

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

“Paved the Path for the Passage of the 19th Amendment”

November 12, 1815—October 26, 1902



Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born in Johnstown, New York on November 12, 1815 to one of the city’s most prominent and respected couples. As a child, her father showed clear preference for his son over Stanton, so from a young age she showed the determination to excel in typically “male” fields of the time.

In 1832, Stanton graduated from Emma Willard’s Troy Female Seminary, then becoming an active member of the abolitionist, temperance, and women’s rights movements through her cousin, reformer Gerrit Smith. In 1840, Stanton married another reformer, Henry Stanton, and they immediately travelled to the World’s Anti-Slavery Convention in London, where she and several other women objected their exclusion from the conference.

After their time in London, the Stantons returned to Seneca Falls, New York. In July 1848, Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and several other women convened the Seneca Falls Convention. Together, those in attendance wrote the

“Declaration of Sentiments” and spearheaded the movement to propose women be granted suffrage.

Stanton continued to be a prolific writer and lecturer on women’s rights and other reform topics, and after meeting Susan B. Anthony in the early 1850s, she became one of the national leaders promoting women’s rights, especially the right to vote.

During the Civil War, Stanton focused on abolition work, but after the end of the war, she became even more ardent in her work supporting women’s suffrage, working with Susan B. Anthony on a weekly newspaper called *Revolution* and founding the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869. Stanton served as the president of NWSA until 1890, at which point the organization merged with a similar one to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

While she advocated for the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery, Stanton opposed the 14th and 15th Amendments which extended voting rights to black men but not to women, causing a rift within the larger women’s suffrage movement that was rectified by this 1890 merger. In the 1880s, Stanton was in her mid-sixties and decided to focus more on her writing as opposed to continuing to travel and lecture. During this time, she wrote three volumes of the *History of Woman Suffrage*, which documented individual and local activism efforts building the movement for women’s suffrage.

In addition to numerous articles, Stanton also published the *Woman’s Bible*, which reflected her beliefs in a secular state and encourage women to examine how religious orthodoxy and masculine-centered theology prevented them from achieving full self-determination. Stanton died on October 26, 1902, leaving behind the foundation necessary to the eventual passage of the 19th Amendment, eighteen years later.

Sources

<https://www.nps.gov/people/elizabeth-cady-stanton.htm>

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<https://www.biography.com/activist/elizabeth-cady-stanton>