

HOW THE VOTE WAS WON

Remembering the struggle for the 19th Amendment

The push for women's suffrage dates to our country's founding. In 1776, as the Continental Congress set about shaping a new government, Abigail Adams admonished her husband, Founding Father and, later, second president of the U.S. John Adams, to "remember the ladies." Seventy-two years later, "the ladies" launched an intense fight to gain what they didn't obtain at the country's founding: the right to vote. Another 72 years would pass before they achieved their goal.

As the U.S. celebrates the centennial of the 19th Amendment this year, visit three places where "herstory" was made.

THE CALL

The location in July 1848 of the first Women's Rights Convention, Seneca Falls, New York, is today the center of the multi-site **Women's Rights National Historical Park** ([nps.gov/wori](https://www.nps.gov/wori)). Given pride of place as the stirring centerpiece of the visitor center, *First Wave* is a near-life-size sculpture of 20 known and anonymous convention attendees, including co-organizer Elizabeth Cady Stanton, principal author of the meeting's Declaration of Sentiments, which was modeled on the U.S. Declaration of Independence and served as a rallying cry for the movement. Park rangers lead tours of Stanton's preserved home as well as Wesleyan Chapel, where convention-goers met. The M'Clintock House in nearby Waterloo, where the Declaration of Sentiments was drafted, is open for guided tours during warmer months.

THE CRUSADE

In April 2016, a 200-year-old brick house on Capitol Hill that still serves as headquarters of the National Woman's Party (NWP), which is now focused on education rather than lobbying, was designated the **Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument** ([nps.gov/bepa](https://www.nps.gov/bepa)). Visitors can explore the small museum on their own or take one of two ranger-led tours offered daily Wednesday through Sunday. Exhibits showcase historical photos, political cartoons, promotional literature and protest banners and focus on the work of NWP founder Alice Paul, a prominent member of the 20th-century women's rights movement.



COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Among Paul's achievements, she coordinated a 5,000-person-strong suffrage procession held in Washington, D.C., the day before President Woodrow Wilson's 1913 inauguration. She and the NWP began picketing outside the White House in January 1917.

THE COST

After the U.S. entered World War I, public opinion started to turn against the protestors. Refusing orders to desist, Paul and more than 150 other protestors were arrested over a period of several months in 1917 and incarcerated at the D.C. jail and the Workhouse in Lorton, Virginia. The appalling conditions in which the women were kept, in addition to the suffragists' hunger strikes and subsequent forced feedings, outraged the nation. The furor finally helped to goad President Wilson into backing the 19th amendment.

On January 25, the Workhouse Arts Center that occupies the campus of the former Workhouse in Lorton will unveil the **Lucy Burns Museum** ([workhousearts.org/lucyburnsmuseum](https://www.workhousearts.org/lucyburnsmuseum)), documenting the 91-year history of the workhouse and correctional facility—including the story of the suffragists imprisoned there.

Down the road from the Workhouse Arts Center, the **Turning Point Suffragist Memorial** ([suffragistmemorial.org](https://www.suffragistmemorial.org)) is slated to open on the grounds of Occoquan Regional Park on August 26. Visitors to the memorial will pass through replicas of the White House gates where suffragists picketed in 1917 and then enter a plaza featuring a suffragist sculpture at its center surrounded by 19 interactive stations providing an overview of the seven-decade fight for passage of the 19th Amendment.

Not coincidentally, August 26 is Women's Equality Day, designated by Congress in 1973 to coincide with the 1920 certification of the 19th Amendment.

—Penny Musco