

ELIZABETH PIPER ENSLEY

When: 1848-1919

Where: Born in the Caribbean, moved to Boston, then Washington, D.C., and finally to Denver

Why Important: Ensley was an activist for women's suffrage and equality.



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Elizabeth Ensley was born in the Caribbean. She moved to Boston in the 1870s. She helped create a library in the city and became a teacher. As an black woman, Elizabeth was also involved with civil right's groups and women's suffrage groups. Suffrage is the right to vote.

In 1882, she married Horwell N. Ensley and the couple moved to Washington, D.C. Ten years later they moved to Denver. Elizabeth continued working for women's suffrage civil rights. She became the Denver reporter for the *Woman's Era*, a newsletter of the National Association of Colored Women.

Elizabeth became a successful campaigner for the Colorado Equal Suffrage Association. On November 7, 1893, women won the right to vote in Colorado! It was only the second state to grant women the right to vote, behind Wyoming.

After that success, Elizabeth founded the Colored Woman's Republican Club. She worked to educate black women on why and how to vote. Next, Elizabeth founded the Association of Colored Women's Clubs in 1904. The Association joined eight clubs from all over Colorado, making for a stronger alliance.

Elizabeth later joined the Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs. One of only a few black women in the club, Elizabeth was an active and important member of the organization. She helped to break the 'color-barrier' that existed for many African-Americans.

Her impressive ability to organize and lead served as an example to many. She helped fight for black women's rights during a difficult time.