

## From History of Women's Suffrage

Jean Brooks Greenleaf address to House Judiciary Committee, 1892

One clear, bright morning I drove up to this Capitol with a friend. As we ascended the hill we warmly expressed our admiration for the beautiful structure, and were enthusiastic in our admiration for those who so nobly planned that, with the growth of the nation, there could be a commensurate outstretching of its legislative halls without loss to the dignity of the whole. We drove slowly around the front and commenced the descent on the opposite side, when I called to the driver to stop in order that we might feast our eyes on the inspiring view which lay before us. There rose Washington Monument so simple yet so grand, and I recalled the fact that in its composition it fitly represented the Union of the States. My heart swelled and my eyes overflowed as I thought of the grand idea embodied in this Government, the possibilities of this country's future. The lines of "My country, 'tis of thee," rose to my lips, but they died there. Whence came my right to speak those words? True I was born here; true I was taught from my earliest youth to repeat the glorious words of Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman and other patriots; but when I grew to womanhood I had to learn the bitter lesson that these words applied only to men; that I simply counted as one in the population; that I must submit to be governed by the laws in the selection of whose makers I had no choice; that my consent to be governed would never be asked; that for my taxation there would be no representation; that, so far as my right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" was concerned, others must judge for me; that I had no voice for myself; that I was a woman without a country, and only on the plane of political equality with the insane, the idiot, the pauper, Indians not taxed, the criminal, and the unnaturalized foreigner. Honorable gentlemen, women come here annually to ask that these wrongs be righted. To-day we have come again to entreat that, as you have extended this building to meet the needs of the people, you will extend your thought of the people and make it possible that the principle underlying the Government of this country may be embodied in a law which will make the daughters of the land joint heirs with the sons to all the rights and privileges of an enfranchised people. In the name of the women of the State of New York, I ask it.