

# WYOMINY WOMEN HAVE HAD SUFFRAGE FOR FIFTY YEARS

**HISTORICAL SUFFRAGE VICTORY DATES BACK TO PROMISE OF MAN TO HIS WIFE**

**National American Woman Suffrage Assn. Plans to Pay Tribute to First Equal Rights State**

New York, March 12.—(Time: January, 1869.)  
 Place: Home of William H. Bright, Cheyenne, Wyo.  
 Scene: Combination living and dining room in which are seated Mr. and Mrs. Bright discussing the eternal question of equal rights.  
 "The fact is, Betty," said Mr. Bright, in addressing his wife, "it is a shame that I should be sitting in the legislature of Wyoming instead of you. My early education can't measure up to yours and I know you are far more capable than I am."  
 History fails to record the exact words in Mrs. Bright's reply, but it is known she cleverly admitted "there were several women in Wyoming far more capable to represent their state in legislative matters than the husbands who had been elected to that duty." Her reply apparently made a deep impression on her husband, who closed the conversation with the emphatic remark:  
 "Now, Betty, I know you are right and I'm going to see what can be done. We will see if politics in Wyoming can't be played so that women may have the vote the same as men."  
 Such, in brief, was the start of equal suffrage back in the Territory of Wyoming in 1869. Mr. Bright took up his task in the most approved political fashion. First, he went to the democrats in both houses and assured them that it was a certainty Governor Campbell, a republican, would veto any such action by the democrats, "but that the democrats might just as well get the credit and honor of introducing an issue certain to be recognized later."  
 Mr. Bright lost no time in hurrying to the republican leaders and succeeded in getting them deeply interested. He stressed the democratic opposition he had met and threw the highlight upon the advantage it would be to the republican party to have the credit for furthering this liberal measure which the democrats would inevitably defeat.  
 So convinced were the politicians on each side that their conferees on the other side were going to vote in the negative that republicans and democrats lined up in a strong affirmation of the measure—much to the astonishment and consternation of most of them. However, those who had given only a lip service to the suffrage bill contented themselves with the thought that the republican governor, Campbell, who had not favored the bill, would certainly veto it.  
 Now it so happened that Governor Campbell was a man with a sense of justice that could be affected by the consideration that he gave to the bill. The more he studied the situation, the more he became convinced of the justice of the measure. Presently his signature was affixed and woman suffrage became law in Wyoming.  
 And so it happens that hundreds

of members of the National American Woman Suffrage Association are planning to meet in jubilee convention in St. Louis, March 24 to 29, not only to commemorate the fifty years of suffrage campaigning and triumph on the part of the association, but to also pay tribute to Wyoming, the first commonwealth in the world's history to bestow unlimited suffrage on women.  
 Later, Chief Justice Howe and Associate Justice Kinsman, the men who had the territory's larger interests at heart, begged the women to lend their counsel in jury service and primary that every courtesy and protection should be extended to all women who would rally to the need of the hour. And the women served on the juries and have continued to serve on Wyoming juries from that day to this.  
 Wyoming has given unqualified endorsement to woman suffrage throughout the fifty years of its experience with it. There was an abortive effort to repeal it by the incoming legislature of 1871, but already the reform had entrenched itself in popular sentiment and no repealing of it was possible. When Statehood swung in the balance on the issue, in 1890, Wyoming men sent word to Washington that they would stay out a hundred years rather than come in without their women. They figured that it ought not to take more than a hundred years for the rest of the country to catch up. It was a good liberal margin. It's fifty years since Wyoming was won and in exactly half of the states of the Union the women over twenty-one have been empowered to vote for the next president.  
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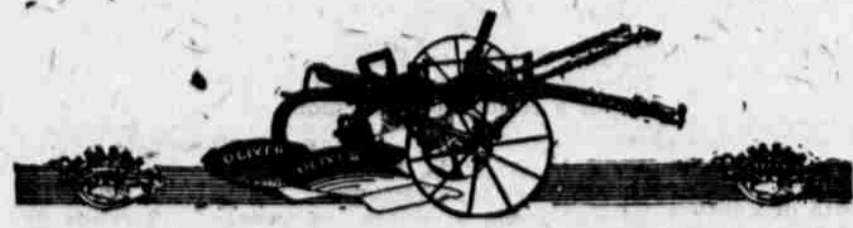
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