

Michigan 2020 Women's Right to Vote Centennial

# Girl Scout Patch Program



Greater Grand Rapids  
Women's History Council

## **DISCOVER**

- Read the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/amendmentxix>. Using the resources listed below, learn about key people and events in the women's suffrage movement. Why did it take so long for women to gain the right to vote? What arguments were made for and against giving women the right to vote? Test your knowledge by taking the quiz at: <https://www.2020centennial.org/kids-quiz>
- Women in Michigan earned the right to vote in 1918 – two years before the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment went into effect. Learn more about the campaign for the right to vote in Michigan. Test your knowledge by taking the quiz at: <https://www.2020centennial.org/michigan-quiz>
- Learn about Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw, Emily Burton Ketcham, or another national, state, or local suffrage leader. Where was she from? What was her involvement in the movement? What did she do to inspire others? Share what you have learned.
- Leaders of the suffrage movement had a bitter disagreement about whether to support the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which gave the right to vote to black men, but not to women. Learn more about this disagreement and ways in which women of color fought for women's suffrage and against discrimination within the movement.
- What are the requirements for being a voter in Michigan? How can a person register to vote? How can voters learn more about candidates and issues on the ballot? How does a registered voter actually go about voting?
- Learn about elected positions within your community. Who represents you and how can citizens express their opinions to elected officials? How many women represent your community at the national, state or local level?
- Suffragists fought to change the U.S. and state constitutions, so that women could vote. Learn more about the steps that must be taken to change the U.S. and Michigan constitutions. Learn about a current issue relating to changing the constitution, such as the effort to ratify the ERA.

## **CONNECT**

- Talk to members of your family to find out whether any of your ancestors participated in the suffrage movement or if they engaged with any group working for women's rights. Research their work and share what you have learned.
- Visit your local library or museum and see if they have local archives and/or books on women and the suffrage movement. Learn more from these resources. (Alternative: Explore a digital suffrage exhibit)
- Visit a local polling place on an election day. Before you go, examine a ballot (available at: <https://www.vote411.org/>) and learn more about the process of voting.
- Talk to someone in your family or another adult who is registered to vote. Discuss with them why they vote and how they educate themselves on candidates and issues before voting.

- Learn who your elected officials are and what they do. Connect with them and discuss current challenges and opportunities in your community.
- Create your own timeline, banner, or poster or other form of media related to the suffrage movement or voting. Share your work in your meeting place, your school, or another public place.
- Host a mock debate or election with your friends, family or Girl Scout sisters.
- Participate in a “Who Gets to Vote” simulation or similar activity in your troop meeting. (See: <http://leg.wa.gov/CivicEd/Documents/Voting%20Rights%20Lesson%20Plan.pdf>) Discuss what you learned from the activity.
- Visit a League of Women Voters meeting and learn more about the work of the League.

## **TAKE ACTION**

- Participate in an event celebrating the centennial of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (see “Events” below) or plan and carry out your own activity honoring women who fought for suffrage. For one idea, see: <https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/honor-suffragist/>.
- Thank a woman who inspires you - a historical figure from the women’s suffrage movement or someone making a difference today (with your parent/guardian’s permission). Write her a card, a letter, or a message on social media.
- Help to preserve the stories of women who have made history in your community. Who were the first women elected to public office in your school district or community? Learn more about them and find a way to share their stories in your community.
- Select a current issue relating to voting or voting rights and create a 1-minute presentation and poster to educate others about it. (See Contemporary Voting Laws and Issues below.) Share your work with a public official or others outside your troop.
- Run for an elected position in your school or volunteer at school or in the community.
- Help others learn about the voting process. Show someone of voting age how to research candidates and issues and help them make a plan for voting on Election Day. (See: <https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-1633---,00.html> and <https://www.lwv.org/blog/make-your-election-day-plan>),

## **RESOURCES**

“Suffrage” means “the right to vote.” The word “suffrage” comes from the Latin word “suffragium,” which means “support” or “aid.” Suffrage advocates in the U. S. suffrage movement called themselves “suffragists”, not “suffragettes.” The latter term was used to belittle suffragists. See, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/suffragistvsuffragette.htm>.

## **Overview of the Suffrage Movement in the United States**

There are many websites with information about the women's suffrage movement. The following sites give a good overview of the movement, which stretched from before the 1848 Seneca Falls convention in New York to the enactment of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920.

<https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/19th-amendment-1>

<https://www.neh.gov/article/winning-vote-divided-movement-brought-about-nineteenth-amendment>

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/woman-suffrage>

<https://www.womensvote100.org/learn> (Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission)

<https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/interpretation/amendment-xix/interps/145>

Suffragists used a variety of tactics to advocate for their cause, including circulating petitions, marching in parades, writing letters to newspapers and legislators, creating their own publications, and designing pins, banners, postcards, and posters. Girl Scouts can draw inspiration for their own activities from learning about the many different ways that suffragists communicated their message. See:

<http://www.crusadeforthevote.org/creating-a-female-political-culture> (cartoons, posters, pins, suffrage colors, parade photo), <https://www.ggrwhc.org/suffrage-grand-rapids/>, and <https://grpl.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16055coll19> (images and artifacts from Michigan and Grand Rapids suffrage campaigns).

Some Girl Scouts may have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. during the upcoming year. The National Portrait Gallery, the Library of Congress, the Belmont-Paul National Monument, the National Archives, and other museums there are celebrating the suffrage centennial with exhibits. See: <https://washington.org/visit-dc/womens-suffrage-centennial-events>.

## **Women of Color and the Suffrage movement**

Contributions of women of color to the suffrage movement have often been minimized or overlooked. In addition, many women of color continued to face barriers to voting even after the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment granted women suffrage. These sources highlight accomplishments of and challenges faced by women of color during and after the suffrage movement.

*Between Two Worlds: Black Women and the Fight for Voting Rights:*

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/black-women-and-the-fight-for-voting-rights.htm>

*African American Leaders in the Suffrage Movement:*

<https://suffragistmemorial.org/african-american-women-leaders-in-the-suffrage-movement/>

*Matter of Fact*, with Soledad O'Brien: <https://youtu.be/YhqXsY4osvM>. This short video identifies national leaders of the women's suffrage movement and examines barriers to voting by black and Native American women that continued after the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed.

“A Resolution for Racial Equality”: <https://www.ggrwhc.org/a-resolution-for-equality/>. Bay City suffragist Lottie Wilson Jackson’s call for suffragists to take a stand against racial discrimination.

*Voting Rights for Native Americans:*

<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/elections/voting-rights-native-americans.html>

### **Suffrage Movement in Michigan**

State and local suffrage organizations played a very important role in the suffrage movement, because, until the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was adopted, each state’s constitution defined women’s voting rights. Michigan women were excluded from voting when the first Michigan constitution was adopted in 1835. Courts also ruled that, because women did not have the right to vote, they were barred from running for elected office.

Agitation for women’s suffrage started as early as the 1840s in Michigan. In order to change the Michigan constitution, suffragists had to first convince male legislators to authorize a referendum (popular vote) on women’s suffrage. Then they had to convince the eligible voters (all male) to vote in favor of the proposal. The modern referendum process is described at:

[https://ballotpedia.org/Amending\\_state\\_constitutions#Michigan](https://ballotpedia.org/Amending_state_constitutions#Michigan). For information on amending the U.S. Constitution, see: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/constitution> .

In 1874, 1912, and 1913, suffragists waged hard-fought campaigns to convince voters to amend the Michigan constitution to give women the right to vote, but they were unsuccessful. The suffragists persisted, however, and in 1917 they won a partial victory when they convinced Michigan legislators to grant them presidential suffrage (the right to vote for president only). This limited type of suffrage was possible without a constitutional amendment, because the U. S. Constitution gives each state legislature control over the process for choosing its own presidential electors. Finally, in 1918, Michigan women gained full suffrage when men in Michigan voted in favor of changing the state constitution to allow women to vote. As a result, Michigan women earned full voting rights almost two years before the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution went into effect. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment gave women across the country the right to vote.

An interesting aspect of the suffrage movement in Michigan is that Michigan was among only a handful of states where women could vote in school elections long before they won full suffrage. Michigan women who owned taxable property had the right to vote in school elections beginning in 1867 and that right was extended to parents of school children in 1881. Women who were eligible to vote in school elections could also run for school board offices. Women took advantage of this right and started winning seats on school boards around the state as early as the 1880s. Sadly, many of these pioneers have been forgotten as local histories often focused only on the achievements of men.

Once women received full voting rights, some suffragists, including women who had already served on school boards, ran for other elected positions. In 1920, suffragist Eva McCall Hamilton, of Grand Rapids, became the first woman to be elected to the Michigan legislature.

Women who were active in the suffrage movement were typically very active in other civic reform efforts, especially in matters relating to the health, education, and welfare of women, families, and children. After women won full suffrage, the National American Woman Suffrage Association voted to become the League of Women Voters and suffragists turned their attention to educating women voters about their new right. Suffragists in Michigan and across the country formed local chapters of the League and joined in this effort. Today, the League of Women Voters still plays an important role in voter education, both for men and for women.

Many brave and determined women from across Michigan were involved in the suffrage movement. Girl Scouts can honor them by learning more about them and uncovering and sharing stories of suffragists from their own communities who may have been forgotten. For more on the suffrage movement in Michigan, see:

*Taking Center Stage: Women's Suffrage in Grand Rapids:*

<https://www.gqrwhc.org/suffrage-grand-rapids/>

This unique digital exhibit gives an overview of the suffrage movement in Michigan with an emphasis on Grand Rapids suffrage activities. It includes a collection of historical images and explains how local and state suffrage activities connected with the national suffrage movement through a comprehensive timeline of the suffrage movement. The exhibit includes a complete listing of officers of the major state-wide suffrage organizations – a great resource for girls who want to learn more about suffragists from their home communities.

*Michigan and the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.* – <https://www.nps.gov/articles/michigan-and-the-19th-amendment.htm>. Selected highlights from the Michigan suffrage movement.

*Michigan Women Forward, Hall of Fame Timeline:* <https://miwf.org/herstory/mi-womens-history-center/> - A number of the women who have been inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame were active in the women's suffrage movement. Explore the Hall of Fame website to identify suffragists from your area and to learn more about prominent Michigan women. (Suggestion: type the word "suffrage" in the timeline search box or search for your town or city.)

*Long Hard-Fought Battle for Women's Suffrage:*

<https://www.lansingstatejournal.com/videos/news/local/capitol/2018/01/18/-long-hard-fought-battle-womens-suffrage/109571804/>

This brief video created by the Lansing Journal gives an outline of the women's suffrage movement in Michigan and includes historical photos from the movement

*Grand Rapids Public Library Suffrage Archive and Digital Suffrage Exhibit:*

<https://grpl.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16055coll19> and suffrage archives:

<https://www.grpl.org/uploads/grhsc/127.pdf>. Girl Scouts can get an up-close look at the Michigan suffrage movement by visiting the library archives or viewing its online digital collection, which includes copies of *The Michigan Suffragist*, the newsletter of the Michigan Equal Suffrage Association from 1914-1917; images from the scrapbook of nationally-known Grand Rapids suffragists, Emily Burton Ketcham and Alde Louise

Tuck Blake; and memorabilia from the suffrage era (pins, flyers, suffrage songs, etc.). Viewing this collection is a great way for girls to immerse themselves in the suffrage movement.

Girl Scouts who want to dig a little further can explore the library's digital collection of nearly 23,000 cards filled out by Grand Rapids area women who registered to help with the war effort in 1917: <https://grpl.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16055coll5> . They may even find a family member listed!

*Bay-Journal Heritage Collection:* <http://bay-journal.com/bay/1he/writings/mi-womens-suffrage-assoc.html> . This collection focuses on women from the Bay City area who were active in the women's suffrage movement.

*Your local library or historical association* – There were active suffrage associations in communities across Michigan. Check with your local library, history museum, or historical association to see what information they have about the suffrage movement in your area. Many local newspapers have been digitized and are available through local libraries. In addition, Central Michigan University has a gateway site that offers free access to digitized newspapers from across the state.

<https://www.cmich.edu/library/clarke/Pages/Michigan-Digital-Newspaper-Portal.aspx>  
Girl Scouts who want to learn more can also search the digital copy of *The Michigan Suffragist*, <https://grpl.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16055coll19>.

### **Places**

Anna Howard Shaw statue - Big Rapids- Anna Howard Shaw is perhaps Michigan's most famous suffrage leader. Shaw moved to Big Rapids when she was a young child and later attended Albion College where she studied for the ministry. She served as the president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1904-1915 and she played a major role in both the suffrage movement and in the Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, a group formed by women to support the war effort during World War I. See: <https://www.nps.gov/people/anna-howard-shaw.htm>.

St. Cecilia Auditorium, Grand Rapids (site of the National American Woman Suffrage Association convention in 1899, see: <https://www.ggrwhc.org/nawsa-comes-to-grand-rapids/>)

Susan B. Anthony and other national suffrage leaders traveled extensively in Michigan. Check with your local library/history associations to see if Susan B. Anthony or another national suffrage leader visited your area. Girls who would like to do more can read Susan B. Anthony's diaries online. Her 1874 diary is among others available at the Library of Congress, See: [https://www.loc.gov/resource/mss11049.mss11049-002\\_00107\\_00307/?sp=1](https://www.loc.gov/resource/mss11049.mss11049-002_00107_00307/?sp=1). Start with image 134 to see the places Anthony visited in Michigan as she spent a month crisscrossing the state by train, rallying public support during the 1874 suffrage campaign.

### **Events**

Events commemorating the suffrage centennial have been scheduled across Michigan. However, to date, there is no central listing of events, so check to see what is scheduled in your area. The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council has an active schedule of events for the year. Girl Scouts are invited to dress up as suffragists and join the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council in marching in the Hollyhock Lane Parade in Grand Rapids' Ottawa Hills neighborhood on July 4, 2020. Girls are also invited to a community-wide celebration of the suffrage centennial "Her Voice: Her Vote" which will be held on Wednesday, August 26, 2020 in the historic St. Cecilia Auditorium in Grand Rapids. For details about these and other events, see: [www.ggrwhc.org](http://www.ggrwhc.org).

### **Contemporary Voting Laws and Issues**

<https://www.usa.gov/voting-laws-history> (information on who is eligible to vote, voter I.D. laws, and historical election results)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/21/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/> (statistics on voter turnout in the United States)

<https://www.carnegie.org/topics/topic-articles/11-barriers-voting/> (discussion of barriers to voting)

### **Additional Resources**

National Women's History Project – [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org)

Rock the Vote – [www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com)

Smart Voter – [www.smartvoter.org](http://www.smartvoter.org)

League of Women Voters – [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

The Federal Election Commission – [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov) (has sample registration form)

Project Vote Smart – [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org) (candidates and their positions on issues)

Michigan Secretary of State - <https://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-1633---,00.html>



## Michigan 2020 Women's Right to Vote

### Centennial Girl Scout Patch Program

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After completing activities from each category of Discover, Connect, and Take Action, please submit [this form](#) to Girl Scouts of Michigan Shore to Shore. If the program was completed as a troop, troop leaders may complete one form for all girls and patches will be given to the troop leader. When purchasing patches you will have the option to pick up your order at any of the GSMISTS Service Centers or have them mailed. If you have any questions please reach out to [girlsexperience@gsmists.org](mailto:girlsexperience@gsmists.org)

<https://form.jotform.com/GSMISTS/2020suffragecentennial>