



## Women's Suffrage

In 1917 women earned the right to vote in New York State. That triumph was the result of many decades of struggle on the part of women all over the state, dating back to at least the 1840s and the Woman's Rights Convention which had been held in Seneca Falls. In Tompkins County, the cause of suffrage was not adopted until the 1890s, and that at first only reluctantly.

In the fall of 1894, the New York Women's Suffrage Association held its annual convention in

Ithaca despite the fact that, at the time, there was no women's suffrage organization in Ithaca, nor was there much public support for the issue here. Gradually, that support grew and Tompkins County became one of the few counties to support suffrage before it actually passed in the state.

The early history of the suffrage movement in Tompkins County is detailed in three scrapbooks in our archives. They date to the 1890s and are fragile and difficult to use. The History Center is very grateful for support from the South Central Regional Library Council for funding to digitize them and make them available on the New York Heritage website. This broad access is critical for users who can't come here to view the scrapbooks themselves, and for us here at The History Center in our efforts to preserve them for the future.

*Photo caption:* Louisa Riley was a founder of the Ithaca Women's Club and Ithaca's Political Study Club, which advocated for women's right to vote in New York State.