Women’s Right to Vote: Revolution & Evolution

Suffrage Small Quilt Challenge

“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”

Presented by Dakota County Star Quilters
Women’s Right to Vote: Revolution & Evolution
Suffrage Small Quilt Challenge

Dakota County Star Quilters (DCSQ) is pleased to present this display of small quilts celebrating the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution—the women’s suffrage amendment.

The idea for this quilt challenge began four years ago, when the presidential election was the first to feature a female candidate from a major political party. The day after the election, a groundskeeper at Lakeside Cemetery in Hastings, Minnesota, found a note stuck on a old gravestone being held in place by an “I Voted” sticker. The note said, “She was a suffragette.” The grave belonged to Maria Van Hoesen. The groundskeeper brought the note to the Hastings Pioneer Room, the local historical records museum. The three volunteers there were intrigued; they’d never heard of any particular suffragist activity in Hastings. They began researching.

What they found was significant. The Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA) was formed in Hastings at a temperance meeting at the First Presbyterian Church on September 20, 1881. This church is still standing on Vermillion Street and is on the Historical Register. Of the 14 women who founded the MWSA, three were from Hastings.

The researchers also discovered that the first women to vote in the U.S. (in a previously closed election) after the 19th amendment went into effect did so in South Saint Paul, Dakota County, Minnesota. Because of this rich history, the curator of the Hastings Pioneer Room went to DCSQ and asked them to host a Suffrage Small Quilt Challenge, which invited quilters from across the country to commemorate the anniversary.

The exhibit includes 36 quilts from 16 states across the country. After the quilts are shown in South Saint Paul, the display will tour around the country to various quilt conferences and quilt guilds.
Thanks to those who helped in the realization of this project:

**Suffrage Small Quilt Challenge committee:**
Nicole Anderson-Davis       Beth Robinson
Karen Asmundson            Jeannette Root
Jean Gordon               Rosemary Root
Beth Kobliiska            Cindy Thury Smith
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Donna Anderson, Show Coordinator, Cherrywood Fabrics

**Dakota County Historical Society**
Matthew Carter, Executive Director
Rebecca Snyder, Director of Research & Publishing

**Packaging**
WestRock
Liberty Carton
Susan B. Anthony was a strong force behind the women’s suffrage movement. In 1936 she was honored by the United States Postal Service with her picture on the three-cent stamp.

Gay Bitter
Princeton, New Jersey

New Jersey Suffragettes Rock!

This quilt honors suffragette leaders in New Jersey. Ladies climbing a ladder to post signs for a visit by Dr. Shaw at the casino in Long Branch is a metaphor for the “climb” to achieve the right to vote. Rocks surrounding the central panel represent the difficult road. At the top, the rocks turn to beautiful sea glass, and the names of the suffragette leaders float in the sky above.
Rhonda Borders
Alamosa, Colorado

*Woman Suffrage Procession*

The Woman Suffrage Procession is considered the “first large organized march on Washington, DC, for political purposes.” This march, along with Suffrage Hikes and the Silent Sentinels, were intriguing quilt ideas, but this shows off more color and pageantry.

Susan Weiby
Cottage Grove, Minnesota

*Celebrate the Vote*

I made this quilt to celebrate 100 years of women being able to vote. I included many names of women who helped make this happen.
Denise Vokoun
Inver Grove Hts., Minnesota

Honor the Past, Change the Future

Symbols include the ribbon for the suffragettes of the 1900s and the feminist sign for the present activities. Voting is our voice to make change for justice and equality.

Phyllis Campbell
Rockford, Illinois

Seneca Falls 1848

I designed, machine-pieced, and machine-quilted this using a fabric line of reproduction prints named “Seneca Falls.” The first Women’s Rights Convention was held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York.
Looking through the pictures of suffrage of women marching, carrying signs, this slogan stood out, and I had to use it.

Doris Carr
Kansas City, Missouri

*We Produce Voters*

Libby Smith
Crossville, Tennessee

*Perfect 36*

When Tennessee legislators were called back to a special session in August 1920 to vote on ratification of the 19th amendment, they were greeted by suffragists wearing yellow roses and opponents wearing red roses. Thus the “War of the Roses” began. By a single vote, Tennessee became the required 36th state to ratify. Supporters referred to Tennessee as “The Perfect 36.” This quilt has 36 yellow rosebuds surrounding the state.
Cindy Thury Smith
Hastings, Minnesota

When Did Women Get the Right to Vote?

I got to wondering when women in other countries got the vote compared to women in the U.S. I was both surprised (New Zealand!) and horrified (France! Switzerland! Saudi Arabia!).

Marilyn Carr
Brookfield, Missouri

I Voted

With the presentation of a voting sticker, Americans know that they have exercised their right to select a person or idea they feel strongly about. One hundred years ago, women were thought of as an extension of their husband, without the right to express themselves freely. Brave women started the suffrage movement, and in the last century women have proven themselves to be strong leaders with a take-charge attitude.
Jana Cunningham & Melody Boucock
Oakland, Oregon

Truth to Power

This quilt honors four American suffragists and features the colors of the American suffrage movement. Note that it was illegal to educate slaves, so Sojourner Truth never learned to read or write. This is a copy of her only known autograph.

Cindy Thury Smith
Hastings, Minnesota

Ratification of the 19th Amendment by the States

Some states were dragged kicking and screaming into allowing women to vote. Eventually they came around. The upper right shows Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Carrie Chapman Catt looking down, while the lower left and right have Harry T. Burn and George Francis Train representing the men who helped pass the 19th amendment. My thanks to artist Garry Walton for the use of the female figure from his Votes for Women poster.
Claire Sadowniczak
Ormond Beach, Florida

*Raising the Future*

Purple, white, and yellow were the colors of the women’s suffrage movement. The sunflower used in the quilt’s corners was their symbol from the Kansas state flag. 1920 is, of course, when the 19th amendment was ratified.

Sharon Fiebiger
Shoreview, Minnesota

*Rising Power*

The unity and determination shown by the American women’s suffrage movement is inspiring to me. I used Orange Peel blocks in the traditional colors of the American movement set to form circles and gold “wonky” corners to represent unity of purpose shown by the participants and individuals coming together to achieve a common goal. The gradation of purple from light to dark signifies women’s rising political power.
Sharon Florin  
New York, New York  
*Vote!*

I’m a member of the Empire Quilters Guild in New York City where I heard about this challenge and decided to give it a whirl.

Rosemary Root  
South St. Paul, Minnesota  
*Cockades*

Some suffragettes made rosettes, or cockades, from ribbon to wear on their lapels. My quilt design is inspired by the shapes of those cockades and is done in the American suffragette colors of purple, white, and gold.
Jeannette Root
South St. Paul, Minnesota

*My Grandmothers’ Voting Methods*

My grandmothers were close friends. Grandma Kate, who was born in Switzerland and became a U.S. citizen, never missed a chance to vote. Grandma Nettie, who was born in the U.S., was reluctant to vote if her husband didn’t tell her who to vote for. This frustrated Grandma Kate.

Kaye Goers
Mendota Heights, Minnesota

*Women’s Suffrage*

I was inspired by a newspaper article reprinted from 100 years ago. It was in black and white, so I had to determine my own colors. Suffragette colors were purple, gold, and white—thus my choices.
Jackie Grinde
Eagan, Minnesota

Susan B. Anthony’s Wisdom

I found this quote to be meaningful to me and important for the push for women’s need for the right to vote.

Elizabeth Robinson
St. Paul Park, Minnesota

Use Your Vote!

I wanted to convey that women had to persistently march, demonstrate, and lobby legislators to amend the U.S. Constitution to be able to vote. The pink hat represents the current struggles for women. The stars represent the 36 states required for ratification. Purple, white, and yellow were the colors of the banner suffragette Alice Paul sewed the 36 stars to.
Sharyn Resvick
Plymouth, Minnesota

Victory

A woman’s silhouette in the victory stance is on a background of the colors of the National Woman’s Party: purple for loyalty, white for purity, gold for hope. I quilted sunflowers on the gold for Kansas, where Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton campaigned. One block is the suffragette flag and one is Granny’s Choice. Women of today are victorious because their grandmothers and great-grandmothers fought for the cause.

Jackie Grinde
Eagan, Minnesota

Leaders in Women’s Suffrage Movement

After studying various women in the suffrage movement, these stood out to me.
Guardian Angel Quilters
Kansas City, Missouri

Our Shot

This original design uses a scrappy border with traditional blocks around a center medallion. The words on the center banner are from a suffragette banner circa 1918. The woman represents the suffragettes; the girl represents the future. We are reminded not to “throw away our shot” by using our right to vote.

Nita Penfold
Melrose, Massachusetts

Seneca Falls Convention

I grew up in western New York state, and the only piece of women’s history we were taught was the Seneca Falls women’s suffrage convention. This piece celebrates the declaration of sentiments at the first meeting demanding women’s rights in the United States.
Nita Penfold
Melrose, Massachusetts

Honor Your Foremothers

Our foremothers worked very long and hard to get women the vote, and I feel we disrespect their memory if we do not exercise that right. This piece is a reminder to vote.

Martie Guthrie & Beth Nastachowski
Seward, Nebraska

She Persisted

Both past and present inspire this quilt. The infinity knot and the purple and gold colors echo the original suffragette sashes. The phrase “nevertheless she persisted” represents both the inclusion of women in our current politics and the barriers women still face. Thus, our quilt represents both the accomplishments of the 19th Amendment and the continued obstacles women face—and overcome.
Grace Hawley
Arlington, Virginia

100th Anniversary

Using neckties, I did some crazy quilting with embroidered motifs. I wanted the quilt to look vintage.

Linda Neikam
Farmingville, New York

Sisters Struggle for Suffrage

The background of this quilt consists of many small pieces of fabric, representing the women who participated in the suffrage struggle, in the colors of the American suffrage movement. I used symbols of solidarity, government resistance, and feminism.
Diane Murtha  
Bettendorf, Iowa  

*She Voted*

While many women helped make the 19th Amendment a reality, just a few key supporters are featured here: Mrs. Stanley McCormick, Mrs. Charles Paul, Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Dunway, Mrs. Paul, and other images. My grandmother, Katherine Azzaline, an Italian immigrant, was very proud to become a U.S. citizen and exercise her right to vote. Her photo is on the quilt’s label.

Grace Hawley  
Arlington, Virginia  

*Women’s Rights*

I used the traditional hexie pattern to show the old and modern use of hexies.
Elizabeth Kobliska
Inver Grove Hts., Minnesota

*Suffrage Sampler*

I chose traditional blocks to represent the journey of the women’s suffrage movement to the present: Sarah’s Choice, Everybody’s Favorite, Sister’s Choice, Aunt Mary’s Favorite, Courthouse Steps, Brick Pavement, Grandmother’s Choice, Granny’s Choice, Mother’s Dream.

Trisha Millonig
Eagan, Minnesota

*Suffrage Crazy Quilt*

I have always wanted to make a crazy quilt. These were popular during the suffrage movement. The double pink and black fabrics are period-appropriate reproduction fabrics. I also used men’s ties in the quilt.
Sally Manke
Arcadia, Michigan

Women’s Votes Matter

Images represent three key components of the American women’s suffrage movement. The Statue of Liberty symbolizes freedom, hope, and opportunity for women seeking the right to vote. A woman casting her ballot is a direct result of the hard-won passage of the 19th Amendment. This voter is leading by example, involving her daughter in the voting process.

Elizabeth Kobliska
Inver Grove Hts., Minnesota

Teaching Girls to Read

My quilt has titles from authors of the Enlightenment because of its influence on the women’s rights movement and school books from the 19th century because of the importance of educating girls and women. Photos are Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul, and Susan B. Anthony. The pages in the open book contain quotes from Thomas Paine, Susan B. Anthony, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Hillary Clinton.
Karen Kuranda
Stamford, Vermont

The Right Is Ours

In this quilt, I used a wide variety of quilting techniques to reflect the changes that have occurred through these years, from vintage classically pieced blocks and applique to the cutting-edge digital technologies that exist today for creating custom fabrics, to using quilting and embroidery software in drafting, designing, and implementation of much more complex projects.

Sharon Lau
Mendocino, California

The Light of Truth

Ida B. Wells was an African-American investigative journalist and educator and an early leader in the civil rights movement. She was one of the founders of the NAACP and was active in women’s rights and the suffrage movement. This quote of hers struck me as apropos of the fight for equal rights. We need to turn the light of truth upon the injustices. That was true of the suffrage era as well as today.