" in Madison, offering six days of classes for 66 attendees. Individuals learned about organizing, marketing, suffrage history, the legal status of women, citizenship, and working with the press.

1915—Voters rejected another referendum bill.

June 10, 1919—Wisconsin's State Legislature voted to ratify the 19th Amendment, approving it 52 to 2 in the Assembly and 24 to 1 in the Senate.

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