19th Amendment
Centennial Commemoration
NARA-wide Activities

Photograph; ca. 1911; Marie Baldwin; Official Personnel Folders - Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Record Group 146: National Archives, St. Louis.
You may not be able to come see THE 19th Amendment right now in person, but you can visit us virtually!

National Archives across the nation have records related to Women’s Rights. Did you know we have 14 public research facilities and 14 Presidential Libraries? This presentation will introduce you to some of our favorite items related to Women’s Rights from many of our different collections.
The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution secured American women’s right to vote in the Constitution. It was won after many years of protests, parades, and organizations demanding inclusion. While decades of struggle to include African Americans and other minority women in the promise of voting rights remained, the face of the American electorate had changed forever.
Frances Perkins was a leading figure in the fight for women’s rights. She was the first woman appointed to U.S. Cabinet, as Secretary of Labor. This is the title summary page from her Official Personnel Folder (OPF), notating her nomination and title change.
On February 28, 1980, President Jimmy Carter met with a group of prominent women and signed a proclamation creating the first National Women’s History Week.
For the 50th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, Postmaster General Winton M. Blount sent President Nixon a personalized presentation folder of Woman Suffrage stamps and a first-day issue postmarked Adams, MA, the birthplace of Susan B. Anthony.
Personal note written in 1978 by STOP ERA advocate Phyllis Schlafly to Missouri Attorney General John Ashcroft, in support of his work with the lawsuit against the National Organization for Women (NOW).
President Truman nominated the first woman to be Treasurer of the United States, Georgia Neese Clark. In this memo, Secretary of the Treasury John Snyder recommends her appointment.
Susan B. Anthony (along with 14 other women) was arrested for illegally voting in Rochester, NY, on November 5, 1872. She was arrested, convicted, and fined $100 but never paid the fine. *U.S. v. Susan B. Anthony*, Record of Conviction
President Reagan and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman on the Supreme Court, walk outside the Supreme Court after her swearing-in ceremony, September 25, 1981.
First Lady Betty Ford addressed the Greater Cleveland Congress of International Women’s Year (IWY) in Cleveland, OH, on October 25, 1975. “The search for human freedom can never be complete without freedom for women,” she told the conference participants.
As thanks for the creation of the White House Council on Women and Girls and the positive example that it set for the rest of the world, Ambassador Swanee Hunt presented these crosses, made from bullet casings, to Tina Tchen, Executive Director of the Council.
Eleanor Roosevelt, the first woman to represent the United States as a delegate to the United Nations, opens a session of the UN Commission on Human Rights at Geneva, Switzerland, April 16, 1951.
Lou Henry Hoover had many roles over the course of her life. She modernized the office of First Lady from its traditional social role toward a more activist direction while still trying to keep a modest public profile. She mobilized her nationwide network of friends and colleagues, political acquaintances, and Girl Scouts and Girls Scout leaders to assist the unemployed and destitute in their communities, and she refused to take any credit for the work that was done.
Civil rights leader Dorothy Height—called "the godmother of the Civil Rights Movement"—served on the President Kennedy's Commission on the Status of Women and advised multiple Presidents and government agencies on civil rights issues. For 40 years, she was the president of National Council on Negro Women, where she worked to address both racism and sexism.
"For our girls, women's suffrage is ancient history. They've never known the inequalities that women had to endure and overcome a couple of generations ago. That's why it's so important for us to be vigilant in our remembrance, and vocal in our celebration of women's history—because we owe the great women in our past for the opportunities that we enjoy today."

—President George W. Bush's remarks to Women Business Leaders on March 20, 2001
Letter from Jacqueline Cochran, head of the former Women’s Air Service Pilots (WASPs) to [General] Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had become her close friend, thanks to his support of her efforts. Her return of support helped convinced Ike to run for President.

Condoleezza Rice has held many titles, including director of Soviet and East European Affairs with the National Security Council, as well as a special assistant to President George H.W. Bush for National Security Affairs. She was President George H. W. Bush's National Security Advisor and Secretary of State—the first woman to be NSA and the first Black woman to head the State Department.
"Wyoming was not only the first place, when it was a territory, to grant women the right to vote, but also the first state to do so and the first state to give us a woman governor, Nellie Taylor [Ross]." —Hillary Clinton, August 26, 1995
Press release, "Remarks of Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson at Dedication Ceremonies of Women's Pavilion HemisFair, 4/6/1968", "Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX.

In 1968, Lady Bird Johnson opened the Women's Pavilion at the San Antonio HemisFair, the first official international exposition in the Southwest. The expo's theme was the shared cultural heritage of the Americas, and she spoke of women's international cooperation and the Great Society.

Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library
Early drafts of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 called for equal treatment of all Americans, regardless of race or religion. Amendments adding “sex” became the basis for protecting gender equity in the workforce. In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that this provision also protects employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
The Selma marches of 1965 were a famous step toward the passage of the Voting Rights Act later that year. This outline for the planned March 19 march (which occurred on the 21) is part of Montgomery Civil Case Files, Civil Action No. 2181-N.
During WWI, large numbers of women were recruited into jobs as part of the war effort. The high demand for weapons and the overall wartime situation resulted in munitions factories collectively becoming the largest employer of American women by 1918, with women taking traditionally men's jobs in large numbers for the first time in American history.

The photograph shows women workers at the Watertown Arsenal in 1918 working on lathes producing gun barrels.
World War I touched the everyday lives of Americans. President Wilson established the U.S. Food Administration with an Executive order on August 10, 1917, and appointed Herbert Hoover to lead this agency. Hoover instituted the “Food Pledge Campaign” outlined in this poster, “Women Will Win World War!”
For many Native Americans, including women like Julia Denetclaw, the 19th Amendment did not guarantee them the vote. She still attempted to register to vote, prompting this affidavit.
During the Civil War, the U.S. Government tried a new approach to filling its personnel shortage: It opened its payrolls to women for the first time, a turning point in women’s history. The correspondence relating to employment of Bridget Clark is among letters of recommendation by various politicians and other notable citizens for individuals seeking jobs at the Schuylkill Arsenal, primarily during the Civil War.
In 1935, four young women took their broken dreams of a new life in America to fight for other enslaved women, setting a precedent for those who fight sex trafficking today. These “Broken Blossoms” took known prostitution ringleader Wong See Duck to court and won their freedom.
In the early 1930s, garment workers involved in the Los Angeles dressmaking industry were mobilizing and demanding improved working conditions during the needle trades strike. Strikers united for a “living wage,” “equal division of work,” and “no discrimination against any race, color, creed, or because of union activity” notable for the inclusion of Latinas in the ILGWU materials and negotiations.
Women munition workers urge President to support suffrage bill. Six women war workers, representing thousands of others, were delegated to see President Wilson and urge him to support the motion for an immediate passage of the Federal suffrage amendment. These women were employed at the Bethlehem Steel Company's plant at Newcastle, PA.
This article “The Peace Policy of the Iroquois” by Arthur C. Parker featured in *The Indian School Journal* tells the long history of women’s suffrage within their Nation.
Twenty-four years before Rosie the Riveter, the iconic symbol of women’s wartime participation in traditionally male-oriented jobs, qualified inkers were needed to generate topographical maps for war. Women as well as men could earn $1,520 to $1,900 a month (adjusted for inflation) and contribute to the war being fought by doughboys overseas. These draftsmen and women would produce 9 million maps over the course of the war.
Now that you have sample of women’s rights through different times and places, we invite you to continue your exploration at

Archives.gov/women

and to engage with your National Archives and Records Administration locations all across the United States.