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**Things you didn't know (or maybe forgot) about how women got the vote**

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff

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The word "suffrage" does not originate from the word "suffering," although plenty of people have suffered in the pursuit of suffrage. It derives from the Latin term suffragium, meaning a vote or a right to vote. It can also refer to a prayer, which is certainly an apt description given the many groups of people who have prayed for the right to vote.

Here are some other things you may not have known about how women obtained the right to vote.

**A Slight in London Sparked A U.S. Movement**

The first Women's Rights Convention took place in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848 and shaped the suffrage movement for decades. The event was the idea of abolitionists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. Cady Stanton and Mott were furious after being barred from an 1840 anti-slavery convention in London, England, because of their gender.

**Abolitionists and Suffragists Were Intertwined**

The women's rights movement sprang from the abolitionist movement before the Civil War, but the relationship was often uneasy. Some felt women should be able to vote before Black men, or the other way around, while others insisted everyone should get the right to vote at once. And some white women wanted to bar Black Americans from their initiatives, fearing their involvement would turn Southern legislators against the cause.

"If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back," said abolitionist and suffrage activist Sojourner Truth. "And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them."

**Lonely Guys in Wyoming Deserved a Hat Tip**

Wyoming was the first territory or state to act after the 1848 Convention when it passed a women's suffrage law on December 10, 1869. Some men truly wanted voting access for women, but many legislators had other motivations. They hoped that the new right to vote would attract more single women to the territory, where men outnumbered women 6 to 1.

**Julia Ward Howe's Eyes Saw the Glory but Not the Vote**

Author and abolitionist Julia Ward Howe founded several major women's organizations and suffrage groups. During the Civil War, she also wrote the lyrics that became the activist anthem "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."

**Susan B. Anthony Was Arrested For Voting**

At a time when women were mocked for speaking in public, Susan B. Anthony was a leading voice in the fight for equality in labor practices and pay. After voting in Rochester, New York, in 1872, she was arrested, convicted of voting illegally and fined, and the publicity attracted many people to her cause. She did not live long enough to cast a legal vote.

"We brag of our universal, unrestricted suffrage; but we are shams after all, for we restrict when we come to the women," Anthony said.

**The Supreme Court Ruled Against Letting Women Vote**

Women's activist Virginia Louise Minor tried to register to vote in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1872 and was rejected. She and her husband sued, and the case rose to the Supreme Court. The 14th Amendment states that "all persons" have the right to equal protection under the law. However, the nine male justices declined to interpret the 14th Amendment's "all persons" clause to include women, forcing suffragists to refocus on changing the Constitution.

**Men Feared 'Petticoat Rule'**

According to a 1900s anti-suffrage pamphlet aimed at women, they shouldn't get the vote because: 90 percent "do not want it, or do not care;" they would be competing with men instead of cooperating; "more voting women than voting men will place the Government under petticoat rule;" and, "It is unwise to risk the good we already have for the evil which may occur."

**Ida B. Wells Organized Women of Color**

Death threats drove journalist Ida B. Wells from Memphis, Tennessee, after she wrote an 1892 lynching exposé. She then moved to Chicago, Illinois, where she urged women of color to get involved in politics. Wells led a group at the 1913 Women's Suffrage Parade in Washington, D.C. After being told by organizers to go to the back or leave, she emerged from the crowd halfway through the march and joined the Illinois delegation at the front.

**'Silent Sentinels' Picketed the White House for 18 Months**

Led by Alice Paul, who had helped organize the 1913 march, more than 1,000 women in January 1917 began daily demonstrations at the White House gates. They faced verbal and physical attacks. At one point, Paul was arrested, jailed and charged with obstructing traffic. In jail, Paul went on a hunger strike, which motivated public support for women's suffrage.

"I am not one of those who believe - broadly speaking - that women are better than men," Paul said. "We have not wrecked railroads, nor corrupted legislatures, nor done many unholy things that men have done; but then we must remember that we have not had the chance."

**A Tragic Pandemic Helped the Cause**

The 1918 flu spread quickly among soldiers in the last stages of World War I, creating a sudden shortage of men. As women surged into the U.S. workforce, they blew apart the arguments that they were delicate and intellectually inferior. Unequal pay and poor working conditions gave momentum to their fight for equal rights and protections.

**Finally, Women Got the Vote**

On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment, passed by Congress the previous June, was ratified by Tennessee, the last state needed to reach the threshold for becoming part of the Constitution. It was certified on August 26, 1920, and women had the right to vote.

**Please respond to the following questions:**

* **Using evidence from the text, explain what suffrage is.**
* **According to this article, why did some Wyoming state legislators want women to be able to vote?**
* **Using evidence from this text, explain the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution and why it did not give women the right to vote.**
* **According to this article, what was petticoat rule and why did men fear it?**
* **Using evidence from this text, explain the 1918 event that led to a female surge into the US workforce.**
* **According to this article, who were some of the first women to participate in the women’s rights movement?**
* **What constitutional amendment gave women the right to vote?**
* **Using evidence from this text, explain what the author wanted you to learn from this article.**