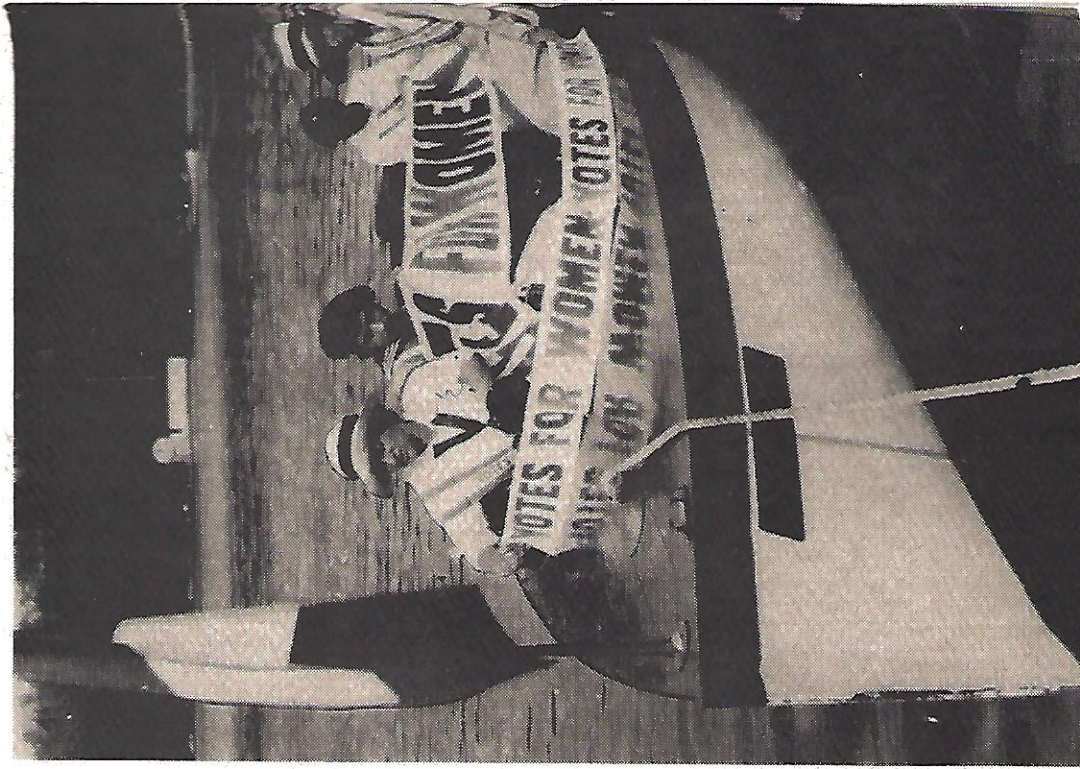


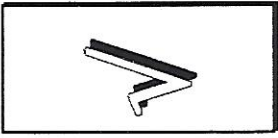
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**Woman Suffrage  
in New Jersey**

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**Middlesex County Cultural  
and Heritage Commission**



# *Casting Their Vote*

## **Woman Suffrage in New Jersey**

**Suffrage in New Jersey: Historical  
Perspective**

*Dr. Margaret Crocco and Neale McGoldrick*

**Suffragist Biographies: Key  
Women in New Jersey**

The Women's Project of New Jersey,  
from *Past and Promise: Lives of New  
Jersey Women* (Metuchen, NJ:  
Scarecrow Press, 1990)

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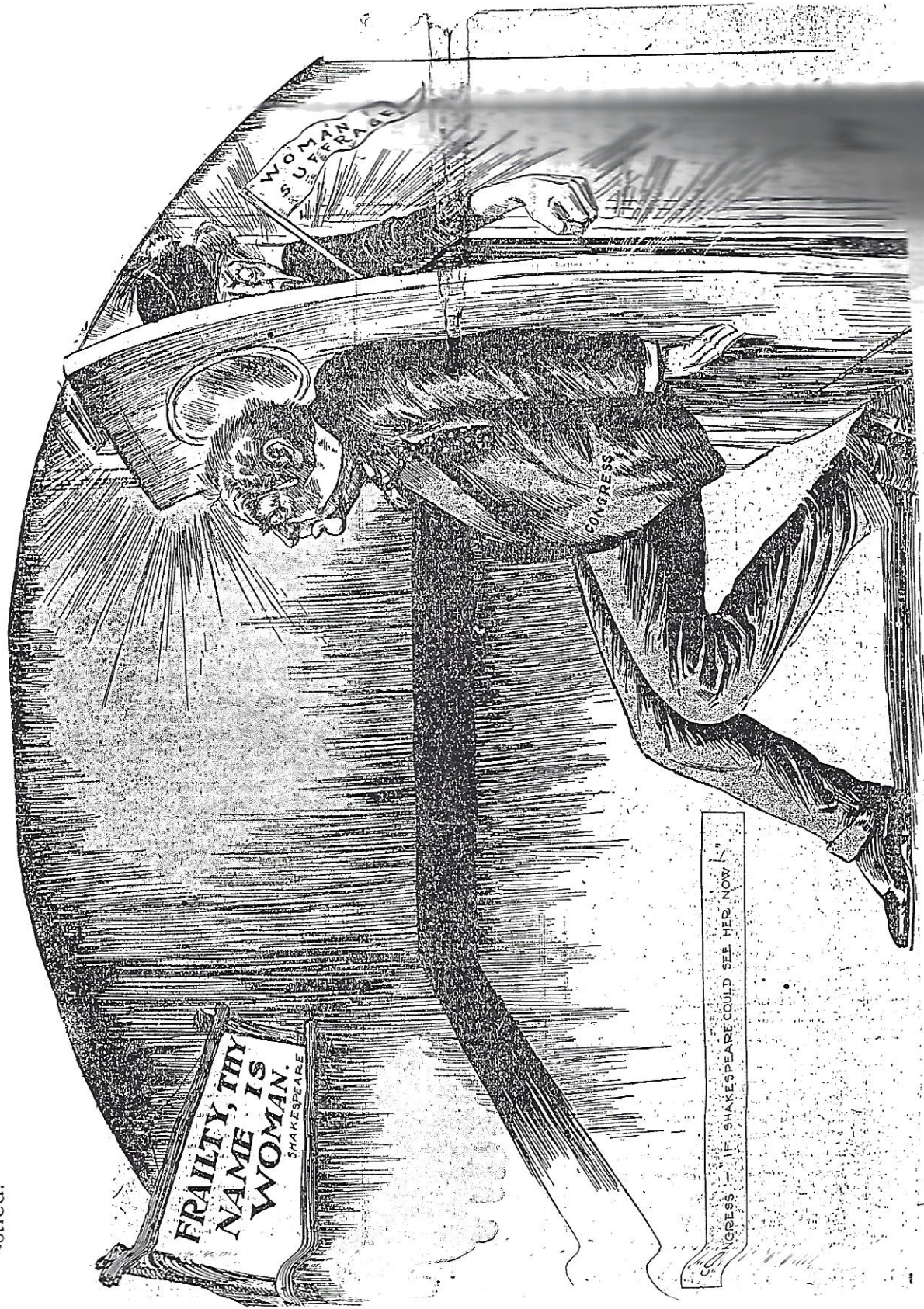


*Edited by Anna M. Aschkenes  
Melissa L. Block*

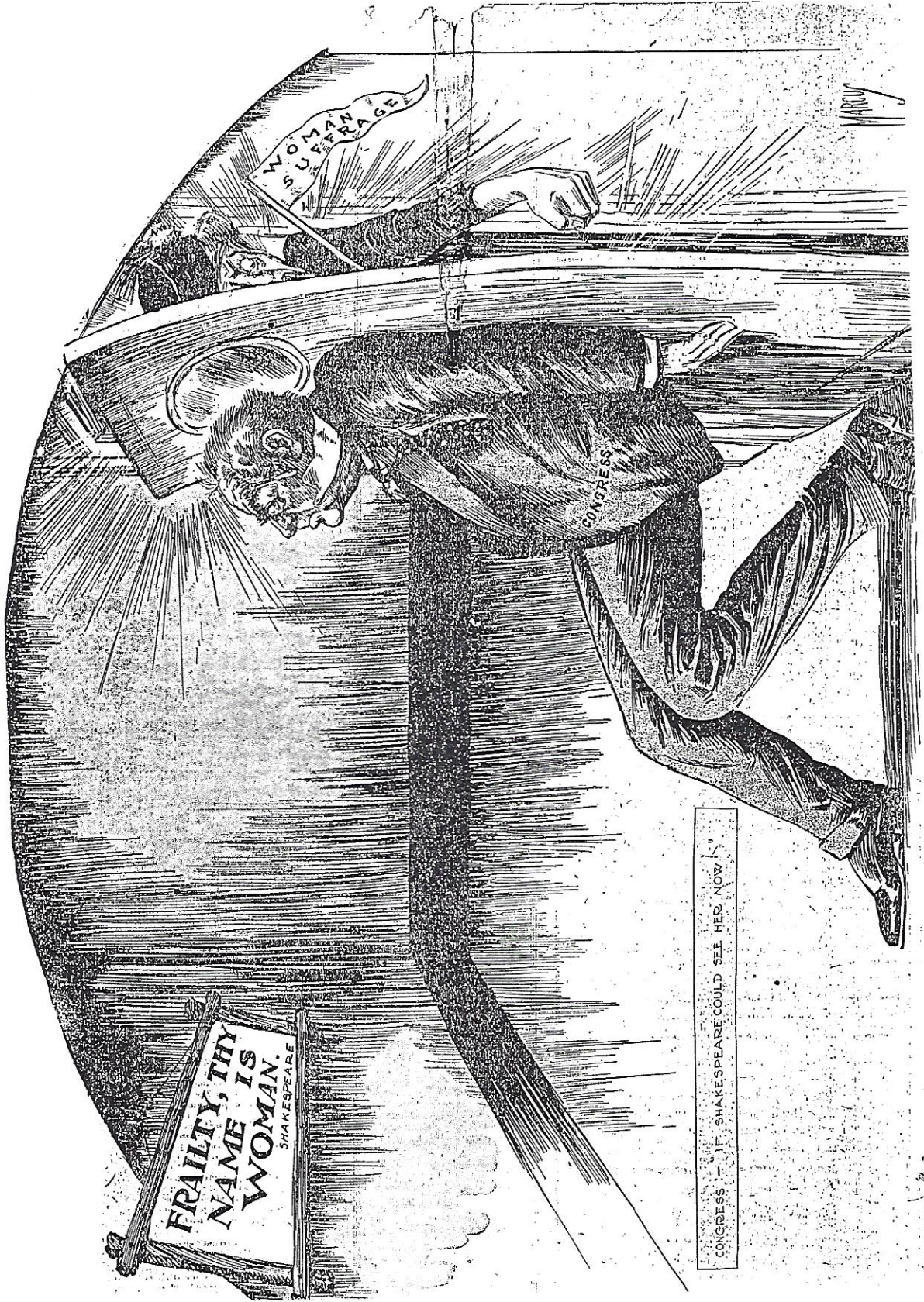
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Cover photo: Suffragists campaigning on Lake Hopatcong, 1915.  
From the collections of the New Jersey Historical Society, Newark,  
New Jersey.

Cartoon from the New York Times, Sunday  
January 17, 1915. From the collection of Mark  
Noblistied.



Cartoon from the New York Times, Sunday January 17, 1915. From the collection of Mark Nonestied.



*At a late election in this town women affected the privileges granted them by the laws of this state and gave their votes for members to represent them in the legislature.*

Another newspaper, referring to the same election stated that:

*Too much credit cannot be given to the Federal ladies of Elizabeth for the heroic virtue displayed on Wednesday last in gallantly advancing to the polls to support their candidates.*

A commentary in the same paper suggested suffrage was noteworthy, showing that at least some citizens were aware of the significance of woman suffrage in the context of the American Revolution:

*It must now appear that the citizens of Essex County are friends of equality since no less than seventy-five women were polled at the late election... The Rights of Man have been warmly insisted upon by Thomas Paine and other Democrats, but we out-strip them in the science of government, and not only reach the "Rights of Woman," but boldly push it into practice. As women are now to take part in the jurisprudence of our state, we may shortly expect them to take the helm, government.*

The *Newark Centinel of Freedom* ran perhaps the only poem on woman suffrage published in the eighteenth century on October 18, 1797. In the November 7, 1800 issue, the *Centinel* printed a letter written by a member of the state legislature which affirmed the fact that the extension of the vote to women was intentional:

*The bill for a general election of members of Assembly has this day been passed while the aforesaid bill was pending before the House of Assembly, a motion was made to amend the bill by adding that "it is the true intent and meaning of this act that the inspectors of elections shall not refuse the vote to any widow or unmarried woman of full age." The House unanimously agreed that this section would be clearly within the meaning of the Constitution and as the Constitution is the guide of inspectors it would be entirely useless to insert it in the law. The motion was negatived. Our Constitution gives this right to maids or widows, black or white.*

During the presidential election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800, several New Jersey newspapers commented on the role of women:

Newton: *May their patriotic conduct at the late elections add an irresistible zest to their charms.*

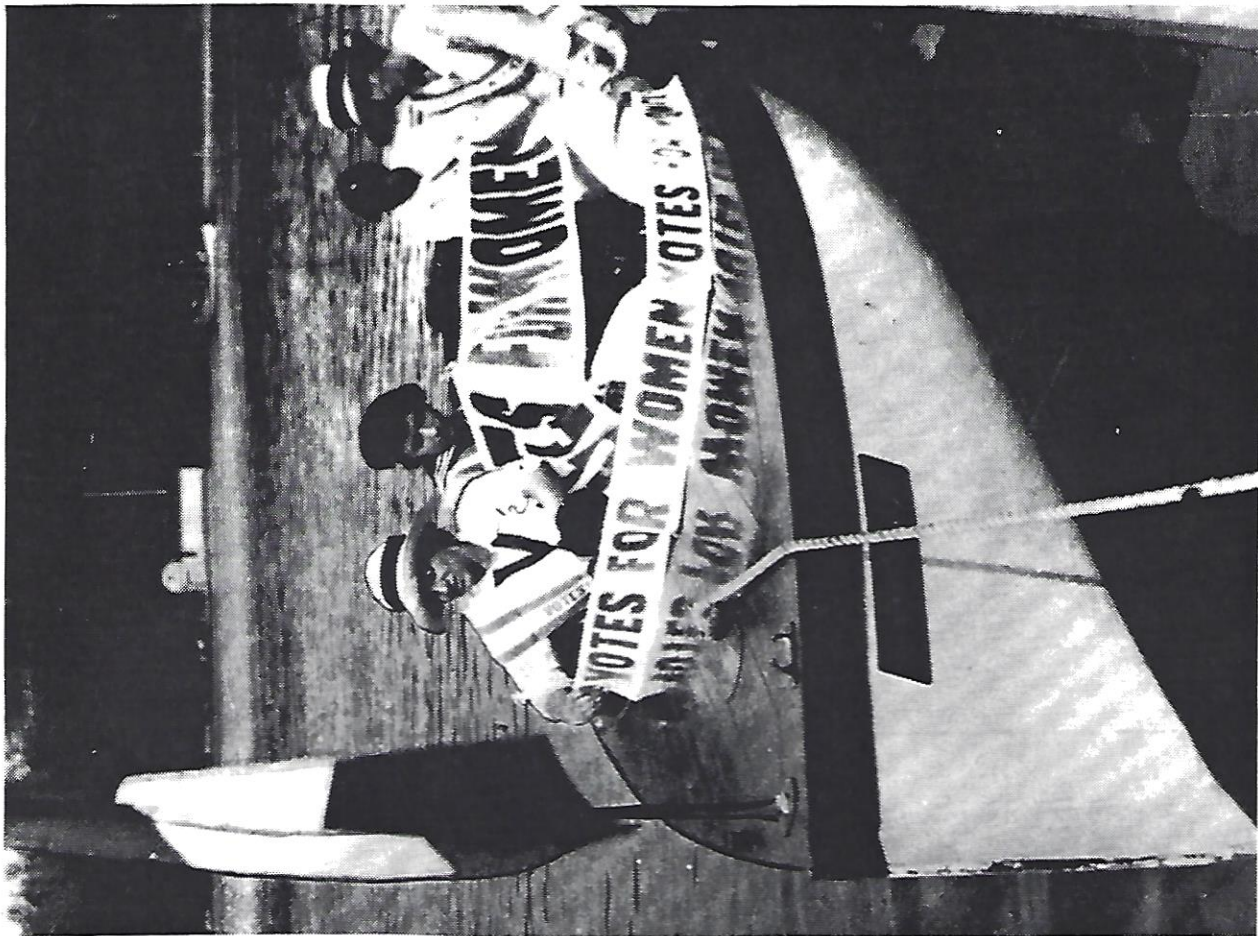
Mendham: *May their republican conduct be pleasing and exemplary to their sisters of the Union.*

Hackensack: *Rights of women. May they equally participate with men in the rights of men.*

Liberty Corner: *The fair daughters of America particularly those who stepped forward to show their patriotism in the cause of republicanism in the late election.*

Westfield: *May they stand unrivaled in their love of freedom and justice.*

Suffragists campaigning on Lake Hopatcong, 1915.  
From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.



Bloomfield: *The fair of New Jersey who gave their suffrage to the Republican candidate, may they receive for their reward peace and happiness.*

But despite this praise, complaints surfaced about women voting; some argued that married women had voted, others that women voted twice. But the most vigorous complaint, often voiced in the suffrage debates more than a century later, was that women were not "independent" voters, being too easily swayed by the men in their lives. William Griffith, a lawyer in favor of constitutional reform, offered this negative comment on women voting:

*It is perfectly disgusting to witness the manner in which women are polled at our elections. Nothing can be a greater mockery of this invaluable and sacred right, than to suffer it to be exercised by persons, who do not even pretend to any judgement on the subject.*

Records exist of both African Americans and women voting in Hunterdon County in 1802. This election was very close, and both sides offered petitions to the legislature with regard to fraud. Among the issues raised were the charges that married women, slaves, minors, and out-of-state residents had voted. The legislature refused to set aside the election, arguing that the only time a person's vote could be challenged was at the time of voting and that no individual had been challenged at the polls. The court did give special consideration to the question of one married woman who had voted, deciding ultimately that she was entitled. She had been deserted by her husband, had resumed use of her own name, and had paid property taxes.

While evidence suggests that women got support from both Federalists and Republicans, and voted for a variety of candidates, those candidates who lost tended to use female voters as scapegoats. Finally, in 1807, after a hotly contested election in Elizabeth about the location of Essex County Courthouse, women were disenfranchised in the name of "election reform." Evidence indicates that the election of 1807 involved a great deal of fraud, but not that either female or black voters were specifically implicated in the fraud. The voting took place over a three-day period and a considerable number may have voted twice. The results of the elections clearly seem to have been manipulated. Three times as many votes were cast in Newark for this election as had been cast the year before!

The law which restricted suffrage was introduced into the legislature by John Condict of Essex County, who had been nearly defeated by the votes of women in Elizabethtown in 1797. His proposal stated that: *from and after the passage of this act no person shall vote in any state or county election for officers in the government of the United States, or of this state, unless such person be a free white male citizen of this state.* (Note that since the 1776 Constitution did not specifically include women, the Constitution did not need to be amended in order to restrict the vote.) Thus in one sentence, women and blacks lost the vote, despite the fact that inconsistencies and irregularities were fixed features of voting in New Jersey elections at the time. Ironically, this same law also effectively eliminated property qualifications for white male voters who were twenty-one years of age.

Some historians have suggested that women were not concerned about losing the right to vote because they

had not fought to gain suffrage in the first place. A more likely reason might be due to the restricted lives women led and their limited ability to influence politics. Women could not hold office and had no political organizations to assist them. By contrast, the black communities of Lawnside in Camden County and Gouldtown in Cumberland County vigorously opposed the restrictive suffrage legislation and continued their opposition for decades.

The *True American* commented on the legislative session which produced this law with the following lines published on November 30, 1807:

*Election bill met better fate.*

*On every hand defended,*

*To check confusion through the State*

*The female's voting ended.*

Despite the short-lived nature of black and female suffrage, the fact that women had voted gave inspiration to later suffragists who fought to restore those rights in New Jersey.

## ***Women's Rights in the Jacksonian Era***

After 1807, New Jersey simply fell in line with the rest of the states in denying the franchise to women. But the precedent remained, and in 1844, when the state revised its entire constitution, the words "white" and "male" were made part of the state constitution.

In the period from 1807 until 1840, little public discussion of woman suffrage occurred although reports exist that some widows voted in Barnsboro in the election of 1824. During the period 1820 to 1840, many states broadened the franchise for men by eliminating property qualifications for white male voters.

Many reformers of the day saw slavery as the most serious evil in the United States. The abolitionist cause grew in numbers and intensity with each decade until the Civil War. Virtually all of the women who were involved in the early movement for female suffrage were abolitionists.

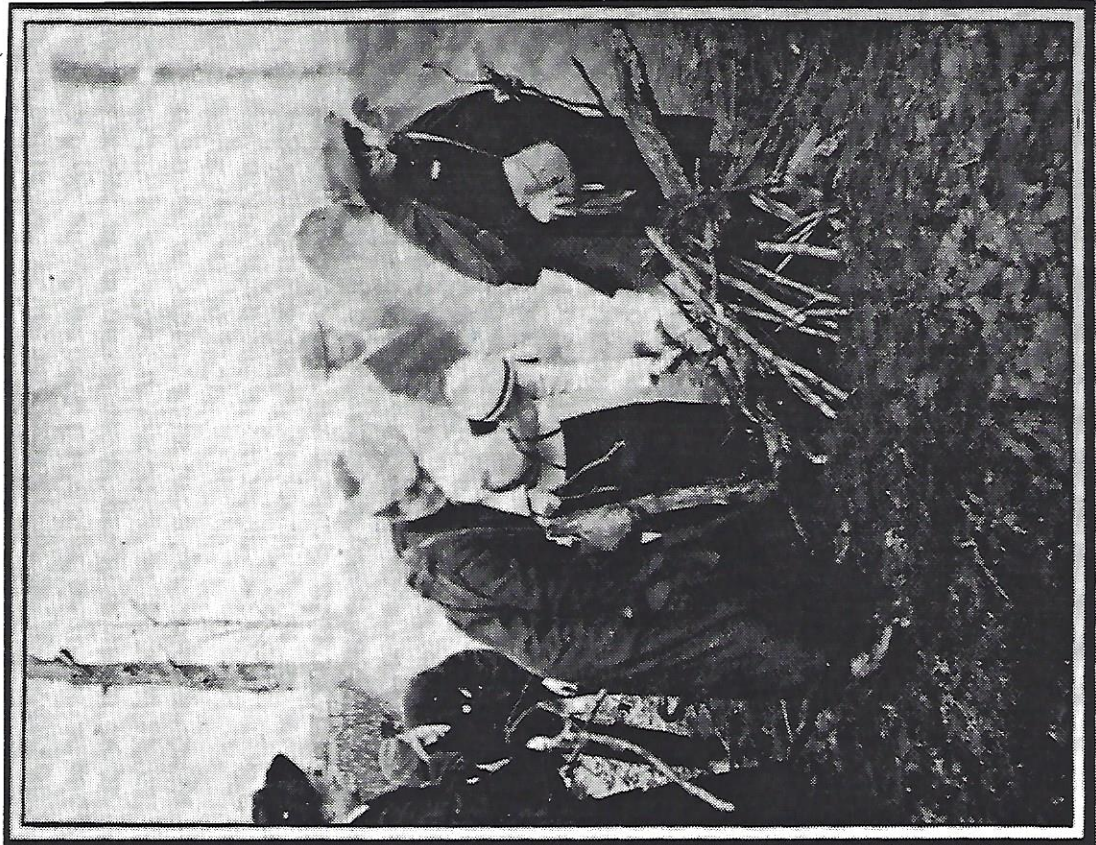
While attending an anti-slavery convention in London in 1840, two American female abolitionists had an experience which planted the first seeds of the women's movement. Women were not seated on the convention floor of the anti-slavery conference; they had to sit in the balcony. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott and their husbands refused to remain at the convention. Thus, a number of American women began to see the need for a formal movement to improve women's rights as a result of their work to end slavery.



Saturday Evening Post March 1, 1913 issue of a New Jersey Suffrage March to Washington, DC. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.



MRS. JOHN BOLDT COMING FROM GOVERNOR WILSON'S HOME AT PRINCETON, AFTER DELIVERING HER MESSAGE THERE



A HALT BY THE WAYSIDE—"GENERAL" JONES AND MRS. BOLDT STARTING A CAMPFIRE

When these women met again in 1848, they planned the first major convention on women's rights to be held in Seneca Falls, New York. In all, three hundred people, forty of them men, attended that first convention. Of all the resolutions presented in the *Declaration of Sentiments*, only the one for woman suffrage failed to pass unanimously. For the leaders of the convention, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, this marked the first major event in a lifelong struggle which would take seventy years. Only one woman who attended that first convention at Seneca Falls lived to see the suffrage amendment ratified in 1920!

Following the Seneca Falls convention, the movement for women's rights spread. During the 1850s a series of nationally advertised conventions were held in New York, Massachusetts and elsewhere. Lucy Stone and other proponents of women's rights traveled around the country speaking to civic groups. Stone and her husband, Henry Blackwell, lived in New Jersey during this period. The property they owned in Orange was in Lucy Stone's name. In 1858, she refused to pay taxes on the grounds of "no taxation without representation." In response, the tax collector came to the house and removed some of her possessions to be sold at auction to cover the taxes. Supportive neighbors bought the items and returned them to Stone.

Woman suffrage was only one of the issues that concerned these activists, and to many it was considered secondary to reform of laws on property, divorce, and the rights of citizenship. Most of these women were also active in the abolition movement, temperance, dress reform and other causes of the period. Dorothea Dix and Sarah and Angelina Grimké provide examples of

other national reformers who lived and worked in New Jersey for part of their lives.

As the country came closer to war through the 1850s, reformers turned more of their attention to the slavery question. Suffrage took a back seat. Once the Civil War broke out, national attention was consumed by that conflict. Further discussion of the rights of blacks and women had to wait until the war came to an end. However, women who had worked hard for the rights of both slaves and women clearly anticipated that both groups would benefit from the post-war settlement.

## ***Two Directions in the National Suffrage Movement 1860-1900***

Prior to the Civil War, qualifications for voters had been determined totally by the states. After the Civil War, Congress faced the question of how to define the status of the former slaves. Knowing that the southern states would balk at giving rights to their former slaves, the Radical Republicans, who controlled Congress after 1866, used their power to add amendments to the Constitution which defined the status of citizens and guaranteed African Americans the vote.

*Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and the state wherein they reside.*

*Section 2. When the right to vote is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such state being twenty-one years of age and citizens of the United States the basis of proportion [for representation in Congress] shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens...*

*From the Fourteenth Amendment*

*The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude.*

*From the Fifteenth Amendment*

These amendments posed a dilemma for former abolitionists who also supported women's rights. Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony proposed that former abolitionists join them in a combined movement for universal suffrage. Henry Blackwell became an officer of the new organization, called the American Equal Rights Association. They tried to convince the Radical Republicans in Congress to remove the word "male" from the proposed Fourteenth Amendment, but they were unsuccessful.

When these amendments went before the states for ratification, a split occurred among the advocates of women's rights. Despite gains promised to black men under the amendments, the language of the Fourteenth Amendment specifically disenfranchised women. In 1868 this amendment introduced the word "male" into the U.S. Constitution for the first time. In this amendment, the word "citizen" and the word "inhabitant" were linked to the word "male" whenever the vote was discussed.

That same year Congress made the split between the two movements even greater by proposing the Fifteenth Amendment, which gave black males the right to vote. By defining the right to vote in a separate amendment, Congress implied that the right to vote was not synonymous with citizenship. Up to that time the Constitution had been silent on the subject. While it would have taken an interpretation by the courts or a legislative act to grant women the vote, once the Fifteenth Amendment was passed, nothing less than an additional amendment would do.

Card announcing Newark Suffrage Parade. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

## SUFFRAGE PARADE

### COME AND MARCH FOR YOUR PRINCIPLES

**DATE**—Saturday, October 25, 3 P. M.  
**PLACE**—Lincoln Park, Newark. Look for the Purple, White and Green.

**CAR LINES**—To Lincoln Park; Broad, Mt. Prospect, Main Line, Clinton, and Summer.

**DRESS**—Wear anything you like **ONLY MARCH.**

**BEARING**—Head up, Eyes front, **NO LAUGHING OR TALKING**, Obey the Marshals. Carry yourself with the dignity due a great cause.

**FOR THE PARADE**—Bannerets, 20 cents, Pennants 10 cents, Votes for Women Regalia 55 cents, Votes for Women Felt Bands 5 cents. For sale at Headquarters or Starting Point.

**EVERY MAN and WOMAN WELCOME**

### Parade Mass Meeting at Proctor's 5 to 7 P. M.

**SPEAKERS**—Rev. Anna Howard Shaw,  
United States Senator Poindexter,  
and Hon. Everett Colby.

### WOMEN'S POLITICAL UNION

Phone Market 3150 79 Halsey Street, Newark

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton realized that since the Constitution had defined voting rights in this way, it would take another amendment to the Constitution (rather than an act of Congress or a decision of the courts) to grant women the right to vote. For this reason, they campaigned against passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, a position which caused serious tensions among both black and white supporters of the women's movement. Stanton was outraged that African Americans, Chinese Americans and other immigrants should be deemed more fit to vote than women, but the leading black abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who had been a notable proponent of women's rights, saw it differently. Note his omission of the unique needs of black women in the following speech:

*When women, because they are women, are dragged from their homes and hung up upon lampposts; when their children are torn from their arms and their brains dashed to the pavement; when they are objects of insult and outrage at every turn when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot.*

Stanton was more charitable in a letter she wrote from Newark in March, 1869, defending the lack of interest in woman suffrage on the part of Charles Sumner, who had been influential in assuring that freed slaves were granted the vote:

*We must be forever grateful for what [Sumner] has done for human rights, even though it does not tell directly for us. I think God rarely gives one man, or one set of men, more than one*

*great moral victory to win. Hence we see the old abolitionists generally shrink from the van of our movement tho' they are in hearty sympathy with it. If Mr. Sumner "don't want to be in this fight," as he told me, in my heart I say "God bless him!" Our victory is sure to come.*

The first debate in Congress on woman suffrage challenged the status quo too sharply. The AWSA occurred in 1866 when it considered a bill that would extend suffrage to African Americans in the District of Columbia without a restriction limiting the vote to males. Senator Frelinghuysen of New Jersey stated views that became commonplace during the decades of debate that followed:

*It seems to me as if the God of our race has stamped upon the women of America a milder, gentler nature, which not only makes them shrink from, but disqualifies them for the turmoil and battle of public life. They have a higher and holier mission. It is in retracy [sic] to make the character of coming men. Their mission is at home by their blandishments and their love to assuage the passions of men as they come in from the battle of life, and not themselves by joining in the contest to add fuel to the very flames. . . It will be a sorry day for this country when those vestal fires of love and piety are put out.*

In 1869, two different national woman suffrage groups were established which took opposing views about the best strategy for attaining woman suffrage. In May, the National Woman Suffrage Association was begun by

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Only women were accepted for membership in the NWSA, which supported not only suffrage but also divorce reform and equal pay. The following November, Lucy Stone and her husband Henry Blackwell founded the American Woman Suffrage Association in reaction to the creation of the NWSA. The AWSA was a single issue organization, not wishing to be encumbered with issues such as divorce, child labor, or criticism of the status of women in the churches. Acknowledging that a federal amendment to the Constitution might be necessary, they nevertheless chose to work in individual states first.

During this time, both Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucy Stone were living in New Jersey: Stanton in Tenafly and Stone in East Orange. Sensitive to the criticism that a second organization might weaken the cause, Lucy Stone sought to explain herself in a letter to Susan B. Anthony written in 1869 which emphasized the shared goal, rather than the rivalry in having two organizations for woman suffrage.

As the two groups evolved during the late nineteenth century, a fundamental difference in ideology emerged. The American Woman Suffrage Association adhered more closely to social conventions for Victorian women, fearing that they would lose the support of middle class men and women if they also confined its tactics to genteel and philanthropic activities in its effort to achieve woman suffrage on a state-by-state basis.

The National Woman Suffrage Association moved away from the conservative cultural prescriptions for women of the Victorian era, embracing more aggressive tactics and a broader cross-section of women while still excluding men. They set a national strategy designed to

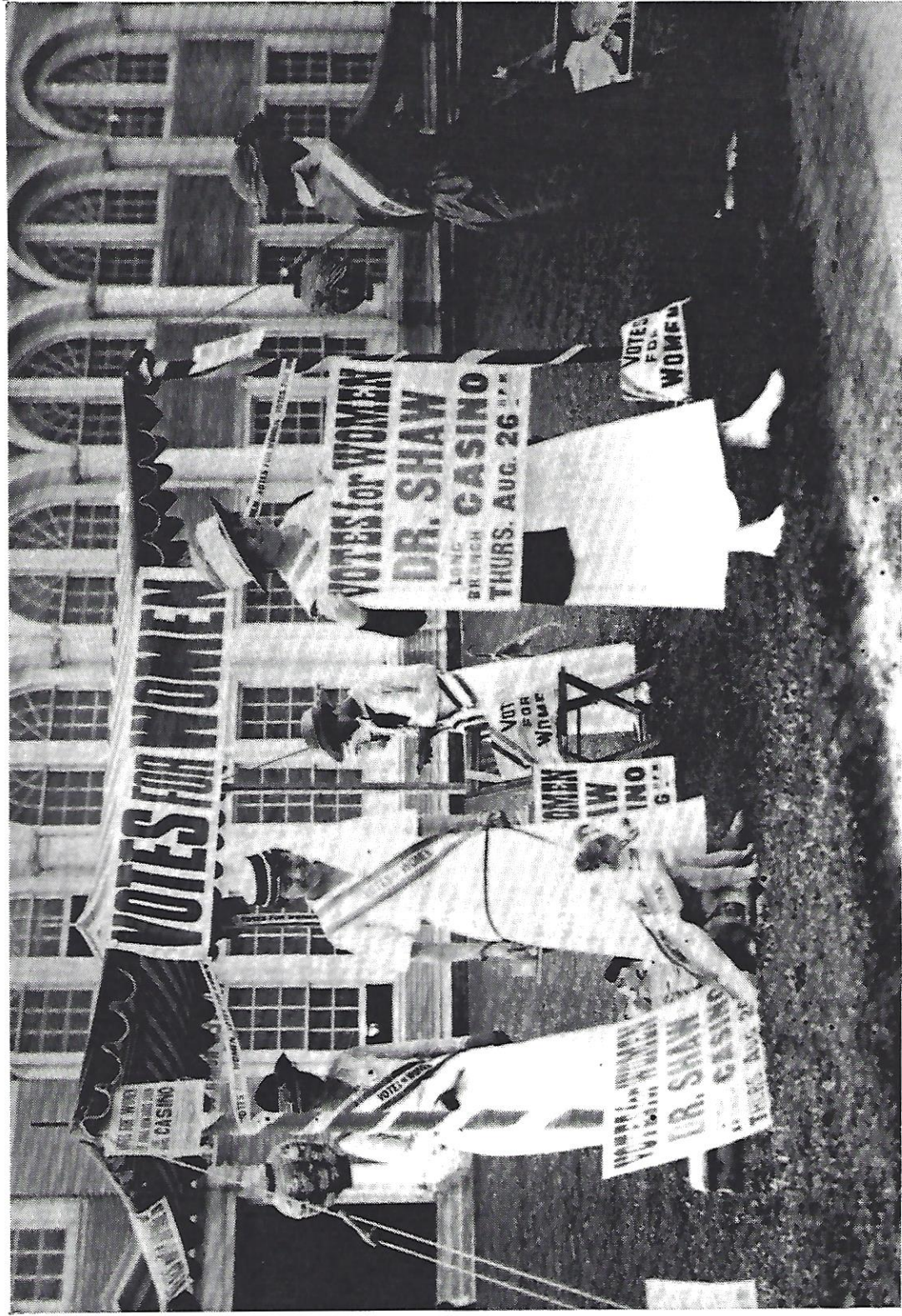
win the passage of an amendment to the federal constitution which would give the vote to all women. From this period until 1890, the AWSA and the NWSA followed their separate paths on the road to suffrage.

Starting in 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton began a three volume history of woman suffrage in collaboration with Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage. In it, she argued from the "Gibraltarian rock of reason," accusing her opponents of using "ridicule and petty objections" as their weapons. She claimed that women's rights would ultimately "be established by the same process of reason as that by which he demands his own."

*The fundamental principle of our government—the equality of all citizens of the republic—should be incorporated in the Federal Constitution, there to remain forever. To leave this question to the States and partial acts of Congress, is to defer indefinitely its settlement, for what is done by this Congress may be repeated by the next; and politics in the several States differ so widely, that no harmonious action on any question can ever be secured, except as a strict party measure. Hence, we appeal to the party now in power, everywhere, to end this protracted debate on suffrage, and declare it the inalienable right of every citizen who is amenable to the laws of the land, who pays taxes and the penalty of crime.*

While the wheels of suffrage ground slowly in the East, the western territories jumped into the lead. The territory of Wyoming passed the first law allowing woman suffrage in 1869, followed by Utah in 1870. In 1878, a suffrage amendment was introduced into

Postcard of suffragists campaigning in Long Branch.  
From the collections of The New Jersey Historical  
Society, Newark, New Jersey.



Congress by California Senator A.A. Sargent, who was a friend and supporter of Susan B. Anthony. It stated that: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex. This bill was introduced into Congress on a regular basis from 1878 through 1918. Over time it became known as the "Anthony Amendment."

In 1872, Virginia Minor, the president of the Missouri Woman Suffrage Association, decided to test the issue of suffrage by registering to vote in St. Louis. When the St. Louis registrar, Reese Happersett, refused to allow Minor to register, she challenged him. In doing so, she also challenged the Missouri state constitution which specifically denied women the right to vote. At about the same time, a similar case was brought to the New York state courts by Susan B. Anthony.

Virginia Minor lost in the Missouri courts and appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. A unanimous court held in 1874 that the privilege of suffrage was not automatically conferred on those who were citizens. The states were allowed, under the U.S. Constitution, to restrict suffrage to certain classes of citizens and specifically to withhold suffrage from women.

To decide the case, the Supreme Court reviewed the question of whether a woman was a citizen. It determined that she was. Then the Court considered whether a female citizen had the right to vote under the Fourteenth Amendment. It determined that she did not because the Constitution left it up to the states to determine the qualifications for voting. As a result of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, only race was protected.

To reach this conclusion, the Court reviewed the history of voting laws passed in the states at the time the original Constitution was written. It noted that states like Tennessee, which were admitted to the union after the Constitution had been adopted, limited their suffrage to white men. Therefore, the Court concluded, the framers of the Constitution had not intended that suffrage was an essential right of citizenship within the democratic process.

It is true, of course, that voting rights in almost all states had been limited by some level of property qualifications (and were, therefore, not equated with citizenship). Nevertheless, had the court looked instead at New Jersey, it might have come to a different conclusion. New Jersey women had voted, legally and in significant numbers, in the three decades right after the ratification of the Constitution.

The interest in reform in the 1890s was not limited to suffragists. The 1890s found the country facing numerous problems associated with the changes brought about by industrialization and urbanization. Many northern states introduced literacy requirements for voting in an effort to "protect the ballot" from both blacks and immigrants. Increasingly, women in urban areas found themselves pulled and pushed into reform work to deal with the living conditions of the slums: tenement housing, poor sanitation, poverty, prostitution, alcoholism and disease.

A major new impetus for reform came from women's clubs which emerged around the country and were subsequently organized into the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1890. This national organization was incorporated in 1893 in Newark. Its first president was a



New Jersey woman, Charlotte Emerson Brown, the sister-in-law of Antoinette Brown Blackwell. Women's clubs involved members in a variety of social causes and also provided cultural activities which expanded women's horizons outside the home. Among the most famous clubs of the period was "Sorosis," a professional women's club organized in New York in the 1860s by Jane Croly after she was refused admission as a woman to a dinner given in honor of Charles Dickens.

On the national level, the largest organization to become concerned with the suffrage question was the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). During the early years of the nineteenth century, men usually held the positions of leadership and set the direction for the temperance movement. Frances Willard and Annie Wittenmyer felt the necessity of a temperance organization for women, establishing the WCTU in 1874. In 1892, under the leadership of Frances Willard, the WCTU followed the motto "Do everything," an attack on all the evils of society linked to alcohol. By 1892, the WCTU had nearly 150,000 dues-paying members, while at the same time only 20,000 women belonged to the General Federation of Women's Clubs. By 1911 the WCTU almost doubled its membership, growing to 245,000 members. The WCTU also served as a catalyst for the organization of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, which stimulated and organized the efforts of black women at social welfare within their community.

The late nineteenth century club movement allowed numerous women the opportunity to expand their sphere beyond the home, to utilize their educations, and to enjoy the companionship of other women while working towards the betterment of society. With no

public relief agencies to care for indigent persons, women organized to provide these social services.

The impact of clubs on the suffrage organizations was both positive and negative. On the one hand, they involved women in a variety of other causes which distracted them from the suffrage issue, but, in the long run, they helped the cause by drawing women into a wider sphere of public activity. Women in these clubs only gradually came to support the concept of suffrage with the understanding that the vote would allow women to be more effective social housekeepers.

By 1890, the old differences between the AWSA and the NWSA seemed less important. Neither was doing well alone and each had to deal with the proliferation of women's clubs. In that year, the two groups merged into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). Elizabeth Cady Stanton became its first president, followed by Susan B. Anthony in 1892.

During the late nineteenth century, many middle class women also became actively involved in the Populist and Progressive movements, working for reform of the labor laws, conservation, and consumer protection. Often reformist women felt that these other causes were more important to the welfare of the nation; but over time many women realized that they could do more for all their causes if they had the vote.

In the 1890s, the old idea of female suffrage based on Enlightenment ideals of equality gave way to a defense of woman suffrage based on an ideology that claimed women's moral nature would help solve some of the problems in the cities thought to have been created by industrialization, alcohol and massive immigration. This

shift in direction was the result of the expanded influence of women's clubs.

Despite the emergence of a unified woman suffrage movement in the 1890s, the period has been criticized as both conservative and lethargic. Suffrage support from the women's clubs, temperance organizations and other reform groups produced an array of arguments both novel and traditional in their bent.

By the start of the twentieth century, justifications for woman suffrage came from a wide variety of platforms: woman suffrage would clean up the cities; woman suffrage would turn the tide of immigration; woman suffrage would end the abuse of alcohol; woman suffrage would usher in a new age of moralism. Older arguments that women had a right to vote were gradually supplemented by arguments that women needed the vote to become effective moral caretakers of society.

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## *Suffrage Activities in New Jersey 1865-1900*

Like women across the country, women in New Jersey found the denial of the right to vote painful, demeaning, and unjust. Lucy Stone's presence in the state was significant: she helped to organize suffrage groups in Orange, Vineland, Newark, Trenton and other cities. By 1885, the suffrage society in her hometown of Orange had eighty-five members.

In 1867, the various suffrage societies around the state came together in the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association. Lucy Stone served as the president. That same year the suffrage society in Vineland staged a public protest against women's disenfranchisement, perhaps the earliest demonstration for woman suffrage in the state. The following year they set up their own ballot box at the polls for the presidential election. Women entering the voting place went first to the station used by the men where they were "rejected with politeness." The women then moved to the other side of the platform where they deposited their ballots in the women's box. The results of the ballot cast by the Vineland women were: Ulysses S. Grant, 164; Horatio Seymour, 4; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 2; John C. Fremont, 1; and Mrs. Governor Harvey of Wisconsin, 1. In subsequent mock elections, 216 women voted for president in 1872 and 158 voted for governor in 1874.

In 1871, the Equal Rights Party nominated the controversial advocate of free-love, Victoria Woodhull, for president in Vineland. The town was also noted for its interest in other issues of the day like spiritualism, hydropathic medicine, spelling reform and dress

reform. Susan Pecker Fowler and Mary Tillotson helped organize the "Anti-Fashion Convention" there in 1874. In a similarly progressive vein, the Unitarian Church in town included women on its committees and allowed them to assist in the services.

In 1871, Ann Hora Connelly of Rahway successfully petitioned the legislature to pass a law giving men and women equal rights with regard to their offspring in divorce proceedings. Up to that point, the courts had favored the father, no matter what the circumstances of the divorce. In 1874, the state also revised its laws enabling married women to hold property and inheritance in their own names. In 1895, married women in the state also gained the right to contract and to sue. Finally in 1896, New Jersey women won the legal right to have their earnings and wages viewed as their own property.

It was while living in Tenafly in 1869 that Elizabeth Cady Stanton began writing the first of three volumes on the History of Woman Suffrage. Years later, in 1880 she caused a huge stir in the town when she attempted to vote and was denied the right to do so.

Lucy Stone was also still in New Jersey at this time, serving as president of the NJWSA until she and her husband moved to Massachusetts in 1869. There they helped to direct the New England woman suffrage movement. During these years in New Jersey, Stone wrote a pamphlet called *Reasons Why the Women of New Jersey Should Vote* which was endorsed by the Executive Committee of the NJWSA in Vineland.

Much of the energy of the NJWSA focused on the fight for women's school suffrage which grew in response to

the new statewide laws on compulsory education. Many states which steadfastly refused women the right to vote in general elections had permitted them to vote in local elections related to schools. In 1868 women formally petitioned the New Jersey state legislature for the right of school suffrage which included elections of the school boards and in some cases voting on school bond issues.

Another early effort of the NJWSA was the presentation of a "memorial" to the Judiciary Committee of the State Senate in 1869. A report from the *Paterson Daily Press* from March of 1869 announced that this attempt to introduce "an act relative to the right of suffrage in the State of New Jersey" into the legislature was greeted with much derision. The formal response by the Judiciary Committee to the act included some satirical commentary on the qualifications of voters in the state:

*In South Jersey, it is well known that no citizen is admitted to the polls unless competent to detect the difference between greenbacks of the different denominations, while in the county of Salem, in addition to this qualification, a complete and intimate acquaintance with the personal habit, general appearance, sex and size of that noble animal, the shad, is an indispensable prerequisite to any exercise of the elective franchise...*

This mockery of the NJWSA petition elicited editorial outrage from at least two prominent newspapers, the *Paterson Daily Press* and the *Newark Journal*. The *Paterson* editors commented that the issue of woman suffrage:

Letter written by Lucy Stone on December 18, 1858. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.


Orange, New Jersey, Dec. 18, 1858

Mr. Mandeville, Tax Collector, Sir:

Enclosed I return my tax bill, without paying it. My reason for doing so is that women suffer taxation, and yet have no representation, which is not only unjust to one half the adult population, but is contrary to our theory of government. For years some women have been paying their taxes under protest, but still taxes are imposed, and representation is not granted. The only course now left us is to refuse to pay the tax. We know well what the immediate result of this refusal must be.

But we believe that when the attention of men is called to the wide difference between their theory of government and its practice, in this particular, they cannot fail to see the mistake they now make, by imposing taxes on women, while they refuse them the right of suffrage, and that the sense of justice which is in all good men, will lead them to correct it. Then we shall cheerfully pay our taxes---- not'till then.

Respectfully

 Lucy Stone

*...has assumed a position which entitles it at least to candid and dignified discussion on its merits, and should remove it from the arena of ridicule and buffoonery.*

In 1873, Senator Cutler of Morris County oversaw the passage of another law, a supplement to the compulsory education laws, requiring that school board members or "trustees" be literate and permitting women over twenty to hold these offices. New Jersey women in villages and county districts were then granted "school suffrage" in 1887, enabling them to vote for these trustees where such votes took place as part of a school meeting. However, in 1894, the State Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional as it applied to voting for school board members. Still, women continued to vote on school taxes. According to suffragist records, at least fifty women held the office of school trustee by 1895 and at least one African American woman, Mrs. Edward Washington, ran for a seat on a local school board (Haddonfield) as a result of the school suffrage legislation.

Reflecting back on the state's suffrage tradition from the eighteenth century, *Harper's Weekly* took an interest in the New Jersey suffrage question in 1880, commenting:

*If women are competent to vote at school meetings, they can not on other questions involving common interests of the sexes, be classed fairly with criminals and lunatics. This was the conviction of the people of New Jersey many years ago, and women were enfranchised and voted.*

Restoring the right of suffrage required an amendment to the state constitution. Passing an amendment in New Jersey is a complex process, slightly different from that for federal amendments. The legislature must pass the measure in two successive years before the amendment can be submitted to voters. Suffrage legislation faced the formidable hurdle of being presented twice to state legislators and then a third time in a referendum to the voters, all of whom were men. Passage was further hampered by the requirement that, if defeated, an amendment could not be resubmitted to the voters for five years.

In 1890, Dr. Mary D. Hussey, a lawyer in East Orange whose mother Cornelia was a Quaker pioneer for suffrage in the state, used the issue of the loss of school suffrage to re-ignite the suffrage movement in New Jersey, calling on a number of active suffragists to join in resuscitating the NJWSA which had languished during the 1880s. Undoubtedly encouraged by the unification of the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association, the NJWSA adopted a constitution and elected Judge John Whitehead, husband of the suffragist, Cornelia Whitehead, as its president. (Later presidents were women). The Rev. Antoinette Brown Blackwell became president in 1891, then Amelia Dickinson Pope.

Florence Howe Hall, elected president of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association in 1893, attempted to rally women by saying:

*The loss of school suffrage in our state should inspire the women of New Jersey with greater determination to gain full suffrage...*

The organization decided that it should keep women interested in voting in the school elections by printing a leaflet describing the contributions which had been made by female school trustees and informing women that they could still vote on bonds and fiscal appropriations. Through extensive petitioning and lobbying, the women waged a three year battle for school suffrage. Wide spread opposition among state legislators to full school suffrage forced the NJWSA to settle for a proposal to restore only the limited school suffrage of 1887.

The measure passed the legislature in 1895 and 1896. In 1897, after the NJWSA had obtained 7,000 signatures on a school suffrage petition, the legislation passed for the third time. The women again waged a furious campaign of public speeches, newspaper articles, pamphlets, and petitions, and also recruited support from churches, prominent public figures, and other sympathetic organizations, such as the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Grange and the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs. A special election was held on September 28, 1897, but the result was a major disappointment. An amendment to regain school suffrage, to which it was generally supposed there would be practically no opposition, was defeated—75,170 to 65,000. The measure was defeated in urban counties and not supported strongly enough in rural counties to make up the difference. Since the woman suffrage movement was associated with temperance and nativism, it seems likely that the ethnic, Catholic vote in the urban counties may have contributed to defeat of the school suffrage bill.

The labor expended in this campaign was not fully lost, however. Through the efforts of the NJWSA the public

learned that women still had a partial vote in school elections. In Cranford, for example, women helped to pass legislation which built two new schools, one at a cost of \$24,700 and another at a cost of \$11,000. There was certainly irony in the fact that women could go to the polls to vote on school fiscal issues but not for candidates for school trustee.

Despite a succession of failures, the suffragists periodically submitted petitions to the New Jersey Legislature asking for the restoration of the full suffrage they had lost in 1807. In addition to leaflets and petitions, the NJWSA relied on parlor meetings to sway public opinion and build support for woman suffrage. In one year, Dr. Mary Hussey reported that more than 12,000 leaflets had been distributed and 800 suffrage papers were given out at twenty-five meetings. The NJWSA held its annual meetings in Newark during the 1890s and stressed education and networking with other women's organizations as its chief political strategies.

Other progress in New Jersey women's rights could be noted during the 1890s. In 1894, the state legislature passed a law making it possible for a woman to serve as notary, and in 1895 eliminated the ban against a woman as Commissioner of Deeds. In 1895, the state legislature passed a bill allowing women to practice as attorneys. That same year, Mary Philbrook was formally admitted to the bar as the first female attorney in New Jersey. In 1896, Philbrook won passage of a law enabling women to serve as masters of chancery court (that is, officers of the court of equity). Because of the support of suffragists like Florence Howe Hall and Mary Hussey who had introduced Philbrook to Stanton and Anthony, Mary Philbrook became the legal counsel for the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association.

Woman Suffrage Party Survey Card. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE PARTY, 48 EAST 34TH STREET



**FOR VOTERS ONLY**

Will you mark a cross  in front of the statement which expresses your stand on woman suffrage, and give your name and residence.

- I intend to vote for Woman Suffrage
- I am opposed to Woman Suffrage
- I have not formed an opinion

Name..... Address.....

The Woman Suffrage Amendment will come **VOTE YES**   
before the voters November 2nd, 1913

By 1900, eight women were practicing law in the state. Likewise, one hundred women were practicing medicine in New Jersey, despite the fact that no medical training was available in state for women. Women in the northern part of the state could attend the Woman's Medical College of the New York Infirmary, founded in 1868 by the Blackwell sisters as the first medical college run for and by women. Women from the southern part of the state could attend the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania with internship training at the Woman's Hospital in Philadelphia. As medical professionals in New Jersey, women were eventually accepted as members of most county medical societies. However, for many, acceptance required a struggle. Dr. Sophia Presley applied seven times to the Camden County Medical Society before being accepted in 1890. By 1900, however, Dr. Frances S. Janney was elected president of the Burlington County Medical Society, the first woman in the state to receive this honor.

The revitalized NJWSA forged important ties to the New Jersey Woman's Christian Temperance Union founded in Trenton in 1876 and the New Jersey Grange. The NJWCTU became the most highly organized and active group of women in the state. It had seventeen departments, but efforts concentrated largely upon young people and the circulation of literature concerning the evils of alcohol. Relying on tactics later borrowed by the NJWSA, in 1879, the NJWCTU reported that its workers had handed out 30,700 pages of leaflets.

Sarah Corson Downs became president of the NJWCTU with twenty-six chapters in 1881. By 1890 the NJWCTU had grown to 208 chapters and 8,000 members. Under Downs' leadership the state organization worked to

have temperance taught in the schools and became increasingly pro-suffrage.

The NJWCTU also fought the opposition of immigrant groups and the liquor lobby, trying to bring an end to liquor trafficking in the state. Between 1900 and 1906, two-day suffrage rallies were held during the summer months at Ocean Grove at the invitation of the Methodist Camp Meeting Association which advocated temperance. Numerous black women also supported the WCTU, including Ann Harrison of Trenton who regularly attended the meetings and willed her property to the union "to be used only in the cause of temperance."

In rural parts of New Jersey, the Grange or Patrons of Husbandry also demonstrated an interest in the suffrage cause. Local assemblies not only permitted women but required a percentage of female members, to be granted a charter. Women could both vote and hold all leadership positions within the assemblies. Grange women in Vineland were among the earliest suffragists in the state. They reported to the NJWSA that members "frequently discussed and were mostly in favor of woman suffrage." The Grange also had close ties with the WCTU, requiring pledges of abstinence by its members.

Women's clubs emphasized the role of woman as social housekeeper. In 1894, Cornelia Bradford, a member of the Jersey City Woman's Club, established the Whittier House, the first settlement house in the state. The YWCA's of Newark and Trenton followed the policy of helping those who tried to help themselves. This included providing shelter and sometimes work. During the late nineteenth century, The Women's Employment Society of Morristown provided work for unemployed



seamstresses who were paid standard wages for making dresses to be given to the needy.

Local women's clubs were also directed toward self-improvement. Perhaps the best known such club flourished in Orange. It was founded in 1872 when a group of fifteen women met in East Orange upon the invitation of Louise Rile to talk about subjects other than their children or servants. In addition to discussion meetings, the club's fundraising contributed to community projects, giving ten dollars to two schools "towards a library" and enabling the schools to qualify for an equal amount from the state. In time, the Woman's Club of Orange also became more political, taking an active interest in civic affairs. Its members led a drive for signatures on petitions for the restriction of child labor, for state factory inspection, and for preservation of the Palisades.

The Contemporary Club of Trenton was established for similar purposes:

*... to create an organized center of thought and action among women of Trenton, and stimulate an interest in science, literature, art, social and ethical culture, that will render the members helpful to one another and useful to society.*

In 1889, at the twenty-first birthday celebration for the famous New York City club, Sorosis, three New Jersey groups were represented: The Woman's Club of Orange, the El Mora Ladies Literary and Social Club of Elizabeth and the Monday Afternoon Club of Plainfield.

In 1894, the Woman's Club of Orange appealed to other women's clubs in the state to organize a state federation.

Meeting in Orange, the women voted unanimously to follow a suggestion to federate made by Margaret S. Yardley, who became the first president of the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs. Nearly fifty groups, representing communities from throughout the state, with a heavy concentration of clubs from the Newark metropolitan area, became charter members. They included the Friday Club of Bridgeton; Woman's Literary Union, Elizabeth; Monday Afternoon Club, Plainfield; Ray Palmer Club, Newark; Odd Volumes, Jersey City; Wednesday Morning Club, Cranford; and the Haliti Cumi Club, Vineland. The club with the strangest name was the Philitscipora of Newark, derived from the club's interests in philosophy, literature, science, poetry, oratory and art.

The membership and leadership of the various women's organizations were tightly interconnected, with groups such as the NJWSA, Grange and NJWCTU all working together in support of issues like school suffrage. Several leaders of the NJWSA served as leaders of the New Jersey State Federation of Women's Clubs, in particular, Antoinette Brown Blackwell and Florence Howe Hall. The president of the Orange Woman's Club in 1890 was Charlotte Emerson Brown, who helped in the formation of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Black women also organized clubs, and some black women were active in suffrage organizations. One member of a black woman's club was Catherine Scudde, who belonged to the Presbyterian Church in Princeton. Within this community, the Colored Woman's Club taught several branches of industrial skills and furnished entertainment for African American women there.

The work of New Jersey women in these public organizations can be better appreciated when viewed from the perspective of the narrow codes of behavior which severely limited women's activities in the nineteenth century. As clubs became more popular, the Reverend E.R. Craven of Newark condemned women for speaking in public places and charged a fellow minister with disobedience to the divinely enacted ordinance against women speaking in church. After considering the charge against the minister, the Presbytery concluded:

*Inviting women to preach in his pulpit at the regular public services on the Sabbath Day was irregular and unwise, and contrary to the views of the Scriptures and of the Church order derived from them ... and as such misconduct may open the way to disorder and mischief, we affectionately counsel and admonish Brother See to abstain from it in the future.*

Although the clubs provided an outlet for women's social and political interests, the very success of these general interest clubs in New Jersey was believed by state suffragists to have limited the popularity of clubs specifically aimed at suffrage. Demanding full suffrage for women was still perceived as a radical demand; many club women supported only a more limited option like that of school or municipal suffrage. As the 1890s came to a close, the New Jersey suffrage movement was distracted by the many other reform movements of the Progressive Era.

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## ***The National Movement 1900-1915***

While women suffragists of the nineteenth century saw the suffrage struggle as part of a crusade for women's equality, many women at the turn of the century saw woman suffrage as a means to protect the "female sphere." The term suffragist and feminist are sometimes used interchangeably. A feminist is someone (male or female) who views women as the equal of men in all aspects of business and politics. The term suffragist is used for those who support the idea that women should vote. Thus, it is generally safe to assume that while all feminists were suffragists, not all suffragists were feminists. More conservative suffragists usually argued that women needed to vote because they had special moral and personal characteristics that made them different from men. They fought against the idea that giving women the vote would produce radical change in society as a whole. Suspicion of the concept of woman suffrage was widespread even among women, and animosity towards the wider cause of feminism was rampant.

The moderate strategies of the National American Woman Suffrage Association can be seen in the leadership of Anna Howard Shaw between 1904 and 1915. Fearful of alienating its mainstream constituency and political supporters, the organization rejected militancy and relied largely on the education of women and state suffrage campaigns to do the work. Typical of NAWSA arguments were laments that immigrants, criminals and idiots could vote, while women could not. Other arguments focused on the idea that women had higher morals and needed the vote to protect the home.

Postcard of New Jersey Delegation of Suffragists at the White House, 1913. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.



NEW JERSEY DELEGATION OF SUFFRAGISTS AT THE WHITE HOUSE. NOV. 17<sup>TH</sup> 1913.

APR 1914  
W. H. WALKER, N. J.

At this time, the NAWSA also shied away from recruiting black women or immigrants as members for fear of losing support from its largely middle and upper middle class white constituency. The NAWSA increasingly turned to the support of Southern women. As a result, by 1900 numerous black woman suffrage clubs and more general black women's clubs with suffrage projects existed in different parts of the country. African American women were either discouraged in their efforts to help or segregated in their attempts to join demonstrations.

In 1913, for example, NAWSA officials asked Ida Wells Barnett, representing the Alpha Suffrage Club of Chicago, not to march with the white delegation because it might offend certain "unnamed" Southern women. Likewise, the national women's club movement expressed its concern for "race suicide" and "social purity," code words for the mixing of ethnic groups.

These social attitudes were reflected in the NAWSA publication, *The Woman's Journal*. The four-page weekly newspaper contained articles about the suffrage struggle in all the states, lessening the isolation that women's organizations undoubtedly felt.

In addition to articles about the suffrage struggle and the "women's sphere," the paper also included news related to women's history including that of ethnic groups. One article, for example, described a monument to Sacajawea; another offered a lengthy obituary for Harriet Tubman. This chronicle of suffrage progress provided an archive for suffragists across the nation.

Another source of inspiration was the radical English movement for woman suffrage. In the early twentieth

century, English suffragists, led by Emmeline Pankhurst, regularly engaged in various forms of political protest to publicize their cause. They marched, destroyed public property, attacked politicians and even went to jail. One English suffragist threw herself in front of a group of horses coming around the bend at a race track, deciding the cause needed a martyr! Alice Paul, a New Jersey Quaker, was studying in London during this period. She gained experience in this confrontational political style as part of her work with the English suffrage movement. However, in 1909, Alice Paul returned home from her studies at the London School of Economics to find a much more sedate American suffrage scene.

In 1912, Paul joined the NAWSA and became co-chair with Lucy Burns of the Congressional Committee. Drawing on her experience in England, Paul staged a parade of 7,000 suffragists in Washington, D.C. at the same time as President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. Federal troops were called in, largely due to the hostile reaction of the onlookers to the parade. The subsequent investigation and notoriety surrounding the parade made Paul a national figure.

Remaining in Washington, Paul focused all her attention on pressure for a federal amendment. Her campaign was based on constitutional principles rather than arguments on the special nature of the female character.

Carrie Chapman Catt had worked in the New York suffrage referendum campaign and was widely believed in that state to be the best organizer in the suffrage movement nationwide. Her assumption of the presidency of the NAWSA after Anna Howard Shaw stepped down in 1915 gave a boost to morale and brought focus to the national movement.

Catt's move into the presidency marked the "last hope" of many suffragists. She immediately made major organizational and strategic changes that infused new life in the movement and helped turn the tide toward victory. Recognizing the failure of the state-by-state effort, Catt developed what she called her "Winning Plan" for gaining an amendment to the Constitution by throwing out the old bureaucratic structure and personnel and replacing them with women dedicated to working on the task on a full time, professional basis.

For a while, the moderate suffragists seemed to be making steady progress toward suffrage in the western states. In 1890 Wyoming was admitted to statehood having had woman suffrage as a territory since 1869. Colorado in 1893 and Idaho and Utah in 1896 also adopted woman suffrage. In 1910 Washington joined these states, followed by California in 1911. In 1913, women in Illinois were the first east of the Mississippi to gain suffrage in township and presidential elections. Surprisingly, urban bosses in Chicago enthusiastically supported the change. By 1916 suffrage was also extended to Nevada, Oregon, Kansas and Arizona.

But despite this progress, the South appeared determined not to extend suffrage, and suffrage in the East was challenged by political bosses, liquor interests, and others who feared that woman suffrage would result in prohibition.

In 1915 New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania held referenda on the question of woman suffrage. Both suffragists and antisuffragists realized that this was a turning point in the long campaign for the vote. If even one of these states carried woman suffrage, the national political scene would change dramatically.

## *The New Jersey Campaign 1900-1915*

Because the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) took a state-by-state approach, the prospects for women in each state depended largely on the local organizations which had to petition the legislatures and persuade popular opinion. The national suffrage organizations kept track of the progress being made in each state and reported the states' stories in their newspapers to provide encouragement to others. Despite this encouragement, the early heritage of women voting here and the presence of many suffrage leaders in the state, New Jersey suffragists found the going rough.

A period of relative inactivity during the first decade of the twentieth century followed the defeat in 1897 by the voters of the amendment to the state constitution giving women the right to vote for school trustees. Lillian Feickert and Mary Philbrook, counsel to the NJWSA, worked to mobilize a more concerted effort within the state. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, suffragists joined the many social, cultural and civic clubs popular among women in an effort to promote the suffrage cause. Mary Philbrook, for example, lectured widely in these groups about the difficulties she had experienced in being admitted to the bar, while adding her endorsement of the woman suffrage movement.

A broad range of clubs and political groups were enlisted in the cause directly. Among these were the Paterson Business and Professional Women's Club, The Civic Club of Stone Harbor, the Rutherford Equal

Picture of Mrs. Mina C. Van Winkle (President, Women's Political Union, NJ) reading the headline "Suffragists claim 19 of 21 NJ Counties," in the New York American. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey."



Suffrage League, both conferences of the Baptist and Methodist churches, the New Jersey Education Association, the Central Building Trades Union, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Anti-Saloon League and the West Jersey Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church. The membership of suffrage clubs formed an interlocking network with the various women's clubs which flourished during this time.

Dr. Mary Hussey and Florence Howe Hall, a daughter of Julia Ward Howe, were charter members of the Jersey City Woman's Club. Florence Howe Hall also served as the president of the Essex County Chapter of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association, the president of the Plainfield Branch of the Alliance of Unitarians and of the State Federation of Women's Clubs of New Jersey. Dr. Mary Hussey helped found the Orange Political Study Club around the time she helped revitalize the NJWSA.

At meetings of the Jersey City Woman's Club, Mary Philbrook met Cornelia Bradford, founder of the Whittier House. Philbrook became the legal counsel to the Whittier House as well as to the NJWSA. Concerned with the problem of child labor, Bradford, who became a supporter of the suffrage movement, felt that votes for women were also votes for reform of such abuses. In 1914, she spoke before the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association on "The Value of the Vote in Social Service Work." Ella Carter, Clara Laddey and Lillian Feickert were all members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

Not all members of women's clubs were suffragists. Between 1906 and 1909 the State Federation of Women's Clubs endorsed suffrage for women; however, the organization moved away from this position because the

membership became more divided on the issue and did not endorse suffrage again until 1917. By contrast, the General Federation of Women's Clubs endorsed suffrage in 1915.

In 1911, Mary Philbrook brought a test case to court claiming the right of New Jersey women to vote. *Carpenter v. Cornish* cited the 1776 constitution of New Jersey which allowed women to vote as its justification. Harriet Carpenter, a Newark school teacher who owned property in Passaic Township, demanded that since she paid taxes she be registered as a voter there. The case drew national publicity, and Philbrook's brief was widely circulated. Nevertheless, the New Jersey Supreme Court decided against Harriet Carpenter's claim of a right to vote, stipulating that the vote for women was "nothing more than a privilege."

The high point of this period was unquestionably the campaign for a state referendum on an amendment for woman suffrage in 1915. By this date, Jeanette Rankin, Republican of Montana, had been elected to serve in the House of Representatives. New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts also had woman suffrage referenda before their voters that year. However, the struggle in the eastern states faced serious obstacles, such as ward bosses, liquor interests and concerted efforts by anti-suffrage forces.

The suffrage amendment which had been proposed unsuccessfully in New Jersey in many previous legislatures passed the Assembly by a vote of 46 to 5 and the Senate by a vote of 14 to 5 in 1915. Despite this apparent endorsement, the political parties did not work for the amendment and many party bosses opposed it. The suffrage amendment did win the

support of the Progressives, the Socialists and the Prohibitionists in New Jersey, some of the political leaders of the two major parties, and the backing of the Anti-Saloon League and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

A major question for both sides involved the issue of liquor. The pro-suffrage campaign accused the "antis" of receiving money from the liquor interests, and the antis played to men's fears that a vote for women was a vote for prohibition. Essex and Hudson counties, which had the most votes, were home to many of the liquor interests. In these areas, the political bosses worked hard to defeat the amendment.

Key elements of the pro-suffrage campaign involved trying to get President Wilson to support the cause. He finally did, but restricted his support saying he would personally vote for the suffrage amendment, but could not speak for his party. Equally disappointing to the suffragists was the fact that he did not make his announcement until just before the election, giving them little time to take advantage of the endorsement.

Other speakers recruited to the cause were former presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan and congressmen and senators from western suffrage states. Colorado State Senator Helen Ring Robinson made speeches throughout New Jersey. Joe Tumulty, Wilson's secretary, returned to the state to speak for the measure.

Among the churches endorsing the amendment was the Camden Baptist Association which resolved unanimously that:

*We hereby endorse equal suffrage and recommend it to the people as a measure for the promotion of temperance, the protection of the home and the building of higher ideals in national life.*

Since only men would be voting in the election to grant woman suffrage, support from prominent New Jersey men was critical. The New Jersey Men's League for Woman Suffrage was led by Banking Commissioner George M. LaMonte. The president of Princeton University declared himself for suffrage, but many of the faculty were antis. Just before the election a group of prominent New Jersey men, including Thomas Edison, made a public statement in support of suffrage which was carried by newspapers throughout the state. Republican Mayor Mark Fagan of Jersey City and his Democratic predecessor, H. Otto Wittpenn, husband of suffragist Caroline Wittpenn, both endorsed the amendment.

Attracting working-class men to the cause posed problems for the suffragists. One opportunity arose when the president of the New Jersey Firefighters' Relief Association allowed representatives from both pro- and anti-suffrage groups to address their convention in Atlantic City. The anti-suffrage speaker went first; when the pro-suffrage speaker began, considerable commotion broke out among the firefighters. The president threatened to remove those who could not give respectful attention, at which point several hundred men left the convention hall. Organizations endorsing suffrage in 1915 included the State Grange and the Letter Carriers' Association. Nationally, the Socialist and Progressive Parties, the American Library Association,



Postcard of Suffragists band advertising a concert. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.



Postcard of Suffragists band advertising a concert. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.



the National Catholic Women's League, and the Council of Jewish Women all supported the movement.

Securing the support of the New Jersey Education Association was another significant development. In 1913, Elisabeth Almira Allen became the first woman president of the New Jersey Education Association. A prominent advocate of pensions for teachers and women's rights, Allen had taught in Atlantic City for many years. Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, leader of the NAWSA, spoke at the educators' convention in Atlantic City. Shaw spent several days in the state speaking in Gloucester and Camden counties and then moving north to campaign in places like Morristown.

Suffragists put pressure on the 13,000 female teachers to help turn out the male vote. Teachers were told that if each of them took responsibility for one vote for suffrage, the amendment would carry the day. Other targeted groups included the male and female factory workers at the Westinghouse Electric Company of Newark and street car conductors in Trenton. One day, the Standard Oil Company plant in Bayonne closed a half hour early so that workers could listen to suffrage speakers. In Newark, Samuel Gompers spoke in favor of suffrage at the Newark Labor Union Suffrage League. The dyers and weavers in the textile mills of Paterson were invited to a formal debate on suffrage sponsored by the local YMCA. Speaking in favor of suffrage was Sofia M. Loebinger, a militant suffragist; speaking against it was a former N.J. legislator, Henry Marelli.

Little effort seems to have been addressed to winning support of racial or ethnic minorities. A rare paid newspaper advertisement in a German language daily was directed at telling German Americans how to vote.

Of all the immigrant groups, Germans were least likely to support suffrage because of their ties to the beer brewing industry. In fact, the national organization of German Catholics had criticized Theodore Roosevelt for his support of suffrage. The organization's slogan, "hausfrauen nicht ausfrauen," meant that women belonged in the home, not outside of it.

Clara Laddey of Arlington, President of the NJWSA from 1908-1912 and a German immigrant herself, specialized in speaking to German societies around the state. Her membership in the WCTU, however, probably did not win her many friends in those societies. Laddey also marched at the head of the NJWSA delegation in the first suffrage parade in New York City and was an American delegate to the International Woman Suffrage Congress in Budapest, Hungary, in 1913.

The *Newark Evening News* reported on October 9, 1915, that Mary Church Terrell, a prominent African American woman, had encouraged black men to support woman suffrage out of a sense of justice. At the same meeting Alice Dunbar, wife of the poet Paul Dunbar and a leader in the National Association of Colored Women, argued that suffrage would not take women out of the home any more than church activities had. Other black women associated with the movement in New Jersey included one of the founders of the NAACP, Grace Baxter Fenderson. Cordelia Thomas Greene Johnson, founder of the Modern Beautician Association and president of the Jersey City chapter of the NAACP spoke around the state to groups of African American women and men on behalf of suffrage.

Dr. Florence Spearing Randolph, feminist, minister, and temperance worker oversaw the growth of the New

Jersey Federation of Colored Women's Clubs (NJFCWC) between 1915 and 1927, pulling in temperance groups, missionary societies and clubs for the betterment of self and society. By the 1920s, the NJFCWC included in its membership over thirty-five hundred domestics, day workers, doctors and lawyers who met annually in Atlantic City. Randolph also served as chaplain to the National Association of Colored Women, as an organizer and lecturer for the WCTU and on the executive board of the NJWSA.

Randolph encouraged the membership of the NJFCWC to use their influence to get publicity in the newspapers, to change laws, and to gain appointments on important boards in an effort to wipe out racism, sexism and colonialism.

On behalf of the NJFCWC, Randolph appealed directly to President Woodrow Wilson, asking him to address the issues of race rioting, lynching, and the raping of black women. She also spoke in 1915 in front of the New Jersey Legislature in support of woman suffrage and worked with Lillian Feickert and Republican women on this cause.

The efforts of the suffragists, generally organized at the county level, included the widespread distribution of leaflets and broadsides explaining the suffrage arguments. Most leaflets were distributed during suffrage marches or sent through the mail. Suffragists claimed to have distributed as many as 20,000 flyers in a day.

These tracts made the case that suffrage for women was a logical and historically based extension of human rights in this country. Proponents seemed to assume that men would see the validity of the cause if it were explained in

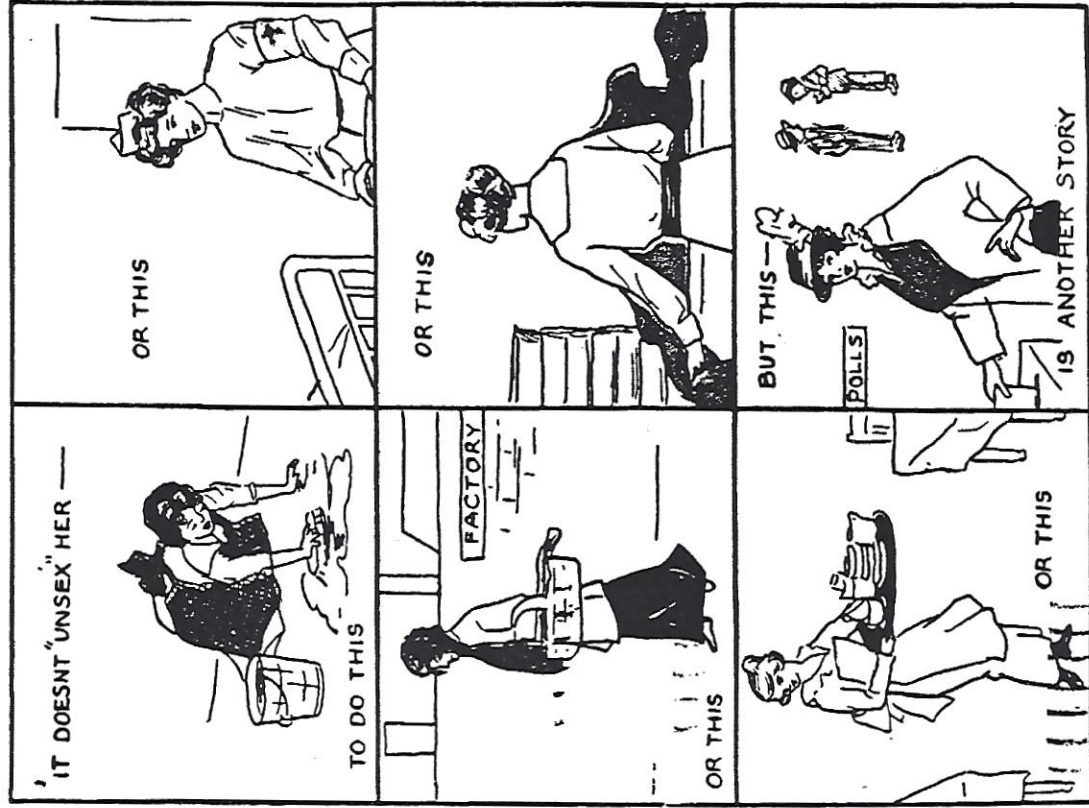
rational terms. The most commonly used arguments stated that the only other persons denied suffrage in the state were foreigners, criminals and the insane.

To combat the argument that suffrage would cause women to neglect their responsibilities in the home, the NJWSA published a pamphlet in 1915 in Plainfield entitled "The Better Babies Pamphlet," an attempt to prove that women who vote had healthier babies. The picture of a baby on the cover carried the caption "I wish my mother had a vote—to keep the germs away." According to Lillian Feickert, the states with the lowest infant mortality were all woman suffrage states!

Suffrage leaders in Paterson organized a coffee house to capitalize on the large crowds attracted by the immensely popular evangelist, Billy Sunday. The coffee house was directly behind the tabernacle and richly decorated with yellow suffrage signs and literature. Sunday's audience included as many as 1400 at one time—many of whom had traveled across the state. The newspaper in Paterson reported that Billy Sunday made a public statement in support of suffrage, despite the fact that he had been entertained by Jennie Tuttle Hobart, widow of former vice president Garret Hobart, who had served under President William McKinley, and who was a prominent anti-suffragist leader there.

Excursions in favor of suffrage, whether by train, boat, car or foot, were sponsored by local suffrage organizations to gain publicity for the cause. One such march in Monmouth County began in Long Branch, proceeded to Red Bank, then divided, with half the group going on to Seabright and Atlantic Highlands and the other contingent going to Freehold, Adelphia, Farmington, Hamilton, and finally Asbury Park. Perhaps

Postcard cartoon by the Women Suffrage Association.  
From the collections of The New Jersey Historical  
Society, Newark, New Jersey.



# VOTES FOR WOMEN

the most unusual symbol for the movement was the "suffrage camel" which the Newark office lent out to other groups for their marches and rallies.

Dances were also used as fundraisers. The Trenton Civics and Suffrage Association sponsored a Lincoln dance in February, 1915, where the season's newest dances were demonstrated. The Women's Political Union of Newark held a series of balls, including one in 1914 and one in 1916 which raised funds for the cause. A huge rally took place in the ballroom of the Essex and Sussex Hotel in Spring Lake. East Orange staged a large celebration honoring Lucy Stone's protest against "taxation without representation." Other tactics included national contests on women and the vote which were promoted by the local suffrage societies. The *American Suffragette* magazine sponsored a national essay contest in 1911, and the NAWSA, a poster contest in 1915.

Events on a smaller scale included a whist party and a Japanese evening organized by the Junior Equal Suffrage League. The Atlantic City Woman Suffrage League promoted the idea of a "suffrage garden." The town of Collingswood featured "Suffrage Girls" at a children's carnival. The Hunterdon County Fair was the scene for the flying of a suffragist balloon. Montclair boasted a "suffrage school." Organizers in New York proposed that women workers go on a one-day strike to demonstrate the importance of women to the economy, but the idea did not get wide support and was not tried in New Jersey.

Newspaper coverage throughout the state was limited, reflecting the lack of interest of the political parties and the major events taking place in the war in Europe.

Sixteen of the thirty-seven dailies in New Jersey favored suffrage; four opposed it, and the remainder were neutral. The *Trenton True American* and the *Trenton Evening Times* were among those papers in favor of the referendum of 1915. The *Newark Evening News* gave considerable space and sympathy to the cause. In newspapers which were supportive, many suffragists wrote lengthy letters to the editors explaining their views. Overall, the newspapers were willing to print anything the suffragists sent them, although typically on the women's page where it was not likely to be read by prospective male voters.

During the days of the referendum campaign, women of New Jersey continued to exercise the small degree of school suffrage that they held, sometimes with interesting results. In Washingtonville, a school district in North Plainfield, women turned out en masse to support the building of a larger school house. On a similar question in Dover, women voters outnumbered men three to one. Also in 1915, Thomas L. Raymond, the pro-suffrage mayor of Newark, appointed Beatrice Winsler, a member of the Women's Political Union, to the Board of Education. The Union had pressed the Mayor to appoint a woman to serve on the Board.

In the final days of the campaign, both sides insisted that momentum was on their side, and the newspapers generally thought the vote was too close to call. On election day suffragists recruited poll watchers for as many wards as possible and organized cars to drive voters to the polls. Many had predicted a light vote, but in fact the vote was relatively large for an off-year election and resulted in the registration of many new male voters.

In the end, suffragists complained of election fraud, specifically citing the fact that in numerous localities, voters who had been on line when the polls closed were not permitted to vote. However, when the final votes were tallied and the measure went down to defeat by almost 50,000 votes, it became clear that these minor complaints had not significantly affected the election. The *New York Times* reported that the use of "Negro women as suffrage watchers at polling places" was thought to have lost votes for the amendment in Atlantic City.

Among those communities which supported suffrage were Metuchen, East Orange, Belleville, Nutley, Glen Ridge and South Orange. In Newark only fifteen of the 189 voting districts went for the amendment. Mina Van Winkle of the Women's Political Union charged that there were "corrupt political influences in the state," but no substantial evidence has been documented.

The defeat of the referendum in New Jersey was a significant setback for the suffrage cause and foreshadowed the negative vote in New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Moreover, New Jersey law did not permit the amendment to be reintroduced into the legislature for five years. Since the amendment had to be submitted to two successive legislatures for approval, this meant that a New Jersey amendment was at least seven years off.

For some suffragists the defeat of the New Jersey referendum was merely one more hurdle to cross. A delegation of New Jersey women showed up at a New York suffrage parade the following week carrying a sign which read "delayed but not defeated." Lillian Feickert, president of the NJWSA, announced that the following year the suffrage forces would present a proposal for a

New Jersey law permitting women to vote in presidential primaries. She argued that since the primary was not a direct vote for an officeholder, but only for a candidate, participation in primaries was not subject to the limitations of the New Jersey Constitution of 1844. Thus, women should be permitted to vote.

Alice Paul of Moorestown, who had spent all of 1915 working in Washington rather than participating in the New Jersey campaign, realized that the clear defeat in New Jersey would shift the focus to the national amendment, where she believed it belonged. She boldly declared:

*The defeat of suffrage in New Jersey will greatly stimulate the movement for an amendment to the national Constitution enfranchising women. For over sixty years women have been trying to win suffrage for the state by the state referendum method advocated by President Wilson. It has meant the expenditure of an enormous amount of energy, of time and of money... We approach the next session of Congress full of hope that the leverage which the suffrage movement possesses as a result of the fact that one fourth of the Senate and one sixth of the House, and one sixth of the electoral votes now come from suffrage states will mean the passage of the national suffrage amendment, thus doing away with the costly and laborious state campaigns [like that] unsuccessfully waged in New Jersey.*

## *The Anti-Suffrage Response*

The anti-suffrage movement focused its attention on arguments that only 10% of women wanted the vote, that states which offered equal suffrage often resulted in fewer property rights for women, and that such enfranchisement would distract women from their roles as wives and mothers. Many concerns were voiced that woman suffrage would mean increased taxes to support social welfare legislation.

Antis argued that if women voted, they would have to take on the other duties of citizenship which would interfere with the role of mother. They asserted that suffrage would "unsex" women and destroy the family. This argument capitalized on the national hysteria over the rising divorce rate, described by a New Jersey governor as "one of the most formidable perils which menaces the social order." These arguments implied that the emancipation of women would prove a threat to the family and ultimately to civilization.

Anti-suffragists claimed that there was no reason to be proud of western states, citing frequent divorce and polygamy among their ills. They also noted that in no male suffrage state was the wife called upon to support the husband. In fact, New Jersey law required that husbands pay their wives' debts, but that wives did not have to pay their husbands' debts. Anti-suffrage rhetoric indicated that all this "protection" of women's rights would change, should women get the vote.

The strategies of the antis were similar to those of the suffragists - they distributed leaflets, made speeches and participated in debates. On one notable occasion, the

antis requested the use of the auditorium in Asbury Park and were denied it because the founder of Asbury Park, James A. Bradley, a Methodist, accused them of being tied to liquor interests. This led to charges and countercharges, with the suffragists demanding affidavits to prove that anti-suffrage funding did not come from the brewers' association.

Prominent men were enlisted in the battle against suffrage. State Senator James E. Martine made speeches for the antis, reporting that he had met with Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii and that she had reported to him that she found the work of government too fatiguing. Edward Ehlers of Rockaway, Chairman of the Morris County Republican Committee which opposed suffrage, issued a statement to the newspapers explaining his views:

*In Morris County President Wilson was never popular, having received a minority vote, so his favoring woman suffrage will have little favorable influence .... There are certain times where women voting might be advantageous, but on the whole I am of the opinion that the added tax burden offsets these advantages.*

Prominent female members of the anti-suffrage campaign included Mrs. Thomas J. Preston (formerly Mrs. Grover Cleveland), Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge and Mrs. Jennie Tuttle Hobart (widow of former Vice President Garret Hobart, who had served under President William McKinley). In Paterson, Hobart was very active in community affairs, lending her prestige to anti-suffrage work and helping to organize the Paterson branch of the New Jersey Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. This group described woman suffrage as a "great injustice" and a "grave menace to our state."



Anti Suffrage flyer. From the collections of The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

## **MAN'S GOVERNMENT BY MAN**

Every woman knows that the INTERESTS OF WOMEN—wives, mothers, sisters, daughters—ARE DEARER TO THE MEN THAN THEIR OWN.

EVERY SUFFRAGIST, by demanding the vote, practically DECLARES THAT THE HUSBANDS, FATHERS, SONS AND BROTHERS ARE NOT TO BE TRUSTED BY THEIR WIVES, MOTHERS, SISTERS AND DAUGHTERS.

Should strife and conflict come to our shores, as come they may, TO WHOM BUT OUR MEN CAN WE TURN FOR PROTECTION?

If men alone can protect and govern in times of storm and strife, shall we not PLACE EQUAL RELIANCE UPON THEM WHEN WE ARE AT PEACE?

The power of the BALLOT RESTS ENTIRELY UPON THE POWER TO ENFORCE THE LAW.

Man's government by women would be A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE POWER TO ENFORCE ITS DECREES.

Government without force behind it would be government merely in name, because unable to command obedience or respect.

Unless there exists behind the ballot the power to enforce its mandate, THE BALLOT DEGENERATES FROM POWER TO WEAKNESS AND WEAKNESS SPELLS ANARCHY AND RUIN IN GOVERNMENT.

THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE, THE PROTECTION OF LIFE AND PROPERTY, DEPEND UPON THE EXERCISE OF PHYSICAL FORCE WHEN NECESSARY, AND BY MAN ALONE CAN IT BE EXERCISED.

**Vote NO on Woman Suffrage, October 19th, 1915**

New Jersey Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage

Headquarters

**137 East State Street**

Trenton, New Jersey



## ***The Arrest of Alison Low Turnbull Hopkins***

Alison Hopkins was born in Morristown, New Jersey, in 1880. Her family was socially prominent, and she became involved early with the civic life of the town. In 1914, Hopkins became active in the suffrage struggle which was focused on getting a suffrage amendment in the state of New Jersey. Hopkins believed that: only through political power could women secure the reforms they wished for in our government and in our labor laws. She went on to join the Congressional Union, serving on the executive committee.

After New Jersey's state referendum failed in 1915, Hopkins helped to organize a New Jersey branch of the Congressional Union in 1916. The tactics of the national CU were to defeat Democratic candidates at every level including that of the president. However, the New Jersey chapter was not comfortable with that position. Wilson had endeared himself to New Jersey suffragists by supporting their 1915 campaign. Moreover, Hopkins' husband was head of Wilson's re-election campaign in New Jersey. Men like J. A. Hopkins were supportive of the suffragist cause. Hopkins was also state campaign manager for Woodrow Wilson.

In 1917 Hopkins joined a group of women from around the country picketing at the White House. She was arrested and sentenced to sixty days in prison, but released after three days due to her husband's direct appeal to President Wilson. After being released, Hopkins wrote a letter to Wilson complaining that her release had prevented her from getting justice from the courts and had been done only to save him

embarrassment. After sending the letter, she returned to the White House with a banner, and stood there for ten minutes. The banner said:

*We ask not pardon for ourselves but justice for  
all American Women.*

A large, curious crowd gathered, but nobody bothered her. While she stood there, the President passed through the gates and saluted. For many others the experience of prison was more painful, lasting as long as seven months. Hopkins remained a leader of the National Women's Party through the ratification struggle. After ratification she left politics but continued to participate in Heterodoxy, a feminist club which met in New York City.

## ***Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment***

The struggle for the federal amendment finally came to a head in 1918 during the last months of the war when Wilson increased his efforts in favor of woman suffrage. President Wilson had argued that he could not ask Congress to address the suffrage question while the war was going on, but he may have been motivated by the fact that some U.S. allies were passing suffrage laws around this time. England did so in 1918 while several other nations, Iceland, Finland, and Australia among them, passed suffrage laws even earlier.

In January, 1918, Wilson met with a group of Democratic Congressmen about suffrage. According to the report of one Congressman, the President:

*... very frankly and earnestly advised us to vote for the amendment as an act of right and justice to the women of the country and the world.*

Wilson couched his argument in favor of suffrage in language closely linking the issue to women's involvement in the war effort:

*We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right? This war could not have been fought, either by the other nations engaged or by America, if it had not been for the services of the women ...*

*Woman Suffrage in New Jersey p. 40*

As the struggle moved toward the Senate, the suffragists exerted increased pressure on Wilson to vote in favor of the bill. On September 27, Wilson telephoned six senators to ask them to vote for suffrage. Then, on September 30, the president gave a speech before the Senate, requesting that they consider the bill as a "war measure." Wilson also appealed to the senators to vote for woman suffrage on grounds that echoed the arguments which had surfaced in the suffrage movement around the turn of the century. The promise attached to woman suffrage was the promise of a better country:

*I tell you plainly that this measure which I urge upon you is vital to the winning of the war and to the energies alike of preparation and of battle.... And not to the winning of the war only. It is vital to the right solution of the great problems which we must settle, and settle immediately, when the war is over.*

Despite Wilson's personal appeal, the suffrage measure was defeated by a vote of 62 to 34 in the Senate. This was an election year, however, and the National Women's Party responded to this setback by working energetically for the defeat of those senators who had opposed the amendment and were up for re-election.

Another suffrage vote in the Senate on February 10, 1919 lost by a margin of only one. President Wilson called the Sixty-sixth Congress into special session on May 20, 1919. The House re-passed the amendment by more than the necessary two-thirds majority for an amendment to the Constitution with a vote of 304 to 89. In the Senate, many opposed to woman suffrage simply failed to attend Congress that day. Voting went quickly and

Two cartoons printed in The Daily Home News, from 1919.

**ONE MORE STEP TO THE PROMISED LAND**



**THE REST ARE EASY**



without fanfare; the Senate finally carried the motion by the necessary two-thirds so that the issue could be put before the voters in every state.

The ratification process by the states did not proceed without difficulty. Ratification by three-fourths of the states is needed for a bill to become an amendment to the Constitution. As anticipated, the greatest struggle occurred in those states which had not granted their women suffrage up to this point. Paradoxically, however, states which did have suffrage laws also posed some problems. For a variety of reasons, these state legislatures dragged their heels and exasperated suffragists who had counted on early action from these states for leadership in the process.

Illinois was the first state to ratify, followed closely by Wisconsin. Michigan was the first to call a special session of its legislature for the purpose of ratifying and ratified third. Over the next few months most of the other western and northeastern states joined the ranks. New Jersey was the twenty-ninth state to ratify in 1919. The Solid South, as was expected, refused to ratify. However, the thirty-third state to ratify was Oklahoma, and the thirty-fourth, West Virginia. Finally in August of 1920, Tennessee became the thirty-sixth and last state necessary for the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. The struggle for suffrage was won.

***Suffragist  
Biographies***

The Women's Project of New Jersey

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## **Mary Philbrook 1872 - 1958**

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Mary Philbrook, the first woman to be admitted to the bar in New Jersey, was born in Washington, D.C. on August 6, 1872.

In 1878 the family moved to Jersey City, N.J., where Philbrook attended Public School No. 11 at Bergen Square and Jersey City High School. A course in stenography at Drake's Business School completed her formal schooling. Her first job was as secretary in the law office of Russ and Oppenheimer in Hoboken. Two years later she became secretary to Henry Gaede, who was a law partner with James Minturn, corporation counsel for Hoboken. Minturn (who later became a justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court) encouraged Philbrook's ambition to become a lawyer, and sponsored her petition to the court to be allowed to take the bar exam.

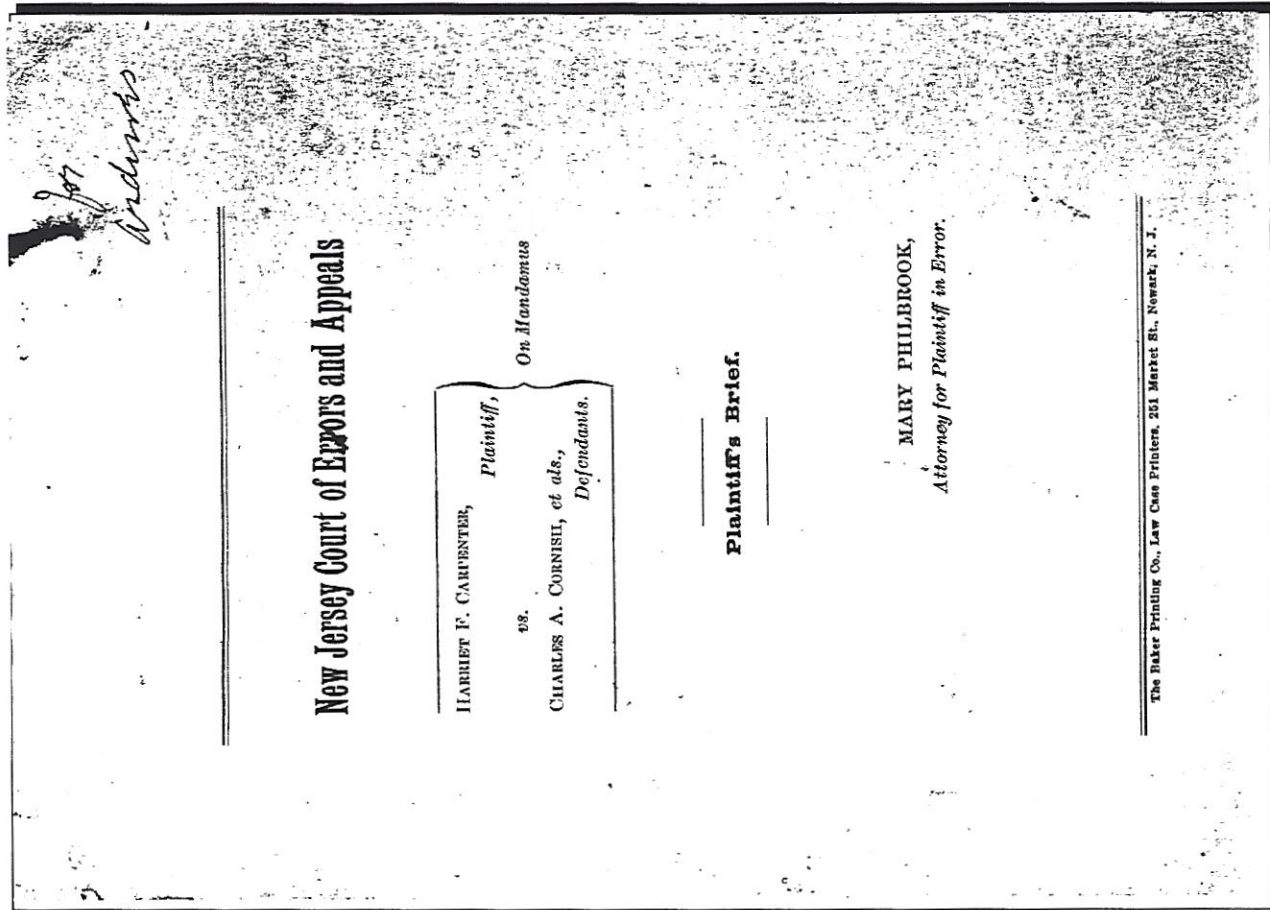
Philbrook's lack of college or law school degree was no obstacle to her admission to the bar. At that time, according to a New Jersey statute, any citizen (after "reading" the law in the office of an attorney) could apply for admission. A real obstacle was the fact that no woman in New Jersey had ever sought admission to the bar, and it was on this ground alone that the New Jersey Supreme Court refused Philbrook's petition. Although she had not previously seen herself as, in her words, a "crusader for women's rights," but simply an ambitious woman seeking a good way to make a living, this rejection by the court was a critical factor in determining Philbrook's future course. Supported by

the membership of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association, Philbrook lobbied in the New Jersey legislature for a law specifically enabling women to become lawyers. Finally, she was admitted to the bar in June 1895.

Philbrook began her practice in Jersey City and then opened an office of her own. While still a struggling young lawyer, she volunteered her services as the counsel for the Legal Aid Society at Whittier House, a social settlement founded in downtown Jersey City in 1894. Suffragists like Philbrook were often the activists in broad-based organizations such as the Jersey City Woman's Club. Through club activities they were able to draw the support of middle-class, reform-minded women to their cause. Philbrook delivered many lectures about women's rights to club women around the state. She also campaigned for the establishment of a public college for women.

In 1902, Philbrook moved her law practice to Newark, where she organized the first statewide Legal Aid Association. Appointed the first female probation officer for Essex County in 1902, she organized the juvenile court system in Newark and served on the commission headed by Caroline Alexander Wittpenn which spearheaded the drive to establish the New Jersey Reformatory for Women. She was appointed undercover investigator for the United States Immigration Committee which conducted an inquiry into white slavery (importing immigrant women for the purpose of prostitution). Philbrook traveled across the country, gathering evidence and prepared the report that was submitted to Congress in 1910 and resulted in the passage of the Mann Act.

Mary Philbrook's legal brief for Harriet F. Carpenter, a Passaic Woman who sued the town for refusing to allow her to register to vote. From the collections of the New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.





While Philbrook worked tirelessly for many of the reforms supported by the women's movement in the Progressive Era, she did not neglect her career. Because of the public attention brought by her legal aid and penal reform work, she drew many clients and built a prosperous practice in Newark. She was the first woman appointed to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1906 based on the constitutional claim of New Jersey women to vote.

In 1914, ill health forced Philbrook to retire from public life for three years. When she recovered, women were mobilizing themselves for World War I. Philbrook volunteered to serve as a Red Cross lawyer in France. Returning to Washington D.C., she participated in some of the militant demonstrations of the National Women's Party (NWP).

With suffrage won, Philbrook returned to New Jersey, where she organized support for the removal of discriminatory laws and for an equal rights amendment to the state constitution. Her position was too radical for her former allies in the suffrage movement, some of whom had worked hard in the Progressive Era for protective legislation for women, legislation that equality-minded women like Philbrook perceived as restrictive. In 1929 Philbrook's demand for equal working conditions cost her the position of counsel for the city of Newark.

During the 1930s, Philbrook and Alice Paul worked at the Geneva conferences of the League of Nations to include an equal rights clause in the covenant. Mary Philbrook catalogued the papers of the NWP at its Blair House headquarters and helped to organize the N.J.

chapter of the Women's Archives, established by historian Mary Beard.

In the 1940s, Philbrook renewed her campaign for an equal rights amendment to the state constitution. At the 1947 Constitutional Convention (when she was seventy-five) she organized a coalition of women's groups to lobby for an equal rights provision in the new constitution. Though opposed by many powerful organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, Philbrook's delegation was able to secure changes in the language of the constitution (i.e., person for he) that, though little noted at the time, were cited by the New Jersey Supreme Court in 1979 as grounds to rule that sex discrimination was constitutionally prohibited in New Jersey.

From The Women's Project of New Jersey publication *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990), essay by *Barbara Burns Patrick*.

## ***Lillian Ford Feickert 1877 - 1945***

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Lillian Ford Feickert was born on July 20, 1877, in Brooklyn, N.Y. Her parents were Episcopalians, of English, Irish, and Scottish descent. Her mother came from the West Indies. Her father, a lawyer, was born in New York State. Feickert could trace her direct ancestors back to 1622, when Martha Ford, a widow with two young children, ventured across the Atlantic to America on the ship Fortune. This plucky female ancestor was clearly an important role model. The Fords' home at South Elliott Place in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn had a view of lower Manhattan across the East River.

When Feickert was twenty-five she married Edward Foster Feickert, a banker from New York. The couple moved immediately to Plainfield, N.J., where Edward joined the newly organized Plainfield Trust Company as assistant secretary. Over the next eight years Feickert led a relatively quiet suburban life, tending her home and garden, as her husband moved up in the banking world. The Feickerts suffered a personal tragedy when their only child died in infancy, an event they never mentioned in later years. In 1910 he organized and assumed the vice-presidency of what was to become a much larger institution: the State Trust Company. In 1908 the Feickerts moved to a large property at the foothills of the Watchung Mountains in North Plainfield Township.

Even in this period Feickert exhibited some of the organizational talents and boundless energy that would fully emerge in the next decade. She organized and led

local, and then statewide, mission study classes for Grace Episcopal Church of Plainfield. She also joined a number of women's organizations, among them the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association (NJWSA). When Clara Laddey, NJWSA president, appointed her enrollment chairman of the association in late 1910, Feickert became a public figure for the first time.

She proved to be an ideal choice for the post. Borrowing methods from the political parties, she supervised house-to-house visits, conducted indoor and outdoor meetings, and oversaw mass distribution of suffrage literature. In just two years the association grew from a few hundred in 1910 to 1,200.

As president of the NJWSA from 1912 to 1920, Feickert became the leading figure of the New Jersey suffrage movement, and she was at the association's helm when the vote was finally won. By then the membership had grown to 120,000. She honed her political skills by presiding over the unsuccessful fight to win male voter approval in October, 1915. In July, 1919, Feickert was chosen to head the formal effort of several organizations to convince the state legislature to ratify the federal suffrage amendment.

With the winning of the vote Feickert had become supremely confident of women's abilities to achieve their post-suffrage objectives either to elect candidates to office or to secure passage of favored legislation. Indeed, events in the early 1920s bore out her initial optimism. Early in 1920 the state Republican party, respecting Feickert's achievements as New Jersey's leading suffragist, named her as vice-chairman of the

Republican State Committee and assigned her the task of organizing the Republican women in the state. (The party also created a Woman's Division of the State Committee, to which it appointed a number of other suffragist leaders.) Simultaneously elected treasurer of the newly formed New Jersey League of Women Voters (NJLWV), Feickert parted ways with the NJLWV in mid-1921, rejecting the organization's nonpartisan direction. "Now that we have the vote," she wrote in a letter to the league's board:

*...we should become political workers. I, for my part, am through with creating sympathy in favor of industrial laws, etc. I want to see the women well organized in both parties, so that we can work for the measures we believe in by the direct method instead of the indirect method.*

By severing her ties to the league when her term ended that April, Feickert chose to focus her energies as president of the New Jersey Women's Republican Club. The club soon had a reported membership of 100,000, with some financial backing from the state Republican organization.

In later years Feickert asserted that her acceptance of the vice-chairmanship of the State Committee was part of a bargain she had struck with Edward C. Stokes, Republican chairman and former governor. By May 1921 this "bargain" resulted in the passage by the Republican-dominated legislature of several bills that advanced women's political and legal status. "I was not willing to accept the vice chairmanship without making a bargain," she related.

*I laid my terms before the men who offered it to me. These were that all political committees should be composed of an equal number of men and women; that there be women on all juries; and that at least two members of the State Board of Education and the Department of Health should be women.*

Feickert and organized Republican women had a few other successes. Most notable of these was a bill passed in March 1923, known as the Night Work Bill, which prohibited women from working at night, between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., in manufacturing and mercantile establishments, laundries, and bakeries.

The supportive attitude of the Republican party organization toward the NJWRC gradually changed, however. By late 1923, Feickert's demands for strict party support of Prohibition and her insistence on legislative passage of women's bills had brought her (and the NJWRC) into disfavor with Republican party leaders. In 1925, with open party concurrence, she was defeated in her quest for reelection to the State Committee, thereby losing her position as vice-chairman.

Feickert moved briefly into the public limelight when she ran unsuccessfully as a pro-Prohibition candidate for the United States Senate in 1928. Her public role ended finally in the early 1930s with the defeat of Prohibition and the demise of the State Council, at which point Feickert returned to private life.

From The Women's Project of New Jersey publication *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990), essay by Felice D. Gordon.

## *Alice Stokes Paul 1885 - 1977*

Alice Stokes Paul wrote the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and led the first nationwide nonviolent civil disobedience campaign for woman suffrage as well as an international movement for women's equality. She was born near Moorestown, N.J., on January 11, 1885, the oldest child of a Quaker family steeped in the tradition of activism in education and public service. Paul's maternal grandfather, Judge William Parry, president of Rutgers University, helped establish Swarthmore College, where Paul's mother was one of the first students. Paul was raised in Quaker schools where she learned the conflicting traditions of nonviolent civil disobedience and "Quietism," or withdrawal from the world in the interest of piety. She learned to live simply and use the words thee and thou, to attend long, silent services two or three times a week, "centering down" to her own conscience, the Inner Light. With the Quaker assumption of women's equality, Paul's mother took her to suffrage meetings at a neighbor's house.

When she was sixteen, Paul began Swarthmore College on a scholarship. Friendly but shy and inner-directed, she pursued sports, took a wide variety of courses, and became attracted to economics and political science. In 1905 she graduated Phi Beta Kappa and went on to train as a social worker in the College Settlement on New York's Lower East Side, earning a certificate from the New York School of Philanthropy (Columbia University). A year later, in 1907, Paul received a masters degree in economics and sociology from the University of Pennsylvania.

Although convinced that social work "was not doing much good in the world," Paul remained a social worker during the two years of graduate work in England that would change her life. While studying at the London School of Economics, she joined the militant suffragettes of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), led by Emmeline Pankhurst. She became one of Pankhurst's trusted organizers, and was imprisoned three times, during which she undertook hunger strikes and was force-fed. When she sailed for home in December 1909, she feared that the Moorestown Quakers would disown her. However, at a meeting of 500 townspeople at the Moorestown Town Hall, Paul defended the WSPU's strategies and her own involvement to the applause of most of the audience.

Working on her doctorate in Philadelphia, Paul introduced the city to street corner speeches and suffrage parades. After she received her degree in 1912 from the University of Pennsylvania, Paul became co-chair of the Congressional Committee of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). They were to lobby for a woman suffrage constitutional amendment.

On March 3, 1913, the day before Woodrow Wilson's inauguration, they staged a parade of 7,000 suffragists, including men and blacks, in Washington D.C. Crowds taunted and attacked them and federal troops were called. Publicity and the subsequent investigation brought suffrage into the limelight and made Paul a national figure. Paul was an unusual national leader: she remained shy and quiet, but her intensely blue eyes and intellectual clarity were what people noticed.

Alice Paul sewing the last ratification star onto National Women's Party banner, 1920. From the collections of the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.



In 1914, Paul's fast-moving and independent style led to her separation from NAWSA. The Congressional Union later became the National Women's Party (NWP), an organization to educate congressmen's home districts about suffrage and keep the suffrage issue on the conscience of the nation.

When, in 1917, the possibility of war threatened to dwarf the suffrage issue, Paul sent "silent sentinels" to the White House carrying purple, gold, and white banners insisting that the democracy of Wilson's war rhetoric did not apply to women. Hundreds of women, including Paul, were imprisoned, began hunger strikes, and were force-fed. Paul herself was placed in a psychiatric ward, where a doctor released her saying she had "a spirit . . . like Joan of Arc's, and it is useless to try to change it."

After the suffrage amendment finally passed in 1920, the NWP reorganized to use women's vote to pursue full equal rights. Abandoning her militant strategy, Paul proceeded toward educating women and building a network among their organizations to support full equality. In 1922 she began the study of law, earning a doctor of law degree in 1928 from American University in Washington, D.C.

Meanwhile, under Paul's direction, the NWP drafted equal rights laws for the states. Paul wrote an amendment for the federal constitution, which was submitted to Congress in 1923. It stated simply: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and the territories under its jurisdiction."

But the amendment was opposed by the League of Women Voters and other groups. These groups were

afraid that the Supreme Court would use the ERA to strike down special industrial protections for women which had been considered important gains of the Progressive Era. Paul did not accept that women as a class were biologically fragile and argued that if the Supreme Court wanted to strike down such laws, she thought, it was already empowered to do so through the suffrage amendment. Furthermore, she reasoned, women's protections could be extended equally to men.

Paul led her fight for equal rights on three fronts. She formed alliances for the ERA with national women's organizations such as business and professional women's clubs. Large councils of government employees, industrial workers, and other occupational groups formed within the NWP. The strength of these coalitions steadily increased and they defeated many of the discriminatory New Deal National Recovery Administration codes. In the process, more women became ERA supporters.

Paul's second front for equal rights was on the state level. She and an NWP research committee of twelve attorneys identified discriminatory laws in each state and recommended reform legislation. By 1929 NWP had introduced nearly 600 bills to state legislatures; almost half passed.

Paul also worked for international women's rights. In 1929 she led the NWP in founding the Inter-American Commission for Women in the Pan American Union. In 1933 their Equal Nationality Treaty was signed by all member nations, and Paul's sweeping Equal Rights Treaty was signed by three. Throughout the thirties at the League of Nations in Geneva her association of women's groups from many countries achieved official

League of Nations status for their Study Committee on the Status of Women. Next she headed a League Committee of Experts that produced multi-volume surveys of legal codes pertaining to women in each member nation—a tremendous undertaking for which she is little known.

In 1938, Paul, opposed by U.S. labor interests, founded the World Women's Party (WWP). From its Geneva headquarters, she and the WWP opposed the discriminatory codes that the International Labor Office submitted.

When World War II began, the WWP villa in Geneva became a refugee center for prominent liberal and feminist leaders stranded there. Paul wrote hundreds of letters to resettle them, but when the war intensified, she returned to Washington.

Between 1941 and the "new wave" of feminism in the 1960s, Paul continued to work for women's equality. In 1943 she rewrote the ERA to read: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." In 1946 the ERA lost its first Senate floor vote by only three votes.

Paul haunted United Nations meetings. She led the WWP in the successful struggle to include the wording of sex equality in the UN Preamble and several sections of the charter and later in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which would be a model for the constitutions of many emerging nations.

In 1972, Congress passed the ERA to the states, but Paul foresaw that the seven-year time limit for ratification, plus the section giving Congress, rather than the states, the right to enforce it, would spell defeat. Nevertheless, from her Connecticut cottage, Paul, then 87, lobbied by telephone.

From The Women's Project of New Jersey publication *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women* (Metuchen, NJ): Scarecrow Press, 1990), essay by *Amelia Fry and Sheila Cowing*.

## ***Florence Spearing Randolph*** ***1866 - 1951***

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Florence Spearing Randolph, African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AMEZ) minister and social activist, was born in Charleston, S.C., on August 9, 1866. Her father was a prosperous cabinetmaker, and both parents were members of old free African-American Charleston families.

Randolph attended local public schools and graduated from Charleston's Avery Normal Institute. At that time, employment options for black women were restricted to domestic work, teaching, music, or dressmaking. Many educated African-Americans, seeking to shield their daughters from the drudgery and physical dangers of domestic work, encouraged the other three options. Randolph chose dressmaking, and after two years as an apprentice became an instructor in a dressmaking school. In 1885, while visiting her older sisters in New York City and Jersey City, she realized that her dressmaking skills could command at least \$1.50 per day (as opposed to the 50 cents per day she was then earning) and she decided to move to Jersey City.

On May 5, 1886, she married Hugh Randolph, who was employed as a cook in the dining car service of the Pullman Company. They purchased a home in downtown Jersey City and converted an upper story to a workroom for Randolph's profitable business, which then employed two dressmakers and five girl assistants. The Randolph's one child, Leah Viola, was born on February 7, 1887.

*Suffragist Biographies p. 10*

Randolph was an ardent and life-long Christian activist. As an eight-year-old accompanying a blind grandmother on prayer and scripture reading visits to the sick, she was greatly impressed with the teaching of Christianity. Upon conversion at age thirteen, she became engaged in active service in the Charleston Methodist Episcopal Church. In Jersey City she affiliated with the Monmouth Street AMEZ Church and was appointed a Sunday school teacher and youth class leader. Her avocation led to private study of the Bible with a tutor who was a Yale graduate and a Greek and Hebrew scholar. She later completed a course with the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, Illinois, as well as special work at Drew Theological Seminary.

Randolph's early interest in Christianity coincided with the launching of an active public service career. In 1892 she accepted an invitation to join the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) of Jersey City, where her lecturing and organizing against the liquor traffic continued for decades. Her WCTU work inspired the organization of a "Kings Daughters Society," which engaged in city missionary work.

Randolph's religious and community service and her oratorical endeavors fused in 1897 when she sought a license to preach. Although her gender instigated opposition among older AMEZ bishops and ministers, the license was granted. With support from Bishop Alexander Walters (one of the founders of the NAACP), Randolph progressed through the subsequent stages toward ordination. At the May 1900 Atlantic City AMEZ Church Conference she was ordained a deacon. She was ordained an elder (with the right to consecrate the sacraments and serve communion) in 1903.



Pennsylvania Railroad Ticket, "Votes for Women Special." From the collections of the New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey.

**PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD**

**VOTES FOR WOMEN SPECIAL**

**TRENTON, N. J. TO JERSEY CITY**

**SPECIAL TRAIN**

**Leaves TUESDAY, February 18, 1913, 3.00 P. M.**

**40**

**This Card will admit holder to  
Special Train only.**

**PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD**

**Jersey City to Trenton, N. J.**

**SPECIAL TRAIN**

**TUESDAY, February 18, 1913**

**Leave JERSEY CITY.....8.25 A. M.  
" NEWARK.....8.42 A. M.  
" ELIZABETH.....8.52 A. M.  
Arrive TRENTON, N. J.....9.52 A. M.**

**40**

**This Card will admit holder to  
Special Train only.**

Randolph was selected as a delegate to the Third Methodist Ecumenical Conference in London in 1901. While there, Randolph was invited to preach at the Primitive Methodist Church of Mattison Road. After the conference she toured England, Scotland, Belgium, and France.

Upon her return to the United States, Randolph was chosen pastor of Newark's Pennington Street (later Clinton) AMEZ Church. During her ministry she pastored five churches in New Jersey and New York, working without salary for the first twelve years. The churches to which she was assigned were small, poor, and struggling, with few members and many debts. Invariably, when through her leadership a little church became solvent, a "nice young man" would be assigned and Randolph would move on to the next problem area.

Randolph is most often associated with the Summit church that she organized and built. In 1925 she was appointed by AMEZ Bishop P. A. Wallace as temporary supply pastor in charge of a Summit mission known as Wallace Chapel. Fund raising began in the fall of 1926, and by 1928 Randolph and the trustees had purchased a modern duplex house on three lots at the corner of Broad and Orchard streets in Summit. Alterations to the first floor provided a one hundred seat chapel; the second floor was used as a parsonage. In 1946, after serving Wallace Chapel for twenty-one years, Randolph retired from the active ministry.

Throughout her ministry, Randolph participated in state and national AMEZ connectural activities. Among her highest priorities were foreign missions, particularly those in Africa. Having identified problem areas during

her first ten years as president of the New Jersey Women's Foreign Missionary Society, in 1911 she recommended to the national convention of the AMEZ Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society (WHFMS) the creation of a Bureau of Supplies to coordinate the collection and distribution of all donations to foreign mission fields. The 1912 AMEZ General Conference adopted her recommendation and named her secretary of the bureau. Her 1916-20 term as the fourth president of the missionary society was followed by many years of foreign work primarily inspired by her ongoing travels.

Between 1922 and 1924 Randolph traveled throughout the interior of Liberia and the Gold Coast, journeying by truck, oxcart, canoe, and on the shoulders of native carriers to gain firsthand knowledge of the AMEZ foreign mission field. In addition to preaching, she assessed the educational, health care, and other service needs with which the WHFMS was concerned. When she returned to the United States, she brought with her a young African girl, Charity Zumala, whom she educated at Summit High School and Hampton Institute. After returning to her Gold Coast (now Ghana) home, Zumala taught school until her death in 1946.

Randolph organized the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs (NJFCWC) in 1915. That October, black women representing thirty New Jersey WCTU societies had met to consider plans for arousing greater African-American interest in the temperance movement. By 1917, eighty-five clubs, with a combined membership of 2,616, were affiliated. Randolph served the federation as president for twelve years. Her interest and participation continued throughout her life.

Randolph's work in interracial organizations other than the WCTU dated back to her two years as superintendent of the Negro Work for the Christian Endeavor Society of New Jersey. Her continued Christian Endeavor and temperance work led to active participation in the equal rights movement. She served on the Executive Board of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association, and in 1920, shortly after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, she was invited by former Governor Edward C. Stokes, then chair of the New Jersey Republican party, to assist Lillian Feickert, head of the Republican women's division, in Harding's presidential campaign.

Randolph's work with African-American, interracial, and church organizations was lauded on June 7, 1933, when Livingstone College (Salisbury, NC), the largest college supported by the AMEZ Church, awarded her an honorary doctor of divinity degree.

After her 1946 retirement from the pulpit, Randolph made her home in Montclair. As pastor emeritus of Wallace Chapel, she continued to attend state and national church meetings.

From The Women's Project of New Jersey publication *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women* (Metuchen, NJ): Scarecrow Press, 1990), essay by *Gloria H. Dickinson and J. Maurice Hicks*.

## ***Cordelia Thomas Greene Johnson*** ***1887 - 1957***

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Cordelia Thomas Greene Johnson, founder and president of the Modern Beautician Association and president of the Jersey City chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was born in Elkton, Md., on May 23, 1887, to exslaves, John and Margaret Craig Thomas. She was the eleventh of fifteen children, all of whom were girls except the last. Johnson's father, a laborer, was a quiet, introspective man and her mother, a laundress, was a positive person who believed in the power of education. Neither could read or write.

Johnson received her early education in Maryland, completed high school, and may also have taken courses at several colleges, including New York University and Columbia University.

As a youth Johnson was active in her church and Sunday school in Elkton. When President Theodore Roosevelt visited her church, Johnson was so impressed that she resolved to become active in civic and political affairs. She took an interest in the founding of a chapter of the Young Women's Christian Association by the people in her town.

Johnson came to Jersey City about 1915. To support herself she took in washing, as her mother had before her. Her first husband died on October 24, 1917, from double pneumonia. It was about this time that Johnson submerged herself in the life of the community.

She became a member of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage League and spoke to groups all over the state. She developed such a reputation as a speaker that the state Republican black political leader asked her to join him in supporting Calvin Coolidge for president. They toured the county together for Coolidge and the following presidential campaign she went around the county speaking in support of Herbert Hoover. During these trips she visited various beauty shops and saw the unsanitary and unsafe conditions in them.

In the 1920s Johnson attended the beauty school of Madam C. J. Walker, who became one of the first black millionaires in the country. The school gave her an appreciation for the proper methods and conditions of this trade. Although she received her training from the Walker school, she allied herself with the Apex system, a rival method. She opened her own beauty shop at 49A Kearney Avenue in Jersey City, and in 1929 she became president of the New Jersey Apex League. In 1934 she opened her own school at 57 Belmont Avenue.

During the early 1930s there was a clamor to license beauty shops, because of the health and safety problems in the business. It was not unusual to find women whose heads were scarred or injured by inexperienced hairdressers. Johnson joined with others, both black and white, in lobbying for standards in training, safer products, and better sanitary conditions in beauty shops. She spoke before the state legislature on a bill to regulate beauty shops and their operators. As a result, the word straightening, a method of using a hot steel comb to take curls out of hair, was written into the law. This was most important to black women, since it was a standard method used by them in styling their hair.

Johnson's lobbying efforts resulted in a strategy to ensure that blacks be considered in the writing of legislation on the profession and in the selection of a black for the five-member State Beauty Control Board.

Johnson led the Modern Beautician Association to affiliate itself with the national Beauty Culturist League, and in 1938 she became its president (until her death in 1957). The essential ingredient in building the state and national organization was "continuing education" in the skill and art of beauty culture and in the professional management of its shops.

In 1955 Johnson was elected president of the Jersey City branch of the NAACP. The branch was at its low point organizationally. Among other things, Johnson instituted a cotillion for the young people and a newsletter for its membership. These steps did much to invigorate the organization financially and structurally and they remained a tradition with the branch through the civil rights period of the 1960s.

Johnson ended her career working as an active member of the Church of Incarnation, a youth worker at Grace Episcopal Church, a Red Cross instructor, an observer with the United Nations, and a member of the President's Advisory Board for the Small Business Administration.

From The Women's Project of New Jersey publication *Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1990), essay by *Theodore Brunson*.

# *Appendix*

*Oral History Transcription  
Interview by Margaret Crocco  
at Roosevelt Hospital, Edison, NJ  
on August 13, 1995*

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MC: How did your parents feel about your voting?

MARIE: Well, my father ... [told me] "Do what you want," he said. "We're asking for a raise and we don't seem to get it." He didn't say do it [vote] or don't ... [vote], it was up to us. I figured, well, let's give it a vote, maybe we might get better [conditions] than what we got now, and I was about 27 then.

MC: Were you in favor of the suffrage efforts ...

MARIE: Yes, it was the Depression ... My father was a carpenter and being he had no education, he couldn't [find a] job, [in carpentry] he had to take work in the coal mines, so my mother said, "Let's go ahead [and vote] and maybe daddy will get a raise." Half the time ... [the miners] were on strike, that's why Pennsylvania is known for ... [strikes and mining].

MC: Did women talk about how they voted?

GRACE: The first time I had voted, I don't think I talked to very many [people]. We lived in the country, a little country town by itself. Neighbors were quite far apart.

MC: Was there discussion of women voting as something unusual or something special?

GRACE: Well, my parents and my grandparents thought it was just wonderful that I had a chance to speak my piece and have a say ...

MC: When do you remember first voting?

GRACE: I was just 21 and I remember well my grandfather and my dad insisted that I take the privilege of voting.

MC: Were there other women who were voting?

GRACE: Oh, yes [we voted] in the schoolhouse in Bloomfield, New Jersey. I was born there, and there are two streets named after my family.

MC: [Nellie, I understand that in] 1933, you first voted? And was that in England?

NELLIE: Yes.

MC: Was it an election for the Prime Minister and the Parliament?

NELLIE: Yes.

MC: Because women in England got the vote, I believe, in 1918, before women in the United States.

MARIE: Well, where I was living in a small mining town, they didn't think it was necessary [to vote] because on account of the mining, coal mining ... It was a small mining town, every time they [the miners] wanted a raise, they were rejected, so they said what's the use of voting? We don't get our load anyhow [our fair share of money].

MARIE: [I was living] In western Pennsylvania in the mining town [where] my father worked ...

MC: Do you remember what you were doing? Were you living at home at this time?

GRACE: I was keeping house for my dad and my brothers. My mother passed away when I was 16.

MC: Had you done anything prior to the first time you voted to educate yourself?

GRACE: [I was] in school, that was all. I didn't read much of the newspaper ... as I remember.

MC: So your vote was shaped [instead] by your opinions --

GRACE: And I was thrilled to death to have the opportunity.

MC: Rose, let's come back to you. What were you doing at the time that you first voted? ... Were you working?

ROSE: Yes. In factories ... in Perth Amboy ... [I did] piece work. But I have to tell you just one little thing. My husband came from Hungary, and he was a witness for about 25 men changing to citizens [taking the oath to become American citizens].

MC: How did your husband feel about your voting?

ROSE: Well, my husband is dead, of course, now ... [but] he [had] wanted me to vote.

MC: And what about your parents?

ROSE: Oh, they were very happy about it.

MC: Nellie, what was it like in England?

NELLIE: It was an exciting time. They used to send cars around to take people to a voting poll, and the women used to stand up in Hyde Park to [give] speeches there. [They would stand on] Boxes in Hyde Park [so they could be heard and seen, it was] free speech.

MC: Why did they send the cars around?

NELLIE: Oh, because a lot of people wouldn't vote [if they couldn't get to the polls]. [There would be a] parade on the streets and [they would] go around with loud speakers on the cars. [The message over the speaker was] Vote, vote, vote for Gladstone. Children used to ... make fun out of it.

MC: The women in England who voted, what were some of their views?

NELLIE: Oh, that women should be allowed to have their say in Parliament, [especially] about the schools and education ... after the war, they [schools] kept them [young women] on longer to make up for the education ... lost ... during the war.

MC: When you first voted, was there an excitement about the elections? Or excitement about women voting in the elections?

NELLIE: I think in general, women were ... [excited to] be able to have a say [instead of relying on] someone to say it for them. I know I've been proud to vote in each election.

MC: ... Some of the newspapers writing about women getting the vote in 1920, referred to women's voting as a problem, that they saw women voting as a problem. Now that puzzles me, why it would be a problem? Do you have any sense of why it might have seemed that women now coming into the electorate would have been considered problems?

GRACE: (Laughs) Unless it was a distance to get to the polls. You know, being, like Marie said, in a country town, that they're separated, they might [vote] for each other.

MC: Would it have been harder for women to get to the polls than men?

GRACE: Well, we didn't have the transportation they have today. We had horse and carriage.

MC: And would it have been harder for women to have left the house and the family?

GRACE: Probably, 'cause a lot of women were housekeepers, while the men were out working the farms.

MC: Were the women that you knew, women of your age, excited about voting?

MARIE: Yes, some of them. They wanted to know what's going to become of the voting that we did [what would be the effect of their vote]. We had to go to the post office to vote, because nobody had cars in those days, few people, and we were supposed to go to the post office. If it was good or not,

... [women] thought it was their duty. We weren't allowed to say who we were voting for. We were not allowed to not even discuss it with your husband or wife or your brother or sister.

MC: Was that the same for men?

MARIE: Yeah. The men were more close-mouthed than the women.

MC: Before the elections, though, did you discuss the candidates and the issues with, say, your women friends? Do you remember talking about --

NELLIE: The candidates, they used to come [to our] home, to the door.

GRACE: We never wanted to say who we were voting for or what we were standing for. It just [was] a family secret, ... something you kept to yourself.

GRACE: I can't remember my girlfriends [voting], but I just remember my immediate family ... and me, [it was] the opportunity of a lifetime to be able to vote.

MC: So, your family encouraged you to vote?

NELLIE: Yes, definitely. [Many young women] left school at 14, we didn't get the education they get over here [or the] scholarship [or the chance to go to] school. I left [school] when I was 14, worked in the big stores as cashier.

MC: How old were you when you married?



NELLIE: 22.

MC: And at that time, you started voting?

NELLIE: Yes.

MC: And your husband approved of your voting?

NELLIE: Oh, yeah.

MC: How old did you have to be in England to vote? Do you remember?

NELLIE: I think it was 21.

MC: How old were you when you finished school, Grace?

GRACE: Oh, I was about 12-years-old. I didn't finish school on time. My mother was sick and I had to stay home.

MC: How old were you when you married?

GRACE: 20.

MC: ... Rose, when did you leave school?

ROSE: [Age] 14. My mother was sickly [also], I had to stay home, I was the oldest of the family. Helped get the other children after school. So, that's why I [quit school] so early. I graduated from fourth grade (Laughs).

MC: Did you marry?

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ROSE: At 18.

MC: And how did your husband feel about your voting?

ROSE: He felt good about it. Yeah, he wanted to go along with ... [women voting]. (Laughs)

MC: When did you leave school?

GRACE: When I was 16. My mother was sickly, she died when I was only 16. [When she was dying] ... I had to stay home and take care of her and kept house for my dad and my brothers.

MC: Did you marry?

GRACE: Yes, at 24.

MC: And your husband, was he as supportive as your family?

GRACE: Oh yes, yes.

MC: Do you think your families or your husbands were unusual in supporting your voting?

MARIE: Mine was, yes. He used to take people voting. The ones that didn't have a car, he'd pick them up ... he was a barber and, of course, he had the whole town in his favor. ... He'd tell them, vote for this and vote for that.

MC: In your town, it sounds like voting was very important to everyone.

MARIE: Yeah, but not [everyone was] in favor [of women voting]. They were very much against it because they always had trouble getting what they wanted for the coal mine. You [had] to ... [mine] a certain amount of coal to make the money that you needed for the family. Sometimes ... four people [would] work in a big room like this, and my father was working with my two brothers. [They were all] worried with him [about money and conditions in the mine] ...

MC: Do you remember, did most people vote? Would you say that most people who were eligible to vote [did so]?

MARIE: Yeah, most of them. [Actually] The men, yeah, but not the women. ... Why? Because the money didn't come in that they needed.

MC: And that kept the women from voting?

MARIE: Yeah, they figured ... [because] they're not getting more money [what good would voting do].

MC: So, voting and the jobs in that town were closely connected. Rose, was your husband unusual in encouraging you to vote?

ROSE: He was very political and because of that, I went along with it [voting]. He like politics, although he was not a good ... speaker, but you'd be surprised (Laughs) ... [at how involved he was] ... Even though he was not a good speaker, ... he ... went to friends, talked with friends. He was very much [in favor of the vote].

MC: And he was unusual in being so encouraging to you.

ROSE: Yes, for a long time. Then there were times he was sickly and then he had to sort of slow down.

MC: Nellie, what about [you and] your husband?

NELLIE: We used to vote for allowances for children. Seven shillings from the government.

MC: Can you explain the allowances for children?

NELLIE: Yes, we used to get [from the government] about ten shillings a week at first, nothing for the first child.

MC: Did women want [the allowance] to ... [increase]?

NELLIE: Yeah. I had four children, so I needed money.

MC: And what about your husband? Was it unusual for him to be so supportive of his voting?

NELLIE: No, he thought it was a privilege for women to get the vote, and I should take advantage of it.

MC: Did you know any husbands who didn't feel that way?

NELLIE: I imagine there were, but we didn't talk about politics [to our friends], it was almost secretive what ... [political party you supported]. You didn't tell anybody which party you were voting for. I can remember that.

MC: But no one made fun of women who went to the polls.

NELLIE: Not to my knowledge. You were proud to go.

MC: You never saw any women being told or heard them told that it wasn't their position [to vote?]

NELLIE: No, not at all.

MC: ... Were there any [voting] issues, like those that Nellie talked about, that ... [particularly] concerned ... [women?] ...

GRACE: I can't remember, other than things might be better if you voted.

MC: ... Did you work during the Depression?

GRACE: I never went to work [when I was a young adult] ... later years, ... I went to work ... after I was married.

MC: Did you have children?

GRACE: Yes, two.

MC: And did you pass on your love of voting? Did you have a daughter?

GRACE: Yes, I did. She was very proud, she worked in the polls.

MC: Would you describe your family as a political family?

GRACE: Well, they never went out to lecture [or give political speeches], but they took the advantage of being able to vote.

MC: Did you or your daughter join the League of Women Voters?

GRACE: No.

MC: So, other than voting, you had no other involvement?

GRACE: No ... [we would] talk to everybody, you spoke to your neighbors [in Bloomfield] and that was it.

MC: Do you remember the years of the Depression?

ROSE: Do I remember?! (Laughs) I remember it well.

MC: Did you work during those years?

ROSE: Well, I had to get some kind of job, even though I got [paid] less money ... [than I should have for the work I did], but just to keep going. I took some ... jobs for ... a few years, maybe say three or four [when the pay was cheap], and then ... [the pay level began to improve] slowly.

MC: How was it [the Depression years] for you Marie?

MARIE: Well, I ... don't know if ... [it was common for] the women ... [to work]. They were all home with the children. The only ones that worked in my family, was my father and two brothers. My husband was a barber, and he had his own barber shop.

MC: During the 1930's, was your town hit hard by the Depression?

MARIE: ... I was in New Jersey ... In New Brunswick [Marie came from Pennsylvania, but moved to New Jersey in 1926.]

MC: Was New Brunswick hard hit by the Depression?

MARIE: Yes, very. My husband didn't make enough money to pay the rent. ... [He had some] steady customers [for his business]. But I was lucky because [those customers] who had a garden, instead of paying my husband money, they'd give him fruit and vegetables, whatever they had, and he'd come home every night with different things [for us to eat].

NELLIE: ... after the first world war, ... [there] was a terrible shortage of work. I remember my father was out of work for a year. ... My mother always worked as a dressmaker, she worked in the West End [of London] and made exclusive [dress] models. She worked for the Queen, the old queen ... [Editor's Note - This was probably Queen Elizabeth who we now refer to as Queen Mother, although the reference could also be to Queen Mary.]

MC: When did you come to the United States?

NELLIE: I came ... when my daughter got married. She married an American in England. [The ceremony took place] in my house and he was [later] transferred to Germany, ... [I moved] over there to see her. And then ... [my daughter] came

... to New Jersey [with her husband].

MC: [So,] you [were] in England during the second world war?

NELLIE: [Yes, I was.] I had four children during the war.

MC: But in those hard times, like the Depression or the war, did people seem more interested in voting so that they could change things?

NELLIE: I remember ... [a heightened] interest, papers used to be full of ... [news about] demonstrations [and] Winston Churchill [he] was ... [a] clever man ... he did a lot of good, I think.

MC: [Then] You did vote for ... [Winston Churchill] for Prime Minister? Did your husband vote for him also?

NELLIE: [I] Didn't know. [If he did vote the same as I did] We weren't supposed to tell one another.

MC: You really didn't? You didn't even tell [your] husband [who you voted for]?

NELLIE: No. It's true, [we didn't]. Me and my daughter, [we discussed our vote, but it was] private between me and ... [her] ... And she ... [told me] she wanted me to vote for a certain person ... I said, "I don't care what you say, I'm going to do what I want to do."

MC: Why was the rule so strict? ... so secretive?

MARIE: Because ... [if it was known that too many people were going to vote] for one president, well, he ... would have won the election. By keeping quiet, nobody knew who was going to win.

MC: And you found out when the newspaper arrived the next day.

MARIE: Yeah.

MC: ... Grace, would you know why it was so secretive?

GRACE: Why, just that ... [it] was the thing to do, to keep your business to yourself. [You already knew] what you thought best and that was it.

MC: After news of an election was reported in the newspaper, were there celebrations?

MARIE: If your party got elected, yes.

MC: So, people might have known how you voted.

GRACE: By the reaction of the people, yes!

MC: ... Rose, did you keep voting through your middle age and later years?

ROSE: Yes.

MC: Nellie, did you?

NELLIE: [No,] I didn't feel that my vote carried much consequence.

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MC: When did you have that idea?

NELLIE: After the war experience.

MC: After the war you stopped voting? Did you ever become a citizen of the United States?

NELLIE: No. [My citizenship is] still British.

MC: Why did you feel that your vote didn't count?

NELLIE: There were such arguments about everything.

MC: Do you think it was a good thing that women were given the right to vote?

GRACE: Of course.

MC: Why do you think it's good for women to vote, Rose?

ROSE: Well, it's really necessary [for us] to have the right ...

MC: Marie, do you think it's good that women [vote]?

MARIE: Yes, I think so ... because [when] there were more people in favor of a certain person, [that candidate would win] and women ... [who] would stick [together] to that one person, [could effect the election].

GRACE: ... Each time we voted, we voted [for] ... the better [political] party ... or [in order to] ... make things better.

MC: Do you feel that women had the education to vote?

GRACE: I think so, in general, yes. They're stronger-minded than men.

MC: In your view, ... [were they informed] about the issues and the candidates as well as men?

GRACE: Oh, I think [women] were interested because they had the privilege to vote [and were informed about issues].

MC: ... Are there any other stories that you'd like to tell us about voting or politics you remember from the past?

GRACE: I can remember going to [hear] Nixon ... I was just as close to [Nixon] as I am to you, and I thought that was quite a privilege and an honor to be able to hear him. They had ... [the rally] in ... and armory [in New Jersey and it was] crowded and oh, it was just packed. I was thrilled to be able to go and hear the President and be that close to a President. Nixon, his wife's birthday is the same birthday as mine, so I sent ... [Mrs. Nixon] a birthday card every year, and I got a thank you card back.

MC: Did you vote also in your state elections when the governor was up for election or the senators?

GRACE: I can't remember that, to tell you the truth. I imagine I did. I thought it was an honor to be able to have a say and hope the help would be for the better.

MC: Rose, did you vote in the state elections?

ROSE: Yeah.

MC: ... And what about primary elections in New Jersey?

ROSE: Not always, but we did, a lot of times.

MC: Would you tell us, were you Republican or Democrat?

ROSE: Democrat for all time.

MC: Democrat. So you typically voted in the Democratic primaries in New Jersey. And were you Democrat all the way through them.

MARIE: Yeah.

MC: ... Do you think women's voting has been a good thing?

GRACE: I think so, yes.

MC: Why?

MARIE: It's just not all one-sided. We have a say and hopefully ... [we choose] whatever is the better [and that the better candidate] gets the vote, gets in office.

MC: Marie?

MARIE: I do, too. Because I think they're [women are] smarter than the men. Because ... [we're] bringing up all the things that the men wouldn't think of.

MC: Like what?

MARIE: ... My husband ... he didn't know what I did, we didn't discuss ... [voting]. He asked me [once] who would you vote for. [I answered], "That's none of your business." "I don't know who you ... [vote for]" and ... [he never knew who] I did. ... [Remember, I told you] he's the one who used to take ... everybody around [to the polls, because he had a car]. [Well, once he told me that] one guy said to him, "who did your wife vote for?" He [replied], "She told me it's none of my business. 'Cause maybe the other women, they thought it was their duty to tell their husbands, but [for my wife] it was secret." ... Me and my daughter ... [fought] all the time. She didn't want me to be a Republican. I said, "You vote who you want." I said, "I'm older than you so [I can decide for myself]."

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*prepared by Margaret Crocco*

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### *Recommended Videos on Suffrage and Related Women's History*

*Alice Paul* The story of the leader of the National Woman's Party. NJN Video. \$19.95 plus \$3.50 for shipping and handling. CN 777 Trenton, NJ 08625-0777. Chad Davis: (609) 777-0500.

*The History of the Suffrage Movement*. CD-Rom for colleges and high schools (planned release, late 1995). For further information, contact the Educational Film Center at (703) 750-0560.

*How We Got the Vote*. 52 minutes. Narrated by Jean Stapleton. Available from the National Women's History Project, Windsor, CA. (707) 838-6000.

*Jeanette Rankin: The Woman Who Voted No*. 30 minutes. Biography of first female Congresswoman, suffragist and pacifist, from Montana. PBS Video. 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, Virginia 22314, (800) 424-7963.

*One Fine Day*. 6 minutes. Vivid images of 19th and 20th century American women, with study guide. By Martha Wheelock and Kay Weaver. Ishtar Films, Box 51, Patterson, NY 12563. (914) 878-3561.

*One Woman, One Vote*. Highlights of the suffrage movement created as part of the series "The American Experience" on PBS. First broadcast on February 15, 1995. Available for educational use from PBS Video, (800) 344-3337.

*Women in American Life*. Four fifteen to seventeen minute videos featuring 550 historical photographs from selected photo archives. Each examines a particular period of U.S. history with an emphasis on women's daily life. National Women's History Project. Windsor, CA. (707) 838-6000.

*The Women of Summer*. 55 minutes. The story of an ambitious feminist experiment at the Bryn Mawr Summer School of Women Workers during the 1920s and 1930s. By Suzanne Bauman and Rita Heller: Filmmakers Library, NY, NY: (212) 808-4980.