

# Suffragists Speak

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## FREE POSTER PROJECT

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The 19th Amendment, which became law on August 18, 1920, stated that “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.” The journey was long, arduous, and complex. Issues of race and class arose as generations of diverse women grappled with abolition, immigration, and temperance, as well as the question of when and if to compromise. While the women’s patience was frequently tested, their resolve never wavered. As we engage in our present and contemplate our future, let us take inspiration from their bravery and commitment.

Bloody feet,  
sisters,  
have worn smooth  
the path by which  
you come hither

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## ABBY KELLEY FOSTER

BORN: 1811, PELHAM, MA. DIED: 1887, WORCESTER, MA.

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Abolitionist and speaker Abby Kelley Foster said these words when she addressed the first National Woman's Rights Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1850. In the concluding paragraph, she said, "I hope, however, that you do not feel that I speak to you in anger. Oh, no; it is in the hope of inducing you to be willing to assume responsibilities, to be willing to have a sleepless night occasionally, and days of toil and trouble; for he that labors shall have his reward; he that sows shall reap."

The right is  
ours, have it we  
must—use it  
we will.

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## ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

BORN: 1815, JOHNSTOWN, NY. DIED: 1902, NEW YORK, NY.

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Elizabeth Cady Stanton was one of the key figures in women's suffrage throughout her life. This quotation was part of her Keynote Address before the Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York on July 19, 1848. "The right is ours. Have it we must. Use it, we will. The pens, the tongues, the fortunes, the indomitable wills of many women are already pledged to secure this right. The great truth that no just government can be formed without the consent of the governed we shall echo and re-echo in the ears of the unjust judge, until by continual coming we shall weary him."

Why should  
women not be  
a martyr for  
her cause?

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## **ERNESTINE ROSE**

BORN: 1810, PIOTRKÓW, POLAND. DIED: 1892, BRIGHTON, UNITED KINGDOM.

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Ernestine Rose was a Jewish immigrant from Poland who was active in woman's rights and abolition. She spoke these words in her address before the National Woman's Rights Convention in 1851 in Worcester, Massachusetts: "Or has she been recreant in hailing the motto of Liberty floating on your banners as an omen of justice, peace, and freedom to man, that at, the first step she takes practically to claim the recognition of her Rights, she is rewarded with the doom of a martyr? Why should women not be martyr for her cause?"

The time to  
assert a right  
is the time that  
it is denied.

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## ANGELINA GRIMKÉ

BORN: 1805, CHARLESTON, SC. DIED: 1879, BOSTON, MA.

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Angelina Grimké was the younger of two sisters from a slave-owning family. They went north and became speakers for abolition and the less welcome topic of woman's rights. When Theodore Weld (whom she later married) wrote Angelina, "Let us all first wake up the nation to lift millions of slaves of both sexes from the dust," she responded with "The time to assert a right is the time that it is denied."

All I ask of  
our brethren is  
that they will  
take their feet  
from off our necks

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## SARAH MOORE GRIMKÉ

BORN: 1792, CHARLESTON, SC. DIED: 1873, BOSTON, MA.

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Sarah Moore Grimké wrote a series of letters on the topic of women's rights which were published in William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper the *Liberator* in 1837. The full quotation is: "I ask no favors for my sex. I surrender not our claim to equality. All I ask of our brethren is, that they will take their feet from off our necks, and permit us to stand upright on the ground which God designed us to occupy."

Why should not  
woman seek  
to be a  
reformer?

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## LUCRETIA MOTT

BORN: 1793, NANTUCKET, MA. DIED: 1880, CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP, PA.

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Lucretia Mott was a speaker on abolition, woman's rights, peace, and social reform. The quotation is from the address "Discourse on Woman" that she delivered in Philadelphia in 1849. "Why should not woman seek to be a reformer? If she is to shrink from being such an iconoclast as shall 'break the image of man's lower worship,' as so long held up to view; if she is to fear to exercise her reason, and her noblest powers, lest she should be thought to 'attempt to act the man,' and not 'acknowledge his supremacy;' if she is to be satisfied with the narrow sphere assigned her by man, nor aspire to a higher, lest she should transcend the bounds of female delicacy; truly it is a mournful prospect for woman."

If laws are  
unjust, they must  
be continually  
broken until they  
are altered.

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## JOSEPHINE ST. PIERRE RUFFIN

BORN: 1842, BOSTON, MA. DIED: 1924, BOSTON, MA.

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Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin was an African American journalist, publisher, civil rights advocate, and suffragist. From 1890–1897 she was the editor and publisher of the *Woman's Era* which was the first newspaper published by and for African American women. In 1895 she convened The First National Conference of the Colored Women of America in Boston. The quotation is from the *Woman's Era*.

for the truth  
is powerful  
and will  
prevail

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## SOJOURNER TRUTH

BORN: 1797, RIFTON, NY. DIED: 1883, BATTLE CREEK, MI.

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Born enslaved as Isabella Baumfree, Sojourner Truth took her name in 1843 when she began the life of a traveling preacher for the abolition of slavery. In her dictated autobiography called *Book of Life*, she told of a speaking trip to Angola, Indiana. When it was suggested that she arm herself with a gun or a sword for her protection, she said, “I carry no weapon; the Lord will preserve me without weapons. I feel safe in the midst of my enemies, for the truth is powerful and will prevail.”

There will never  
be a new world  
order until women  
are a part of it.

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## **ALICE PAUL**

BORN: 1885, MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP, NJ. DIED: 1977, MOORESTOWN, NJ.

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Alice Paul was a prominent leader in the movement that led to the 19th Amendment. She spearheaded the 1913 Woman's Suffrage Parade in Washington, D.C. when over five thousand suffragists marched on Pennsylvania Avenue on the day before President Wilson's inauguration. The quotation is from 1941 when Alice Paul had just returned from two years in Geneva, Switzerland working for the World Woman's Party. Since women were critical to the war effort, she argued that they should be part of the negotiations and decisions after it was over.

The way to  
right wrongs  
is to turn the  
light of truth  
on them.

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## IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT

BORN: 1862, HOLLY SPRINGS, MS. DIED: 1931, CHICAGO, IL.

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Ida Bell Wells-Barnett was a pioneering journalist who investigated lynching in the south in the 1890s. She was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Her relationship with the predominately white women's suffrage groups was often contentious. The quote is from her book, *The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader*.

And so, lifting  
as we climb,  
onward and  
upward we go

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## MARY CHURCH TERRELL

BORN: 1863, MEMPHIS, TN. DIED: 1954, ANNAPOLIS, MD.

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Mary Church Terrell was one of the founders of the Colored Women's League in 1892 and later served as the first president of the National Association of Colored Women. The quotation is from "The Progress of Colored Women," an address she gave in 1898 to the National Association of Colored Women on its fiftieth anniversary. "And so, lifting as we climb, onward and upward we go, struggling and striving, and hoping the buds and blossoms of our desires will burst into glorious fruition ere long."

To the wrongs that  
need resistance,  
to the right that  
needs assistance,  
to the future  
in the distance,  
give yourselves.

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## CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT

BORN: 1859, RIPON, WI. DIED: 1947, NEW ROCHELLE, NY.

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Carrie Chapman Catt was a pivotal figure in the ratification of the 19th Amendment. She is a complicated figure in the suffrage story because of her attitudes on immigration and race. The stirring words quoted here came at the end of her Commencement Address at Iowa State College, her alma mater, in 1921.

Make  
the world  
better.

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## LUCY STONE

BORN: 1818, WEST BROOKFIELD, MA. DIED: 1893, BOSTON, MA.

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Although Lucy Stone made great contributions to the abolitionist and woman's rights movements, she is perhaps best remembered as the first woman in the United States to keep her own name at marriage. When she and Henry Blackwell married, they registered a protest against the accepted terms of marriage which was read at the ceremony and published in abolitionist newspapers. The quotation is of the last words she spoke to her daughter Alice Stone Blackwell who was also a suffragist and active in the fight for the 19th Amendment.

It will come,  
but I shall  
never see it

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## SUSAN B. ANTHONY

BORN: 1820, ADAMS, MA. DIED: 1906, ROCHESTER, NY.

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Susan B. Anthony was an indefatigable crusader for women's rights throughout her long life. At her 86th birthday celebration in Washington D.C., she spoke of those who had worked with her: "There have been others also just as true and devoted to the cause — I wish I could name every one — but with such women consecrating their lives, failure is impossible!" The quotation comes from an interview in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* on August 28, 1902.