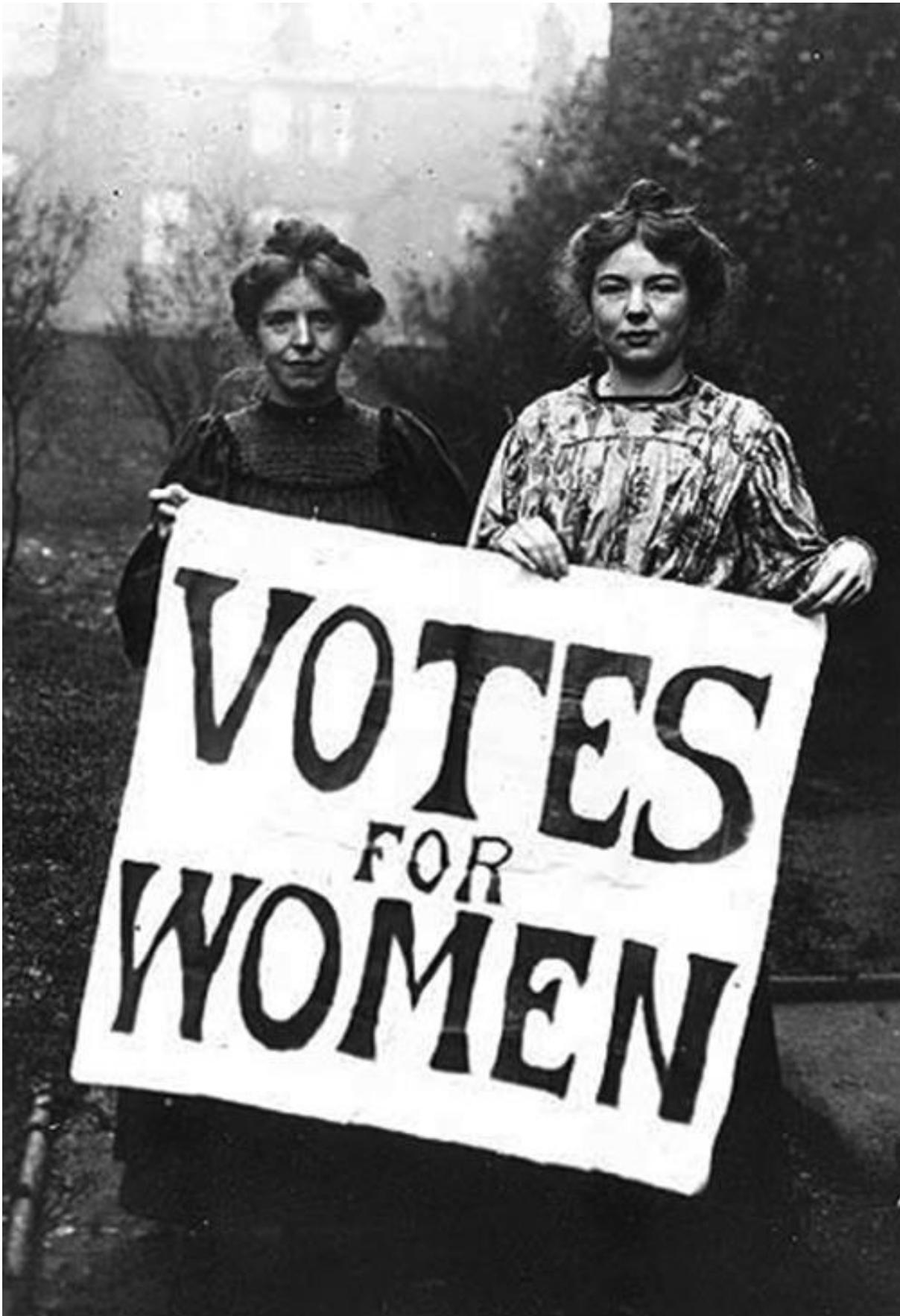


WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL COMMISSION
THIRD REPORT TO CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT
MAY 5, 2019





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INTRODUCTION

There is perhaps no better known Civil War anthem than the Battle Hymn of the Republic. While most Americans may have heard the tune, and many know the words, fewer know the lyricist. Likely fewer still know that the woman who wrote the words, Julia Ward Howe (pictured at left), was not only an abolitionist, but a suffragist. In fact, Ward Howe joined fellow women's rights champion Lucy Stone in founding the American Woman Suffrage Association¹. Ward Howe's and Stone's efforts were indicative of the passionate conflicts inside the fight for women's right to vote. The outward battle was one that was widely understood: American women were unable to vote, and the women's suffrage movement wanted equality at the ballot box. The battles inside the movement, however, were fraught and sometimes surprisingly ignorant of real voting equality.

Ward Howe and Stone's organization split from more famous Susan B.

Anthony's and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's National American Woman Suffrage Association. Eventually, Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul spearheaded separate, sometimes jealous efforts to achieve the same suffrage end goal. While it's debatable whether the schisms lengthened the battle these voting rights advocates fought, it is certain that they succeeded. Their efforts, with both the conflict and the victories, are worth remembering.

This is the goal of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission. The Commission, created by Congress in 2017, first met in late 2018. The Commission has made much progress in its early endeavors to encourage, plan, develop and coordinate efforts countrywide to commemorate the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment. This report explores the Congressional Charter of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission and the Commission's undertakings thus far to deliver a notable Suffrage Centennial.

¹ <https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/julia-ward-howe>

CHARTER EXECUTION PLAN

In Section 3 of the Charter of the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission, Congress outlines the objectives and scope of activities. “The Commission’s objectives are to carry out Congressional intent to use the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide suffrage for women

- (1) to encourage, plan, develop, and execute programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment;
- (2) to catalog and coordinate activities and programs developed by or with federal entities commemorating the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment;
- (3) to encourage private organizations and State and local governments to organize and participate in activities commemorating the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment;
- (4) to facilitate and coordinate activities throughout the United States relating to the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment;
- (5) to serve as a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information about events and plans for the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment; and
- (6) to develop recommendations for Congress and the President for commemorating the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment.”

In order to most thoroughly execute the directives as noted in the charter, the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission prioritized items from its vision casting efforts and working plans. To “encourage, plan, develop, and execute programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of the passage and ratification



of the 19th Amendment”, the Commission has hired a National Events Director, States Events Director and Staff Director whose daily tasks are centered on the planning and delivery of chartered directives. The Commission has also engaged a public relations firm to enhance exposure to media outlets and the public through social accounts, a website and earned media.

Under Point 1 of Section 3 of the Charter, the Commission is charged with “encouraging, planning and developing programs, projects and activities”. Because the Commission members include representatives from each the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Department of the Interior and the Smithsonian, the Commission has found ample opportunity to fulfill its obligation to “encourage programs, projects and activities.” Recently the Smithsonian Portrait Gallery hosted the opening of its suffrage exhibit, “Votes for Women, A Portrait of Persistence”. A number of Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commissioners attended and were recognized.



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After the launch of the Commission social accounts and website, the Commission will be able to further encourage federal, state and local partners and like-minded organizations in their activities and events. The Commission plans to promote its national partner programs in its communications, with intentions to launch an e-update, a web-based calendar and Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts. Further, the Commission intends to encourage the National Archives’ Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote exhibit and “Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote” at the Library of Congress by encouraging its members to attend, and by promoting them through outreach.

In addition to federal partners, including the Department of the Interior, where at National Parks, youngsters can earn “Junior Suffragist”

badges similar to “Junior Ranger” badges, the Commission will encourage other partners. Other entities the Commission has committed to encouraging are state and local governments and historical societies and other nonpartisan entities planning programming to honor the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment. Such encouragement also extends to the U.S. Congress where the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission is a public supporter of legislation that would create a suffrage centennial commemorative coin. The Commission is also encouraging and supporting legislation to create a new state quarter program honoring suffrage leaders from each state. Additionally, the Commission is encouraging members of Congress to pursue the creation of a suffrage centennial postage stamp.

Point 1 of Section 3 of the Charter also entreats the Commission to “plan... programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment”. The Commission has coordinated with both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to develop resolutions reaffirming the 19th Amendment. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission will address the bipartisan Women’s Caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives to further advocate for the resolution to see floor time on May 21, 2019, 100 years to the date from the 19th Amendment’s original passage in the U.S. House.

Concurrently, the Commission's representatives will ask the 116th Congress to pass the resolutions in their respective chambers while wearing yellow roses on their lapels. The significance of the yellow rose in the women's suffrage movement is rooted in the 36th and final state to ratify the 19th Amendment, Tennessee. In advance of the ratification vote in Tennessee, both suffragists and anti-suffragists began wearing roses on their dresses and encouraging legislators to wear roses on their lapels to identify their respective sides. Suffragists for women's



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voting rights wore yellow roses. Antisuffragists, against women's enfranchisement, wore red roses. On the day of the vote, the red roses barely outnumbered the yellow. The Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives, who was against women voting, saw an opportunity to end the ratification path in Tennessee. He called the roll. One by one, each member voted in the way their rose color indicated they would until the roll rested on a 24 year-old freshman with a *red* rose on his suit.² Despite his red rose, the young legislator voted yes, hastening the course of American history and ushering in a new era for women. The Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission plans to

supply the 116th Congress with yellow roses for their lapels on the days of their suffrage Centennial votes. Recreating the splendor of a chamber full of roses will be a picture worth a thousand words and 100 years. However, there is no way to assign value to all the roses being yellow this time. That moment will be priceless.

The Commission also intends to help plan events with the White House, including the potential planting of a "Suffrage Centennial Rose" in the White House Rose Garden in the spring of 2020. The planning will also extend to states, where the Commission is engaging governors' offices and legislative leadership, as well as state historical societies to determine what events the Commission may encourage and to help states plan suffrage centennial events of their own. Many states have begun robust planning for their own ratification centennials and for the countrywide centennial in August of 2020. In addition to already-planned activities, the Commission will encourage states, counties and municipalities to execute a number of commemorative demonstrations developed by the Commission.

The third key piece of Point 1 of Section 3 of the Charter points the Commission to "develop... programs, projects, and activities to commemorate the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment". The Commission has developed a plan for a Suffrage Centennial commemorative medal, which earned approval from the Secretary of the Treasury and will shortly move to the design process. The Commission has also developed a robust website that

² <https://www.blueshoenashville.com/suffragehistory.html>

will launch in conjunction with the May 21 and June 4 Congressional suffrage centennials. The website will serve to additionally fulfill point 2, “to catalog and coordinate activities and programs developed by or with federal entities commemorating the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment” and point 5, “to serve as a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information about events and plans for the centennial”.



WOMEN'S **VOTE** CENTENNIAL

the official site celebrating 100 years
of American women's right to vote

In order to serve as portal into the world of Suffrage Centennial efforts, the website will include a list of content experts and an online toolkit for local 100th anniversary commemorations, both developed by the Commission. The Commission is also developing a weekly e-newsletter and generating shareable content for Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Additionally, the Commission is developing shareable videos and tutorials for families, teachers and children looking for “hands on” activities generating investment and interest in the Suffrage Centennial.

To further “catalog and coordinate activities and programs developed by or with federal entities commemorating the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment,” the commission’s website will feature a calendar, searchable by state, to include all relevant events and activities that coincide with the Commission’s mission statement:

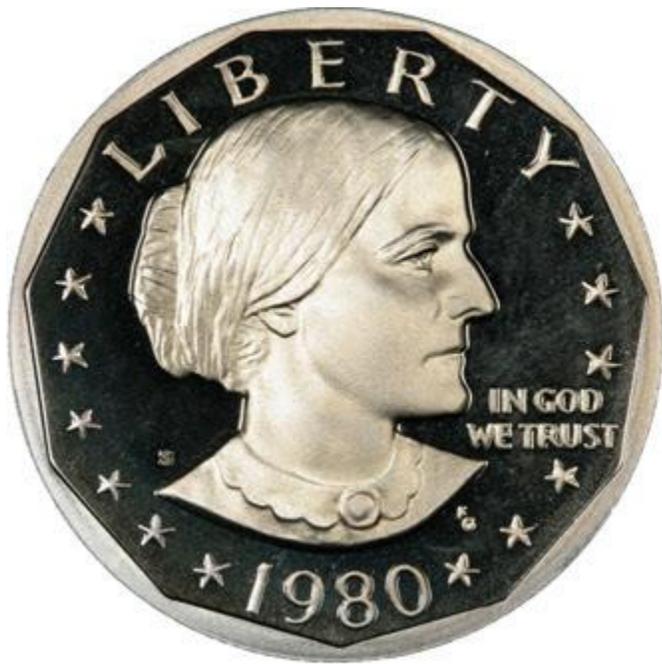
“To commemorate and coordinate the nationwide celebration of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment and to educate the American people about the history and the leaders of the women’s suffrage movement in the United States in a nonpartisan fashion.”

The Charter, in Section 3, point 3, mandates the Commission “encourage private organizations and state and local governments to organize and participate in activities commemorating the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment.” The Commission is currently engaging state stakeholders, requesting legislatures pass resolutions reaffirming the 19th Amendment. The Commission is also requesting governors issue executive orders declaring state observances of individual ratification dates and the federal date of significance: August 26, 2020, the centennial of the 19th Amendment’s addition to the U.S. Constitution. The Commission is additionally requesting the lighting of state capitols and executive residences in gold, the color most consistently associated with the women’s suffrage movement.

The Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission has already received a letter of intent from Mattel, the maker of American Girl and Barbie brand dolls. However, it is the intention of the Commission to pursue additional partnerships across the economy, the not-for-profit and government sectors as reaching broad audiences matches the spirit of the Congressional intent of the charter. These partnerships also serve to execute Point 4 of Section 3 of the Charter, “to facilitate and coordinate activities throughout the United States relating to the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment.”

To further facilitate activities, the Commission website will include downloadable curriculum already built by experts at the Smithsonian, Library of Congress, Department of the Interior and National Archives. The curricula will coordinate with events and programming that Americans may search for on the site’s calendar. The website, along with the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission social media accounts and e-newsletter will “serve as a clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information about events and plans for the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment,” point 5, section 3 of the Charter.

Finally, the Commission is charged in Section 3, point 6 with developing “recommendations for Congress and the President for commemorating the centennial of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment.” In its first Recommendations Report to Congress and the President, the Commission recommended the passage of resolutions reaffirming the 19th Amendment and the yellow rose demonstration. Additionally, the Commission will support the state



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quarter program, commemorative coin and the stamp honoring the 100th Anniversary of women's right to vote. The Commission has also recommended to the White House the planting of a yellow rose bush in the White House Rose Garden and the involvement of key women leaders in the centennial efforts.

Other possible opportunities for recommendations to Congress and the President are being explored. Near enough to Washington D.C. Congressional offices are the Belmont Paul House, where Alice Paul headquartered her suffrage marketing and public relations efforts, and Occoquan Work House, where suffragists were taken when they were convicted of charges related to their protests.

CONCLUSION

In Section 4 of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission Charter, the description of duties says the "Commission will provide advice on activities relating to the commemoration of the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment, and plan activities and develop recommendations for Congress and the President for commemorating the centennial. The Commission also is authorized to award grants to States and the District of Columbia to support programs and activities related to commemorating the centennial." The Commission's next meeting, which will include a review of the website and communications, is planned for Washington D.C. on June 3, one day before the Commission encourages the National Archives exhibit opening with their support. As evidenced in the "description of duties", there are some items the Commission has yet to discuss. However, a significant amount of planning has taken place, and a great amount of attention is about to be focused a truly historic American moment: the Suffrage Centennial.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

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