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The National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU)

The National Woman’s Christian Temperance Union was founded in Cleveland, Ohio in November 1874. This union grew out of the Woman’s Crusade that occurred in 1873 and 1874. Women in the United States who had no political power took action against liquor trafficking and wanted to seek change across the country. These groups of women started non-violent protests and told society about the dangers of alcohol. Some women entered saloons and prayed for the sale of alcohol to be terminated and within three months they drove liquor out of 250 different communities. They finally felt accomplished.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Finally, in the fall of 1874 the women decided to hold a national convention in Cleveland, Ohio and the WCTU was formed. This was the first mass organization among women devoted to reform movements and linked the religious and the secular based on Christianity. Although this organization mostly based reform on Christianity and Temperance, they also sought out to improve society around the world. Therefore, the International Women’s Christian Temperance Union was created. These organizations also focused on labor issues, prostitution, sanitation, and international peace. Still, when membership grew, these women started focused on suffrage movements. The WCTU organized women suffrage leaders and encouraged American women to become involved in politics.[[2]](#footnote-2) Membership within the Women’s Christian Temperance Union elevated throughout every decade, by the 1920s, there were more than forty countries involved and had more than 766,000 members paying dues. However, from the 1960s and beyond, membership dropped each decade, but it is still around today.

The WCTU is the oldest voluntary woman’s organization that has a long history of training women to speak in public, stand up for what they believe in, and run an organization. [[3]](#footnote-3)

1. . Women’s Christian Temperance Union, “Early History,” WCTU, accessed October 26, 2012,

   http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=wctu+today&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. .“Woman’s Christian Temperance Union,” A&E Television-History Channel, last modified 2012, http://www.history.com/topics/womans-christian-temperance-union- [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . “Woman’s Christian Temperance Union,” eNotes, last modified 2012, http://www.enotes.com/womens-christian-temperance-union-reference/womens-christian-temperance-union [↑](#footnote-ref-3)