

Women's History Month: Not All Pioneers Of Women's Suffrage Movement Were White

Eboni Boykin in Politics, Women's Issues 1 week ago

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Womens History Month Not All Pioneers Of Womens Suffrage Movement Were White

In the often short passages about women's suffrage in American history textbooks in public schools, the names of Ida B. Wells and Mary Church Terrell are often missing. The story of the fight for women's suffrage is a story told with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton as the stars.

The efforts of Anthony and Stanton were great indeed, as they were relentless in their efforts, and after much work on winning the right to vote for women, they succeeded and are remembered as the heroes of the early women's rights movement.

On March 3, 1913, the Woman's Suffrage Parade took place. Led by Alice Paul, it was a brutal affair, complete with spitting, drunk men hurling insults and objects at the marchers. Every woman who participated had to have been incredibly brave, as the horrible things that occurred that day could not have been unexpected.

As important as the suffrage of women of all races was, Alice Paul "quietly discouraged" black women from marching in the parade. According to her, "As far as I can see, we must have a white procession, or a Negro procession, or no procession at all." The only black women's organization to march in the procession was Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, an organization that is still alive today.

Mary Church Terrell was a member of Delta Sigma Theta and was a founder of the National Association of Colored Women. Terrell marched with the brave black women of Delta Sigma who were not only in danger for being women but for being subjects of race. Terrell felt it was her job to lead the charge for the right to citizenship and suffrage for all women and black men. She recognized that she belonged "to the only group in this country that has two such huge obstacles to surmount ... both sex and race."

Ida B. Wells was also a member and marched with Delta Sigma in the Womam's Suffrage Parade. An anti-lynching crusader, Wells was a successful Memphis journalist and went on to help found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and run for the Illinois State Legislature.

The women's movement was not entirely the work of white suffragists. As we reflect on the early movement, we need to remember to give credit where credit is due and be critical of the things we do so that we can do even greater things.

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Eboni Boykin

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[Douglas Goodman](#)

1 week ago

Eboni,

Thanks for bringing these two women and the efforts of Delta Sigma to our attention. This is a piece of history that should no longer be omitted.

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[Frank Hagler](#)

1 week ago

Eboni

Good informative article. You honored the contributions of these African-American women without disrespecting the contribution of white women. Good job.

2



[Barbara Shoff](#)

1 week ago

All women regardless of color, pulled together until black men were given the right to vote and all women were shut out. It was at that time that the break took place. Because of this division the suffrage movement lost momentum for several years. Had they remained in solidarity I have no doubt women would have gained the vote sooner.

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[Starley Shelton](#)

1 week ago

Very nice article. A fresh perspective. Thank you.

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