

## Reflecting on Susan B Anthony's Life and Significant Contributions -- *continued*

Susan B Anthony (SBA) had five siblings: two brothers and three sisters. She was particularly close to her sister Mary with whom she would share a house later in life.

On the occasion of the 197<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birthday, let's reflect on her life and her significant contribution to women's suffrage.

Anna Howard Shaw (1847-1919), a suffragist, medical doctor and one of the first ordained Methodist preachers in the United States, during her eulogy of SBA, repeated part of their last conversation: SBA: "I leave my work to you and to the others who have been so faithful—**promise that you will never let [my work] go down or lessen our demands.** *There is so much to be done. Think of it! I have struggled for sixty years for a little bit of justice and die without securing it.*"

- 1837 - Circulated and gathered petitions against slavery. Attended a Quaker boarding school in Philadelphia.
- 1851 - SBA was introduced to Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) by Amelia Bloomer. That meeting commenced a 51 years-long friendship and association between the two. A 1999 documentary by Ken Burns entitled *Not for Ourselves Alone*, tells the story of their friendship and collaboration.
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton (ECS) is quoted as having said: "*I forged the thunderbolts, Susan fired them.*"
- 1861 - Participated in the Underground Railroad. An SBA diary entry read: "fitted out a fugitive slave for Canada with the help of Harriet Tubman."
- 1863 - ECS and SBA organized Women's Loyal National League to circulate petitions to abolish slavery which concluded in the passage of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment. By 1866, after the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, the League was renamed the American Equal Rights Association and continued advocacy for women's suffrage.
- 1866 – 1907 - SBA and Mary Anthony's house in Rochester is the base for activities, including SBA's numerous trips by train (perhaps as many 75-100 trips per year for many years) to promote the cause of women's suffrage. In 1895 as part of her work for suffrage in California, rode through Yosemite National Park on the back of a mule (she was 75 years old at the time).
- 1869 - The American Equal Rights Association becomes the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA)
- 1872 - SBA attempted to vote in the Presidential election in Rochester, was arrested for doing so, convicted after a trial, ordered to pay a \$100 fine which was never paid.
- 1876 - On the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence SBA, after having been denied permission to speak, secured the podium and read a Declaration of Women's Rights, opining that it was needed since the 1776 Declaration had excluded women.
- 1878 - SBA and ECS had successfully lobbied U.S. Senator Aaron Sargent of California who introduced into Congress the 29-word "Anthony Amendment" that would eventually become the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The amendment would be introduced into Congress each of the next forty years.

- Until 1875, suffragists had adopted the strategy to use the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to achieve suffrage. In *Minor v. Happersett*, 88 U.S. 162 (1875), the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that “the Constitution of the United States does not confer the right of suffrage upon anyone.” The NWSA then began to implement the more difficult strategy of pushing for a constitutional amendment.
- 1881 – 1922 - The six-volume *History of Women’s Suffrage* was published – 5700 pages of suffrage history. It is ironic that the six volumes cover 41 years of suffrage (about 139 pages per year) and high school American history books give women’s suffrage short shrift (although studies show that history books are being more generous in the number of pages dedicated to women’s suffrage).
- 1900 - SBA bequeathed her legacy to a younger generation and announced that Carrie Chapman Catt would be her successor. Carrie Chapman Catt would, on February 14, 1920 at the Congress Hotel in Chicago, establish the League of Women Voters.
- 1900 - SBA celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday at the White House at the invitation of President McKinley.
- 1906 - On March 13, 1906, at the age of 86, SBA died at home in Rochester after an illness. Thousands attend her March 15<sup>th</sup> funeral. SBA had led and participated in a movement which would eventually lead to the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, joined other women in acknowledging that they did not need to be dependent on husbands, fathers or brothers to forge their own identities.
- *Obituary from the New York Times:*  
<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0215.html>
- 1979 – 1981 - Susan B Anthony dollar minted by the United States

Sources:

Susan B Anthony, n.d., *In Wikipedia*, retrieved January 31, 2017

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