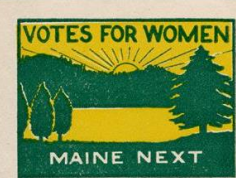


WOMEN'S LONG ROAD

MAINE STATE MUSEUM TEACHER MATERIALS



What Else Was Going On?

The women's suffrage movement was impacted by other events in the state, country, and world. Here are a few:

1861 – 1865 – The Civil War. The war had a huge impact on American lives at home as well as on the battlefield. The women's suffrage movement mostly stopped for these years as women dedicated their time and energy to the war effort. Women took on new responsibilities during the Civil War. They kept businesses and farms going while the men were away fighting, and some even followed the armies to participate in the war as nurses. Although the movement paused during the war, once the war was over many women realized that they had skills as workers, organizers, and leaders.

1865-1914—Development of the industrial United States. As factories and mills expanded throughout Maine, more and more women left their family farms and moved to cities to find work. Other female workers were recent immigrants to the United States, including the Irish, Canadians, Eastern European Jews, Lithuanians, and others. Although most working conditions were difficult and pay was low, many women had their own source of income for the first time. Women often gave their wages to their families and most still married and had children, but at work they were exposed to more people and ideas. They gradually gained independence.

1890-1914—The Progressive Era. During these decades, America was in a period of widespread political reform and social activism. Women and men across the country were worried about issues such as industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and political corruption. They wanted to make people's lives better. Women joined and even led many of these movements. Women's organizations and clubs across the country not only worked to promote suffrage, but also fought for better schools, the regulation of child labor, inclusion of women in unions, and the prohibition of liquor (also known as the Temperance Movement).

1914-1918—World War I. This war also takes the focus off of women's suffrage, but this time there are a lot of suffragists who are not willing to wait. Women in Washington D.C. protest against President Woodrow Wilson, saying women have already waited too long. Even among suffragists, there is debate over whether this is the right thing to do. Lots of people thought it was unpatriotic. As with the Civil War, once again women took on more responsibility keeping things going on the home front, in factories. Thousands of American women went overseas to serve as nurses, some at front-line medical stations. When the war was over, even more people saw that women deserved the right to vote.