

Rights Won, Rights Used

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Right after they won the right to vote in 1910, Washington women started voting in large numbers. The newly voting women worked aggressively to support progressive causes. "Progressivism" was a political movement that supported experimental causes, such as like shorter work days. From 1910 to 1920, women helped pass progressive laws to improve working conditions and the health of women and children.

Jury Service

One issue remained unresolved. Should women serve on juries? People worried that women were not competent enough to serve on juries. Other people did not want women to hear the gory details of criminal trials. Women protested again, this time to get the right to serve on a jury. Washington State gave them that right in 1911.

Women Politicians

Between 1910 and 1920, the number of women voters and elected women politicians in Washington climbed steadily. In 1912, Frances C. Axtell from Bellingham and Dr. Nena Jolidon Croake from Tacoma were elected to the Washington state government.

A National "Dam-Breaker"

Washington women inspired the national women's suffrage movement. Seven other states and one territory (Alaska) gave women the right to vote in the four years after Washington did. But suffragists believed that only an amendment to the U.S. Constitution would make sure all women in the country could vote. In 1920, that amendment passed.



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Footer images, left to right: "Woman forever march," Washington State Historical Society Catalog ID Number: 2010.151.4; "Woman's suffrage pin," Washington State Historical Society Catalog ID Number: C2008.0.132; "Votes for women: official organ of Washington Equal Suffrage Association," Washington State Historical Society Catalog ID Number 2000.104.38.14