


  
**THE CONNECTION**

**WEST CONTRA COSTA BRANCH**  
**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN**

Advancing gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy  
[westcontracosta-ca.aauw.net](http://westcontracosta-ca.aauw.net)

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NEWSLETTER 1

AUGUST 2020



**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Welcome to the beginning of a new year. It's a very different and challenging time as we continue to deal with COVID-19 and no in person gatherings for the foreseeable future.

Our Board meetings are online using Zoom. We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 2:00 pm. All members are welcome to attend. Our next **Board Meeting will be Tuesday, September 1**. There will be a **September-October Newsletter**. Articles are due to me by Tuesday, August 25.

This month we celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and Women's Right to Vote. This is a special edition and, other than my message, has only links to this celebration. There is a film (*The Vote*), a website ([womensvote100.org/suffragemonth](http://womensvote100.org/suffragemonth)), an online event with League of Women's Voters of Oakland and three Hindsight podcasts. Enjoy!

May you and yours be safe and healthy. Thanks for your support. I enjoy working with such special woman.

**Roberta Montgomery, President**

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# American Experience: *The Vote*

[pbs.org/thevote](https://pbs.org/thevote)

One hundred years after the passage of the 19th Amendment, *The Vote* tells the dramatic story of the hard-fought campaign waged by American women for the right to vote — a transformative cultural and political movement that resulted in the largest expansion of voting rights in U.S. history. (film in two Parts 113 minutes each)

## National Women's Suffrage Month

[womensvote100.org/suffragemonth](https://womensvote100.org/suffragemonth)

On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment was certified into the U.S. Constitution, forever protecting American women's right to vote. As the centerpiece of our centennial commemorations and in recognition of this pivotal chapter in the story of American democracy, the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission worked with Congress to designate August 2020 as National Women's Suffrage Month. In recognition of the designation, the Commission and its partners will conduct month-long suffrage inspired programming to commemorate 100 years of the 19th Amendment and women's right to vote. Throughout August for National Women's Suffrage Month website has programs and events to Educate, Activate, Celebrate, and Inspire.

## Join the League of Women Voters of Oakland in an online Centennial Celebration "Empowering Voters and Strengthening Democracy"

**Wednesday, August 26, 2020, 12:00 - 1:30pm**

Join the League of Women Voters of Oakland for a free online Centennial Celebration focused on Empowering Voters and Strengthening Democracy past and present. Don't miss this special Women's Equality Day gathering which marks the 100th Anniversary of the certification of the 19th Amendment and the 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters. Hear from inspirational guest speakers and thought leaders, celebrate the winners of our annual "Making Democracy Work" awards, and enjoy multimedia performances. Come away ready to continue the fight to ensure that every voter has free and fair access to the polls because we are all equal on Election Day. The fight never ended; there is more work for us to do.

This free event will take place online. You must [register \(link below\)](#) in advance to receive the link to the event site.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/empowering-voters-strengthening-democracy-a-centennial-celebration-tickets-115882498673>

# Hindsight: Looking Back at 100 Years of Women's Suffrage

KMUW 89.1-FM will debut a **six-episode podcast** series in March 2020 in recognition of 100 years of women's suffrage. *Hindsight: Looking Back at 100 Years of Women's Suffrage* examines the history of women's suffrage, political involvement, and social activism in the United States from the middle of the 19th century through today. Historian and host Dr. Robin Henry blends historical context and conversations with scholars, politicians, and activists. *Hindsight* aims to educate, entertain, and provide listeners a better understanding of women's diverse voices and roles in U.S. history.

## Origins: The 19th Century Women's Movement

By [Robin Henry](#) • Mar 2, 2020 Hindsight, Episode 1

<https://kmuw.drupal.publicbroadcasting.net/post/origins-19th-century-womans-movement>

In 1920, the United States ratified the 19th Amendment recognizing women's voting rights. Over the next year, we will explore, commemorate, and celebrate the history of women's suffrage in the United States and discover what role voting played in the social, political, legal, and economic changes of the 20th and 21st centuries.

For historians, knowing where to start a story, where the real root of a movement begins is difficult to find but is critical to where the narrative goes.

In the 1830s, white women lived under the protections of coverture, a legal doctrine that, upon marriage, covered women from legal and political responsibility in most cases. While this also placed responsibilities on the husband for their well-being, it meant a much more restricted public life for women, which, by the middle of the 19th century, was beginning to feel stifling.

The women who began or organized for women's rights in the 1830s were responding to legal, political, and economic circumstances. Limited and irregular rights, along with strident conversations on equality and autonomous rights, had all but disappeared.

We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal. - Declaration of Sentiments.

In July 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott held in Seneca Falls, New York, "a convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman."

This brief description of the "world-shaking" event was sent to the local newspapers advertising the first women's rights convention. The convention lasted two days and took place over six sessions, offering presentations, lectures, and multiple discussions about the role of women in society. The result was the Declaration of Sentiments — a document that would serve as the foundation of women's rights in the United States and fuel a movement that would culminate in the ratification of the 19th Amendment, recognizing women's right to vote.

In this episode, we explore the origins of the 19th century woman's movement.

Listen 31:41 min. Origins of the 19th Century Woman's Movement | Hindsight, Episode 1

## Hindsight: Conflict and Compromise

By [Robin Henry](#) • Apr 27, 2020 Hindsight, Episode 2

<https://kmuw.drupal.publicbroadcasting.net/post/hindsight-conflict-and-compromise>

If necessity is the mother of invention, then conflict both presents new challenges and opportunities and requires us to consider what our necessities actually are.

In this episode of *Hindsight*, we will explore the development of the woman's movement between 1850 and 1875.

While we might be prone to focus on this period's most extreme conflict — the American Civil War — in point of fact, this 25-year period is also a dynamic and critical one for the development of the woman's movement and its push for political, legal, economic, and suffrage rights.

It's a period in which we see the newly acquainted Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton begin to organize a movement around a fully articulated statement of woman's rights in the context of the larger, international movement for abolition and human rights, but struggle to move it beyond white, middle-class women's issues. It's a period in which lesser-known married partners Francis and Virginia Minor challenge the U.S. Supreme Court to declare what rights women have as citizens under the 14th Amendment. And it's a period in which racism and regionalism will bitterly divide the nation, the movement, and many friendships, shaping and reshaping the goals of the woman's rights movement for decades to come.

So hold on for a bumpy ride. This is *Hindsight*, Episode Two: Conflict and Compromise.

Listen 41 min. Conflict and Compromise | Hindsight, Episode 2

# Hindsight: Regionalism, Race, and the Right To Vote

By [Robin Henry](#) • Jul 13, 2020 Hindsight, Episode 3

<https://kmuw.drupal.publicbroadcasting.net/post/hindsight-regionalism-race-and-right-vote>

In 1915, the American humor magazine *Puck*, known for its political cartoons and satire, published a special edition, guest edited by New York State suffrage groups, in anticipation of the upcoming statewide referendum on women's suffrage.

The centerfold illustration, called "The Awakening" and drawn by Henry Mayer, depicts Lady Liberty, with the slogan "Votes for Women" emblazoned on her tunic, awakening the nation to women's desire for suffrage, walking across the already-enfranchised American West, toward the East, where women were reaching up, clamoring to be saved by her.

Printed just below Mayer's illustration is a five-stanza poem by Alice Duer Miller. Less famous now, Miller was a popular poet and writer of the early 20th century who was part of Dorothy Parker's famous Algonquin Round Table and often captured the mood of the movement with an irreverent quick wit and skill.

Untitled, this poem is a call to arms for women across the nation to take up the cause of suffrage:

*Look forward, women, always; utterly cast away  
The memory of hate and struggle and bitterness;  
Bonds may endure for a night, but freedom come with a day,  
And the free must remember nothing less.*

Combined, this centerfold and the magazine's special edition were meant to capture the contemporary spirit of the late 19th and early 20th century's most current, democratic movement: women's suffrage. While signaling a new dawn for the nation, in many ways it also harkens back to John Gast's 1872 painting *American Progress*, which depicts a winged, white, ghost-like woman sweeping westward settlement, capitalism, and Native and African American displacement — all the trappings of American progress. Now, she's bringing the vote—the key to citizenship and democracy—back to her eastern sisters.

Mayer's illustration provides an intriguing depiction of the American suffrage movement but doesn't tell the whole story. Not even close.

By the end of 1914, more than 4 million women had voting rights equal to men in 11 states, all in the West, leaving women elsewhere still reaching for the light of Liberty's torch of freedom. By the time the suffrage amendment was ratified in 1920, women in 27 states, 56% of the nation, held full voting rights. Nearly all of those states were in the West and the Midwest. But for many suffragists and their supporters, the real prize was New York, the most populous state, the state that would signal the domino-like toppling of all the other stalwart states.

Several times since the beginning of the women's rights campaign, suffragists had presented the New York state legislature with the opportunity to extend voting rights to women. Each time they voted it down... if it even left committee. While many of the initial women's rights activists came from New York, women's suffrage found its initial successes not in the Empire State, but in the West and Midwest.

From the vantage point of hindsight, these western victories can look deceptive, easily won as the torch of liberty strides over them toward the East. But that's not really the case. The suffrage victories in the West and the Midwest came in stages, sometimes—as in the case of Washington—were repealed, and centered on local and regional conversations about immigration, temperance, and citizenship. When we add in Southern suffrage, a post-war addition to the national suffrage movement, the very real conversations on race, the 15th Amendment, and the role of women in the franchise come to light.

No matter what Henry Mayer depicted in his centerfold in *Puck*, not a single one of the state suffrage campaigns was easy. Each one was individual and relied on local suffragists who, more times than not, supported suffrage for reasons that conflicted with the national message of the National American Women Suffrage Association. For a national movement, these regional differences often caused conflict, and made it nearly impossible to craft a single message of women's suffrage that reflected the true diversity of American women.

On this episode of *Hindsight*, we will dive deeper into the roles that regionalism and race played in the development and evolution of the suffrage movement and in the campaigns to win suffrage state-by-state.

Listen 43:51 min. Regionalism, Race, and the Right to Vote | Hindsight, Episode 3