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Seneca Falls Convention

Lead: In July 1848 a group of activists met in Seneca Falls, New York and launched the Women's Suffrage Movement.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: The Founders of the United States left two great matters of unfinished business. Slavery and whether women would have rights equal to that of men. The first would require a great war to resolve, the second a long struggle involving great sacrifice and political pressure. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and

Lucretia Mott met in 1840 at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. They had been involved in the abolitionist movement in the United States, but found in London they shared another common concern, the rights of women. At the convention they could not join their husbands on the convention floor because they were females, but instead had to remain behind a curtained partition as they listened to the proceedings. Their time together in London produced a friendship and a determination to help remove the barriers to women's full participation in American political and economic life.

Through continued contact at meetings and by correspondence, the rough outlines of a plan began to take

shape and by early 1848 they were ready to act. A mutual friend, Jane Hunt of Seneca Falls, a small village just west of Syracuse, New York, brought together an informal planning group including Mott, Stanton, Martha Coffin Wright and Mary Ann McClintock. They set the date for a convention to meet in Seneca Falls the following July.

On the Sunday prior to the conference the group met in McClintock's parlor to draft a Declaration of Sentiments. After much frustration, Stanton began reading aloud from the Declaration of Independence. Substituting "all men" in the phrases which contained "King George" they came up with 18 grievances mirroring Mr. Jefferson's sentiments: lack of voting rights, the right to wages,

equal custody of children, property, and inheritance. The Convention opened on July 19th and eventually passed most of these. It was the beginning of the long struggle for women's suffrage culminating in 1920 in the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

Research assistance by Elizabeth Simmons. At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Burnet, Constance Buel. *Five for Freedom: Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt.* New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1968.

Buhle, Mari Jo and Paul. *The concise History of Women Suffrage: Selections from the Classic Work of Stanton, Anthony, Sage and Harper.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1978.

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. *The Seneca Falls Convention (1848).* The full text of this document as drafted by the author can be accessed at:
<http://kuhttp.cc.ukans.edu/carrie/docs/usdocs.txt/sececa.htm>