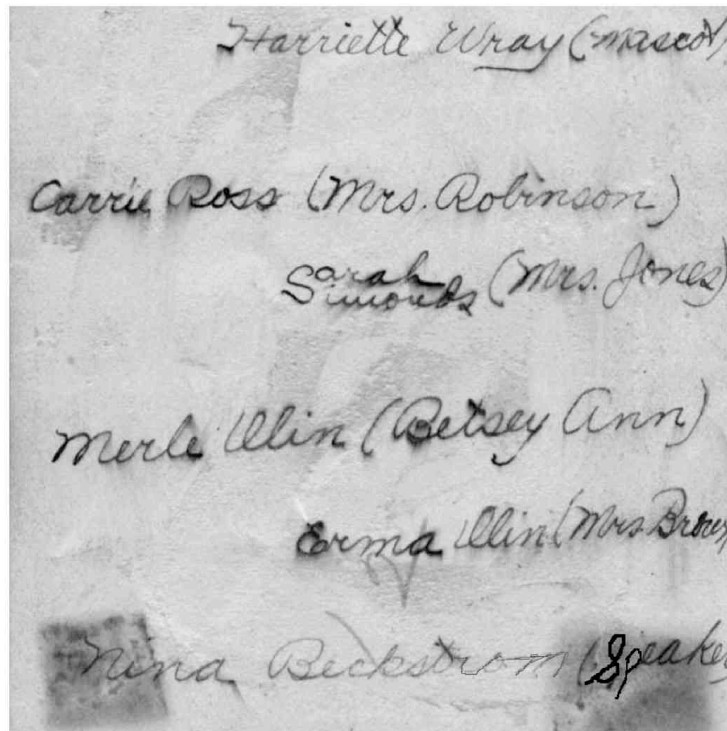




Teacher Harriette Wray sits on the left.

The five graduating seniors of the Bothell High School Class of 1912 are wearing their costumes for the play.

Because the setting of the play was about 20 years earlier, they are wearing the fashions of a generation before.



Harriette Wray

Carrie Ross

Sarah Simonds

Merle Olin

Erma Olin

Nina Beckstrom

*This play was given by the 1st graduating class of the Bothell High School*

Woman's Rights

*1912  
I was in it*

Scene: A room arranged for a meeting. Bill announcing "A woman will speak on 'Woman's rights at 6 P.M.'"

Enter Mrs. Jones

Mrs. J. My goodness me! It is a pull to town. Why, mercy on us! There's There's Jemima Brown. (Enter Mrs. Brown with baby)

Mrs. Brown: Well, Mrs. Jones, my dear, how do you do?

Mrs. J. Why Mrs. Brown, who thought of seeing you! The last one I expected to be greeting.

What brings you here? Ah, don't I know, the meeting.

Mrs. J. Well, why not?

Mrs. B. Oh, your're such a stay-at-home.

You know, I never fancied you would come.

Besides, I thought you held it quite a sin

Not to be there when your old man comes in.

It's very clear to-day, that he won't see

The kettle on when he comes home to tea.

And then I thought You'd have been shocked to hear

A woman speak on woman's rights, my dear,

With new ideas, rebellion and the rest of it.

Mrs. J. Well, Mrs. Brown, I'll make a clean breast of it,

Totell the honest truth, I didn't know

Women had rights, till just a week ago,

When cousin Betsy Ann, Who's been away

These last two years, came down to spend the day.

My word! it must be fine to be so wise.

To hear her talk would open some folks' eyes.

She vowed, in all her life, she never saw such

Such poor, oppressed, down-trodden souls before.

"Why, bless my heart!" she cried, "you don't tell me

You stay at home to get that creature's tea!

My dear, I never thought you such a dunce.

You might as well be a black slave at once.

The days are long since past and over when

We let ourselves be trampled on by men.

And now our more enlightened spirit mocks

At cooking dinners and at darning socks.

Then rise, my dear, to seek these higher lights,

Assert yourself, and stand up for your rights."

Mrs. B. Oh dear me, What it is to be so clever!

Mrs. J. Yes, isn't it! I tell you that I never

Had grasped that I was trodden down, my dear,

Till Betsy Ann's remarks jast made it clear

How hard it was to be a slave to Bill

And only dance attendance on his will.

But, though I was quite ready to rebel,

How to begin I couldn't rightly tell.

And, while in doubt my brain I still was beating

I chanced to see the notice of this meeting.

"Hurrah!" said I. "I'll go to town to-day,

And listen what the lady's got to say.

She'll be the one to give me clearer lights

On how to stand up for my Woman's Rights."

Mrs. B. Oh well, that's nice. Now I can sit by you.

Now, Wh at do you suppose she'll bid us do?

Mrs. J. Why, that's what I'm expecting to be told.

Not go on slaving as we've done of old.

No, she'll have hit upon some wiser plan.



Enter Betsy Ann

Mrs. B. Look, isn't that your cousin, Betsy Ann?

Mrs. J. Why, so it is! I might have known she would be present at this meeting if she could. Just wait a minute now and you shall hear her speak; she'll very soon make matters clear. Good evening to you, Betsy.

Betsy A. Come, that's right!  
I'm glad to see you've ventured here tonight  
To swell this noble meeting. Oh, it's grand  
To see the women of our native land  
Thus gathering, resolved to find a cure  
For wrongs which they no longer will endure.  
Oh, what a change from those dark ages, when  
They wrighed in silence 'neath the heel of men.

Mrs. J. Isn't she wonderful? I said you'd see.

Mrs. B. Oh wonderful, I'm sure. But, as for me, it really doesn't quite apply, I feel.  
You see, Tom Never crushed me with his heel;  
No, not that day when I felt such a sinner,  
And let the pudding burn, and spoilt his dinner.

B.A. Dinner indeed! I hope you'll soon be looking  
For higher work to do than common cooking!  
And laying puddings at a tyrant's feet.

Mrs. B. Why, bless your heart alive! the man must eat!  
And who's to boil the pudding, pray, but me?

B. A. Long use has made you tame to slavery  
And all the cruel hardships of your lot, (Baby cries)  
But, mercy on us all! What's that you've got?

Mrs. B. (Indignantly). What's that?  
Why bless me, ma'am, are you a gaby?  
That! Why, what should it be, except the baby?

B.A. The baby! What a thing to take about!

Mrs. B. Oh, you'd have left him all alone, no doubt,  
To scream himself distracted if he chose.

B.A. I don't go in for trivial things like those.  
A woman wants a higher sphere, I say,  
Than hushing screaming children night and day.

Mrs. B. If we don't hush them, pray who is to do it?

Mrs. J. Dear Mrs. Brown, be quiet, or you'll rue it.  
You see how much she knows; how ever can  
You dream of arguing with Betsy Ann?

Mrs. B. Oh Yes, I don't deny she's very clever,  
But leave my ppppet when he cries! No, never!

Mrs. J. Oh, I've no doubt the speech will make it clear,  
But, mercy on us all! Whom have we here?  
(Enter Mrs. Robinson)

Mrs. R. Why, Mrs. Robinson, it's never you!  
Yes, Mrs. Jones, it's me, and quite time too!  
I've come to town, a five miles' muddy walk,  
To put a stop to this diagraceful talk,  
And hiss the shameless creature from the place  
The moment that she dares to show her face.  
What does a woman want with speaking, pray?

Mrs. B. Perhaps she may have got something to say.  
You speak yourself, ma'am, don't you?

Mrs. R. Hold your tongue, Impudent girl!  
I know when I was young  
We never dared to interrupt our betters.

Mrs. B. Oh! I'll go back to school and learn my letters.

- Mrs. R. Letters indeed! You've learned them quite enough.  
In my days we knew nothing of such stuff.  
When I was young we'd no such silly rule.  
I thank my stars I never went to school!  
Why does that creature keep us waiting still?
- Mrs. J. She's not due yet: it says six on the bill.
- Mrs. B. It's handy to know how to read yourself,  
Isn't it, ma'am?
- Mrs. R. Hush, you impertinent elf!  
Go, hide your head, and that vain thing that's on it.  
Why don't you wear a decent, close, straw bonnet?  
In my young days I know.....
- B.A. What do you say  
To mine, I wonder? (showing hat)
- Mrs. R. Take the thing away.  
A good sound whipping is the thing you're needing,  
I know what does the harm, it's all this reading.  
If I were King of England, I declare  
I'd tear up every book in England, - there!
- Mrs. J. (aside) Oh dear! I wish she wouldn't get so hot.  
Suppose she had a fit upon the spot!  
And I can't follow when they talk so fast.  
Enter speaker  
Here comes the speaker lady, then, at last.  
Now then, I hope we'll get our duty clear.
- Speaker (Mounting platform)  
I come to speak on Woman's Rights.
- B.A. &  
Mrs. J. Hear, hear!
- Mrs. R. Hear, hear, indeed! Disgraceful, shout her down!  
Rise, everyone, and hoot her out of town!  
Such impudent assertions there's no bearing.
- Sp. In common fairness let us have a hearing.  
Give me five minutes just to state my views.  
Then argue out the question if you choose.
- Mrs. R. The simplest way of arguing is this;  
To put your fingers in your ears and hiss.  
Views indeed! You may state them all day long.  
Whatever you may say, I know it's wrong.
- Sp. My friends, I come before you in the name  
Of womankind, to urge you all to claim  
Yours rights, and all unite with heart and hand  
To vindicate the honour of our land;  
Where for so long a woman ruled the waves.
- B.A. Yes, and where women never will be slaves;  
Bursting our chains we rise and we rebel.  
I'm with you ma'am.
- Mrs. J. Yes, ma'am, and I as well.
- Mrs. B. I'm sure I shall be very pleased to rise,  
If you'd excuse me when the baby cries,  
And just on washing days, ma'am, too, I fear.
- B.A. However can you talk such folly here!  
Air all that nonsense outside, if you will.
- Mrs. R. (taking fingers out of ears)  
What, is the dreadful creature talking still?  
We never had such things in my young days.  
I disagree with everything she says.
- Sp. Now, may I speak one word, if you don't mind?  
I have a strong impression you will find  
In all the annals of the human race,  
That where a woman claims her rightful place,  
It is recorded her without delay.

Mrs. J. Hear, hear! Our rights! Give us our rights, I say.  
 Sp. Of course . And if folks chance to ask what is it  
 We want, no doubt we can be most explicit.  
 You, ma'a, (to Mrs. J.) at least can tell us out of hand  
 What are the women's rights which you demand.

Mrs. J. I, ma'am? Of course, - oh yes- of course I can.  
 It's - there- what did you tell me, Betsy Ann?  
 About- oh dear- what was it? Oh, I have  
 It now. Yes, I'm not going to slave  
 To darn Bill's stockings and to get his tea.

Sp. A most disgraceful case of slavery.  
 Bill's tea, indeed! As if he couldn't go  
 And get it at the Public House, you know.

Mrs. J. The Public House! I'd like to see him dare!

Sp. Well if he does go, It's his own affair.

Mrs. J. His own affair, indeed! How do you think  
 I'm to keep house if money goes in drink?

Sp. Why, surely it's a notion of past ages  
 To be dependent on your husband's wages.  
 Isn't it possible he might declare  
 That he who earns them has a claim to share  
 The profits, and consider it his right  
 To find things nice when he comes home at night?  
 The children, too. Of course on would condemn  
 The woman who would toil and slave for them  
 I dare say, now, the parish might provide  
 For them.

Mrs. J. What! Have you no proper pride?  
 Parish indeed! No, that wont do for me.

Sp. We seem to rather like our slavery.  
 What these rights are seems awkward to get at.

Mrs. R. What right have you to rights? Just tell me that.

Sp. Certainly, ma'am; I'll give you my suggestions,  
 A speaker's business is to answer questions.  
 Give me a moments hearing, while I name  
 The rights I think each woman ought to claim.  
 And, first of all, I claim for us the right  
 To make our own homes cosy, neat, and bright,  
 By all those things, which nobody denies,  
 A man can't do, however much he tries.  
 The right to train our children from their youth  
 In self-control, obedience and truth.  
 The right to make them and the father say  
 Home isn't home, if Mother is awsy.

B.A. What's this? You're advocating slavery!  
 Sp. Will you explain what it is to be free?  
 Surely it isn't only games and fun!  
 The work is there, and therefore must be done  
 By somebody, it can't be let alone.  
 To save confusion, each shall do his own.  
 And women's work must needs go begging, when  
 Women are busy with work of men.

B.A. Cooking and mending are affairs too common  
 To make the work of an enlightened woman.

Sp. Now let's be practical! You wont deny  
 We can't well do without the food supply.  
 And in this northern land, I think, don't you?  
 That clothes are rather necessary too.  
 Therefore it follows, till the world is ended,  
 That dinner must be cooked and clothes be mended.  
 And things that we are needing every day  
 Must be of some importance, I should say.



The little children trained in every home  
 Are men and women of the days to come.  
 So I, for one, vow that I won't resign  
 Those mighty duties which I hold as mine.  
 Give up my sovereignty at home? Not quite!  
 I therefore claim it as the Woman's Right.

Mrs. R. There really is some truth in what she says.

(To Sp.) We held the same ideas in my young days  
 I'm glad to find you wiser than your looks.  
 I'm sure you don't approve of school and books.

Whatever does a woman want with knowing  
 Anything more than scrubbing floors and sewing?  
 Oh, if we could the good old days recall! (Sighs)

Sp. Excuse me, but that's not my view at all.

The world goes forward, and be sure we're wrong  
 If, with the world, we do not move along.

Knowledge is power; it helps us with our work;  
 Gives us fresh reasons why we mustn't shirk.

A girl will make a cake not worse but better,  
 If she can do a sum and write a letter.

She'll care the more, about her native land  
 If its past history she can understand.

Life will be richer if she knows the pages  
 Left by the mighty writers of past ages.

Oh, we should make a great mistake, 't's plain  
 To teach the fingers and forget the brain.

Then perhaps some among the women here  
 May find a wider, though not higher sphere.

For tasks and callings sometimes come our way  
 Unknown to women of a by-gone day.

But that's no reason why our girls should be  
 One bit less modest, sweet, and womanly.

Those who at shorthand and accounts are clever  
 Can make a pudding just as well as ever.

I've kept you very long, my friends, I fear.

All. - No, No. We were just going to say, "Hear, hear!"

Sp. Thanks, thanks, my friends. Now are we all agreed

To claim these rights which are our rights indeed?

The right of every sister, mother, wife,

To smooth, to sweeten, and to brighten life,

By little things, which, though they seem so small,

Are not so unimportant after all. Applause.

The ladies still applaud. I'll venture then

To say a few words to the gentlemen.

(To audience)

The ladies venture, sirs, to hope that you

Will kindly think of claiming your rights too.

The right to help, with love and loyalty,

Her who makes home the place it ought to be.

For, do you see, this meeting has decided

That labour must be equally divided.

And good results will just depend on whether

Both parties do their share and pull together.

Mrs. J. I'd stay all night to hear her talking still,

But I must run home and get tea for Bill.

B.A. I must say she's convincing.

Mrs. B. I shall tell Tom

Tom every word; the last few words as well.

Mrs. R. It may be just within the bounds of truth

That so good things have happened since my youth.

Sp.

Well, Let me say just "thank you for the bright  
And pleasant meeting that we've had tonight,"  
Although I'm sure you think "She needn't come  
And teach us how to make a happy home,  
Choose other things for future winter nights  
Each woman here has claimed her Woman's Rights.

graduating class of 1919.  
Bothell, Wash

MRS. CHARLES H. GREEN  
Bothell, Washington

Harriette Wray (Misses)

Carrie Ross (Mrs. Robinson)

Sarah Simons (Mrs. Jones)

Merle Ullin (Betsey Ann)

Emma Ullin (Mrs. Brew)

Mina Beckstrom (Spahr)