

# Woman Suffrage before the Nineteenth Amendment

## GEOGRAPHY WORKSHEET 29

Region \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Read the information below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

In 1774 Abigail Adams wrote a letter to her husband, John, endorsing the idea of independence from Britain. It contained these words:

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 strong language from the wife of the man who would become the second President of the United States. Abigail Adams' hopes for political equality for women, however, were not to be realized during her lifetime. The plan of government that came out of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 was written by white men of property. It excluded from participation in the republic American Indians, African Americans, the poor, and women.

The "ladies," as Mrs. Adams called them, did foment a rebellion. Some individuals say it had already begun in 1648, when the wealthy landowner Margaret Brent sent a petition to the Maryland legislature. She asked for a seat

in that body and for the right to vote in the election. Brent believed that she could not effectively administer her vast landholdings without political equality as well.

While Margaret Brent failed to win representation, women did not give up trying to achieve it. In 1848 the first women's rights convention was held at Seneca Falls, New York. It was led by women who had been excluded from a convention against slavery. The delegates issued a statement that reads like the great documents of liberty. The statement declares the right of women to share equally with men in all things economic, political, legal, and educational.

It was in education that women made early gains. The growing demand for teachers opened careers to women which led, in turn, to the opening of public high schools for girls and to the admission of young women to colleges. Education awakened women to their inferior legal, economic, and social status. Jobs as teachers gave them a bit more economic independence.

The social and legal distance between men and women lessened as the frontier moved west. Establishing

### Woman Suffrage Before the 19th Amendment, 1920



