Making History

After years of advocacy and debate over women’s suffrage, Massachusetts became the 8th state to ratify the 19th Amendment on June 25, 1919.

“In this State from now on, our entire efforts will be concentrated upon securing ratification in other states.”

Agnes H. Morey, Massachusetts Chairman of the National Woman’s Party

"Point..."
In the months before the final debate both sides had been organizing. Alice Paul came to Boston for a ratification rally. She had gained national recognition for radical protest and had endured hunger strikes and forced feeding in jail.

"Counter Point..."
On May 13, 1919 the Boston Globe reported “Socialism, Bolshevism and woman suffrage were bundled together at a protest meeting at Tremont Temple last night.” One speaker alleged that women voters in Russia had made children the property of the state.

At the State House
The week of June 25th was dangerously hot in Boston. Newspapers reported that one person had died from the heat and five were "prostrated." The House gallery was reserved entirely for women that day. An equal number of tickets were passed out for suffragists and anti-suffragists. More suffragists than anti-suffragists attended.

Roll Call
A final anti-suffrage attempt failed on the House floor. It would have delayed the vote in favor of a state wide referendum. On a roll call vote, the amendment passed 185-47. After the final vote there was silence in the galleries for a moment until members of the House began to applaud on the floor. Women in the galleries responded with cheers and applause. House Speaker Joseph E. Warner smiled while banging the gavel in a mock call for order.

Massachusetts was the 8th state to ratify, but women would not have the right to vote until August 1920, when the requisite 3/4th of the states had also ratified.