Nineteenth Amendment

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.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

The 19th Amendment was first introduced to Congress in 1878 and was not ratified until August of 1920, when Tennessee became the 36th state to do so. In the intervening decades, arguments for and against women’s suffrage emerged by a growing movement mostly composed of educated white women. The documents and information on this source sheet (part of New-York Historical Society’s “Women & the American Story” robust resource collection) provide a lens into additional layers and nuances of American society, politics, and history.

The first document is a broadside from the New York State Woman Suffrage Association in New York City.
Women in the Home

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to this handout, what are the main arguments for suffrage?
2. Why might women have chosen to make these arguments as part of their suffrage campaign?
3. Who is the audience for this pamphlet/argument?
4. Who or what is missing from this argument?
Anti-Suffrage

The second document is a picture of Josephine Pearson and Nina Pinkard, two anti-suffragists, who rallied support for the movement in the Southern states. This picture was taken outside their headquarters in Tennessee amidst the final vote to ratify the 19th amendment.

Caption Description

“Truth crushed to the Earth will rise again” — is illustrated in this lovely picture of Mrs. Jas. S. Pinckard, President General of the Southern Women’s League for the Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, who as grand-niece of John C. Calhoun unfurls the Confederate flag as emblematical of Southerner’s States Right to fight for the defeat of the Federal Amendment; to her left is the Veteran who “fought and bled” for Tennessee’s States Rights; standing to his left, holding the flag of the union, is Miss Josephine A. Pearson, Pres. of the Tenn. Division of the Southern Women’s Rejection League for the Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, who led the fight in Tennessee, which became the Battle Ground of the nation. August 1920.
About the resource:
Josephine Pearson and Nina Pinckard led the anti-suffrage battle in Tennessee and posed for this photo outside their headquarters. The symbolism in this image ties anti-suffrage to the supposed honor and glory of the Old South. The women stand on either side of an elderly Civil War veteran. Nina holds a Confederate flag. Along the flagpole is a banner honoring Confederate general and Ku Klux Klan founder Nathan Bedford Forrest. Behind the women are portraits of Tennessean Andrew Jackson and his wife, Rachel.

Josephine Pearson included this photograph in a scrapbook and wrote the caption.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What messages are Pearson and Picknard trying to convey in this picture through the symbolism they’ve chosen to represent in the image?
2. Why was women’s suffrage seen as a threat to some in the South, in particular?
3. In what ways does this picture echo or resonate today? Or does it seem like an historical relic? Explain.
"Pink Tax"¹

The practice of charging different prices for "substantially similar" consumer goods or services that are marketed to different genders.

- This practice, which was first studied in 1994, costs consumers (targeted to and generally consisting of females) an average of $1300 a year.²
- New York State was the first state to ban the practice, with the law going into effect on Sept. 30, 2020. California followed suit with a similar ban that was approved on Sept. 27, 2022.³
- A federal ban titled the Pink Tax Repeal Act⁴ was proposed in Congress in 2021. It has yet to be passed.

Questions for Discussion

1. Think about the products you buy/in your home. Are any of them targeted towards a particular gender despite their substance being “substantially similar” to a similar product sold in a different color?
2. Where is the line between gender discrimination and free market rules? Should the government get involved in banning the “Pink Tax” as a matter of gender discrimination? Why not simply let the free market speak for itself?
3. In what other areas in your life has gender equity come up? How have the discussions and actions around those areas played out and what have been the consequences?