

Democratic Women's Club Worcester County

*Celebrating the Upcoming
100th Anniversary
Of Women's Right to Vote*

**SPECIAL EDITION
SEPTEMBER, 2019**

Letter from the Publisher

Dear DWC Members,

As we plan celebrations and parades, commemorating passage of Amendment XIX, giving women the privilege and the right to participate in our democracy, we should take a moment to reflect on the many hard battles and heart wrenching sacrifices made by the women who came before us. It is our opportunity to not only celebrate their accomplishments, but to thank this group of farseeing pioneers who never let go of their vision of equality. These Suffragists worked arduously for what would 'come-to-be' after they were gone. They did it for us. They did it for our children.

August 18, 1920, however, wasn't a day of armistice. The pioneers envisioned more profound expansions of equality, and knew the battles would continue for years ahead. They understood they'd have to pass their torches to future generations. 100 years later, we continue the struggle. As long as we see workforce inequity, pay inequity, consumer inequity, threats to reproductive health and choice, and violence against women, we know there is still much work ahead.

We will continue the work... it's up to us and to our children. This is how to thank the Suffragists for their 1920 gift. And, there is no better way to thank them than to put that gift to good use. Thank a Suffragette! Get women registered! Get them voting! Tell your daughters, aunts, nieces, sisters and friends it's their time. Copy [vote.org](https://www.vote.org), and paste it to every email you send.

We got this!

Ellen Em Hench

In the Beginning

Although the plight for women's rights and suffrage had been going on for many years, **officially**, the Women's Suffrage movement in the United States began with the **Seneca Falls Convention in 1848**. Over 300 people, men and women, attended this historic meeting where they discussed, debated and adopted a revolutionary "**Declaration of Sentiments**" based on the Declaration of Independence.



In it were listed the many inequities women suffered under the legal and political systems, including: No voice in the law, No independent rights after marriage, No custody of children in case of divorce, No right to a college education. No opportunity to enter most professions, AND — of course — no right to vote!

And, so it began.

A Silent Protest



The Silent Sentinels picketing the White House in 1917

In January 1917, the National Women's Party took the controversial step of picketing outside the White House — the first time any group had done so. The "Silent Sentinels" held banners and signs that were deliberately intended to provoke; when the Russian delegation visited the White House, one of them read, "We, the women of America, tell you that America is not a democracy. Twenty million American women are denied the right to vote. President Wilson is the chief opponent of their national enfranchisement."



Then ... A Night of Terror

Beyond On-going Risk of Imprisonment, Women Were Beaten and Tortured as They Fought for the Right to Vote

When we tell our children about the fight for women's suffrage in America, we often tell a sanitized version of the story. We talk about letter-writing campaigns, activist conferences, and stirring speeches — and occasionally, we mention defiant suffragists being hauled to jail. But we often shy away from the darker truths about the sacrifices and suffering many suffragists had to endure in the fight for women's right to vote.

One especially notorious event, the "Night of Terror," when 33 suffragists from the National Women's Party, who had been arrested for protesting outside of the White House, were brutally beaten and tortured at the Occoquan Workhouse, a prison in northern Virginia took place a little over 100 years ago on November 14, 1917.

"By November, many of the Silent Sentinels had been repeatedly arrested and Occoquan superintendent W.H. Whittaker was frustrated. On November 14, he ordered the nearly 40 male guards to "teach the women a lesson." The guards attacked the 33 women with clubs, brutalizing them and throwing them into cells. According to affidavits taken during a later investigation, women were dragged, choked, pinched, and kicked — and some women received even worse treatment. They twisted Dora Lewis' arm behind her back and slammed her into an iron bed twice before leaving her unconscious on the floor. Her cellmate, Alice Cosu, believed that Lewis was dead and suffered a heart attack, but she was denied medical treatment until the next morning. Dorothy Day, who later co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement, was slammed repeatedly over the back of an iron bench.

After she started a roll call from her cell to check in on her fellow prisoners, Lucy Burns was identified as the group's ringleader. When she refused the guards' orders to stop the roll call, they handcuffed her arms to the cell bars above her head, leaving her standing bleeding all night. In solidarity, other women stood holding their arms above their own heads until she was released".

For many of the women, the physical and psychological consequences of their harrowing experience would be lifelong. Their stories horrified the nation, galvanizing public support for the Women's Suffrage Movement and bringing new momentum which helped pass the 19th Amendment, recognizing women's right to vote, three years later. The freedom to vote, however, had come at a cost, and that cost was borne in part by these women.

The Pioneers of Protest

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815 – 1902



Ms. Stanton's "Declaration of Sentiments", presented at the Seneca Falls Convention held in 1848, in Seneca Falls, NY, is often credited with initiating the first organized women's rights and women's suffrage movements in the United States. Before Ms. Stanton narrowed her political focus almost exclusively to women's rights, she was an active abolitionist

Lucy Stone, 1818-1893



Ms. Stone was best known for refusing to change her last name when she married abolitionist Henry Blackwell in 1855, the couple declared that the tradition of the wife changing her name, "refused" to recognize the wife as an independent, rational being, and placed the husband in an unnatural state of superiority. After she graduated from in 1847, Stone became a lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society—advocating, "not for the slave only, but for suffering humanity everywhere.

Susan B. Anthony, 1820 - 1906



After many years of teaching, Ms. Anthony continued her passion for equal rights, and desire to end slavery, by becoming an abolition activist. She ultimately became one of the most visible leaders of the Women's Suffrage Movement. In 1851 she met Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The two became good friends ... working together for over 50 years fighting for women's rights, as they traveled around the country delivering speeches in favor of women's suffrage.



Ida B. Wells, 1862-1931

Ms. Wells is probably best known as for her work as a journalist and anti-lynching activist. Her writings exposed and condemned the inequalities and injustices applied to African-Americans, and especially the arbitrary violence that white racists used. In March 1913, as Wells prepared to join the

suffrage parade through President Woodrow Wilson's inaugural celebration, organizers asked her to stay out of the procession. Although most early suffrage activists were abolitionists before they were feminists, by the beginning of the 20th century, the status quo of *suffrage sympathizers* could not support a black woman marching along-side her white counterparts. Wells joined the march anyway.



Alice Paul, 1885-1977

The leader of the most militant wing of the woman-suffrage movement, Ms. Paul earned an undergraduate degree in biology from Swarthmore College and a PhD in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. She coordinated an enormous suffrage parade to coincide with—and distract from—President Wilson's inauguration in 1913. For this “unpatriotic” act, Paul and the others were imprisoned.

The Pioneers ... Not Always on Same Page

Twelve years after the Seneca Valley Convention, in 1870, the 15th amendment to the Constitution was ratified giving African American males the right to vote. This led to a dramatic schism in the women's-rights movement. Activists like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, believed an amendment granting the vote to African Americans should not be ratified unless it also granted the vote to women. Proponents of this point of view formed a group called the National Woman Suffrage Association. Those willing to support the added legal protections and citizen rights of former slaves, even if they would have to continue their fight for universal suffrage, formed the group called The American Woman Suffrage Association. This animosity eventually faded, and in 1890 the two groups joined to form a new suffrage organization, the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was NAWSA's first president, and Susan B. Anthony was its second.

Finally

On Election Day in 1920, millions of American women exercised their right to vote for the first time. For almost 100 years, women (and men) had been fighting to win that right: They had made speeches, signed petitions, marched in parades and argued over and over again that women, like men, deserved all of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.



** In 1920, Alice Paul proposed an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution. ("Men and women," it read, "shall have equal rights throughout the United States.") The ERA has never been ratified. And, so it continues!

Spotlight On Linda Linzey



For several years, Linda Linzey has been a key speaker and contributor to the Democratic Women's Club of Worcester County. Her passion, combined with her advanced studies in women's history, has provided our membership with profound insight into centuries of women's struggles and sacrifices, as well as the incredible contributions of the women who have lead the way into 20th and 21st century global achievements. Currently, Linda is coordinating and working with a DWC committee that is honoring and celebrating the 100 anniversary of women's suffrage. Today, we thank and spotlight Linda.

A graduate of Towson University, Linda earned her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education & Teaching, with a Minor in Women's Studies. She is a member and former docent of the Maryland Women's Heritage Center. As Program Coordinators for MWHC, Linda and colleague, Jeanne Cooper, co-produced 2012's "*Unsung Heroines*", a live, and recorded event, honoring women in the military and those who served on the home front during World War II. The production includes interviews of several key women who discussed their experiences during the war and since. For more information on the Maryland Women's Heritage Center, please visit <https://mdwomensheritagecenter.org>

Watch Linda's incredible, eye-opening interview, revealing the compelling and fascinating story of her career, and the background of how she was drawn to produce "*Unsung Heroines*". This 30-minute production, hosted by Maryland Women's Heritage Center, also includes many clips from Linda's "*Unsung Heroines*". You'll be delighted and enlightened!

Click on: https://youtu.be/XdiaDe15w_I

**The DWC Newsletter is Happy to Announce its New Feature!
We Will be "Spotlighting" Members, Routinely!**

A DWC Committee is Formed

“Dear DWC Members,

Earlier this year, Deb Fisher-Reynolds and I approached the DWC Board of Directors, seeking approval to form an ad hoc group to recognize the 2020 centennial of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ... when women FINALLY won the right to vote. The Board’s response was an unequivocal, “YES”. With that approval, Vicky Wallace spread the word to DWC membership ... announcing the formation of this new committee, “100th Suffrage Anniversary” (100 SA), and invited others interested in joining to get in touch.

As of this writing, our cadre numbers eleven. With so many “on the job”, our committee will be able to research and collect print, digital and audio-visual resources; educate our membership and the community about the history of suffrage; plan commemorative events; network with other like-minded organizations and groups and incorporate suffrage history with our 2020 “get out the vote” efforts.

We are reading some of the many books written on the topic and are at the research and planning stages. Please contact one of our members if you have any resources to share or would like to join our efforts: Deb Fisher-Reynolds, Debbie Gousha, Joy Braun, Debbie Hile, Rebecca Samowicz, Rosie Bean, Vicky Wallace, Judy Butler, Sue Fox, Em Hench, Linda Linzey.

Watch your inbox for more communications ... you will hear from us regularly”!

Linda Villegas Linzey,
100th Suffrage Anniversary (100 SA)
Committee Coordinator

The Woman’s Hour by Elaine Weiss

“Winning the vote required 72 years of ceaseless agitation by three generations of dedicated, fearless suffragists, who sought to overturn centuries of law and millennia of tradition concerning gender roles. The women who launched the movement were dead by the time it was completed. The women who secured its final success weren’t born when it began.”

In Honor of the Women



She is me.

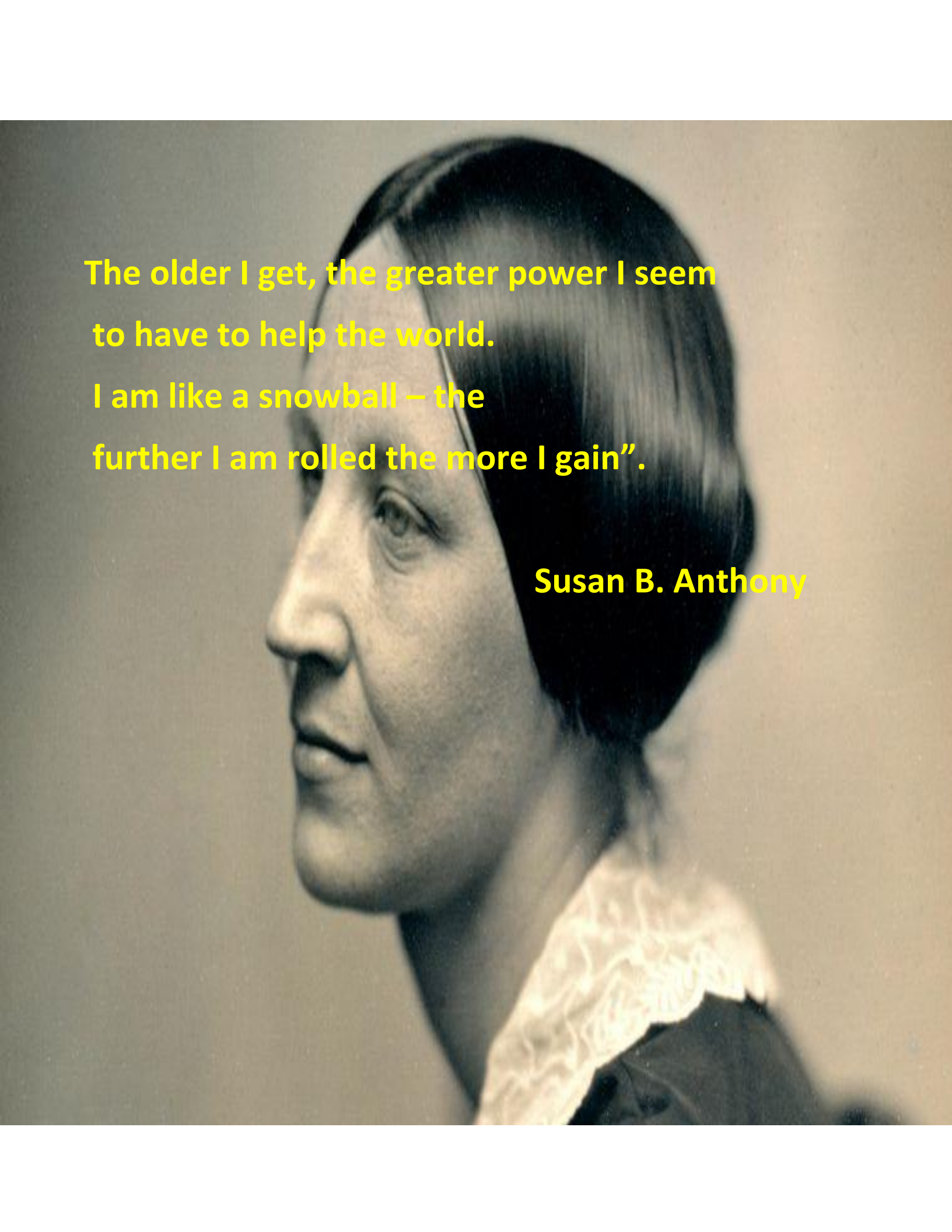
#ShelsMeLWV



Luisa is a voting rights activist with a passion for registering new citizens to vote. After achieving her own voting rights at her naturalization ceremony, Luisa got to work using her rights to expand others. The Suffragists would be very proud.

VOTE TODAY, SHAPE TOMORROW!!!

VOTE.ORG



**The older I get, the greater power I seem
to have to help the world.
I am like a snowball – the
further I am rolled the more I gain”.**

Susan B. Anthony