



Wisconsin Women's Suffrage Presentation Speaker's Notes

Slide 1: 19th Amendment Centennial logo

Slide 2: Wisconsin Centennial logo

Slide 3: The Wisconsin Territory

At the Wisconsin Constitutional Convention in 1846, delegates wrestled with whether to extend suffrage to black men and / or all women. Those questions proved too difficult to resolve, so Wisconsin entered the Union as the 30th state in 1848 with white male suffrage only, the same year as the Seneca Falls Convention.

Slide 4: Oshkosh suffragists float

As early as 1855, national suffrage leader Lucy Stone spoke throughout Wisconsin urging women to petition for the right to vote. In 1856, three suffrage petitions were introduced in the Wisconsin Senate. The first universal suffrage convention was held in Janesville in 1867, and the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association was formed in 1869. This picture is of the Oshkosh Equal Suffrage League in the 4th of July float made to look like a sailboat.

Slide 5: The Wisconsin Leaders – Olympia Brown

Olympia Brown was born in a log cabin in Michigan and was ordained by the Universalist Church in 1863. She became pastor of the Good Shepherd Church in Racine in 1878 and briefly served a congregation in Neenah in 1898. She served as president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association from 1884 to 1912, and left the ministry in 1887 to devote herself fulltime to the women's suffrage movement. She was one of Alice Paul's "silent sentinels".

Slide 6: Belle Case LaFollette

Although her husband, Robert, "fighting Bob LaFollette", served as a U.S. Congressman and Senator as well as Governor of Wisconsin, Belle was certainly the woman behind the man. She was also a gifted orator, valedictorian of her graduating class, and in addition to helping write many of her husband's speeches and managing his campaigns, she tirelessly campaigned for women's rights herself. An ardent pacifist, she helped found the Women's Peace Party in 1918, and proudly cast her first vote in 1920. When her husband died in 1925, she was offered by declined to succeed him at a U.S. Senator.

Slide 7: Dr. Laura Ross Wolcott

Dr. Wolcott was the first female physician in the Wisconsin and the third in the U.S. She was the first president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association and served the organization for twelve years. She did not live long enough to exercise her right to vote.

Slide 8: Jesse Jack Hooper

Jesse Jack Hooper was born in Iowa, but lived most of her life in Oshkosh. Her causes were many: school reform, public health, an advocate for Native Americans and the Menominee Tribe in particular, and world peace. Two years before her death in 1935, she attended the World Disarmament Conference in Geneva, Switzerland to present a petition signed by a million Americans. She served as the first president of the Wisconsin League of Women Voters.

Slide 9: Ada James

Ada James was born to reform-minded parents who were both active in the women's suffrage movement. After the ratification of the 19th amendment, she remained involved with many causes: temperance, pacifism, birth control advocacy, labor reform, and prison reform.

Slide 10: Theodora Winton Youmans

When the 19th amendment passed, Theodora Winton Youmans was president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association.

Slide 11: 1886: Wisconsin Women Can Sometimes Vote

In 1886, a referendum allowing Wisconsin women to vote in "any election pertaining to school matters" was approved. The following year, Rev. Olympia Brown decided to put the new law to the test, and attempted to vote in a municipal election, arguing that it would impact school matters. She was turned away.

Slide 12: 1888 Brown vs. Phillips

Brown filed suit to argue her right to vote in the municipal election. The result was that the Wisconsin Supreme Court narrowed the focus of the new law to avoid any further ambiguity.

Slide 13: 1912 Referendum

In 1911, Ada James' father, Senator David James, introduced a bill that would grant Wisconsin women full suffrage. The bill passed both houses of the legislature and was approved by the governor. When the bill passed a second time in 1912, it went to a referendum. Suffragists led by Ada James initiated a state-wide campaign of stump speeches and automobile tours, but the state's male voters defeated the referendum by a margin of nearly 2 to 1.

Slide 14: 1916 Parade in Chicago

Undeterred, four years later, a large contingent of Wisconsin women participated in a parade down Michigan Avenue in Chicago during the Republican National Convention. Their yellow tunics became an icon of the Wisconsin suffrage effort.

Slide 15: First to Ratify!

On June 5, 1919, state legislatures received the official papers from the U.S. Congress for the proposed 19th amendment. The amendment now had to be ratified by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the states in order to become law. The legislatures in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin all ratified the 19th amendment five days later on June 10, 1919. Illinois was the first to vote by a half hour, but before the votes could be certified, the official papers had to be hand-carried across the country to the Secretary of State's office in Washington, D.C. The 76-year old former Wisconsin Senator David James (father of Ada), was chosen to be the messenger. He arrived in the nation's capital on June 13 and presented Wisconsin's official papers. Minutes later, the messenger from Illinois arrived in the same office, but due to an error on the Illinois papers another vote had to be taken a week later, and Wisconsin's papers were certified first.

Slide 16: Meanwhile in Appleton

There is not much in the historical record concerning what was going on in Appleton during the years leading up to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Some Post-Crescent articles from those years shed a little light on the prevailing sentiment of the day locally. An article dated April 3, 1909 observed, "It is doubtful, however, if many Appleton women are in favor of so-called women's rights principles and the possibilities are that even in the not expected event of full suffrage being extended to them, not one in ten women would go to the polls on election day."

Not many years later, however, it seemed that the tide had begun to turn. An article from January 4, 1912 noted the organization of the Political Equality League of Wisconsin and reflected, "If any city can boast of an intelligent and progressive womanhood, Appleton is that city." Twice during that year, the newspaper reported on suffragists coming to Appleton to speak.

In 1914, it was noted that Mrs. Rush Winslow was president of the Outagamie County Political Equality League. Minna Rogers Winslow appears to have been the most prominent Appleton woman sympathetic to the women's suffrage cause. She was married to Dr. Rush Winslow who served two terms as Appleton mayor and was one of the founders of St. Elizabeth's hospital. Mrs. Winslow served as Superintendent of the Appleton Schools from 1893-1894. During her tenure, Columbus School was built, and being the first "modern" school at that time, she named it after the Columbian Exhibition that was held in Chicago in 1893. Mrs. Winslow was one of the founders of the Appleton AAUW chapter.

Slide 17: On Wisconsin

Theodora Winton Youmans wrote these lyrics to the rousing tune of "On Wisconsin".