**Women’s Suffrage**

**Alexis de Tocqueville: *Democracy in America* (1840)**

* Alexis de Tocqueville was a French citizen who traveled to America and wrote about his observations of American culture and politics.
* In *Democracy in America,* he discusses how Americans viewed the equality of the sexes.
* Tocqueville acknowledged that women were not completely equal in American society, but he also claimed that they enjoyed greater equality here than in Europe.
* “Americans do not think that man and woman have either the duty or the right to perform the same offices, but they show an equal regard for both their respective parts; and though their lot is different, they consider both of them as beings of equal value.”

**The Seneca Falls Declaration (1848)**

* mid-19th century.
* As can be seen in the opening passages, the document was modeled after the Declaration of Independence.
* “…We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and *women* are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. “

**Susan B. Anthony: In Favor of Women's Suffrage (1872)**

* In this speech, given following her arrest for attempting to vote in the 1872 election, Anthony argues that respect for America's fundamental principles requires that women be allowed to vote.
* “In thus voting, I not only committed no crime, but, instead, simply exercised my citizen's right, guaranteed to me and all United States citizens by the National Constitution, beyond the power of any State to deny.”
* “It was we, the people, not we, the white male citizens, nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed this Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings or liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people-women as well as men. “

**Agnes Nestor: *Working Her Fingers to the Bone* (1898)**

* Beginning in the late 19th century, the rapid increase in the number of women in the work force reflected a significant shift in the role and status of women in American culture.
* As women become more economically empowered, their methods and scope of organization also became increasingly more apparent and often tied to labor disputes.
* Such disputes often provided the impetus for organized movements to achieve suffrage with the general understanding that political influence would provide women with greater protection in the work place.
* Agnes Nestor was a factory worker who played a substantial role in the emerging women's labor movement.
* This reminiscence by Nestor described how the oppressive conditions of the glove factory pushed her to take a leading role in a successful strike of female glove workers in 1898.

**Alice Stone Blackwell: The Military Argument (1897)**

* Alice Stone Blackwell made a strong argument against the connection between eligibility for serving in the armed forces and suffrage.
* “’ The insuperable objection to woman suffrage is fundamental and functional, and Nature alone is responsible for it, since she has created man combatant and woman non-combatant.’ If this theory were correct, all men who can fight would be admitted to the ballot box, and all men who cannot fight would be excluded.”
* “It must be rendered that if women do not render military service, they do render equivalent service to their country in another way, since it is the women who bring all the soldiers into the world. This ought in all fairness to be taken as an offset for the military service which is not required for them.”

**Anti-Suffrage Pamphlet (c.1910)**

* “*Housewives!* 
  + You do not need a ballot to clean out your sink spout. A handful of potash and some boiling water is quicker and cheaper…
  + Why vote for pure food laws, when your husband does that, while you can purify your Ice-box with saleratus water?”
  + “Vote NO on Woman Suffrage
  + BECAUSE 90% of the women either do not want it, or *do not care.*
  + BECAUSE it means *competition* of women with men instead of *co-operation*.
  + BECAUSE 80% of the women eligible to vote are married and can only double or annul their husband’s votes…
  + BECAUSE in some States more voting women than voting men will place the Government under petticoat rule.
  + BECAUSE it is unwise to risk the good we already have for the evil which may occur. “

**Alice Miller: *Why We Don't Want Men to Vote* (1915)**

* Alice Miller was a prominent writer who often expounded on topics relevant to women. Here she satirizes the viewpoints of many men who wanted to deny women the right to vote.
* “Why We Don't Want Men to Vote
  + Because man's place is in the army.
  + Because no really manly man wants to settle any question otherwise than by fighting about it.
  + Because if men should adopt peaceable methods women will no longer look up to them.
  + Because men will lose their charm if they step out of their natural sphere and interest themselves in other matters than feats of arms, uniforms, and drums.
  + Because men are too emotional to vote. Their conduct at baseball games and political conventions shows this, while their innate tendency to appeal to force renders them unfit for government.”

**"Kaiser Wilson"**

* During World War I, militant suffragists, demanding that President Wilson reverse his opposition to a federal amendment, stood vigil at the White House and carried banners such as this one comparing the President to Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany.
* In the heated patriotic climate of wartime, such tactics met with hostility and sometimes violence and arrest.

**Carrie Chapman Catt: *Do you know?* (1918)**

* This work was intended to inform about the status of women’s suffrage across the globe and point out how far behind America was up to that point in time.
* Catt also stressed the importance of suffrage for women working to secure their rights as citizens.
* “DO YOU KNOW that the movement for woman suffrage is just a part of the eternal forward march of the human race toward a complete democracy; that in the American colonies only a very small proportion of the men could vote; that even after the Revolution only property-holders could vote; that it was only by slow and hard-fought stage that all men finally won the right to vote; and that in most foreign countries the franchise for men is still heavily loaded with restrictions?...
* DO YOU KNOW one single sound, logical reason why the intelligence and individuality of women should not entitle them to the rights and privileges of self-government?”

**Passage of the 19th Amendment**

* Passed in 1919
* “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”