

Susan B. Anthony's Influence on Women's Rights

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Susan B. Anthony

Introduction

The Nineteenth Amendment granted women the right to vote and prohibited any United States citizen from being denied the right to vote because of their sex. The idea of women's suffrage gained prominence in the United States after the Seneca Falls Convention, which was 72 years before the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. The amendment was first drafted by two women suffrage activists, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in 1878, 42 years before it was ratified and 30 years after the Seneca Falls Convention. One of the multiple triumphs in Susan B. Anthony's incredible life was that she was able to convince the United States government to grant women the right to vote. All the while, her groundbreaking work did not come easy. Tragically, Anthony was arrested and fined for voter fraud, but despite this type of suppression, her can-do attitude and moral strength of mind, character, and purpose paved the way for granting women the right and power to vote and achieve equality.

Susan's Triumphant Childhood

Susan B. Anthony was "raised in a Quaker family" and her family was very "interested in reform, specifically abolition, woman suffrage, and temperance" ("Women's Rights" 2018). A Quaker is someone who is a member of a Christian movement called the Religious Society of Friends, non-violent, and they believe that everyone was created equally. "Anthony's father believed in equal treatment for boys and girls," so Anthony and her sisters had the opportunity to "receive an advanced education," which was rare at the time for girls ("Center for American Women" 2018). This may be one of the reasons why she believed that everyone was equal and deserve equal rights. When she was 18, "her father enrolled her at Deborah Moulson's Female Seminary, a Quaker school in Hamilton, Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia," but after one term,

she left to teach so she can help pay off her father's debts from the Panic of 1837, an unstable currency and financial system which resulted in a lack of confidence in the government and the banks ("Woman's rights activist" 2018). Anthony took a teaching position in New York where she "met woman suffrage activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton" ("Women's Rights" 2018). Together they formed the Women's New York State Temperance Society, at the same time Anthony had a "leadership position in the New York chapter of the American Anti-Slavery Society" ("Women's Rights" 2018). After the Civil War, Stanton and Anthony along with other women suffrage activist fought for women to be included in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

The Tragedy of Betrayal

The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Nineteenth amendments all played an important part in Anthony's life. After the Civil War, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States, while the Fourteenth Amendment granted citizenship to everyone born in the United States, giving citizenship to former slaves. The Fourteenth Amendment states that "any state [shall not] deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law" ("14th Amendment" 2018). However, the Fourteenth Amendment extended the vote only to former slaves, despite the active relationship between prominent abolitionists and early suffragettes. Anthony worked alongside with congress with hopes that women would be included in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. When they weren't included in these amendments, Stanton and Anthony argued that the vote should be extended to both sexes and they formed the National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The NAWSA started a campaign of speeches, protests, petitions, and other forms of activism to secure the right to vote for women.

The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified in 1865, three years before the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified and fifty-five years before the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. The

Fifteenth amendment was also passed after the Civil War, granting African American men the right to vote. It states that “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude” which Anthony later uses in her speeches and again during her trial (“15th Amendment”). While these amendments were being written and drafted, Anthony was fighting to have women included in them. Because of the relationship between the early suffragettes and the prominent abolitionist, Stanton and Anthony believed women would be included in the Fifteenth Amendment. The finale amendment that played an important part in Anthony's life is the Nineteenth amendment. It grants women the right to vote, which Anthony fought for after women were left out of the Fifteenth amendment. Stanton and Anthony wrote the first draft of the Nineteenth Amendment when it finally became an amendment; they had won that fight that they fought for so long.

Susans Achievements

In support of the Thirteenth Amendment, Anthony and Stanton created “the first national women's political organization” called the Women’s National Loyal League in 1863 (Meconi 2018). The Women’s National Loyal League had the largest petition drive, at the time, that demonstrated a women’s organization ability to function effectively on a national scale. It also showed great public support for the Thirteenth Amendment. Anthony and Stanton also “founded the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA)” in 1869, with Stanton in a leadership position and Anthony organizing all of the association's conventions and protests (Meconi 2018). Lucy Stone, another suffrage activist, headed another alternative suffrage organization in that same year called the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). Years later, in 1890, these two groups resolved their differences to merge as one group known as the National-American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Two years after the NAWSA was

founded, Anthony became the group's second president for eight years. After she resigned from being president, Anthony traveled around the United States and Europe to promote woman suffrage. She got to see women get the right to vote in New Zealand and Australia. She believed that “failure to reach this goal [women getting the right to vote] was impossible” (“Woman's rights activist” 2018). Anthony lived a life full of triumphs; however, one of the tragedies in her life was when she was arrested in 1872 for voting in the presidential election.

Tragedy of Getting Arrested

Anthony believed that women had the right to vote because the Fourteenth Amendment states that all people born in the United States are U.S. citizens and have all of the privileges of being a citizen, so she decided to vote in the 1872 presidential election since she was a person born in the United States and was a U.S. citizen. Two weeks later she was arrested for “violating New York’s voting laws” and had to stand trial (“Susan B. Anthony” 2018). Anthony argued that the Fourteenth Amendment made her a citizen and gave her the right to vote in her speeches while she traveled across the country. Her lawyer also brought up this argument during the trial with the hope of Anthony being proven innocent. However, after the closing arguments, Judge Ward Hunt advised the jurors to find Anthony guilty of the charges and they obliged. She was allowed to talk after the sentencing, for “she was not allowed to speak until after the sentence had been given” which was common at the time, and once she was able to speak she gave a powerful speech in support of women's suffrage (“Susan B. Anthony 2018”). Anthony was fined \$100, but she refused to pay it. However, she was freed and the fine wasn't collected in an effort to avoid more “publicity and a legal appeal to the Supreme Court” (“Susan B. Anthony” 2018). After she was freed, she continued to fight for equal rights and because of her never giving up attitude, women won that fight when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified and women were

able to vote.

Conclusion

Anthony lived a life full of triumphs, she founded the Women's New York State Temperance Society, Women's National Loyal League, the National Woman Suffrage Association, held a leadership position in the New York chapter of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and she wrote the first draft of the Nineteenth Amendment. However, the greatest triumph in her life was being able to convince the government to grant women the right to vote in the Nineteenth Amendment. She believed that everyone was created equally and therefore should be treated equally. Even though no one would listen to her, she never gave up on fighting for equal rights for slaves and women. Anthony was able to bring the two separate groups fighting for women's rights together and lead them. But she also had tragedies in her life, like being arrested for voting and being told that women would be included in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments when they weren't. The last tragedy in Anthony's life is that she died before the Nineteenth amendment could be ratified. It is because of Susan's triumphs and her tragedies, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920, granting women the right to vote and paving the road towards women gaining equal rights and giving women more chances to live a better life with ease.

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Anthony, Susan B. "Letter from Anthony to Stanton on Her Illegal Vote." *Women in America*, Primary Source Media, 1999. American Journey. *Student Resources In Context*, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ2161000170/SUIC?u=san49095&sid=SUIC&xid=5d5bcb69>. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.

In this letter, Susan B. Anthony is explaining to Mrs. Stanton how she voted for the first time. She then explains how several other women follow her lead and vote as well. This will be used in the triumph part of my essay. This is because women decided to stand up for themselves and do something they believed they deserved to be able to do.

Anthony, Susan B. "Speech on the Right of Women's Suffrage." *The Civil War*, Primary Source Media, 1999. American Journey. *Student Resources In Context*, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ2151000025/SUIC?u=san49095&sid=SUIC&xid=cad1ab1c>. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.

In this speech, Susan is explaining that she was "exercis[ing] [her] citizen's rights". She wanted to convince the people that she had done no wrong in voting. This will be in the tragedy section of my essay. It will be put there because women shouldn't have to fight to have equal rights.

"Susan B Anthony Background Info - National Council for the Social"
https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/susan_b_anthony_background_info.pdf.
Accessed 27 Nov. 2018

This source is a summary of Susan's life. It has all of the main events in her life, explains how she was raised, and why she was the way she was. This shows why she is important to the U.S's history and how she changed the way people saw women. It will be used in both the tragedy and the triumph parts of my essay because it mentions the tragedy parts and the triumph parts of her life.

"Susan B. Anthony." *American Eras*, vol. 8, Gale, 1997. *Student Resources In Context*, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/K2438000214/SUIC?u=san49095&sid=SUIC&xid=a640c730>. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.

This explains how Susan became apart of the women's suffrage movement and how she helped get it off the ground. It shows how she brought two different groups who didn't see eye to eye together to form one unified group of people fighting for the same thing. The unifying of two groups will be part of my triumph section of my essay. It shows how strong and persuasive she was.

"SBA speech before the Court, 2017."
<https://www.rit.edu/cla/statesmanship/media/ap-friday/AnthonyStanton/SBA%20speech%20before%20the%20Court.pdf>. Accessed 13 Nov. 2018.

Secondary Sources

"When Susan B. Anthony's 'Little Band of 9 Ladies' Voted Illegally - The" 5 Nov. 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/05/us/womens-rights-suffrage-susan-b-anthony.html>. Accessed 27 Nov. 2018.

This article shows how much the public actually cared about women's suffrage. When Susan and the other women voted an article was put in the newspaper, but it was put under a section called "Minor Topics". This is why it will be in the tragedy section, because no one cared about women having the same rights as a man. It talks about what men thought the real reason was for the women to vote. The women really did not want to vote.

Meconi, Honey. "Anthony, Susan B." *American Governance*, edited by Stephen Schechter, et al., vol. 1, Macmillan Reference USA, 2016, pp. 87-89. *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/CX3629100039/OVIC?u=san49095&sid=OVIC&xid=6baf9e9d>. Accessed 7 Nov. 2018.

"Nineteenth Amendment (1920) Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady" https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/coretexts/_files/resources/1920%2019th%20Amendment%20discussion.pdf. Accessed 14 Nov. 2018.

"Susan B. Anthony." *American Eras*, vol. 8, Gale, 1997. *Student Resources In Context*, <http://link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/K2438000214/SUIC?u=san49095&sid=SUIC&xid=a640c730>. Accessed 5 Nov. 2018.

"Susan B Anthony Background Info - National Council for the Social" https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/susan_b_anthony_background_info.pdf. Accessed 14 Nov. 2018.

"Susan B. Anthony The Suffrage Movement - Core Knowledge" https://www.coreknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CKHG_G6_U9_Reform-in-Industrial-America_WTNK_C06_WomensVotingRights.pdf. Accessed 14 Nov. 2018