WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE—IDAHO 1896

Support for the enfranchisement of women had steadily grown within Idaho for decades. On November 3, 1896, voters had the opportunity to cast their ballots not only for the next president and governor, but also to amend the Idaho Constitution, giving women the right to vote. The amendment won a clear majority, but was appealed to the Idaho Supreme Court on a technical issue. On December 11, 1896, the justices ruled unanimously in favor of the amendment. Idaho became the fourth state to grant women unrestricted voting rights.

After the 18,408 votes cast for "Amendment No. 1 (Women’s Suffrage)" were counted, those in favor numbered 12,126 while 6,282 were opposed. The amendment held the popular vote in all but Custer County. Note that the Certified Abstract of Votes below originally had the vote tally incorrect; someone entered the correct vote totals in the lower right corner of the document, which was signed by Governor William J. McConnell, State Auditor; Frank C. Ramsay, Attorney General George M. Parsons and Secretary of State I. W. Garrett on November 27, 1896.
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The Idaho Falls Equal Suffrage Club used this hand-painted banner from 1895 through 1897. On the back of the banner is a sample ballot, which contains a handwritten inscription that reads, “As voted by Augusta B. Smith April 6th 1897 after woman’s suffrage was granted to us.”

The silk banner was donated to the Idaho State Historical Society in 1907 by the Columbian Club, a civic and philanthropic women’s organization that supported many family-related causes.