

Votes for Women

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The Struggle for Suffrage Revisited



Edited by

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Votes for Women brings together in one volume recent scholarship on the struggle of American women for the suffrage. Paralleling recent efforts in popular culture to restore to our national past the story of how women got the vote, these original essays present the latest and best in that history. Each of the eleven essays illuminates some aspects of the long battle that lasted from the 1850s to the passage of the suffrage amendment in 1920. From their antecedents in the minds of women like Mary Wollstonecraft and Frances Wright to the beginnings of an organization like the women who met at Seneca Falls in 1848 to the civil disobedience during World War I orchestrated by Alice Paul's National Woman's Party, the essential elements of a tumultuous story emerge. So too do the themes and historical controversies about suffrage and its leaders. The authors focus on the activities of suffrage opponents as well as the ways in which the suffrage battle is interwoven with constitutional issues involving the federal government and the states. Other essays look at the suffrage struggle in its regional setting, especially in the West and the South. Because this is a story that depends on individual leaders such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Sojourner Truth and Alice Paul, the lives of these women become a significant thread tying the story together. Baker's introductory essays set the stage for revisiting suffrage by making explicit the similarities and differences in interpretations of suffrage and what the battle for suffrage tells us about women's history. She suggests that this new material shows how the suffrage movement intersected with historical developments in national experience - it cannot be isolated from other events in American history. In an epilogue, Anne Firor Scott considers the difference that the vote has made for women and men in the 20th century.

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