Today in History - June 4

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Congress Approves Nineteenth Amendment

On **June 4**, 1919, Congress, by joint resolution, approved the women's suffrage amendment and sent it to the states for ratification. The House of Representatives had voted 304-89 and the Senate 56-25 in favor of the amendment.

National Woman's Party activists watch Alice Paul sew a star onto the NWP Ratification Flag,... National Photo Co., Washington, D.C., ca. 1919-1920. *Women of Protest: Photographs from the Records of the National Woman's Party*, Prints & Photographs Division

Disagreement on whether the best strategy was to pursue enfranchisement through a federal amendment or by individual state campaigns had divided the women's suffrage movement in 1869. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony worked for a federal amendment under the banner of the National Woman Suffrage Association, while Lucy Stone led the American Woman Suffrage Association's state-by-state battle for the vote.

In 1890, the two groups joined to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association and Stanton became its president. Carrie Chapman Catt became president in 1900 and directed the association's series of well-orchestrated state campaigns took place under the dynamic direction of Carrie Chapman Catt, while the new National Woman's Party, led by Alice Paul, used more militant tactics to obtain a federal amendment.

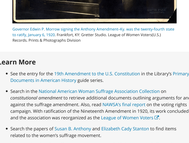
In this 1916 book *Women's Suffrage By Constitutional Amendment*, Congressman Henry St. George Tucker of Virginia argued that enfranchising women by constitutional amendment would violate the Constitution:

> *For three-fourths of the States to attempt to compel the other one-fourth of the States of the Union, by constitutional amendment, to adopt a principle of suffrage believed to be inimical to their institutions, because they believe it to be of advantage to themselves and righteous as a general doctrine, would be to accomplish their end by subverting a principle which has been recognized from the adoption of the Constitution of the United States to this day, viz., that the right of suffrage — more properly the privilege of suffrage — is a State privilege, emanating from the State, granted by the State, and that can be curtailed alone by the State.*
>
> Women's Suffrage By Constitutional Amendment, by Henry St. George Tucker. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916. p.4. National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. Rare Book & Special Collections Division

Henry Wade Rogers, a Yale University law professor, offered a different perspective in "Federal Action and State Rights," an essay written the 1917 collection *Woman Suffrage by Federal Constitutional Amendment*, compiled by Carrie Chapman Catt. He argued that previous constitutional amendments set a precedent for the demands of suffragists:

> *...the Fifteenth Amendment provides that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude..." If woman suffrage is a sound principle in a republican form of government, and such I believe it to be, there is in my opinion no reason why the States should not be permitted to vote upon an Amendment to the Constitution declaring that no citizen shall be deprived of the right to vote on account of sex.*
>
> "Federal Action and State Rights," by Henry Wade Rogers. In *Woman Suffrage by Federal Constitutional Amendment*. New York: published by the National Woman Suffrage Publishing Co., Inc., 1917. p.151. National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. Rare Book & Special Collections Division

Rogers's position prevailed. Women's active participation in the war effort during World War I and their broadening role in society highlighted the injustice of their political powerlessness. On August 18, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified.



Governor Edwin F. Morrow signing the Anthony Amendment--Ky. was the twenty-fourth state to ratify, January 6, 1920. Frankfort, KY: Center Studio, League of Women Voters(?). Records, Prints & Photographs Division

Learn More

- See the entry for the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in the Library's Primary Documents in American History guide series.
- Search the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection on constitutional amendment to retrieve additional documents outlining arguments for and against the suffrage amendment. Also, read NAWSA's final report on the voting rights campaign. With ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, its work concluded and the association was reorganized as the League of Women Voters.
- Search the papers of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to find items related to the women's suffrage movement.
- Images related to the suffrage movement are available in Women's Suffrage: Pictures of Suffragists and their Activities. View the timeline entitled One Hundred Years Toward Suffrage.
- Other digital collections that document the suffrage movement include the Scrapbooks of Elizabeth Smith Miller and Anne Fitzhugh Miller, included with the National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection, the Carrie Chapman Catt Papers, Women of Protest: Photographs from the Records of the National Woman's Party, and Women's Suffrage in Sheet Music, among others.
- Search Chronicling America to find historic newspaper articles about the suffrage movement. In addition, the Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room has created a series of topics guides to the newspapers in Chronicling America, including guides on the Nineteenth Amendment, Susan B. Anthony, and the Golden Flyer Suffragettes.

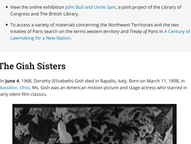
Fort Necessity

On **June 4**, 1754, twenty-two year-old Colonel George Washington and his small military force were busy constructing Fort Necessity, east of what is known today as Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Washington's men built the fort to protect themselves from French troops intent on ousting the British from the territory northwest of the Ohio River. Washington's troops were surrounded at Fort Necessity, and forced to surrender to the French on July 3, 1754.

Washington's military activity in the area marked the beginning of the French and Indian War, the American phase of a worldwide war between Great Britain and France. Fighting began over issues of local settlement and trade rights in the upper Ohio River Valley. At the core of the conflict was the larger issue of which nation would dominate the heartland of North America.

George Washington. [The Glasgow Portrait]. Photograph of a painting. [between 1900 and 1920]. Detroit Publishing Company. Prints & Photographs Division

The first years of the war were disastrous for the British and colonial Americans. However, the tide changed under England's Prime Minister William Pitt, who spearheaded Britain's war effort. After British troops and their colonial counterparts established control of French Canada, the French were forced to the peace table. The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763, ended the French and Indian War and granted Britain all of France's territory in North America east of the Mississippi River.



William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, 1756. William Hoare, artist. photograph of a painting. [between 1900 and 1920]. Detroit Publishing Company. Prints & Photographs Division

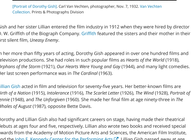
The French and Indian War helped unify the American colonies. Wilderness fighting trained the American colonists military. Ironically, however, England's administration of its expanded empire soon became grounds for a colonial Declaration of Independence. Young Colonel Washington would go on to lead the Continental Army as General Washington during the Revolutionary War. Just twenty years after Britain had secured the territory from France, the 1783 Treaty of Paris granted the vast tract of unsettled territory, the Northwest Territory, to the new United States.

Learn More

- To see letters written by George Washington, commander of the Virginia Regiments during much of the French and Indian War, search on the dates 1754 through 1759 in the George Washington Papers. Of particular interest here is Washington's letter to the House of Burgesses after his "unsuccessful Engagement with the French at the Great Meadows" — Fort Necessity.
- The British military surgeon, Dr. Richard Schulburg is said to have written the lyrics to "Yankee Doodle" during the French and Indian War. Also, search Today in History on northwest territory to find additional information.
- View French and Indian War: A Resource Guide, an online feature that compiles resources from across the library and select external sites related to this international conflict.
- View the online exhibition John Bull and Uncle Sam, a joint project of the Library of Congress and The British Library.
- To access a variety of materials concerning the Northwest Territories and the two treaties of Paris search on the terms *western territory* and *Treaty of Paris* in A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation.

The Gish Sisters

On **June 4**, 1968, Dorothy (Elizabeth) Gish died in Rapallo, Italy. Born on March 11, 1898, in Massillon, Ohio, Ms. Gish was an American motion-picture and stage actress who starred in early silent film classics.



[Portrait of Dorothy Gish]. Carl Van Vechten. photographer. Nov. 7, 1932. Van Vechten Collection. Prints & Photographs Division

Gish and her sister Lillian entered the film industry in 1912 when they were hired by director D. W. Griffith of the Biograph Company. Griffith featured the sisters and their mother in their first silent film, *Lineage Enemy*.

In her more than fifty years of acting, Dorothy Gish appeared in over one hundred films and television productions. She had roles in such popular films as *Hearts of the World* (1918), *Orphans of the Storm* (1921), *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay* (1944), and many light comedies. Her last screen performance was in *The Cardinal* (1963).

Lillian Gish acted in film and television for seventy-five years. Her better-known films are *Birth of a Nation* (1915), *Intolerance* (1916), *The Scarlet Letter* (1926), *The Wind* (1928), *Portrait of Jennie* (1948), and The Unforgiven. She made her final film at age ninety-three in the *Whales of August* (1987), opposite Bette Davis.

Dorothy and Lillian Gish also had significant careers on stage, having made their theatrical debuts at ages four and five, respectively. Lillian also wrote two books and received special awards from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the American Film Institute, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.Lillian Gish passed away at age ninety-nine in New York City in 1993.

Learn More

- Search Chronicling America on Lillian Gish or Dorothy Gish for newspaper articles, reviews, and movie advertisements up through 1963.
- Find portraits, movie posters, and photos of movie scenes by searching the image collections on Lillian Gish or Dorothy Gish.
- To find other photographs of famous Americans, browse the occupational index in the Van Vechten Collection under categories such as actors, artists, or authors.
- See The Life of Cary: Early Films of New York, 1898 to 1906 which includes forty-five films representing some of the first films produced in the city in the early days of the motion-picture industry.
- For a variety of reasons, only about 10 percent of the movies produced in the United States before 1929 still exist. Learn more about Motion Picture Conservation at the Library of Congress in an essay from the Chief of the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division David Francis.
- The National Film Registry selects 25 films each year showcasing the range and diversity of American film heritage to increase awareness for its preservation. Selections from the National Film Registry presents a series of Registry titles including D.W. Griffith's 1909 film A Corner in Wheat.
- The National Film Registry includes two movies featuring Lillian Gish: the 1909 silent Broken Blossoms directed by D.W. Griffith and Charles Laughton's 1955 Night of the Hunter.
- A number of the Biograph Company films held in the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress are available online. Search across the collections of motion pictures on the term Biograph to find them.

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