

Primary Source: Votes for Women Ratified

from Kansas City Star September 1, 1920

"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."

This is the full text of the 19th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution. The amendment had to be ratified, or approved, by 36 states. The 36th state to ratify the amendment was Tennessee on August 18, 1920. A few days later, the governor of Tennessee sent the appropriate documents to U.S. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby.

Below is a newspaper report about the new law from the Kansas City Star on September 1, 1920.

**SUFFRAGE NOW IS A
LAW**

**RATIFICATION OF 19TH AMENDMENT WAS PROCLAIMED
THURSDAY.**

Secretary Colby Signed Document

at

**His Home and Later a Crowd of
Women at State Department
Cheered Announcement.**

Washington—The right of women to the ballot was officially made a part of the Constitution of the United States Thursday when Secretary of State Colby proclaimed ratification of the nineteenth amendment.

The proclamation announcing officially that the suffrage amendment had been ratified was signed at 8 o'clock in the morning at Mr. Colby's home when the certificate from Governor Roberts that the Tennessee legislature had ratified the amendment was received. Secretary Colby announced his action on his arrival at his office later.

SUFFRAGE LEADERS CHEERED.

A group of suffrage leaders who had waited in vain the night before for the arrival of Tennessee certification were hurriedly summoned to the state department and met Colby. They cheered when told the last step to make the amendment operative had been taken.

Among them were Alice Paul, chairman of the National Woman's party; Abby Scott Baker, Miss Julia Emory, Baltimore; Dr. Lydia Allen Devilbis of Georgia;; Miss Mary Moore Forrest, Scituate, Mass.; Mrs. Anne Calvert Neely, Vicksburg, Miss.; Mrs. B. C. Kalb, Houston, Tex.; Mrs. Cyrus Mead, Dayton.O.; Miss Emilie Grace Kay, St. Paul, Minn., and Miss Emma Wold, Portland, Ore.

LATE TRAIN DELAYED ACTION.

Plans for issuing the proclamation at a late hour Wednesday Night were frustrated when the train bearing the ratification credentials from Tennessee was reported an hour late.

The women gave evidence of keen disappointment in not having had an opportunity to make something of a ceremony out of the signing of the proclamation and went back to headquarters planning an independent jubilation. When he learned of their plans, Secretary Colby invited them to return.

Secretary Colby had prepared a statement regarding ratification of the suffrage amendment which he planned to read to the officials of the national women's party had they accepted the invitation.

When the secretary's invitation was declined, another party of suffrage leaders appeared at the department. They were officials and members of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, headed by Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, who was on her way to New York from Nashville. The invitation to hear Mr. Colby's statement was promptly accepted by this group and they filed into his office for the purpose.

DODGED A SUFFRAGE ROW

Secretary Colby's statement after reciting his official action said:

"It was decided not to accompany the simple ministerial action on my part with any ceremony of selling. This secondary aspect of the subject has, regretfully, been the source of considerable contention as to who shall participate in it and who shall not. Inasmuch as I am not interested in the aftermath of any of the frictions or collisions which may have been developed in the long struggle for the ratification of the amendment, I contented myself with the performance in the simplest manner of the duties developed upon me under the law.

"I congratulate the women of the country upon the successful culmination of their efforts, which have been sustained in the face of many discouragements and which have now conducted them to the achievement of that great object.

"The day marks the day of opening a great and new era in the political life of the nation. I confidentially believe that every salutary, forward and upward force in our public life will receive

fresh vigor and re-enforcement from the enfranchisement of the women of the country.”

Questions

1. What are the two women's suffrage parties mentioned in the article?
2. Which group was with Secretary Colby when he gave his statement?
3. What does this from Secretary Colby's statement tell you about the relationship between the two groups? "I am not interested in the aftermath of any of the frictions or collisions which may have been developed in the long struggle for the ratification of the amendment..."
4. What does *jubilation* mean here: "went back to headquarters planning an independent jubilation"?