

# The Women's Right to Vote in Tennessee



May 1914 Anne Dallas Dudley leads the first Parade for Women's Voting in the South and is the first woman in Tennessee to make an open-air speech. She leads a march of 2,000 women from downtown Nashville to Centennial Park.

November 1914 Anne Dallas Dudley brings the national convention of the National American Women's Association to Nashville. The heated debate ends with a resolution to support the Susan B. Anthony Amendment by "every means within its power."

- 1915 Anne Dallas Dudley is elected to head the Tennessee Equal Suffrage Association and helps to introduce and lobby for a suffrage amendment to the state constitution. Over 80 local suffrage chapters are organized in the state.
- May 1915 The Tennessee General Assembly takes the first step in the amendment process by adopting a joint resolution favoring it. The resolution would have to pass again in 1917 and then be approved by a majority of voters before it could become law.
- 1916 May Day Marches for women's suffrage in Nashville are held annually from 1914 to 1920 from the Capitol to Centennial Park.
- 1916 Woodrow Wilson promises that the Democratic Party Platform will endorse women's suffrage.
- 1917 Anne Dallas Dudley is elected vice president of the National American Women's Association. She works closely with President Carrie Chapman Catt in planning the master strategies of the campaign that finally succeeded in 1920.

- 1917 The Tennessee House of Representative passes a limited suffrage bill that would have granted women the right to vote in local elections and for U.S. president. The Senate votes it down.
- 1918 The U.S. House of Representatives passes with a 2/3 vote to enfranchise women, but loses by two votes in the Senate.
- 1919 For a third time, the U.S. House of Representatives votes to enfranchise women. The Senate finally passes the Nineteenth Amendment, and suffragists begin their ratification campaign.
- April 5, 1919 Tennessee General Assembly passes a limited suffrage act to give women the right to vote in presidential and municipal elections.
- April 22, 1919 Mary Cordelia Beasley Hudson of Camden, TN is the first woman in Tennessee to vote.
- June 4, 1919 The 66<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress passes the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. It then needs ¾ of the state legislatures to ratify in order to become law.
- February 14, 1920 The League of Women Voters formed
- August 9, 1920 Tennessee Governor A.H. Roberts convenes a special legislative session
- August 18, 1920 The Tennessee legislature becomes the 36th and final state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment becomes law.

"To get the word 'male' in effect out of the Constitution cost the women of the country 52 years of pauseless campaign... During that time they were forced to conduct 56 campaigns of referenda to male voters; 480 campaigns to get Legislatures to submit suffrage amendments to voters; 47 campaigns to get State constitutional conventions to write woman suffrage into state constitutions; 277 campaigns to get State party conventions to include woman suffrage planks in party platforms, and 19 campaigns with 19 successive Congresses."

--- Carrie Chapman Catt