**How the Fifteenth Amendment Affected the Women's Suffrage Movement**

The 15th amendment was one of the three reconstruction amendments that extended constitutional rights to African Americans. The amendment passed in 1869, extending suffrage rights to African American men (Jenick, 2019). Undoubtedly, this was a great win for America, specifically African Americans. The abolitionists and the women's suffrage movement worked together to get equal rights for all in America. They worked together to achieve the 13th amendment abolishing slavery and the 14th amendment granting blacks citizenship. Sadly, the 15th amendment did not include women's enfranchisement despite the women's suffrage movement assisting in abolition (Jenick, 2019). Therefore, the amendment was not a win for the women's suffrage movement, causing adverse effects. It caused tension in the campaign, lengthened the time it took to win women's voting rights, and disclosed chronic racial and elite discrimination.

**History of the Women's Suffrage Movement and Its Relation to the 15th Amendment**

The first public demand for women's rights was the Woman's Rights Convention of 1848, held at Seneca Falls. Women's suffrage rights were one of the eleven resolutions declared in the convention (Ball et al., 2019). The Women's Suffrage Movement suspended activism during the Civil War to support the Union during the war. When the war ended, the movement joined abolitionists forming the African Equal Rights Association (AERA), which achieved the 13th and 14th amendments.

The movement's leaders felt the time was ripe to demand universal suffrage rights. Therefore, AERA leaders, mainly suffragists and abolitionists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Fredrick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and Sojourner Truth, began their advocacy for universal rights (Holcomb, 2020). However, section two of the 14th amendment only extended citizenship rights to "male citizens." To women suffragists, this meant that universal suffrage rights would not be extended to women, something they fought for decades to get. In short, the amendment was a betrayal to women suffragists. Tension began when discussions of the 15th amendment did not mention women in enfranchisement. Sadly, ratifying the 15th amendment confirmed their fears and disappointment as it excluded women in the suffrage rights. The ratification of this amendment caused strife in the women's suffrage movement that brought adverse effects.

**Caused Tension in the Movement**

The 15th amendment ended voter discrimination based on race and history of servitude but failed to include gender. This exclusion caused tension in AERA, where members disagreed on who between black men and women deserved suffrage rights first (Jenick, 2019). After the ratification of the 14th amendment in 1868, a proposal for the 15th amendment was made, which President Ulysses S. Grant arguably supported. This proposal excluded women in the enfranchisement, dimming the possibility of a universal suffrage right that AERA initially advocated for. Tension rose when abolitionists in AERA supported the 15th amendment while women suffragists opposed the same. Abolitionists like Frederick Douglass argued that AERA should support the 15th amendment, then the movement would advocate for Women's suffrage rights later (Rebeiro, 2021). In an opinion piece, Stanton said, "We object to the proposed amendment of the Constitution of the United States securing 'Manhood Suffrage'" (Gold, 2023). Stanton, alongside other women like Susan B. Anthony, strongly opposed the amendment.

The tension rose to the point that AERA could not hold anymore, leading to a split in the movement. This split led to two suffrage associations. Stanton and Anthony created The National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), which primarily advocated for women's suffrage rights nationally (Holcomb, 2020). Julia Ward and Lucy Stone came up with The American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), which advocated for suffrage rights at local levels. NSWA had other demands, like the amendment of divorce laws, while ASWA focused on women's suffrage rights only (Holcomb, 2020). In a nutshell, the 15th amendment created tension that eventually split the movement.

**Lengthened the Time It Took to Win Women**'**s Suffrage Rights**

The amendment led to the delay of the 19th amendment in two main ways. First, ratifying the 15th amendment meant that the universal suffrage right that AERA was primarily advocating for would stall. Enfranchising black men without including women meant that AERA would have to plan for more campaigns later to enfranchise women. This wait is a delay, knowing that the women's suffrage movement had been fighting for suffrage in a decades-long struggle. Therefore, it would take several more decades to enfranchise women. Secondly, the amendment causing a split in one of the most influential equality advocacy movements meant no solidarity. Although ASWA and NSWA fought for women's rights, their influence was less potent than it would have been if they had done so under one umbrella (Holcomb, 2020). This split dragged the achievement of women's suffrage. However, the two groups realized this fault and re-merged under one umbrella towards the end of the 19th century. This re-merge brought a quick achievement of ratifying the 19th amendment, enfranchising women.

**Disclosed Racial and Elite Discrimination Sentiments**

Stanton and other women took racist moves when opposing the 15th amendment by aligning with white supremacists that supported women's suffrage. Also, she used racial and classist slurs in her open opposition to the amendment. These moves displayed a permeation of the hidden racial bias that the women's suffrage movement leaders had hidden for decades. Stanton argued, "If you do not give the whole loaf of suffrage to the entire people, give it to the most intelligent first" (Gold, 2023). To her, the intelligent were educated white women; therefore, "if intelligence, justice, and morality are to have precedence in the government, let the question of women brought up first and that of the negro last" (Gold, 2023). Frederick Douglass tried to bring Stanton to his argument that voting right for blacks was "…a matter of life and death…" unlike women (Rebeiro, 2021). However, Douglass's piecemeal trial with Stanton was unsuccessful. This racist and classist language used by Stanton shows that they never saw African Americans as less worthy of voting rights compared to white, educated women.

**Conclusion**

It is clear from the above discussion that the 15th amendment was not an all-win for women suffragists. The amendment led to decades-long friction in the women's suffrage movement. It brought tension to the movement of who deserves suffrage rights first between women and black men. These tensions led to the movement's crumble and split, which delayed the win of women's suffrage rights. Also, the amendment revealed deep hidden racial and classist sentiments of the movement's leaders. Although these three adverse effects lengthened the suffrage rights achievement for women, the 19th amendment was eventually ratified in 1920.

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