

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

By Phyllis Vogel, LWV Sarasota County Speaker's Bureau Chair

In last two months we explored the contributions of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and others to the Women's Rights Movement starting with Seneca Falls Convention. This month we turn to the collaboration between Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, a Quaker. Quakers hold that men and women are created equal.

The women's rights movement was already gathering momentum when Anthony joined. In 1852, Anthony attended her first National Women's Rights Convention, which was held in Syracuse, New York, where she served as one of the convention's secretaries. "Miss Anthony came away from the Syracuse convention thoroughly convinced that the right which woman needed above every other was the right of suffrage." Suffrage, however, did not become the main focus of her work for a few more years.

A major hindrance to the women's movement was a lack of money. Few women at that time had an independent source of income, and even those with employment generally were required by law to turn over their pay to their husbands. 1853, Anthony worked with William Henry Channing, an activist Unitarian minister, to organize a convention in Rochester to launch a state campaign for improved property rights for married women. She took her lecture and petition campaign into almost every county in New York during the winter of 1855 despite the difficulty of traveling in snowy terrain in horse and buggy days.

Anthony developed a reputation for fearlessness in facing down attempts to disrupt her meetings, but opposition became overwhelming on the eve of the Civil War. Mob action shut down her meetings in every town from Buffalo to Albany

Anthony and Stanton soon became close friends and co-workers, forming a relationship that was pivotal for them and for the women's movement as a whole. After the Stantons moved from Seneca Falls to New York City in 1861, a room was set aside for Anthony in every house they lived in.

The two women had complementary skills. Anthony excelled at organizing, while Stanton had an aptitude for intellectual matters and writing.

Because Stanton was homebound with seven children while Anthony was unmarried and free to travel, Anthony assisted Stanton by supervising her children while Stanton wrote. A biography of Stanton says that during the early years of their relationship, "Stanton provided the ideas, rhetoric, and strategy; Anthony delivered the speeches, circulated petitions, and rented the halls. Anthony prodded and Stanton produced." Stanton's husband said, "Susan stirred the puddings, Elizabeth stirred up Susan, and then Susan stirs up the world." By 1854, Anthony and Stanton "had perfected a collaboration that made the New York State movement the most sophisticated in the country", according to some historians.

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Anthony and Stanton began publishing a weekly newspaper called *The Revolution* in New York City in 1868. It focused primarily on women's rights, especially suffrage for women, but it also covered other topics, including politics, the labor movement and finance. It provided a forum for expression of women's views from a variety of viewpoints.

Its motto was "Men, their rights and nothing more: women, their rights and nothing less."

After twenty-nine months, mounting debts forced Anthony to transfer the paper to a wealthy women's rights activist who gave it a less radical tone. The paper published its last issue less than two years later.

[HYPERLINK](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_B._Anthony#cite_note-rakow-14-18-74)
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In May, 1869 Anthony, Stanton and others formed the National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA). The movement was rent in two when in November 1869 Lucy Stone, Julia Ward Howe and others split off to form the American Women's Suffrage Association (AWSA). The immediate cause for a split was the proposed Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which would prohibit the denial of suffrage because of race. In one of her most controversial actions, Anthony campaigned against the amendment. Instead she and Stanton called for Universal suffrage. They said that by enfranchising all men while excluding all women, the amendment would create an "aristocracy of sex" by giving constitutional authority to the idea that men were superior to women.[87]

In 1890, the two competing organizations (more on these next time) merged as the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), with Stanton as president but with Anthony as its effective leader. When Stanton retired from her post in 1892, Anthony became NAWSA's president.

After the formation of the NWSA, Anthony dedicated herself fully to the organization and to women's suffrage. She did not draw a salary from either it or its successor, the NAWSA, but used her lecture fees to fund those organizations.

Both Anthony and Stanton joined the lecture circuit about 1870, usually traveling from mid-autumn to spring. Farmers and other outside workers were more likely to be home in winter. The timing was right because the nation was beginning to discuss women's suffrage as a serious matter. Their lectures brought new recruits into the movement who strengthened suffrage organizations at the local, state and national levels. Their journeys during that decade covered a distance that was unmatched by any other reformer or politician.

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Anthony's commitment to the movement, her spartan lifestyle, and the fact that she did not seek personal financial gain, made her an effective fund-raiser and won her the admiration of many who did not agree with her goals.

To ensure continuity, Anthony trained a group of younger activists, who were known as her "nieces," to assume leadership roles within the organization. Two of them, Carrie Chapman Catt and Anna Howard Shaw, served as presidents of the NAWSA after Anthony retired from that position.

On November 18, 1872 Anthony was arrested by a U.S. Deputy Marshal and charged with illegally voting. Anthony's trial generated a national controversy and she used every moment to her advantage. It became a major step in the transition of the broader women's rights movement into the women's suffrage movement.

On the third day of the trial, when asked if she had anything to say, Anthony responded by saying, "you have trampled under foot every vital principle of our government!" Repeatedly ignoring the judge's order to stop talking and sit down, she protested what she called "this high-handed outrage upon my citizen's rights".

When Justice Hunt sentenced Anthony to pay a fine of \$100, she responded, "I shall never pay a dollar of your unjust penalty", and she never did.

Anthony and Stanton had differences and quarreled at times but throughout they worked together in a close and productive relationship. Their interests diverged somewhat as they grew older: Stanton grew more radical; Anthony more conservative but their relationship remained close.

Stanton died in 1902 and Anthony in 1906. Neither lived to see the achievement of suffrage. As Anthony declared, "Failure is not an option." A proposed amendment was to be brought before Congress forty-five times before the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote was ratified.

They had laid the foundation for what was still a long fight ahead.

Historical sources from Historian Anna Moore