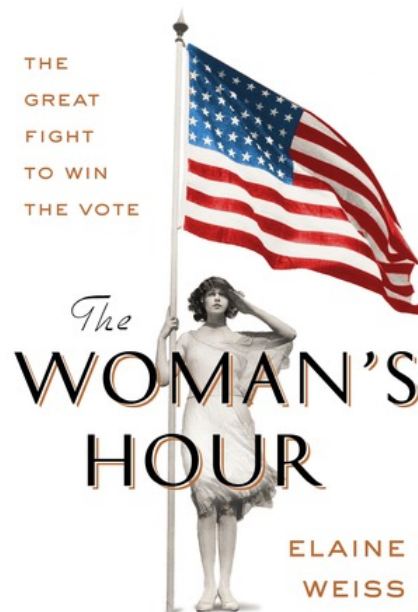




The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote

Elaine F. Weiss

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The nail-biting climax of one of the greatest political victories in American history: the down and dirty campaign to get the last state to ratify the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote.

"Anyone interested in the history of our country's ongoing fight to put its founding values into practice--as well as those seeking the roots of current political fault lines--would be well-served by picking up *The Woman's Hour*." --Margot Lee Shetterly, author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Hidden Figures*

Nashville, August 1920. Thirty-five states have ratified the Nineteenth Amendment, twelve have rejected or refused to vote, and one last state is needed. It all comes down to Tennessee, the moment of truth for the suffragists, after a seven-decade crusade. The opposing forces include politicians with careers at stake, liquor companies, railroad magnates, and a lot of racists who don't want black women voting. And then there are the 'Antis'--women who oppose their own enfranchisement, fearing suffrage will bring about the moral collapse of the nation. They all converge in a boiling hot summer for a vicious face-off replete with dirty tricks, betrayals and bribes, bigotry, Jack Daniel's, and the Bible.

Following a handful of remarkable women who led their respective forces into battle, along with appearances by Woodrow Wilson, Warren Harding, Frederick Douglass, and Eleanor Roosevelt, *The Woman's Hour* is an inspiring story of activists winning their own freedom in one of the last campaigns forged in the shadow of the Civil War, and the beginning of the great twentieth-century battles for civil rights.

The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote Details

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Jeimy says

A fantastic work of narrative nonfiction that offers a behind-the-scenes look at what it took for Tennessee to ratify suffrage and how this led to women having the right to vote across the U.S.

Sadly, many of the issues being discussed 100 years ago are still relevant today. Thankfully, women are reclaiming their political power. Let us hope that the unity created by the International Women Marches leads to changes at such a grand scale as that described in this book.

Laura Hoffman Brauman says

If we taught history like this book writes it, every student would want to study for a PhD. The Woman's Hour was riveting from the first page to the last. In 1920, the vote to ratify the 19th amendment and give women the right to vote was up in the Tennessee legislature. 35 states had voted to ratify, none in the south. Suffragettes and anti-suffragettes all collided in Nashville in a bitter struggle to determine whether or not women would gain the federal right to vote. There was literally a nail biter finish equal to any thriller I have read or watched. I learned so much about this -- including the shameful pieces of how race impacted the anti-suffragette movement and how many suffragettes were willing to sacrifice equal rights for African-Americans if it got women the right to vote. This was incredible -- it would make an amazing film and at minimum, excerpts of this should be used in high school history classes. One of the most moving photos in the book was of Susan B Anthony's gravestone in November of 2016. Over 10,000 women took their "I voted" stickers and left them on the gravestone -- what an incredible tribute to the lifelong crusade of these women.

Linh says

This is truly excellent. I will never again believe that women were "given" the vote. They fought tooth and nail to get the enfranchisement. This is something that every woman should read.

Andy Miller says

A comprehensive telling of the political battle of Tennessee's ratification of the 19th amendment. The book immediately pushes back against today's perspective that ratification was inevitable; while 35 of the needed 36 states had already ratified, momentum had stalled and most of the remaining states were in the south where opposition was strong. Tennessee was seen as the most likely of the remaining states to ratify, a ratification defeat in Tennessee would have further stalled momentum and there was no easy state to follow. "The Woman's Hour" follows the women leading the three major groups lobbying the legislature. The pro suffrage forces were divided into two groups, the mainstream National American Women Suffrage Association who sent their national President, Carrie Catt to Tennessee and the more militant Women's Party whose President Alice Paul stayed in Washington DC to raise money while Tennessee born Sue White led

the ratification effort. The anti suffrage forces were led by native Josephine Pearson who recruited anti suffrage forces from within the state and throughout the country to Nashville to lobby against ratification. This history often reads like a suspense novel, there are betrayals, notably the Speaker of the House who repeatedly out maneuvered suffrage advocates with legislative rules and motions , there are leaders who come through such as the Governor who was often maligned by suffrage forces and paid for his support of suffrage with the end of his political career and there is drama such as pro suffrage representatives needing to go back home to a dying wife or very sick child. References to Harry Burn are scattered throughout the narrative building to the suspense to his surprise vote for ratification while wearing the anti-suffrage rose and just after he voted to table ratification which was defeated on a tie vote, the anti-suffrage Speaker immediately called for a ratification vote knowing that another tie vote would defeat ratification, but in the meantime Harry Burn received the famous hand delivered letter from his mom imploring him to vote yes. You can't discuss ratification of the women's suffrage amendment without discussing race. From the safety of today's political climate, many now simply dismiss the suffragists of a century ago as racists. This book does not shy away from disappointing actions from many of the suffragist leaders, the number of cringe inducing statements at the time distancing themselves from Black suffrage in the south and the lack of follow through by leaders like Alice Paul after women's suffrage was achieved. The book does provide the political context, the opposition to suffrage was openly based on racism. They argued that women's suffrage would give precedence for Black suffrage, that the amendment was similar to the hated 14th amendment imposed by the northern dominated Federal government that was written to provide equal protection to all, they quoted pro Black suffrage statements in women's suffrage writings and convention speeches. The anti suffragists repeatedly raised the specter of Black woman voters noting that across the country in states that allowed the women's vote, that Black woman voted at a higher rate than white woman did. The book notes that the Black suffragists at the time were unanimous in their support of the women's suffrage, something that the anti suffragists used against suffrage. The book does an excellent job of providing the historical facts that lets the reader decide this challenging and sad aspect of what was otherwise a tremendous victory in America's evolving strides toward progress

Karen says

This book was excellent. It reminded me how much politics has changed, and how much it has remained the same. I kept exclaiming, "I have lived this!" Especially as we approach the century anniversary of sufferage, this book seems timely.

Mary says

Elaine Weiss does a commendable job of writing about the last big battle before the ratification granting women the right to vote. The book reads like fiction and definitely helped me better understand both the Suffragettes and the "Antis". There were so many different issues and players in this fight for ratification. It was amazing that it was passed and a true testament to the will and drive the Suffragettes had.

Carl Sagan once said, "You have to know the past to understand the present" and Ms. Weiss' book helps us both know the past while giving us a way to understand our present - the question is will we take about the challenge entrusted to us?

Read this if you like history. Read this if you are even a little bit political. But don't read if you only like fast-paced books that don't need a lot of consideration.

Teri says

It is the battleground of Memphis, Tennessee in August 1920 where Carrie Catt and Alice Paul, suffragettes, stand toe-to-toe with Josephine Pearson, an anti-suffragette. The fight for the 19th Amendment comes down to one more needed state to ratify, giving the vote to women in America. It is an election year and Tennessee governor Albert Roberts wants to make sure he is re-elected. His stance on the "Susan B. Anthony Amendment" could make or break his campaign. In the hopes that the "woman vote" will get him another term, Roberts calls a special session of the Tennessee legislature to consider the amendment.

The women of the suffrage movement are split between the Catt's National American Women's Suffrage Association and the more radical National Women's Party led by Paul. They both go after the men of Tennessee's House and Senate, while their opponent Pearson pulls some dirty tricks of her own to try to squash the vote. The days leading up to the vote are frenzied and stressful for all involved. Each side knows that whichever way the vote goes, it will be by a narrow margin. The savior of the day is one Harry Burn, who on the advice of his mother, makes a very last minute decision that heralds a monumental change in the lives of all American women.

This is one of those non-fiction books that reads like a novel. The constant changes in those days leading up to the final vote can, at times, be nail-biting. It is a story that all women need to read. Many women fought to get the right to vote. Many women fought against it as well. I think a lot of modern women take the ability to vote for granted. It shows in our polls with only about 63% of eligible women voting in the 2016 November election. This is an excellent book that will make you want to go out and join the League of Women Voters and stand as a proud voter.

Elizabeth? says

There are key figures in the battle to ratify the nineteenth amendment that I didn't know about until reading this book.

There is a lot of history to this one and it gave me a new appreciation for the women that fought societal norms to pave the road to suffrage. It wasn't easy. The more things change, the more they stay the same. Women can vote, but make up a small percentage of political roles. Decisions made about women's reproductive rights aren't typically made by women. Women in the U.S. are some of the only ones that don't get paid maternity leave. Women in the workforce still don't see equal pay and are held back from moving up the ladder once they have children. So what this means is that we must harness the power of Carrie Catt and Alice Paul and keep the fight going.

I am amazed at what it took for women to get the right to vote. I will do better to use my voice now that I know the blood, sweat and tears that went into it.

Jillian Doherty says

Highlighting the power of women's fight for equality in a single summer, this brilliant and timely narrative nonfiction is a wake up call.

By looking back on our struggles, can we truly understand hidden and undervalued lessons gained that we take for granted today.

Weiss' voice is not only readable but empowering as Daniel James Brown (Boys in the Boat) but as fascinating for both men and women to read. Plus we could take a page from their powerful methods of activism and continue to fight against oppression today.

I hope when it's published in March, Women's history month, its only the beginning of it's long and needed life.

Karen says

I received this from netgalley.com in exchange for a review.

Wow, every time we walk into a polling booth we should be remembering these ladies and the battle they fought for our right to vote!

4?

Mehrsa says

This book was a suffrage thriller! It's about the fight to get Tennessee to ratify the 19th amendment and it's a fascinating read. It's also super revelatory about the debates today. Here are a few takeaways and thoughts:

1. The anti-suffrage women--these are today's conservative women who always seem to be fighting against their own political representation. I will never understand it, but what was fascinating here is that every single phyllis schlafly and Sarah Palin and Tomi Lahern's today would say that of course they would be fighting for suffrage, but they wouldn't. That's the pathetic and sad truth.
2. The anti-suffrage men were in a few camps: bought by railroads or liquor interests who thought women would be against them and the men who thought that the women would join a womens party and unseat them. This goes back to point one, but it seems that everyone was afraid that women would join together and push female candidates and form a coalition to push for certain interests (against war, alcohol, corruption), but ha! Jokes on us, we totally didn't! Ugh!
3. Shocking to me that Eleanor Roosevelt and Ida Tarbell were anti vote and so was Wilson's wife. I cannot fathom it. And Harding and Wilson seems to show not all that much strength either way here.
4. The racism of the suffragettes. Yikes. I mean, I sort of knew about Susan B. Anthony's infamous rants, but it seems to have been more pervasive (though not total). And it's just unbelievable that they would be willing to throw their black female sisters under the bus so that they could get the vote (though Anthony felt like Frederick Douglass through the girls under the bus to get the 15th amendment passed). But they wouldn't let Ida B. Wells march with them and they kept making arguments that the womens vote would not threaten white supremacy in the south (oh by the way, that's what this whole thing hinged on in Tennessee by the way--the Klan having long made the 15th amendment null and void. Charming).

Such a great book.

Giselle Bradley says

4.5 Stars

Carol Surges says

The amount of detail in this review of the final ratification of the 19th Amendment is almost mind boggling and the extensive Notes and Bibliography stand as proof of the amount of work this title required. At times it's almost a minute-by-minute, play-by-play look at the struggle between the Suffs and the Antis as they worked around the clock at times to get the 36th state to ratify the amendment. Keeping track of the numerous players and which side they supported was challenging. A list of names and affiliations would have been immensely appreciated. The up and down relationship between the blacks efforts for equality and the women's efforts to gain the vote are exposed along with the amount of subterfuge that went on as the opponents struggled to gain the upper hand.

Weiss closes the book with a brief look at the aftermath of ratification and the long slog to get women to the polls in the numbers that the suffragists had anticipated.

Krisette Spangler says

I learned so much as I read through this great novel. There was just so much I didn't know about the suffrage movement. My only complaint was the organization of the novel often left me confused about the people I was reading about.

Lauren Stoolfire says

I received an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote by Elaine F. Weiss follows a handful of brave women who fought for the right to vote with cameos from Woodrow Wilson, Warren G. Harding, Frederick Douglass, and Eleanor Roosevelt. The narrative presented primarily takes place in Nashville, August 1920. By this time only one more state is required for ratification of the nineteenth amendment and everything falls on Tennessee. The opposition features politicians with careers at stake, liquor companies, railroad magnates, and racists who don't want black women voting. There are also the 'Antis' - women who fear that their own enfranchisement will cause the moral collapse of the United States. All of these elements come together to face off in Nashville replete with dirty tricks, betrayals and bribes, Jack Daniel's, and the Bible.

This history book by Elaine F. Weiss is easily one of the most readable and comprehensive books on the women's suffrage movement focusing on ratification and Tennessee that I have ever had the opportunity to read. I've been reading quite a bit lately about that time period and women's suffrage, but this is hands down the most informative when it comes to such a key moment in history. The author also does a fantastic job of integrating history of the movement into the primary as well - I, for one, particularly enjoyed seeing Victoria

Woodhull's name get brought up since she's so often left out (I'm glad that people are really beginning to learn more about her life). The author also does a great job of starkly laying out all of the movement's detractors, so matter-of-factly detailing their means, methods, and motivations for being on the other side of history. Finally, I'd also like to mention that Weiss also does a brilliant job of making her history book feel incredibly timely. Of course, the main events in the book take place 98 years ago, but she still does a fantastic job of making their battle feel like fresh and current.

Overall, I highly recommend this new non-fiction book from Elaine F. Weiss all about everything finally coming together after a decades long struggle for women to cast their ballots. Every page of this inspiring 400+ page tome is inspiring and well worth your time. I will definitely be keeping my eyes out for future projects from this author.
