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CIVIL WAR TO CIVIL RIGHTS: KENTUCKY EQUAL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION



Kentucky Historical Society collections

STATEWIDE — The Kentucky Equal Rights Association (KERA) was founded in 1888 and was the first statewide women’s rights association in the South.

KERA was inspired by early suffragist and abolition activist Lucy Stone, who helped form the National Women’s Rights Convention. KERA members included Laura Clay and Madeline Breckinridge, who advocated changing laws that kept women financially dependent on men, increasing women’s higher education attainment and allowing

women to vote. At the turn of the 20th century, KERA helped pass child labor laws, increase the age of consent from 12 to 16 and establish a juvenile court system.

KERA was instrumental in lobbying the General Assembly to ratify the 19th Amendment to the federal Constitution, which allowed women to vote. On Jan. 6, 1920, Gov. Edwin P. Morrow signed the ratification bill as members of KERA watched. Kentucky was one of only four Southern states to ratify the amendment.

The Kentucky Historical Society (KHS) links Kentuckians with their past via archival collections that document people from every walk of life, reaching back to 1509. Letters, diaries, oral histories and photographs, as well as the first and second Kentucky Constitutions, are included. Find these and other KHS collections online at khscatalog.kyvl.org

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The Kentucky Historical Society is an agency of the
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