

Suffrage History

Books

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By the time of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, publications on the suffrage movement had already begun to appear, and they have amassed through the years. Below is a selection of mostly books from the 1990s and 2000s with a few reprints of earlier work. Any descriptions not footnoted came from League sources. Note that the categories are used fairly loosely. A book in the General Histories and Biographies section may also have information on anti-suffrage, suffrage activism of women of color, and current voting and equality issues.

This list is for informational purposes only. Being included on the list does not indicate endorsement by the League. We recommend that users research further any book intended for educational use.

As of the date of this document, all links are viable. However, this can change as online resources are modified. Contact league@lwv-bmc.org if you have comments or recommendations for additional listings.

General Histories and Biographies

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| Morgan Anita | 2020 | <i>We Must Be Fearless: The Woman Suffrage Movement in Indiana</i> This book "examines the struggles and triumphs of a myriad of Hoosier women black and white, rich and poor, urban and rural who banded together to seek equal rights with men at the ballot box." |
| DuBois, Ellen Carol | 2020 | <i>Suffrage: Women's Long Battle for the Vote</i> "This exciting history explores the full scope of the movement to win the vote for women through portraits of its bold leaders and devoted activists." |
| Cassidy, Tina | 2019 | <i>Mr. President: How Long Must We Wait?: Alice Paul, Woodrow Wilson, and the Fight for the Right to Vote</i> Little-known feminist who brought to America the radical tactics of British suffragettes. |
| Lemay, Kate Clarke | 2019 | <i>Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence</i> Highlights unrecognized activists in the history of women's suffrage. |

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| Library of Congress | 2019 | <i>Votes for Women: Images from the Suffrage Movement</i> A book of postcards using images of women's suffrage drawn from the collections of the Library of Congress. |
| Ware, Susan | 2019 | <i>Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote</i> Why They Marched is a tribute to the many women who worked tirelessly in communities across the nation, out of the spotlight, protesting, petitioning, and insisting on their right to full citizenship. ¹ |
| Weiss, Elaine | 2018 revised edition; 2011 | <i>The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote</i> The Woman's Hour is an inspiring story of activists winning one of the last campaigns forged in the shadow of the Civil War, and the beginning of the great twentieth-century battles for civil rights. ¹ |
| Keyssar, Alexander | 2009 revised edition; 2000 | <i>The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States</i> A comprehensive history of the right to vote, putting suffrage into the larger context of voting rights. |
| Conkling, Winifred | 2018 | <i>Votes for Women! American Suffragists and the Battle for the Ballot</i> By turns illuminating, harrowing, and empowering, Votes for Women! paints a vibrant picture of the women whose tireless battle still inspires political, human rights, and social justice activism. ¹ |
| Gosling, Lucinda | 2018 | <i>Art of Feminism: Images That Shaped the Fight for Equality</i> International survey of feminist art. |
| Tetrault, Lisa | 2017 | <i>The Myth of Seneca Falls</i> Seneca Falls is not the only place to start the story of women's suffrage, but the stories of many activists were omitted in the writings of Armstrong and Stanton, specifically those of Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe. |
| McConaughy, Corrine M. | 2015 | <i>The Woman Suffrage Movement in America: A Reassessment</i> Story of woman suffrage as one involving the diverse politics of women across the country as well as the incentives of the men with the primary political authority to grant new voting rights. |
| McMillen, Sally | 2009 reprint edition | <i>Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movement (Pivotal Moments in American History)</i> Covers 50 years of women's activism, from 1840 to 1890, focusing on four extraordinary figures—Mott, Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Susan B. Anthony. ¹ |
| Baker, Jean H. | 2006 | <i>Sisters: The Lives of America's Suffragists</i> The condensed biographies of activists Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frances Willard and Alice Paul, the five women widely recognized for their efforts in the American suffrage movement. ² |
| Sinclair, Evelyn, and Ruth, Janice E. | 2006 | <i>Women Who Dare: Women of the Suffrage Movement</i> This book walks through the history of the movement, with special attention paid to illustrating friendships and histories of the key players. ² |

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| Buhle, Mari Jo, and Buhle, Paul | 2005 | <i>The Concise History of Women's Suffrage</i> A shorter version of the six volumes written by Stanton, Anthony, and Gage. The original contained 5,000 pages of women's suffrage documents, articles, speeches, and convention programs. |
| Bausum, Ann | 2004 | <i>With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote</i> Bausum's book examines the various layers and angles of the movement, starting first by highlights the story's giants, then continues on to detail the events from 1906 to 1920 leading up to the right to vote. ² |
| Lumsden, Linda | 2004 | <i>The Life and Times of Inez Milholland</i> Lumsden's study of this colorful and influential figure restores to history an important link between the homebound women of the 19th century and the iconoclastic feminists of the 1970s. ³ |
| Wellman, Judith | 2004 | <i>The Road to Seneca Falls</i> Documented account of the historic Seneca Falls convention in its contemporary context. |
| Barry, Kathleen | 2000 | <i>Susan B. Anthony: Biography of a Singular Feminist</i> Barry draws upon letters, diaries, and other documents to integrate Anthony's personal story into the political, economic, and cultural milieu of nineteenth century America. ⁴ |
| Gordon, Ann D., editor | 2000 | <i>The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony</i> Includes transcripts of Stanton & Anthony letters, diary entries, speeches, and newspaper articles. ⁴ |
| Dubois, Ellen Carol | 1999 | <i>Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869</i> An newer edition featuring an update on the political landscape since <i>Feminism and Suffrage</i> was first published to include voting patterns of women. ² |
| Kolmerten, Carol A. | 1999 | <i>The American Life of Ernestine L. Rose</i> A biography of Ernestine Rose (1810-1892), a pioneer Jewish feminist and freethinker. Born in Poland, she immigrated to the U.S., becoming a pioneer in the American women's suffrage movement and a close colleague of Susan B. Anthony. ⁴ |
| Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, et al. | 1999 reprint | <i>History of Women's Suffrage</i> Includes all six volumes of <i>History of Woman Suffrage</i> published between 1881 and 1922 by the women who made the history. ⁴ |
| Ward, Geoffrey | 1999 | <i>Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony</i> Written as a companion to the Ken Burns PBS documentary of the same name. The video and the book tell of the remarkable partnership of these two extraordinary women and its effect on the development of the suffrage movement. ⁴ |

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| Harper, Judith | 1998 | <i>Susan B. Anthony: A Biographical Companion</i> This illustrated volume presents 123 alphabetically arranged entries on significant events, people, publications, movements, and organizations associated with Anthony and her struggle for humanitarian reform. ⁴ |
| Flexner, Eleanor, and Fitzpatrick, Ellen | 1996 | <i>Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States</i> Originally published in 1959, this classic work relates the story of women who spent a lifetime fighting law and custom to finally achieve their political rights. ⁴ |
| Gurko, Miriam | 1996 | <i>The Ladies of Seneca Falls: The Birth of the Woman's Rights Movement</i> Traces the course of the women's rights movement from its origin in the Seneca Falls Convention through the passage of the 19th Amendment. The author examines each of the movement's founders to show the various backgrounds from which their feminist consciousness sprang and the unique contributions that each made to the suffrage movement. ⁴ |
| Sherr, Lynn | 1995 | <i>Failure is Impossible: Susan B. Anthony in Her Own Words</i> ABC correspondent Lynn Sherr adds insightful biographical commentary to a wide-ranging selection of Anthony's speeches, letters, and quotes. |
| DuBois, Ellen Carol, editor | 1992 | <i>The Elizabeth Cady Stanton – Susan B. Anthony Reader</i> Correspondence, writings, and speeches of Stanton & Anthony, edited by one of the preeminent historians of the suffrage movement. |
| Stanton, Elizabeth Cady | 1992 reprint | <i>Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897</i> A reprint of Stanton's lively autobiography first published in 1898. The new introduction and after word interpret her positions and strategies for today's readers and bring current scholarship to the appraisal of Stanton's historical importance. ⁴ |
| Griffith, Elisabeth | 1985 | <i>In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton</i> The first comprehensive biography of the founder of the American women's rights movement. Griffith emphasizes the significance of role models and female friendships in Stanton's progress toward personal and political independence. ⁴ |
| Harper, Ida Husten | 1983 reprint | <i>The Life & Work of Susan B. Anthony</i> The first two volumes of this "authorized" biography of Susan B. Anthony were published in 1898; the final volume in 1908. Harper and Anthony worked endless hours going through letters, diaries, and scrapbooks to compile what is still the most detailed account of her event-filled life. ⁴ |
| Kraditor, Aileen | 1981 | <i>Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920</i> Kraditor investigates the ideas and tactics employed by the leaders of the women's suffrage movement to achieve their goal of gender equality. ⁴ |

Women of Color and the Women’s Suffrage Movement

Women who have been widely recognized as leaders in the suffrage movement, such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were white and usually affluent. This picture has long been incomplete. With the interest in the 2020 centennial of the passage of the 19th Amendment, women of color, such as Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell, are finally taking their place in popular history as their stories are being researched and told. They represent not only the early battles for women’s rights but also the ongoing fight to ensure voting rights and equality for all.

Although a few of the resources listed under General Histories and Biographies do cover the diversity of participants in the suffrage movement, the resources listed below focus on the experiences of women of color.

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| Dionne, Evette | 2020 | <i>Lifting as We Climb: Black Women’s Battle for the Ballot Box</i> Dionne tells the story of Black women who refused to accept the limited role allowed them in the overall women’s suffrage movement. |
| Jefferson-Jenkins, Carolyn | 2020 | <i>The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters</i> “This book is structured to show the progression of the relationship between the League of Women Voters and its members of color as manifested in changes to its policies, practices, symbols, and messaging.” |
| Jones, Martha S. | 2020 | <i>Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All</i> A history of the African American women’s movement to fight for the ballot. |
| Kendall, Mikki | 2020 | <i>Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot</i> This book is not as much about suffrage as about modern White feminism and how it has failed to face issues that affect all women. |
| Dudden, Faye E. | 2011 | <i>Fighting Chance: The Struggle over Woman Suffrage and Black Suffrage in Reconstruction America</i> The author explores the repercussions from Elizabeth Cady Stanton opposing the 15 th Amendment because it granted Black men the right to vote but not women. |
| Giddings, Paula J. | 2009 | <i>Ida: A Sword among Lions (Ida B. Wells and the Campaign against Lynching)</i> Ida B. Wells was a celebrated Black journalist and suffrage crusader. This book focuses on her activism against lynching. |
| Jones, Martha S. | 2007 | <i>All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture 1830-1900</i> A broader vision of African American women’s activism shows that voting rights were at the core of movements against slavery and for civil rights. |
| Terborg-Penn, Rosalyn | 1998 | <i>African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850-1920</i> The definitive work on the contributions of Black suffragists. |

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| Gordon, Ann D., ed. | 1997 | <i>African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965</i> In a series of essays, historians examine the struggle waged by African American women to win the right to vote from the period of the abolitionist movement until the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. ⁴ |
| Painter, Neil Irwin | 1996 | <i>Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol</i> Goes beyond myths, words, and photographs to uncover the real life of Sojourner Truth, who was born into slavery and became a legendary leader in the anti-slavery and women's rights movements. ⁴ |

Men and the Women's Suffrage Movement

It's important not to discount the contribution of men to the suffrage movement. True, many men opposed it. But the support of men was a critical part of the success of the effort. Remember, Congress had to pass the amendment before it could be ratified and made law. The 66th U.S. Congress did this in June 1919. There were no women in Congress at that time.

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| Kroeger, Brooke | 2017 | <i>The Suffragents: How Women Used Men to Get the Vote</i> The story of how and why a group of prominent and influential men in New York City and beyond came together to help women gain the right to vote. |
| Voss, Frederick S. | 1995 | <i>Majestic in His Wrath: A Pictorial Life of Frederick Douglass</i> Featuring over seventy illustrations, this volume documents Douglass' life from his youth as a slave to his position as one of the country's most honored civil rights leaders. Included are images of Douglass, prominent abolitionist contemporaries, fellow Black reformers, and members of the Douglass family. ⁴ |
| Douglass, Frederick | 1994 | <i>Autobiographies: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave; My Bondage and My Freedom; Life & Times of Frederick Douglass</i> Brings together in one volume Douglass' autobiographical writings. He writes of his life as a slave, an abolitionist, and a participant in the women's rights movement. ⁴ |
| McFeely, William | 1991 | <i>Frederick Douglass</i> In this modern biography, McFeely interprets Douglass' life and motivation, including the turbulent relationship between Douglass and Susan B. Anthony during the post-Civil War debate over the 14th and 15th amendments. ⁴ |

Anti-Suffrage Activism

As the movement pushing for women's suffrage grew, so did the number of women vocally opposed to it. They would fight to the very end to prevent the passage of the 19th Amendment.

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| Goodier, Susan | 2013 | <i>No Votes for Women: The New York State Anti-Suffrage Movement (Women, Gender, and Sexuality in American History)</i> Explores the complicated history of the suffrage movement in New York State by delving into the stories of women who opposed the expansion of voting rights to women. ¹ |
| Hale, Annie Riley | 1916 | <i>The Eden Sphinx</i> Hale's argument was that women's lack of political power was due to their failure to properly influence men as mothers. |
| Goodwin, Grace Duffield | 1913 | <i>Anti-Suffrage: Ten Good Reasons</i> Goodwin denied the urgency of suffrage and stressed the differences between the sexes as a reason not to give women the vote. |

Children's Books

The website <https://www.2020centennial.org/resources-suffrage-books> offers an extensive list of books, including those for children and young adults.

The website [A Mighty Girl](#) has a section on books on suffrage for children.

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| Schatz, Kate | 2020 | <i>Rad American History A-Z</i> "Written specifically for young people, the book is a reminder for Americans of any age of our collective progressive heritage and its lessons for building a better, more sustainable and egalitarian future." |
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Sources

Note: Book summaries and reviews not sourced were either provided by League members or, if in quotes, taken from publisher information.

¹ Amazon.com (online); accessed 12/10/2019; <https://www.amazon.com>

² Five Books about Women's Suffrage, Amy Guth, Chicago Tribune 8/18/2010 (online); accessed 12/10/2019; <https://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/books/chi-books-suffrage-story.html>

³ Amazon.com (online); accessed 8/20/2020; <https://www.amazon.com>

⁴ Susan B. Anthony House (online); accessed 12/10/2019; <https://susanbanthonyhouse.org/blog/recommended-books/>