



Prohibition became an even more important political issue in the early 1900s. The *Dallas Morning News* described prohibition as the “paramount [dominant] . . . issue in our politics.” Candidates often ran for election chiefly on the prohibition issue. In 1917 U.S. senator Morris Sheppard of Texas sponsored a constitutional amendment for national prohibition. The Eighteenth Amendment won the support of enough state legislatures—including the Texas legislature—to be ratified in 1919. As a result, the manufacture and sale of alcohol became illegal throughout the nation in 1920.

**Reading Check Analyzing Information** How did prohibition affect the Texas Democratic Party?

### That's Interesting!

#### Preserving the Alamo

Texas women took up many causes, such as preserving the state's historic structures. In the early 1900s, Adina de Zavala and Clara Driscoll worked with the Daughters of the Republic of Texas to save the Alamo. The old mission had been purchased by a wholesale grocery company and fallen into poor condition. Driscoll used her personal fortune to buy the Alamo property, helping to save it for future generations.



### The Suffrage Movement

Women played a key role not only in prohibition but also in most progressive reforms. They fought to protect working mothers' rights and for new laws limiting child labor, ensuring food safety, and requiring school attendance. Some women even held political office. In 1918 Annie Webb Blanton became the first woman to win election to a Texas state office. She served as the state's superintendent of public instruction. As state superintendent, she helped establish a system of free textbooks, revise the teacher certification process, and improve rural education.

An overriding issue for women of the time was the effort to gain the right to vote. In 1913 Eleanor Brackenridge was chosen president of the Texas Woman Suffrage Association, later known as the Texas Equal Suffrage Association. Minnie Fisher Cunningham, Annie Webb Blanton, and Jane McCallum were other important suffrage leaders in Texas. Association leaders believed that “no state can be a true democracy in which one half of the people are denied the right to vote.” They campaigned across Texas in favor of voting rights for women. However, the suffragists faced strong opposition in the state. Cunningham and the other suffrage leaders struggled to convince Texans that women should be allowed to participate in the state's politics.

Women in other states were also working for suffrage. Finally, in 1919 the U.S. Congress proposed the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women the right to vote. The Texas legislature ratified the amendment in June 1919, and in 1920 women across the nation were able to vote.

Jane McCallum and other leaders went on to work with the Women's Joint Legislative Council. This group focused on education, prison reform, and child-labor issues. Nicknamed the Petticoat Lobby, this group was an influential force in Texas politics for years to come.

**Reading Check Summarizing** How did Texas women exercise their civic responsibilities in the early 1900s?

