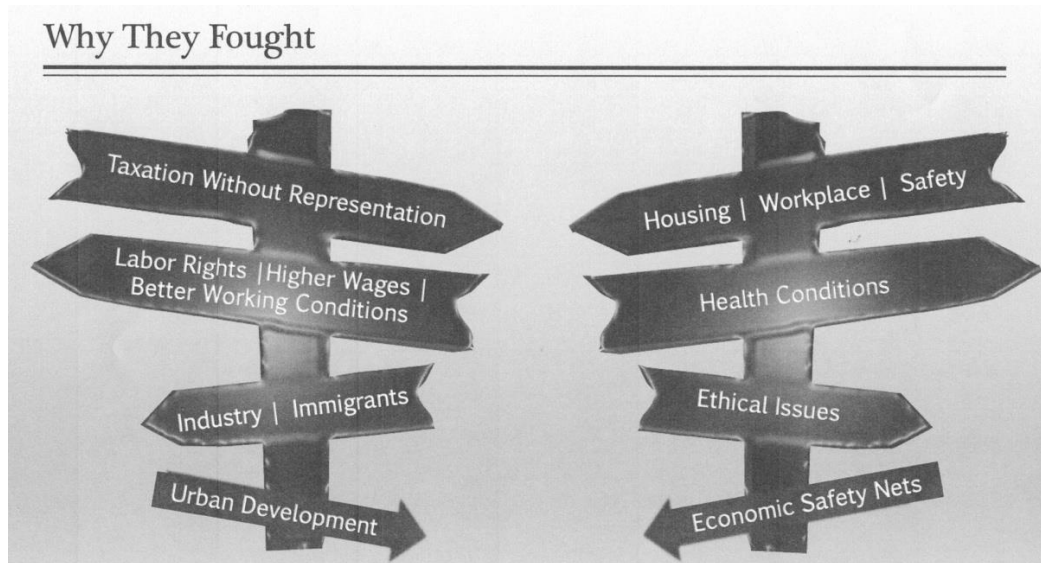


## Faced with Many Issues, Women Prioritized Getting the Vote

Today—August 26, 2020—officially marks the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, enabling women to vote. The Treasure Coast branches of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) present the women of Florida who helped make it happen.

These Intelligent, brave and trailblazing suffragists of the 1800-1900s wanted to improve several aspects of the lives of women, children, families and communities. To achieve their aims, they knew they had to get the right to vote.



The six Florida suffragists shown below were important in the drive to get the vote, which took over 70 years and resulted in the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.



*Ella C. Chamberlain*  
Tampa

*Anna Howard Shaw*  
Lakeland

*May Mann Jennings*  
Jacksonville

*Blanch Armwood Beatty*  
Tampa

*Mary McLeod Bethune*  
Daytona Beach

*Cynthia B. Haney*  
Stuart

**Ella C. Chamberlain, Tampa.** As a columnist for the local newspaper, Ella wrote about Women's Rights and built a large audience. Though men had a say in how they were taxed, women who owned property did not, so Ella adopted the colonial battle cry and delivered articles and speeches about Taxation without Representation.

Ella formed the Florida Women's Suffrage Association and attended national women's conventions in Washington DC in 1893 and Atlanta in 1895. When she left Florida in 1897, the Florida Woman's Suffrage cause suffered from her absence.

**Reverend Doctor Anna Howard Shaw, Lakeland.** As a national leader of the movement, Anna had all but given up on Florida. But she owned a winter home in Florence Villa near Lakeland and her good friend Susan B. Anthony visited her there during the last winter of her life. In 1904 she succeeded Susan as president of the National American Women's Suffrage Association. During the years when the Florida legislature met, Anna addressed several audiences in Winter Haven, Tampa, Pensacola, Jacksonville and Orlando. Perhaps her most famous and persuasive speech on gender equality and women's suffrage was **The Fundamental Principle of a Republic** delivered in New York in 1915. In 1917, the Miami Herald described her speech to the Florida Equal Suffrage Association as 'one of the wittiest, wisest and sanest expressions of the suffrage arguments.'

**May Mann Jennings, Jacksonville.** May learned the art of politics from her father and her husband (Governor of Florida in 1901). In Jacksonville, she advocated for women's rights from the Jacksonville Women's Club. She considered Jacksonville the "Gateway to Florida," and heralded the renovation of the local train depot so it was attractive to wealthy businessmen. She was responsible for a number of mandates passed by the Florida legislature about juvenile reform schools, juvenile court, child labor and making desertion of a family a felony. She became president of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, spawned 60 new clubs and mobilized over 9,000 women. Her wide network of legislators, governors, Supreme Court Justices and the media helped forward women's issues.

**Blanch Armwood Beatty, Tampa.** Blanch graduated from Spellman Seminary before she was 16 and became the first black woman in Florida to earn a law degree from Howard University. Like May Mann Jennings, she saw changes coming and planned for them. She anticipated the change from wood stoves to gas stoves and trained black females in using the new stoves. She was then hired by the Tampa Gas Company and founded the Tampa School of Household Art. She was invited to speak at the National Association of Colored Women. Her extraordinary intelligence was very helpful in creating arguments for the cause of women getting the vote.

**Mary McLeod Bethune, Daytona Beach.** Mary founded the Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls (which is today Bethune Cookman University) in Daytona, taking advantage of its proximity to the train station and businessmen traveling to Florida. When she wanted music for the students, CC Mellor from Pittsburgh loaned her a grand piano, paid off the school's bills and helped her bring running water and electricity to the school and the local black community. When Thomas White of White Sewing Machines toured the school, he donated new sewing machines and hired workers to finish the interior of the school. May was forceful in educating young women.

**Cynthia B. Haney, Stuart.** Cynthia was a clear thinker, prolific writer and a great enthusiast for things she believed in. As a leader in Stuart and the Stuart Woman's Club, she took on city beautification, voting rights and prohibition. She was the first female to register to vote in Stuart on November 1, 1920.

As a result of the leadership of these and other women, the Florida Legislature passed municipal suffrage laws for Fellsmere (1915); Florence Villa, Moore Haven, Palm Beach and Pass-a-Grille (1917); and DeLand, Aurantia, Daytona, Daytona Beach and Orange City (1918). And the US Congress passed the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in August 1920.

Kimble Medley, Alice L. Luckhardt, and Linda Barker

\*The American Association of University Women

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