

Seneca Falls & Skaneateles Trip June 15, 2023



CATHARINE BLAINE

Seneca Falls and The Women's Rights Movement in the State of Washington



"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal"

On July 19, 1848, seventy-two women and men gathered in Seneca Falls, New York, to declare independence from the "tyranny" of men. Some 300 participants in the first Women's Rights Convention debated the merits of a document they called a Declaration of Sentiments. Closely modeled after the Declaration of Independence, the list called on the U.S. Constitution to grant to female citizens "all the rights and privileges" already enjoyed by white American men.

Although the Declaration was unanimously approved, only 68 women and 32 men actually signed the document. One of the youngest to do so was 18-year-old Catharine (Fraser) Blaine. Born in Dutchess County, New York, Catharine was raised in Seneca Falls in a progressive, middle-class household. Her father publicly opposed slavery and her mother had converted to the Unitarian, a Christian denomination that emphasized earthly justice and personal responsibility. All three were abolitionists, including Catharine, being the Methodist church as well.

Five years after the Seneca Falls convention, Catharine married Methodist clergyman David Blaine. Although both of them hoped for a missionary posting to China or Africa, Blaine was sent instead to minister to settlers in the rough, new town of Seattle. In the summer of 1853, Catharine headed west to her new life in Washington Territory. Along with her steamer trunk and her Bible, she carried the red-inked petitions that had sprouted in upstate New York.



The original handwritten text of the Declaration of Sentiments has been lost, but great care was taken to reproduce it after the Seneca Falls Convention. Photo courtesy of the Seneca Falls Convention and the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, 1848.

FINDING A VOICE and a Venue

Based on the original letters and publications prepared by the 1848 convention, we present this exhibition. Informed by archival and laboratory research, the First Women's Rights Convention is brought to life through a series of processes.

COMING TOGETHER

Many progressive women were involved in the struggle for the abolition of slavery. Four local women who were part of this network of activists seized the opportunity presented by Lucretia Mott's visit from Philadelphia to organize the First Women's Rights Convention.



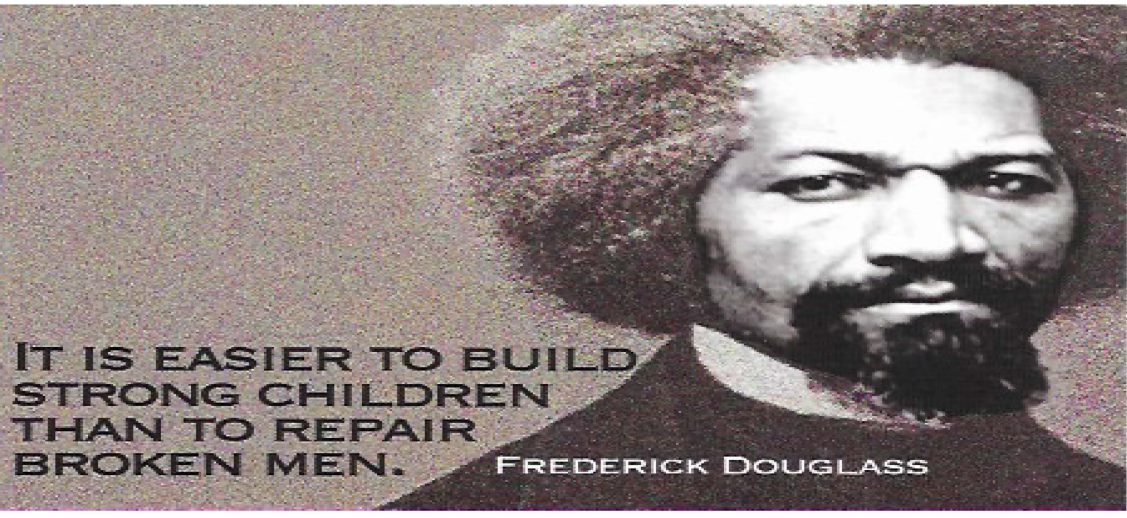
THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL



In 1843, the Wesleyan Methodist congregation was founded on the principles of equality for all. They considered their chapel to be an open house and opened its doors to reform speakers of all kinds.

A Venue for Free Speech

In the days leading up to the convention, the Wesleyan Chapel, though small, became a place of great activity. It was a place where women could gather and speak freely. The chapel was a place where women could find a voice and a venue.



IT IS EASIER TO BUILD STRONG CHILDREN THAN TO REPAIR BROKEN MEN. FREDERICK DOUGLASS

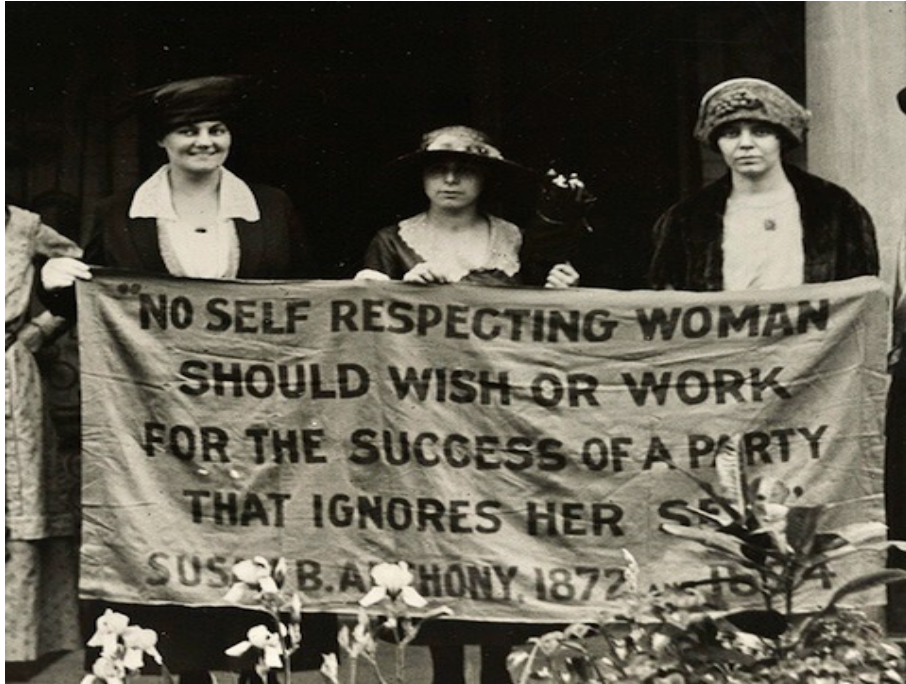
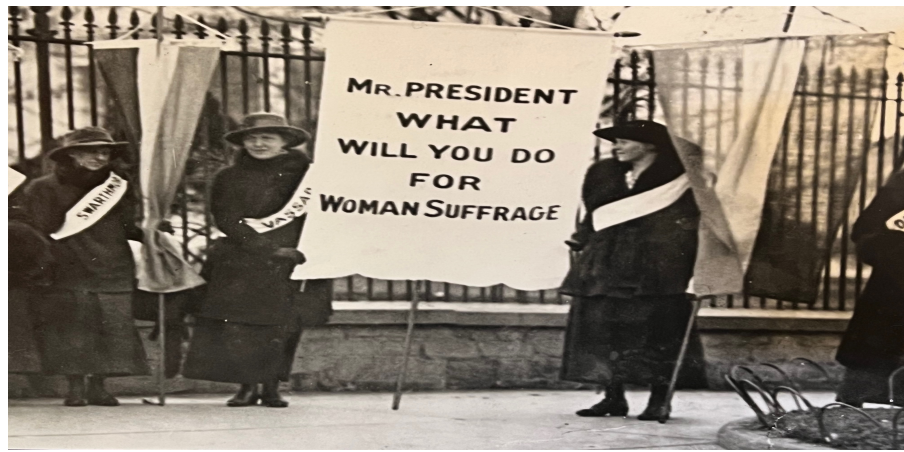
"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by any state on account of sex."

The Equal Rights Amendment

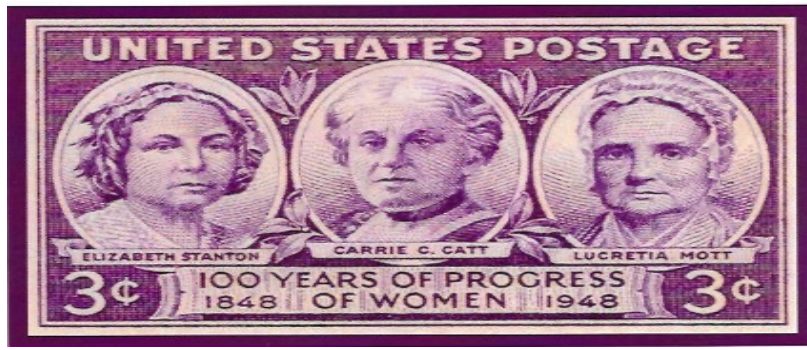
The Equal Rights Amendment was written by suffragist Alice Paul and presented in the Presbyterian Church in Seneca Falls, NY in 1923. The ERA was introduced into every session of Congress from 1923 to 1972, when it was passed and sent to the states for ratification. By the deadline in 1982, the ERA had only been ratified by 35 states, just short of the 38 needed to pass. The ERA has been introduced into every session of Congress since then, with no time limit on ratification.



Alice Paul circa 1918



<p>No man is good enough to govern any woman without her consent. -Susan B. Anthony</p>	<p>Forward out of darkness, leave behind the night; forward out of error, forward into light! -Slogan of the National Woman's Party</p>	<p>Men, their rights, and nothing more; women, their rights, and nothing less. -Susan B. Anthony</p>
<p>Liberty must be fought for. And, women of the nation, this is the time to fight. -Inez Milholland Boissevain</p>		<p>I do not demand equal pay for any women save those who do equal work in value. -Susan B. Anthony</p>
	<p>WOMEN'S RIGHTS</p> <p>Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty? -Inez Milholland Boissevain</p>	<p>The best protection any woman can have is courage. -Elizabeth Cady Stanton</p>



Never doubt
that a
small group of
thoughtful,
committed
citizens
can change
the world.
INDEED
IT'S THE ONLY THING
THAT EVER HAS.
Margaret Mead

