

From: National Women's History Project [nwHP@nwHP.org]

Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2011 1:34 PM

To: Stauch, Chelsea

Subject: Happy Birthday Susan B. Anthony!

Celebrating Susan B. Anthony's Birthday

by Penny Colman

February 15th is the day to celebrate the birth of Susan B. Anthony who was born on that date in 1820. That prompted me to think about some of her birthday celebrations that I wrote about in my forthcoming book Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: A Friendship That Changed the World.

In 1870, her fiftieth birthday, a group of her friends held a festive affair at the Woman's Bureau in New York City. Hundreds of admirers attended, despite a heavy downpour. Dressed in a red and black dress of "changeable" silk (a cloth with the horizontal threads dyed one color and the vertical dyed in another), Susan was honored with gifts, and speeches.

In 1890, her seventieth birthday, two hundred women and men feted her at a grand banquet in Washington, DC. The dining room at the Riggs House was festooned with tropical flowers, foliage, and American flags. Gifts were piled high on a table. Seventy pink carnations were presented to her. Toasts were made. Poems, telegrams, cablegrams, and letters were read. Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave the main address on the friendship of women: "If there is one part of my life which gives me more intense satisfaction than another, it is my friendship . . . with Susan B. Anthony." In response, Susan said, "I never could have done my work if I had not had this woman at my right hand."

In 1900, her eightieth birthday, another gala event was held in Washington, DC. Her old friend John Hutchinson, who had been singing protest songs for fifty years, sang. Frederick Douglass's grandson Joseph played a violin solo. Coralie Franklin Cook, a professor at Howard University and founder of the Colored Women's League, spoke, as did representatives from the suffrage states. Eighty children, one by one, laid a single rose on her lap.

Susan B. Anthony's last birthday celebration was held in 1906 in Washington, DC, a few days after the annual meeting of the National American Woman Suffrage Convention. When a letter was read from President Theodore Roosevelt congratulating her on her eighty-sixth birthday, she exclaimed, "I would rather have President Roosevelt say one word to Congress in favor of amending the Constitution to give women the suffrage than to praise me endlessly!" Addressing the gathering, Susan said, "There have been others also just as true and devoted to the cause-I wish I could name every one-but with such women consecrating lives-failure is impossible."

Those words-"*failure is impossible*"-were the last words Susan B. Anthony spoke in public. On March 13, 1906, she died at home in Rochester, New York. Today her home is a National Historic Landmark where her birthday is celebrated every year. Celebrate her birthday with an on-line tour of her home. <http://susanbanthonyhouse.org/visit-us/onlinetours.php>.

Acclaimed author, Penny Colman, can be contacted at www.pennycolman.com

In 1920, fourteen years after the death of Susan B. Anthony, women in the United States won the right to vote with passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. [Winning The Vote: The](#)

[Triumph of the Americana Woman Suffrage Movement](#) by Robert P. J. Cooney, Jr., tells the story as no other book has. It captures the color, passion, and excitement of this important part of American history.

For resources related to Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights, visit the **[Women's Rights and Women's Equality Day Resources](#)** section of our webstore www.nwhp.org

[Winning The Vote](#)

[Theme and Celebration Items](#)

National Women's History Project

3440 Airway Dr Ste F

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

<http://www.nwhp.org>

(707) 636-2888

nwhp@nwhp.org

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please click [here](#).