

History of American Association of University Women (AAUW)

with emphasis on Missouri during the period prior to passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

In 1881, Marion Talbot and Ellen Swallow Richards invited 15 alumnae from 8 colleges to a meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. The purpose of this meeting was to create an organization of women college graduates that would assist women in finding greater opportunities to use their education, as well as promoting and assisting other women's college attendance. The ACA also worked to improve standards of education for women so that men and women's higher education was more equal in scope and difficulty **The Association of Collegiate Alumnae or ACA, (AAUW's predecessor organization) was officially founded on January 14, 1882.** In 1884, the Branch structure was established.

MISSOURI BRANCHES BEFORE 1920:

In the period from 1884 – 1920, six Missouri branches were formed: Kansas City & St. Louis, organized in 1893, and the oldest branches in the Southwest Central Region; Columbia in 1907; Springfield in 1908; Maryville in 1918; and Warrensburg in 1920.

AAUW NATIONAL

In 1921, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) merged with the Southern Association of College Women (founded in 1903) to create the AAUW, although local branches continued to be the backbone of AAUW. Missouri became one of five state divisions in AAUW's Southwest Central Region.

The policy of expansion greatly increased both the size and the impact of the Association, from a small, local organization to a nationwide network of college-educated women, and by 1929, there were 31,647 members and 475 branches.

AAUW MISSOURI

Throughout its history, the **Division/AAUW Missouri** has concentrated on issues related to the status of women and girls. It has lobbied for legislation and promoted education throughout the state at branch and state level. AAUW Missouri continues to work for equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. Until sometime in the '90s, AAUW Missouri was called a Division, but it is now known as AAUW Missouri. <https://aauw-mo.aauw.net/>

AAUW Missouri is sponsoring an Information Sharing project for the 2020 Centennial of the 19th Amendment which provides a state-wide calendar of events and many resources. <https://womensvotecentennial.info/>

AAUW TODAY

Since its first meeting in 1881, AAUW has been a catalyst for change. Today, the nonpartisan, nonprofit organization has more than 170,000 members and supporters across the United States, as well as 1,000 local branches and over 800 college and university partners. <https://www.aauw.org/>

RESOURCES

There is an online collection of AAUW milestones that tell the story of AAUW's important role in women's history in more detail. See AAUW Timeline: <https://history.aauw.org/>

PDF: History of AAUW written by its founder Marion Talbot, published in 1931; <https://libsysdigi.library.uiuc.edu/OCA/Books2009-07/historyofamerica00talb/historyofamerica00talb.pdf>

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