

# Racial Equality and Gender Equality In the Women's Rights Movement

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**Abstract**

Throughout history, there have always been particular groups that have been suppressed, for instance women and blacks. Women's rights activists and abolitionists started off their battle for suffrage together, however, African Americans were enfranchised five decades before women were. This raises the question of how the struggles for racial equality and gender equality have interfered with each other within the Women's Rights Movement. This thesis is intended to find out how African American activists and Women's rights activists have influenced one another while looking at crucial events throughout their history like the Seneca Falls Convention and the Emancipation Proclamation. Therefore, it starts in 1848 with the first women's rights convention in the United States and concludes around 1919, with the enfranchisement of women. Findings show that their relationship has not been rather stable throughout history and that they have hurt one another multiple times, however when they were starting to work together, they did accomplish some incredible achievements.

**Keywords:** Race, Gender, Class, Abolitionism, Women's Rights Activism, Inequality

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## Introduction

*“The right of woman to vote is as sacred in my judgment as that of man, and I am quite willing at anytime to hold up both my hands in favor of this right.”*

*“As you very well know, woman has a thousand ways to attach herself to the governing power of the land and already exerts an honorable influence on the course of legislation. She is the victim of abuses, to be sure, but it cannot be pretended I think that her cause is as urgent as that of ours”*  
(Douglas, 1868).

Both of these quotes are cited from the same short letter Frederick Douglass wrote to Josephine Sophie White Griffing - an American reformer campaigning against slavery and for women's rights. What is striking is that in this particular letter both of Douglass' alternating views come forward. In the first citation he states that he feels the right of a woman to vote is sacred, whereas in the second citation, he downgrades his first statement by saying that her cause is not as urgent as that of African Americans. During the establishment of the Women's Rights Movement and the Seneca Falls Convention, Frederick Douglass was an extremely prominent figure. Being an African American man, supportive of women's rights, he was able to enact quite some influence. However, his attitude changed somewhat in the years after the Civil War, when black rights were more likely to be assigned. This change in attitude can be read from the citations mentioned above, where he does not want to speak on the behalf of woman's suffrage in Washington, because he had decided to devote himself to strive for black suffrage only at that point in time. About two decades earlier, at the Seneca Falls convention, he was the pivotal factor for including the woman's suffrage in the Declaration of Sentiments. Throughout the years, there have been a number of changes within society to alter his view as much as it did.

Women and African Americans have always been regarded to be lesser people than white men. This is embodied by the fact that for a long time in US history, they were unable to enjoy the same rights as these white men. For instance, they were not paid the same amounts of money as white men, they were not able to own property like white men could, and most importantly, they were not able to cast a vote. The absence of this last right prevented them from being able to make a change and to establish a better future for themselves. The women's rights activists and the black rights activists started forming separate movements, however at one point in time, they realized they needed each other in order to be heard. Their collaboration led to quite some disappointment when

it failed and the relationships between black rights activists and women's rights activists tensioned. Race and gender are prioritized in the research, since they have been major influences on one another. However class most definitely contributes to the creation of opportunities as well. Race and gender relationships throughout the years are extremely interesting because they are not permanent, meaning they continue to change over the years. Therefore, the focus in the upcoming chapters will be on this relationship.

How have the struggle for racial equality and gender equality interacted with each other within the Women's Rights Movement in order to establish voting rights? This is a question that multiple scholars have asked themselves over the years. Nevertheless, most of these scholars have dedicated themselves to a limited time period, which restricts us from seeing the bigger picture all at once. Throughout this thesis, my perspective on this matter will thus be illustrated over a larger period in time, in order to offer insights into the entire period in which voting rights for women were being established. The Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 will be addressed first. Being the first women's rights convention in the United States, it marked the beginning in the battle towards equal suffrage for women and the first gatherings of women's rights activists. The importance and the consequences of the Emancipation Proclamation will be considered in the second chapter. Controversy about the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments will be explored and the contesting views concerning these documents will be regarded. The last chapter will encompass the last steps towards universal suffrage and will focus on the differences between some states in particular. Across the United States some major discrepancies have been taking place in accordance to voting rights for women in various areas, which is interesting to consider when illustrating the path towards universal suffrage in the States. The chapter will be concluded with the Nineteenth Amendment, which enfranchised women in every state across the United States in 1919. What is interesting about the approach chosen by me is that the time span will be rather large, which enables the process to be portrayed entirely. Furthermore, the last chapter focusses on two states in particular that diverse enormously in their method towards achieving women suffrage. It is a unique manner of research in this field to exemplify the heterogeneity which is always present throughout the United States.

Particular scholars have done voluminous research on this field of studies and thus have been pivotal factors of contribution to this thesis. Angela Davis is an example of a pivotal scholar for my research. She is the author of *Women, Race & Class*, a book she wrote in 1981. She highlights her opinion that women like Anthony and Stanton should have realized that it was not the right time for suffrage for women yet since the American society was not ready yet. Being a black

woman herself, she addresses that the white, middle-class women in the women's rights activists did not understand the needs of the African American community, and therefore, their collaboration with black rights activists was doomed from the start.

Furthermore, Sally McMillen, the author of *Seneca Falls and the origins of the women's rights movement*, focusses on four significant women in their strive towards voting rights. Anthony, Stanton, Stone, and Mott are central throughout her coverage since these were the women that stood at the beginning of the Women's Rights Movement. An in-depth analysis of each of their lives and activism is provided by McMillen. She addresses a period of about fifty years, from 1840 until 1890, filled with activism in order to establish equality. By the end of this period, however, voting rights were still not manifested. This book is extremely helpful when trying to understand everything that went on at the time.

Ellen Carol DuBois offers us a renewed feminist perspective from the 1970s looking back at the years the Women's Movement started to develop, in her book *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869*. Throughout the book, she examines the relationship between the black rights advocates and the women's rights advocates and notes the end of their collaboration which is followed by some racist views when these feminists ally with the Democratic Party. Furthermore, she expresses the superiority that these women feel over ex-slaves and immigrants. DuBois is completely honest in examining the minds of the women participating in activism during these years and does not hide any feelings or thoughts these women had in their strive for equality. The descriptive method of the book is helpful in order to understand the developing feminist feelings.

Dudden, finally, wrote the book *Fighting Chance*, which is illustrative of women and some men within the women's rights movement in the time around the Civil War. The relationship between these women and black rights' supporters is being laid out and central figures are being discussed. She portrays the change in attitude women like Stanton and Anthony experienced after the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. She addresses expressions from these women like Stanton claiming that "a man's government was actually *worse* than a white man's government" (169). Many other scholars like Flexner address the fact that this change in attitude resulted in racism toward African American men, nonetheless, Dudden indicates that these women were not fundamentally racist. She states that frustration about the unfairness of the process is a factor which made some of their statements somewhat harsh towards black men.

In order to prevent confusion about dates, a timeline comprising the major events that are covered throughout this thesis is included in Appendix A.

## **Chapter 1 : The Seneca Falls Convention**

Around the mid-nineteenth century, women started to consider the rights they were not able to enjoy yet, as opposed to their male counterparts, who were able to enjoy these rights. The desire for fundamental rights, like voting rights, started to increase. Throughout this chapter, these first strives for equal rights will be addressed, which were captured during the Seneca Falls Convention. I will start off by explaining which events were causing the Seneca Falls Convention to take place and illustrate the declaration that was established at this convention, namely the Declaration of Sentiments. Furthermore, some prominent figures throughout this process will be examined. I will start with discussing the Grimké sisters, moving on to Frederick Douglass, and lastly, I will illustrate the role Elizabeth Cady Stanton played in establishing this convention. The chapter will end by illustrating why it was that only women from a particular social class were able to affiliate with these women's rights activists.

Important is to know why women started to be aware of the rights they should have had and began to fight for these rights. Norton et al states that 'religious revivalism helped women see themselves as equal to men, and reform movements brought middle-class women into the public sphere' (Norton et al., 300). Furthermore, multiple women represented by the NWP - National Woman's Party - emphasize the impact the idea that women were second-class citizens throughout history had on their role in society, when looking back to this era. They state that this is not at all a realistic reflection of their actual role in the economy and society of the United States - and the rest of the world (Chafe, 55). The tension that resulted from this distortion of the truth in the eyes of women, led to women starting to realize they were more valuable than what they were portrayed to be. They too were intelligent enough to contribute in discussions regarding political decisions and important matters in their life like slavery and equality. With the proceeding of time, women became more and more assertive in terms of making their voices heard.

Women's social and economical equality was demanded at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 by three hundred men and women. This was the first women's rights convention ever held which means it was a new break-through in the seeking of equal rights. One of the reasons for the convention was the fact that women were not accepted at abolitionist conventions, they were even denied seats there (McMillen, 72-73). These women were portrayed by men as if they were not intelligent enough to speak about abolitionist matters to men, since they were not involved directly.

This prejudice made them realize they should aim for their own citizenship rights, which they did by organizing the Seneca Falls Convention.

Two major events related to abolitionism occurred within the area of Seneca Falls, which set the stage for the Seneca Falls convention. A new political party was formed, called the Free Soil Party, which divided the political figures in Seneca Falls and all other places across the northern United States (Dudden, 25). Secondly, there was a disconnection within the Genesee Yearly Meeting of Friends, which led to a new group emerging called the Congregational Friends, who were reform Quakers (McMillen, 84). Quakers in general were against slavery, some more strict than others however. The reformers were choosing a new path, they wanted equality and removal of boundaries between them and the world, as well as between men and women, and black and white people. Both of these events happened in central New York state, and were thus of great impact in this small area, leading to the convention taking place. At this convention, the Declaration of Sentiments was set up and signed by one hundred out of the three hundred attendees, of which sixty-eight were women and thirty-two were men (McMillen, 72).

The Declaration of Sentiments is comparable to the Declaration of Independence, however, the former emphasizes the fact that women should be mentioned too. The most famous example is, for instance, that the Declaration of Independence states that 'all men are created equal', whereas the Declaration of Sentiments states that 'all men and women are created equal'. By recognizing women in their declaration and have this declaration mirror the declaration of independence, they link them directly to the ideals that were present during the founding of the United States. Ross Evens Paulson argues that the agenda of the people who signed the Declaration of Sentiments was liberal rather than the perceived thought that it was radical. They wanted to fit in the dominant culture instead of challenge it (Strom and Paulson, 478). However, people can interpret the facts in various ways. I feel like their agenda was not solely liberal, since there were major radical factors that played a role during this time. The foremost factor being that women did not have a say in political decisions at all until this point, men did not listen when women spoke their minds and therefore, these women were portrayed as deficient. The men and women that signed the declaration at this point in history enabled diverging views, which means they were not so much liberal, but rather radical because they were allowing their perspectives on life and equality to be seen and heard, even though these perspectives were far from the norm. Furthermore, Quakers thought highly of equality. This could be a major contributor to their emphasis on equal rights, since many of the attendees belonged to the Quaker community. Some of the Quakers in this area were high on abolitionism as well, like the M'Clinktock family, who were the founders of Philadelphia's Free

Produce Society. When they moved to New York to extend their religion, they continued to pursue their anti-slavery way of living. They had a store which contained products that were all manufactured without any form of slave labor. This family illustrates therefore that Quakers not only supported equality among men and women, but also between black and white. Abolitionism and women's rights therefore go often hand-in-hand during this period in the New York region.

In order to gain more influence for their movement, influential Americans had to become part of their journey towards justice and they had to be supportive of their views. By bringing these discussed groups together, women's rights activists were able to create a larger audience that was interested in this matter, enabling more people to sympathize with their ideals and goals. There were a few figures besides Stanton that were prominent for this organization, both male and female, who will be examined in this chapter.

### The Grimké Sisters

The Grimké sisters, for example, were brought up in a slave-owning community in Carolina and turned out to be the first and only white women who fought for the Abolition and joined the movement. Because of their family's direct involvement in slavery, they realized there were some fundamental faults in the minds of people which had to be altered in order to stop slavery. Angela Grimké is disgusted by the way her younger brother Henry is treating 'his' slave, namely by harming him both physically and mentally. When she found out that he regarded his slave as less than his horse, she knew some fundamental changes had to be made in the current situation in the south and tried to seek help at different churches and Christian denominations, like the Presbyterian Church of Charleston, S.C., and the Quakers in Charleston (Lerner, 277-278). One after the other, however, made her leave the church because of her strong abolitionist views - even though they did not give this as the reason, she knew it was. She moved up North to her sister Sarah, who lived in Philadelphia. Here, they joined the Society of Friends, who are mostly referred to as Quakers or Friends, where they expected more understanding of their ideals. Even here, however, they experienced a lot of discriminatory activities, like separate colored seating. After a while, they started to speak their minds about it, and disobey the rules by sitting in the colored section as well (Lerner, 283). Again, they were disowned by the church. In May 1837, the first Anti-Slavery Convention of American women was organized and the Grimké sisters were some of the leaders in this convention. In these conventions, people were encouraged to treat black citizens the way white citizens were treated, especially focused on women. To further portray their supportiveness of colored people, Angelina married Theodore Weld, who was one of the key players in America's

abolitionism (McMillen, 66). At their wedding, the guests were of all colors and shapes, including some of their father's freed slaves, trying to make way for new ways of thinking. By the end of their lives, they found out they had some mixed-raced nephews, who were sons of their brother. They supported them financially as well as emotionally, allowing them to live with them and paying for their education, with help of other abolitionists in their community (Lerner, 277-291). This seems like a legitimate end of their journey and fights towards justice for (former) slaves since they were not alive anymore to see the aftermath of their protests, whereas they were able to see the lives of their nephews turned out better after living with the Grimké sisters. Because of the fact that these women were speaking their minds to both men and women in gatherings, meant they became more and more influential and notorious within these groups of people. Even though they primarily spoke about the abolition of slavery, the fact that these women did speak up was of great impact in the fight for women's rights and equality as well. Furthermore, their views were incredibly outspoken which contributed to them becoming influential in both fields. Men started to feel inclined to attend meetings where these sisters spoke, which was a break-through since men usually only listened to other men speaking about important matters in life. In a social and political point of view, these women established some of the first changes within society regarding the importance and portrayal of women.

### Frederick Douglass

Illustrative of the commencing relationship between abolitionists and the Women's Rights Movement is Frederick Douglass. However, he can be regarded as an exception rather than the rule. This being that he was an African American man and a former slave, who cared very deeply about the reaching of equal rights for both women and African Americans. One of his most famous statements is "right is of no sex, truth is of no color," (NPS, 58) in saying this, he compares the rights of colored people to those of women. By comparing them, he makes no distinction in importance. Thus race is not of more importance to him than gender is, which makes his argument even more powerful, since he will not profit directly from reaching equal rights for women.

Douglass was the only African American man who was present at the Seneca Falls Convention, and he was very strongly opinionated about the issues discussed. The resolution about women's suffrage only passed after he gave a speech about equal rights among women and African Americans compared to white men, and he stated that women should really be represented and accepted in American politics in order for the country to move forward. The fact that he was the person who made sure the resolution passed shows his incredibly great influence in the movement.

Being an African American man and former slave, he had a bag full of experience, which he was not afraid to share. This resulted in people gaining sympathy for him and becoming supportive of his views. He felt amongst others that women should have a say in general and that men should listen to them more often than they do (Quarles, 35-36).

Shortly after this convention took place, his thoughts were published in *The North Star*, where he wrote the following: "In respect to political rights, we hold woman to be justly entitled to all we claim for man. We go farther, and express our conviction that all political rights which it is expedient for man to exercise, it is equally so for women. All that distinguishes man as an intelligent and accountable being, is equally true of woman; and if that government is only just which governs by the free consent of the governed, there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the exercise of the elective franchise, or a hand in making and administering the laws of the land. Our doctrine is, that 'Right is of no sex'" (Douglass and Foner, 51). This quotation of him recognizes that it is extremely important and fair to give women a voice within society as well, since they should not be regarded as lesser people than men. Because of the role they had been playing in society until now, many men did not believe women could be intelligent and intellectual. The main tasks women had were making the house, doing chores and raising the children. Men did not put up with the fact that women could be more than that, and Frederick Douglass desired to be an eye-opener for them, in showing that women could be just as intelligent as men. In order to prove their intelligence, women should be able to participate in political debates and discussions about society. Women should be able to enjoy the same rights as men, and they should have a say in the laws that society holds over its people, however at this point in time, women were only allowed to obey the laws, rather than have a say in them. This notion had to be altered and Frederick Douglass was very clear about it.

Douglass can be regarded as the ultimate key between abolitionists and women's rights activists. He was part of both activist groups, just like many others, the difference, however, is that he was regarding the topic from a standpoint of a former slave, whereas most of the others were women. Just like women, slaves and black people were regarded lesser people and could not be seen as intellectual or part of the society even. Throughout his life, Douglass - born as Frederick Baily - was able to educate himself with the help of his slaveowner's sister-in-law. His literacy enabled him to learn more about the society he grew up in and the life he desired for himself. This empowered him to educate others as well, which meant much more slaves and slave-children were enlightened by him. When he was around the age of twenty, he managed to escape to New York (Matlack, 22-23). I feel like him being lucky enough to be able to properly educate himself, made

him more aware of the rights everyone should be able to enjoy. Coming from the background he did, and experiencing the things he experienced, he saw every person as equal to one another and that was really something he craved striving for.

### Elizabeth Cady Stanton

When growing up in a wealthy family, the passing of all of her brothers marked a sorrowful period in her parents' life. In order to make it up to her father, Elizabeth Cady Stanton tried to do as much 'male activities' as she could, like horse back riding and learning Greek. Despite her best efforts and her father appreciating this, he told her that he wished she was a boy anyway. These words clearly mark the inferiority women faced during that time. Men were regarded superior to women and that clearly had a lot of impact on Stanton. The fact that men were considered preferable over women is also clear when looking at education. When Stanton graduated from the Johnstown Academy at age sixteen, she was declined from going to university, unlike her male classmates. Even though her academic record was one of the best of her class, which was a mixed boys and girls class, she could not attend due to the fact that she was a woman. Her father was a prominent attorney and showed her around in the judicial world multiple times during her youth. This world taught her that women were not at all treated equally to men, and that especially married women had little rights whatsoever. They were not even legal guardians of their own children, and could not own property of their own. Something had to be changed in her eyes. However, a great deal more was wrong with the world at that time, and she came in contact with the abolitionist movement (Stanton, 33-48; McMillen, 9).

When she married an abolitionist orator named Henry Brewster Stanton, they spent their honeymoon in London and visited the World Anti-Slavery Convention. At this convention too, however, women were not regarded as equals to men, and this was made very clear when their credentials were rejected. This angered her so much that she and another American woman at the convention - Lucretia Mott - decided to discuss women's rights at a convention. The convention that took place on behalf of the women's rights is known as the Seneca Falls Convention. Stanton is regarded as the intellectual woman involved in the convention, she worked out the Declaration of Sentiments, and with the help of Frederick Douglass, she was able to pass important resolutions like equality amongst men and women and voting rights for women (McMillen, 24-27; Davis, 53).

Interesting to notice is that almost all of the influential women during this crucial period for women's rights stem from wealthy, middle-class families. This meant that their parents could afford education for them, so if they were allowed to go, they could. Furthermore, the subjects discussed at

the dining table were of course of more intellectual standards than in families that were members of the lower classes. This enabled these women to start thinking about the society they were living in, and the things they desired to have altered. They learned about the inequality that ruled within married families, that women had little rights compared to men. Besides, them being part of this elite group, meant their voices were being heard by the right kind of people: the influential ones.

When the first Women's Rights Convention within the United States was established in Seneca Falls, the first changes in the history of women were accomplished. The fact that women were gaining a voice within society meant that they were making progress. Collaboration between women's rights activists and black rights activists started to come into existence thanks to prominent abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and the Grimké sisters, who were supportive of the Declaration of Sentiments. This document was signed by hundred attendees of the convention, illustrating their loyalty towards the idea of woman suffrage. During these first stages in the strive for suffrage, black rights activists and women's rights activists started to develop and discuss their mutual ideals of universal suffrage and equality.

## **Chapter 2 : The Emancipation Proclamation**

After women had gathered themselves in a movement and worked out what they desired to achieve for themselves and their loved ones, they realized that they would need a bigger group to cooperate with. Throughout the upcoming chapter, this new cooperation will be examined. In order to come to an understanding of this collaboration and why it came to an end, a series of crucial political decisions in the United States during this time need to be addressed first. One of these political decisions was the ratification of the Emancipation Proclamation, introduced by President Abraham Lincoln. Therefore, this chapter will be starting off with the complex decisions that this president was set out to make regarding the abolition of slavery and the consequences this brought along. Afterward, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments which occurred on the political agenda will be examined in order to explain the resistance that took shape within the bond that was established between the women's rights movement and the black rights movement. Furthermore, views from prominent women like Stanton and Anthony about these developments in US policies will be offered. The collaboration between these two movements - the AERA, the American Equal Rights Association - will be displayed, and there will be explained what led to them parting again. Lastly, the question is raised as to why African American women were excluded from both these parties.

### Abraham Lincoln's presidency

When Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860, he immediately noticed he was going to face some difficulties during his term. By March 4, 1861, when he was inaugurated, there were already seven states that had announced that they were separating from the Union and were to become the Confederate States of America. A war known as the American Civil War broke out, which is found to be the war with most deaths in US history. It all started when the Confederacy attacked Fort Sumter in South Carolina. Four more states left the Union when Lincoln denounced his policy of "coercion" on April 12th, that same year (Owens, 225-226). The economy of these separated states was based on slavery, it was their primary source of earnings and this was thus something they refused to give up, despite the fact that other people were suffering because of it. They were in complete contradiction with what the Union had in mind to be a proper society. Furthermore, there were some 'border states' that did have their economy based on slavery. These states, however, did agree for most part with what the Union stood for, and thus desired to become part of them.

In a letter to Horace Greeley, Lincoln declared his desire to save and restore the Union using the following words: *“My paramount object in this struggle is to save the union, and it is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the union without freeing any slave, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if i could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that”* (Nabers, 3). In using these words, he implies that not slavery, but really the restoration of the Union is his number one war effort, at least at the beginning of the war. He was extremely persistent in trying to glue the Union back together with the Confederate states, whereas many others thought at the time that it might be better just to let those states go. Lincoln did not favor any kind of compromise, and even though his words might be interpreted otherwise, he loathed the idea of compromising to slavery on federal territory. Lincoln was very persistent on the abolition of slavery, although he could not say it out too loud, out of fear of losing some of his allies.

When almost two years into the war, Lincoln decides to issue a warning to the Confederate states. He states that if they decide not to join the Union, a document will come into effect where slavery is abolished. The rebellious states do not react to this warning whatsoever and the document called the Emancipation Proclamation is issued. It was important for Lincoln not to seem desperate and therefore, he waited to issue the proclamation until after they had had some success winning battles. The Emancipation Proclamation belongs to the most well-known documents ever issued in the United States. This document was the primary measure in the abolition of slavery in the southern states, since there is being declared that all slaves in the Confederacy will be free starting January first, 1863. Because the ‘border states’ do not belong to the Confederacy, but to the Union, these states are being excepted. He needed these states in the battle against the South, and thus could not afford to lose them over the slavery-issue, a compromise was therefore reached and they were allowed to keep their slaves. Overall, Lincoln’s proclamation led to a change in legal status from enslave to free for more than three million ‘unfree’ people, as they were being referred to in the Constitution (Welling, 164-165).

Nevertheless, this effect did not happen immediately. Practically seen, when enslaved people escaped their imprisonment within the Confederate government, they became legally Freedman. However, it was harder for them to escape this world than it seems. Due to lacking means of communications, it took a rather long time before people, and especially enslaved people heard the news about the Emancipation Proclamation being set into motion. Moreover, there were a lot of slaves who did not have the financial means to flee their owner, or who had families that they could not leave behind (Nabers, 3). These were all factors that played a crucial role in the possibly

changing lives of former slaves. However, the Emancipation Proclamation needed extensive constitutional background in order to be properly accepted as a means to change peoples lives.

### The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments

The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments are fundamental in the execution of the Emancipation Proclamation, since the proclamation was only a document, and thus the US Constitution had to be amended with alterations in order to formalize it. These amendments prohibited discrimination and slavery and obliged states to treat African American citizens the same way white citizens were treated. The laws, however, were not as well executed as they implied on paper.

In the Fourteenth Amendment it is stated that “all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws” (Norton et al., A-12-13). The amendment was adopted in July 1868 as part of the Reconstruction Amendments, in order to reunite the Union and the Confederacy and synchronize the Union's ideals in the entire nation. In this amendment, it was the first time that the Constitution stated that voters would be men only, even though it articulates that all citizens of the United States deserve equal jurisdiction (Nabers, 4-5; McMillen 163). Women are again visualized as secondary or lesser citizens than men are. Nevertheless, this was already a major improvement for former slaves, because they were defined as citizens as well and they were to be treated equally to everyone else. This was not the case everywhere in the United States, however. The Confederacy was still trying to hold on to their distorted ideals of white supremacy, despite the fact that they were defeated. Therefore, they figured out some ways around the amendment to further enforce inequality and discrimination.

The same is true for the Fifteenth Amendment that was ratified a year later, which declares 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 race, color, or previous condition of servitude” (Norton et al., A-13). The words used in this amendment imply that people cannot be denied the right to vote due to their race, color, or previous condition of servitude. This means that former slaves and people of color cannot be denied, however, women can be denied. Women are thus seen as lesser than former slaves, while former slaves were regarded to be garbage by many people in the south. This

amendment actually acknowledges that every man in the United States should not be denied to vote, however, some states found ways to exclude particular persons from voting. An example of this would be that officials created literacy tests African American citizens had to pass before they were allowed to vote. Most African Americans were still illiterate, as well as the tests being extremely difficult, making it almost impossible for them to pass and therefore they could be denied to vote after all. Even if intelligent African Americans had passed such a test, the registrars pretended they had failed and they were denied voting rights after all. Another measure to ensure voting rights remained in the hands of the wealthy whites was a poll tax that was introduced in some states and districts (Poe, 535). Not every average citizen could afford to pay such a tax in order to vote. The results of this tax are rather obvious; only the wealthy, white, male, citizens were capable of voting, leaving this right to remain a privilege. This goes to show that the upper class, white men continued to rule the country because they were the ones that could bend the rules that originated out of a desire for equality.

By this time, however, women were still not enfranchised. The Fifteenth Amendment was said to have introduced 'manhood suffrage', legally outlawing discrimination on a racial basis concerning voting rights. Some women saw this as a refusal to take woman suffrage seriously. One of these women is the previously mentioned Elizabeth Cady Stanton. After her great contribution to the Seneca Falls Convention, she never stopped fighting for equal rights for women. Her speech at the Women's Suffrage Convention in Washington, D.C. illustrates her anger about the unfairness of the Fifteenth Amendment. She advocates for a Sixteenth Amendment granting 'womanhood suffrage', emphasizing that the government requires a female voice in order to be able to make decisions for women's best interest. An argument is made that society is not at all represented well in the government at that point in time and that it will not be represented properly when only African American men are granted voting rights (DuBois, 847-849). The relationship between the women's rights movement supported by Stanton and Anthony and the Emancipation Proclamation was thus a rocky one. Even though they started out fighting for voting rights for African American men as well, they did expect the journey to end with both of these minority groups having earned voting rights at the same time. When it turned out that the Emancipation Proclamation and the amendments that resulted from this proclamation only developed into black voting rights, Stanton and Anthony were not very supportive of the abolitionists anymore. Voting rights for them seemed further away than ever before, since they realized that an aristocracy of sex was now created and men were not planning on sharing their power and authority with women. At the same time, an argument could be made that the African American women would be downgraded even more when

their men would be enfranchised. These women were equal to their men during slavery, however, when African American men were to be granted these rights, and their women would not, a massive gap would start to develop (McMillen, 172). This would therefore degrade their status within society even more.

Michaela Bank states in her article that when Stanton and her women's rights advocates urged for woman's rights and universal suffrage, they had a particular group of people in mind for whom they appealed these rights. This is where the privileged groups come to light again, they namely desired these rights for wealthy, righteous, well-educated, white Americans (Bank, 2007). Despite her good intentions for a better represented society, she completely missed her own mark when she only needs these rights to be shared with this intellectual, upper class, elitist group. However, it can be said that she was rather discriminating towards other groups in order to make her focus group - women - more likely to be granted equal rights. Since drastic change was necessary in order to establish a society in which no-one was inferior anymore when it comes to legislation, small steps had to be taken at a time.

### The AERA

Stanton, and other women were not only challenging abolitionists, but the two minority groups used to be in need of one another as well. This can be illustrated by Frederick Douglass who stood up for women's rights at the Seneca Falls Convention, as well as women such as the Grimké sisters who devoted their lives to improving conditions for African Americans and former slaves. When working together, much more can be achieved. Susan B. Anthony realized this too in 1866, when she claimed that because of the act of emancipation, women and African Americans had come to be on the same level in terms of political and legal status. Both of these groups did not have the right to vote yet, but were legal citizens of the United States. An alliance was therefore the logical and wise next step in both their journeys towards justice and equality, and the American Equal Rights Association (AERA) was founded in May of that same year. Their principles of gender equality and racial equality now turned into general equality and the strive for universal suffrage within the United States (Free, 134-135; McMillen, 163).

This association faced a great deal of struggles because of the always present conflicts of interest. When it came to the expanding of their rights, either group chose their own association over the other. They carried out two campaigns, one in New York and the other in Kansas. The latter eventually led to the separation of the movement. They experienced quite some resistance towards women's suffrage campaigns by abolitionists that used to be allies, because they felt like the fight

for female enfranchisement would hurt their primary goal of establishing suffrage for African American men (Free, 134, 147-151; McMillen 174). Their point of view is arguable: when looking at the United States in that period, major changes were already taking place and too much change at once was unlikely to happen. Despite this, I do feel that organizations could have been more valuable when working together, because they have larger numbers of members to advocate for their rights and more cogency. Nevertheless, former slaves have been suppressed for years and years, and they have been in worse conditions than women during these years. This ensures that it is understandable that they do not want to be suppressed any longer and long for equal rights sooner rather than later. The Fifteenth Amendment was the biggest deal-breaker, since this amendment ensured suffrage regardless of race, but did not ensure suffrage regardless of sex, meaning that only African Americans profited from this amendment. Women within this organization were angry with the abolitionists for not supporting them in declining the idea of this amendment when female suffrage is not guaranteed by it. This opens up a discussion about what women would have done when the facts were vice versa. If they would have been the ones that were enfranchised, would they have negotiated until black suffrage was assured? Probably not.

A split in the movement started to appear because even though the goal was still identical for many members, their approaches were completely different. The Kansas campaign offered insight to this fact for many of the participants. Women recognized that the abolitionists' focus was mainly on establishing rights for their own sake, as opposed to the planned universal suffrage. The Kansas campaign was the second as well as the last campaign, and the movement fell apart afterwards. On the one hand, there was a division that recognized that African Americans had to be enfranchised before women could be, led by Lucy Stone. On the other hand, there was a division that urged that African Americans and women should be enfranchised simultaneously, led by Stanton and Anthony. They realized that they would never accomplish this in collaboration with the AERA, and strived for an independent women's rights movement (McMillen, 174; DuBois, 53-57). When Frederick Douglass asked Susan B. Anthony whether the granting of women's suffrage would change anything with regards to the nature of the sexes, Anthony perfectly explained why suffrage was crucial for women. She told him that "it will change the nature of one thing very much, and that is the dependent condition of women. It will place her where she can earn her own bread, so that she may go out into the world an equal competitor in the struggle for life" (DuBois, 847). In order to have an equal shot at achieving the things in life that one desires, there should be no limitations or set-backs when compared to other human beings.

Because of the Fifteenth Amendment, political influence amongst former slaves grew and that contributed to the confidence within the women's rights movement as well. When black men got a taste of their growing influence and expanding rights, they were not going to abandon them just because women wanted them to. Thus, these women were greatly disappointed when their perceived allies backed off from their anticipated mutual goals - black and woman suffrage. African American men, like Wendell Phillips, point out that "if the ex-slaves did not have the political weapons to protect themselves against their former owners, the abolition of slavery would prove a worthless victory" (DuBois, 56). In connecting black enfranchisement to the abolition of slavery, Phillips made a strong and easily defensible point. He made a point women could not make and therefore, people could argue that black people's interest was of more importance. Through suffrage, they could be on the same political level as their former owners and that made them more powerful within a society that knew so many former slaves. Douglass points out that if black people would not be enfranchised, a message is sent that they are not fit to participate properly within society, whereas they are of great value for society, as are women. However, there is another argument that was often made by abolitionists that cannot support woman suffrage, namely that the enfranchisement of black people was the one secure foundation for Reconstruction. DuBois touches upon the fact that women's rights were never a priority for the abolitionists, and some even saw it as a burden in their struggle towards racial equality. These men expected women's rights activists to always be around when they were in need of their support. Phillips underlined at an antislavery meeting in 1865 that this was 'the hour of the negro' and that one war had to be fought at a time, thus only one question could be asked at a time - this question being the one for black suffrage. Of course, women did not at all agree with this, and again males are seen as superior to women. Stanton responds to him with a very simple question, namely whether the African race is entirely made up of males (DuBois, 60). Her point goes to show that even when people - abolitionists in this case - are striving for equal rights for their race, they only think of the men within their race.

However, the Reconstruction-era was also a period where more attention than ever was focused on black women. During this period, the two minority groups - women and blacks - tried to accomplish equal rights to white men. Since black women were part of both of these minority groups, there could be argued that they would be granted equal rights regardless of who would accomplish it first. This was not the case however, both groups let these women down by not including them in their campaigns. Black women were a means to introduce women's rights into the political dialogue at the time, because the dialogue was mostly about race, and white women could thus use that to raise the question of what would happen with black women in the case of black

suffrage. This goes to show that white, elitist women were only using black women when it was to their advantage. African American women had thus a double burden to defeat, one for being black and the other one for being a woman. Sojourner Truth is one of the African American women who was an active abolitionist and women's rights activist. Being a former slave, she knew what she was fighting for and was extremely eager to be seen as a full-fledged citizen, including obtaining all the rights that citizens should be able to enjoy (DuBois, 846).

A drift between these merged organizations therefore inevitably took place. The abolitionists had their own - male - interests at heart only, when they started seeing light at the end of the tunnel and thought they did not need women anymore. To them, they were nothing more than a burden anymore, because without them they could make some more valid points in reaching suffrage and equal rights. African American women had always been amongst the most inferior people of the United States, however, they could always count on their men to be there with them. When their men got the chance to establish a better and fairer life for their race, they only thought about themselves and neglected to stand up for the rights of their women. This goes to show that a large number of people are driven by power in taking action, once they have obtained a taste of it, they want it all for themselves. The society still regarded women as lesser, inferior citizens, and they were given no chance to represent themselves in the government, or even appoint someone who could represent them properly. An aristocracy of sex was born in the United States, where all men were superior to all women. With this, racism by women's rights activists was reborn too. They could not believe that the lowest classes within their society all of a sudden were regarded of more value than some of the intelligent women coming from the highest classes of society.

### Chapter 3 : Voting rights in the States

In a country like the United States, female enfranchisement was a never-ending endeavor. Women like Stanton, Anthony and Chapman Catt would never give up this ultimate goal in their battle towards gender equality. Since African American men had already gained some privileges over them, like voting rights, their collaboration with black rights activists gradually came to an end. Black rights activists did not have the same goals as these women anymore, and therefore there was a decreasing interest in their partnership with the women's rights movement. Even though Anthony was an abolitionist at heart, the fact that African American men were granted the right to vote and women were not, resulted in her and Stanton establishing the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869. What is striking is that this same year, women in the territory of Wyoming were granted the right to vote. Ironically, women here were enfranchised because this territory was inhabited by Democratic men who deplored the fact that black people had just been enfranchised. In what way did gender and race contribute to the fact that women were enfranchised decades earlier in the western United States than in other parts of this country? Furthermore, a distinction will be made about the national idea regarding women's rights and the local realization of these ideas within the different territories of the US. The question is raised whether there is a link between the southern slave states not enfranchising women and the western states enabling women's right to vote decades before the rest based on racial and gendered principles. To start off the chapter, some general facts about woman suffrage in the various states and territories in the United States will be addressed and compared. Afterward, feelings women's rights activists experienced towards African American rights activists and vice versa throughout the years will be examined, focussing on Anthony, Stanton, and Douglass. The Nineteenth Amendment and the road towards it will be explored next, as well as reasons for the distinction in the timing of woman suffrage in western states and other parts of the United States. In particular, the states of Wyoming and Alabama will be taken into account when comparing the West to the rest of the United States.

The map in Appendix B shows the time by which each state had granted women's suffrage - or did not grant it yet by 1919. One thing that immediately becomes clear is that the Western states are primarily colored orange, meaning that by 1919, they already had enfranchised women. Another striking visual is that a great deal of the former 'slave states' in the southeast are colored blue, meaning that they have yet to enfranchise women in these regions. What can be concluded from this map is that some states in the west, like Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and Idaho, had enfranchised women decades before former slave states like Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina.

### Racism and Enmity

Because of their failed collaboration with the black rights activists, women felt the need to demean African American men, in order to glorify themselves. Some even started to have racist views, even though they began their journey towards justice as abolitionists (Stanton et al., 1970). This goes to show that when people have a choice between saving their own good, or helping others, they will always put their own interests first. Black rights activists were anxious that if they were to continue to strive for universal suffrage, neither black suffrage, nor women's suffrage would be accomplished and thus political disabilities of race would not be removed. Especially Anthony and Stanton were radical in their racist comments, partly out of a strategic standpoint, to persuade the minority Democrats. Their main remark against African American men was that women were now regarded to be lesser citizens than them, and thus placing them beneath African American men on the political and social ladder. Stanton states in an 1868 editorial, "To what a depth of degradation must the women of this nation have fallen to be willing to stand aside, silent and indifferent spectators in the Reconstruction of the nation, while all the lower stratas [sic] of manhood are to legislate in their interests, political, religious, educational, social and sanitary, molding to their untutored will the institutions of a mighty continent. . . . What an insult to the women who have labored thirty years for the emancipation of the slave, now when he is their political equal, to propose to lift him above their heads" (Stanton, 1868). With the wording of 'all the lower stratas', she refers to African American men, or former slaves. Throughout this statement she declares that black men were for a fact amongst the lowest of society, and by granting them rights women are not granted, the social construction alters and - white - women are in turn amongst the lowest of society. This was comparable to the general idea during this tumultuous time, namely that white women should be equal, if not superior to African American men. If equality for everyone cannot be achieved equally, women supportive of Stanton and Anthony's views felt that they were at least supposed to be enfranchised before black men.

What is striking is that the most prominent women's rights advocate and former slave, Frederick Douglass slightly changed his view as well. Being the only man who was supportive of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's resolution that women should vote, he was an eminent member for the women's rights advocates. Where he was supportive of the Declaration of Sentiments in 1848 and he vowed to give women a voice in politics and society, he was starting to develop conflicting ideas as soon as African American men were given new rights through the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. He now felt that it was unnecessary to include the woman issue since women already had substantial control on legislation, whereas Negroes did not have any influence whatsoever

(Riegel, 487). At the annual meeting in New York of the Equal Rights Association in 1869, Douglass claims that “when women [...] because they are women, are dragged from their homes and hung upon lamp-posts; when their children are torn from their arms ... then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot equal to black men” (Quarles, 41). He implies with this statement that women do not actually experience danger in their existence, at least not based on them being women, whereas African Americans did really experience these horrifying events. Therefore, this is one of the reasons for Douglass to justify the distinction between black enfranchisement and female enfranchisement. The desire to obtain voting rights amongst other rights, is a logical consequence when someone is being hurt because of the racial class one belongs. In order to change the cycle of being harmed based on racial discrimination, influence in the government has to be accomplished. The first step in gaining influence in politics and the government are of course voting rights.

The overall feelings towards one another before the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment came into existence were friendly and supportive. Black rights activists and women's rights activists thought they needed each other in order to succeed in their ultimate mission of establishing universal suffrage. This was their motive to start working together for the AERA and racism or prejudice against one another did not appear within either movement. However, this changed, after these amendments had a good chance of being passed and ratified. Their relationship towards one another started to fill with hatred and begrudges, examples of this are mentioned above through Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony. Because of this change in attitude towards one another, collaboration in the future became impossible. Furthermore, the attitude in the West was completely different from the rest of the country. Because of the fact that black women were scarcely present in the West, white women did not have to take them into account as much, since they made up just a small percentage of the population. On the contrary, black women in southern states made up about half the female population, and therefore, they were hard not to take into account. Nevertheless, women in the South did not take them into account anyway, which might be one of the causes for them to have to wait such a long time to be enfranchised.

### Woman Suffrage

June 4th, 1919 was the day women across the United States had been waiting for. This day, Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which enabled women across the United States to cast a vote, a year later in August, this amendment was ratified. The amendment reads as follows “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. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation” (Norton et al., A-13). However, throughout time, state legislators could decide for themselves who they would allow to vote. This is the reason for the great diversity in years across the States when women were enfranchised, as can be noted from Appendix B. Women's rights activists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns are said to be the founders of the Nineteenth Amendment since they had been lobbying for this constitutional amendment (Clift, 142). There have been proposals like this before by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in 1878, so there must be particular reasons why it did not work out when Stanton and Anthony tried to accomplish this, whereas it did when Paul and Burns started to lobby. One of the reasons might be that the time was not right yet when Anthony and Stanton urged for it. African Americans had just gained more influence within the American political society through voting rights, and white men might have been afraid to share power with yet another minority group - women, - which would result in them losing a great deal of their dominance. Another reason for this sudden change in attitude can be the alteration in their approach. This time, women had a state-by-state approach, where they realized that securing women's voting rights in the United States all at once was going to be an extremely difficult mission.

### Woman Suffrage in the West

Across the United States, there were several states that enfranchised women before the actual Nineteenth Amendment. What is striking about this is that the majority of these states were located in the West, namely, thirteen out of the sixteen western states had granted women suffrage prior to the amendment, whereas only two states outside the West had granted women full suffrage before 1919 (McCammon and Campbell, 55). Arguments made by Alan Grimes focus on the Puritan values in the West that women would endorse. Some social problems like excessive drinking, prostitution, and gambling were taking place in these western areas. The native white, male legislators at the time believed that women would be supportive of laws regulating these problems, this way, women would help create a civilized frontier. These social problems were thought to be caused by foreign-born settlers from all over the world. In Wyoming for instance, most of the foreign-born settlers came from Ireland and China (Grimes, 109-110). One can thus easily imagine the differentiating cultural ideals amongst society which people had to experience in this region.

McCammon and Campbell come up with a different explanation for these differentiating years when women's suffrage was introduced in different states across the US. They explore the

importance of social movements in the strive for suffrage, and the role they played in the different states. An important finding is that there was no organized movement striving for suffrage in Wyoming whatsoever, even though it was the first state to grant suffrage to women. On the contrary, all states outside the West did have organized suffrage movements, whereas most of them were not granted suffrage before the Nineteenth Amendment. They conclude by saying that the large number of suffrage organizations or the amount of people partaking in these organizations did not play a fundamental role in the early enfranchisement of women in the West. An important finding is that the western states used significantly less outsider strategies than the other states, meaning that they tried staying on the down-low when it came to recruiting members for their suffrage organization who are non-politicians. By remaining silent towards the large public, these western organizations avoided public opposition (McCammon and Campbell, 61). This would result in them gaining more leverage in the eyes of the legislators, because they would not hear any public criticism either. At the same time, they addressed the public with general accepted views of women within society and based their arguments to grant women voting rights on these principles. Where the non-western states tried to get the people to understand the importance of equal rights on the basis that people are created equal, the western states understood this manner would not work due to lack of understanding from the greater public, so instead of claiming their equality, these states focussed on the importance of gender differences. Their strategy to emphasize the beliefs on women's roles in society and the importance of voting rights in order to continue to pursue these roles, worked in terms of being granted voting rights before the Nineteenth Amendment. These arguments are called expediency arguments and these accentuate the motherhood skills women have, and the importance for them to bring these insights into the political center (McCammon and Campbell, 63).

When combining the findings by Grimes with those from McCammon and Campbell, there can be concluded that because of the social problems that occurred in these particular regions in the West, the expediency arguments gained more ground. Women were indeed of more value in the West in terms of trying to keep their society as organized and civilized as possible, since there was more that needed proper organization. The way in which women shaped their arguments was thus extremely important in this region in order to achieve voting rights.

Yet another reason for the earlier women's suffrage in the West can be concluded from the territories that existed in a large region of the West. The procedures regarding the reform of voting rights are different in territories from states. Nearly all states were dependent upon a public referendum as well as a legislative vote in order to facilitate woman suffrage, whereas territories

could facilitate woman suffrage based on a favorable legislative vote. Nevertheless, only three states enacted woman suffrage this way, while being territories. One of them was Wyoming, the first territory to grant women voting rights (Massie, 2-5). As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, women in this territory gained voting rights because northern Democrats opposed the idea of black men gaining voting rights and full citizenship. Since Congress was made up of Republicans, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments could be passed and ratified, which disappointed those northern Democrats. When in September of 1869 territorial elections were held in Wyoming, only Democrats were elected, which was an enormous surprise for everyone. When the Legislature met in October that same year, they set out to protect women's rights, contrary to the Republicans idea of protecting the rights of African Americans. One of the protection bills was that teachers were paid the same amount regardless of their sex, this branch was mostly occupied by women. William Bright, one of the Democratic territorial legislators, introduced the Bright's bill, giving Wyoming women the right to vote. Ultimately this bill was passed for a couple of suspected reasons. The first one being that lawmakers wanted to get more attention to the territory of Wyoming, making it more attractive for settlers to move into this territory, especially women. The territory consisted of six men for every woman and because of this fact, there was a lack of children as well. Furthermore, they felt like women would continue to vote for the Democratic Party since they enabled them to vote. And last, but not least, there was, of course, the racial argument. African American and foreign-born settlers were not as well-liked in Wyoming as women were (Massie, 10). They were regarded inferior people, and the Democratic legislators felt that if they were allowed to vote, especially white women should be enfranchised too. One of the legislators is said to have said that "if you are going to let the niggers and the pigtailed [the Chinese] vote, we will ring in the women, too" (Leader, 1870). In short, it could be said that for Wyoming it was crucial they had a majority within their narrow territorial legislature, as well as a governor who was inclined to sign the bill, which resulted in them being the first territory to grant women suffrage (Dudden, 198). The reasons mentioned are not necessarily the best of reasons to enfranchise Wyoming women, however, the results are even more favorable and just for these women.

### Woman Suffrage in the South

Alabama, on the other hand, was not enfranchised until the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. In this state too, several movements made attempts to generate gender equality within voting rights. In 1901 the Alabama Constitutional Convention took place, where attempts were made to try and grant women any type of suffrage, these attempts failed however. One of the

reasons it failed was because the general idea in this area was that women were not supposed to interfere with politics, since they were assumed to be the caretakers at home. After this failed attempt, many women started to get involved with the WCTU - the Women's Christian Temperance Union - where they intended to abolish the alcohol consumption in their areas (Burns, 2007). The ideas of this movement were thus similar to the women's moral responsibility in Wyoming in the 1860s. Because of the fact that women started to realize their moral role within society years and years later in this area of the United States than women in western parts like Wyoming indicates that it might not be as strange that suffrage was established a lot later in this area. However, they still continued to try to establish voting right through emphasizing their equality rather than their refreshing insights and diverging views as women. So contrary to western women, who managed to gain voting rights through highlighting their capabilities for not being men, Alabama - and other southern - women were still encompassing their equality to men. Through this and other movements, women in Alabama started to gain more interest in their social issues, and these organizations helped them realized that without voting rights, they would not stand a chance at improving living conditions for themselves and their children whatsoever. Women's rights associations in the various cities of Alabama figured that the more members they had, the more power they could enact on the government. They therefore started to combine these local organizations to form the AESA - the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association in October, 1912. To further expand their dominance, they allied with the NAWSA - the National American Women Suffrage Association. Nevertheless, the AESA was designed to give white women a vote (Burns, 2007).

They did not care for giving African American women a voice, whereas this was important for the NAWSA. What is weird about this situation is that the ratio white to black women was completely different in the southern states from the ratio in the western states. Here, in the south, the ratio was namely about fifty-fifty, whereas in the western areas there was an extremely small amount of little black women in comparison to white women in this area. Perhaps if they were to collaborate with these African American women, the movement as a whole would be a lot more powerful than they were at the time, which would result in their cogency increasing. Their desire to protect their racial hierarchical system everywhere in the South however, led them to not make this decision and remain short-sided out of fear to lose their higher position within society based on race. Another difference between these organizations that caused some friction was the fact that the AESA was especially focussed on enfranchising women on a state level. This is typical for the south, since it was not long ago that the Union and the Confederacy fought one another in the Civil

War. Women in the south felt less of a connection with women in the United States as a whole than they felt with women within their own state. In 1915 they had yet another chance to gain suffrage, when the AESA requested J.H. Greene to put forward a suffrage bill, however this bill fell short for the three-fifths majority. Greene himself withdrew support as well, leaving the women to have to wait for yet another four years to be able to put forward a suffrage bill. Faith amongst women in the state of Alabama granting them voting rights sunk, they realized they probably had to wait for the federal government to amend women's voting rights. When the law was passed in June 1919, and they requested the state to ratify the amendment, they received brutal opposition from the Women's Anti-Ratification League and the state refused to ratify the amendment since they detested transgression from the federal government. Nonetheless, in 1920 suffrage was finally achieved and the AESA dissolved right afterwards (Burns, 2007).

There thus are obvious differences in the process of gaining suffrage for women between the western state of Wyoming and the southern state of Alabama. In Wyoming, the reasons were widespread and the process was short, whereas, in Alabama, the white, male, state legislators would not share their power with anyone, not even with the federal government. The process in Alabama was therefore long-lasting and exhausting. Women in this area did not have a say about what would happen to them, and in order to accomplish them gaining a voice, men had to give up some of their power, which they would not. Furthermore, the reasons for suffrage were diverse too. In Wyoming, the Democratic men who were able to seize power were disapproving of the power African American men had just gained through being enfranchised. As opposed to this idea, Alabama men did not even want to enfranchise women after the federal amendment was passed by Congress. This goes to show that women in Alabama were still found to be inferior to men. Yet another reason for the great gap between the enfranchisement of women in the different states could be rooted in the southern slave states as opposed to western states. A large part of the western states was enfranchised before the Nineteenth Amendment, which illustrates that they regarded it just to enable women to vote too. As mentioned before, one of the reasons for this was that instead of highlighting the equalities between men and women, western women tried to exhibit the diversities between men and women and show that they could offer new insights into politics, men would not think of when improving the law. And thus we could conclude that voting rights in the United States are granted based on inequalities rather than equalities.

## Conclusion

Over the course of approximately seven decades, major changes in the lives of women and African Americans took place in the United States. In 1848, a break-through was generated by influential women like Stanton and Anthony, when they organized the first Women's Rights Convention. For the first time in US history, women started to make themselves be taken seriously in this male-dominated country. At this convention, they were offered support by former slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who made sure woman suffrage was one of the resolutions within the Declaration of Sentiments. He was thus an extremely prominent figure in the establishment of this Declaration of Sentiments. Douglass offered women a voice whereas other men refused to listen at times when women spoke up. The fact that he was enabling women to speak up, can be traced back to his own past, where he was restricted from many things as well, being a slave. Because of his own experiences in being shut down when desiring to be seen as equal to other people, he was more likely to be accepting of other minority groups like women. He was a tremendous encouragement for activist women and formed the basis of collaboration between blacks and women. Besides Douglass, many other attendees of the Women's Rights Convention started out as abolitionists. This immediately captures the link these two activist groups have, people in either of the groups desired to establish a society where everyone is regarded as equals to one another. In other words, these people desired universal equality and universal suffrage. The convention was a beginning made to a somewhat rocky partnership between the two activist groups.

It took decades for women to make real progress. Even though their voices were heard by a larger public than before, they were still not treated as equals to men. When the Emancipation Proclamation was enacted after the Civil War, women felt as though massive changes were bound to happen. Fortunately, massive changes did happen, just not for them. As a result from this Emancipation Proclamation, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were introduced, which were improving the living conditions and rights of African American men. For the first time in US history, the amendments specified voting rights to male citizens. It was a major set back for women's rights activists when their presumed allies - African Americans - were given rights and women were explicitly excluded from these rights. African American men did not want to give up the chance to obtain more rights for the sake of women and felt that they deserved these particular rights before women should. A separation between the two movements emerged because large parts of the groups were choosing themselves before the other group. Frederick Douglass, who had been an ally for the women's rights activists from the start, now turned himself against them and chose to put his own race forward. He no longer wanted to advocate for women's rights, out of fear that it

would harm black rights. So instead of helping the women to establish the same rights for them, abolitionists like Frederick Douglass now started to focus on the struggle for racial equality. They assumed that the wealthy, white males that were governing the country at that point, would not want to share their power and authority with yet another inferior group. Therefore, they determined that they were not going to bolster the women anymore. By not supporting the women in their endeavor towards universal suffrage anymore, they hindered them rather much. The activist group became smaller and therefore their level of influence decreased as well. Author Angela Davis argues that the relationship between these two activist groups was doomed from the start, because the white, middle-class women active for the Women's Rights Movement did not understand the needs of the African American community.

The US is characterized by a massive distinction between the several states. Some states in the West, for instance, was able to enfranchise women decades before states in the rest of the US. Wyoming serves as an example where the black population helped the women's rights without themselves knowing. Primarily out of disgust for black people gaining influence, Democrats in this region considered it to be best that women were to be enfranchised as well. Their racial discrimination was expressed by equalizing women as well. The enfranchisement of women in this area was done thoroughly for all the wrong reasons, but a fact is that because of black men becoming empowered, women did too in this area, and thus these black men were of aid to women here. On the other hand, women in the South of the United States were having a hard time becoming enfranchised. In these southern states, the ratio between black and white women was completely different from the West. In the West, there were hardly any black women compared to white women, whereas in the South, the ratio was about fifty-fifty. This great diversity in ratio means that their approaches towards these African American women should be completely different as well. However, neither in the West nor in the South were white women willing to collaborate with black women. This meant that women's rights movements were highly underrepresented in the southern states and thus were not able to enact as much power as they could have when cooperating.

Women were thus not taking on all the opportunities they could have, in order to establish gender equality for themselves within their contemporary society. Based on the information provided within this thesis, conclusions can be drawn that the interaction in the struggle for racial equality and gender equality within the Women's Rights Movement has varied over the years. Where they started out as 'friends' and allies, they ended up harming one another in their mutual strive for suffrage. Through supporting each other and the lack there of, voting rights for African Americans were established long before voting rights for women. The fact that both the women's

rights activists, as well as the black rights activists, put themselves first, helped and harmed both groups at the same time. Black women have been left out by both groups, whereas they could have been a helping hand for either. We can conclude from this that they were somewhat self-harming themselves when trying to establish voting rights by not taking on all the opportunities in order to gain more influence.

This thesis was able to provide a broad overview of the events that encompassed the road towards voting rights for two suppressed groups, the women's rights activists and the black rights activists. Because of the rather large time span compared to other authors, the process in its whole could be illustrated. Furthermore, the great diversity that is captured in a country like the United States in all sorts of disciplines, is captured in this thesis as well through the portrayal of the major differences between several states. States in the West have been compared to states in the South in terms of their allowance of voting rights for women. Heterogeneity will always be present in the United States and the discrepancies within this field of studies have been portrayed in this thesis.

The research does raise some more questions on the way in which we are regarding these two groups - women's rights activists and black rights activists - in contemporary society. How did, in fact, the collaboration and the roles these groups took on in the past, implement the inequality that is still present in contemporary society? Furthermore, research could be extended in the field of black woman suffrage. In what ways would black women's lives be altered if their collaboration with white women would have been more progressive throughout this period in history.

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## Appendice

### Appendix A: Timeline of major events mentioned throughout the thesis

1837 : The first Anti-Slavery Convention of American women - organized by the Grimké sisters

1848 : The Seneca Falls Convention - The first women's rights convention of the US

1860 : Abraham Lincoln elected president of the United States

1861-1865 : The American Civil War

1863 : Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Lincoln

1866 : Establishment of American Equal Rights Association

1868 : Fourteenth Amendment ratified

1869 : Fifteenth Amendment ratified

1869 : Women's enfranchisement Wyoming territory

1869 : Establishment of National Woman Suffrage Association

1916 : Establishment of National Woman's Party

1919 : Nineteenth Amendment passed

1920 : Nineteenth Amendment ratified

**Appendix B: Women's Suffrage map of the United States**

This map illustrates the time by which each state had enfranchised women.

