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ABSTRACT

Susan B. Anthony worked for seventy-two years to secure female suffrage but did not live to see her dream become a reality for United States women. Although universal suffrage had been granted to all white men in the 1820s, white women remained disenfranchised. Their lack of voting rights continued, despite women's increased benevolence work in the Temperance, abolition and other reform movements of the early nineteenth-century. After the first woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton argued for female suffrage or what became known as, "the ultimate legislative demand."¹

Anthony entered the woman's rights movement in 1850 and soon joined Stanton to create legislative changes for women. This paper begins with an analysis of the first woman's rights convention and subsequently, argues three main points. First, the 1850s was a period of necessary experimentation in the woman's suffrage campaign that tested the usefulness of conventions, speaking tours and petitions. Secondly, Anthony utilized the period immediately following the Civil War to create alliances to ensure that a legislative amendment would grant women suffrage. However, once it became clear that neither the Fourteenth nor the Fifteenth Amendments would enfranchise women, in 1870, Anthony applied a third strategy, known as the New Departure. Anthony urged women to utilize the ambiguous language in the Fourteenth Amendment and test the application of federal voting legislation through acts of civil disobedience. On November 5, 1872, Anthony voted in the Presidential election. Her subsequent arrest and illegal trial proceedings created a precedent that further precluded women from applying the Fourteenth Amendment as proof of their legal right to vote. This paper combines the arc of an Anthony biography with a more complete analysis of her influence on the nineteenth century woman's suffrage movement.

My sources include the utilization of the Susan B. Anthony Papers located at the Library of Congress as well as three of the *History of Woman Suffrage* volumes that Anthony, Stanton and Matilda Gage wrote in the 1890s. I have also utilized Ann Gordon's compilation of Anthony and Stanton's letters and speeches from throughout the nineteenth century. I have drawn upon Anthony's newspaper, *The Revolution* as well as *The New York Times* and other publications to assess the press coverage and public perceptions of the suffrage movement. Those sources aid me in my analysis of Anthony's influence and commitment to the woman's suffrage cause.

¹ Ellen Carol Dubois, "Women's Rights and Abolition: The Nature of the Connection," in *Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 63.

LORI SATTER
SUSAN B. ANTHONY: A VISIONARY OF THE NINETEENTH-
CENTURY UNITED STATES SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT
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The ideas that are represented in this thesis originally took root my first year at Mount Holyoke in Introduction to Women's Studies with Professor Martha Ackmann. In the first month of class we read Elizabeth Cady Stanton's famous document, the *Declaration of Sentiments*. Our study of that text led me to question the history education I had received before arriving at college. During that semester I learned about women's activism and battles for equal rights, access to birth control, gender identities. However, no subject matter compared to the sense of awe and appreciation that I felt when I read about the nineteenth century suffrage movement. The histories of legendary figures like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony filled me with tremendous pride and provided me with female political activists.

I developed my initial thoughts about a senior independent study while I was abroad last spring. Upon my return to the States, I began to gather secondary materials and immersed myself during the summer in Anthony's world. Over the course of the academic year my project has developed and my thinking of the suffrage movement has undergone a tremendous evolution.

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the incredible support network I had while conducting my research and writing. I would like to thank Professor Jane Gerhard for constantly encouraging me to continue my work, despite the unexpected bumps I experienced during the process. I owe a great amount of gratitude to Professors Martha Ackmann and Professor Justin Berhand for providing me with two sounding boards during the early and later phases of the project. I would also like to thank the reference librarian, Chrissa Godbout for her enthusiasm in my research and unfailing ability to help me find the materials I needed within the depths of the library. I received tremendous support from Professor Holly Hansen and the students in the History Colloquium I participated in during the spring semester. I left those dinner sessions well prepared to take on the necessary tasks for the week. I would like to thank my friends both on campus and beyond the college's gate, who patiently listened to me while my thesis continued to form.

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PROLOGUE

“Don’t give up the Ship.”² Susan B. Anthony wrote that spirited declaration in 1883, in the waning years of her life and leadership of the nineteenth-century United States female suffrage movement. Anthony struggled for over fifty years to ensure that women would be granted the right to vote. She did not live to see the states ratify the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, which enfranchised women. Rather, Anthony fought for a more comprehensive vision of women’s lives and public participation that took over seventy years to materialize. Anthony’s evolving strategies and not her failure to secure a female suffrage law, characterized her successes throughout the suffrage campaign. Anthony’s story was one of constant struggle and of one woman’s determination to secure voting rights for women as an expression of full and equal citizenship and power. This thesis seeks to make clear why Anthony’s efforts, including the defeats she faced, are crucial for us to remember. Anthony’s work provides a window into the political limits and opportunities confronting women in the mid nineteenth-century.

How should Anthony’s successes be measured in the absence of a nineteenth-century female suffrage amendment? The following three chapters

² SBA to Elizabeth Boynton Harbert, 25 Dec. 1883, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Against an Aristocracy of Sex 1866-1873*, Vol. IV, Ann D. Gordon, ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 318.

answer this question through an analysis of Anthony's strategies in the antebellum and post-bellum periods. Her methods compel additional questions, such as, how did Anthony embody and challenge nineteenth-century gender ideologies in order to attract women and men to her suffrage cause? Secondly, in what ways was the woman's rights movement predicated on the abolition cause, with regard to campaign strategies and rhetoric as well as political support? Finally, how should scholars understand Anthony's voting action in 1872? What led her to decide to cast her ballot? Was her action a spontaneous testing of established voting regulations, or was her act of civil disobedience an important facet and representative of the culmination of suffrage activism?

This thesis focuses almost exclusively on Anthony's influence on the nineteenth-century suffrage movement and explores four main themes: race, political ideologies, state versus federal power and the symbolism of the vote. Although Elizabeth Cady Stanton has been identified as one of the main leaders of the suffrage movement, her strategies focused almost entirely on the emphasis of white racial superiority. Stanton presented white women as more deserving of the vote than immigrants or black men.

Anthony's political evolution demonstrated her attention to the national political scene and characterized her involvement in the suffrage movement. In the early 1850s, she worked with the temperance campaign and implemented petition drives to secure female suffrage. Anthony's speeches before and after the Civil War, united the issues of slavery and female subordination. Anthony began

to explore of civil disobedience as a viable strategy during the post-bellum era. Anthony read the political shifts throughout the nineteenth-century and in response she retooled the female suffrage campaign.

One of the major differences between Anthony and Stanton was their approach to race. As white women, both activists embodied the nineteenth-century complex that historian Peggy Pascoe identified as “racialist.” Anthony and Stanton grew up during a period when culture, morality and intelligence were signifiers of white racial superiority.³ That ideology acted as a constant backdrop throughout both activists’ involvement in the suffrage movement. Anthony’s speeches and actions before the war developed an argument dependent on white women and slaves’ common experience of subordination. However, during the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, Anthony adopted a white supremacy argument to position white women as superior to black men. After states ratified those amendments, Anthony returned to a natural rights argument and encouraged acts of civil disobedience. In contrast, Stanton never wandered far from her original position that privileged white women over black men. Anthony and Stanton’s, approaches to racial difference became a point of contention throughout the history of female suffrage.

The changing signifiers of political participation as well as evolving political ideologies from the antebellum to post-bellum period was another

³ Peggy Pascoe, “Miscegenation Law, Court Cases, and the Ideologies of ‘Race,’” in *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women’s History*, 3rd Ed., Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol Dubois, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 163.

important theme that shaped the suffrage movement. During the first half of the nineteenth-century, Americans identified with the notion of a citizen's natural right, embodied in Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*. Stanton and Anthony utilized the natural rights ideology and encouraged women to use their power through their revered position as wives and mothers in the domestic sphere to appeal for legislative changes. Unenfranchisement did not limit women's involvement. Prior to the Civil War, white women had influence on the body politic through indirect methods of political participation such as petitions and fundraising.

After the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, the ability to vote became the premier method of political participation and the signature of citizenship. As a result, the indirect methods of female activism and the natural rights ideology remained in tension with the evolving symbolism of the vote. Once black men became citizens through the Fourteenth Amendment, Anthony employed aspects of gender ideologies to present white women as morally superior to black men in order to attract political support for a female suffrage law. Anthony's white racial supremacy argument proved unpopular and politically alienating. She then steered the female suffrage campaign away from the embodiment of gender ideologies and back to the natural rights argument to convince the public of woman's entitlement to the vote.

Throughout her involvement in the suffrage movement, Anthony remained attune to the national political scene and changes in state versus federal power.

After the Civil War, political power became concentrated at the federal level through constitutional amendments that articulated citizens' rights. Anthony then worked with Congress to ensure that women became citizens through the language of the Fourteenth Amendment. Reconstruction laws reaffirmed men's liberties and left women without a clear understanding of their position as Americans. As a result of the increased power of the federal government, the suffrage campaign depended on political parties to create legislation that would grant women citizenship status and voting rights. Anthony perceived the growing emphasis of the two-party political system as an opportunity to ensure woman's rights. Anthony courted Congressmen in the Republican Party and members of the Democratic Party. Anthony continued to make tactical choices that at times adhered to or challenged the political tenor of the nation. As a result of her efforts, Anthony became a political player who tirelessly campaigned for female suffrage.

Nineteenth-Century Attributes of a "True" Woman

From 1810 to 1890, dominant gender ideologies permeated the United States. Those ideas affected the influence Anthony had in the 1860s and 1870s, on the woman's rights movement. The Cult of Domesticity and separate spheres ideologies specified a woman's proper role in society and were intrinsically linked to the notion of Republicanism. That political ideology developed during the Revolutionary War era in the late 1770s, attempted to strike a power balance between the male citizen and the state. Republicanism carved out a specific

position for women, through the role of Republican Motherhood, as the mothers of future male leaders.⁴

The development of the separate spheres and Cult of Domesticity ideologies, as well as women's challenges to them, occurred simultaneously. A turning point took place during Anthony's childhood in the 1820s, in the history of female labor. New textile factories and other job opportunities for women had become available as a result of the Industrial Revolution. Paid labor positions had removed women from the home or sphere of unpaid labor and propelled them into the public realm of paid labor. As a result, many Americans believed women violated their esteemed position within the home.

Male and female authors and many ministers published articles that argued a woman's natural position was the family caretaker. The evolving ideology has become known as the Cult of Domesticity. It operated with the separate spheres ideology, and daily life became divided between two spaces. Women worked within the domestic or private sphere and men operated in the public or paid labor sphere. Popular literature of the early nineteenth-century depicted both areas of life utilizing gendered characteristics based upon male and female attributes. There were two components to the Cult of Domesticity that worked together to dictate a woman's role in society. The first facet was femininity. The Cult of Domesticity described piousness, submissiveness and purity as attributes of

⁴ Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *The American Historical Review* Vol. 89, No. 3 (June 1984), 623. For a more complete analysis of Republicanism, see Linda Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 8-19.

femininity.⁵ In a popular magazine, *Brother Jonathan*, editor, John Neal described the feminine characteristics that every American woman should strive to emulate. He wrote, “she is the very personification of goodness and forgiveness, breathes the very atmosphere of love, and in her mouth is the law of kindness. She clings fondly for protection and support, to the man of her choice...”⁶ Literature claimed that women constantly enjoyed the rewards of her labor, whereas men worked in a thankless position. In another essay about masculine and feminine attributes, the author lamented that man “in his external life in the world, is subject, and at the same time rarely attains the end for which he labors, but loses that harmony with himself...”⁷ Man relied upon the domestic sphere to rejuvenate him after his tiresome day in the public sphere. Through these behavior guides, authors taught women to relish their uncomplicated existence in the domestic sphere and to pity their husbands who worked tirelessly in the public sphere.

The second component of the Cult of Domesticity was a woman’s responsibilities. Pamphlets advised women to “be wives and mothers, to nurture and maintain their families, to provide religious example and inspiration, and to affect the world around by exercising private moral influence.”⁸ Women continued to be responsible for the care of their children and to maintain a

⁵ Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820- 1860,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Part 1 (Summer 1966), 152.

⁶ John Neal, “Brother John’s Wife,” in *This High and Holy Moment: The First National Woman’s Rights Convention, Worcester, 1850*, John F. McClymer, ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), 27.

⁷ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “The Spheres of Woman,” in *This High and Holy Moment*, 36.

⁸ Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: A “Woman’s Sphere,” in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 8.

peaceful home environment for their husbands. Within the canon of domesticity, the home became a sanctuary from the toils of public life. In addition to playing the part of the wife, motherhood was especially revered within the Cult of Domesticity. Although the father remained the authority figure within the patriarchal family unit, women wielded tremendous power within the private sphere. Mothers were responsible for their children's domestic education. Through women's role as educator, they "symbolized and were expected to sustain traditional values and practices of work and family organization."⁹

The Cult of Domesticity and separate spheres ideologies were only associated with white middle and upper class men and women. Those gender ideologies constructed the role of wife and mother as every white woman's ideal vocation. Household chores and other domestic responsibilities became "discrete, specialized, and objective work-role[s]."¹⁰ A woman's work within the home emulated the work that her husband performed with one notable exception. A man was able and was expected to escape from the domestic sphere in order to perform his duties in the public realm. In contrast, a woman had little means of escape because her duties resigned her to the four walls of her home.¹¹ All white women could unite through the powerful position their female sex enjoyed. Black women did not enjoy that agency and they were subject to the same demands of manual labor as their male relatives. Although "black women were women indeed...their

⁹ Ibid., 64, 70.

¹⁰ Ibid., 74.

¹¹ Ibid.

experiences during slavery- hard work with their men, equality within the family, resistance, floggings and rape...set them apart from most white women.”¹² In contrast to black women’s experiences in the antebellum period, the Cult of Domesticity “intensified [white] women’s gender-group identification, by assimilating diverse personalities to one work-role that was also a sex-role signifying a shared and special destiny.”¹³

The separate spheres and Cult of Domesticity ideologies heavily influenced the first decade of the woman’s rights movement. Those ideas defined a woman’s proper role in American society. In order for Anthony and other woman’s rights activists to be successful, they had to both embody and challenge those societal norms. Historian Nancy Cott has argued that without nineteenth-century gender ideologies, women’s consciousness would never have developed to create a ““woman’s rights”” campaign.¹⁴ Anthony argued in the 1850s that suffrage was the next step toward influencing aspects of life beyond the walls of the domestic sphere.

The Complacency and Peril Associated with the Discourse of Female Suffrage

During the 1880s, Stanton, Anthony and Matilda Gage, all advocates and leaders in the woman’s suffrage movement, began to record the history of their campaign. Through the activists’ recollections, these documents and their interpreted significance have been passed down to modern historians through the

¹² Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 23, 27.

¹³ Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 100.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

filtered lens of nineteenth-century suffragists. The arguments that stem from the volumes those three women wrote, entitled *History of Woman Suffrage*, have deeply shaped the discourse of the woman's suffrage movement. Within those bodies of work, the Seneca Falls convention has been identified as the birthplace of the American woman's rights movement. With few exceptions, other than the work of Lisa Tetrault, contemporary authors have not questioned the inherent biases of Stanton's accounts.¹⁵ Tetrault explains that the *HWS* volumes have distorted the understanding of the nineteenth-century woman's suffrage movement. Stanton's volumes contain the compilation of convention resolutions, addresses to legislatures and congressional proceedings that do not exist in their entirety in any other collection of primary sources from the period. As a result, it is far too easy to accept not only the documents' content but the suffragists' analyses of those historical moments. The authors chose to compile the documents in particular chronological and thematic groupings. Therefore, the final product has emphasized specific aspects of the suffrage movement. For example, Stanton and the other editors included many details and accounts from the Seneca Falls convention. However, the Worcester meeting or the first national convention has been dwarfed in its short coverage. The related history of Stanton's volumes have become in Tetrault's words, the "master narrative" of the woman's suffrage movement.¹⁶

¹⁵ Lisa Marguerite Tetrault, *The Memory of a movement: Woman Suffrage and Reconstruction* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilm International, 2005).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4, 46.

Perhaps the most notable historian in the field of the nineteenth-century woman's suffrage movement is Ellen Carol Dubois. Dubois heavily relies on the *HWS* volumes in her book, *Feminism & Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America*. Her book provides historians with a detailed account and analysis of the suffrage campaign from the first convention in 1848 until the formation of an independent suffrage organization in 1869.

A problem in Dubois' analysis of the suffrage movement is linked to the language she employs. As the title of her book suggests, Dubois identifies Anthony and Stanton as leaders of American feminism. One possible explanation for why Dubois uses the word "feminism" or "feminist" is that the methods of twentieth-century activism mirror the strategies the woman's rights movement employed during the nineteenth-century. As a result, Dubois believes it is appropriate to label both Anthony and Stanton's actions within the suffrage movement as well as their strong leadership as early examples of feminism and feminist figures. However, while Europeans coined the term "feminism" in the latter decades of the nineteenth-century, Americans did not utilize the term until after the First World War.¹⁷ Therefore, it is inappropriate to label Anthony and other nineteenth-century suffragists as feminists. Instead, the terms, "activist" or "suffragist" are preferable to the word, "feminist." The strategies activists employed in the 1860s were similar to the methods feminists would use during the twentieth-century. However, Anthony and Stanton embodied as much as they

¹⁷ Gisela Bock, *Women in European History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 83.

challenged notions of gender roles and racial hierarchies in their movement and therefore should not be labeled as feminists.

The secondary literature that analyzes the female suffrage movement approaches the leaders and the issues of the campaign primarily through two avenues. Dubois' book illustrates a detailed exploration of suffrage that spans the specific chronology of twenty-one years. Historians, such as Louise Newman, chose to address one theme of the suffrage movement. She confronts the complex issue of race in her book, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States*. Newman challenges the notion that Anthony or Stanton were racist with a more complex contextual analysis of the Reconstruction period.¹⁸ Her analysis provides a point of departure for understanding Stanton and Anthony's motivations for employing white supremacy as a viable political strategy. Newman begins her history in the 1870s and not with earlier moments in the suffrage movement. An examination of race in the antebellum period is crucial for understanding the suffragists' language and behavior in the Reconstruction period.

None of the historians in the field of woman's history focus on one leader. With the exceptions of biographies, such as Kathleen Barry's, *Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of a Singular Feminist* or Ida B. Harper's, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, a void in scholarship exists that evaluates Anthony's influence on the suffrage movement both before and after the Civil War. Biographies do not fill

¹⁸ Louise Michelle Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4-5.

that vacuum because they focus on the external events in the subject's life and lack a historical framework through which to analyze the impact of the person.

Anthony: A Visionary Pioneer

This thesis evaluates Anthony's influence on the nineteenth-century woman's rights movement before and after the divide of the Civil War. The first chapter analyzes the historically identified beginning of the suffrage campaign, the first woman's rights convention on July 19, 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York. Lifelong activists, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and Lucy Stone, organized the conference and put into place several strategies to ensure that their movement would continue. The women encouraged fellow activists to travel throughout the country and lecture on woman's unequal position within American political society. They also compelled women in nearby towns and states to hold their own conventions to garner additional support for the movement. In 1850 activist, Paulina Wright Davis, organized the first national woman's rights convention in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her convention inaugurated annual national conventions that were crucial to the suffrage movement's expansion.

The first chapter questions the ultimate influence that the first woman's rights convention had on the expansion of the suffrage movement. The Seneca Falls convention occurred prior to the first national meeting. However, the former convention should not be considered more important in the story of woman's rights, merely because it took place first. The chapter will evaluate the resolutions

both conventions produced and the impact that the leaders and their demands had on the antebellum phase of the woman's rights movement.

The second chapter introduces Anthony to the woman's suffrage campaign through an analysis of her work with the Daughters of Temperance organization in New York state. The rhetoric she developed beginning in 1852 as well as her growing friendship and collaboration with Stanton continued to shape the suffrage movement. However, as the campaign developed and expanded, the two women utilized different strategies when they debated the issue of enfranchisement. Anthony's dominant tactic emphasized that the emancipation of slaves and women could be accomplished simultaneously. Despite Stanton's many years of participation in the abolition movement, she believed that woman's rights could not be won by comparing the inferior position of American slaves with woman's subordinate position. The tension between utilizing racist rhetoric to garner public and political support and Anthony's dominant strategy continued throughout the early years of Reconstruction.

After the Civil War, Anthony moved closer to Stanton's view of racial hierarchy. Anthony changed her tactics and slowly abandoned the abolition cause. She no longer believed that woman's rights could be won through a partnership with abolitionists or their political party, the Republicans. Instead, Anthony sought out alliances with two controversial groups. First, she accepted financial aid from the Democratic Party. Anthony lectured with known racist, George Francis Train, once the Republican Party had abandoned the female suffrage

cause during the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. Anthony also attempted to gain support from the National Labor Union in order to form a third political party that would unite the labor cause with female suffrage. Both alliances were unsuccessful in securing a female suffrage amendment. In 1869, Anthony and Stanton formed their own organization, the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), in order to lobby for a female suffrage law.¹⁹

The final chapter analyzes Anthony's strategies after the formation of the NWSA. Anthony and Stanton campaigned in 1870 for a sixteenth amendment that would prohibit voting discrimination based on sex. The passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments in the aftermath of the Civil War ensured black male citizenship and voting rights, but left women without suffrage. However, as the federal government began to narrow its role in creating voting rights legislation and returned that power to the state level, Anthony changed tactics and tested the application of the Fourteenth Amendment through a strategy called the New Departure. Under the New Departure, Anthony argued that women were citizens through the ambiguous use of the word "male" in the Fourteenth Amendment and therefore had the right to vote. In the early 1870s, Anthony reintroduced the natural rights ideology and began to encourage women to register and vote in local elections to test the legislatures' application of the Fourteenth Amendment. Anthony registered to vote and cast her ballot on November 5, 1872 and was subsequently arrested and convicted. Her appeal never reached the Supreme Court

¹⁹ The National Woman Suffrage Association will hereafter be abbreviated, NWSA.

as she had hoped, and although her case attracted national attention, her civil disobedience tactic did not result in a female suffrage law.

The changing strategies that Anthony introduced illustrated a lack of public support for female suffrage. Anthony overestimated the power of the courts to change public opinion when she pursued a constitutional amendment in the aftermath of the volatile legislative period of Reconstruction, which had added three new amendments. Although the New Departure strategy attempted to operate within existing laws, the country as well as both federal and state legislators were not ready to grant women voting rights. Rather, most Americans continued to embrace the separate spheres and Cult of Domesticity ideologies that placed women in the home and out of the political sphere.

The absence of a female suffrage amendment is one of the problems that arise during the process of writing a history of the nineteenth-century woman's suffrage movement. Although there were short term defeats, as a result of Anthony's influence on the suffrage campaign, there was the ultimate achievement that granted female voting rights through the language of the Nineteenth Amendment. Anthony's story emphasizes her resounding commitment to a movement that was both unpopular and without the sustained support of either political party. The dedication that Anthony had did not result in a female suffrage amendment during her lifetime. Anthony offered a vision of woman's participation in government without any stipulations of sex during a period in history when the majority of Americans regarded women as political observers.

Anthony's leadership is a fifty year history of unwavering perseverance to create a place for women that allowed them the freedom to exercise their citizen's right to vote.

CHAPTER I OPENING THE DOOR TO A WOMAN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT

On June 12, 1840, male members of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society barred fellow abolitionists, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, from participating in their London convention. That evening Stanton and Mott, “agreed to hold a woman’s rights convention on their return to America” and “thus a missionary work for the emancipation of woman...was then and there inaugurated.”²⁰ Eight years later, those two women organized the first woman’s rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York and began a seventy-year battle for female suffrage.

Early women’s activism in the first decades of the nineteenth-century challenged women’s role as the submissive and fairer sex. In 1848, Stanton and Mott’s organization of the Seneca Falls convention emerged within that broader history. At that moment, Stanton and other activists embodied and challenged the Cult of Domesticity and separate spheres, through the utilization of petitions and subsequent conventions. The resolutions that Stanton presented to the audience at the Seneca Falls convention called, the *Declaration of Sentiments*, represented the first document that articulated strategies to expand the woman’s rights movement. Stanton employed and emulated the ideas of the *Declaration of Independence* in the infant stages of the woman’s rights movement. She echoed the natural rights

²⁰ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et al., eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. I (Salem: Ayer Company, 1985), 54-62. Hereafter, this source will be referenced as *HWS*, Vol. I.

of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” in order to expose the limitations of Thomas Jefferson’s text.

In 1848, the Seneca Falls convention became the landmark event in the nineteenth-century master narrative of the woman’s rights movement.²¹ The resolutions and impact that the Seneca Falls convention had as the first woman’s rights meeting should be positioned in comparison to the first national meeting that activist, Paulina Wright Davis, organized in 1850 in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The Seneca Falls convention must be considered as a pivotal event, but should not outweigh the impact of the Worcester convention. Rather, Seneca Falls should be framed as an event that opened the door for public debate on woman’s rights. The successes of the Worcester convention would not have been possible without the achievements of Seneca Falls. Both of those conventions embodied and challenged woman’s supposedly natural position within the domestic sphere. In addition, as both meetings illustrated, the issue of race relations within the white woman’s movement was a source of contention throughout the nineteenth-century. During the antebellum period, Stanton and eventually Anthony argued that securing their own liberties was the next step within the context of other social movements, such as temperance and abolition.

The “Cult” of Domesticity and Early Challenges

²¹ Lisa Marguerite Tetrault, *The Memory of a movement: Woman Suffrage and Reconstruction* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilm International, 2005), 46.

Women had participated in temperance and abolition organizations since the first decades of the nineteenth-century. Both causes enabled women to remain within the domestic sphere, while still working for liquor regulations and the abolition of slavery. Women used indirect methods that would moderate liquor consumption as well as abolish slavery. The petition was seen as “a pure expression of individual moral conscience, as opposed to the vote, which was viewed as tainted with personal interest and party spirit.”²² Fundamentally, the petition listed a set of grievances from a minority group and presented the document to the majority.²³ Male abolitionists had begun to use the petition as a strategic tool in the early decades of the 1800s. Leaders in the abolition movement, such as William Lloyd Garrison drafted petitions and eventually submitted them to Northern state legislatures for consideration. Abolitionists’ petitions sought the immediate emancipation of all slaves.

Women’s benevolence work in both abolition and temperance highlighted their virtuous nature and moral superiority that were tied to the Cult of Domesticity. Although the male-dominated society had excluded women from voting, women could utilize their feminine qualities and be the advocates for social change.²⁴ During the initial years of the woman’s rights movement, Stanton and eventually Anthony urged women to continue their volunteer efforts and work to secure their own emancipation.

²² Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, & Women’s Political Identity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 3.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 14.

The Seneca Falls convention represented the first public forum that was dedicated to the discussion of woman's rights. However, it was certainly not the first occasion that women challenged their position by stepping out of the domestic sphere and into the public realm. Sarah and Angelina Grimké had opened the door to public speaking on behalf of women. Similar to most women who entered the public sphere in the first half of the nineteenth-century, the Grimké sisters embarked on speaking tours as part of their benevolence work.²⁵

Throughout the antebellum period, abolition served as a catalyst for the discussion of woman's rights.²⁶ Women, like the Grimkés, who were middle or upper class white women, enjoyed the leisure time their class position afforded them. Their position enabled them to become involved in benevolence organizations. The Grimkés' participation in the abolition cause emphasized the joined history of slavery and the woman's rights movement during the nineteenth-century. The Grimkés had grown up and observed first-hand the institution of slavery. As young adults, the two sisters moved from their childhood home in South Carolina to a Quaker community in Philadelphia. In 1836, through their newly found social network, the Grimkés quickly came into contact with local abolitionists. Under the guidance of the American Anti-Slavery Society, the sisters lectured to all-female audiences to promote abolition. Soon after the

²⁵ Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 45.

²⁶ Abolitionists believed in the emancipation of all American slaves. For more information on the movement's ideologies and women's participation, see Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, & Women's Political Identity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Grimké's began to make public addresses, the Council of Congregationalist Ministers of Massachusetts denounced the two women for behaving in an unwomanly and unchristian manner. The ministers' objection to the Grimké's public speeches questioned women's proper role in the abolition movement. Sarah Grimké believed that the objection to women's public speaking was a direct reflection of women's unequal status within American society. As a result, she and her sister implored women to work for their own rights, in addition to campaigning for slaves' freedom.²⁷ Anthony would take up that fight and the Grimké's argument during the initial years of her involvement with the woman's rights movement.

At the same moment that the Grimké sisters challenged the notion of woman's public participation in the abolition movement, Bathseba Brown and Susan Hicklen of Harrisville, Ohio circulated a petition that sought the emancipation of American slaves to end the "abasement of the foulest stains in the catalogue of our crimes."²⁸ Similar to the Grimkes, Brown and Hicklen saw an inherent connection between the enslavement of Africans and their own subordination. Brown and Hicklen, appealed to the Washington D.C. legislature and called for the abolition of slavery within the District. Their petition called for universal suffrage to extend to all persons, regardless of sex or condition of enslavement. Brown and Hicklen drew attention to voting restrictions that were based upon sex and race, and demanded, "the immediate enfranchisement of

²⁷ Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 45- 48.

²⁸ Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship*, 68.

every human being...”²⁹ Their appeal illustrated a moment that predated the appeals women would eventually make in the 1850s, before their constituents at woman’s rights conventions and in front of state legislatures for female suffrage.³⁰

As the number of female abolitionists grew in the 1840s, women began to combat their own subjugation independent of the anti-slavery cause. In 1846, Alpheus S. Greene, a Democrat from New York, presented to the state constitutional convention a petition that six women of Jefferson County, New York had written and circulated. Their appeal called for, ““equal, and civil and political rights with men.”” Within the body of their appeal, the female petitioners also demanded the right to vote.³¹ This petition was the first appeal that women wrote that did not position woman’s rights within the context of slaves’ emancipation. Rather, the women of Jefferson County symbolized an independent campaign that was separate from other benevolence causes. During the same summer, a group of women from Albany drafted a petition that called for the end of female taxation without representation. Their argument echoed many of the ideas from the *Declaration of Independence*. The petitioners deplored the government for levying taxes while women remained without direct representation in political matters. Stanton and Anthony emulated that argument before and after the Civil War in their campaign for suffrage. These two petitions were the products of conversations women had regarding their inferior status,

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 69.

³¹ Lori D Ginzberg, *Untidy Origins: A Story of Woman’s Rights in Antebellum New York* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 7, 16-17. The female petitioners were Eleanor Vincent, Susan Ormsby, Amy Ormsby, Anna Bishop, Lydia A. Williams, and Lydia Osborn.

prior to the first woman's rights convention. These discussions provided leaders, such as Anthony and Stanton, with a base of supporters upon which they built their movement during the 1850s. Unfortunately, those three appeals had few participants and no long-term agenda for creating social reform.

Earlier moments of women's petitioning and lecturing did not spark a state-wide or national movement because of women's relative isolation to one another. Isolation characterized the female experience in the early nineteenth-century and highlighted women's inferior status in relation to men.³² Prior to the Seneca Falls convention, women had few arenas where they could collectively address their grievances regarding their social position. These spaces were primarily restricted to the home. As the Jefferson County petition illustrated, undeniably there were women ready to challenge aspects of femininity that gender ideologies had reinforced. Benevolence work and paid labor offered two escapes from domestic isolation. Aside from those two exceptions, women's isolation became magnified as their influence in public spaces became restricted during the early decades of the nineteenth-century. Unlike white men in the Revolutionary War era, who had access to local taverns or meeting houses that united them through a fraternal network, women lacked the public space to create an organized movement.

The Seneca Falls convention: Building a Woman's Rights Movement

³² Christine Bolt, *The Women's Movements: in the United States and Britain from the 1790s to the 1920s* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts, 1993), 1.

The Seneca Falls convention was the first step toward the development of a national campaign for woman's rights. In addition to the circulation of petitions, during the mid nineteenth-century "conventioneering" became a widely accepted activity. Anthony biographer, Kathleen Barry, characterized the convention as a space where men and eventually women could gather who belonged to different classes and work together to propose social change.³³ Women's benevolence activities broke down the barriers of isolation that they experienced due to their remote position within the domestic sphere.

The Seneca Falls convention illustrated Stanton, Mott and fellow activist, Lucy Stone's hesitancy to lead a public discussion on woman's rights. As a result, James Mott gaveled the convention to order and ran the proceedings. After the Seneca Falls convention, women came to dominate the convention space, rather than male leaders. Barry argued, "[women] would... define their space, out of which they would build their own movements of protest."³⁴

Once women had a public forum to address their liberties, they could draft resolutions that would provide an agenda for subsequent campaigns. Stanton presented a draft of the *Declaration of Sentiments* to her audience on the second day of the Seneca Falls convention. Stanton sought to unite white women based upon their common subjugation, "which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled."³⁵ In the text, Stanton highlighted the rights

³³ Kathleen Barry, *Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of a Singular Feminist* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 72.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁵ *HWS*, Vol. I, 70.

women did not possess as a result of the ambiguous term “man” within Jefferson’s document.

Stanton did not have the benefit of a woman’s rights convention or an inclusive document that detailed the freedoms women should possess. As a result, Stanton relied on the accepted and problematic ideas of Jefferson and the philosophies of John Locke, Jean- Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Paine. During the period of the American Revolution, the political philosophy of Republicanism emphasized the need for male and not female individualism.³⁶ Central to the concept of male liberties were the ““freedom from arbitrary power, freedom of speech...freedom... of moral man to make his own way in the world.””³⁷ Woman’s freedoms had been left ambiguous and undefined. Attributes such as “virtuous” and “selfless” became closely associated with white women and the home. Femininity became tied to woman’s moral authority within the domestic sphere. In contrast, the Founding Fathers entrusted men with the ideals of “liberty,” “independence” and “freedom.” Women had not been expressly included or excluded from enjoying those rights. As the Cult of Domesticity became further ingrained in American culture, notions of personal independence became political and economic principles that only applied to men.³⁸

Stanton employed those ideas from the Revolutionary War era and exposed woman’s subordination through a carefully articulated message that

³⁶ Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 10.

³⁷ Barry, *Susan B. Anthony*, 125- 126.

³⁸ Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920,” *The American Historical Review* Vol. 89, No. 3 (June 1984), 631.

embodied traditional gender ideologies and challenged woman's position within American society. Stanton framed woman's entitlement to equal status with men as a natural right. She discouraged women from being satisfied with "occupying such a station in society...which place her in a position inferior to that of man, [and is] contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore [is] of no force or authority."³⁹ Women's demands for property, divorce rights and eventually suffrage outwardly threatened the separate spheres and the Cult of Domesticity ideologies. However, Stanton and eventually Anthony never encouraged women to abandon their domestic duties. Rather from the beginning of the movement, they implored women to utilize their morality, virtue and fairness that the Cult of Domesticity had issued them, to argue for their rights.

In order to appeal to a wider audience beyond abolitionists and temperance reformers, Stanton, Mott and Stone could not deviate too far from gender and political ideologies of the period. The *Declaration of Sentiments* was a document that by its very existence directly challenged popular notions of femininity. Stanton's text called for women to take control of their natural rights. Although the notion that women deserved to vote rather than have men represent their interests was fairly radical, the ideas that Stanton expressed were not new concepts of freedom. Rather, the originality of her document was symbolized through its female authorship. Stanton composed a list of grievances and a series of resolutions that criticized woman's subordinate position and identified the

³⁹ *HWS*, Vol. I, 72.

female sex as equally deserving of the founding principles of the Republic. Stanton compelled her audience at the Seneca Falls convention to recognize that “all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights...life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...”⁴⁰

In order to begin a woman’s rights movement that would sustain itself in the face of public criticism and ridicule, Stanton had to convey an ideology that was familiar to American men and women. Similar to the Founding Fathers, who had expressed their inherent freedoms against the tyranny of King George III, Stanton articulated the rights of women to the American government. The language within the *Declaration of Sentiments* was directed toward the female audience members at the convention. However, in order to create legislative change, Stanton required male supporters of woman’s rights. The ideas of the *Declaration of Independence* provided Stanton with a basic framework to challenge men’s misrepresentation of women in the public sphere. Stanton argued, “because women...feel...aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.”⁴¹ The *Declaration of Sentiments* demanded gender equality in all aspects of legal rights, including suffrage.

In addition to borrowing language and ideals of freedom from Jefferson and political philosophers, Stanton also emulated tactics from the abolition cause.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 70.

⁴¹ Ibid., 71.

Abolitionists identified slavery as both an economic and social ill. Stanton utilized that rhetoric and replaced slavery with white men's immorality that led to white women's subordination. Stanton described, "he [man] has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies...deemed of little account in man."⁴² Although Stanton argued for gender equality, she did not stress the importance of racial equality within the resolutions in the *Declaration of Sentiments*.⁴³

The resolutions from the Seneca Falls convention illustrated Stanton's commitment to white women's equality to white men, "that woman is man's equal...and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such."⁴⁴ Rather than unite with black women, Stanton embodied the popular nineteenth-century evolutionary theory that argued white men and white women were naturally allied as a result of their racial superiority.⁴⁵ She and other woman's rights leaders chose to create a movement that was joined based upon skin color. The activists did not unite all women against an oppressive economic and social system.

The *Declaration of Sentiments* did not represent black women, nor did the black press report the Seneca Falls convention. Frederick Douglass, a former slave and abolitionist, also omitted black women from his analysis of race and

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Angela Davis, *Women, Race & Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 57.

⁴⁴ *HWS*, Vol. I, 72.

⁴⁵ Louise Michelle Newman, *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10.

gender inequalities within American society.⁴⁶ In his newspaper, *The North Star*, Douglass referred to “Negroes” and their position as slaves. However, he never made the distinction between male and female slaves. Historian Angela Davis categorized slavery as a system that consistently muddled the differences between the sexes. White masters considered both sexes to be his property. As a result, black women were the anomalies to nineteenth-century notions of femininity. For example, while society coveted white women’s reproductive bodies, the same reverence did not extend to enslaved black women.⁴⁷ As Douglass’ article conveyed, even within the black press, black women belonged to either the enslaved, “Negro,” or “woman” and not to a movement that addressed their grievances.

The “Ultimate Legislative Demand” and the Expansion of the Woman’s Rights Movement

In the aftermath of the Seneca Falls convention, suffrage became the “ultimate legislative demand,” and there was a great deal of public attention paid to the suffrage resolution. Many both within and outside of the infant movement perceived a woman’s right to vote as a radical demand and an impossible goal. Stanton believed that female suffrage was the one reform that would change women’s legal status.⁴⁸ On the final day of the convention, Stanton proposed the movement’s dedication to achieve elective franchise for women. Stanton and other leaders reasoned that the *Declaration of Independence* had already allied

⁴⁶ HWS, Vol. I, 74.

⁴⁷ Davis, *Women, Race & Class*, 5, 7.

⁴⁸ Ellen Carol Dubois, “Women’s Rights and Abolition: The Nature of the Connection,” in *Woman Suffrage and Women’s Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 63.

men and women as equals. Therefore, all rights that white men enjoyed should also belong to white women. In addition to female suffrage, the convention audience agreed that women should have the opportunity to address the public during church assemblies as well as on the convention stage.⁴⁹ Stanton argued that the most important right a citizen possessed was the vote. In Stanton's written recollection of the Seneca Falls convention, she conveyed that "those who took part in the debate feared a demand for the right to vote would defeat others they deemed more rational, and make the whole movement ridiculous."⁵⁰ After a discussion among the audience members at the convention, Douglass' support of the resolution ensured that it narrowly passed over others' objections. In the meeting's aftermath, all who had supported woman's right to vote, at the convention, also supported all other reform measures that had appeared in the *Declaration of Sentiments*.⁵¹

Stanton's initial tactics in the aftermath of the Seneca Falls convention were not far-reaching enough to guarantee the growth of the woman's rights movement. One of the goals Stanton hoped to achieve was increased press coverage, which was a crucial aspect of the growing movement and a determining factor for its success. Stanton and others sought to use newspapers as a medium to announce upcoming meetings, resolutions and open public debates to woman's rights issues. However, ridicule dominated the coverage of the Seneca Falls

⁴⁹ *HWS*, Vol. I, 72.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁵¹ Dubois, "Women's Rights and Abolition," 63.

convention with headlines such as, ““The Reign of the Petticoats.””⁵² The infant movement depended on the newspaper coverage in order to overcome woman’s isolation in the private sphere. Stanton and eventually Anthony needed their words to be carried farther than convention halls. Newspaper articles would achieve that goal. To encourage press coverage in the future, Stanton and fellow activist, Elizabeth McClintock, wrote to the editors of the *Seneca County Courier*. Although the *Courier* had published an announcement of the Seneca Falls meeting, the newspaper did not report on the resolutions the members adopted. In their letter to the editor, the suffragists demanded to be taken seriously. Stanton and McClintock declared, “if your columns are open to the women of Seneca county, we throw down the glove to any one who will meet us...on the great question of Woman’s Rights...Ridicule will not have any effect on those who seriously feel themselves aggrieved; argument is far better.” Stanton and McClintock predicted that woman’s rights issues would soon dominate other American reform movements.⁵³

In order to attract the support of the male-dominated press, Stanton tailored the tactics of the suffrage campaign to the Cult of Domesticity ideology. In order to combat the public resistance to woman’s suffrage, activists embarked on speaking tours. Although as a female speaker Stanton was unpopular, she balanced her public presence by employing attributes of femininity as evidence of

⁵² Jean V. Matthews, *Women’s Struggle for Equality: The First Phase, 1828- 1876* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997), 58.

⁵³ ECS & Elizabeth McClintock to Editors of the *Seneca County Courier*, 23 July 1848, in Ann D. Gordon ed. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Against an Aristocracy of Sex 1866-1873*, Vol. I (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 88.

the benefits that woman's rights would have on the public sphere. In the following years, she and Stone reasoned that female suffrage was the only solution to correct the immoral political system. Stanton declared that "man cannot speak for us...he cannot judge our thoughts, feelings and opinions by his own. Moral beings can only judge of others by themselves..."⁵⁴ She positioned white men as incapable of representing the morally superior sex. Stanton argued that once women had the vote they would bring their self-control and pious nature that characterized the domestic sphere into government affairs.⁵⁵

In addition to identifying women as morally superior to men, Stanton also utilized white privilege to garner support for white female suffrage. She argued that white male universal suffrage had not improved the political system. She stated, "but to have the rights of drunkards, idiots...ignorant foreigners...fully recognised, whilst we ourselves are thrust out from all the rights that belong to citizens- it is too grossly insulting..."⁵⁶ 1820s suffrage laws had removed property restrictions, thereby granting all white men a voice in government matters. Stanton appealed to white men's sense of racial superiority in the antebellum period. Stanton highlighted the differences between uneducated and immigrant men to present white women as the saviors of American politics. White female

⁵⁴ Address by ECS on Woman's Rights, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 96.

⁵⁵ Elizabeth R. Varon, "White Women and Party Politics in Antebellum Virginia," in *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 3rd ed, Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander eds. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2003), 118.

⁵⁶ ECS speech entitled: "Woman's Rights," Sept. 1848, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 105.

activists placed their racial commonality with white men ahead of their gender differences.⁵⁷

Not only would women bring their morality into American politics, but their votes would grant them a voice in government and self-representation. Stanton called for the immediate end to men's representation of women.⁵⁸ She continued to articulate the many ways that men misrepresented women within the public sphere. The most egregious example was the government's taxing of women. Stanton declared that women, similar to the white men of the Revolutionary War generation, should be able to "assemble to protest against a form of government... [that exists] without the consent of the governed, to declare our right to be free as man is free- to be represented in the government which we are taxed to support..."⁵⁹ However, the woman's rights movement could not be successful until it developed a theoretical framework independent of Revolutionary War ideology. The three principle strategies that Stanton and other activists utilized in the aftermath of the Seneca Falls convention provided Anthony with a template to build upon once she joined the woman's rights campaign.

The Worcester Convention: The Beginning of a National Movement

⁵⁷ Newman, *White Women's Rights*, 58.

⁵⁸ ECS speech entitled: "Woman's Rights," in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 105-106.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

Paulina Wright Davis gaveled the first national woman's rights convention to order in 1850 in Worcester, Massachusetts.⁶⁰ The convention built upon the example of the Seneca Falls meeting and the *Declaration of Sentiments* served as an ideological model. The resolutions that the Worcester convention members would adopt had the benefit of an existing document of female authorship. Unlike the first woman's rights meeting, Davis organized and led the discussions at the Worcester convention. Davis' organization and leadership at the Worcester convention was partly an experiment that tested women's ability to lead a national conference and speak publicly to a large audience.

No longer were small, local meetings adequate forums to discuss woman's rights. Instead, Davis sought to bring a more diverse group of men and women together through the format of a national convention. Davis had the ability to correct mistakes that Stanton had made during the frenzied planning process for the Seneca Falls convention. Davis issued speaking invitations beginning as early as July for the October convention.⁶¹ Stanton, Stone and others were able to alter their schedules to travel to Worcester. In contrast to the Seneca Falls meeting, female and not male speakers predominantly addressed the audience. Stone, who had become a self-supporting public lecturer, was the keynote speaker of the

⁶⁰ Matthews, *Women's Struggle for Equality*, 66.

⁶¹ Paulina Wright Davis to ECS, 7 July 1850, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 170.

convention.⁶² Unlike Stanton's state-wide appeal before the Seneca Falls convention, the 1850 meeting called for national participation and men and women from nine different states attended. The Worcester convention also boasted the support of William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, two of the most public names associated with the abolition movement.⁶³ Their expressed concern regarding the inequality between the sexes elevated the woman's rights movement from a local matter to an issue of national importance.

Davis focused the proceedings to ensure the expansion of the movement. Her speech at the start of the convention symbolized a departure from other reform movements. She stated, "the reformation we propose in its utmost scope is radical and universal." Davis emphasized the unique nature of the woman's rights movement, for it, "is a movement without example among the enterprises of associated reformations, for it has no purpose of arming the oppressed against the oppressor..."⁶⁴ The language of the *Declaration of Sentiments* had identified white men as the oppressors of white women, without creating an alliance with non-white women. In contrast, the discussions and resolutions from the Worcester convention did not target white men as the source of gender inequality. Instead, Davis and others emphasized an agenda that sought freedom for all peoples

⁶² In a letter to Amy Kirby, a fellow suffragist, in September of 1848, Stanton had proposed a national speaking tour to attract more women to the suffrage movement. Lucy Stone became the spokeswoman of the campaign. *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I. 123.

⁶³ *HWS*, Vol. I, 216- 217.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 222-223.

regardless of, “class or caste.”⁶⁵ More significantly, Davis did not encourage the emancipation of white, middle class women to the detriment of black women’s position in American political life.

Unlike the *Declaration of Sentiments* that did not acknowledge black women as a political force, the resolutions from the Worcester convention included all races. The convention members described an ill effect of the slave system, “the rights and liberties of one human being can not be made the property of another...” The principle resolution of the Worcester convention reflected a more inclusion campaign and stated, “women are clearly entitled to the right of suffrage, and to be considered eligible to office...a denial of which is a gross usurpation on the part of man... ‘Equality before the Law, without distinction of Sex or Color.’”⁶⁶ The adoption of this resolution signaled the plausibility of building a movement that was based upon woman’s common subjugation and not a racial hierarchy.

Former slaves, Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass spoke at the convention and echoed Davis’ call for gender and racial equality. In an article in the *New York Tribune*, the reporter summarized Douglass’ argument on woman’s right to civil liberties, “Let woman *take* her rights, and then she shall be *free*.”⁶⁷

Sojourner Truth’s presence at the convention signified black women’s involvement in benevolence organizations. Truth entered the woman’s rights

⁶⁵ Ibid., 223.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 223, 219.

⁶⁷ *New York Tribune*, 26, Oct. 1850, in *This High and Holy Moment: The First National Woman’s Rights Convention, Worcester, 1850*, John F. McClymer, ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), 140-141. Emphasis in original.

movement and represented free and enslaved black women. Her participation served as a constant reminder in both the abolition and woman's rights campaign to incorporate black woman's grievances into the predominantly white movements.⁶⁸

The international attention to the Worcester resolutions signified the growth of the suffrage movement that was predicated on the Seneca Falls convention. The proceedings in Worcester inspired Harriet Taylor Mill, John Stuart Mill's wife, to write the article, "The Enfranchisement of Women," which appeared in the *Westminster Review*. Newspapers throughout Europe published the piece. Her article represented the natural expansion in the press coverage of international suffrage events. As a result, both the article and the resolutions from the Worcester convention provided women with an example of a movement that sought to enfranchise women to affect direct legislative changes. Women's involvement in previous moral reform campaigns, such as the abolition and temperance, had not focused on the battle for woman's rights. The expansive woman's rights movement represented the opportunity for a direct voice in politics. The scattered movements in Europe continued to grow and press for legislative changes, similar to the campaigns in the United States. The international response to the meeting also created a global female community that encouraged subsequent conventions to garner support and combat opposition.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ibid., 64-65.

⁶⁹ Matthews, *Women's Struggle for Equality*, 66-67.

Most importantly, the 1850 convention inaugurated annual national meetings. Woman's rights activists convened such meetings in every year of that decade, with the exception of 1857.⁷⁰ National conventions boasted larger audiences than local meetings and male leadership would have been expected. However, women rejected the notion of male organizers in their movement. Female leadership became one method that Davis and Stanton used to emphasize the appropriateness of women public speakers. Women began to assume roles as officers of the campaign and chairs of subsequent conventions which signified a commitment to a movement independent of male leadership.⁷¹ Women such as Davis, Stone and eventually Anthony, served as President for the proceedings of national conventions. Annual meetings passed resolutions similar to those in the *Declaration of Sentiments*, as well as proposed goals for the following year. The planks of the woman's rights platform included higher education for women, marriage legislation to place women as men's equals, and most importantly, the vote. The numbers of men and women who attended these annual conventions continued to grow sharply following the Worcester meeting. In 1860, over two thousand men and women convened in New York state prior to the outbreak of the Civil War.⁷² The Worcester convention reaffirmed the central legislative goal

⁷⁰ There was no evidence to explain the absence of a national convention in 1857.

⁷¹ Davis was not the first woman to preside over a convention. Suffragist, Amy Post led the second woman's rights meeting on August 2, 1848. In the *History of Woman Suffrage*, Volume I, the discussions that took place under Post's leadership, served as a continuation of the Seneca Falls convention. See, *HWS*, Vol. I, 75.

⁷² Matthews, *Women's Struggle for Equality*, 67-68.

of the woman's rights movement: to campaign for female suffrage on a national and local scale.

Conclusion

The Seneca Falls convention has become the watershed moment in the history of woman's rights. The *Declaration of Sentiments* provided suffragists with a list of political and social demands. However, the gender ideologies of the period demanded that the document's language remain within the terminology of the *Declaration of Independence*. Therefore, from the start of the nineteenth-century woman's rights movement, activists relied upon a text that had excluded them. In addition, Stanton chose not to create a unified female suffrage movement and omitted black women from the *Declaration of Sentiments*. In contrast, the Worcester proceedings used Stanton's document as an ideological base upon which to expand the suffrage movement to include black women. The Worcester convention illustrated the possibilities of a woman's rights movement that did not cower to racist ideologies and instead, emphasized broader ideas of freedom and female equality.

The year after the Worcester convention, Anthony met Stanton, and throughout that decade they worked together to garner additional support for the movement. Anthony would continue to embody and challenge gender ideologies as well as to employ a white racial supremacy argument throughout her campaign for woman's rights. In order to build an expansive movement, Stanton and

Anthony would have to pull away from the Cult of Domesticity in order to mount a successful campaign for suffrage.

CHAPTER II
WHOSE RIGHTS?: THE BATTLE TO FIND A PLACE AMIDST
THE POLITICS OF THE 1850s AND THE RECONSTRUCTION ERA

Early in 1850, while Susan B. Anthony was in Seneca Falls, New York to hear William Lloyd Garrison present an anti-slavery lecture, she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton. As Stanton described in the *History of Woman Suffrage*, the two women became “fast friends.” Their friendship developed into an equal partnership, unparalleled in their relationships with others. In Stanton’s reminisces she commented, “in writing we did better work together than either could alone.”⁷³ Soon after that first encounter, Anthony and Stanton began to collaborate on the organization of conventions, speaking tours and petition drives. Their friendship continued until Stanton’s death in 1902.

During the antebellum period, the campaign for female suffrage continued to expand through Stanton and Anthony’s leadership. In contrast to most historical analyses, the decade of the 1850s was a crucial period of strategic change in the suffrage movement. Anthony both embodied and challenged gender ideologies through her leadership of conventions and in appeals to the New York state legislature. Anthony also continued the suffragists’ alliance with the abolition movement and worked with temperance reformers.

Anthony had entered the woman’s rights movement through her work with the Daughters of Temperance organization. That group campaigned for legislation

⁷³ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et al., eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. I (Salem: Ayer Company, 1985), 459. Hereafter this source will be abbreviated, *HWS*, Vol. I.

to limit the consumption of alcohol.⁷⁴ Anthony spoke before female reform organizations to convince them to become involved in the woman's rights movement as a method toward achieving their individual goals. As the 1850s continued, Anthony lectured on behalf of the Daughters of Temperance, and she also became increasingly involved with William Lloyd Garrison and other radical abolitionists.

During the antebellum period, Anthony utilized both the Cult of Domesticity ideology and a natural rights argument to attract female supporters to the suffrage movement. Similar to Stanton's campaign strategy, Anthony believed that women would bring their virtuous nature to the body politic. She relied on the members of Daughter of Temperance to participate in the suffrage campaign. Anthony also increased the number of conventions devoted to woman's rights issues. In those meetings, she merged the plight of American slaves with women's inequality to white men. Anthony implored Northern white women to work for their own enfranchisement in tandem with the abolition of slavery. During the 1850s and in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, Anthony viewed female suffrage and slaves' emancipation as part of the same issue of subordination.

One of the defining characteristics of the antebellum period of the suffrage movement was the state-level focus of legislative appeals, as opposed to the federal campaigning strategy of the late 1860s. To adhere to the power that state

⁷⁴ For more information of women's involvement in the United States' Temperance cause, refer to Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) and Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: A "Woman's Sphere," in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

legislatures had on suffrage laws, Anthony led a petition drive in 1854 to amend the New York state constitution to include women as enfranchised voters. That appeal was the final attempt to secure a female suffrage law before the Civil War. Although the period of the Civil War was important in the history of women's benevolence work, activists did not campaign for suffrage during the conflict. Instead, they devoted their efforts toward ensuring a Union victory. After the war was over, suffragists returned to their efforts to ensure that female suffrage would become a part of Reconstruction debates.

During Reconstruction, Anthony's actions and arguments were in tension with her support of black male suffrage. In 1866, Anthony and Stanton united with abolitionists and formed the American Equal Rights Association (AERA) to campaign for universal suffrage.⁷⁵ However, Stanton continued to campaign, as she had before the war, using a racially superior argument to ensure white female suffrage. Once the Republican Party pulled their support of female suffrage in favor of black male suffrage, Anthony cultivated an alliance with the Democratic Party in spite of her history with abolitionists. Anthony introduced a separatist strategy as another tool within the female suffrage campaign.

Anthony's new tactic used the Cult of Domesticity that elevated the status of white women. That ideology enabled her to position white women as superior to black men. During the ratification period of the Fourteenth Amendment, she opposed black male voting rights at the cost of woman's continuous

⁷⁵ Hereafter the American Equal Rights Association will be referred to as the AERA.

disenfranchisement. The amendment introduced the word “male” into the Constitution and thereby, explicitly associated the notion of citizenship with sex. In her application of the Cult of Domesticity, Anthony highlighted the virtuous nature of white women that they would bring to the body politic as voters.

Anthony also formed a relationship with the National Labor Union to circumvent the two-party political system. Neither her alliance with the union nor the Democratic Party led to the passage of a female suffrage law. Anthony’s utilization of a white racial supremacy argument also proved unsuccessful. The defining characteristics of the Cult of Domesticity did not change during the nineteenth-century. The majority of Americans did not support Anthony’s use of gender ideologies or controversial political allies, and therefore Anthony had to look to other strategies to secure a female suffrage law.

An Early Alliance: Anthony and the Daughters of Temperance

Anthony’s activism had its roots in female moral reform organizations of the 1840s. During the preceding decades, white women had formed various reform groups, such as the Martha Washington Union and the Daughters of Temperance.⁷⁶ The members of those reform movements attempted to bring about social change through the application of their white, Protestant idealism.⁷⁷ The Daughters of Temperance emphasized the importance of female domesticity and the separate spheres ideology. Those gender ideas connected woman’s superior

⁷⁶ Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 133.

⁷⁷ Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 1-2.

place within the home to her moral character. The members of the Daughters of Temperance argued that the combination of feminine power and qualities would bring stability to family life.⁷⁸ These characteristics became increasingly important as Anthony challenged members of the Daughters of Temperance to act beyond their domestic bounds. Society had begun to accept women's participation in moral reform and specifically, temperance work. Anthony positioned the right to suffrage as a necessary tool to ensure liquor regulations.

Anthony framed suffrage as the next step in the evolution of women's participation in moral reform and public debate. In her first public speech in 1849, Anthony echoed the argument of other temperance reformers and declared that women had the influence to steer men away from alcohol and drunkenness. Furthermore, Anthony believed once women had the vote, they would be able to change legislation to curtail alcohol consumption. The language of her speech worked within the ideology of the Cult of Domesticity. She urged her female audience, "to do all in our power, both individually and collectively to harmonize and happify our social system."⁷⁹ Anthony focused her attention on white, middle and upper classes wives and mothers, whom society deemed as morally superior to men and all other races. Anthony urged the members of the Daughters of Temperance not to surrender their cause to the men who opposed female suffrage. Instead, they must work for the day "when no wife shall watch with trembling

⁷⁸ Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 135, 140.

⁷⁹ SBA in a speech to the Daughters of Temperance, 2 March 1849, in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Against an Aristocracy of Sex 1866-1873*, Vol. I (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press: 1998), 138-139. Grammar in original.

heart... [the] sure descent of her idolized companion, down into the loathsome haunts of drunkenness...when no mother shall have to mourn over a darling son..."⁸⁰ At that time Anthony did not suggest that woman suffrage was the only solution to end male inebriation. Instead, she used that opportunity to gain additional support for temperance laws at the state level. Her early speeches conveyed the positive impact women would have on temperance legislation.

Anthony's involvement in the temperance movement provided her with insights into possible tactics, which she would later apply to the suffrage campaign. The most important strategy Anthony learned was augmenting and changing alliances, which became a constant thread throughout her involvement in the suffrage movement. In the early 1850s, she sought to garner support from women. Men were not specifically targeted for support, as they were the primary demographic of alcoholics and drunkards. She relied upon female audience members in the Daughters of Temperance to act on their own behalf and create change. During the 1852 campaign for temperance legislation, she made a speech to the women of Batavia, New York. There, Anthony challenged her female audience to no longer allow men to misrepresent women in the voting booth. Social issues, such as temperance, required that women vote to ensure liquor restrictions. As a result, women must, "send up...one united resolve to refuse to trust them as our agents." Anthony charged her female audience with the

⁸⁰ Ibid., 137.

dangerous “womanly virtue” of remaining silent during a period that demanded social reform and action.⁸¹

At that moment, Anthony impressed upon women the need for political action to correct the social evil of alcohol abuse through the implementation of a natural rights argument.⁸² Anthony demanded that women must use their power as citizens and take action to ensure their issues had a voice within the body politic. Anthony continued Stanton’s reasoning and challenged the misrepresentation of women. Within the body of the *Declaration of Sentiments*, Stanton had described a gendered double standard. Anthony charged that white men enjoyed political enfranchisement despite their drunken and immoral behavior.⁸³ Anthony also employed language from the Cult of Domesticity and urged women to act on behalf of themselves and not leave social reforms to men. In a speech entitled, “Expediency,” Anthony continued to convince women that it was their duty as the “god appointed, though humble” sex to focus their “pure minds” to guarantee liquor regulation.⁸⁴ Anthony argued that although nineteenth-century gender ideologies identified women as the purer sex, they did not have elective franchise and therefore could not make legislative changes. As a result, white men made political decisions for both sexes despite their questionable morality. Anthony urged her audiences to work toward social reforms including suffrage so their

⁸¹ Box 7, Reel 6, address first delivered in Batavia, New York, May 1852, Susan B. Anthony Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Emphasis in original.

⁸² Kathleen Barry, *Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of a Singular Feminist* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 70.

⁸³ *HWS*, Vol. I, 71.

⁸⁴ Box 7, Reel 6, “Expediency,” June 27, 1853, Susan B. Anthony Papers. Emphasis in original.

daughters could fulfill their destiny as governors in the body politic.⁸⁵ Once she had additional supporters within the Daughters of Temperance, Anthony took steps toward a New York state constitutional amendment that would enfranchise women.

The Petition as a Tool in the Suffrage Campaign

In order to attract additional supporters to the suffrage cause, Anthony led a petition drive in 1854. The circulation of petitions was a strategy to reach those that did not necessarily come into contact with other forms of literature. Historian Susan Zaeske discussed several effects of abolitionists' petitions, which also could be said of suffragists' appeals. Newspaper articles, speeches and conventions only attracted those who were directly interested in causes like abolition and suffrage. In contrast, "face-to-face" encounters through the circulation of petitions granted activists the potential to reach a new audience of supporters.⁸⁶

The 1854 petition drive to add a female voting amendment to the New York state constitution questioned the power of the woman's lobby to create legislative change. In order to gain suffrage, Anthony led women throughout New York state to gather signatures on two separate pieces of legislation. The first petition Anthony began to circulate in 1855 sought the "Just and Equal Rights of Women" and the second asked for "Women's Right of Suffrage." The latter

⁸⁵ SBA speech, "Expediency."

⁸⁶ Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, & Women's Political Identity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 175.

petition demanded that a suffrage amendment be added to the state constitution. Although by 1854 women in New York state had property and marriage rights per the resolutions of the previous decades, Anthony and others called for a bill that would expressly state woman's equality to man in all aspects of the law. Anthony continued to employ the idea of direct political participation through the vote. During the petition drive, women reformers argued that "governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed..."⁸⁷ Until women could directly elect government officials, men would continue to misrepresent women in all political matters. In 1854, Anthony circulated the two petitions among local woman's rights leaders and they in turn gathered signatures during village meetings.⁸⁸ Those two state legislative appeals sought to attract support for the woman's rights movement and also to encourage debate regarding the necessity of female suffrage.

The petition drive illustrated the expansion of the woman's suffrage campaign within New York state. Anthony extended the call for signatories in 1855 through the *New York Daily Tribune*. During that January, eleven villages held conventions to encourage both men and women to sign the two woman's rights petitions. Local meetings throughout New York state were part of a strategy to expand the movement and support for the two petitions. The following month Anthony posted a similar announcement in the *Tribune*. As a result, an additional

⁸⁷ HWS, Vol. I, 588-589.

⁸⁸ SBA to Matilda J. Gage, 28 June 1854, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Against an Aristocracy of Sex 1866-1873*, Vol. I, 275-276.

fifteen towns hosted meetings.⁸⁹ Anthony submitted the two petitions to the state legislature in Albany. Her written statement to the assembly demanded a state constitutional amendment that granted female suffrage due to a citizen's right to vote.⁹⁰ Anthony hoped that the possible success in New York state would lead to subsequent petition drives in neighboring states.

Anthony's 1854 campaign to amend the New York state constitution signified the final effort for state-level changes in the antebellum period. The New York state legislature did not adopt either of the measures.⁹¹ In 1856, Samuel Foote, a member from the Judiciary Committee, read the decision of the legislature regarding female suffrage. His committee had ruled against any amendments to the state constitution where the petition included female enfranchisement. Foote's conclusion illustrated the brevity with which his committee had considered the appeals. Foote suggested that in those "instances in which husband and wife have both signed the same petition... [his committee] would recommend ...that the husband may wear the petticoats, and the wife the breeches, and thus indicate...the true relation in which they stand to each other."⁹² In light of Foote's ruling, Anthony shifted the focus of her strategies after this appeal. She abandoned the rhetoric of the Cult of Domesticity and continued to emphasize woman's natural right to direct political participation through the vote.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 291, 301-2.

⁹⁰ SBA to Anson Bingham, 20 June 1855, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 304.

⁹¹ Earlier in 1856, the Select Committee rejected the appeal for female suffrage, but had passed the petition that would grant, "just and equal civil rights for woman." The latter petition was referred to Foote's Senate Judiciary Committee.

⁹² *HWS*, Vol. I, 630.

She argued, “Woman does not ask for privileges; all she wants is her rights- to be placed upon equality with man.”⁹³ In the aftermath of the failed New York state legislative appeal, Anthony called attention to woman’s shared subordinate position with American slaves.

A Shared Plight: American Women and Slaves and the Status of the Suffrage Campaign on the Eve of the Civil War

During the late 1850s, rather than encourage Northern white women to believe their oppressed condition was unique and their freedom depended upon the continued servitude of slaves, Anthony merged the two ideas. She reasoned that the Northern and Southern state and economic structures held the power that subordinated women and slaves. In front of Northern white women, Anthony used a speech, “Make the Slave’s Case Our Own,” and reinforced suffragists’ alliance with abolitionists. Suffrage and abolition movements had previously overlapped and Anthony depended upon the support from Garrison and other leaders in the abolition campaign to expand the female suffrage movement. During her lectures, Anthony continued to campaign for temperance legislation and abolition, while she narrowed the woman’s rights platform to the issue of female suffrage as the only solution to other gender inequalities and social reforms. Anthony declared in 1859, “Liberty or Death” was the watchword for women with regard to their freedom. Anthony argued, without the vote, women could switch places with slaves due to their identical positions of servitude and misrepresentation. Anthony

⁹³ SBA Speech at Monroe County Woman’s Rights Convention, 15 Jan. 1855, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 296.

called for the immediate emancipation of all slaves and women. In order to convince women of their common plight with slaves, Anthony reasoned that those in slavery were “thinking, acting, conscious beings, like ourselves...” and deserved emancipation.⁹⁴

Anthony and Stanton’s participation and alliances with temperance and abolition groups, as well as the state-level legislative campaign, contributed to the expansion of the suffrage cause. In 1860, as the capstone to a decade of campaigning for woman’s rights, Anthony outlined the movement’s successes at the tenth national convention that took place in New York City. In her address to approximately four hundred people, Anthony emphasized that one hundred and fifty meetings had occurred in forty different New York state counties. Stanton’s plan to continue local meetings was successful. As a result of Paulina Wright Davis’ idea for annual national conventions that began in Worcester in 1850, the movement had expanded throughout the North. The presence of female lecturers as a campaign tactic had also proven successful. Anthony reported that six women had toured the country to garner support for the movement. Anthony concluded her speech with a summary of the resolutions that national conventions had passed during the decade, the most profound of which demanded “a full recognition of our equal rights, civil and political...[woman’s] right... [to] the ballot.”⁹⁵ Conventions throughout the 1850s had passed similar resolutions.⁹⁶ The

⁹⁴ Box 7, Reel 7, “Make the Slave’s Case Our Own,” ca. 1859, Susan B. Anthony Papers.

⁹⁵ *HWS*, Vol. I, 707.

⁹⁶ “Woman’s Rights Convention,” *The New York Times*, 11 May 1860, p 8.

continuity of the woman's rights agenda illustrated a staunch commitment to achieving those liberties, which activists viewed as inherent freedoms.

The increased literacy and population of both New York state and the nation had created a new target audience for woman's rights activists through announcements of conventions and the resolutions from those proceedings.⁹⁷ *The New York Times* reported the events of the 1860 convention in a lengthy article and included the meeting's resolution that once again emphasized "that all men are created equal, and all women, in their natural rights, are the equals of men; and endowed by their Creator with the same inalienable right of the pursuit of happiness."⁹⁸ Throughout the course of the convention, Stanton implored the audience to continue their support of woman's suffrage as the current political climate "daily show[s] how incompetent [men] are...as individuals, or as governments..."⁹⁹ The tenth national convention rededicated the woman's rights movement to their original goal of female suffrage.

The Reconstruction Era: The Power of the Federal Government & Woman's Suffrage

During the Civil War, suffragists devoted all of their efforts to the Union cause rather than work for female voting rights. Two examples of the conflict's positive effects on woman's status in the public sphere were the rise of Northern women's employment and women's fulfillment of untraditional gender roles in

⁹⁷ Claire E. Jerry, "The Role of Newspapers in the Nineteenth-Century Woman's Movement," in *A Voice of Their Own*, Martha M. Solomon ed. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1991), 18.

⁹⁸ *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 418.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 419.

retail stores. In addition, over eighteen thousand Northern white women volunteered for the Union army as nurses, cooks and laundresses. As a result of these advances and the emancipation of American slaves, Anthony and other suffragists perceived that there was an opportunity to create social and political changes that would drastically expand the rights of former slaves and women.¹⁰⁰

After the war's conclusion, Anthony utilized two contradictory strategies to attract more people to the female suffrage cause. Anthony campaigned for woman's rights and urged suffragists to resume annual national conventions. Throughout the early years of Reconstruction, Anthony continued to utilize her speech, "Make the Slaves Case Our Own," and implored the public to consider not only freedmen's rights but women's liberties as well. However, during the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, Anthony narrowed her campaign and employed the rhetoric of white racial supremacy to attract additional support for white female suffrage.

In the early years of Reconstruction, Anthony continued to support black male suffrage to avoid losing future Republican Congressional support for woman's suffrage legislation. After the Civil War, abolitionists were no longer on the fringes of politics. The Republican Party held solid majorities in both houses

¹⁰⁰ Jean V. Matthews, *Women's Struggle for Equality: The First Phase, 1828- 1876* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997), 116-117. For more on suffragists' and specifically Anthony's participation in the Civil War see, Lyde Cullen Sizer, *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War, 1850- 1872* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), Jeannie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern Women and the Civil War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), Matthews, *Women's Struggle for Equality*, 116-120, Kathleen Barry, *Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of a Singular Feminist*, (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 150-154.

of Congress, which allowed them to control Reconstruction legislation. One of the main objectives of the Reconstruction project was to bring Southern states back to the Congressional fold. Southern whites opposed black male enfranchisement because they did not wish to share political influence with men whom they considered former chattel. Republicans did not expect to gain many Southern white votes. Rather, leaders in the Party, such as Senators Benjamin Wade and Charles Sumner, believed they could blunt the Southerners' political voting power with newly enfranchised black men. Republicans did not believe that female voters would not have a similar effect.¹⁰¹

In spite of Wade and Sumner's political strategy, Anthony saw the possibility of radically expanding voting rights to include black men and women. Previously, suffrage had been a states' issue. Once the federal government began to include suffrage as part of its Reconstruction legislation, Anthony shifted the primary strategy of the suffrage campaign to a federal amendment. Anthony believed that the Republican majority in Congress could provide enough political support to grant woman's suffrage within Reconstruction legislation.

During the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, female voting rights became overshadowed, due to Congressional Republicans' support of black male citizenship. To secure public and Congressional support for universal suffrage, Anthony and Stanton united in 1866 with Wendell Phillips and other Republican

¹⁰¹ Ellen Carol Dubois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 59. See also, E. Merton Coulter, *The South During Reconstruction: 1865- 1877* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), 113.

abolitionists.¹⁰² They formed the American Equal Rights Association (AERA). Stanton addressed the assembly, “now in the reconstruction is the opportunity, perhaps for the century, to base our government on the broad principle of equal rights to all.”¹⁰³ Anthony also declared her support for universal suffrage, “we believe that this is the hour to establish the equality of every individual who is subject to the government of the United States- not the hour for races, but the hour for human beings to be established in equality.”¹⁰⁴ Despite Anthony’s public remarks and participation in the AERA, her primary objective was to secure female suffrage.

As Republicans led the campaign for the Fourteenth Amendment’s ratification, members of the AERA appealed to women and men throughout the country to support enfranchisement of all Americans regardless of sex or race.¹⁰⁵ In 1866, Senator Wade wrote to Anthony and, in confidence, expressed his support for female suffrage. Similar to his fellow Republicans, he privately opposed denying suffrage on “account of race, color, or sex”¹⁰⁶ However, securing black male rights proved to be controversial, and the Congressional Republicans did not wish to use its political capital on female enfranchisement.

¹⁰² After the Civil War, the public associated abolitionists with the Republican Party. Hereafter, the political term, “Republican” encompasses the term, “abolition,” as the party and the social movement became inextricably linked during the Reconstruction era.

¹⁰³ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et al., eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. II (Salem: Ayer Company, 1985), 153. Hereafter this source will be abbreviated *HWS* Vol. II. The American Equal Rights Association will be referred to as the AERA.

¹⁰⁴ SBA Speech to the Equal Rights Convention, 6 Dec. 1866, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Against an Aristocracy of Sex 1866-1873*, Vol. II (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press: 2000), 1.

¹⁰⁵ *HWS*, Vol. II, 90.

¹⁰⁶ “Senator Wade on Female Suffrage,” *The New York Times*, 10 Dec. 1866, p 5. Wade wrote his opinion on female suffrage to SBA and she released the letter to *The New York Times*.

As a result of the disparity between the Republican Party's private and public positions on female suffrage, Anthony adopted a separatist strategy.

Anthony's new strategy emphasized her opposition to the word "male" in the Fourteenth Amendment that would associate citizenship with sex. Anthony argued that there was no existing law that recognized female citizenship. The freedoms associated with citizenship, such as voting rights had been established prior to the Civil War. However, during the antebellum period, women's indirect methods of political participation carried greater influence. The ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment would grant black men citizenship, and as a result, political influence would become intrinsically linked to sex. Through Reconstruction legislation, sex replaced class and race as the determinant of an American's civil liberties.

As it became clear that woman's suffrage did not have the Republican Party's support, Anthony employed a racist agenda that described the subjugation white women experienced. Rather than expand the female suffrage platform to include black women as well, Anthony chose to explore an alliance with Democrats.¹⁰⁷ In order to justify the campaign's new partnership, Anthony and other suffragists began to draft petitions that argued, that women, despite comprising one-half of the population, "stand outside the pale of political recognition. The Constitution classes us as 'free people,' and counts us *whole*

¹⁰⁷ During the Reconstruction period, black women had few powerful advocates to help them gain political rights. For more information of black women's agency, see Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race & Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983).

persons...[yet] the ballot...is not in the hand of every citizen.”¹⁰⁸ Within the language of this petition, Anthony shaped a white racial supremacy argument.

Throughout the ratification period of the Fourteenth Amendment, Anthony and Stanton’s involvement in the AERA served as the means to ensure black men did not receive the vote unless and until women were enfranchised. In a letter to the editor of *The Standard*, Stanton expressed her frustration with the proposal to include the word “male” in the Constitution. She perceived that white women faced the serious dilemma, “whether we had better stand aside and see ‘Sambo’ [enjoy]...the right of suffrage...first.”¹⁰⁹ Similar to Stanton’s exclusion of black women from the *Declaration of Sentiments* and her employment of racist language, Stanton once again favored white female suffrage over the enfranchisement of other races. Although Anthony did not emulate her friend’s rhetoric to attract new supporters, her decision to narrow the suffrage platform to white female suffrage signified a racially motivated strategy.

Her public rhetoric continued to support universal suffrage. At the first national woman’s rights convention after the war, in 1866, Anthony proposed the following resolution,

The duty of Congress at this moment is to declare what shall be the basis of representation in a republican form of government...that taxation must give representation; hence our demand must now go beyond woman... We, therefore, wish to broaden our Woman’s Rights platform, and make it in *name-* what it ever has been in *spirit-* a Human Rights platform¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *HWS*, Vol. II, 91, Emphasis in original. As slaves, men and women were counted as 3/5 of a person, as opposed to white women who were “whole persons.”

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 172. Emphasis in original.

The tension between Stanton and Anthony's public remarks and behavior as well as their participation in the AERA, illustrated the strategic depth of the woman's suffrage movement. In the event of a possible defeat of the Fourteenth Amendment, Anthony and Stanton would continue to campaign for female voting rights. They depended upon a base of white supporters, who responded to a racial supremacy argument. Not only did Anthony employ a variety of strategies on her speaking tours, she and Stanton also continued their tactic of state appeals.

The Republican's campaign to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment emphasized the lack of support within Congress for female suffrage legislation. As a result, Stanton and Anthony looked to state legislatures, as they had during the antebellum period, to create a female voting rights law. During the early years of Reconstruction, states had begun to revise their Constitutions. In 1867, Anthony and Stanton appeared before the constitutional convention in New York state to promote the inclusion of female suffrage within the body of the revised document. They also used that opportunity to oppose the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.¹¹¹ Stanton painted black men as mentally incompetent and thereby incapable of voting. During the convention, Stanton reasoned, "enfranchise him, [black men exclusively] and we are left outside with lunatics, idiots and criminals for another twenty years."¹¹² Stanton's language during Reconstruction did not coincide with her political activism. At the same moment that Stanton equated black men with lunatics and criminals, she was also the co-

¹¹¹ *HWS*, Vol. II, 270.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

vice president of the AERA along with Frederick Douglass.¹¹³ Anthony and Stanton's measure before the New York state legislature did not pass. A mere nineteen men supported the motion and an overwhelming one hundred and twenty-five men did not.¹¹⁴ Both the failure at the state level and the Republican Party's lack of public support for female suffrage pushed Anthony and Stanton toward other sources of financial backing and political power.

The 1867 Kansas Campaign for Woman's Suffrage

The Kansas Campaign was the moment when it was no longer possible for Anthony to support both black male and female suffrage. It quickly became clear during the campaign for the Fourteenth Amendment that Congressional Republicans were not going to support the suffragists' appeal for female voting rights. As a result, Anthony turned to the Democratic Party, which had opposed the Republican Party's enfranchisement of black men. In contrast to revisions that the New York state legislature had drafted in March 1867, Kansas allowed its citizens to vote on two referenda. One would secure black male suffrage, and the second would enfranchise women. The two pieces of legislation became separated, rather than united under the common issue of subordination. Suffragists Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell campaigned in Kansas prior to the arrivals of Anthony and Stanton. Despite the newspaper articles and "overflowing...meetings," the Republican Party abandoned the woman's suffrage

¹¹³ Davis, *Women, Race & Class*, 75.

¹¹⁴ Barry, *Susan B. Anthony*, 177.

referendum.¹¹⁵ Republicans viewed female suffrage as politically damaging in tandem with the unpopularity of black male enfranchisement. As a result, Anthony turned to the Democratic Party for political and financial support for the Kansas ballot. As Stone described, “they [Democratic state party] with nothing to lose, and utterly unscrupulous...will work with anybody.”¹¹⁶ Anthony began to accept donations from Democrats to sustain the campaign throughout the spring of 1867.

Financial constraints and not party loyalty compelled Anthony to find an ally in the Democrat, George Francis Train. In 1867, Train was a politician seeking the Democratic presidential nomination. He perceived that the female suffrage referendum in Kansas as an opportunity to attract voters to his campaign.¹¹⁷ Anthony accepted Train’s offer to stump for the woman’s suffrage cause. She mused in a letter to fellow suffragist, Anne Dickinson, “how funny; [sic] that Geo. Francis Train is coming into the state for a month- to talk for woman- What sort of a furor he will make.”¹¹⁸ Train’s entrance into the Kansas Campaign in support of female enfranchisement marked the beginning of the split among suffragists.

¹¹⁵ Lucy Stone to ECS, 10 April 1867, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 49.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Dubois, *Feminism and Suffrage*, 93-94.

¹¹⁸ SBA to Anne E. Dickinson, 23 Sept. 1867, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 93. Grammar in original. Historian Ann Gordon characterized Train as a Northern Democrat who favored labor reform and abolitionism. However, Train did not support the enfranchisement of black men before white women.

In the months prior to the November vote, Anthony's alliance with Train further dismantled her relationship with Senate Republicans Wade and Sumner, as well as abolitionist ally, Garrison. Republicans throughout the country accurately viewed Democratic support of woman's suffrage as part of a broader effort to weaken the campaign for black male enfranchisement.¹¹⁹ The Kansas referendum on black male suffrage represented one of the cornerstones of Reconstruction legislation. Although such legislation was not focused in Kansas, Congressional Republicans sought to test the public support of black male enfranchisement. Republicans reasoned that the ratification of a federal amendment would not be successful, nor would their Party remain in power, should the Democratic opposition in a non-Southern state render black men disenfranchised.¹²⁰ Even without Republican support for female suffrage, Stanton and others remained optimistic that Kansas women would become enfranchised. Stanton wrote to her husband, "everybody says the woman proposition will be carried, but the negro one will not. The Democrats here go for us strong."¹²¹ In the end, male voters defeated both referenda.

Despite the negative outcome, the Kansas Campaign cemented Anthony's alliance with Train. The referendum was the first experiment of placing female suffrage on a ballot. The failure to secure the women of Kansas suffrage, illustrated the controversial nature of the campaign. Anthony described the defeat

¹¹⁹ Dubois, *Feminism & Suffrage*, 87.

¹²⁰ James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: The First Phase, 1828-1876* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997), 382.

¹²¹ ECS to Henry B. Stanton, 9 Oct. 1867, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 96.

of the female suffrage referendum in a letter to fellow suffragist, Olympia Brown, “never was so grand a success- never was defeat so glorious a victory.”¹²² The Kansas Campaign highlighted the lack of public support for female voting rights. To attract men and women to the cause, Anthony embarked with Train on a national speaking tour after the vote. At that time, Train provided the financial backing for Anthony and Stanton’s newspaper, *The Revolution*, which first circulated in January of 1868.

The Influence of *The Revolution* and Suffragists’ Changing Alliances

The publication of *The Revolution* was another tactic Anthony employed during the campaign for female suffrage legislation. The idea for publishing a strictly woman’s rights newspaper followed the Kansas Campaign. Once the politicians in the Republican Party had abandoned female suffrage in favor of black male suffrage, woman’s rights activists could no longer depend upon the Party’s press to convey their movement’s agenda. The female suffrage movement depended upon the support of a dominant political party. Train’s financial backing provided Anthony and Stanton with the means to promote their cause without the campaign for the Fourteenth Amendment overshadowing woman’s suffrage. Suffragists considered the Democratic Party favorable, due to its inherent disorganization following the Civil War. Within the Democratic Party there were a variety of different political ideologies and agendas. Most importantly for suffragists, the Party had yet to define its position on universal suffrage in the

¹²² SBA to Olympia Brown, 7 Nov. 1867, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 100. Emphasis in the original.

Reconstruction era. Anthony and Stanton hoped that Democrats would prove supportive of woman's suffrage.¹²³

The expressed motto of *The Revolution* was, "Principle, Not Policy: Justice, Not Favors. - Men, Their Rights and Nothing More: Women, Their Rights and Nothing Less."¹²⁴ *The Revolution* was a weekly sixteen page newspaper that offered its readers a rare view of woman's status within American public life. Stanton and suffrage supporter, Parker Pillsbury, edited the newspaper.¹²⁵ Anthony was its proprietor and worked to increase the number of subscribers. Despite its short life of four years and only three thousand subscriptions nationwide, *The Revolution* provided the suffrage movement with direction and focus.¹²⁶ The articles and editorials reflected an increasingly progressive agenda for advancing woman's rights, which did not shy away from controversial social topics of the day.

Anthony's financial alliance with Train was not without drawbacks. Anthony and Stanton lost the support of Garrison and other abolitionists. He, as well as Congressional Republicans felt that Anthony and Stanton had allowed Train's racism to sway them into abandoning their campaign for black male suffrage. Even more damaging, rather than utilize the suffragist's newspaper to

¹²³ Dubois, *Feminism & Suffrage*, 108.

¹²⁴ *The Revolution*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 15 Jan. 1868, p 1.

¹²⁵ Parker Pillsbury was a Republican who remained a constant and active supporter of the female suffrage campaign, despite the Party's abandonment of the cause. For more information of Parker Pillsbury's political and social affiliations see, Ellen Carol Dubois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 74, 104, 108.

¹²⁶ Matthews, *Women's Struggle for Equality*, 129-130.

create an alliance with black women activists, Stanton increased her racist rhetoric. As a result, Anthony became responsible for conveying a counterbalance to her friend's position.

Anthony remained privately supportive of black male suffrage while she devoted her efforts to female voting rights. In a letter to activist, Anna Dickinson, Anthony conveyed her hope for universal suffrage, "if some party would put a woman's suffrage plank- a universal suffrage plank- in their platform- wouldn't that party gather to itself all the enthusiasm of the nation & sweep over the course like wildfire..."¹²⁷ Anthony continued to extol the positive effects of universal suffrage on the American political system. She emphasized that female suffrage legislation would continue the process of enfranchising all citizens.¹²⁸

Abolitionists pressed Anthony and Stanton to wait for a more appropriate time for woman's suffrage. In comparison to the female suffrage campaign, abolitionists had a tremendous amount of momentum and political support within Congress, due to the Republican Party's majority.¹²⁹ Once Garrison had heard that Train offered to finance the suffragist's newspaper, he angrily described the Democrat as a "crack- brained harlequin and semi-lunatic..."¹³⁰ Republicans, such as Garrison, did not wish to waste political capital by supporting female suffrage. However, those same male activists felt deceived by Anthony's alliance with

¹²⁷ SBA to Anna E. Dickinson, 29 June, 1868, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 151-152. Emphasis and punctuation in original.

¹²⁸ "Susan B. Anthony in Tammany Hall," *The Revolution*, Vol. I, No. 1, 9 July 1868, p 1.

¹²⁹ Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 145.

¹³⁰ William Lloyd Garrison to SBA, 4 Jan. 1868, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 124.

Train. In spite of their opinion, Anthony continued to solicit financial support from Train and argue for female suffrage. In a letter to fellow suffragist, Olympia Brown, Anthony described the urgency of the woman's suffrage issue. She wrote, "We must & will be heard now- republicans imploring us to be silent... no, we will not wait- we will not be silent- Now is the accepted time..."¹³¹ As the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment appeared inevitable in the spring of 1868, Anthony began to develop a new alliance to ensure female suffrage.

The ideas in *The Revolution* conveyed the similarities and interests of both the Democratic Party and a second ally, the labor reform movement. In order to combat the public outcry from their alliance with the Democratic Party, Anthony and Stanton began to cultivate a relationship with the National Labor Union. The National Labor Union formed in 1866 and was made up of predominantly white, skilled craftsmen. Above all, the union championed the establishment of the eight hour work day. Two years after its inception, the union sought to expand from its minority base and include blacks, women and farmers in order to become a more powerful force in politics.¹³² Similar to the inclusion of the Democratic Party's racist ideology within *The Revolution*, Stanton tailored the newspaper to have maximum relevancy to working class women. *The Revolution* declared, "the principles of the National Labor Union are our principles. We see on the surface

¹³¹ SBA to Olympia Brown, 1 Jan. 1868, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 121. Emphasis and punctuation in the original.

¹³² Dubois *Feminism & Suffrage*, 111- 114.

of this great movement the dawn of brighter days.”¹³³ Stanton wrote articles that addressed reforms in the hiring and firing of female employees, woman’s position in religious practice and inequities in divorce proceedings. Even more unique, Stanton included reports of female professional pioneers and working women’s organizations. From the beginning of their alliance, suffragists and union members emphasized that their legislative reforms would improve the political system.¹³⁴

Anthony sought to use the labor union as a base of supporters to replace male-dominated political parties. In order to unite the female suffrage and labor movements, Anthony proposed the creation of a new political organization, the Working Woman’s Suffrage Association (WWSA). Anthony hoped that the labor union and the woman’s suffrage campaign could combine their separate efforts for social change to increase their collective political power. Through the WWSA, Anthony hoped to gain enough political influence to compel Congress to pass a female suffrage law. However, the female members of the National Labor Union resisted Anthony’s proposal of a political party. Soon after, the labor party ceased to ally themselves with the short hair and bloomers that society stereotypically associated with all suffragists.¹³⁵

During the ratification period and following the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in August of 1868, the suffrage movement could not continue

¹³³ “The National Labor Union and U.S. Bonds,” *The Revolution*, 9 April 1868, p213, quoted in Dubois *Feminism & Suffrage*, 110.

¹³⁴ Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 151.

¹³⁵ Matthews, *Women’s Struggle for Equality*, 131.

without the political clout of other organizations. Anthony's alliance with both the Democratic Party and the National Labor Union had inherent flaws. Despite, the racism of the Democrats and the controversial eight-hour work day of the labor union, suffragists did not shy away from forming new alliances. Immediately after the states ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, Congress looked to guarantee black male voting rights in what would become the Fifteenth Amendment. The increasingly narrow female suffrage campaign and rhetoric that Anthony had begun during the Kansas Campaign further developed as she positioned white women as the saviors of American politics.

Racism as a Tool and the Split of 1869

No longer could Anthony argue for the vote by describing women as equally subjugated as black men. After the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified, Anthony began to emulate Stanton's racist language that her friend had consistently used since the beginning of the suffrage campaign. Anthony employed white racial superiority as a tactic in her campaign for female suffrage. Rather than argue that women had the natural right to vote, she employed the Cult of Domesticity. Anthony used that ideology to combat the prevailing opinion that should the government enfranchise women, family life would be disrupted.¹³⁶ In one speech entitled "Women Want Bread Not the Ballot," Anthony stressed that once women could vote, those who wished to be involved in politics would bring

¹³⁶ Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 6-7.

feminine characteristics to the process as the “moral backbone of our nation.”¹³⁷ In the antebellum period, suffragists had justified their desire for the vote by emphasizing their inherent female qualities, “fairness, harmony, and self-control.”¹³⁸ Through her use of the Cult of Domesticity ideology, Anthony played upon Southerners fears of enfranchised black men and emphasized that female voters would return the nation to the business of politics due to their moral superiority. In contrast, black men would join inferior classes of people wielding their vote and forming a political voting block against Southern, white male interests.¹³⁹

Not only did Anthony remind the public of woman’s moral character, she also placed white men and women as racially superior to other ethnicities and racial groups.¹⁴⁰ Similar to Stanton’s rhetoric, Anthony reasoned that women were the representatives of American white culture. As ambassadors, once women got the vote, “who can doubt...high conditions will be the result?”¹⁴¹ Anthony assured white men that in contrast to black men, female voters were not a threat to their way of life. She stressed a new balance of power between white men and white women in government politics. Both black men and black women were left out of her model. The tension between Anthony and Stanton’s racist strategy and

¹³⁷ Susan B. Anthony, “Women Want Bread Not the Ballot,” in *The Struggle for Women’s Rights: Theoretical & Historical Sources*, George Klosko and Margaret G. Klosko eds. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1999), 139.

¹³⁸ Elizabeth R. Varon, “White Women and Party Politics in Antebellum Virginia,” in *Major Problems in American Women’s History*, 3rd ed. Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander eds. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2003), 118.

¹³⁹ Louise Michelle Newman, *White Women’s Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 59.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴¹ “Women Want Bread Not the Ballot,” in *The Struggle for Women’s Rights*, 139.

their affiliation with the AERA, ultimately led to a split within the female suffrage movement.

At the time of the 1869 AERA New York convention, states legislatures were in the process of ratifying the Fifteenth Amendment.¹⁴² The law prohibited disenfranchisement based upon race or previous conditions of servitude.¹⁴³ In one final attempt to win female suffrage through their alliance with the AERA, Anthony and Stanton introduced a campaign for a sixteenth amendment, which would grant female suffrage. Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell disagreed with Anthony and Stanton. They did not see black male suffrage as secure, or the political climate appropriate, for another constitutional amendment. In the aftermath of the Civil War, despite Reconstruction legislation and a Northern military presence, there was increasing violence aimed at freed blacks. Black men's ability to vote would lead to Republican victories that secured progressive legislation. However, black men's voting power would not improve the economic and physical threats in the daily lives of former slaves.¹⁴⁴ In contrast, Anthony and Stanton believed black men's liberties were protected by virtue of their direct voice in politics, whereas, white women remained disenfranchised. Anthony and Stanton did not want to delay a possible legislative victory that would enfranchise women, in order to further ensure the sanctity of black male rights. As a result, they left the AERA and formed the National Woman Suffrage Association

¹⁴² Dubois, *Feminism & Suffrage*, 186.

¹⁴³ *HWS*, Vol. II, 314.

¹⁴⁴ Davis, *Women, Race & Class*, 78-79.

(NWSA).¹⁴⁵ Their campaign had one plank: to achieve a legislative victory, ensuring female suffrage.

Conclusion

In the antebellum period Anthony joined the movement and began to steer its direction toward different political alliances. Unlike the abolitionists' campaign, which after the war had enough support in Congress to pass suffrage legislation for black men, female activists lacked a deep, national commitment to woman's suffrage. As a result, Anthony turned to George Francis Train for financial support and the political power of the Democratic Party. That alliance proved philosophically controversial and led the suffrage campaign to the National Labor Union. However, by 1869 it had become clear that the success of female suffrage required new tactics. Anthony and Stanton chose not to support the AERA's agenda as long as black male political rights overshadowed white women and their campaign for enfranchisement. Suffragists in the NWSA considered the vote to be the "ultimate legislative demand," similar to the sentiments that followed the Seneca Falls convention in 1848.¹⁴⁶ As a result, Anthony steered the members of the NWSA toward questioning the application of the Fourteenth Amendment and the definition of citizenship. In the early 1870s, Anthony continued to employ suffrage tactics from the antebellum period, such as

¹⁴⁵ The National Woman Suffrage Association will hereafter be abbreviated NWSA.

¹⁴⁶ Ellen Carol Dubois, "Women's Rights and Abolition: The Nature of the Connection," in *Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 63.

conventions, petitions and speaking tours. Anthony soon added a new strategy, civil disobedience, to the arsenal of the woman's suffrage movement.

CHAPTER III CHALLENGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE STATE JUDICIARY

The Revolution reported on May 20, 1869 that Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton led a group of suffragists away from the American Equal Rights Association (AERA) and had formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA).¹⁴⁷ Stanton's article in the suffrage newspaper continued and outlined the new group's agenda, "[as] a thorough canvass of the several states with conventions...petitions, [and] that at the opening of Congress, we may send in the largest petition that had ever yet been presented at the national capitol."¹⁴⁸ Stanton and Anthony hoped that those tactics would prove successful in granting women suffrage.

The members of the NWSA worked throughout 1869 for the successful ratification of a sixteenth amendment, which would establish female voting rights. However, after an unsuccessful appeal to a Congressional committee that occurred in 1870, it became clear that the federal government would not support a fourth constitutional amendment during the final years of the Reconstruction project. The NWSA soon used a strategy called the New Departure that

¹⁴⁷ The American Equal Rights Associations and the National Woman Suffrage Association will hereafter be referred to as the AERA and the NWSA, respectively.

¹⁴⁸ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "National Woman's Suffrage Association," *The Revolution*, 20 May 1869, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Against an Aristocracy of Sex 1866-1873*, Vol. II, Ann D. Gordon, ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 242.

emphasized civil disobedience and consciously tested the application of citizens' rights within the Fourteenth Amendment. Through the New Departure strategy, isolated cases of female voting occurred throughout 1872 and many resulted in legislative appeals. Those cases lacked a national figure, like Anthony, who would unite the individual examples of female voting. Anthony exercised what she perceived as her citizen's right to vote on November 5, 1872. Anthony cast her ballot in the presidential election to bring national attention to woman's unenfranchisement through her position as a leader of the suffrage movement.

Despite an increase in conventions, speaking tours and legislative appeals, the woman's suffrage movement still lacked the depth and political support within the government. In contrast, the abolition cause had a longer history that had included the Civil War, as well as overwhelming Congressional Republican support, which had ensured black men's citizenship status. States would ratify three constitutional amendments during a five-year period in the beginning of Reconstruction. The Thirteenth Amendment was added to the Constitution in 1865 and abolished slavery. Three years later, former slaves were granted citizenship through the Fourteenth Amendment. In the proposed Fifteenth Amendment that would be ratified in 1870, race could not be used to discriminate against male voters. The final two amendments of the Reconstruction project were controversial. After the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, the federal legislature began to narrow the application of citizen's rights. As a result, there was little support within the federal government in 1870 to expand voting rights

to women. Therefore, the NWSA abandoned the battle for a sixteenth amendment. Anthony believed that civil disobedience through the New Departure would emphasize women's desire for voting rights more successfully than a lengthy congressional battle to pass a constitutional amendment. Her 1872 voting action and subsequent trial were the culmination of over two decades of political activities. In the progression of the suffrage movement, casting her ballot was Anthony's next step toward ensuring that women got the vote.

The Struggle for a Sixteenth Amendment

The failure of both the 1867 Kansas referendum on female voting rights and suffragists' unsuccessful attempts to impede the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment demonstrated that there was not enough national support for woman's suffrage. After the Civil War, Anthony and Stanton had depended upon a dominant political party or social reform movement to provide political power. However, within the newly formed NWSA, a new agenda developed that was independent of political parties. Suffragists relied upon their own organization that was devoted, almost to the exclusion of other woman's rights issues, to female suffrage. The NWSA took the resolutions and goals from both the Seneca Falls and Worcester conventions and applied them to the new campaign for a sixteenth amendment. Anthony and Stanton continued to rely on pre-Civil War strategies, such as national conventions and petitions to attract additional support for the movement.

To ensure that sex would not be the determinate for voting rights, Anthony and Stanton led a campaign to oppose the Fifteenth Amendment. Suffragists circulated copies of an appeal, which stated, “The Right of Suffrage in the United States shall be based on citizenship, and shall be regulated by Congress; and all citizens of the United States, whether native or naturalized, shall enjoy this right equally without any distinction or discrimination whatever on account of sex.”¹⁴⁹ Anthony and Stanton employed their newspaper, *The Revolution* to channel their urgent message for female suffrage. One article challenged women to form local suffrage organizations, create publications and draft petitions to ensure that a sixteenth amendment would be ratified quickly.¹⁵⁰

During the ratification period, Anthony did not employ a white supremacy argument. That strategy had proved unsuccessful and politically alienating during the late 1860s. Instead, the notion of universal male suffrage became the oppressive force and not black male enfranchisement. In an article that appeared in *The Revolution*, Anthony’s remarks signaled a return to a natural rights argument. She opposed the Fifteenth Amendment, “not because it enfranchises black men, but because it does not enfranchise all women...our protest is not that all men are lifted out of the degradation of disenfranchisement, but that all women are left in.”¹⁵¹ Anthony urged women to reject the public perception of their own “inferiority... [and] subject condition.” Anthony and Stanton objected to women’s

¹⁴⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et al. eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. II (Salem: Ayer Company, 1985), 333. This volume hereafter will be referred to as *HWS*, Vol. II.

¹⁵⁰ *The Revolution*, 29 April 1869, in *HWS*, Vol. II, 333.

¹⁵¹ “SBA on the Fifteenth Amendment,” *The Revolution*, 7 Oct. 1869, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 272-273.

exclusion from the political system while “all manhood will vote not because of intelligence, patriotism, property or white skin, but because, it is male, not female.”¹⁵² Similar to the antebellum period, Anthony brought women’s attention to their own position of disenfranchisement and political dependence on men. Anthony and Stanton positioned the vote as a tool necessary to reconstruct the body politic in the aftermath of universal male suffrage legislation that had left women with no direct voice in the government.¹⁵³ Despite their campaigning efforts, states ratified the Fifteenth Amendment in March of 1870. In the aftermath, Anthony publicly challenged all men’s ability to represent women’s interest and urged women to augment their participation in the female suffrage movement to ensure the speedy passage of a sixteenth amendment.

Anthony was committed to working with the federal government in order to secure a constitutional amendment.¹⁵⁴ The second NWSA convention in 1870 took place at the nation’s capitol. The convention coincided with an appeal to a Congressional committee that called for the enfranchisement of women who lived in Washington D.C. The NWSA chose to make their appeal on behalf of the women of D.C. because the District of Columbia was a site where two previous federal successes had taken place. Prior to the Civil War, legislators had abolished slavery within the District and after the conflict many Republican politicians had

¹⁵² *HWS*, Vol. II, 334-335.

¹⁵³ Lisa Marguerite Tetrault, *The Memory of a movement: Woman Suffrage and Reconstruction* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilm International, 2005), 171.

¹⁵⁴ SBA to Elizabeth T. Schenck, 14 Jan. 1870, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 294.

publicly supported the enfranchisement of black men.¹⁵⁵ Suffragists believed they could leverage enough Republican support within the Congressional delegation to end local voting discrimination based on sex. Anthony and Stanton's appeal on behalf of the women of the District illustrated the focus of federal power in the aftermath of the ratification of the three constitutional amendments. Unlike the antebellum period, the members of the NWSA did not rely upon individual states to pass woman's suffrage legislation. Instead, they looked to the federal government to continue the process of enfranchising the nation's citizens.

Throughout the Reconstruction period, the NWSA continued to call attention to the contradictions within Constitutional law. During the Congressional appeal, Stanton emphasized that the Constitution had granted individual states the power to regulate suffrage, but not the ability to prohibit voting rights.¹⁵⁶ In Anthony's address to the legislature, she appealed that they strike the word "male" from the District of Columbia Suffrage Act, and thereby enfranchise the women of the District. The committee opposed the suffragists' appeal not on a lawful basis, but rather because the men feared that enfranchising women would lead to a power imbalance between husband and wife. One senator asked Anthony and Stanton, "what [would] the effect... be in case women were allowed to vote, if there were a difference of opinion between the husband and wife on some political question- where [would] the authority of the

¹⁵⁵ Ida H. Harper, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I (New York: Arno Press, Inc., 1969), 337.

¹⁵⁶ *HWS*, Vol. II, 412.

family...rest?" Stanton responded, "there was always a superior will and brain in every family" and authority remained in the hands of individuals which would be, "preserved in the family as well as in society."¹⁵⁷ Anthony and Stanton argued that a power imbalance already existed in many families and enfranchised women would not augment the problem. The committee also questioned Washington women's desire for suffrage. In response, Anthony and Stanton presented a signed petition that contained the names of fifteen hundred D.C. women. Despite these efforts, the Congressional committee did not pass the resolution.¹⁵⁸ After the unsuccessful appeal, Anthony went on a speaking tour to garner additional female supporters for the woman's suffrage cause. The NWSA ceased to rely completely on federal legislative appeals after their defeat. During her lectures, later that year, Anthony introduced a new tactic to the campaign, civil disobedience.

The "New Departure" and Civil Disobedience in the Woman's Suffrage Campaign

After the failed Congressional appeal in 1870, Anthony encouraged women to test the limitations of the Fourteenth Amendment through acts of civil disobedience, a strategy which became known as the New Departure. Virginia Minor, the president of the Missouri Women's Suffrage Association, introduced Anthony and the members of the NWSA to the New Departure. The strategy employed a natural rights argument. It defined voting as the most basic privilege

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 415.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 414-416.

of citizenship and therefore, a citizen's natural right.¹⁵⁹ The New Departure provided the NWSA with both new language and a set of strategies that they could apply through acts of civil disobedience.

The press coverage of the New Departure reflected the erosion of the natural rights ideology, which hindered the NWSA's tactics during this period. The natural rights strategy had dominated the woman's suffrage campaign since the antebellum period. However, after states ratified the Fifteenth Amendment, philosophical ideals returned to a familial focus rather than to reward the interests of the individual. In one article that appeared in Seattle's *Territorial Dispatch* in 1871, editor Beriah Brown, characterized Anthony, "[as] a revolutionist, aiming at nothing less than the breaking up of the very foundations of society..."¹⁶⁰ Brown perceived Anthony's strategies as a threat to the separate spheres that remained a dominant ideology. The Fifteenth Amendment represented the culmination of the expansion of citizen's rights.¹⁶¹ Unlike Brown and others, Anthony challenged traditional gender ideologies and emphasized that women would not limit themselves to the separate spheres existence they endured before the Industrial Revolution and the Civil War.

Anthony believed that the strategy of civil disobedience would be more successful than campaigning for a sixteenth amendment, due to their unsuccessful federal appeals. Anthony continued to use her ironically entitled speech, "Women

¹⁵⁹ Ellen Carol Dubois, "Taking the Law into Our Own Hands," in *Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 117-118.

¹⁶⁰ Harper, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 401.

¹⁶¹ Jean V. Matthews, *Women's Struggle for Equality, The First Phase, 1828- 1876* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997), 172.

Want Bread Not the Ballot,” with the strategy of the New Departure. She emphasized that enfranchised women would bring morality to the body politic.¹⁶² Through Anthony’s speech, she challenged her female audience to register to vote to test the application of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Casting Ballots and Court Battles

The new tactic of civil disobedience built upon the rhetoric and strategies of previous decades. Similar to Anthony’s addresses to the Daughters of Temperance in the 1850s, she once again urged women not to allow men to misrepresent women at the ballot box. In response to Anthony’s New Departure strategy, a select number of women began to register to vote and attempted to cast ballots under the protection of the Fourteenth Amendment. These early cases occurred in relation to local or state-wide elections and not a national election. During this period, a number of states, especially those in the west, had granted limited suffrage laws to women. As a result of those legislative successes, Anthony and others became optimistic that subsequent suffrage laws could not be far behind.¹⁶³ One of the earliest voting actions, after the implementation of the New Departure, took place in New Hampshire. In 1870, the registrar of voters allowed Marilla Ricker to register but then refused to allow her to vote. Rather than risk public embarrassment, Ricker acquiesced to her friends’ urgings and did

¹⁶² Susan B. Anthony, “Women Want Bread Not the Ballot,” in *The Struggle for Women’s Rights: Theoretical & Historical Sources*, George Klosko and Margaret G. Klosko eds. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1999), 139.

¹⁶³ In 1869, Wyoming became the first state to pass female voting rights. For more information on early legislative victors see, Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman’s Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 160-162.

not bring the matter to the state court.¹⁶⁴ There were at least four other cases throughout the next two years in California, Michigan, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania. The geographical span emphasized Anthony's successful implementation of the New Departure as a suffrage tactic.

These cases acted as experiments in the application of the Fourteenth Amendment. Typically, all of the women were allowed to register. However, their ballots were not accepted. Courts denied that women were citizens and therefore were entitled to the same rights as men.¹⁶⁵ The inconsistency between the registrar of voters, which allowed women to register and the state court system, which would not firmly set a precedent, illustrated the ambiguity of women's status within the body politic. In several cases, the registrar of voters refused to concede that women were citizens and could therefore vote. On other occasions, the registrar of voters determined that women's ballots could not be accepted because their female sex precluded them from voting.

One of the last cases to go to court before Anthony's arrest occurred in January of 1872 and further confused the application of the Fourteen Amendment with regard to the issue of female citizenship. The registrar of voters prevented Catherine V. Waite and her daughter from registering to vote in Hyde Park, Illinois. Waite appealed to the Illinois Court with her husband as her legal representative. Her husband's support of woman's suffrage enabled the case to proceed in court. Waite reasoned his wife had the legal standing to vote in the

¹⁶⁴ *HWS*, Vol. II, 586.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 587, 600, 601.

state of Illinois. The state Constitution required persons be over the age of twenty-one and have established residency. The Waites declared women should be able to register and vote, “upon the same qualifications as are required by men.”¹⁶⁶

The Waites’ case represented the circular reasoning of the male legislature on both the state and federal levels. In his ruling, Judge Jameson declared that “the claim...of a right to vote on the ground of mere citizenship, and as a natural right, must fall to the ground.” Jameson rejected the notion that an American born person had the natural right to vote as a citizen. He supported the position that suffrage was reserved for only male citizens and that “all citizens are not directly to participate in the act of representing, but each is to be represented, the male being selected to express the will of the household...” Jameson’s decision reaffirmed women’s subordination to their male relatives. The judge further classified women as equal in the eyes of the law to a “child, criminal, or lunatic” and should be represented accordingly.¹⁶⁷

In the Waites’ case, Judge Jameson’s decision also demonstrated the interchangeable arguments against female suffrage. His ruling represented a return to the reasoning Stanton and others had worked to counter beginning with the *Declaration of Sentiments*. Jameson did not argue that female suffrage would lead to the breakdown of the familial structure. Instead, beginning with this ruling in 1872, courts denied women enfranchisement because their male relatives naturally represented their interests. Jameson’s ruling left women without a voice

¹⁶⁶ “Ladies, You Can’t Vote,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13, Jan. 1872, p 4.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p 4.

in political issues and disregarded their status as tax-paying citizens. Women were once again told to wait, “until they can effect their entrance there legally and directly, by the door, and not seek...to climb thither some other way...”¹⁶⁸

Anthony continued to employ the New Departure strategy. She believed that the plaintiffs in these isolated cases did not have the presence of an international figure, which she embodied. Furthermore, none of the appeals had reached the Supreme Court and therefore judges did not have to apply any established precedent to their rulings.

Anthony’s implementation of the New Departure strategy had sparked a shift in the government’s anti-suffrage arguments. The NWSA’s appeal to the House and Senate Judiciary Committee, in 1872, marked the final attempt to introduce legislation for female voting rights through Congress. In her appeal, Anthony urged legislators to reconsider their 1870 ruling and grant the women of Washington D.C. suffrage. She warned the members that women had waited more than twenty years for a suffrage law to specifically enfranchise them. In resolution, Anthony advised the Senators, “under such circumstances...we can wait no longer.”¹⁶⁹ The Senate committee voted against this latest measure to enfranchise women and cited religious doctrine. The men reasoned that the Bible held women to a higher place in society as wives and mothers, “we hold that an extension of suffrage would be adverse to the interest of...women of the

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p 4.

¹⁶⁹ *HWS*, Vol. II, 513-514.

country...”¹⁷⁰ In addition to citing religious doctrine, House members returned to the previous arguments their fellow legislators had used and not only questioned the devotion of female suffragists, but also their commitment to motherhood and the domestic sphere. Finally, the committee declared that the Constitution had not recognized women as citizens.

The Senate’s argument illustrated the government’s staunch decision not to support or grant female suffrage. The central arguments that male legislators used to deny women suffrage made it difficult for Anthony to build a national movement with enough public support to ensure female suffrage. Anthony could not use one consistent body of rhetoric or political ideology. In response to the different arguments that legislators argued, Anthony had to develop new strategies to adapt to the multiplying legislative opinions. In the aftermath of the Senate committee’s decision, Anthony began to lecture and that autumn, she urged women to vote and no longer wait for the male government to enfranchise female citizens.

“The only question left to be settled, now: Are women persons?”

In 1872, Anthony sought to act locally, in her home town of Rochester, New York with the hope that her act of civil disobedience would bring the woman’s suffrage cause to the attention of the Supreme Court. On November 1, 1872, Anthony directly applied the New Departure tactic to her own actions. Anthony’s actions reflected her 1850s’ strategy to set a precedent at the state-level

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 516.

that women could then apply throughout the country. Anthony was the first woman to register and vote in a presidential election since states had begun to curtail female political involvement in the early 1840s. Anthony continued to recruit women to the suffrage cause and throughout 1872, she urged women to register to vote in the November presidential election. In one of the Rochester newspapers, the reporters implored New York state citizens, “Now Register! Today and tomorrow are the only remaining opportunities. If you were not permitted to vote, you would fight for the right, undergo all privations for it, face death for it.”¹⁷¹ Anthony responded to the plea and successfully helped approximately fifty women register to vote. Stanton was not a part of this action. Rather, Anthony’s push for registration and voting was her own strategy, separate from Stanton and the broader NWSA agenda, which did not expressly support acts of civil disobedience.¹⁷² Instead, Stanton relied upon conventions, lecture series and petitions, rather than direct action to achieve female enfranchisement.

When Anthony triumphantly cast her ballot on November 5th, at least twenty other women followed her lead.¹⁷³ Anthony wrote the following spirited declaration to Stanton after she cast her ballot, “Well I have been & gone & done it!!- positively voted the Republican Ticket...at 7 Oclock- & swore my vote in at

¹⁷¹ Harper, *Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. I, 423.

¹⁷² Elisabeth Griffin, *In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 154.

¹⁷³ Kathleen Barry, *Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of a Singular Feminist* (New York: New York University Press), 1988, 249. There are inconsistencies between the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and secondary sources as to how many women registered and voted on November 5th. Barry cites fifty women registered as a result of Anthony’s campaigning in New York State and fifteen women, including Anthony were served with warrants two weeks later. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported only twenty women had voted and does not report how many women registered.

that was registered on Friday...”¹⁷⁴ An article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* described Anthony as delighted by her success in registering and voting in the election.¹⁷⁵ Two weeks after the election, a warrant was issued for Anthony’s arrest, stating:

on...the fifth day of November, 1872, at the city of Rochester, N.Y., at an election...for a Representative in the Congress of the United States... without having a lawful right to vote and in violation of section 19 of an act of Congress approved May 31, 1870, entitled, “An act to enforce the right of citizens of the United States to vote in the several States of this Union and for other purposes”¹⁷⁶

The state of New York charged Anthony with unlawful voting. More specifically, the state found her in violation of the Enforcement Act.

Female voters used the Enforcement Act to circumvent the legislative process that would specifically grant female suffrage. Congress had passed that law in the aftermath of the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. Although the amendment had made it illegal to deny free men the right to vote based upon, “race, color, or previous condition of servitude,” Congress determined in light of violence directed toward black men in the South, an additional law was required to protect black voters.¹⁷⁷ The Enforcement Act provided free men with lawful recourse in court against local election officials who prohibited them from voting. The Enforcement Act further stated in addition to protecting black men’s ability to vote it also prohibited, “any judge, inspector or other office of election whose

¹⁷⁴ SBA to ECS, Rochester, NY, 5 Nov 1872, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* Vol. II, 524. Emphasis and punctuation in original.

¹⁷⁵ “Women as Electors: Miss Susan B. Anthony and Two Others Registered- Twenty More Demanding that Their Names Be Placed on the Books,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 Nov. 1872, p 3.

¹⁷⁶ *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 531- 532.

¹⁷⁷ *HWS*, Vol. II, 314.

duty it is...to receive, count...[or] register...the vote of any citizen...and that [if] he was wrongfully prevent[ed]...” from voting that citizens could take legal action against the state.¹⁷⁸ Election officers began to apply the Enforcement Act and accept women’s ballots when they registered and attempted to vote.¹⁷⁹ In Anthony’s arrest, the state reasoned that neither the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments nor the Enforcement Act had established female suffrage.

Anthony had succeeded in bringing national attention to the lack of specificity in the language of the Fourteenth Amendment. She hoped to argue in court that the first phrase of the amendment had granted women citizenship as it had for “all persons born or naturalized in the United States.”¹⁸⁰ As a result, women were citizens and therefore, voting rights could not be denied to them. When she cast her ballot and was then arrested, Anthony called into question woman’s true state of misrepresentation in the United States. The cause for arrest required a stricter application of the word “male” in the Fourteenth Amendment. In a letter to Martha Coffin Wright, a fellow suffragist, Anthony outlined the argument her lawyer, John Van Voorhis, intended to use in her case. Voorhis’ strategy was to present cases of female voting as evidence of the conflicting applications of the Fourteenth Amendment. He and Anthony sought to compel the

¹⁷⁸ “Enforcement Act,” in *The Statutes at Large and Proclamations of the United States of America, From December 1869 to March 1871, and Treaties and Postal Conventions*, Vol. XVI, George P. Sanger ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.), 1871, 140-141.

¹⁷⁹ Dubois, “Taking the Law into Our Own Hands,” 121.

¹⁸⁰ *HWS*, Vol. II, 313.

state of New York for a more defined notion of citizenship and natural rights through an examination of woman's "Constitutional Right."¹⁸¹

Anthony's testimony and argument later that month to United State's Commissioner Storr relied solely upon New York state voting regulations. Anthony laid the foundations for her later defense before the State Supreme Court. Commissioner Storr asked Anthony whether she possessed any doubt regarding her lawful ability to vote. Anthony responded, "Not a particle." Storr then asked if Anthony voted, "for the purpose of testing the question" and definition of the word "male" in the Constitution. Anthony answered in the affirmative and continued, "I had been resolved to vote at the first election that I had been at home for 30 days..."¹⁸² She had adhered to the mandated residency requirement. In response to her argument, the United State's Commissioner stated that Anthony's case questioned the constitutionality of woman's voting rights.¹⁸³

Voorhis offered historical precedence for previous female enfranchisement in the final days of the examination. He brought to the Commissioner's attention Georgia's state constitution, which had allowed women to vote beginning in 1789 until the legislature passed restrictions in the 1820s. Women in various states had also cast their ballots in the 1800 presidential election. Most recently, until 1807, women in New Jersey were able to vote. Voorhis presented his client as acting within the boundaries of the law and not

¹⁸¹ SBA to Martha Coffin Wright, 1 Jan. 1873, Garrison Family Papers, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA. Emphasis in original.

¹⁸² *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 539.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 542.

threatening the political process. He concluded his case, “This defendant believed she had a right to vote, and exercised it. She had no intent to break the law and is no criminal. You must find that they [female voters] committed an immoral act and intended to violate the law, or you cannot hold them.”¹⁸⁴ In December of 1872, the commissioners found Anthony guilty of “unlawful voting” and her case moved to the State Supreme Court the following year.¹⁸⁵ Anthony’s case before the State Supreme Court was the culmination of twenty years of campaigning for female suffrage. The decision in her case would set a precedent that would either grant women *de facto* voting rights through the Fourteenth Amendment and the Enforcement Act, or the members of the NWSA would have to refine their strategies and resume their campaign for a sixteenth amendment.

The public reactions to her arrest and pending trial were varied. An editorial that appeared in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* represented two differing opinions, “[Anthony] is entitled to recognition...we cordially commend her.” The piece went on, “she might have voted twice- it would not have been any more illegal.”¹⁸⁶ In a letter to *The New York Times*, Stanton responded to a negative article that questioned the legality of Anthony’s voting action. Stanton declared, “this is not simply a question of woman’s enfranchisement, but it involves the

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Barry, *Susan B. Anthony: A Biography of a Singular Feminist*, 252.

¹⁸⁶ “Miss Anthony’s Claim to Office,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 7 Dec. 1872, p 4.

settlement of Federal and state rights and powers, constitutional law and republican institutions.”¹⁸⁷

Anthony’s work did not diminish while she awaited trial in the winter of 1872. She continued to encourage women to commit similar acts of civil disobedience. Anthony campaigned in Washington D.C. and throughout New York state. With the exception of a newspaper article that reported that the location of Anthony’s trial had been moved from her home county, where she had extensively lectured, to Canandaigua County, there was little press coverage of her case. Instead, Anthony relied upon her public speaking to continue the debate on female suffrage. Her speech during this period was entitled, “Is it a Crime to Vote?” In the opening lines of her lecture, Anthony laid out her defense. She argued, “I not only committed no crime, but instead, simply exercised my citizen’s right, guaranteed to me...by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny.”¹⁸⁸ In the ensuing sections of her speech, Anthony presented the argument that she and other members of the NWSA had utilized since the organization formed in 1869. Anthony read portions of the Fourteenth Amendment that articulated the rights of all Americans. She asked her audience, “the only question left to be settled, now: Are women persons?” Anthony urged her listeners to conclude that women were persons and therefore, citizens of the United States. As a result, women have the right to vote and participate directly in

¹⁸⁷ Stanton to Louis John Jennings, c. 22 Jan. 1873, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 589.

¹⁸⁸ Susan B. Anthony, “Is it a Crime to Vote,” in PBS: Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/crime_to_vote.html, 22 Sept. 2006.

political matters. Anthony dramatically stated, “one-half of the people of this nation to-day are utterly powerless to blot from the statute books an unjust law, or to write there a new and a just one.”¹⁸⁹ Within the body of her speech, Anthony seemingly dismissed the indirect methods women had used since the Revolutionary War era to influence the political process. Anthony could no longer reason that fundraising, publicly supporting candidates and holding conventions were significant contributions to the body politic. Black men’s enfranchisement limited political involvement to voting. As a result, Anthony challenged her audience “to exercise their too long neglected ‘citizen’s right to vote.’”¹⁹⁰

Anthony’s trial began on May 13, 1873 and illustrated the Republican Party’s rejection and disposal of the New Departure as a viable strategy for obtaining female suffrage.¹⁹¹ It quickly became clear that the proceedings would not be fair or entirely constitutional. The presiding Judge Ward Hunt, was not a local jurist, he had recently been appointed to the United States Supreme Court. Shortly after the proceedings began, Judge Hunt unlawfully prevented Anthony from giving testimony and declared her to be an incompetent witness. Hunt’s decision symbolized Anthony’s exclusion from her trial. She was not able to present her argument to the jury or have her position entered into the court record. Hunt wrested the central issue of the trial, female suffrage, away from Anthony and heard only men’s arguments on the subject. Anthony was left without a voice

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ SBA, “Is it a Crime to Vote?”

¹⁹¹ Dubois, “Taking the Law into Our Own Hands,” 129.

in the male-dominated court room. Her lawyer, Judge Seldon had replaced Voorhis and testified on Anthony's behalf.¹⁹² Upon the case's conclusion, Hunt further impeded the proceedings when he instructed the jury to find the defendant guilty and thereby directly interfered with the verdict. In Anthony's diary, she recorded, "[Hunt] refused to poll jury...the greatest outrage History ever witnessed."¹⁹³ An article in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported Hunt's ruling. The Judge reasoned "if the Fifteenth Amendment had contained the word 'sex' then the argument of the defense would have been potent...the Amendment, however, does not contain that word...The regulation of the suffrage is conceded to the States as a State's right." Hunt continued and stated "Miss Anthony knew that she was a woman, and that the Constitution of this State prohibits her from voting. She intended to violate that provision..."¹⁹⁴ Despite the guilty verdict, the New Departure effectively compelled the New York State Supreme Court to set a precedent for future cases of female voting.¹⁹⁵

Anthony's case also illustrated the increasingly narrow interpretation of the Reconstruction Amendments. In 1873, the Supreme Court presented its ruling

¹⁹² Barry, *Susan B. Anthony*, 254.

¹⁹³ SBA Diary, 18 June 1873, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 611.

¹⁹⁴ "Susan B. Anthony: She is Found Guilty of Violating the Election Law of New York---The Charge of Judge Hunt---Trial of the Inspectors of Election who Received Her Vote," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 June 1873, p 1.

¹⁹⁵ Anthony's lawyer, Judge Seldon appealed Judge Hunt's guilty verdict and one hundred dollar fine to Congress. Both the House and the Senate referred the case to their Judiciary Committees. Anthony addressed the legislative body and argued that Hunt had denied her, her citizen's right to a trial by jury. However, the legislators did not grant Anthony a new trial. They repealed her fine, but did not believe they had the right to overturn Judge Hunt's ruling. For more on Anthony's appeal see *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, 1866-1873*, Vol. III, Ann D. Gordon, ed. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998) 39, 43, 88.

in the *Slaughterhouse* case. The case did not address suffrage, but rather, the federal versus state regulation of vocational rights. The Court's decision stated that the Fourteenth Amendment's intention was to protect black men's rights and not to transfer the protection of citizen's rights from the state to the federal level. In a similarly narrow interpretation of the amendment, in *United States v. Reese*, the Supreme Court ruled that the black male plaintiff had not sufficiently proved his voting rights had been denied based on race. During Anthony's trial she had predicted the affects of narrow interpretations of the Reconstruction amendments. She argued "if we once establish the false principle, that the United States citizenship does not carry with it the right to vote in every State...there is no end to the...cunning devices that will be resorted to, to exclude...class[es] of citizens from the right of suffrage."¹⁹⁶ Anthony's trial signaled the end of the New Departure and argument that the Fourteenth Amendment protected and granted women's voting rights by virtue of their citizenship status. Once again, suffragists would have to rely upon the federal or state legislatures to pass female voting laws.

Conclusion

In the aftermath of her trial, Anthony returned to the business of woman's suffrage and a new phase of the movement began. The NWSA campaigned for a sixteenth amendment to the Constitution, as they had in the late 1860s.¹⁹⁷ Anthony did not abandon the civil disobedience strategy. In a letter to fellow

¹⁹⁶ *HWS*, Vol. II, 641.

¹⁹⁷ Barry, *Susan B. Anthony*, 267.

suffragist, Isabella Beecher Hooker, Anthony declared her hope that women would continue to cast their ballots, “I hope you & all other women who were refused to vote last fall- will persistently present yourselves at every election.”¹⁹⁸ Similar to the strategies that Anthony had consistently implemented before and after the Civil War, such as petitions and speaking tours, she did not dismiss the possibility of an appropriate period in the future to resume civil disobedience tactics.

The NWSA had begun in 1869, with a campaign for a federal amendment to the Constitution that would expressly grant female suffrage. However, suffragists misread the political tides. Reconstruction had been a volatile period of legislative changes. Not only had four million of the South’s labor force been emancipated, the Constitution had enfranchised former male slaves in the body of the Fifteenth Amendment. Within five years, blacks’ status within the United States had transformed from property to citizens with the same Constitutional rights to the “life, liberty and property,” which the Founding Fathers had imagined nearly a century earlier.

Congress did not merely shy away from drafting female suffrage legislation into the Constitution. States did not ratify a subsequent amendment after the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, until 1913, which granted Congress the power to levy income taxes. The Supreme Court’s decision in *Slaughterhouse* and *United States v. Reese* illustrated the return to the federal governing role of the

¹⁹⁸ SBA to Isabella Beecher Hooker, 14 July 1873, in *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Vol. II, 619.

antebellum period. Those rulings placed regulatory powers back into the hands of state legislatures, rather than in the federal government. Anthony believed that her case would set a positive precedent for future voting cases. However, she underestimated the resolve of the federal government, which did not support female enfranchisement. Female suffrage had been a consistent demand since the antebellum period. The introduction of the radical New Departure strategy had appeared during a historical moment when the federal government and the country was eager not to continue to expand citizen's rights, but desired a return to social stability that did not allow for woman's suffrage.

EPILOGUE

On January 27, 1876, the National Woman Suffrage Association gathered for its eighth annual convention in Washington D.C., “in this one-hundredth year of the Republic...to press their claims to self-government.”¹⁹⁹ In the months that led up to the centennial celebration in July, suffragists argued that similar to the Revolutionary War heroes, women were still fighting against a government that taxed them, despite women’s misrepresentation within the body politic.

The members of the NWSA believed the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia was an opportunity to remind the nation of its founding principles. During the initial planning phases of the exhibition, the organizing committee promised woman’s rights activists a Woman’s Pavilion. Suffragists desired a space within the displays to promote woman’s rights and specifically female suffrage. However, the organizing committee dwarfed women’s participation in the centennial events. The events’ organizers did not build the Woman’s Pavilion. Furthermore, the men perceived that the purpose of the exhibition was to celebrate the achievements of American men and not all citizens.

In response, members of the NWSA rented a suite of hotel rooms near the site prior to the start of the festivities. They circulated suffrage pamphlets and

¹⁹⁹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et al., eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. III (Salem: Ayer Company, 1985), 3. Hereafter this volume will be referred to as *HWS*, Vol. III. The National Woman’s Suffrage Association will be abbreviated NWSA.

materials. At the end of the celebration, suffragist Matilda Joslyn Gage, and Stanton drafted a document titled, *Declaration of Rights for Women*. The male organizers refused to allow the NWSA members to read their document as part of the public proceedings. As a result, on July 4, 1876, immediately after a speaker read the *Declaration of Independence*, Anthony and others stormed the platform and read their own declaration to the audience. Hundreds of women had signed the document in support of female suffrage and in protest of women's exclusion from the centennial events.²⁰⁰

The reading of the *Declaration of Rights for Women* symbolized nearly thirty years of efforts to secure female voting rights. The ideas in the document reflected the resolutions Stanton first proposed in Seneca Falls, New York on July 19, 1848. The 1876 document lamented, "our faith is firm and unwavering in the broad principles of human rights proclaimed in 1776... Yet we cannot forget... that while all men of every race, and clime, and condition, have been invested with the full rights of citizenship... all women still suffer the degradation of disenfranchisement."²⁰¹

The document continued and arraigned the government on "articles of impeachment."²⁰² The suffragists' charges against the male legislature included the introduction of the word "male" into the Constitution through the Fourteenth Amendment, which had articulated men's citizenship status but had excluded

²⁰⁰ Jean V. Matthews, *Women's Struggle for Equality: The First Phase, 1828- 1876* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997), 183-184.

²⁰¹ *HWS*, Vol. III, 31.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

women. Secondly, since the American government had formed, women had been denied a trial by a jury of their peers. Anthony's case in 1872, had illustrated the injustices that could result from a violation of that Constitutional right. Not only had Judge Hunt refused to allow Anthony to be a witness during her own trial proceedings, he had also directed the jury to find her guilty, which violated her rights as a citizen. Finally and most egregiously, the *Declaration of Rights for Women* charged the government with violating woman's right to direct political participation in government, despite levying taxes against its female citizens.²⁰³

The document's conclusion illustrated the next phase in the woman's suffrage movement. Anthony addressed the audience and declared,

at the close of one hundred years, as the hour-hand of the great clock that marks the centuries points to 1876, we declare our faith in the principles of self-government; our full equality with man in national rights; that woman was made first for her own happiness, with the absolute right to herself- to all the opportunities and advantages life affords for her complete development...we ask of our rulers, at this hour, no special favors, no special privileges, no special legislation. We ask justice, we seek equality, we ask that all the civil and political rights that belong to citizens of the United States, be guaranteed to us and our daughters forever²⁰⁴

Similar to the tactics that suffragists had implemented prior to the Civil War, the members of the NWSA would continue to hold annual nation conventions, embark on speaking tours and educate the public regarding woman's disenfranchised position within American political society, in the years following the centennial celebration.

²⁰³ Ibid., 31-32.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 34.

One question remains to be answered: why was Anthony unsuccessful in the nineteenth-century campaign to win voting rights for women? During the antebellum period, women indirectly participated in politics through fundraising and petitioning. However, after the Fourteenth Amendment rendered sex the determinate for citizenship, there were no tangible consequences for politicians who excluded women from the political process. The act of voting became the signature of American citizenship. As a result, the disenfranchised female lobby lost its power as political agitators. In response to the lack of support for woman's enfranchisement, Anthony unsuccessfully employed the Cult of Domesticity ideology before and after the war as evidence of the morality that white women would bring to the body politic. Although many Americans supported a white supremacy argument, most did not want to reshape gender ideologies to include women as voters. Instead, Americans sought the continuity of gender roles that restricted women to the domestic sphere, separate from political matters.

The evolution of Anthony's involvement in the suffrage campaign mirrored the transformation of the movement. Activists, like Anthony began to enter the public sphere under the auspices of moral reform societies, such as temperance and abolition organizations. Women's participation within those groups provided them with the awareness of their subjugation. However, women's campaigns for stricter liquor regulation or the emancipation of slaves would not serve to alter white women's position within American society. The

leaders of the woman's rights campaign had to implement new tactics to create and expand the national movement.

In order to attract female supports to the suffrage cause and secure woman's enfranchisement, Anthony and Stanton employed various political strategies during the antebellum period. National conventions, petition drives and state legislative appeals created depth and breadth within the movement and suffrage grew from a local issue to one of national concern and awareness. However, the organizing strengths and legislative appeals of the suffrage campaign occurred too late within the reform tides of the nineteenth-century. Unlike the abolition movement that had overwhelming Republican Congressional support during Reconstruction, the issue of female voting rights never sustained the political support of either political party. As a result, Anthony turned to civil disobedience as a strategy to circumvent the legislative process. Anthony's voting action took place at a time when the federal legislature began to restrict their power and return issues of citizenship and suffrage to the state level.

Anthony continued to fight for woman's suffrage throughout the nineteenth-century. In 1890, a new phase of the campaign began, when the NWSA united with Lucy Stone's organization, the American Woman Suffrage Association and formed the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Throughout the next thirty years, the suffrage campaign continued to expand and its members used different tactics, including state and federal appeals to secure female voting rights. The suffrage movement also evolved through the youth of

the second generation of female college students. Their participation made voting rights an important issue to both older and younger generations of women in the twentieth-century. Women's volunteerism during World War I elevated their status as patriots and contributed to the ultimate ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Through Anthony's leadership, she determined the course of the suffrage movement for over fifty years. By her death in 1906, women still remained disenfranchised and would not receive the vote until 1920. Susan B. Anthony's story was truly the history of a visionary pioneer in the struggle for female suffrage.

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