



# THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERAN AFFAIRS



## OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING



19 FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER:

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## Exploring Timbuctoo: A Community's Legacy in New Jersey History

The **New Jersey Department of Military & Veterans Affairs** invites all employees and community members to an enriching event that explores the powerful history of Timbuctoo—one of New Jersey's earliest African American settlements.

Join us as historian and descendant **Guy Weston** shares the remarkable story of Timbuctoo, a community built by free African Americans and formerly enslaved people, its deep ties to the Underground Railroad, and the courageous Black soldiers from Timbuctoo who served in the Civil War.

 Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025

 Time: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

 Location: Virtual Event (Teams Webinar)

 Registration Required:

Scan the QR Code or Click the Link to Register

This event is open to ALL state employees and community members as we honor this important chapter of New Jersey's shared history.

**SCAN THE QR CODE**

**REGISTER HERE**



**OR**



### **DEIB EVENT DISCLAIMER**

*Due to federal regulations, DEIB and cultural observance events are open to state-funded state employees ONLY at this time. Federal-funded employees are not permitted to participate during business hours while on federal time. Thank you for your continued partnership and support.*





20 FEBRUARY 2025

# SUSAN & SUFFRAGE



DEIB NEWSLETTER

HONORING SUSAN B. ANTHONY'S WORK FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND HER LEGACY



IMAGE SOURCE: BRITANNICA

## FEME COVERT

'Suffrage', as a term refers to an individual or group's right to cast votes for their government representatives. While every citizen over the age of 18 has the right to vote today, for over half of the United States' history, that was not the case. Most of early law in the US was rooted in the legal traditions of the British, and by extension their colonies. Law at the time determined that a married woman was what was referred to as a 'feme covert', with no legal distinction from their husband. Essentially, women had no legal personhood in the United States. If that sounds like they were treated as property, well that notion really isn't too far off the mark.

Coverture meant that any wages a woman earned were to be claimed by their husband. As was any of her property, or children. Under the law at the time, husbands had significant authority over their wives, with few legal protections in place for women. Abigail Adams would pen a famous letter to her husband John Adams in 1776 amidst the United States separation from colonial rule colloquially titled 'Remember the Ladies'. In the letter she wrote; "I long to hear that you have declared an independency. And, by the way, in the new code of laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make, I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."

This was one of the highest profile calls for representation for women in the early history of the United States. Unfortunately, it would take another century and half for Congress to pass the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed the rights for women to vote federally. Elements of coverture in the US didn't disappear overnight afterwards either. Women weren't regularly allowed on juries until the 1960's. It wasn't until the 1970's that women were allowed to apply for a credit card. There wasn't a federal outlawing of marital rape until the year 1993. The effects of coverture still linger today in many matters such as housing, employment, or tax purposes. Or even just in social settings.

## ENTER SUSAN

Significant progress has been made in the decades and centuries since this nation's founding regarding equality and equity for women, an entire half of our population. This progress couldn't have been made without our forebears' fighting constantly, whether with the pen or in the streets, for greater agency and autonomy among women. Few figures have stood so tall in the sphere of suffrage rights as Susan B. Anthony.

Born on February 15th, 1820 to Daniel and Lucy Anthony, her family had to navigate the swiftly expanding and changing climate of a nation less than fifty years old. Members of the Quaker community (who were one of earliest major organizations outspoken against slavery), the Anthony family was heavily involved in the Abolitionist movement. Using their own home as a meeting place, the Anthonys would serve host to various abolitionist figures such as Frederick Douglass or William Lloyd Garrison, who were frequent guests in their home. This emphasis on social justice during her formative years would greatly influence what followed.



IMAGE SOURCE: BRITANNICA

Working as a teacher in New York in 1848, she discovered through her worker's union that men would earn a monthly salary of ten \$10.00 while a woman would only receive \$2.50 for the same amount of work. This would be an impetus moment for Anthony as it pushed her further into the realm of fighting for gender equality, building upon the values she learned as an abolitionist. In 1851, Susan B. Anthony would meet the organizer of the Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, which was the first woman's rights convention in the United States. The two would form a dynamic partnership that would influence the rest of their lives. Together they would found the American

Equal Rights Association and go on to be the editors for its own newspaper, 'The Revolution', which not only discussed suffrage but other topical issues at hand such as divorce, the importance of an eight-hour workday, and education.

## SHIFTING POLITICS

Just as the suffrage movement began to gather momentum, a fracture would form over the proposed 14th and 15th Amendments. The 14th Amendment granted voting rights to all male citizens over 21, and the 15th Amendment prohibited voting discrimination based on race, but excluded women, including Black women and other women of color. Susan B. Anthony and others opposed the 15th Amendment unless it included gender equality, while activists like Frederick Douglass and Lucy Stone supported it, believing it was a crucial step for Black men. In response, Anthony organized the first suffrage convention in Washington, DC in January 1869, and the first federal women's suffrage amendment was proposed in Congress that March. That same year, Anthony and Stanton formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), opposing the 15th Amendment, while Stone and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper created the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which supported the amendment but continued advocating for women's suffrage. The groups vied for support until the 15th Amendment's ratification in 1870, after which the NWSA focused on securing a separate amendment for women's voting rights.

## RENEGADE REGISTERING

Impatient waiting for progress, In 1872, Susan B. Anthony urged an entire movement of women to test and assert their rights under the new 14th and 15th amendments by registering to vote. She and a group of women successfully registered and, on November 5th, cast their votes in the presidential election for Ulysses Grant. Soon after, Anthony was arrested, tried, and convicted for voting illegally in Rochester, New York. She was fined \$100 but refused to pay, hoping the case would be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. Although that didn't happen, the trial sparked extreme national attention and furthered the suffrage movement's cause in the public consciousness. Susan B. Anthony would pass away in March of 1906, having met with President Theodore Roosevelt only a year prior to discuss the submission of a women's suffrage amendment to Congress. The 19th Amendment would pass in 1920, popularly titled the 'Susan b. Anthony Amendment'. This was a watershed moment for US politics that would enable hundreds of millions of US citizens more agency and more control & autonomy over their own lives for generations to come.