



Founding Sisters and the Nineteenth Amendment (Turning Points in History)

By Eleanor Clift

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Editorial Review

Review

"In this important electoral year, how women use their vote will be crucial both to the election and to securing the advances women have made, Eleanor Clift has given us a timely history of how hard fought these gains were, and how essential it is for women to again show ourselves as a force in our democracy."--Marie Wilson, President, The Ms. Foundation for Women. President, The White House Project

From the Inside Flap

After seventy-two arduous years, the fate of the suffrage movement and its masterwork, the Nineteenth Amendment, rested not only on one state, Tennessee, but on the shoulders of a single man: twenty-four-year-old legislator Harry Burn. Burn had previously voted with the antisuffrage forces. If he did so again, the vote would be tied and the amendment would fall one state short of the thirty-six necessary for ratification. At the last minute, though, Harry Burn's mother convinced him to vote in favor of the suffragist, and American history was forever changed.

In this riveting account, political analyst Eleanor Clift chronicles the many thrilling twists and turns of the suffrage struggle and shows how the issues and arguments that surrounded the movement still reverberate today. Beginning with the Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention of 1848, Clift introduces the movement's leaders, recounts the marches and demonstrations, and profiles the opposition—antisuffragists, both men and women, who would do anything to stop women from getting the vote.

Founding Sisters and the Nineteenth Amendment mines the many rich stories buried deep within this tumultuous period of our history. Here, Clift reveals how:

- Opposition came not only from men, but also from women who were afraid of losing the special protection they enjoyed as the "weaker sex." It wasn't until the United States was preparing to enter World War I to defend democracy around the world that denying women the vote became indefensible.
- Frail and beautiful Inez Milholland Boissevain died campaigning for suffrage and became a martyr to the movement. Her death spurred protests in front of the White House, to the embarrassment of President Wilson.
- The president directed the mass arrests of these peacefully picketing suffragists, and they endured miserable prison conditions that horrified the nation.
- Race divided the suffrage leaders. Frederick Douglass played a crucial role during the early suffrage meetings—and later was betrayed by Susan B. Anthony.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton had a penchant for "bloomers" as a symbol of women's independence—a risky fashion statement that backfired.

A stirring reminder for women to never take their rights for granted, Founding Sisters and the Nineteenth Amendment profiles the brave figures who spent their lives supporting the women's movement over the course of seventy-two years.

From the Back Cover

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