MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY FALL 2020

Minnesota HISTORY

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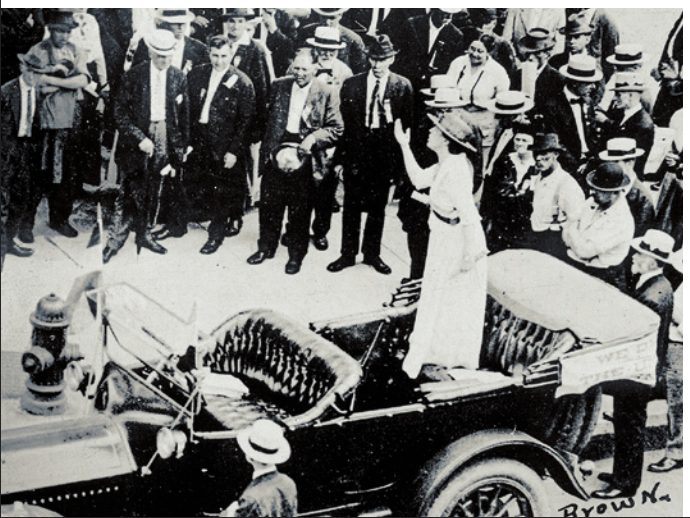
Special Double Issue:
Nineteenth Amendment Centennial

MINNESOTA and WOMAN SUFFRAGE



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Woman suffrage banners ca. 1918–20 from the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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Visit *Minnesota History* at mnhs.org/mnhistory.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Double issues

This special, double issue of *Minnesota History* is only the fourth in the past 22 years, and the first in over a decade. Previous double issues were devoted to the Making of Minnesota Territory, 1849–1858 (Winter 1998–99); St. Anthony Falls—Making Minneapolis the Mill City (Spring/Summer 2003, in conjunction with the opening of the Mill City Museum); and Minnesota's Greatest Generation (Spring 2009), part of MNHS's multi-year, multi-faceted statewide initiative, which culminated in the major long-term exhibit *Minnesota's Greatest Generation: The Depression, the War, The Boom,* which continues to attract visitors to the History Center.

Another thing that makes this issue special is my collaboration with a guest editor. Hamline University professor Kristin Mapel Bloomberg is an authority on woman suffrage and women's rights in the Midwest. Her expertise has been invaluable in shaping this issue, and I've truly valued getting to know Kris both professionally and personally over the last two years—meeting at our offices, in coffee shops, and more recently via Google Meet—as this issue has been in the making.

This double issue marking the centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women the right to vote, shares its theme with MNHS's digital exhibit *Votes for Women*, mnhs.org/votesforwomen, which went online in late August. The "live" exhibit featuring Minnesota women activists at the Minnesota History Center, originally slated for this September, is now set to open in March 2021.

Single-theme double issues of magazines run the risk of turning away readers who aren't interested in the theme. (This is one reason they're rare!) Even if you think you aren't interested in woman suffrage or women's rights, I urge you to look through these 88 pages. Something will catch your attention. As network television used to say, "We return to regularly scheduled programming" with our Winter 20–21 issue.

—*Laura Weber*

ABOVE: *Founded in 1910, the 1915 Suffrage Club aimed to achieve equal suffrage by 1915.* (MNHS COLLECTIONS)

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

This issue is made possible, in part, by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008, and the Henry and Donna Morgan Fund for Research and Publications.

Minnesota HISTORY

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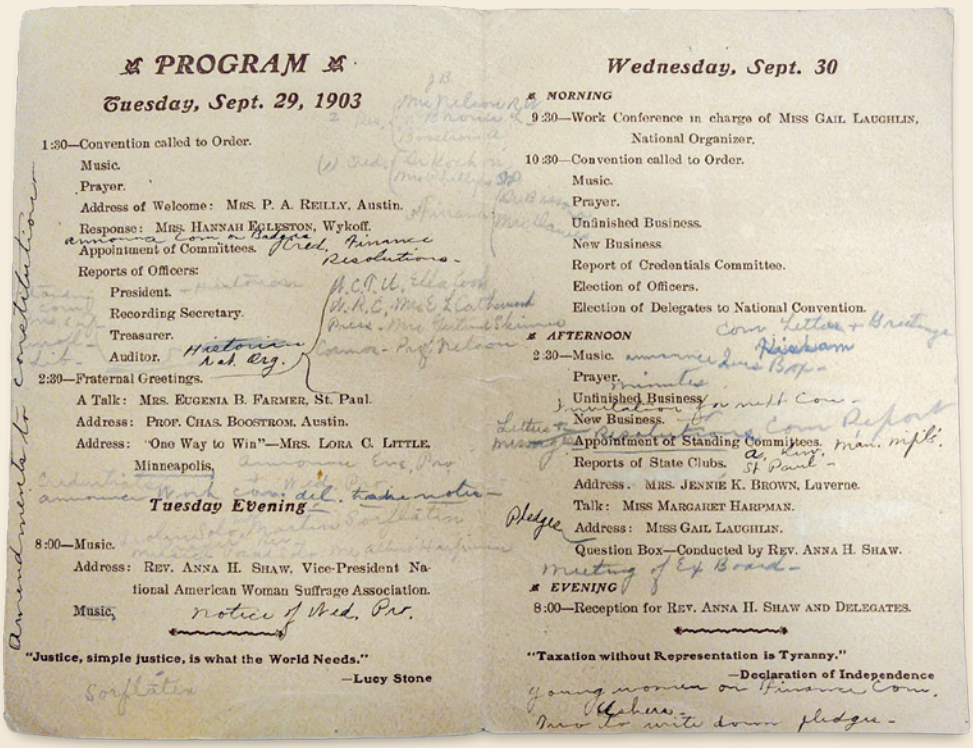
Jottings on a conference program

As an exhibit developer, I mine primary sources for historical information. But I also view them as catalysts to spark exhibit visitors' imaginations. A story-rich object helps visitors relate to the past on a personal level. Through that human connection, we learn from those who went before us, and appreciate how their experiences mirror and inform our own.

This convention program opens a window into the world of its owner. In 1903 Maud Conkey Stockwell was in the third of her 10 years as president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA). She was in her mid-30s, and her interests in civic affairs were broad. While leading the MWSA she also organized the Economic Study Club of Duluth and was a founding member of the Woman's Club of Minneapolis.



PROGRAM

Tuesday, Sept. 29, 1903

1:30—Convention called to Order.
Music.
Prayer.
Address of Welcome: Mrs. P. A. Reilly, Austin.
Response: Mrs. Hannah Egleston, Wykoff.
Appointment of Committees.
Reports of Officers:
President.
Recording Secretary.
Treasurer.
Auditor.
2:30—Fraternal Greetings.
A Talk: Mrs. Eugenia B. Farmer, St. Paul.
Address: Prof. Chas. Boostrom, Austin.
Address: "One Way to Win"—Mrs. Lora C. Little, Minneapolis.

Tuesday Evening

8:00—Music.
Address: Rev. Anna H. Shaw, Vice-President National American Woman Suffrage Association.
Music.

"Justice, simple justice, is what the World Needs."
—Lucy Stone

Wednesday, Sept. 30

Morning

9:30—Work Conference in charge of Miss Gail Laughlin, National Organizer.
10:30—Convention called to Order.
Music.
Prayer.
Unfinished Business.
New Business.
Report of Credentials Committee.
Election of Officers.
Election of Delegates to National Convention.

Afternoon

2:30—Music.
Prayer.
Unfinished Business.
New Business.
Appointment of Standing Committees.
Reports of State Clubs.
Address: Mrs. Jennie K. Brown, Luverne.
Talk: Miss Margaret Harpman.
Address: Miss Gail Laughlin.
Question Box—Conducted by Rev. Anna H. Shaw.

Evening

8:00—Reception for Rev. Anna H. Shaw and Delegates.

"Taxation without Representation is Tyranny."
—Declaration of Independence

Program, Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association annual state convention, Austin, Minnesota, September 29–30, 1903. MNHS COLLECTIONS (SUFFRAGE PAMPHLETS).

When Maud Stockwell looked at this program, what did she see? What did she make of the two-day schedule of events? Was Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, a nationally recognized suffragist, Stockwell's first choice as keynote speaker? The other national speaker, Gail Laughlin, was on a four-year speaking tour funded by the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Were Jennie Brown from Luverne and Margaret Harpman from Austin good lead-ins for this no-nonsense lawyer from Maine? Could Laughlin hold the group's attention during that late-afternoon slot?

Handwritten notes on a page—written in ink or in pencil, carefully inscribed or hastily scribbled—can evoke an emotional connection that transcends time. Looking at Stockwell's jottings conjures a scene of her seated at her desk the night before the conference, writing reminders to herself in black ink. Late Tuesday evening, the next day's program would be reviewed. Before the discussion of new business on Wednesday afternoon, members would be invited to the 1904 convention (to be held in Anoka). Between Laughlin's address and the Q and A session with Rev. Shaw on Wednesday afternoon, there would be a plea for financial pledges, and two young women were needed to record the details.

In 1916, suffragist Ethel Hurd wrote that Stockwell's tenure as MWSA president was "characterized by persistent, quiet, earnest behavior." Stockwell's penciled jottings, likely written during the conference, underscore this assessment. Did she, I wonder, pour herself some tea and consult these notes the morning after the conference, as she organized her day's tasks?

Kate Roberts is the lead developer for Votes for Women, an exhibit that reveals the stories of dozens of Minnesota women who fought for voting rights before and after passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. She holds a PhD in art history from the University of Minnesota.

"A Vast Host of Consecrated Women"

New Scholarship on Minnesota's Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights Movement

Kristin Mapel Bloomberg, guest editor

In the fall of 2017, I pitched the idea of a special issue focused on woman suffrage to *Minnesota History* editor Laura Weber. As the centenary of the Nineteenth Amendment approached, the history of woman suffrage and women's rights was attracting renewed interest, and I wanted to ensure Minnesota's history would attract equal interest. The end result is this double issue, which presents new scholarship from researchers whose topics I introduce in this essay. Collectively, their articles highlight the reform efforts of a variety of activists and organizations, revealing that the state's progressive effort was sustained for decades. This is necessary scholarship. As contributor Elizabeth Dillenburg notes in "Looking Back and Looking Forward," (p. 94) a paucity of women's history topics, including woman suffrage, characterizes the volumes of *Minnesota History*. And, despite some notable exceptions, scholarship beyond the journal is too often influenced by an inherited history centered on, and purposefully shaped by, the victorious officeholders of woman suffrage organizations who stood in the winner's circle when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified. This has concealed the decades of difficult work mobilizing for woman suffrage and women's rights, resulting in a triumphalist history focused on the achievement of the Nineteenth Amendment.

The essays presented in this issue reflect the history field's new approach to woman suffrage and women's rights, and offer a broader view that goes beyond the narrow, highly crafted story promoted by the leaders of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA) and the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) following ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Instead, our authors highlight subjects that amplify the traditional woman suffrage narrative to explore how ethnicity, race, class, gender, and rural location influenced Minnesota's movement. They reveal the variety of women who contributed to the effort that culminated in Minnesota's ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment on September 8, 1919—of that event, Minnesota suffragist Maud Stockwell explained, "On that memorable day the curtain was rung down on the last act of the drama of seventy-two years, in which a vast host of consecrated

National American Woman Suffrage Association gathering, 1910. (MNHS COLLECTIONS)

women had parts, inspired by a faith in the ultimate attainment of justice."[1]

Minnesota's woman suffrage story reflects, but also diverges from, the national story. Like suffragists elsewhere, Minnesota women established associations and used petitions, lobbying, and lectures to promote their cause; however, Minnesota was not always dominated by just one organization affiliated with NAWSA. At times, independent suffrage associations flourished and eclipsed MWSA membership. What is more, Minnesota women of nondominant race or ethnicity established influential suffrage associations that worked with, or parallel to, the state's dominant-culture suffrage associations.

Minnesota's woman suffrage story reflects, but also diverges from, the national story.

Tracing the chronology of Minnesota's movement that begins to emerge in the pages of this issue reveals the threads connecting the state's story to regional, national, and international ones, prompting new ways of thinking about Minnesota's movement. The early decades of statehood showed that Minnesota held progressive promise. For example, the state's earliest and longest-lived woman suffrage association, the Political Equality Club of Minneapolis (originally the Woman Suffrage Club of Minneapolis), was established in 1868, the same year that Black men were included as Minnesota voters—and two years before the Fifteenth Amendment. Minnesota's early woman suffrage efforts focused on legislative action, which contributor Linda Cameron documents via petitions in favor of woman suffrage submitted to the Minnesota Legislature throughout the 1860s (p. 98). The first woman suffrage bill was introduced in 1869, followed in 1870 by an ill-fated state constitutional amendment for woman suffrage that was never presented to voters. Had it been approved, Minnesota would have been the first state to grant suffrage to women through a popular vote.[2]

Despite this failure, there were achievements. In 1875, Minnesota was likely the first to pass a state or territorial constitutional amendment explicitly granting women the right to vote on local school matters and to be elected to school boards. The decade of the 1870s also saw the beginning of organized reform activity that brought together like-minded people, notably in the 1877 founding of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) of Minnesota, which became an avenue for cultivating women's political leadership. Contributor Frederick L. Johnson examines this development in a new history of Julia B. Nelson—a prominent WCTU speaker and founding member of MWSA—that exposes the links between WCTU activism, the expansion of progressive networks that favored woman suffrage, and the skills built by speakers and organizers like Nelson who used them for decades of woman suffrage activism (p. 104).[3]

In the 1880s, Minnesota women entered more public municipal, political, and social roles, and the woman suffrage and women's rights movement strengthened and diversified. From the WCTU emerged the leaders who

assisted in the formation of the MWSA in 1881, uniting local suffrage clubs. Many Minnesota women saw the vote as a means to larger social reforms that would improve both home and public life. Women not only occupied the domestic realm but also filled roles in factories and as teachers, business owners, and farmers—while simultaneously serving as social leaders in clubs and religious organizations. In 1885, Minnesota women gained the ability to vote for county school superintendents—but they had to submit their votes to a separate ballot box for women.[4]

The 1890s were a pivotal decade, with developments both promising and discouraging. Through one constitutional amendment in 1898, Minnesota women gained the ability to vote for and serve on municipal library boards. Women's social and political culture matured as they activated their power through the growth of what historians call "organized womanhood." Beyond the WCTU, other groups engaged different populations of women. In 1893, the St. Paul and Minneapolis sections of the Council of Jewish Women were established as charter members of the National Council of Jewish Women. Two years later, in 1895, the Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs united a variety of associations under the banner of the General Federation of Women's Clubs—but the federation excluded the state's Black women's associations, which would unite in 1905 through the Minnesota Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. All these clubs were important responses to the social upheavals of the late nineteenth century, when emigration and immigration fractured old ways of social organizing and created a new social sorting process as the middle class developed itself in racial, ethnic, and white communities.[5]

Women's clubwork refined their public leadership skills and further expanded their social and political networks. The end of the decade, however, generated a significant barrier to woman suffrage. In 1898, the same year Minnesota women gained the right to vote in library elections, voters also approved a constitutional amendment that made passing future amendments to the state constitution extremely difficult. Now, a majority of all voters in an election were required to vote "yes" on an amendment; abstaining on a question was effectively a "no" vote. The favored approach to achieving woman suffrage—amending the state's constitution—was no longer a practical option in Minnesota. Early twentieth-century suffragists needed to regroup.[6]

And regroup they did. Minnesota's woman suffrage movement now engaged additional communities and established new, non-legislative strategies designed to draw attention to the cause and unite supporters. Suffrage associations beyond MWSA flourished, representing diverse memberships of race, class, ethnicity, and age. For example, the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association was formed in 1907; the Minnesota Equal Franchise League and the Women's Welfare League in 1912; the Everywoman Suffrage Club (later, the Everywoman Progressive Council) in 1914; and the Minnesota branch of the Congressional Union (later, the National Woman's Party) in 1915.

A FOCUS ON INCLUSION ushered in new suffrage strategies embraced by a younger and more varied population interested in the cause, and the years around World War I emerged as a turning point. Black women worked for suffrage through the Everywoman Suffrage Club, led by Nellie Griswold Francis, and contributor William D. Green's analysis of her efforts demonstrates how Francis combined her suffrage work with activism on behalf of Minnesota's Black community (p. 128). Also during this period, suffragists expanded their reach beyond urban areas to rural ethnic Minnesotans. Men immigrants to Minnesota could vote upon declaring their intention to become citizens; however, organizing for woman suffrage among rural populations with strong cultural identities posed unique difficulties. Contributor Sara Egge confirms it was especially difficult to organize German immigrants, who experienced discrimination during World War I (p. 116). However, suffragists successfully infused their woman suffrage appeal with aspects of the emerging patriotism movement that celebrated immigrant loyalty to America.

In both urban and rural areas, suffragists occupied Minnesota's streets—previously men's territory—popularizing the cause through open-air meetings, parades and rallies, and automobile caravans. They knew performance activism could strengthen solidarity and shift public opinion, as it did during Minnesota's grand suffrage parade in 1914. Yet suffragists needed to carefully balance political activism with restrictive gender performance codes; as a result, they chose means that would not undermine their messaging. Contributor Annette Atkins thus explores how suffragists used clothing and costume to convey gender-appropriate political messages and shows that clothing was—and remains—a powerful symbolic form of feminist activism (p. 140).

Dissatisfied with the slow-moving strategies advocated by MWSA and NAWSA, new organizations proliferated in the 1910s, most notably the Congressional Union, which in 1916 became the National Woman's Party. Inspired by the American suffragist Alice Paul and British suffragettes Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst, for a few years, Minnesota's National Woman's Party might have been the largest suffrage organization in the state. Contributor Jacqueline R.

deVries traces the Pankhursts' influence as popular speakers who drew record crowds of Minnesotans, galvanized supporters throughout the state, and were reported on and discussed in Minnesota's non-English-language press (p. 146). Like their national colleagues, Minnesota's National Woman's Party members were willing to engage in radical strategies beyond the sedate halls of the state legislature. Contributor J. D. Zahniser demonstrates how some Minnesota women took up more militant efforts, if not in their home state, then in Washington, DC, where they picketed the White House under the banners of the Minnesota branch of the National Woman's Party and the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association (p. 154). As a result of their civil disobedience in the nation's capital, Minnesota women were harassed, arrested, and imprisoned. But despite their robust contributions to both the state and national woman suffrage movement, the efforts of the National Woman's Party in Minnesota have remained largely hidden under the shadow of the MWSA.

The increased suffrage activism of the 1910s spurred opposition from Minnesota women such as Lavinia Gilfillan, who was a typical anti-suffragist: an elite white woman who occupied the same social circles as many MWSA members. Contributor Hannah Dyson reveals how Minnesota's anti-suffrage efforts reflected national anti-suffrage activities, which promoted preservation of the gendered, racialized, and classed status quo (p. 163). Minnesota's anti-suffragists also used tactics similar to those used by the state's suffragists, including the distribution of material translated into German and Scandinavian languages.

The close of the 1910s saw a new objective: presidential suffrage for women. This form of women's limited suffrage bypassed the state's difficult constitutional amendment requirements by requiring only legislative approval. Suffragists achieved their goal on March 24, 1919, when the Minnesota Legislature established women's right to vote in presidential elections if they met the same requirements as male voters. Ultimately, suffragists completed their task when a little more than five months later, the Minnesota Legislature met in special session on September 8, 1919, to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, which in the following year would lift the prohibition on women voting for all elected offices.[7]

As is apparent from this overview, generations of Minnesota's woman suffrage and women's rights activists worked in political climates from the Civil War to the Progressive Era and through World War I. Increasingly through time, these activists came from diverse backgrounds to campaign for women's votes either separately or alongside suffragists of the dominant culture. Yet, Minnesota's suffragists were multifaceted human actors who held conflicting points of view even as they worked for a radically progressive cause. As a result, other themes emerge from the scholarship presented in this issue of *Minnesota History* that both confirm and complicate traditional woman suffrage histories. Minnesota's woman suffrage movement reflected the complexities and contradictions found nationally, especially those relating to race, ethnicity, and class. Racist, ethnocentric, and anti-immigrant arguments were made by some of Minnesota's suffrage and anti-suffrage leaders, who occasionally structured their rhetoric to appease moderate white or Yankee voters who might support their cause. However, Minnesota suffragists also advocated for Black civil rights and ethnic inclusion, forged coalitions, and established integrated associations across the lines of class, ethnicity, and race to work together for woman suffrage. These positive points of collaboration among Minnesota's activist groups perhaps reveal a different approach to woman suffrage and women's rights than what was seen regionally or nationally.

Minnesota's suffragists were multifaceted human actors who held conflicting points of view even as they worked for a radically progressive cause.

This issue's scholarship moves Minnesota's historical narrative forward and offers pathways to future research on the state's involvement in one of the largest and longest reform movements in American history. What's collected here is not comprehensive, and this issue is notably missing an assessment of American Indian women's roles in Minnesota's woman suffrage and women's rights movement. American Indian citizenship—and therefore suffrage for both Indigenous women and men—was restricted in Minnesota until 1960. Future scholarship would benefit, for example, from Minnesota-focused histories of women like Elizabeth Bender Cloud, an Ojibwe woman raised on the White Earth reservation and the first American Indian to lead the Indian Affairs Division of the General Federation of Women's Clubs; or Marie Bottineau Baldwin, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, and a suffragist who marched with other women lawyers in the 1913 Washington, DC, suffrage parade.[8]

Scholarship on Minnesota's woman suffrage and women's rights movement has been hindered by limited

archival preservation influenced by decades of gender, race, and class prejudices. Researchers were further disadvantaged when the 2020 coronavirus pandemic closed libraries and archives, forcing scholars who were also teachers to shift their attention to online education. Yet, new avenues have allowed researchers access to digital repositories such as the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub and Chronicling America to locate their subjects, providing the authors featured in this issue of *Minnesota History* with primary sources that expose a broader woman suffrage story. To highlight this approach, we offer snapshots of the discussions about woman suffrage and women's rights found on those pages, including Minnesota's non-English-language and immigrant communities, indigenous communities, and the African American community. It is our hope that after learning more about these rich historical repositories, researchers will be inspired to delve further into these archives.

The centennial of the Nineteenth Amendment has provided our authors with the opportunity to write new histories about woman suffrage and women's rights in Minnesota, to extend the scholarship listed in the bibliography on the next page. Our authors' contributions help us further decenter the usual historical narrative and contemplate how Minnesota's woman suffrage and women's rights movement paralleled or diverged from national or regional expressions of the cause. As a result, this issue of *Minnesota History* invites its readers to consider some of the "vast host of consecrated women" who worked for decades, and provides a foundation for future exploration. With this in mind, continued research could perhaps be guided by questions such as, how did Minnesota activists support, and also oppose, the prejudices held by many Americans at various points in time? Or, what were the greater effects of the National Woman's Party on Minnesota's movement? And, what is the history of Minnesota's limited presidential suffrage for women, passed months before the state ratified the Nineteenth Amendment? Addressing these questions can cast a new light that will better illuminate the national story of woman suffrage.

Above all, this issue of *Minnesota History* is an invitation to join the discussion and discover more about how Minnesota's woman suffrage and women's rights activists furthered their goals. Happy reading, and I look forward to the conversations. ◙

Kristin Mapel Bloomberg is professor of women's studies and a legal studies faculty affiliate at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she also holds the Hamline University Endowed Chair in the Humanities. She received her PhD from the University of Nebraska, her MA from St. Cloud State University (MN), and her BA from Hamline University. Her research interests focus on the history, culture, and literature of midwestern women in the nineteenth century. She has published on topics such as women's social and civic organizations, woman suffrage, women and early co-education, and women-authored journals and novels. She is currently at work on a biography of Nebraska women's rights advocate Clara Bewick Colby.

Notes

1. Maud C. Stockwell, "Suffrage in Minnesota," *Who's Who Among Minnesota Women*, ed. Mary Dillon Foster (St. Paul: The editor, 1924), 317.

2. General Laws of Minnesota for 1868, Chapter 106, 149–51, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1868/0/General+Laws/Chapter/106/pdf/. On Black male suffrage in Minnesota, see Wayne Gannaway, "The Perils of Peace: Frederick Douglass, Winona, and Civil Rights in Minnesota after the Civil War," *Minnesota History* 66, no. 2 (Summer 2018): 74–84. Until their disfranchisement in 1807, single, property-owning women voted in New Jersey, a right initially granted to them by the state constitution. Wyoming (1869) and Utah (1870) established woman suffrage in their territorial constitutions. Wyoming was the first state to grant women full suffrage, in 1890. Colorado was the first state to grant women suffrage through a popular vote, in 1893.

3. Laws of Minnesota for 1875, Chapter 2, 18–19, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1875/0/General+Laws/Chapter/2/pdf/; Kathryn A. Nicholas, "Reexamining Women's Nineteenth-Century Political Agency: School Suffrage and Office-Holding," *Journal of Policy History* 30, no. 3 (2018): 468. Nicholas's research indicates the following states or territories extended some other form of school suffrage to women prior to Minnesota: Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington. Minnesota (1875), Colorado (1876), Wisconsin (1885), and North Dakota (1889) established it a constitutional right.

4. General Laws of Minnesota for 1885, Chapter 204, 275, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1885/0/General+Laws/Chapter/204/pdf/.

5. General Laws of Minnesota for 1897, Chapter 175, 331–32, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1897/0/General+Laws/Chapter/175/pdf/.

6. General Laws of Minnesota for 1897, Chapter 185, 345–46, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1897/0/General+Laws/Chapter/185/pdf/.

7. Session Laws of Minnesota for 1919, Chapter 80, HF no. 222, 89, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1919/0/Session+Law/Chapter/89/pdf/; Special Session Laws of Minnesota for 1919, Joint Resolution Ratifying a Proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, 105–6, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/data/revisor/law/1919/1/1919-SP-R01.pdf. Minnesota was the fifteenth state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment.

8. For these voting rights in Minnesota, see 1857 Constitution of Minnesota, Article 7, Section 1: Elective Franchise, and General Laws of Minnesota for 1950, Chapter 696, 1359–60, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1959/0/Session+Law/Chapter/696/pdf/. For Elizabeth Bender Cloud, see Lisa Tetzloff, "Elizabeth Bender Cloud: 'Working for and with Our Indian People,'" *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 30, no. 3 (2009): 77–115. For Marie Bottineau Baldwin, see Cathleen D. Cahill, "Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin: Indigenizing the Federal Indian Service," *American Indian Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (2013): 65–86.

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compiled by Kristin Mapel Bloomberg

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Looking Back and Looking Forward

Minnesota History's Coverage of Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights

Since 1915, the quarterly's attention to women's history has reflected women's changing roles in society

Elizabeth Dillenburg

The centennial of woman suffrage provides an opportunity not only to reflect on the historic struggles faced by women but also reevaluate the current status of women, woman suffrage, and ongoing challenges to women's rights. This broader spirit of commemoration with an eye on the present and future makes the centennial an ideal moment to survey how *Minnesota History* has covered these topics and consider directions for future research.

Delving into the archives of *Minnesota History* reveals the growth of scholarship on women over the past four decades. While its early articles provided largely biographical studies of notable figures, later essays expanded understanding of women's activism by analyzing the roles of rural and immigrant women and the connections among suffrage, labor, and reform movements. Despite *Minnesota History*'s increasing scholarship on women, there's more work to be done, especially in researching the experiences of African American, Native American, and other immigrant and working-class women and their participation and marginalization in the suffrage movement.

Minnesota History was first published in 1915 during the final push for woman suffrage, but references to women's rights and suffrage in the quarterly were relatively scarce until recent decades. Writing in 1977 amid the "growing interest in women's history," Bonnie Beatson Palmquist compiled a bibliography of articles pertaining to women in *Minnesota History* to assist researchers. However, she found that "[f]ew articles in *Minnesota History* have been about women per se" and cautioned that "[m]any of the articles listed in the bibliography simply contain references to women which nevertheless can serve as vehicles for further investigation." One exception was Winton U.

Woman suffrage meeting in Rice Park, St. Paul, 1914.
(MNHS COLLECTIONS)

Solberg's 1964 article on Martha G. Ripley, a president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA). In his study, Solberg connected Ripley's advocacy for suffrage to her wider activism and involvement in abolition, education, temperance, and the founding of the Minneapolis Maternity Hospital. Solberg described how Ripley viewed the ballot as "one aspect of a larger quest for equality" and "an avenue toward correcting the discriminatory laws and social attitudes that facilitated exploitation of women by men." Solberg's analysis revealed that Ripley viewed suffrage not simply as an end in itself but a means to an end, namely, to enact social reforms.[1]

As Palmquist noted, the feminist movement of the 1970s generated new interest in women's history and led to more articles about women in the 1980s and 1990s.[2] These, too, focused on key figures in the woman suffrage movement, including two of the fourteen MWSA cofounders—Julia B. Nelson and Harriet E. Bishop—as well as Sarah Christie Stevens, a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the superintendent of schools in Blue Earth County in the 1890s.[3]

Later articles similarly analyzed suffragists' activist networks and how the suffrage movement intersected with labor and other reform efforts. For instance, in her 1990 article "In or Out of the Historical Kitchen?: Interpretations of Minnesota Rural Women," Glenda Riley highlighted how many rural women worked on behalf of the woman suffrage cause. Riley used the example of Susie Stageberg, long-term president of the Red Wing WCTU who ran for Minnesota secretary of state on the Farmer-Labor ticket in the 1920s, to show how rural women broke down gender segregation in Minnesota politics in other ways.[4] In 1991, Mary C. Pruitt also examined the ways in which suffrage activism was connected to socialist reforms in the late nineteenth century in "'Lady Organizer': Sabrie G. Akin and the *Labor World*." Pruitt described how Duluth activist Akin was a "bridge builder" who linked the feminist, labor, and socialist movements and challenged conceptions that socialist feminists were marginalized in the labor movement.[5]

Like the 2020 centennial, the 75th anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment provided a moment to reflect on the history of woman suffrage. The Fall 1995 issue of *Minnesota History* featured Barbara Stuhler's comprehensive "Organizing for the Vote: Leaders of Minnesota's Woman Suffrage Movement." Stuhler traced the evolution of Minnesota's woman suffrage activism from the mid-nineteenth century but focused on later suffragists and their efforts around the turn of the twentieth century. As suggested by the article's subtitle, Stuhler concentrated on key figures in the suffrage movement, in particular those involved in the MWSA, including cofounders Julia Nelson and Sarah Burger Stearns as well as Clara Ueland, who was president of the MWSA when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified and was first president of the Minnesota League of Women Voters.[6]

Stuhler also introduced *Minnesota History* readers to lesser-known organizations—like the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association (SWSA), the Workers' Equal Suffrage League, and the Political Equality Club—and the role of minority women, specifically Nellie Griswold Francis, who led the Everywoman Suffrage Club, an African American organization. As with Ripley and other suffragists, Francis's work for social justice and civil rights extended beyond the suffrage movement, and Stuhler described Francis's involvement in a wide range of causes—including the Woman's Welfare League, Urban League, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—and her work authoring and advocating for Minnesota's anti-lynching law following the lynching of three African American men in Duluth in 1920.[7]

Following the turn of the twenty-first century, woman suffrage scholarship in *Minnesota History* has provided more detailed studies of lesser-known organizations that are often marginalized in traditional narratives about suffrage. National suffrage leaders like Susan B. Anthony and Anna Howard Shaw were frustrated at the perceived hostility in the Midwest toward women voting, but articles in *Minnesota History* challenge the idea that the Midwest was not favorable to suffrage for women.

For instance, in 2006, Kristin Mapel Bloomberg and Erin Parrish studied Minnesota's longest-lived and, for a time, largest woman suffrage club in their article, "The Political Equality Club of Minneapolis" (2006). Bloomberg and Parrish detailed the various activities that the Political Equality Club organized to cultivate "educated, active citizens of both home and society" and how women's activism extended beyond suffrage. In doing so, their work demonstrated the vibrancy, strength, and distinctiveness of the suffrage movement in Minnesota.[8]

Similarly, in 2011, Anna Peterson provided an extensive study of the SWSA in "Adding 'A Little Suffrage Spice to the Melting Pot': Minnesota's Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association" (2011). Like Riley's "In or Out of the Historical Kitchen?" Peterson's article questioned the idea that immigrant women were hostile to the cause of suffrage and challenged assumptions that the woman suffrage movement was dominated by middle-class and elite Anglo-American "Yankee" women. As Peterson described,

organizations like the SWSA provided an avenue for women to exercise their power through community organizations, which in turn laid the groundwork for broader activism.[9]

Articles since the 1980s have illuminated the myriad experiences and roles of women, yet there are many aspects of women's history that remain understudied in the pages of the quarterly. Further research should be done on the challenges faced by women of color and Native American women in attaining and exercising the right to vote. *Minnesota History* has featured articles that examine the experiences of African Americans and Native Americans and especially their protracted struggle for civil rights, but they do not focus on suffrage or women's rights. For instance, in 1983, Priscilla K. Buffalohead's "Farmers, Warriors, Traders: A Fresh Look at Ojibway Women" elucidated the contributions of women in tribal cultures and provided a more nuanced picture of women's status in Ojibwe communities and their important political and economic roles. Brenda J. Child and Karissa E. White provide a more recent study of Ojibwe women in their 2009 article, "'I've Done My Share': Ojibwe People and World War II." Child and White draw attention to how citizenship and voting rights for Native American people were piecemeal and hampered by expectations that they disavow cultural and political sovereignty. Even with the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, Ojibwe people, and particularly Ojibwe women, still faced continued obstacles in attaining human rights and equality in employment, housing, education, and social welfare.[10]

William D. Green's scholarship in *Minnesota History* has shed light on African Americans' lengthy fight for suffrage and political rights. For instance, in 1998's "Minnesota's Long Road to Black Suffrage 1849–1868," Green detailed the restrictions of Black citizenship and rights in antebellum Minnesota, the protracted struggle for Black men to gain civil rights, and the achievements of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. In another article published two years later (2000), Green examined the case of Eliza Winston, who escaped slavery in Minnesota and whose experiences highlighted contradictions within the professedly anti-slave and democratic community in Minneapolis that in reality profited from slave money, especially by southerners' tourism.[11]

The work of Green, Child, White, and Buffalohead draw needed attention to the contested rights of African American and Native American communities in Minnesota, but the quarterly's readers would benefit from additional scholarship on the ways in which African American and Native American women worked within and outside the mainstream suffrage movement in Minnesota to achieve their rights.[12]

In 1919, the National American Woman Suffrage Association reorganized as the American League of Women Voters to focus on teaching about citizenship and voting. Here, in 1937, Mrs. C. H. Chalmers and Miss Nellie Merrill prepare League materials to donate to MNHS. (MNHS COLLECTIONS)

A key challenge for researchers of woman suffrage, and especially for scholars investigating suffrage activities by ethnic women, women of color, and Native American women, are the limitations of the archive. For instance, Green noted that Winston left no record and the events of her life remain largely unknown. Moreover, courts, like the one that heard the case of Winston, seldom left records. As Buffalohead notes, references to Ojibwe women are "[a]ll too brief and scattered" and often recorded by European men. When women's voices do emerge in the archive, they are often those of middle- or upper-class women. The nature of the archive means that researchers must employ a variety of sources and innovative methodologies, reading against and along the archival grain to interrogate archival silences, and consider what they might reveal about the nature of woman suffrage and political power. For example, Buffalohead emphasizes the importance of oral tradition in understanding Ojibwe women's roles, while other authors, including Solberg, use oral histories and interviews to fill in some of the silences present in the written archival record.[13]

This special issue provides an important step in addressing these gaps and presents a more nuanced picture of

woman suffrage and women's rights activism for women's rights in Minnesota. The articles in this issue uncover some ways in which class, ethnicity, religion, and race structured the woman suffrage and women's rights movement and informed the identities and arguments of suffragists. It also shows how suffrage activism in Minnesota related to and diverged from national and international movements. *Minnesota History* has come a long way from Palmquist's finding in 1977 that few articles focused on women. Subsequent scholarship has not only enhanced understanding of women's lives and roles, but also challenged traditional narratives that rendered Minnesota—and, more broadly, the Midwest—as hostile to suffrage. These narratives also marginalized the importance of rural and immigrant women's involvement in the movement. Contributions in *Minnesota History* over the past four decades illustrate the rich potential of building scholarship about the diverse women in Minnesota who participated in a variety of activities in support of women's rights and woman suffrage and also reveal the work still to be done. ⊡

Notes

1. Bonnie Beatson Palmquist, ed., "Women in *Minnesota History,* 1915–1976: An Annotated Bibliography of Articles Pertaining to Women," *Minnesota History* 45, no. 5 (Spring 1977): 187–91, quote p. 187. See also Sue E. Holbert's overview of collections related to women's history, which was compiled as part of the Minnesota Historical Society's commitment to fostering research on women's history, in "Women's History Resources at the Minnesota Historical Society," *Minnesota History* 52, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 112–18. Winton U. Solberg, "Martha Ripley: Pioneer Doctor and Social Reformer," *Minnesota History* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1964): 1–17.

2. For more on feminist activism in Minnesota, see Cheri Register, "When Women Went Public: Feminist Reforms in the 1970s," *Minnesota History* 61, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 62–75. For a broader study of women's history, see Sara M. Evans, "Toward a Usable Past: Feminism as History and Politics," *Minnesota History* 49, no. 6 (Summer 1983): 230–35.

3. Julia Wiech Lief, "A Woman of Purpose: Julia B. Nelson," *Minnesota History* 47, no. 8 (Winter 1981): 302–14; Norma Sommerdorf, "Harriet E. Bishop: A Doer and a Mover," *Minnesota History* 55, no. 7 (Fall 1997): 320–23; Jean Christie, "Sarah Christie Stevens, Schoolwoman," *Minnesota History* 49, no. 2 (Summer 1983): 245–53; Solberg, "Martha Ripley." See also Annette Atkins, "Walk a Century in My Shoes: Minnesota 1900–2000," *Minnesota History* 56, no. 8 (Winter 1999–2000): 410–29. For another article about how suffragists were involved in a variety of reform movements, see Cynthia A. Hanson, "Catheryne Cooke Gilman and the Minneapolis Better Movie Movement," *Minnesota History* 51, no. 6 (Summer 1989): 202–16.

4. Glenda Riley, "In or Out of the Historical Kitchen?: Interpretations of Minnesota Rural Women," *Minnesota History* 52, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 61–71, esp. p. 70. For more on the experiences of Minnesota rural women, see Anne B. Webb, "Forgotten Persephones: Women Farmers on the Frontier," *Minnesota History* 50, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 134–48. For a greater discussion of women's political activism in rural communities, see Karen Starr, "Fighting for a Future: Farm Women of the Nonpartisan League," *Minnesota History* 48, no. 6 (Summer 1983): 255–62.

5. Mary C. Pruitt, "'Lady Organizer': Sabrie G. Akin and the *Labor World*," *Minnesota History* 52, no. 6 (Summer 1991): 206–19. More recently, two articles have drawn attention to the often-overlooked role of working-class women in organized labor: Mary Christine Bader, "Sisters in Toil: St. Paul's First Union of Garment Workers," *Minnesota History* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 26–39, and David LaVigne, "Rebel Girls: Women in the Mesabi Iron Range Strike of 1916," *Minnesota History* 65, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 90–100.

6. Barbara Stuhler, "Organizing for the Vote: Leaders of Minnesota's Woman Suffrage Movement," *Minnesota History* 54, no. 7 (Fall 1995): 290–303. See also Stuhler's book, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995).

7. Further information about these organizations can be found in the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society. Records related to the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association can be found at M508, Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association Records, 1894–1923, Manuscript Collection, MNHS, http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00756.xml. The records include correspondence, printed materials, scrapbooks, photographs, and record books. The collection also contains materials of other organizations, including the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association. See for instance M508 26 for newspaper clippings, letters, and other records related to the SWSA. For information about the first president of the SWSA, Jenova Martin, see P939: Martin, Jenova, Manuscript Biographies Collections, 1801–1998, Manuscript Collection, MNHS, http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/P939.xml#a8.

8. Kristin Mapel Bloomberg and Erin Parrish, "The Political Equality Club of Minneapolis," *Minnesota History* 60, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 113–22. The club was founded in 1868 and met for the last time on September 11, 1920.

9. Anna Marie Peterson, "Adding 'A Little Suffrage Spice to the Melting Pot': Minnesota's Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association," *Minnesota History* 62, no. 8 (Winter 2011–12): 288–97.

10. Priscilla K. Buffalohead, "Farmers, Warriors, Traders: A Fresh Look at Ojibway Women," *Minnesota History* 46, no. 6 (Summer 1983): 236–44; Brenda J. Child and Karissa E. White, "'I've Done My Share': Ojibwe People and World War II," *Minnesota History* 61, no. 5 (Spring 2009): 196–207. See also Brenda J. Child, *Holding Our World Together: Ojibwe Women and the Survival of Community* (New York: Viking, 2012).

11. William D. Green, "Minnesota's Long Road to Black Suffrage, 1849–1868," *Minnesota History* 56, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 68–84; William D. Green, "Eliza Winston and the Politics of Freedom in Minnesota, 1854–1860," *Minnesota History* 57, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 106–22. See also William D. Green, "Race and Segregation in St. Paul's Public Schools, 1846–69," *Minnesota History* 55, no. 4 (Winter 1996–97): 138–49; and his monographs: *A Peculiar Imbalance: The Fall and Rise of Racial Equality in Early Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2007) and *The Children of Lincoln: White Paternalism and the Limits of Black Opportunity in Minnesota, 1860–1876* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018).

12. For a list of articles on African American history in *Minnesota History,* see Kent Whitworth, "The Importance of History in Times of Crisis," *Minnesota History* 67, no. 2 (Summer 2020): 55.

13. Buffalohead, "Farmers, Warriors, Traders," 244; Peterson, "A Little Suffrage Spice," 292; Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); Solberg, "Martha G. Ripley," 1. For further reflections on the challenges presented by the archive, see Starr, "Fighting for a Future," 255; and Lydia A. Lucas, "The Historian in the Archives: Limitations of Primary Source Materials," *Minnesota History* 47, no. 6 (Summer 1981): 227–32.

So Near and Yet So Far

The Female Suffrage Bill of 1870

Linda Cameron

Please do not refuse to sign the bill bringing "Woman Suffrage" before the people. Discussion will not harm the truth. We cannot stave it off.

Edwin S. Williams, a young farmer from Rice County, sent this plea to Governor Horace Austin on March 8, 1870, urging him to sign the first woman suffrage bill approved by both bodies of the Minnesota state legislature. Ignoring the plea, Governor Austin vetoed the bill. In doing so, he defied the state constitution. This little-known episode in the fight for woman suffrage in Minnesota reflects the trials facing the movement in other states and clearly illustrates the conflicting attitudes and political gamesmanship responsible for delaying its success.[1]

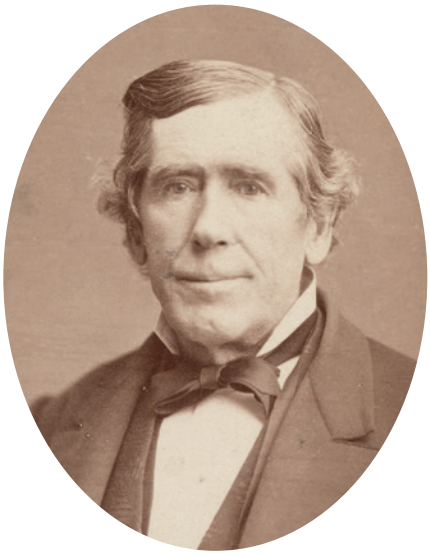
The campaign for woman suffrage in Minnesota had begun in earnest on January 11, 1866, when Representative Anson R. Hayden of Elk River presented the first petition to the state legislature on behalf of one Eva J. Spaulding and others. It failed to go beyond a referral to the joint committee on amendments to the constitution. State representatives considered two more petitions: one brought on behalf of Sarah Burger Stearns in 1867, and another from Mary A. Graves in 1868. The 1867 and 1868 petitions requested that the word "male" be struck from the state constitution as a qualification for voting, but neither resulted in legislative action.[2]

In 1869, however, Representative John Lathrop, a Republican from Olmsted County, introduced the first woman suffrage bill in Minnesota. As the anti-suffrage *St. Cloud Journal* reported, "The wrongs and rights were duly debated, by both men and women—the latter being invited to speak for themselves. . . . Notwithstanding their eloquent appeals, and their touching portrayals of 'man's inhumanity' to the better half of creation, the bill was defeated by a vote of 21 to 22." A reconsideration vote also failed to pass.[3]

Anson R. Hayden of Elk River, ca. 1862.

Addie L. Ballou, a Civil War nurse, addressed the Minnesota House in 1869 in favor of H.F. 91, a bill for female suffrage. It failed by a single vote.

Anti-suffragists argued that the majority of women had no interest in voting or were afraid of being compelled to do so. They posited that women's sphere was the home and family; political activity, the realm of men. Politics, they believed, would degrade women, as summed up in the *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*: "The souls



Abram M. Fridley of Becker, ca. 1878.

1870 State Senate of Minnesota.

of most women shrink with abhorrence from the turmoil, the passion, the strife, to say nothing of the immoralities, of politics and government."[4]

Supporters countered, "If women are denied the ballot, it must be on some other ground than because they are not inherently the equal of men in honor and rights. . . . All that has been said to create the impression that the ballot is corrupting, and that going to the ballot-box is vulgar and indelicate for women, is absurd. . . . The wife should be legally an equal partner with her husband."[5]

Undaunted by these setbacks and encouraged by the success of the women of Wyoming Territory, who were granted full suffrage in December 1869, Minnesota suffragists again pushed for legislation in 1870. On January 26, Stearns County Democratic senator Henry Chester Waite introduced a pro-suffrage petition bearing 150 signatures. The following day, Representative Abram McCormick Fridley, a Democrat from Becker, presented a petition with 600 signatures, asking for a constitutional amendment that removed "male" as a voting requirement.[6]

Two weeks later, on February 9, Fridley introduced House File 123—a bill proposing that suffrage be extended to every person of at least 21 years of age who had lived in the United States for a full year and in the state of Minnesota for a minimum of four months. This included natural citizens, immigrants who declared an intention to become citizens, Native Americans, and mixed-race individuals who agreed to comply with US customs and laws. The Minnesota House of Representatives passed the bill on February 15 by a vote of 33 to 13.[7]

> Supporters might think the representatives an enlightened group of men, but their motives suggested otherwise.

On the face of it, supporters might think the representatives an enlightened group of men, but their motives suggested otherwise. The legislators were quick to publicly explain their reasons for voting as they did.

Representatives Albert R. Hall, a Republican from Hennepin County, and John Louis McDonald, a Democrat from Scott County, admitted that they voted for the bill on the house floor because they wanted the people to decide the issue, but neither would support it in a public vote. The action of the representatives in passing the bill was ridiculed in the newspapers: "The House has passed the proposed woman's suffrage amendment to the Constitution, with the proviso that women shall be allowed to vote on the question of its adoption—their ballots to be received in separate boxes, and counted by themselves. This is, indeed, carrying the joke a little too far, and it is sincerely to be hoped that the Senate will preserve the State from the ridicule and odium sure to follow the adoption of such a measure."[8]

Governor Horace Austin, official portrait, 1873.

Disregarding such opinions, the Minnesota Senate passed the bill on February 24 by a vote of 12 to 9. Like their counterparts in the house, the senators justified their actions by insisting that the decision be left to the people. While the desire for a public vote may sound democratic, lawmakers believed that the public would overwhelmingly vote against the measure, thereby ending the matter once and for all. As Senator Dana E. King, a Republican from Meeker County, stated: "This question has been and will continue to be agitated until it has been authoritatively settled by the only tribunal which has the power to settle it forever—the people. . . . For this reason I shall vote to submit this question to the voters of the state in the strongest confidence that their verdict will be such as will put this question forever at rest, and stamp it, as I believe it to be, one of the greatest follies and humbugs of the age."[9]

The bill landed on Governor Austin's desk for his consideration. He opted not to sign it—a direct violation of the state constitution.

After its passage by the house and senate, the bill landed on Governor Austin's desk for his consideration. He opted not to sign it—a direct violation of the state constitution. The constitution of the state of Minnesota required that any proposed amendment that passed both bodies of the legislature be put to a public vote. The bill itself clearly stated this: "This proposed amendment shall be submitted to the people of the several districts of this State for their approval or rejection, at the next general election for the year Eighteen Hundred and Seventy (1870) and each of the legal voters of the State, in their respective Districts may at such Election vote by ballot for or against such amendment and for the purpose of voting upon the question of the amendment proposed by this act, Females [*sic*] as well as males shall be taken and deemed legal voters."[10]

Senator William Lochren of St. Anthony publicly decried Austin's veto as "without effect," saying that the governor didn't have the right to veto the bill and that the decision would be in the hands of the legal voters the following November. But the veto held, and the public vote never took place. Had voters accepted the amendment, Minnesota would have been the first state since 1807 to grant suffrage to women through a popular electoral vote, regardless of property ownership or marital status. (New Jersey's state constitution allowed some women the right to vote until 1807).[11]

Meanwhile, the governor defended his action by citing illegalities inherent in the language of the bill. The bill would allow women to vote on the measure, but under

William Lochren of St. Anthony, ca. 1900.

Minnesota's existing constitution, they were not legal voters. Austin also believed that there was little public support for woman suffrage, and that therefore the bill was premature. In private correspondence to a Mrs. W. C. Dodge, Austin wrote: "Our bill was so framed, its illegality was so possible, that it would have very much jeopardized the success of the measure. . . . The bill was known to be defective while in the hands of the legislature, and it was kept so no doubt for the purpose of beating it, by those who voted for it, but who would not if they had thought it a valid bill."[12]

In the same letter, Austin pointed out another strong reason for delaying a public vote: "3/5 of our population are of foreign birth and are hostile to the measure to a man, and most of them bitterly so." He believed that, even if approved by a vote of the people, the decision would be struck down in the courts. He had defied the state constitution in the hope that a better bill would be brought forward in a future session. If Governor Austin thought a successful bill would be forthcoming in the next legislative session, he must have been disappointed. No other full-suffrage amendment proposal would pass both house and senate and arrive on a governor's desk until the state ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.[13]

Minnesota's suffragists continued to submit petitions and lobby the state legislature, but it wasn't until the 1875 session that they achieved their first small victory when a constitutional amendment passed, giving women the right to vote in school elections. The scope of the measure was enlarged in 1885 to permit women to vote for county school superintendents. Encouraged, in the early 1890s, women pushed without success for municipal suffrage and the right to vote on the liquor question. The next positive step came in 1898 with the passage of a constitutional amendment allowing women to vote on library issues.[14]

The next two decades brought more delays. Suffrage amendment proposals introduced during legislative sessions after 1900, if they made it out of committees and to a vote, generally met with some success in the house but failed in the senate. Finally, in 1919, Representative Theodore Christianson of Dawson introduced House File 222, a statutory bill for an act to grant women the right to vote, but only in presidential elections. It passed the house by a landslide vote of 103 to 24 on March 5; the senate passed it on March 21 by a vote of 49 to 11. After its approval by the governor on March 24, Minnesota women could vote for presidential electors .[15]

Just over five months later, on September 8, 1919, the Minnesota Legislature voted to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, becoming the fifteenth state to do so. Even though it was expected that the federal Equal Suffrage Amendment, granting full suffrage to women nationwide, would gain the necessary state approval, Governor Joseph A. A. Burnquist signed the Minnesota presidential suffrage bill into state law on September 22.[16]

The State of Tennessee ratified the federal amendment on August 18, 1920, giving it the two-thirds state approval needed. US secretary of state Bainbridge Colby certified the Nineteenth Amendment on August 26, 1920, five long decades after the first Minnesota female suffrage bill to pass both house and senate met with Governor Austin's well-intentioned veto pen.[17] ⊡

Notes

This article is an extended version of the author's "Minnesota Female Suffrage Bill, 1870," MNopedia, https://www.mnopedia.org/thing/minnesota-female-suffrage-bill-1870.

1. Epigraph: Edwin S. Williams, Northfield, letter to Governor Austin, Mar. 8, 1870, Records of Governor Horace Austin, State Archives Collection, box 154.J.14.4F, MNHS.

2. A. R. Hayden profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=13262; *Journal of the House of Representatives, State of Minnesota, 1866* (St. Paul: M. J. Clum, Printer, 1866), 26; *Journal of the House, 1867* (St. Paul: M. J. Clum, 1867), 27; *Journal of the House, 1868* (Minneapolis: Tribune Printing Company, 1868), 41, 47. Little is known of Spaulding and Graves. Stearns helped organize one of Minnesota's first woman suffrage associations, in 1869, and was later the first president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association. Representative John Seboski, a Republican from Hennepin County, presented the 1867 petition, which bore 200 signatures of both men and women. The Speaker of the house appointed a special committee of five (Representatives Seboski, J. K. Randall, Charles A. Wheaton Sr., Charles J. Felch, and John A. Reed) to review it, but it went no further. Representative John Hechtman, a Republican from Hennepin County, presented the 1868 petition for Graves and 349 other "strong-minded" women. It was referred to the committee on elections, but it failed to result in a bill.

3. "Alas! Alas!!" *St. Cloud Journal*, Mar. 4, 1869, 2; *Journal of the House, 1869* (St. Paul: Press Printing Company, 1869), 116, 200–202, 214–15; John Lathrop profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=13543. Representative Abner Tibbitts, a Republican from Wabasha County, presented a petition on February 2. Six days later, Representative Lathrop introduced House File 91 for woman suffrage. The ensuing floor debate, as reported in newspapers, showed the contempt with which many lawmakers viewed the measure. Despite several attempts to table the bill, house members cast their votes on February 24. Following the bill's defeat, several requests were made to reconsider the bill. It was finally tabled when it failed to get the support needed in the reconsideration vote on February 25.

4. "The Woman Suffrage Question in a Nutshell," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune,* Feb. 21, 1869, 1.

5. "Women's Sphere," *Stillwater Republican,* Nov. 30, 1969, 1.

6. Tom Rea, "Right Choice, Wrong Reasons: Wyoming Women Win the Right to Vote," Nov. 8, 2014, WyoHistory.org, https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/right-choice-wrong-reasons-wyoming-women-win-right-vote; Abram McCormick (Major A. M.) Fridley profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=12907; "Minnesota Legislature," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, Jan. 26, 1870, 4; "Minnesota Legislature. Female Suffrage," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, Jan. 28, 1870, 4; *Journal of the House, 1870* (St. Paul: Press Printing Company, 1870), 49; *Journal of the Senate, State of Minnesota, 1870* (St. Paul: Press Printing Company, 1870), 70; Henry Chester (H. C.) Waite profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=11834. Fridley's petition was presented to the House of Representatives on behalf of Abbie J. Spaulding and others.

7. House File 123, House and Senate Bills (Legislative Set), Minnesota State Archives Collection, box 107.C.19.1B, MNHS.

8. Albert R. (A. R.) Hall profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=13153; John Louis (J. L., Jno. L.) McDonald profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=13766; "Minnesota Legislature," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, Feb. 16, 1870, 4; *Journal of the House, 1870,* 165–66; quote: "'Sarkastical' Legislation," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, Feb. 24, 1870, 1.

9. *Journal of the Senate, 1870*, 209–10; "Female Suffrage," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, Feb. 25, 1870, 4; Dana E. (Dana C., D. E.) King profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=12160.

10. House File 123, House and Senate Bills (Legislative Set).

11. "Twelve Bills Vetoed by Governor Austin," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune,* Mar. 10, 1870, 2; Office of the Revisor of Statutes, Constitution of the State of Minnesota, Article IX, Amendments to the Constitution, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/constitution/#article_9; *Federal Union,* Apr. 16, 1870, 2; William (Wm.) Lochren profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=13670. The only mention found of a vote on a Minnesota constitutional amendment has to do with stockholders, with the intent to promote the building of railroads: see "A Constitutional Amendment," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune,* Nov. 1, 1870 (reprinted in other newspapers). Wyoming Territory (1869) and Utah Territory (1870) also granted women the right to vote. New Jersey allowed qualifying women to vote until their disfranchisement. See, Judith Apter Klinghoffer and Lois Elkis, "'The Petticoat Electors': Women's Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776-1807," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 12. 2 (Summer 1992): 159-193.

12. "Twelve Bills Vetoed by Governor Austin"; Governor Austin to Mrs. W. C. Dodge, Mar. 14, 1870, Horace Austin and Family Papers, 1857–1953, State Archives Collection, box P2854, MNHS.

13. Gov. Austin to Mrs. W. C. Dodge, Mar. 14, 1870.

14. *General Laws of Minnesota for 1897*, Chapter 175, p. 331-332, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1897/0/General+Laws/Chapter/175/pdf/. Voters approved the amendment in the 1898 election. See also, *Laws of Minnesota for 1876,* Chapter 14; *Laws of Minnesota for 1885*, Chapter 204; *Journal of the House* (St. Paul: J. W. Cunningham, State Printer, 1891), 217, 946; *Journal of the Senate* (St. Paul: J. W. Cunningham, State Printer, 1893), 209, 290, 431–32; "Minnesota Legislature," *Stillwater Messenger*, Mar. 18, 1893, 7; "Minnesota Lawmaker," *Broad Axe*, Mar. 23, 1893, 3. *General Laws of Minnesota for 1875,* Chapter II, p. 18-19. https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1875/0/General+Laws/Chapter/2/pdf/; *General Laws of Minnesota for 1885,* Ch. 204, p. 275. https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1885/0/General+Laws/Chapter/204/pdf/.

15. "Doings at the State Capitol," *Public Weal,* Feb. 1907, 1, http://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn90060338/1907-02-01/ed-1/seq-1; *Harmony News,* Feb. 28, 1907, 8, http://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn89064545/1907-02-28/ed-1/seq-8; *Journal of the House, 1907* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1907), 178, 266–67, 459; *Journal of the House, 1909* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1909), 153, 834; "Suffragists Win Converts," *Minneapolis Tribune,* Sept. 11, 1909, 6; "Equal Suffrage Lost on Floor of Senate," *Minneapolis Tribune,* Mar. 30, 1911, 1, 11; *Journal of the Senate, 1911* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1907), 63, 920; "Suffrage Fails to Pass Senate," *Bemidji Daily Pioneer*, Feb. 15, 1913, 1, http://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn86063381/1913-02-15/ed-1/seq-1; "Woman Suffrage Bill Is Finally Defeated for Present Session," *Duluth Herald,* Feb. 11, 1913, 1, 5, http://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn83016458/1913-02-15/ed-1/seq-1; *Journal of the Senate, 1913* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1907), 14, 130–31, 331–32, 505, 1423; *Journal of the House, 1913* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1913), 77, 370; *Journal of the House, 1915* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1915), 1070; *Journal of the Senate, 1915* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1915), 479; "Suffragists Disagree," *New Ulm Review,* Jan. 31, 1917, 1; "Two Suffrage Bills Submitted to House," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Feb. 10, 1917, 13, http://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn83016772/1917-02-10/ed-1/seq-13; Barbara Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995), 111; Theodore Christianson Jr. profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?ID=11653.

16. "Christianson Suffrage Bill Passed by Senate," *Minneapolis Tribune,* Mar. 22, 1919, 22; *Journal of the House, 1919* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1919), 164, 700; *Session Laws of Minnesota for 1919,* Resolution No. 2 (887–88) and Chapter 58, *Journal of the Senate, 1919* (St. Paul: McGill-Warner Company, State Printers, 1919); "State Women Celebrate Suffrage Wins," *Minneapolis Tribune,* Sept. 9, 1919, 1, 3; "Legislature in Session for Emergency Laws," *Minneapolis Tribune,* Sept. 9, 1919, 5. Minnesota's ratification was certified the same day as the legislative vote, and Governor Joseph A. A. Burnquist approved it on September 22.

17. Tennessee Secretary of State, "Women's Suffrage: Tennessee and the Passage of the 19th Amendment," https://sos.tn.gov/products/tsla/womens-suffrage-tennessee-and-passage-19th-amendment; US House of Representatives: History, Art & Archives, "Historical Highlights: The 19th Amendment," https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1901-1950/The-19th-Amendment/. General Laws of Minnesota for 1919, Chapter 89, p. 89. https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1919/0/Session+Law/Chapter/89/pdf/

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Newspapers

The *Tomahawk* (Ojibwe)

The front page of the August 19, 1920, issue of the *Tomahawk*, an English-language Ojibwe newspaper published in White Earth from 1903-1926, said nothing of the previous day's ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Instead, readers learned of the milestone in a 60-word paragraph halfway down the second page's fifth column.[1]

Created to promote a specific political view at a time of great disagreement on the White Earth Indian Reservation, the *Tomahawk* represents merely a portion of diverse Native American opinions. The dearth of coverage on the suffrage movement, however, speaks to a more broadly applicable reality: the suffrage movement was distant from Native communities. In fact, it was never front-page news. Rather, the front page of the *Tomahawk* reflected issues of greater concern to Ojibwe people in Minnesota and to the paper's mission to criticize the Bureau of Indian Affairs's agency at White Earth and its US Indian policy in general.

Major woman suffrage milestones were usually reported succinctly. The most detailed coverage came from reprinted editorials selected to represent opposing sides, including one from pro-suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, on September 14, 1916; and another from anti-suffrage leader Katherine T. Balch, president of the Women's Anti-Suffrage Association of Massachusetts, on May 31, 1917.[2]

The suffrage movement was dominated by white women and included those outspoken against Native American rights. Not surprisingly, then, when woman suffrage was won, the *Tomahawk* focused instead on various tribal concerns: a Potawatomie request for an investigation of an Indian agent in Wisconsin, the sale of land on the Standing Rock Reservation, and advertising the activist group Society of American Indians. The *Tomahawk*'s editors even determined that an announcement of a new product in Louisiana called "cactus candy" better merited front-page real estate.

A brief article in the same issue announcing the suffrage achievement, entitled "Strange, But the Truth Is There," clearly demonstrated that in 1920 the *Tomahawk* was much more concerned with Native American rights across the country than with the voting rights of non-Indigenous women. The article read: "When we pause and think, does it not look strange that at this hour of the world calendar that the sons and daughters of the Indians, who were here before Columbus, should seek their rights from the United States? They fought for their independence and their rights—and why withhold the same from the Indian people."[3]

—Tyler Taylor

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Notes

1. "Senate Passes Suffrage," *Tomahawk*, Aug. 19, 1920, 2.
2. Carrie Chapman Catt, "Universal Suffrage for Women in the United States to Be Obtained by 1922," *Tomahawk*, Sept. 14, 1916, 5; Katherine T. Balch, "Statutory Suffrage Has Been Achieved in Defiance of Public Will," *Tomahawk*, May 31, 1917, 5.
3. "Wisconsin Pottawatomies Having Troubles of Their Own," "Sale of Sioux Indian Lands to Be Held in October," "Cactus Candy," and "Strange, But the Truth Is There," *Tomahawk*, Aug. 19, 1920, 1.

Julia B. Nelson

"The Rock on Which the Effort for Woman Suffrage Has Been Founded in This State"

Frederick L. Johnson

Julia Bullard Nelson

DELEGATES TO THE CONVENTION of the fledgling State Temperance Alliance of Minnesota expected little controversy as they gathered in Red Wing's Music Hall on September 1, 1874. But while the male-dominated assembly readied a pre-November election temperance campaign that would choke off the alcohol trade they despised, Julia Bullard Nelson, Harriet Duncan Hobart, and Elizabeth C. Hutchinson were engineering an insurrection that boldly placed woman suffrage on the agenda.[1]

Hobart and Hutchinson possessed solid temperance backgrounds and were properly credentialed for the gathering, but Julia Nelson carried even more weight among conventioneers. They knew her as a temperance saint abused—"basely and vilely insulted"—by an Anoka saloon owner on July 11, 1874. During that incident, Nelson appeared with anti-liquor protesters in front of James McGlauflin's tavern. The owner manhandled them into the middle of the street. Nelson returned, only to be shoved back onto the roadway. She confronted McGlauflin, citing her lawful right to stand where she pleased. Saying, "I'll show you about law," the angry barkeeper came at her with more force. Roughed up but not injured, the determined Nelson filed suit against the "rumseller." On July 31, a six-man Anoka jury issued a "no cause for action" verdict in the case.[2]

As the Red Wing temperance meeting convened, the trio of women knew they could count on support for woman suffrage from one critically important male delegate—convention chairman Phineas A. Jewell, of nearby Lake City. The influential Jewell gave a short speech favoring woman suffrage, noting "that the work of Temperance Reform could not be prosecuted to a successful end without their co-operation, their votes." Nelson, Hobart, and Hutchinson placed a concise 30-word statement before the temperance alliance's platform and resolutions committee:

> *Resolved:* That sex should be no barrier to the exercise of the elective franchise, and we hail with pleasure the signs of the times, which indicate the approach of woman's suffrage.[3]

"[U]pon its reading," wrote a newspaper reporter, "many of the male delegate [*sic*] rose at once, earnest to have something to say against its being adopted." These indignant men viewed the proposal as a brazen, unwarranted detour from their true purpose. Nelson chided convention-goers, according to news reports, saying "She was sorry the temperance boat was so small that they could not take women along."[4]

Consternation reigned in the Music Hall as the proceedings lurched toward chaos. "The discussion of the question waxed so intensely warm," observed one newspaperman, "[that] in order to quell the feeling, the

Hutchinson Family singing troupe sang a Kansas Woman's Suffrage song. . . ." Phineas Jewell then stood and asked them to sing a song made popular during the Civil War, "Tell My Mother that I Die Happy." The Hutchinsons took the edge off the fiery debate, but the well-known singers, of whom Elizabeth Hutchinson was a member, nurtured a broader agenda. To them, support for woman suffrage came naturally. In 1855, a branch of the New Hampshire family had moved to Minnesota Territory's McLeod County and founded the village that carried their name. From the outset, women in Hutchinson possessed voting privileges on "all matters not restricted by law."[5]

Following the failure of the original resolution, temperance alliance delegates managed to cobble together a suffrage statement that praised women for their role in the movement while looking forward to a time when they could vote. Words alone, to the three suffragists, meant little. But for the first time in Minnesota, a formal resolution for action on woman suffrage had been supported, if only tepidly, at a public meeting. Hutchinson, who had followed Nelson as a speaker for woman suffrage during the convention's opening session, returned the next day with her family singing group. With temperance now the delegates' sole focus, the Hutchinsons sang an anti-liquor tune, "O ye sellers of rum in our city." Nelson had composed the lyrics. Happy conventioneers demanded an encore.[6]

Julia B. Nelson's aggressive efforts to compel the 1874 State Temperance Alliance of Minnesota convention to address woman suffrage was a notable opening skirmish in Minnesota's half-century struggle to secure voting rights for women, but was not Nelson's first public effort on behalf of the cause: she organized what is believed to be Minnesota's first debate on woman suffrage, staged in 1869 at Red Wing's Good Templars Hall. Ignoring the suffocating Victorian-era strictures that corseted American women of her time, Nelson (1842–1914) made major contributions to three important American social and political movements: woman suffrage, temperance, and civil rights for African Americans. By 1881, the year in which she assisted in organizing the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA), Nelson, then 39 years old, had braved 14 challenging years as an administrator and teacher of freed Black children in Texas and Tennessee schools. During her last three decades of life, Nelson headed the MWSA for seven years (1890–96), frequently worked on its executive board, and served as a paid state and national lecturer for the group. Simultaneously, she worked for the Minnesota WCTU as superintendent of the state's Franchise Department to secure voting access for women, and as a lecturer, organizer, and later as editor and business manager of the WCTU newspaper *Minnesota White Ribbon* (1902–06).[7]

Nelson's colleagues, first in Minnesota and later nationally, came to view her as emblematic of the woman suffrage crusade.

Nelson's colleagues, first in Minnesota and later nationally, came to view her as emblematic of the woman suffrage crusade. Celebrated for her oratorical skill, writing talent, and dynamic promotion of women's rights, Nelson served as both field marshal and foot soldier in America's fractious suffrage army. Indeed, in their 1902 *History of Woman Suffrage,* Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper made clear their choice for Minnesota's principal suffragist—Nelson—noting it was she "who for twenty years has been the rock on which the effort for woman suffrage has been founded in this State."[8]

Women crusaders against a saloon in Anoka, 1873.

"On a darkish night in June of 1857 the steamer *Henry Clay* landed at the town of Wacoota and from that boat stepped my father Edward Bullard, who had been down the river and brought back with him some horses,

some cattle, and two awkward school girls, one of whom was myself." So begins Nelson's account of her family's migration to Minnesota Territory and a small sawmilling outpost at the head of Lake Pepin. Parents Edward and Angeline Bullard had moved from their Denmark, Iowa, home to join George W. Bullard, Edward's successful brother and a founder of Wacouta (present-day spelling), situated on the Mississippi River five miles southeast of Red Wing. The Bullards established a river valley farmstead on what today is known as Bullard Creek.[9]

Fifteen years old upon her arrival in Wacouta, Julia enrolled in Red Wing's Hamline University, the territory's first institution of higher learning. In a rarity for American universities of the era, Hamline admitted women. She came within two terms of graduation but, at age 19, became the first woman in Goodhue County to earn the top category of three teaching certificates—a "first" grade certificate—issued by the county superintendent of schools. She began a teaching career in Minnesota and Connecticut that lasted from 1861 to 1866.[10]

While at Hamline, Julia met Ole Nelson, a year her senior, who joined the patriotic group of 120 students and teachers from the school who volunteered to fight in the nation's fratricidal civil war. Stationed in swampy bayous along the Mississippi at Helena, Arkansas, Ole Nelson was among the hundreds of Sixth Minnesota Infantry Regiment soldiers ravaged by malaria. He survived the war, returning in June 1865 to his Belvidere Township farm south of Red Wing. He and Julia married on September 25, 1866.[11]

Nelson gave birth to a boy, Cyrus, in August 1867, but the infant died before his first birthday. Tragedy continued when, five months after Cyrus's death, Ole succumbed to the effects of wartime disease at age 27. Devastating as the losses were, Nelson persevered. Now 26, she answered a call from the American Missionary Association (AMA), a leading antislavery group, to teach formerly enslaved people in AMA-sponsored freedmen schools. Prior to the Civil War, most states in the South had made it illegal to educate slaves. With the war's end, northern teachers were needed in the South to handle that task for Black residents. In September 1869, Nelson left Red Wing for her teaching assignment in Houston, Texas. Friends gathered at the steamboat landing to provide a proper send-off, but foreboding about her future in the South turned it into a melancholy, almost funereal farewell. A parting hymn wafted over the water as her steamer moved past Barn Bluff.[12]

Nelson, age 24, about the time she married Ole Nelson. Within two years, Nelson lost both her infant son and her husband.

Soon after she began teaching, Nelson came down with malaria. Upon her recovery, the AMA dispatched the Minnesotan to a rural Texas school at Columbus in the state's southeast. She was its only instructor. Along with teaching Black students, Nelson soon found herself in the midst of an important state election. It was here she began to develop the political advocacy skills she would later employ for woman suffrage. Passage of the Fifteenth Amendment to the US Constitution in 1870 guaranteed Black male citizens voting rights. Columbus's Black community and Nelson encountered the Ku Klux Klan, dedicated to restoring white supremacy in the South. KKK members prepared to hijack the local election.

Nelson with a pupil in Columbus, Texas. She was a schoolteacher in freedmen's schools in Tennessee and Texas in the 1870s and 1880s.

Clearly comfortable in her uncommon role as a single, self-sufficient professional woman, Nelson shrugged off fear of the Klan—thanks, in no small part, to protection offered by the Black community in which she worked—and commenced a letter-writing campaign exposing KKK election strategies and promoting her civil rights agenda. Her missives went to newspapers holding editorial views favorable to the work of northern teachers in the South. Newspapers would often print her letters in full. A lengthy front-page example of a Nelson newspaper communiqué is found in a December 1870 letter fired off to the Frederick Douglass–owned *New National Era* in Washington, DC. There, she reported that the Klan and its supporters hoped "to re-establish the law of the six shooter." But Black community members organized and stood up for their rights, and Nelson reported witnessing "Hundreds of colored men marching up to the polls on equal footing with those who think them unfit to breath [*sic*] the same air, go to heaven . . ."[13]

A woman of some means—the family farm and property in Red Wing served as a source of income—she broadened her cultural horizons in the summer of 1873, touring Europe en route to the Vienna Exposition before returning to Red Wing to lecture about her adventures. Still deeply committed to the education of underserved Black students, Nelson began teaching in Tennessee Society of Friends schools over a 12-year span, beginning in 1875, taking a two-year break (1880–82) for family and personal business. During this pause from teaching, the *Minneapolis Tribune* printed an 1882 article about Nelson, titled, "A Lady Farmer," a detailed look at her broad knowledge of farming methods, which added that she was a "warm advocate of woman suffrage." The *Tribune* also reported on an updating of Nelson's 240-acre Belvidere Township operation conducted with the help of former students, "three faithful negro men." One of the workers and former students, Jeremiah Patterson, would go on to rent the farm, marry Verna Gaylord, a white woman from a neighboring farm, and start a family.[14]

One of Nelson's former students from Tennessee, Jeremiah Patterson, right, moved to Minnesota to assist with Nelson's farm near Red Wing. He went on to rent the farm and marry and start a family with Verna Gaylord, left, who lived on a neighboring farm.

Nelson's reputation in Minnesota as an effective woman suffrage and temperance advocate grew through the 1880s, even as she continued her teaching in Tennessee. During summers at home and during her 1880–82 interlude in Minnesota she traveled the state advocating for suffrage and temperance. Ethel Hurd's *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota* observed, "[Nelson's] work for suffrage in Minnesota was closely interwoven with that of temperance." In September 1881, while attending the state WCTU's annual meeting held in Hastings, she again held talks with temperance women about creating a state woman suffrage organization. Nelson and 13 other like-minded colleagues, including Harriet Duncan Hobart, her ally at the raucous 1874 Red Wing temperance meeting, planned to weave permanent links between the WCTU and woman suffrage efforts in Minnesota. These temperance advocates believed creating a cooperating suffrage organization would benefit both movements, and it was here that the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association was born.[15]

Notable women at that Hastings suffrage conclave, along with Nelson, included Sarah Burger Stearns of Duluth, an early state suffrage advocate; the aforementioned Harriet Hobart, just beginning a record 13-year run as president of the Minnesota WCTU; Minneapolis-based Amanda (Mrs. A. T.) Anderson, a temperance promoter

with a commitment to woman suffrage and close friend of Nelson; and Harriet E. Bishop, the storied St. Paul educator of Minnesota settlement days. Yet, neither the temperance nor suffrage gatherings captured the attention of the *Hastings Gazette,* because the newspaper failed to discover, or chose not to cover, what would prove to be a historic assembly of temperance women dedicated to Minnesota women's voting rights.[16]

Julia Bullard Nelson and other early leaders of Minnesota's woman suffrage movement were far from representative of their time and place. America's so-called "Gilded Age" (roughly 1875–1912), with its rigid Victorian social strictures that excluded women from nearly every aspect of public life, was no golden era for woman suffragists. These remarkable reformers languished in political anonymity, laboring in full knowledge that most of their contemporaries viewed them as an irrelevant cadre of social outliers who had embarked upon a hopelessly quixotic mission.

As they lived through the last decades of the nineteenth century, Nelson and Sarah Stearns fully understood the Minnesota anti-suffrage culture described by the ornate phrasing of Minnesota historian William Watts Folwell: "The Minnesota electorate, restrained by immemorial tradition and by the surviving conviction that Sacred Scripture excluded women from independent public activities, was slow to welcome the innovation." This "ancient prejudice," as Folwell called it, would stubbornly persist.[17]

"The advocates of suffrage in Minnesota were so few in the early days and their homes so remote from each other, that there was little chance for cooperation, hence the history of the movement in this State consists more of personal efforts than of conventions, legislative hearings and judicial decisions." This illuminating statement by the MWSA's then-president, Sarah Stearns, accurately characterized the state's small, loosely organized band of suffragists during the 1880s. During this quiescent period, Nelson stood out among the few spreading the suffrage gospel.[18]

Other roadblocks, some of their own construction, stood in the Minnesota suffragists' way. Among those aligning against MWSA initiatives were male and female traditionalists, increasing numbers of naturalized male immigrant voters, influential society matrons and their sisters of privilege, and dedicated enemies of the WCTU, who likened suffrage advocates to holier-than-thou prohibition backers. Some members of the suffrage and temperance movements, convinced of the righteousness of their cause, could be their own worst enemies. Critics labeled them overly judgmental, sanctimonious, and pompous, adjectives occasionally applied to Nelson. She didn't care. In standing up for her beliefs, Nelson never took a backward step.

Nelson enjoyed the spotlight and the influence it brought to her and the movement. To friends and colleagues, she was now simply "Julia B."—a name first applied in her early years. In 1881, organizers of the popular annual Methodist camp meeting at Red Rock (present-day Newport) chose Nelson as the main speaker for its annual Fourth of July temperance event, but her remarks centered on suffrage. Outdoor worship at summer camps had become popular with Minnesotans during the post–Civil War years, Red Rock among the most popular. A *Pioneer Press* reporter took interest in Nelson's views *and* looks: "She is an ardent woman suffragist, but not of the Susan B. Anthony type . . . she is rather comely . . . and [does not avow] that all men are brutes and a discredit to society." Nelson's demeanor while advocating for women's rights allowed her to overcome a common public view that saw suffragists as self-righteous and overbearing.[19]

Tactical suffrage work, meanwhile, continued. In the absence of president Stearns, vice president Nelson chaired the September 1882 MWSA state convention in Minneapolis. Nelson endorsed Stearns's written plan to bring their suffrage arguments directly to Minnesota legislators. Nelson further advised delegates to beware of increasing European immigration, also a concern of Stevens. They believed that once the newcomers became naturalized citizens, the men could bring Old World prejudices about women to Minnesota voting booths: "Legislators and members of Congress were as a class better able to grasp the merit of the question [suffrage] than were foreign-born voters, in whose native countries women are oppressed," a journalist paraphrased Nelson as saying. Earlier, when a controversy arose about the fairness of a vote consequential to Minnesota suffragists, Stearns had similarly offered no sympathy for the "ignorant classes who could not, or did not read their ballots." (Anti-suffragists argued that a deceptive ballot was used in passing the 1875 constitutional amendment that enabled women to vote on public school–related issues.) But such detail did not trouble Stearns. Minnesota women could vote, at least where schools were concerned, yet they believed legislative action was preferable to risking a popular vote by ill-informed voters.[20]

National suffragists shared the troublesome view of immigrant voters expressed by Nelson and other Minnesota suffragists. While a strong advocate for Black civil rights, Nelson saw immigrant men as likely to be

Nelson enjoyed the spotlight and the influence it brought to her and the movement. To friends and colleagues, she was now simply "Julia B."

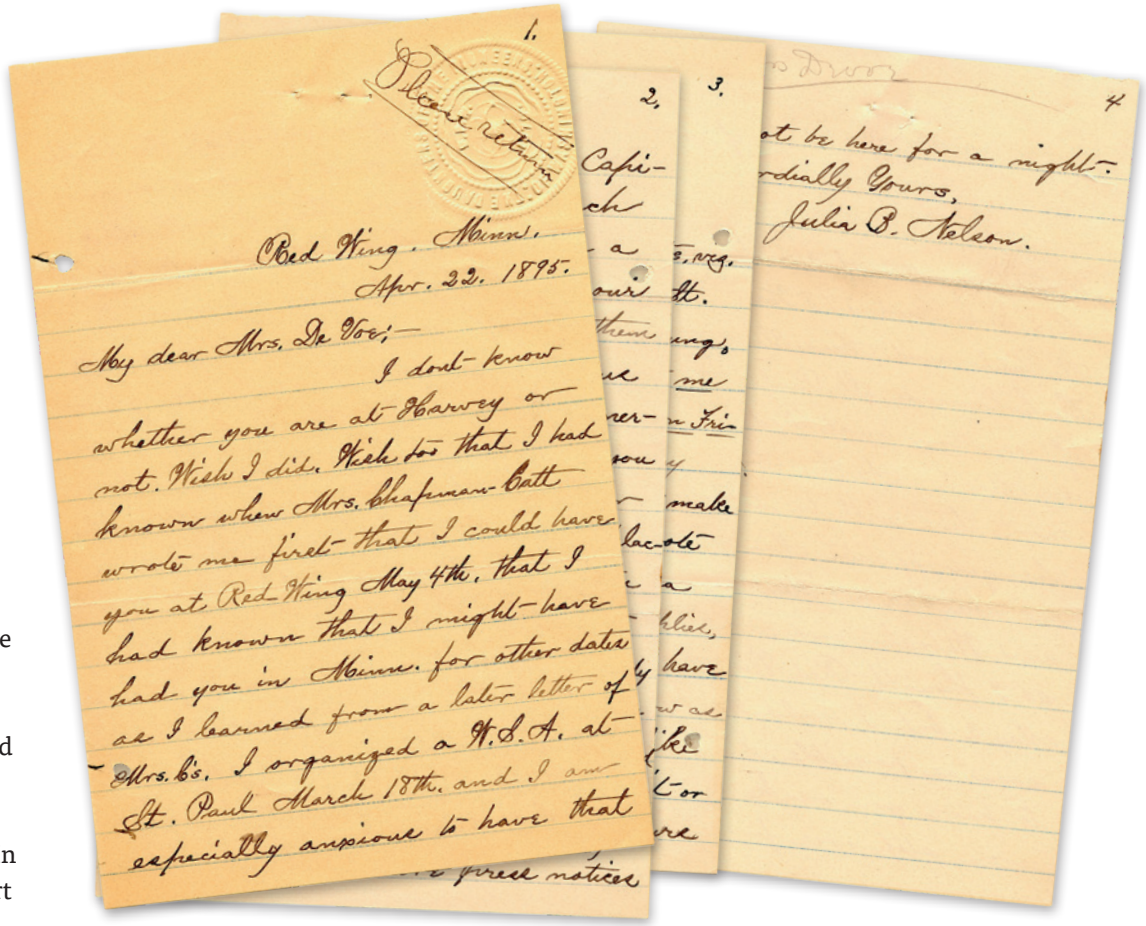
ill-educated traditionalists who opposed the extension of women's rights. At their 1886 convention, National Woman Suffrage Association officials called on Nelson to read her poem "Hans Dunderkopf's Views of Equality." Written in the heavy German dialect of an undereducated immigrant, "Dunderkopf" was a caricature that had become popular public performance fare. Demeaning and cruel by present-day standards, poems and jokes delivered in dialect and produced typically at the expense of the nation's African Americans and expanding immigrant population were, in the 1880s, proven audience pleasers, and reflected the sentiments held by suffragists who believed immigrant attitudes established barriers to enacting woman suffrage.[21]

Nelson took an active part in the first MWSA statewide campaign during 1883–84 to organize suffrage clubs, and, in March 1884, she was MWSA's sole representative at the NWSA national convention in Washington, DC. Two years later, 43 years old and a school principal, Nelson addressed a US House judiciary committee hearing on woman suffrage as a Minnesota suffragist and "law-abiding citizen and taxpayer" who had "beg[u]n Teaching freedmen when it was so unpopular that men could not have done it," and noted that a man in her job received nearly four times more pay.[22]

As her activities increased in 1888, so did Nelson's reputation. In March, she took part in an unprecedented demonstration of woman power, the International Council of Women, a conference of woman suffrage leaders from nine countries around the world. Held in Washington, DC, the assembly lived up to its leaders' assertion that "the time has come when women from all over the world should unite in the just demand for their political enfranchisement." A buoyant Nelson praised the gathering

Julia B. Nelson's home in Red Wing. She is sitting on the porch, second from right. The house, at 219 5th Street, was on the National Register of Historic Places, due to its association with Nelson, until it was torn down around 2004.

for "uniting womenhood [*sic*] of the world and for the uplifting of humanity." After working through a weeklong agenda, Nelson returned to Minnesota inspired by the power of women's unity. In June she was selected to address the Indianapolis convention of the Western Association of Writers, a prominent literary society. In its coverage of the event, one newspaper described her as "well known as a writer and lecturer upon temperance and woman suffrage." And in September, voters at the state WCTU convention in Red Wing elected Nelson as their vice president and her friend Harriet Hobart as president. In November, Nelson and Hobart attended the national WCTU convention in New York City. And throughout 1888 and 1889 Nelson toured Minnesota as a paid lecturer on behalf of the WCTU, and in the process, worked in plugs for woman suffrage.[23]


1.

Please return

Red Wing. Minn.
Apr. 22. 1895.

My dear Mrs. DeVoe;—
I dont know whether you are at Harvey or not. Wish I did. Wish too that I had known when Mrs. Chapman-Catt wrote me first that I could have you at Red Wing May 4th. that I had known that I might have had you in Minn. for other dates as I learned from a later letter of Mrs. C's. I organized a W.S.A. at St. Paul March 18th. and I am especially anxious to have that

2.

Capi-

3.

4

at be here for a night.
rdially Yours,
Julia B. Nelson.

April 22, 1895, letter written by Nelson in her role as president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association to national suffrage lecturer Emma Smith DeVoe about the difficulties the two were having regarding DeVoe's pending Minnesota suffrage trip, organized by Carrie Chapman Catt.

Susan B. Anthony's energizing appearance before MWSA's Minneapolis convention in October 1889 previewed a new strategy for the evolving American suffrage movement. Anthony asked convention goers to enlist in a state-by-state drive to construct a network of suffrage strongholds that would create momentum for a constitutional amendment. South Dakota would achieve statehood in November 1889, and suffrage was on the ballot the following November. MWSA opted to "throw its weight into South Dakota." Nelson was appointed and funded to travel, speak, and recruit as the territory prepared for statehood. Delegates left the MWSA convention with Anthony's admonition ringing in their ears: "Don't leave anything to the chivalry of man, because you won't get it."[24]

Lingering winter weather and a tight schedule faced Nelson on March 31, 1890, as she left Red Wing by train, heading to Milbank, South Dakota, for a speech that evening. It was an opening salvo in a seven-month grassroots effort that brought, along with Nelson, the nation's most powerful suffrage speakers and organizers to the state. Fought mostly during the region's hottest and driest summer on record, the South Dakota offensive mutated into a long, painful slog. As fall approached, fatigue and frustration beset suffrage workers. Emma Smith DeVoe, veteran lecturer for the National American Woman Suffrage Association, refused to make any more appearances in remote schoolhouses and lobbied for work in the relative comfort of towns. Reassigned to cover DeVoe's schedule, a peeved Nelson wrote an official, "If she wants the glory of being met by a brass band let her have it. I'd rather have the *time to speak*."[25]

Nelson believed the South Dakota suffrage effort was in trouble, predicting the state's southeast was "where the battle is thickest and here's where we shall meet a Waterloo." Nelson's prediction was accurate—South Dakotans dealt the national movement a crushing defeat, opting against the vote for women by more than a two-to-one margin. Undeterred by the setback, Anthony and Nelson detoured to Fremont, Nebraska, on November 12 to attend that state's 10th annual convention. Then, with the

MWSA convention looming just one week away, Nelson headed back to Minnesota. Armed with ample supplies of courage, tenacity, intellect, and strength, she intended to bring the vote to Minnesota women by the turn of the century.[26]

Delegates to the annual MWSA convention, held in St. Paul, chose Nelson as their president on November 19, 1890. Nelson immediately set in motion an ambitious lobbying operation in the Minnesota Legislature. A *St. Paul Daily Globe* reporter saw potential in Nelson's powerful presidential address to members while also pointing to an obvious MWSA weakness—"never more than thirty ladies present and ten of those did the talking." To fire up MWSA's small and fractious base, Nelson began a monthlong journey lecturing at local societies. She also convinced MWSA board members to shift annual conventions to cities outside the Twin Cities.[27]

In February 1891, Nelson, acting personally as MWSA's political action committee, took the battle to the state capitol. With the help of Amanda Anderson, she convinced Sylvanus A. Stockwell, a progressive Minneapolis Democrat, to introduce a bill enabling women to vote in municipal elections. Nelson spent several weeks meeting with legislators while at the same time authoring a small free newspaper, *The Equal Rights Herald,* and writing a leaflet, "Points on Municipal Suffrage," which was placed on the desk of each legislator. Unfortunately, the house committee indefinitely postponed action on the bill.[28]

Despite continued setbacks, Nelson remained undeterred through the 1890s, prowling the halls of the Minnesota state capitol during the biennial four-month legislative sessions, gathering support for various bills that would bring to Minnesota women a voting status equal to that of men. MWSA pushed for differing forms of woman suffrage, including suffrage for women in municipal elections (1891), suffrage for women with educational qualifications (1893), suffrage for women on all questions relating to the liquor traffic (1895), and suffrage for all tax-paying women (1897). Yet none of these suffrage measures gathered enough support for success. Nelson's efforts, however, yielded some gains for legislation that increased the status of women in Minnesota law. Successful efforts included providing county officials with power to appoint a "female" as deputy in county offices—which Nelson wryly noted in her history of the MWSA was "presumably of the human species"—and increasing from age 10 to 16 the legal age of consent (for sexual activity) for the protection of girls.[29]

Nelson found ample time to address suffrage issues when the state legislature was not in session. Her words resonated during dozens of meetings and speaking

Armed with ample supplies of courage, tenacity, intellect, and strength, Nelson intended to bring the vote to Minnesota women by the turn of the century.

engagements in Minnesota and across the nation. One Washington, DC, suffrage newspaper celebrated Nelson's achievements on the eve of her testimony before a US Senate committee: "Mrs. Nelson is an all-around woman. She is a philosopher, takes the world in a genial way . . . as a lecturer, adapting herself to place and people, logical and persuasive, she is unsurpassed: as a writer she wields a ready pen; as a woman she is generous and unselfishly devoted to the reforms in which she is engaged." NAWSA also recognized Nelson's skills. Beginning in February 1894, she traveled on its behalf through Kansas and Missouri for 10 weeks, lecturing and organizing local affiliates. She opened her six-week NAWSA-backed visit to New Mexico Territory on April 1, 1896, and assisted in establishing the first territorial suffrage association there. Nelson then moved to Oklahoma Territory and a seven-week assignment. But despite her efforts, none of these states or territories adopted woman suffrage.[30]

Back in Minnesota for the summer of 1894, Nelson enlisted Ignatius Donnelly, a legislative ally from the 1893 state senate suffrage battle, to bolster her campaign for superintendent of Goodhue County schools. But during a Cannon Falls People's Party campaign stop, Donnelly chided Nelson for not showing enough gratitude for his organization's support. Nelson in turn skewered Donnelly for his tepid backing of suffrage. "When I held up the woman suffrage plank of the platform . . . I must have had the heaviest part of the load if that plank is so heavy that all the men in the People's party together can't carry it." A long shot in a Republican stronghold, Nelson was defeated.[31]

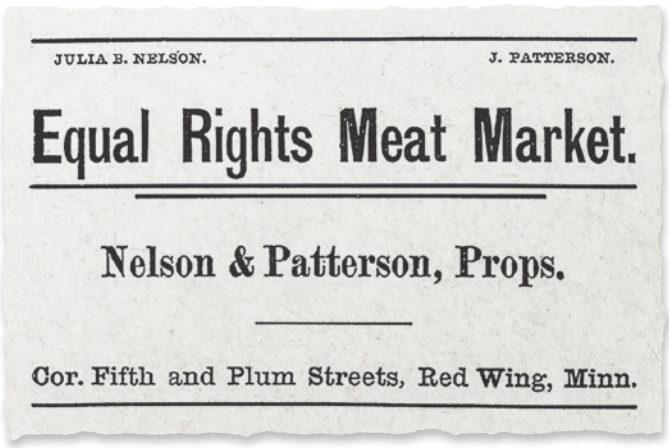
Nelson remained frustrated by six years of minimal success with Minnesota lawmakers and offered a blunt rejoinder to the 1897 legislature when a tax bill failed to treat married women fairly. Lecturing a senate committee, Nelson called for an end to "the [legislative] methods of Robin Hood and his merry men," and declared as "reprehensible" the "present custom of collecting taxes from women to make public improvement about which they have neither vote nor veto."[32]

It is worth noting that while serving as MWSA president Nelson maintained close personal relationships with her Black friends and protégés while displaying her very public commitment to racial equality. She did so even as other national suffrage leaders severed ties with their African American allies in an effort to bring white women in the Jim Crow South on board. Nelson led WCTU's outreach efforts with the state's Black community and made speeches to Black congregations in St. Paul, including Pilgrim Baptist Church. Her friendship with William H. Richards, a former student teacher, and by the 1890s a law professor at Howard University, lasted throughout her life. In May 1897, Nelson and her former student, Jeremiah Patterson, opened Equal Rights Meat Market in Red Wing. Considering the times, this Black-white business partnership was astonishing.[33]

Nelson around 1903. On her lap is a copy of the WCTU magazine, Minnesota White Ribbon, *of which she was the editor and business manager.*

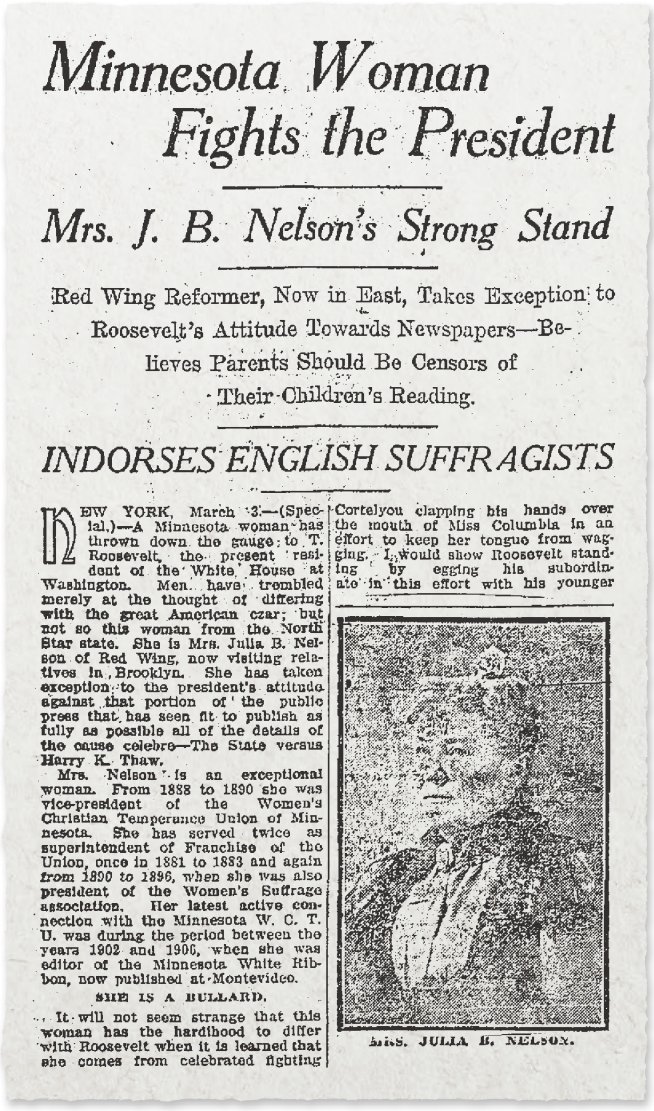
Staggered by a continuing series of ignominious defeats as the twentieth century approached, national and state suffragist movements stalled. Nelson's term as MWSA president ended in April 1897, her major goals unfulfilled. Worse, in 1898, Minnesotans approved a constitutional amendment that made future amendments to the state constitution nearly impossible, thus blocking a primary path to woman suffrage. Nonetheless, Nelson's belief in the cause persisted. As the century turned, she assisting in editing MWSA's *Minnesota Bulletin* from 1902 to 1906 as well as also editing and serving as business manager of the WCTU's monthly magazine, *Minnesota White Ribbon*.[34]

Internal divisions regarding MWSA's future direction burst into public view during the October 1911 convention, described in the *Minneapolis Tribune* as "one of the liveliest rows that ever featured a political convention of any sort in the state." A contest for the presidency brewed between supporters of the formidable incumbent, Emily E. Dobbin, whose relations with the executive committee had frayed, and challenger Alice Ames Hall, a St. Paulite active in the Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs. Helping referee the disputes was Nelson, "whose kindly eyes," wrote the *Tribune* reporter, "have looked at all sorts of trouble . . . in political campaigns for more years than most of the delegates had even seen."[35]



Red Wing newspaper ad for the Equal Rights Meat Market, which Nelson opened in 1897 with Jeremiah Patterson.

Hall's victory triggered an angry walkout by Dobbin supporters. Nelson had backed the more progressive Dobbin during the contentious convention floor fight, and she soon reached a decision that must have shocked the Minnesota suffrage hierarchy. The 69-year-old MWSA charter member and 30-year veteran of the organization resigned. Looking for a new path to suffrage, Nelson joined with other MWSA defectors to form the Minnesota Equal Franchise League. In just a month, the league attracted 360 members, most from existing MWSA affiliates. That number soon doubled. Nelson represented the Equal Franchise League on its national executive board and traversed the state as a recruiter. In November 1913, Nelson joined four other Equal Franchise League colleagues heading for the NAWSA convention in Washington, DC. The league had continued paying dues as an auxiliary MWSA member; thus their representatives were eligible to attend. The Minnesotans planned on taking part in a post-conference "suffrage school" led by Alice Paul,



Minnesota Woman Fights the President

Mrs. J. B. Nelson's Strong Stand

Red Wing Reformer, Now in East, Takes Exception to Roosevelt's Attitude Towards Newspapers—Believes Parents Should Be Censors of Their Children's Reading.

INDORSES ENGLISH SUFFRAGISTS

NEW YORK, March 3.—(Special.)—A Minnesota woman has thrown down the gauge to T. Roosevelt, the present resident of the White House at Washington. Men have trembled merely at the thought of differing with the great American czar; but not so this woman from the North Star state. She is Mrs. Julia B. Nelson of Red Wing, now visiting relatives in Brooklyn. She has taken exception to the president's attitude against that portion of the public press that has seen fit to publish as fully as possible all of the details of the cause celebre—The State versus Harry K. Thaw.

Mrs. Nelson is an exceptional woman. From 1888 to 1890 she was vice-president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Minnesota. She has served twice as superintendent of Franchise of the Union, once in 1881 to 1883 and again from 1890 to 1896, when she was also president of the Women's Suffrage association. Her latest active connection with the Minnesota W. C. T. U. was during the period between the years 1902 and 1906, when she was editor of the Minnesota White Ribbon, now published at Montevideo.

SHE IS A BULLARD.

It will not seem strange that this woman has the hardihood to differ with Roosevelt when it is learned that she comes from celebrated fighting Cortelyou clapping his hands over the mouth of Miss Columbia in an effort to keep her tongue from wagging. I would show Roosevelt standing by egging his subordinate in this effort with his younger

MRS. JULIA B. NELSON.

Nelson's advocacy was not limited to temperance, suffrage, and rights for African Americans, as this March 3, 1907, Minneapolis Tribune *headline shows.*

the movement's controversial but rising star, who with Lucy Burns founded the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage in 1913 (later the National Woman's Party), which split from NAWSA a short time later.[36]

Years of intense advocacy and travel were beginning to take their toll on Nelson. In hopes of clearing up recurring bronchitis issues and acting on her doctor's advice, Nelson wintered in Florida following the convention. On May 18, 1914, she wrote "[I] cast business cares and worries aside" for five months. She added, "Am saving what little strength I have for the Suffrage work." When contacted to take part in a fall North Dakota suffrage campaign, Nelson felt ready.[37]

Prior to the trip, Nelson undertook a meaningful pilgrimage to the October 16–17, 1914, MWSA convention in Minneapolis. Nelson confided to Ethel Hurd, the influential Minneapolis suffragist, that she "deeply regretted" her decision to leave the organization she helped create. Nelson gave a brief address renewing her allegiance to the group. On the 19th, Nelson took an afternoon train to Fargo and that night held a meeting in nearby Mapleton. A photo feature on Nelson's arrival carried in a Fargo newspaper inelegantly labeled her the "Grand Old Woman of Minnesota Suffragists."[38]

After the demanding two-week whistle-stop tour filled with speeches, rallies, and travel, a fatigued Nelson headed home to Red Wing. Illness soon set in, the malady developing into acute pneumonia. The North Dakota expedition was the last battle in her 40-year struggle for woman suffrage and equal rights for all. On December 24, 1914, Julia B. Nelson died at age 72. She had gone down fighting.

Julia Bullard Nelson labored simultaneously at both state and national levels as a driving force in three major American social and political movements. Though many devoted their life's work to both temperance and woman suffrage, none also worked for Black civil rights in the Reconstruction and early Jim Crow era, as did Nelson. Hers is a record of service unmatched in Minnesota's woman suffrage history, and her single-minded, steadfast leadership at the dawn of the state's movement rightfully earns her the description as "the rock on which the effort for woman suffrage has been founded in this State."[39] ⊡

Notes

1. "Proceedings of the State Temperance Alliance," *Grange Advance* [Red Wing], Sept. 9, 1874, 10; Ethel Edgerton Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota: A Record in Its Behalf since 1847* (Minneapolis: Minnesota Woman Suffrage Organization, 1916), 4. Hurd erroneously labels that gathering as a Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) affair. The WCTU of Minnesota was formed in Minneapolis on September 6, 1877, becoming the state's dominant anti-liquor group. Julia Wiech Lief, "A Woman of Purpose, Julia B. Nelson," *Minnesota History* 47, no. 8 (Winter 1981): 307. Lief, the great-niece of Nelson, possessed Julia Nelson's diaries and letters at the time she wrote her article; the location of these primary sources is no longer known. Harriet Duncan Hobart would become the longest-serving president of the Minnesota Woman's Christian Temperance Union (1881–94): see Frederick Johnson, "Hobart, Harriet Duncan (1825–1898)," MNopedia, Minnesota Historical Society, http://www.mnopedia.org/person/hobart-harriet-duncan-1825–1898.

2. Quotation from Rev. J. B. Tuttle, a Baptist clergyman representing Anoka at the convention, *Red Wing Argus*, Sept. 3, 1874, 4; *Anoka County Union:* "That Line," July 21, 1874, 3;

"Our Lodge Temperance Workers," July 28, 1874, 3; "A Lawsuit," Aug. 4, 1874, 3; "An Anoka Suit," Aug. 25, 1874, 3; "Letter from Julia Nelson to a friend," Aug. 25, 1874, 3. For an account of the McGlauflin trial, see *Grange Advance* [Red Wing], Aug. 12, 1874, 4.

3. Dr. Jewell, cofounder of Lake Pepin Nurseries, was a leading Minnesota temperance advocate whose early death from cancer in May 1878 was a heavy blow to the movement: "Phineas A. Jewell," *Annual Report of the Minnesota State Horticultural Society* 25, no. 2 (Feb. 1897): 49–50. "Proceedings of the State Temperance Alliance," 10.

4. "Proceedings of the State Temperance Alliance," 10.

5. "Proceedings of the State Temperance Alliance," 10; Philip D. Jordan, "The Hutchinson Family in the Story of American Music," *Minnesota History* 22, no. 2 (June 1941): 113–15. The provision that women of Hutchinson could vote "in all matters not restricted by law" was granted during a community meeting vote on November 21, 1855. Although not delineated, the restriction placed on that right might have been in deference to state and federal law.

6. "Proceedings of the State Temperance Alliance," 10. Nelson wrote the lyrics to "'Tis Time for the Women to Pray," with the Hutchinsons using her words sung to the music of "A Song of the New Crusade" (1874). Danny O. Crew, *Suffragist Sheet Music: An Illustrated Catalog of Published Music Associated with the Women's Rights and Suffrage Movement in America, 1795–1921* (Jefferson, NC, and London: McFarland, 2002), 102, shows the lyrics written by Nelson.

7. Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, *History of Goodhue County, Minnesota* (Chicago: H. C. Cooper Jr. and Co., 1909), 1055. Neither of the most reliable sources, the MWSA's early history—Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota*—and the "Minnesota" chapter written by Sarah Burger Stearns in *History of Woman Suffrage, 1876–1885,* eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage (Rochester, NY: Susan B. Anthony, 1902), 3:649–61, make any mention of Minnesota suffrage debates earlier than Nelson's. Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota,* 8, 17; Alumni Association, *History of the Hamline University of Minnesota when Located at Red Wing, Minnesota, from 1854 to 1869* (St. Paul: The Association, 1907), 180; Lief, *A Woman of Purpose,* 308–9. The Minnesota WCTU established the journal as the *Minnesota White Ribboner* in 1890 and later changed the title.

8. Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota,* 8, 17–22; Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage, 1883–1900* (Rochester, NY: Susan B. Anthony, 1902), 4:772.

9. Curtiss-Wedge, *History of Goodhue County,* 218, 1055–56. Julia was born in High Point, Connecticut, on May 13, 1842. Bullard Creek, named for the family, runs through Wacouta to the Mississippi. Charles Nelson Pace, ed., *Hamline University* (Minneapolis: Hamline University Alumni Association, 1939), 18–21.

10. Lief, "A Woman of Purpose," 304; Curtiss-Wedge, *History of Goodhue County,* 1055; Alumni Association, *Hamline University,* 180–83. On the grades of teaching certificates, see General Laws of the State of Minnesota, 1877, Chapter 4, "County Superintendents of Schools," Sec. 7 (St. Paul: Ramaley & Cunningham, 1877), 135.

11. Alumni Association, *Hamline University,* 180, "War Record," 249–52; Lief, *A Woman of Purpose,* 304. For details of the travails of Ole Nelson's Sixth Minnesota Infantry Regiment while stationed at Helena, Arkansas, see Board of Commissioners, *Minnesota in the Civil and Indians Wars, 1861–1865* (St. Paul: Minnesota Legislature, 1891), 321–24.

12. Lief, "A Woman of Purpose," 304, 305; Curtiss-Wedge, *History of Goodhue County,* 1055.

13. Julia B. Nelson, "Letter from Columbus, Texas," *New National Era,* Dec. 15, 1870, 1. In a later letter to a Red Wing Methodist Church member, Nelson described enrolling more than 400 pupils in the Free School since September 1871, and "Of these over 100 who did not know the Alphabet when they entered, now read quite well in the Independent Second Reader": Nelson to E. W. Brooks, May 11, 1872, in Lief, "A Woman of Purpose," 306.

14. *Grange Advance* [Red Wing], Jan. 14, 1874, 7; *Lake City Leader,* Mar. 5, 1874, 5; *Red Wing Argus,* Jan. 8 and 15, 1874, 1; "A Lady Farmer," *Minneapolis Tribune,* June 10, 1882, 11. Julia also hired Martha Miller, a young Black woman from Tennessee and likely another former student, to assist the ailing Angeline Bullard, Nelson's mother. Miller appears in the 1885 Minnesota Census as a 19-year-old living with Bullard. See Frederick L. Johnson, *Uncertain Lives: African Americans and Their First 150 Years in the Red Wing, Minnesota Area* (Red Wing: Goodhue County Historical Society, 2004); Appendix, *Census of Minnesota, May 1885,* Black Population of Goodhue County, 148; Jeremiah Patterson, *Red Wing Daily Republican,* Aug. 11, 1883. For more on the Julia Nelson–Jeremiah Patterson connection, see Johnson, *Uncertain Lives,* 48–50, 65–66.

15. *Minneapolis Tribune,* Aug. 27, 1881, 6, reported on the upcoming state WCTU convention in Hastings, erroneously noting the gathering would begin on September 30; the actual date was September 20. Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota,* 8.

16. Barbara Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995), 20–21; Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota,* 9; Johnson, "Hobart, Harriet Duncan"; *Hastings Gazette,* Sept. 24, 1881. The author wishes to thank Cindy Thury Smith, Hastings Pioneer Room curator, and Dakota County historian Heidi Langenfeld for their assistance in reporting on the September 1881 suffrage and temperance activity in Hastings.

17. William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1930), 4:335.

18. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage,* (Rochester, NY: Susan B. Anthony, 1902), 3:650; the quotation is from this volume's study of early Minnesota woman suffrage written by Sarah Burger Stearns. National Woman Suffrage Association, *Report of the Sixteenth Annual Washington Convention,* [Mar. 1884,] (Rochester, NY), 75. Nelson's maiden name is incorrectly spelled as "Ballard" instead of Bullard, a mistake that is occasionally repeated in other suffrage publications.

19. Lief, "A Woman of Purpose," 304; Merrill E. Jarchow, "Red Rock Frontier Methodist Camp Meeting," *Minnesota History* 31, no. 2 (June 1950): 79–92; *Red Wing Republican,* July 5, 1881, 3, excerpts a *St. Paul Pioneer Press* story regarding Nelson's Red Rock speech.

20. Sarah Burger Stearns communicated with 1882 MWSA delegates through a letter read by Julia Nelson: "Woman Suffragists," *Minneapolis Tribune,* Sept. 30, 1882, 8. For a discussion of the Minnesota electorate in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, including immigrant men, see Folwell, *History of Minnesota,* 4:332–33; Stanton, et al., *History of Woman Suffrage,* 3:653. The word "Yes" was printed on the ballot, so to vote against the amendment the voter had to scratch out "Yes" and pencil in "No." Voters ratified the amendment, 24,340–19,468; Minnesota General Laws, 1875, Regular Session, Chapter 2, "An Act ... relating to Elective Franchise," approved March 4, 1875.

21. A typescript of the poem, located in the Library of Congress, can be read online: https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbcmil.scrp1017301/?sp=1. Anthony and Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage,* 4: 75.

22. *St. Paul Daily Globe,* May 16, 1883, 2; *Report of the Sixteenth Annual Washington Convention,* 75; Anthony and Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage,* 4:74–77, 79.

23. Louise Barnum Robbins, ed., "Report of the International Council of Women, 1888," in *History and Minutes of the National Council of Women of the United States* (Boston: The Council, 1898), 1–3. The suggestion for an international union had initially been made at a gathering of British suffragists who arranged a meeting with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, then in England. *Red Wing Daily Republican,* Apr. 12, 1888, 3; National Woman Suffrage Association, *Report of the International Council of Women, March 25 to April 1, 1888* (Washington, DC: Rufus H. Darby, 1888), 51–187; "Western Association of Writers," *Indianapolis Journal,* June 7, 1888, 7; George S. Cottman, "The Western Association of Writers: A Literary Reminiscence," *Indiana Magazine of History* 29, no. 3 (Sept. 1933): 187–97. Frances E. Willard, world president of the WCTU, took part in the convention. Hobart won reelection 247–10, and Nelson gathered 210 of 233 votes cast. *St. Paul Daily Globe,* Sept. 16, 1888, 1; *Red Wing Republican,* Sept. 6 and 13, 1888, 3; Julia Nelson diary, Jan. 14 and Feb. 6, 1889, in Lief, "A Woman of Purpose," 309–10n29; *St. Paul Daily Globe,* Aug. 18, 1888, 11, and Dec. 15, 1888, 11. The

Red Wing Republican followed Nelson's progress through the state in 1888 and 1889.

24. "The Woman Suffragists," *St. Paul Daily Globe*, Oct. 24, 1889, 3; "For Women's Rights," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Oct. 24, 1889, 5, and "The City," Oct. 25, 1889, 5. Delegates also appointed Nelson, Dr. Martha G. Ripley of Minneapolis, and Sarah Burger Stearns of Duluth to be delegates to the upcoming national convention.

25. Nelson wrote to a Red Wing newspaper, "I spoke at Milbank, Elmira, Reveille, Alban, Big Stone City and Twin Brooks," and claimed 240 members enrolled: *Red Wing Argus*, Apr. 17, 1890, 1. She sent four more lengthy articles to the *Argus*—May 1, May 22, May 29, June 26—telling of her suffrage adventures. Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony* (Indianapolis, IN: Bowen, Merrill, 1898), 2:685; Nelson to Bailey, Oct. 12, 1890, in Jennifer M. Ross-Nazzal, *Winning the West for Women: The Life of Suffragist Emma Smith DeVoe* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2011), 57. Emma Smith DeVoe (1848–1927), a native of Illinois, later relocated to Washington State, and led it to the suffragists' fifth state victory in 1910.

26. Nelson to unknown, Oct. 17, 1890, in Ross-Nazzal, *Winning the West for Women*, 58. Suffrage amendments also went down in Kansas and Washington in 1894: Anthony and Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 4:803. For a concise history of the 1890 South Dakota suffrage offensive and voting results, see Effie McCollum Jones, "The South Dakota Campaign," *The Woman Voter*, 7 no. 10 (Oct. 1919): 14–15.

27. "Republic in Danger," *St. Paul Daily Globe*, Nov. 19, 1890, 8; *Minneapolis Tribune*, Nov. 20, 1890, 3. The *Tribune* credited Nelson's address as "entertaining and eloquent." The new president also retained her position as state organizer. Anthony and Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 4:772; "What Women Want," *St. Paul Daily Globe*, Nov. 20, 1890, 2.

28. Julia B. Nelson, "Minnesota" (draft chapter for *History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 4), in "Subject Files: Articles, undated, 1894–1919, Folder 1," digital images 39–105, Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association Records, MNHS, http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00756/pdfa/00756-00046.pdf; also the final version, Julia B. Nelson, "Minnesota," in Anthony and Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 4:772–82. Sylvanus A. Stockwell (1857–1943) was first elected to the Minnesota House in 1891 and served many terms in both the house and senate over the next 50 years. See Sylvanus A. Stockwell profile, Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, https://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail?id=14959.

29. Here and below, Nelson, "Legislative Work," in Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota*, 25–26, 29–34. A leaflet composed by Nelson, "Points on Municipal Suffrage," included her argument, "If the Legislature has the power to restrict suffrage it certainly has the right to extend it": Anthony and Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 4:775. For appointing female deputies, see General Laws of Minnesota for 1891, Chapter 40, 121. For the age of consent, see Nelson, "Minnesota" (draft chapter), digital image 67, and General Laws of Minnesota for 1891, Chapter 90, 162, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1891/0/General+Laws/Chapter/90/pdf/.

30. "Women and the Ballot," *St. Paul Daily Globe*, Mar. 13, 1893, 8, carries this quotation from *The Woman's Tribune. Red Wing Daily Republican* covered Nelson's trip through Kansas and Missouri: see Feb. 19, 1894, 3; Mar. 29, 1894, 3; May 8, 1894, 8. *Kansas [Garnett] Agitator*, Apr. 26, 1894, 8, observed, "better vote-makers than Mrs. Nelson are scarce." Anthony and Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 4:835, 866.

31. "Woman Suffrage," *The Representative* [Minneapolis], Feb. 27, 1895, 2. Ignatius Donnelly edited and published this newspaper and was a founder of the People's Party, which arose in 1892, after the destruction of the Farmer's Alliance. Carl H. Chrislock, "The Alliance Party and the Minnesota Legislature of 1891," *Minnesota History* 35, no. 7 (Sept. 1957): 302, 311–12. See also "Municipal Suffrage for Women," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Feb. 22, 1893, 2, for a description of Donnelly and Nelson working together in the state legislature.

32. Quoted in Leif, "A Woman of Purpose," 311.

33. *St. Paul Daily Globe*, Mar. 8, 1893; *Northfield News*, Sept. 28, 1912, 10; *Minnesota White Ribboner* 1, no. 7 (Oct. 1, 1890) notes Nelson's WCTU ties to "colored people." Nelson retained an amicable business relationship with William Henry Richards, and they followed each other's careers. She wrote a brief laudatory biography of Richards (copy in Julia B. Nelson Papers, MNHS), and he bought some Red Wing property from her. See Library of Congress, William Henry Richards Papers, "Nelson, Julia B. correspondence": Nelson to My Dear Friend, June 16, 1906, and Nelson to Dear Friend, Oct. 18, 1908, are examples of the correspondence, copies in author's possession. *Red Wing Daily Republican*, May 3, 1897, 4; Johnson, *Uncertain Lives*, 65–66.

34. General Laws of Minnesota for 1897, Chapter 185, 345–46, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1897/0/General+Laws/Chapter/185/pdf/. Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 4:335, explains, "the new amendment [required] a majority of *all votes cast at the election* [emphasis added] to ratify an amendment." That impossibly high standard meant a full suffrage amendment to the Minnesota Constitution would never be enacted. The MWSA would need to develop other strategies. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors*, 33–34, 59–70, considers the changes coming to MWSA.

Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota*, 29. Ethel Hurd, principal editor of the *Minnesota Bulletin*, noted, "It was discontinued in 1909, owing to scant funds, not lack of appreciation of its value." The WCTU's *Minnesota White Ribbon*, 1901–06, edited by Nelson, was a successor of *The Minnesota White Ribboner*, 1890–1900.

35. "Woman Suffragists Clash at Election," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, Oct. 8, 1911, 14. Emily E. Dobbin (1875–1949) taught mathematics and science at St. Paul Mechanic Arts High School: Blanche R. MacDonald, "Woman and Their Work," *Minneapolis Tribune*, Mar. 12, 1911, 24. Alice Ames Hall (1863–1952) became involved in the rapidly growing woman's club movement during the twentieth century's first decades: see Maddie Moran and Layna Zahrt, "Biography of Alice Ames Hall, 1863–1952," *Biographical Database of NAWSA Suffragists, 1890–1920*, https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1009860075.

36. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors*, 77–79; see also Minnesota Equal Franchise League Papers, 1911–17, MNHS; and "The Minnesota Equal Franchise League," *Who's Who Among Minnesota Women*, ed. Mary Dillon Foster (St. Paul: The author, 1924), 205; "Minnesotans Want Suffrage Meeting," *Duluth Herald*, Nov. 28, 1913, 7.

37. Nelson to Dear Miss [Theresa] Peyton, May 18, 1914, in Minnesota Equal Franchise League Papers, 1911–17, MNHS; quotations from this seven-page letter are found on pages one and six. Lief, "A Woman of Purpose," 312–13.

38. Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota*, 8, and minutes from the convention [Minnesota Woman's Suffrage Association records (digital), MNHS, Annual Convention Proceedings, 1914–16, Volume 8] make no mention of Nelson's speech, but did list (p. 15) Nelson's monthly pledge for "state work." *Fargo Forum and Daily Republican*, Oct. 19, 1914, 7; *Fargo Forum*, Oct. 15, 1914, 7.

39. Anthony and Harper, eds., *History of Woman Suffrage*, 4:772.

Images on p. 104, 107, 112 (bottom), Goodhue County Historical Society; p. 105, 106, 109, 112, MNHS Collections; p. 110, "Primarily Washington," https://primarilywashington.org/items/show/40357; p. 113, Minnesota Newspaper Hub, MNHS.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE and ETHNICITY in RURAL MINNESOTA

Local Agitation in Pipestone and Lyon Counties

Sara Egge

On June 26, 1916, Rene Stevens, a field director for the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), sent a long letter to Ethel Briggs, office secretary for the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA), detailing the results of her recent trip to southwestern Minnesota. As an affiliate of NAWSA, MWSA had hired Stevens in January to organize suffrage clubs across the state. The work was slow going, prompting Stevens to concoct a plan to drum up support by holding a MWSA quarterly conference in southwestern Minnesota. Her letter served as an evaluation of potential sites.

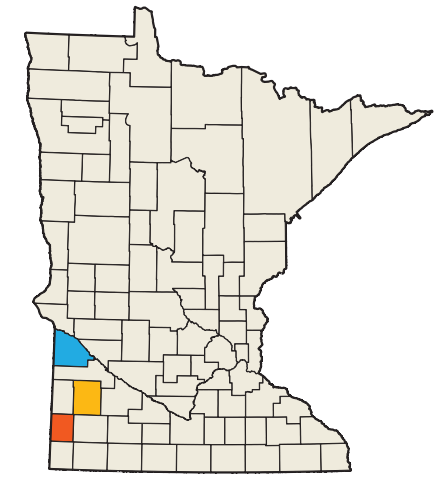
Lincoln County's town of Ivanhoe was unfit, Stevens noted, because it was on a railroad stub and "practically unreachable." Worthington, in Nobles County, seemed an attractive location, but a quick visit confirmed otherwise. The few local suffragists Stevens could find there told her how difficult it had been to organize a district conference earlier that year because the "spirit of inhospitality was revolting as well as deadening to the success of the meeting." While Stevens's interlocuters did not elaborate on what had gone wrong with the previous gathering, the Worthington suffragists also quashed any future plans by declaring that they could not possibly fund the conference. In Rock County, Luverne was promising, but it had only one hotel—and "not a good one"—which meant that "practically everyone with a spare room would have to be interested enough to take a guest." When Stevens approached Luverne's Equal

ABOVE: *Scandinavian women in national costume march for suffrage in Minneapolis, 1913.*

Suffrage Society—a group she called a "band of old conservatives"—about hosting the conference, they flatly turned her down.[1]

Ultimately, Pipestone, a small town on the border of South Dakota and county seat of Pipestone County, emerged as the best location. With Pipestone accessible by rail, Stevens estimated that she could find enough local support among ethnically and religiously diverse women to pull off the conference. Plans that drew in locals whom MWSA assumed were unreservedly opposed to woman suffrage actually revealed the opposite. Before the mid-1910s, the suffrage cause had been unpopular in rural areas in part because grassroots organizing—in general as well as among ethnic groups—had been limited. Stevens's visit signaled MWSA's new focus on outreach. As organizers tapped into Pipestone and other rural enclaves, suffragists began to understand how Minnesota's European ethnic diversity and vibrant social and religious networks shaped local politics.[2]

Two years later, in July 1918, a young MWSA field-worker named Grace Randall visited Lyon County, also in southwestern Minnesota. Populated primarily by Norwegian, German, Belgian, and French Canadian immigrants who despised woman suffrage, Lyon County was not a hotbed of activity for the cause. Nonetheless, Randall convinced four local women to lead suffrage efforts there. By August the quartet was working diligently, despite the odds, to collect signatures on a pro-suffrage petition and to secure support from local organizations. Over the next two months, all four women—Laura Lowe, Minnie Matthews, Harriet Sanderson, and Tillie Deen—carried out grueling schedules to complete the work for MWSA while also continuing their responsibilities to the Red Cross in supporting both an influenza outbreak and US troops fighting in World War I.[3]



● *Lac Qui Parle County* ● *Lyon County*
● *Pipestone County*

How these four women came to woman suffrage and achieved the success they did in the previously unfertile territory of Lyon County provides important insights into how the woman suffrage quest unfolded in Minnesota and why the state lagged behind its neighbors in pro-suffrage activity until the mid-1910s, when new leadership and young talent flooded MWSA. Though woman suffrage activists continued to face difficulties, MWSA's evolution, thanks to the organizing and fundraising skills of its newly elected president, Clara Ueland, made possible the cause's striking transformation from one of Minnesota's least desirable political causes to one of the most fashionable.

Most Minnesotans at the time viewed suffrage as radical and dangerous. Public attacks, especially in newspapers, revealed that Minnesotans feared women voting because it would upend rigid gender notions of women as wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters. In addition, many Minnesotans opposed the cause because they associated it with temperance. For decades, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union had been a champion of woman suffrage, and many suffragists belonged to this national organization. Immigrants whose ethnic customs embraced the consumption of alcohol mistrusted suffragists. Anti-temperance sentiment was especially high in Lyon County.

The hardest-fought battles of woman suffrage in Minnesota took place in counties like Pipestone and Lyon, where women combated ignorance or apathy among their neighbors.

While Clara Ueland, Rene Stevens, Grace Randall, and their counterparts deserve attention for their important work, local suffrage advocates also deserve credit for their critical role in the overall success of MWSA's efforts. The hardest-fought battles of woman suffrage in Minnesota took place in counties like Pipestone and Lyon, where women like Lowe, Matthews, Sanderson, and Deen combated ignorance or apathy among their neighbors. Making woman suffrage popular also meant divorcing it from temperance in the minds of Minnesotans. It meant reaching out to ethnic groups with political connections. It meant crafting arguments that deradicalized the cause by promising that women would still maintain their cherished place in the family even with the ballot. Finally, the charged political climate of World War I changed expectations for Minnesota's immigrants. Local suffrage leaders capitalized on the rising fear of foreign-born residents, championing their mobilization as patriotic in a tactical move to win additional political clout.

Development of Woman Suffrage in Minnesota

A group of 14 women from around the state had formed the MWSA decades earlier, in 1881, first led by Sarah Burger Stearns. Its early efforts largely targeted enfranchisement by a state amendment. At every legislative session between 1881 and 1898, MWSA submitted bills to secure woman suffrage. Prominent individual suffragists who lived mostly in St. Paul or Minneapolis promoted these efforts, giving speeches or hosting meetings to drum up support, but the work was infrequent and often limited to elite circles. In addition, a few field-workers attempted to organize suffrage clubs, including national organizers Laura Gregg and Helen Kimber in 1899, but agitation was spotty and uneven. These local and county clubs were usually short-lived, lasting less than a year, and mostly ineffective.

Nineteenth-century suffragist Ethel Hurd wryly noted that she and her cohort had "little honor or glory, much less remuneration." Prior to MWSA's efforts, in 1875 women had won the right to vote in school elections, making them eligible to serve on school boards. In 1898, the state legislature passed a law that enfranchised women in library elections. While these were victories, they were rather small, and most bills that extended women's rights died in committees or on the floor of either the house or the senate. Focusing on the state legislature not only led to minimal legislative success but also stymied efforts at the local level.[4]

Moreover, after late 1898 securing a woman suffrage amendment became virtually impossible. That year, voters approved a constitutional amendment that said all future amendments to the state's constitution had to receive the majority of the highest vote total cast in the election, not just on the amendment itself. An abstention was now the same as a "no" vote. Lobbying the legislature, the approach favored by MWSA, was no longer a viable option. Suffragists struggled to regroup.[5]

Since its founding, MWSA had also struggled with a shortage of both resources and talent, which helped explain why the organization had stuck with a narrow strategy focused on the state legislature in St. Paul. In addition, navigating ethnic communities in rural Minnesota was complicated. Historian Barbara Stuhler characterizes MWSA's early attempts at rural advocacy as "less ardent and less successful" than urban efforts. A debate among scholars has emerged about what Stuhler calls a "lack of commitment to suffrage from rural constituencies." Some historians, like William Watts Folwell and Stuhler, argue that traditional attitudes about gender or suffrage opposition born from anti-prohibition sentiment "restrained" Minnesotans, especially rural people, from supporting the cause. Other historians point out how "practical hurdles of farm chores and distance from town" prevented rural dwellers from engaging in the ways urban suffragists had envisioned. In other words, everyday obstacles, not rigid convictions about gender, obstructed advocacy in rural Minnesota. While rural Minnesotans did largely oppose the cause, especially in the nineteenth century, the sentiment was not permanent.[6]

Scholars like Barbara Handy-Marchello hit squarely on the issue, placing outright blame on urban-dwelling suffragists for refusing to organize rural women. In her assessment of suffragists in North Dakota, she posits that leaders failed to see "their rural counterparts as allies, as intelligent women with strong credentials in community organization, as the source of change in rural communities." In Minnesota, this resource remained untapped until the mid-1910s not because suffragists suddenly recognized the extensive power rural women wielded but because their state leaders finally had the talent and financial support to move beyond Minnesota's urban centers.[7]

The dearth of local engagement made Minnesota an outlier among other states in the region. Local women throughout Wisconsin, Iowa, and South Dakota had been participating in suffrage efforts for decades. In Wisconsin, women had agitated since the 1860s, largely through temperance reform, and in 1912 voters considered but ultimately rejected a suffrage referendum. Since the 1880s, Iowa had enjoyed a robust history of local activism, which culminated in 1916 when Iowans voted for the first and only time on an (unsuccessful) amendment to the state's constitution. In fact, when Stevens came to southwestern Minnesota in mid-June 1916, she was returning from a disappointing stint in Dubuque, Iowa, to support the campaign before the June 5 referendum. A stone's throw to the west from Pipestone, residents of South Dakota were experiencing their sixth of seven amendment campaigns in 1916. Since 1890, suffragists there had staged tenacious campaigns to enfranchise South Dakota women, and the 1916 effort was the third in a series since 1910. Less than a week after the 1916 Pipestone conference, Stevens became a field organizer based out of Aberdeen in northeastern South Dakota.[8]

Despite Aberdeen's proximity, Stevens's presence in Minnesota was hit or miss; organizing there often received second billing when contests erupted in neighboring states. That little on-the-ground mobilization for woman suffrage had existed anywhere in rural Minnesota before the

Pipestone conference in southwest Minnesota made the event even more remarkable. Not only would it offer a significant opportunity to advocate for woman suffrage, it was likely the first time that most people living there had ever interacted with a professionally trained suffragist.[9]

This new strategy to engage with rural women in Minnesota was part of a broadened vision for MWSA that took shape after Clara Ueland became its president in 1914. In the legislative arena, MWSA leaders reconfigured their goals, focusing on suffrage just in presidential elections. Presidential suffrage bypassed the state's difficult amending process because it only required the approval of the legislature, not an amendment supported by the majority of all votes cast at an election. It also aligned with NAWSA's "winning plan," which gave states different goals depending on the likelihood of success. While the national plan focused primarily on securing a federal amendment, it also allowed simultaneous state campaigns, either for constitutional amendments or, in states like Minnesota where the odds were not favorable, for presidential suffrage.[10]

In addition, MWSA's up-and-coming advocates began embracing tactics to increase their base. As they pursued grassroots organizing among rural women, MWSA field-workers encountered ethnic and religious groups that needed to be won over to advance the cause in Minnesota. Campaign tactics included demonstrations to generate public attention and publicity among an electorate that Folwell described as "restrained" by traditional gender norms that typically "excluded women from independent public activities." Rural women, however, did take positions as school officers, librarians, county deputies, police officers, and superintendents for charitable causes. This activity, combined with their work in collective organizations such as church groups and federated women's clubs focused on civic engagement and community volunteerism, gave rural women a record of public service and community engagement that resonated with suffragist organizers.[11]

To extend MWSA's base into these rural areas, Ueland organized the state by legislative district, emphasizing local outreach among the constituents of legislators whose support seemed attainable. The seven districts in southwestern Minnesota were particularly attractive because they bordered suffrage-rich eastern South Dakota. Still, coordinating a suffrage campaign in any rural Minnesota district was a challenge. Ueland charged field-workers with changing public opinion. En route, they struggled to overcome rugged terrain, underdeveloped communication networks, poor road conditions, and vast distances. Traveling to rural communities was a feat; but convincing locals to support woman suffrage was perhaps the most difficult task.

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Ethnic Dynamics in Rural Minnesota

By March 1916, Stevens and Maria McMahon, another NAWSA organizer, were working in Minnesota's southwestern districts, encountering "unenlightened" people with a "crying need" for information about the cause. Opinions ranged from indifference to opposition. Moreover, for most rural inhabitants ethnic identity profoundly shaped their political viewpoints. After the Civil War, large numbers of European immigrants had arrived in Minnesota, bringing cherished customs that included the consumption of alcohol. Distinct populations flourished in their own relatively isolated rural communities, creating a patchwork quilt of ethnic settlements. At the heart of these communities was the rural church, an institution that sanctified an enclave culture that privileged ethnic values. People spoke their native languages, consumed native foods and alcohol, and celebrated native holidays at church, while their children attended the parochial school taught by members of the congregation and held within church walls. Enclaves and their institutions made it easy for newcomers not only to pass down ethnic values to their children but also to resist pressure to assimilate to American norms.[12]

Late nineteenth-century immigration was highest from countries in northern Europe, including Germany, Norway, and Sweden, but other ethnic groups also founded colonies that made Minnesota ethnically and culturally diverse. For example, Pipestone County's population included Germans and Norwegians, while immigrants in Lyon County to the northeast included Icelanders, Belgians, and French Canadians as well as larger communities of Norwegians and Germans. They came to Lyon County because boosters seeking to develop the local economy lured farmers and laborers to emigrate from Europe.

In one instance, American-born business leaders in Marshall, the county seat, pledged their own money to construct a Catholic church, explaining that they were desperate

The Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association expanded the cause among Scandinavians by adopting a broad message that Scandinavians were progressive-minded. This white ribbon sash was worn by a member of the St. Paul Political Equality Club.

to attract a large cohort of workers at a time when many Catholics were founding large colonies in Minnesota. Over time, these boosters' efforts paid off, and the number of foreign-born residents rose substantially. While ethnic communities were a minority in Pipestone County, by 1920 in Lyon County only 40 percent of the population was native-born, eclipsed by the Germans, Norwegians, Irish, Polish, Belgians, and French Canadians in their midst. Lyon County represented demographic trends across Minnesota. As Stuhler notes, the 1905 census revealed that more than two-thirds of all Minnesotans had at least one foreign-born parent.[13]

Understanding how ethnicity shaped politics proved essential for suffragists working in rural Minnesota, but MWSA had to navigate the issue carefully. Suffragists recognized that many immigrants opposed the cause because they believed women only wanted the vote to enact prohibition. Immigrants also enjoyed tremendous political power, a power that began even before they became citizens. In Minnesota, male immigrants received the right to vote after they registered their Declaration of Intention, a legal document that proclaimed their desire to become a naturalized citizen after only two years of living in the United States. Stuhler claims that Minnesota's suffragists were "not, as a rule, offended that male immigrants" could vote before becoming citizens, or, if they were, they "held their peace."[14]

This attitude no doubt helped MWSA cultivate close relationships with immigrant women, especially those from Scandinavian countries. In 1907, the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association (SWSA) formed, and affiliated with MWSA. The SWSA pursued twin goals of woman suffrage and cultural preservation. By 1915, all Scandinavian countries had granted women the right to vote, a victory SWSA's second president, Nanny Jaeger, was quick to champion. While SWSA proved vital to expanding the cause among Scandinavians by adopting a broad message that Scandinavians were progressive-minded, SWSA remained primarily an elite urban group as nearly all its members lived in the Twin Cities and were the wives of well-to-do Scandinavian men. In addition, only first- and second-generation Scandinavian Americans could join, which further restricted its base.[15]

The stakes were particularly high for the SWSA. After 1916, its members did not hesitate to downplay their ethnic immigrant identities in favor of celebrating American assimilationist ones. But in so doing, the SWSA undercut itself and its mission to preserve Scandinavian culture. By 1918, it even considered changing its name to the Woman Citizen Association. In the end, the SWSA kept its name, but the debate reflects the political precarity foreign-born Americans faced during World War I. Most ultimately bowed to pressure to assimilate out of loyalty. For Germans, the most vilified group, nativist hostility was tremendous.[16]

Woman suffrage came to rural Minnesota with renewed energy in 1916, when state suffrage leaders began partnering with locals who took up the cause themselves and infused it into their already vibrant ethnic social and political networks. MWSA, and to a lesser extent SWSA, could claim a change in public opinion in favor of suffrage only when community leaders endorsed it, defusing its radical charge (steeped, as it was, in both prohibition and women's rights) in the process. In addition, agitation increased among rural Minnesotans when the Congressional Union (later renamed the National Woman's Party), led by Alice Paul, established a state chapter in Minnesota in 1915. MWSA appreciated the union's recruitment of younger suffragists who championed direct action tactics that included parades and street meetings in rural communities. Scholars often overlook the vibrant spectacles orchestrated by Congressional Union suffragists in Minnesota, but Ueland welcomed them, noting that the union sent organizers into "places where there has never been a suffrage meeting. (Minnesota is an untouched field comparatively.) . . . and their work has certainly reinforced our own." Finally, after 1917, World War I virtually silenced immigrant opposition born of anti-prohibition concerns. Instead, ethnic communities, especially non-German ones, mostly endorsed the cause in public ways.[17]

Pipestone Suffrage Conference

The woman suffrage conference planned in Pipestone in 1916 served as the first inkling of just how powerful local coalitions of women could become if given the opportunity. Stevens had selected Pipestone as

part of an effort to advocate for the cause in both southwestern Minnesota and southeastern South Dakota. In late June 1916, at a meeting with Mamie Pyle, president of the South Dakota Universal Franchise League, Stevens explained that MWSA sought to bolster the ongoing campaign there by holding the conference in a county along South Dakota's border. Pyle asked—"wistfully" according to Stevens—"if it wouldn't help Minn. about as much if we worked the border counties on the Dakota side." Stevens's response was telling. In as "tasteful language as possible," she indicated that Minnesota lagged far behind South Dakota in support for woman suffrage. She judged the South Dakota league's efforts more beneficial among South Dakotans, who demonstrated more knowledge of and enthusiasm for the cause. As she put it, Minnesota resembled "the Lord in a willingness to help those who help themselves" but at the same time had a "desire to be shown" the way. Her few months in Minnesota earlier that year had revealed that some locals wanted to help organize the conference but needed a guide to "advise, stimulate, push, etc."[18]

Stevens arrived in Pipestone in early July 1916, and she set to work immediately by contacting local politicians, business leaders, and prominent women from immigrant and non-immigrant groups to gain their endorsements for a conference. In particular, she drummed up support among churchgoing women, including Presbyterians and Methodists, who were mostly non-immigrants, and Catholics, who were mostly immigrants. For Stevens, locals with "social position" were key to a successful conference, and she reportedly "bulldozed" those reticent advocates into providing entertainment, housing, and funding. But it is unclear just how recalcitrant locals were toward the cause. Stevens had low expectations, stating, "I [just] want to make a dent in the attitude of the townspeople," but she also named scores of Pipestone residents who took on the myriad tasks she gave them.[19]

Their willingness seemed insignificant when compared to Stevens, who was a whirlwind of energy and demanded as much from her coworkers, so much so that Clara Ueland responded to one of Stevens's letters by advising her to take it easy. "Do not kill yourself trying to get a conference," she advised. Simply organizing and agitating in rural Minnesota was enough, according to Ueland, but Stevens was undeterred, responding to state headquarters that she had set the date for August 3 and 4 and had publicized the conference in neighboring counties, including Lyon County.[20]

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Newspaper reports about the Pipestone conference were spotty at best, not because Stevens failed to notify newspaper editors but because they could not always print her press releases as quickly as she wanted. With face-to-face contact difficult to maintain among rural populations, newspapers were crucial for organizing. On July 20, Stevens visited Marshall, the county seat of Lyon County, meeting with the editors of both the *Marshall News Messenger* and the *Lyon County Reporter*. Staff at both newspapers admitted that their previous coverage of woman suffrage had been irregular, and they promised to advertise more among their subscribers. Yet their assurances were somewhat hollow. The *Lyon County Reporter* merely published a single, three-paragraph missive about the upcoming conference, while the *Marshall News Messenger* failed entirely, printing a brief that appeared a day after the conference had begun. The lack of coverage, however, did

West Main Street, Pipestone, about 1904.

not keep an unnamed "Marshall delegation" from attending the conference, and they reported it "a great success."[21]

Despite the less-than-sterling work of some local newspapers, MWSA proclaimed the Pipestone conference a victory. Five days before it began, Stevens had hung Votes for Women posters in the windows of nearly every business in Pipestone. While she admitted that "it seemed early to do this stunt," she did it so that country dwellers, including Germans and Norwegians, who came to Pipestone only on Saturdays—"the *big country day in* town"—could see them. The main events were a street meeting during which suffragists walked from corner to corner, repeating their speeches as they went, and a massive banquet hosted by members of two local churches, one Catholic—most likely German—and the other Presbyterian. Stevens had printed almost 1,300 programs, and although she did not tally the total attendance, her letters after the conference were full of positive reports.[22]

The conference's success stemmed in part from what Ueland called a "triumphant tour" of southern and western rural Minnesota that promoted enthusiasm for the conference leading up to the big event. Traveling in an automobile caravan totaling 50 cars, MWSA officers held open-air street meetings at small towns, including Lakefield, Slayton, and Woodstock, along the route from the Twin Cities to Pipestone. They also crossed the border into South Dakota, holding open-air street meetings in nearby Flandreau. These spectacles were invaluable for bringing rural Minnesotans in direct contact with woman suffrage, something that the subdued campaigns of the past had not been able to do. The conference proved to Stevens and others in MWSA that rural populations, including members of ethnic and religious communities, were not categorically opposed to the cause and would step forward when state leaders gave them the chance.[23]

World War I and Lyon County

World War I dramatically transformed woman suffrage campaigning in rural Minnesota, changing what were piecemeal and somewhat limited incursions by individual activists into sustained and meaningful efforts organized around a central message. When President Woodrow Wilson convinced Congress to declare war against Germany in April 1917, Minnesotans were initially reluctant. Some groups, particularly Scandinavian immigrants, endorsed neutrality while others, especially Germans, supported intervention on the side of Germany. In short order, however, suspicions of disloyalty fostered broad patriotic support for US involvement, and in turn, antiwar positions faced increasing public scrutiny. As nativism gripped Minnesota, immigrants from Germany and Scandinavia, including the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association, faced criticism.

According to historian Anna Peterson, the result was a "violent

Suffrage parade in Madison, in Lac qui Parle County, about 1916. Spectacles such as this were invaluable for bringing rural Minnesotans in direct contact with woman suffrage, something that the subdued campaigns of the past had not been able to do.

backlash" that mainly targeted Germans and German Americans but that also caused many immigrants, including Scandinavians, to "renounce their ethnic heritage." No longer could they defend alcohol consumption as an expression of cultural values. Vocal opposition to woman suffrage out of concerns it would lead to prohibition decreased markedly. Most immigrants ultimately bowed to pressure to assimilate out of loyalty. This was a boon for state suffragists, and neither MWSA nor SWSA spoke out against the anti-German frenzy as it grew. Instead, they loyally mobilized, infusing patriotic pro-war efforts, like selling Liberty Bonds, sewing items for the American Red Cross, and conserving foods, into their suffrage work, and ethnic communities, especially non-German ones, mostly endorsed the cause publicly.[24]

Pro-war advocacy spurred the creation of groups like the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, an agency that pursued both patriotic demonstrations and persecution of any group deemed "un-American." MWSA aligned with these efforts at boosting loyalty, reporting themselves and "the mass of Minnesota's women" as unquestionably loyal, with "their record for Red Cross work, for food conservation . . . [and] for Americanization" as their "entire validation." Americanization was especially powerful, for it situated immigrant suffragists as responsible citizens who understood American values. War mobilization further politicized suffragists and the activist networks they had cultivated, especially in rural areas and among ethnic groups for which demonstrating their fervent patriotism could mitigate nativist attacks. Infusing woman suffrage with war work brought sustained and compelling campaigns for the cause to rural Minnesota.[25]

News and Art Club of Minneota, one of the groups from the Lyon County town that sent a resolution to the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association supporting a federal suffrage amendment.

Examining Lyon County reveals how World War I reshaped woman suffrage in rural Minnesota as it, like many rural counties, had a fractured experience with the cause before the war. Snippets in the MWSA archives indicate that field-workers twice organized a suffrage club in Lyon County, first in 1899 and again in 1912. Both efforts were brief, and little evidence exists about the clubs' membership or activities. One report about the 1912 group suggests that it was probably the Current News Club, a local federated women's club in Marshall. Meeting minute records, scrapbooks, and other documents left by the Current News Club, however, never mention any sort of affiliation with or work for MWSA.[26]

Despite the lack of sustained engagement with the cause among locals in Lyon County before World War I, a number of local women willingly joined MWSA as it mobilized for both suffrage and war. After 1917, MWSA pursued two main lines of work: circulating petitions and securing resolutions from prominent groups. The goal was to secure both a federal amendment for women's full suffrage access and women's limited presidential suffrage by bombarding members of Congress and state legislators with overwhelming evidence that constituents in their district wanted women to vote. MWSA managed these efforts by sending field organizers to coordinate directly with local residents, as in July 1918, when suffragist Grace Randall visited the county. Although she met with a number of locals, including state legislators, other political candidates, and supportive women, she reported little about her time there. Randall's brief remarks obscure how meaningful her visit was for pro-suffrage

Despite the lack of sustained engagement among locals in Lyon County before World War I, a number of local women willingly joined MWSA as it mobilized for both suffrage and war.

activists in Lyon County, for shortly after she left, women in Marshall and Minneota, a small town of Norwegian and Icelandic immigrants located northwest of Marshall, began the county's first intensive woman suffrage campaign.[27]

By August 1918, two pairs of women—Laura Lowe and Minnie Matthews in Marshall and Tillie Deen and Harriet Sanderson in Minneota—were engaging in a countywide canvass and petition drive. All four were established leaders in their communities. Lowe and Matthews were members of the Current News Club and the Ladies' Aid Society of the Congregational Church in Marshall. Matthews's home also served as the headquarters of the local American Red Cross chapter. These networks anchored local suffrage agitation, and Lowe and Matthews used them to circulate MWSA's pro-suffrage petitions. State leaders set signature quotas for each town based on the number of voters at the last election. Marshall's goal was 313 apiece for men and women; Minneota's was 124 apiece. MWSA requested separate petitions for each gender, which likely allowed officials to demonstrate widespread support among both men and women while also providing an opportunity for women to sign even if their male counterparts did not.[28]

For over two months, Lowe and Matthews disseminated petitions and faced an onslaught of obstacles. War work, especially for the American Red Cross, consumed nearly every available minute, they reported. In addition, bad weather that fall turned roads into sloppy rut-filled messes. An influenza outbreak and subsequent quarantine made contacting all voters on their list impossible. To top it all off, MWSA staff had failed twice to respond to requests from Lowe and Matthews for "literature on the suffrage question" to distribute in the community, prompting office administrator Clara Heckrich to apologize for the oversight. Lowe also noted that while "soliciting the men [they] encountered considerable opposition." Despite all these difficulties, Lowe and Matthews pulled off a tremendous feat. Although they secured only 130 signatures on the men's petition (not even half of the MWSA quota), they had collected 311 signatures from local women, falling only two names short of their quota. Lowe also submitted a resolution endorsed by the Ladies' Aid Society of Marshall's Congregational Church that supported a federal woman suffrage amendment.[29]

While residents in Marshall engaged impressively with woman suffrage, their rural counterparts contributed even more remarkably. Of the nine resolutions submitted to MWSA from groups in Lyon County, seven came from an extraordinary

Members of the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association pose in front of headquarters of the National Woman's Party in Washington, DC, 1917. Minnesota NWP chair Jane Potter is at center. The women brandished the banners as part of "Minnesota Day" on the picket line at the gates of the White House, February 1917.

canvass by Sanderson and Deen, the well-connected rural advocates from Minneota. Four federated women's clubs (the Minneota News and Art Club, the Fortnightly Club, the Get-To-Gether Club, and the Friday Exchange Club); one chapter of the Royal Neighbors of America (the Alpha Camp Chapter); and two Red Cross chapters (the Nordland and the Eidsvold Auxiliaries of the American Red Cross) all submitted resolutions in support of a federal amendment. The sheer number of resolutions was astounding and their ethnic composition was noteworthy. Minneota had a large population of Icelandic Lutherans, while Eidsvold and Nordland Townships were Norwegian Lutheran communities. In other words, a major source of support from Lyon County came from ethnic enclaves with vibrant social networks that had mobilized for patriotic work in response to World War I.[30]

During this period, MWSA also sought to secure presidential suffrage through the state legislature, and they relied extensively on local advocates to lead grassroots efforts—the central component of this strategy. The most compelling battles for woman suffrage took place in counties like Pipestone and Lyon, where women like Stevens, Lowe, Matthews, Sanderson, and Deen personally combated seemingly insurmountable obstacles, from influenza to indifference. But these advocates also benefited from the nativism that had mobilized ethnic communities to prove their loyalty during wartime. MWSA profited from this loyalty even after World War I ended. In January 1919, two months after armistice, state legislators enthusiastically passed a resolution that endorsed a federal woman suffrage amendment. In March 1919, the state legislature approved presidential suffrage by large margins in both the house and the senate. Grassroots organizing—those "deft strategies of the MWSA" to partner with locals to assemble numerous petitions and resolutions at the district level—had generated irrefutable proof that Minnesotans wanted women to have the right to vote. With the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment the following year, Minnesota women achieved their ultimate goal of access to full suffrage.[31] ⊡

Notes

1. Rene Stevens to Ethel Briggs, June 26, 1916, 1:800–802, and Stevens to Briggs, June 30, 1916, 1:815–18—both Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association Collection, Minnesota History Society [hereafter, MWSA, MNHS].

2. Stevens to Briggs, June 26, 1916, 1:800–802, MWSA, MNHS.

3. Clara Heckrich to Grace Randall, July 11, 1918, 3:568; Randall to Heckrich, July 12, 1918, 3:569; Randall to Heckrich, July 20, 1918, 3:572; Laura Lowe to Clara Ueland, Oct. 14, 1918, 3:808; Heckrich to Lowe, Oct. 15, 1918, 3:818; Lowe to Heckrich, Nov. 12, 1918, 4:131—all MWSA, MNHS.

4. Ethel Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota: A Record of Activities in Its Behalf since 1847* (Minneapolis: Inland, 1916), 5.

5. William Anderson and Albert James Lobb, *A History of the Constitution of Minnesota: With the First Verified Text* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1921), 145–47. According to Anderson and Lobb, the proposition that changed the amending process did not even pass its own standards. Laws of Minnesota for 1897, Chapter 185, 345–46, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1897/0/General+Laws/Chapter/185/pdf/. Susan B. Anthony and Ida Hustad Harper, eds., *The History of Woman Suffrage, 1883–1900* (Indianapolis, IN: Hollenbeck, 1902), 4:772–73, 778–79.

6. Barbara Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995), 20–22, 107–10; William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1930), 4:335; William D. Green, *The Children of Lincoln: White Paternalism and the Limits of Black Opportunity in Minnesota, 1860–1876* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 255–318.

7. Barbara Handy-Marchello, *Women of the Northern Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier, 1870–1930* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Press, 2005), 97. See also Joan Jensen, "The Perils of Rural Women's History: A Note to Storytellers Who Study the West's Unsettled Past," in *One Step Over the Line: Toward a History of Women in the North American Wests*, eds. Elizabeth Jameson and Sheila McManus (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008), 173–83; Sara Egge, "Ethnicity and Woman Suffrage on the South Dakota Plains," in *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains*, eds. Lori Ann Lahlum and Molly P. Rozum (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2019), 218–39.

8. Genevieve McBride, *On Wisconsin Women: Working for Their Rights from Settlement to Suffrage* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Stevens to Briggs, Aug. 21, 1916, 2:190–93, 196–97, and Clara Ueland to Stevens, Aug. 26, 1916, 2:200—both MWSA, MNHS. The amendment in Iowa failed by just over 10,000 votes: see chapter 4 in Sara Egge, *Woman Suffrage and Citizenship in the Midwest* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018).

9. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors*, 20–22; Hurd, *Woman Suffrage in Minnesota*, 31; Stuhler, "Organizing for the Vote: Leaders of Minnesota's Woman Suffrage Movement," in *The North Star State: A Minnesota History Reader*, ed. Anne J. Aby (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2002), 226–30; Nineteenth Amendment Celebration Committee, "Minnesota Woman Suffrage Chronology," folder 7, box 7, Barbara Stuhler Papers, Manuscripts Collection, MNHS; Green, *Children of Lincoln*, 255–318.

10. Jacqueline Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life* (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1996), 132–35; Corrine McConnaughy, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in America: A Reassessment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10–14, 52–54; National American Woman Suffrage Association, *Headquarters News Letter* 2, no. 8 (Aug. 15, 1916), NAWSA Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Carrie Chapman Catt, celebrated for her organizational abilities, was the architect of NAWSA's "winning plan." She served as NAWSA's president from 1900 to 1904 and again from 1915 to 1920. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors*, 111–18.

11. Linda Lumsden, *Rampant Women: Suffragists and the Right of Assembly* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), xiii–xxv, 33–42; Jessica Ellen Sewell, *Women and the Everyday City: Public Space in San Francisco, 1890–1915* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 95–168; Katherine Adams and Michael Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 76–116; Holly J. McCammon, "'Out of the Parlors and into the Streets': The Changing Tactical Repertoire of the U.S. Women's Suffrage Movements," *Social Forces* 81 (Mar. 2003): 787–818; Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 4:335; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors*, 20–22. Wanda Hendricks examines civic engagement among African American women in Illinois: see Wanda Hendricks, *Gender, Race and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 51–74. For a broad discussion of the formulation of anti-suffragism, see Sarah

Hunter Graham, *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 11–30.

12. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 111–18; Clara Ueland to "Suffragist," Aug. 5, 1915, 1:291–92; Clara Ueland to "Suffragist," Nov. 23, 1915, 1:371–72; Stevens to Briggs, Mar. 25, 1916, 1:483–85; "Plan for Work for Suffrage District Association," [1916], 10:3; "President's Address, 1916," 8:95–100—all MWSA, MNHS; Robert Swierenga, "The Settlement of the Old Northwest: Ethnic Pluralism in a Featureless Plain," *Journal of the Early Republic* 9 (Spring 1989): 76–79; Frederick Luebke, "Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains," *Western Historical Quarterly* 8 (Oct. 1977): 412, 417, 427–28; Andrew Cayton and Susan E. Gray, "The Story of the Midwest," in *The Identity of the American Midwest: Essays on Regional History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 15; Andrew Cayton and Peter Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation: Rethinking the History of an American Region* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 27; John Hudson, "Migration to an American Frontier," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66 (June 1976): 258; Robert Swierenga, "The Little White Church: Religion in Rural America," *Agricultural History* 71 (Autumn 1997): 415–17.

13. Arthur Rose, *An Illustrated History of the Counties of Rock and Pipestone, Minnesota* (Luverne, MN: Northern History Publishing Co., 1911), 331–46; John Radzilowski, *Prairie Town: A History of Marshall, Minnesota* (Marshall, MN: Lyon County Historical Society, 1997), 93; Annette Atkins, *Creating Minnesota: A History from the Inside Out* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2007), 72–81; Cayton and Onuf, *The Midwest and the Nation,* 114–16; Luebke, "Ethnic Group Settlement," 412; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 106.

14. Jamin Raskin, "Legal Aliens, Local Citizens: The Historical, Constitutional and Theoretical Meanings of Alien Suffrage," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 141 (Apr. 1993): 1391–470; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 106; Irene Bloemraad, "Citizenship Lessons from the Past: The Contours of Immigrant Naturalization in the Early 20th Century," *Social Science Quarterly* 87 (Dec. 2006): 936–42.

For more on the vital link between temperance and suffrage in Minnesota, see Sabine Meyer, *We Are What We Drink: The Temperance Battle in Minnesota* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015). Suffrage activism in Fort Wayne, Indiana, also required careful consideration of ethnic identities, temperance, and "deep cultural resistance to social change": see Peggy Seigel, "Winning the Vote in Fort Wayne, Indiana: The Long, Cautious Journey in a German American City," *Indiana Magazine of History* 102 (Sept. 2006): 220–57.

While most suffragists might not have explicitly aired their grievances, they understood enfranchisement in imperialist terms, which produced friction. Global expansion reinforced a racial framework that placed governing, and the vote, in the hands of civilized, white Americans both abroad and at home. In addition to immigrants considered undesirable, suffragists also viewed African American and Indigenous voters with similar disdain. See Wayne Gannaway, "The Perils of Peace: Frederick Douglass, Winona, and Civil Rights in Minnesota after the Civil War," *Minnesota History* 66 (Summer 2018): 74–84; Allison Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870–1929* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Molly P. Rozum, "Citizenship: Civilization, and Property: The 1890 South Dakota Vote on Woman Suffrage and Indian Suffrage," in *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains,* eds. Lahlum and Rozum, 240–63.

15. Anna Marie Peterson, "Adding 'A Little Suffrage Spice to the Melting Pot': Minnesota's Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association," *Minnesota History* (Winter 2011–12): 288–90; Anna Peterson, "Making Women's Suffrage Support an Ethnic Duty: Norwegian American Identity Constructions and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1880–1925," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 30 (Summer 2011): 14–17; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 106–8, 131–38.

16. Peterson, "Adding 'A Little Suffrage Spice to the Melting Pot,'" 295–96; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 106–9; Frederick Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974).

17. Quoted in Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 136.

18. Stevens to Ueland, June 30, 1916, 1:815–18, MWSA, MNHS.

19. Stevens to Briggs, July 3, 1916, 2:3–7; Stevens to Briggs, July 6, 2:9–10; Stevens to Ueland, July 12, 1916, 2:25–30; Stevens to "People," July 15, 1916, 43–46; Stevens to Briggs, July 20, 1916, 2:79–81; Stevens to Ueland, July 25, 1916, 2:116–17; Stevens to Briggs, July 29, 1916, 2:150–52; Stevens to Briggs, July 30, 1916, 2:148–49—all MWSA, MNHS.

20. Ueland to Stevens, July 5, 1916, 2:8, and Stevens to Briggs, July 6, 1916, 2:9–10—both MWSA, MNHS.

21. Carmen Heider, "Farm Women, Solidarity, and 'The Suffrage Messenger': Nebraska Suffrage Activism on the Plains, 1915–1917," *Great Plains Quarterly* 32 (Spring 2012): 113–30; Stevens to Briggs, July 20, 1916, 2:79–81; "On to Pipestone," 8:154; and "President's Address, 1916," 8:95–100—all MWSA, MNHS; "Suffragets Will Meet on Next Thurs. and Fri.," *Lyon County Reporter,* July 26, 1916; "Suffrage at Pipestone," *Marshall News Messenger,* Aug. 4, 1916.

22. Stevens to Briggs, July 29, 1916, 2:150–52; Stevens to Briggs, Aug. 8, 1916, 2:179–81; Stevens to Briggs, July 30, 1916, 2:148–49; Stevens to Briggs, Aug. 6, 1916, 2:171–74—all MWSA, MNHS.

23. Briggs to Stevens, Aug. 1, 1916, 2:170–71, and Stevens to Briggs, Aug. 6, 1916, 171–74—both MWSA, MNHS; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 131–38.

24. Peterson, "Adding 'A Little Suffrage Spice to the Melting Pot,'" 295.

25. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 149; "State Convention," Nov. 16–17, 1917, 3:56–59, MWSA, MNHS; Gayle Gullett, "Women Progressives and the Politics of Americanization in California, 1915–1920," *Pacific Historical Review* 64 (Feb. 1995): 73–76; Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870–1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3–5, 24, 50–62, 89.

26. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 67, 77–79; Sophie Kenyon to Anna Howard Shaw, Mar. 10, 1913, 1:164–67; "List of Clubs Paid," [1912], 9:423; "Suffrage Clubs," 1912, 9:426; "Clubs Paid Before June 30, 1912," 9:438; "Appointment Charts, Dec. 31, 1916," 10:29–30—all MWSA, MNHS. The Southwest Minnesota History Center in Marshall has the minute books and scrapbooks of the Current News Club: see Current News Club Collection, Southwest Minnesota History Center, Southwest Minnesota State University, Marshall, MN.

27. Ueland to Winifred Bartlett, Oct. 11, 1917, 2:786; "Yellow Medicine and Lyon Co. Senators," 1918, 9:139; Heckrich to Randall, July 11, 1918, 3:568, Randall to Heckrich, July 12, 1918, 3:569; Randall to Heckrich, July 20, 1918, 3:572—all MWSA, MNHS; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 151–60.

28. Lowe to Ueland, Oct. 14, 1918, 3:808, and Heckrich to Lowe, Oct. 15, 1918, 3:818—both MWSA, MNHS.

29. Lowe to Ueland, Oct. 14, 1918, 3:808; Heckrich to Lowe, Oct. 15, 1918, 3:818; Lowe to Heckrich, Nov. 12, 1918, 4:131; "Presented to Congregational Ladies' Aid by Laura W. Lowe, Chairman," July 24, 1918, 9:319—all MWSA, MNHS.

30. "List (Incomplete) of Resolutions, 1919," 9:353–54; Harriet Sanderson to Randall, Jan. 21, 1919, 5:235–36; Stevens to Sanderson, Feb. 7, 1919, 5:515—all MWSA, MNHS; "Red Cross Committees," *Minneota Mascot,* Nov. 15, 1918; Tillie Deen, "News and Art Club History, 1901–1925," unpublished manuscript, News and Art Club Collection, in possession of Sandy Josephson, Minneota, MN; Torgny Anderson, *The Centennial History of Lyon County* (Marshall, MN: Henle Publishing Co., 1970), 45–47; Charles Vandersluis, *Ninety Years at St. Paul's* (Marshall, MN: Ousman Printing, Inc., 1977), 10.

31. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 168–70; Session Laws of Minnesota for 1919, Chapter 80, HF no. 222, 89, https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1919/0/Session+Law/Chapter/89/pdf/; Ueland to Carrie Chapman Catt, Jan. 23, 1919, 5:282–83, and Nettie Shuler to Ueland, Mar. 4, 1919, 5:641—both MWSA, MNHS.

EXPANDING THE SUFFRAGE STORY THROUGH

Newspapers

Fergus Falls Ugeblad and *Rodhuggeren* (Norwegian)

The 1890s represented an especially rich period for material on woman suffrage in Norwegian-language newspapers. Between the 1880s and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, several Norwegian-language newspapers in Minnesota started publication, relocated (sometimes out of state), merged with other newspapers, switched political perspective, or ceased publication. So much change left coverage on woman suffrage inconsistent. Coverage reached a peak in the wake of the 1893 state legislature's attempt to pass a suffrage amendment. An energetic discussion on enfranchising women ensued in two Norwegian-language newspapers published in Fergus Falls, the *Fergus Falls Ugeblad* ("Weekly Newspaper") and *Rodhuggeren* ("The Radical"). The vibrant political discourse in these two Norwegian-language newspapers highlights perspectives of Minnesotans often ignored when considering woman suffrage.[1]

The *Fergus Falls Ugeblad* and *Rodhuggeren* welcomed commentary on woman suffrage. Both newspapers supported candidates of the People's (Populist) Party and prohibition, often linked with woman suffrage. The papers likely had overlapping readership, and *Rodhuggeren* differentiated itself with more protracted conversations through letters to the editor, some written by women. Both carried suffrage news from Norway and other countries, from the US Congress, and from other states and territories. They also published notices about local suffrage events and reprinted articles from other Minnesota Norwegian-language newspapers, notably prohibition papers.[2]

Most importantly, these two newspapers provide insight into the arguments about woman suffrage taking place in Otter Tail County and beyond. The articles represent a range of opinions on woman suffrage: suffrage rights were embedded in the Constitution; women would support prohibition and should have the right to vote; women belonged in the home; women wanted equal rights; women did not go to war, so they should not have the right to vote; women were just as qualified as men to vote; women were not equal to men per 1 Corinthians' declaration that "man is woman's head"; and the emancipation of women should be realized.[3]

Especially interesting are the arguments from women. In March 1894, an unnamed person identified as *En Kvinde* ("a woman") rejected the claim by suffrage opponents that women belonged in the home and lacked the "common sence" [*sic*] to be informed voters. The following month, Marie from Duluth weighed in with her understanding of the Bible: women were helpmates for men. In May, *Rodhuggeren* readers observed Mrs. Ida Jacobson attack men's arguments against woman suffrage and boldly assert that women wanted equal rights; furthermore, if women voted, there would be fewer wars. In 1896, Ed Thorson's letter to *Rodhuggeren* opposing woman suffrage generated a flurry of responses. In one, Mrs. Hanna Bakken of Crookston rejected Thorson's arguments, urging that the "fight to win woman suffrage must begin soon." Bakken noted the importance of reform issues, declaring, "If women get the right to vote, it will spell doomsday for saloons and brothels."[4]

What transpired in the pages of these two Norwegian-language newspapers stands in stark contrast to discussions about woman suffrage in much of the Minnesota English-language press during the same period. Curiously, lively debate falls relatively silent after 1900 in the Norwegian-language Fergus Falls press.

—Lori Ann Lahlum

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Notes

1. To view Norwegian-language newspapers online, see the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub (https://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/hub) and Chronicling America (https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov). In addition to *Fergus Falls Ugeblad* (published 1882–1938) and *Rodhuggeren* (published 1893–98), *Felt Raabet* (short run), *Arbeidsmanden* (short run), and *Minneapolis Tidende* are in both databases. *St. Paul Tidende* is a Danish newspaper that also would have had Norwegian readers. One issue of *Spring Grove Posten* is in the Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub. Digitized issues of *Fergus Falls Ugeblad* (from 1886 to 1922) cover the longest time span, offering the one consistent look at woman suffrage via online newspapers. *Minneapolis Tidende* (digitized 1914–22) includes coverage of the final push for woman suffrage—in Minnesota, nationally, and internationally (especially in Norway).

2. Odd S. Lovoll, *Norwegian Newspapers in America: Connecting Norway and the New Land* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010), 119–22.

3. *Fergus Falls Ugeblad* and *Rodhuggeren*, 1893–96, *passim.* The quotation "man is woman's head" appears in Olaf O. Vinje letter, *Rodhuggeren*, Nov. 19, 1895.

4. En Kvinde letter, *Rodhuggeren*, Mar. 27, 1894; "Fra Duluth," *Rodhuggeren*, Apr. 3, 1894; Mrs. Ida Jacobson, "Kvindens Stemmeret" ("Woman Suffrage"), *Rodhuggeren*, May 15, 1894; Ed Thorson letter, *Rodhuggeren*, Apr. 14, 1896; Mrs. Hanna Bakken letter, *Rodhuggeren*, Jan. 28, 1896.

Nellie Griswold Francis:

The Vicissitudes of Activism for Women and Race

William D. Green

Nellie Francis, 1921.

On September 8, 1919, the Minnesota Legislature ratified the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, the culmination of years of hard work by Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association. Though the campaign led by Ueland was carried out by a membership that demographically reflected the population of the state—white and largely of northern European descent—a small contingent of African American women, reflecting the state's Black demographic, shared in the victory. Their leader was Nellie Griswold Francis. Upon meeting her, Ueland referred to Francis as "a star . . . possessing the spirit of a flame." To be sure, their common purpose was to promote woman suffrage. But while it was Ueland's single focus, Francis's interest was broader. As Ueland admiringly noted: "To help her race is her ruling motive."[1]

Ueland's words could not have been more prescient. Francis's suffrage work was intertwined and at times at odds with her work for her race, community, club associations, and the war effort, as well as with shouldering what Susan B. Anthony deprecatingly called the "double duty" of marriage and family. Ueland genuinely admired the Black leader, albeit from a lofty paternalistic vantage point where the lines that separated esteem, class privilege, and racism were often blurred. Indeed, white people of status confused Francis's light skin as her one trait suggesting a superior character. Such was the nature of race relations in Francis's experience. To identify herself as a "race person"—one fully committed to the welfare of her people—had to be emotionally clarifying. So much needed to be done, even in Francis's home base, the racially insulated neighborhood of Black St. Paul within the seemingly tolerant capital city and state of Minnesota. The capital contained, as historian and lawyer Paul Nelson termed it, "a village within a city."[2]

Although the boundaries surrounding the "village" were not strictly enforced by the racist laws so characteristic of the Jim Crow South, nevertheless, the insidious social customs of restrictive property covenants, police abuse, the threat of lynching, or white harassment could happen at any time when a Black person ventured beyond the confines of the neighborhood. Yet, until 1885, when the *Western Appeal* dared to begin reporting "what thousands of Black men and women kept to themselves," the Black community had no voice of its own. Before then, racism in Minnesota remained undocumented and unaccountable. In July 1885, *Western Appeal* readers learned of a Black man named C. W. Baptist, who was ordered by unnamed persons to move his business because it was situated across from the prestigious Ryan Hotel "or they would find some way to make him." (Ironically, the hotel was the largest employer of Black laborers.)[3]

In 1887—the same year 13-year-old Nellie Griswold first met William T. (Billy) Francis, whom she would marry in 1893—another member of St. Paul's proper Black society, Mrs. J. J. Wiley, was part of a St. Paul crowd that had gathered to see the visiting US president Grover Cleveland. Jammed next to "some burly white men," Mrs. Wiley grew impatient after the men continued to insult her. A policeman

worked his way over to the commotion and, "seeing Mrs. Wiley was colored," at once arrested her for being drunk and disorderly; the men were allowed to go free. Though charges were eventually dropped, the lesson to Black people was very clear: the dignity of Black people, regardless of their gender and class, could be at any time affronted with impunity. This story was not reported in the white press—the same papers that four years later, ironically, would praise the speech on America's race problem that Francis gave at her high school graduation. In 1895, this same white press would egg on separate white mobs that nearly lynched two Black men just outside Francis's neighborhood. Outside the "village" it was indeed a hostile world.[4]

The first two decades of the twentieth century were quite turbulent, with riots against Black people erupting in several cities, including Brownsville, Texas; Atlanta, Georgia; and Springfield, Illinois. Lynchings were commonplace; Americans were desensitized to the fundamental horror of these vicious acts. Francis would look on with alarm as throngs of moviegoers flocked to the Shubert Theatre in Minneapolis to cheer on the images of *The Birth of a Nation,* a film that romanticized the murder of Black men. Whites who considered themselves friends of Francis's race acted as if they saw no harm in the gruesome spectacle on display. Indeed, organizers of the 1916 suffrage conference in Albert Lea used the film to promote its two-day affair.[5]

Race, in this sense, was a blind spot for white people in Minnesota, including women fighting for their right to vote. No white suffrage leader reached out to the Black community in the spirit of sisterhood, confirming to many Black women that the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association was meant entirely to be a white affair. The words of Mary Church Terrell, an early national leader of what was then called the "colored" women's club movement, echoed forth from 1900 when she addressed the overwhelmingly white National Council of Women of the United States when it met in Minneapolis. Historian Rosalyn Terborg-Penn summarized Terrell's powerful speech this way: "She addressed the group not only about the needs of Black women, but also about the prejudice and lack of sympathy on the part of white women. Terrell indicted them for not extending a helping hand to African Americans whose aims were similar to their own." [6]

Francis saw the potential not only for promoting her community's interests to the state leadership of the colored women's clubs, some of whom she had gotten to know through political activities with her husband, but also for advocating woman suffrage among her own people. Despite not having been active in the organization previously, Francis was elected president of the Minnesota Federation of Colored Women's Clubs (Minnesota Federation of CWCs) in 1912, unopposed, "in a blaze of glory," as the *Appeal* reported.[7]

Those who followed her in the press had noted that Francis was effective at organizing. Leading a campaign to raise funds for her church, she had traveled to New York to successfully persuade Andrew Carnegie to contribute the funds her church needed. Before returning to St. Paul, she stopped over in Washington, DC, where she was escorted by Minnesota senator Moses Clapp to the White House to meet President William Taft. Her election brought to the Minnesota Federation of CWCs a certain positive notoriety that it had never before experienced. This notoriety caught the attention of the officers of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (National Association of CWCs), which would soon be holding its biennial conference in Hampton, Virginia. Within days of her election, on behalf of the Black women in Minnesota, Francis prepared to attend the national conference, where she would meet

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Francis understood this antipathy to be a challenge to generating support for the suffrage movement among Minnesota's Black women, though she also knew that they did not reject the principle of woman suffrage. In the Baptist church tradition of Black women in leadership roles, Francis staged a debate on woman suffrage as early as 1911 at her own Pilgrim Baptist Church. But though the event was a successful fundraiser, the suffrage issue itself did not galvanize Minnesota's Black community. Other matters confronting community leaders took priority. Minnesota had a vibrant network of colored women's clubs that, in addition to social and cultural activities, addressed the issues of education, family support, child welfare, and housing for orphans and the aged.

NATIONAL FEDERATION.

Women's Clubs Doing Good Work for the Race.

Special Correspondence THE APPEAL.

Hampton, Va., July 25.—The National Federation of Afro-American Women's Clubs opened its session upon the beautiful and historic spot where was founded by General Armstrong—who was one of our best friends—that great institution of learning, Hampton Institute. Great, not only in its industrial achievements, but doubly great in that it made possible Booker T. Washington and caused thereby the foundation of Tuskegee Institute. Women from all parts of the United States are here. Women who stand for the best in the communities in which they live. Women who do things, and are obsessed with the desire to benefit the race, and are making history as to our womanhood.

Practically all of the leaders are here.

The opening ceremonies were very impressive and the convention organized without a clash of any kind. Harmony seems to be the watchword and spirit of the meeting.

Mrs. W. T. Francis was appointed second recording secretary.

Many important committees were appointed to facilitate the work of the convention The one in which the deepest interest was manifested was the committee designated to call upon the Governor at Richmond for the purpose of securing the commutation

MRS. W. T. FRANCIS,
St. Paul Representative.

of the death sentence imposed upon a young Afro-American woman. This committee was composed of Mrs. Mollie Church Terrill, of Washington, D. C., and Mrs. W. T. Francis, of St. Paul The ladies at once went to Richmond and were successful so far as to secure from the Governor a stay of two weeks with the privilege of introducing new evidence, and from the Governor's attitude the committee is satisfied that the death penalty will not be enforced

Weather conditions here are ideal.

This is the largest convention ever held by the National Federation, more than five hundred delegates being in attendance.

Reports from all parts of the country show a large increase in the number of clubs of the various State Federations, and it is conceded that better work can be done where all clubs are connected with the state organization.

Much work of a helpful nature is under way and the desire uppermost in the minds of all here is to do good and waste no time in frivolity.

luminaries such as Nannie Burroughs, Ida B. Wells, Hallie Q. Brown, and Maggie Washington (with whom Francis would become close)—all present to discuss topics such as domestic-service training; anti-lynching efforts; updates on segregation laws in public transportation; and woman suffrage. The conference was exactly where she wanted to be. It was a place where all of her powers and her sense of purpose intersected, for it posed the greatest opportunity to bring to bear the backing of the National Association of CWCs to mobilize Minnesota's Black women in the name of suffrage.[8]

But she would be drawn away from the suffrage cause by a more significant need of the formidable National Association president, Mary Church Terrell, who had not yet met the Minnesotan in person. Francis's contacts with the powerful Carnegie and Taft were needed in an urgent mission. Terrell enlisted Francis to join her in going to the office of Virginia governor William Hodges Mann to persuade him to stay the execution of a 17-year-old Black girl named Virginia Christian, convicted of murdering her abusive employer. But the plea fell on deaf ears. Virginia Christian died by electrocution on August 16, 1912. This would seem to bode ill for Francis's club work over the coming months.[9]

Personal challenges temporarily curtail activism

Club work had been keeping Francis busy on several fronts. Some included travel throughout the state and lobbying at the capitol for various legislative initiatives. Yet suddenly Francis was confronted with another, more pressing matter. Billy Francis had taken on the solo law practice of his best friend, Fredrick McGhee (1861–1912), a trial lawyer who had founded Minnesota's first NAACP chapter. McGhee had recently died. Billy had never practiced criminal law, nor was he temperamentally disposed for trial practice law office management. His prior experience was in the Northern Pacific Railway's legal department. Billy was in over his head. He needed his wife's help. Nellie was now expected to manage the paperwork, research and type briefs, record meetings and write correspondence (she had trained as a stenographer), respond to inquiries and clients, and be present in the office while Billy was away.[10]

There was no alternative. The practice was their only source of income. They had invested everything in the law practice, which had not been lucrative when McGhee ran it. Between her club work and the law office, Francis had no chance to mobilize her club members around woman suffrage. Worse, her health was weakening. At the April 1913 meeting of the Minnesota Federation's executive board she resigned. Though board members tried to persuade her to change her mind, Francis was adamant: "Her health would not permit her to hold the office longer." She must have felt incredible pressure to meet the divergent demands of presiding over a statewide organization while managing a law office practically singlehandedly.[11]

And yet, there was grumbling. One can only speculate on the cause. Perhaps it was because, for the first time, under Francis's leadership, the Minnesota Federation of CWCs had enjoyed public attention. With that attention, membership and presumably funds grew. Some may have

Francis attended the 1912 meeting of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs in Hampton, Virginia, as St. Paul's representative. She was elected second recording secretary.

William T. "Billy" Francis

feared that the spotlight would dim after Francis stepped down. This attitude would have also provided fertile ground for envy by members who, within the world of the Black women's clubs of Minnesota, had resented her meteoric rise to leadership. Envy seemed to explain her ostracism from the club world over the following years. Remarkably, even during the suffrage and anti-lynching campaigns to come, neither the Minnesota Federation of CWCs nor individual clubs stepped forward to participate or even endorse the efforts. The only exception was the Everywoman Suffrage Club, founded by Francis in 1914.

Others had a dim view of Francis personally. To some, it may have appeared that claiming ill health was really a ploy to block further inquiry into her family affairs or, worse, salvage a reputation. To still others, she had abandoned the organization that had cast her in the role of a dilletante; her striving for the presidency had not been about service to her people but self-promotion. The accusation would linger for years.[12]

Moreover, some may have presumed that the Francises were of means. After all, Billy had worked all those years in the Northern Pacific Railway legal department. Critics likely presumed that Fred McGhee's law practice must have been successful, for a provocative Black lawyer could never have survived within St. Paul's staid, white-dominated legal and political community. Surely Billy would do just fine inheriting McGhee's legacy as Minnesota's most prominent civil rights spokesman. It had to have been hard for some to believe that the couple was, in fact, desperate for income. And for those grand dames who did, the couple's economic straits may have seemed like a failure of character or, worse, a discomforting reminder of how insecure their own finances were. In any event, it seemed that Francis had failed her obligations to their social class.[13]

On July 4, 1913, at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Federation of CWCs in Duluth, Francis sent a note of greeting to the delegates. There is no record of how it was received, and suffrage was not on the agenda. It would be months before Billy Francis's law practice could take on a person to relieve Nellie of much of the office work and allow her to attend a function of the Minnesota Federation of CWCs. When she did later, it was to honor the guest speaker, Mary Church Terrell, whom she had accompanied on the futile mission of mercy a little over a year before. But Francis was not done with the cause.[14]

By spring 1914, the executive board of the Minnesota Federation of CWCs had changed and Francis was back in the fold in time for the tenth annual convention, which was to meet in Minneapolis. As a clear indication of the changing of the guard, the executive board had elected her honorary president, giving her the high-profile position of responding to Minneapolis mayor Wallace Nye's greeting. Her remarks, though cordial, nonetheless gave her critics another reason to reject her leadership, however titular, for she took the occasion to ask "only for justice for her people, without any apologies or favors." Then, she went further. To the discomfort of delegates who wanted a more conciliatory tone, Francis, in speaking of suffrage for the Black women of the state, called for their "Civil Rights, believing that the Negroes were highly capable of a proper regard for their rights."[15]

To the old guard, woman suffrage had not been approved as a priority for the Minnesota Federation of CWCs. These women resented anything that Nellie Francis touched, but they could hardly speak against suffrage. To do so would place them in direct opposition with the National Association of CWCs, which they were not about to do. Instead, the old guard attempted to invalidate Francis's election, arguing that an honorary president could only be elected by the delegates at the convention. But once again, their argument went nowhere, for the bylaws clearly empowered the executive board to fill that post at any time.

To the discomfort of delegates who wanted a more conciliatory tone, Francis, in speaking of suffrage for the Black women of the state, called for their "Civil Rights."

All the old guard could do was pull their five clubs, all from Minneapolis, out of the Minnesota Federation of CWCs, which they did. Minneapolis was the home of Ione Gibbs, Francis's predecessor, who two years before had grudgingly handed over the presidency to the younger woman. A week later, Francis went to Wilberforce, Ohio, to attend the biennial convention of the National Association of CWCs. It would mark the beginning of a new phase of activism for Francis, for it offered her—even 700 miles away—the opportunity to breach the racial barrier she witnessed in her state.[16]

On August 4, she crowded into the cavernous Galloway Hall of Wilberforce University, a historically Black institution, where she reconnected with some of the most important women in Black activism—Francis's mentor and incoming president Margaret Washington, wife of Booker T. Washington; Nettie Napier, wife of James C. Napier, register of the US Treasury who had once served with Francis's father, James Griswold, on the Nashville City Council; and Matilda Dunbar, mother of poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. But more notable to delegates, unaccustomed to seeing white women sharing the platform with Black leaders, were Zona Gale, a committee chairwoman of the Wisconsin Federation of Women's Clubs (white) and vice president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association; and Harriet Taylor Upton, president of the Ohio Woman Suffrage Association. Francis gave a series of updates, including on the National Association of CWC's lobbying campaigns against the recently enacted Jim Crow bill in Illinois and segregation in Washington, DC, as well as its work among children in urban slums, its plea for peace in Europe as war grew imminent, and its resolution against lynching and segregation in common carriers.[17]

But the first major topic of concern at the convention was woman suffrage. "The suffrage movement is apparent," reported the *Twin City Star,* the Black newspaper of note in Minneapolis. "The reports of the officers contain strong suffrage sentiments, and 'Votes for Women' banners are flying everywhere." But with Gale committing herself to visit the white clubs in Minneapolis in October, and with Upton asking in her address for the cooperation of Black clubwomen in obtaining equal suffrage for all women, Francis saw the first real expression of urgency by white leaders to encourage their counterparts in Minnesota to reach out to their Black sisters.[18]

An important realization

Suddenly Francis could see the simple reality of race relations in Minnesota, where Black people were vastly outnumbered and thus virtually invisible to most white people. For her race to gain respect from white women, it was not enough for Black women to work in racial isolation for suffrage equality; it was crucial for them to be seen working along with white people. The opportunity now seemed to present itself with the pronouncements from Gale and Upton. After Wilberforce, Francis toured several cities with Washington and Napier, ostensibly to meet with leaders of the National Association of CWCs and continue talks with Upton and Gale. The two white leaders, in turn, may have helped smooth the path for Francis to meet the soon-to-be-elected president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA), Clara Ueland.[19]

In the meantime, Francis renewed efforts to organize a group of Black St. Paul women. This time she carefully identified those singularly committed to suffrage. To maintain

Clara Ueland

a presence within the Minnesota Federation of CWCs, she called the new organization the St. Paul Federation and became its president. The group would become the precursor to the Everywoman Suffrage Club, which would serve as a vanguard of support for woman suffrage in the Black community, and would bridge the gap between their community, the larger white community in general, and MWSA in particular. Knowing that MWSA saw the Minnesota State Fair as an opportune occasion to attract new members and raise funds, Francis recognized the possibilities: "Through the efforts of Mrs. W. T. Francis, President of the [St. Paul] Federation," polished singers and musicians presented a novel experience to white fairgoers who had never seen Black people perform. "They were listened to with rapt attention by the audience in the Hall of Fame, and heartily applauded." Proudly, the *Twin City Star* reported, "This is the first time recognition has been given any member of our race on a program of the white State Federation [of Women's Clubs]."[20]

Francis showed that she could attract national suffrage speakers to

Minnesota that would appeal to both Black and white audiences in the state. One speaker who would prove invaluable to Francis in the coming months was St. Louis suffragist Victoria Clay-Haley, "one of the leading women of her race . . . who is doing so much for the good of her people, and who had been so honored and assisted by the white people because of her untiring energy and integrity." On October 12, 1914, Francis presided at a St. Paul Federation meeting of 25 women held at Zion Presbyterian Church where Clay-Haley, active in the National Association of CWCs, spoke on "The Emancipation of the Woman." Francis also persuaded a few white women from outside the Twin Cities to share remarks on the importance of the ballot. At this meeting the attendees established "a suffrage club organized for the purpose of studying the question of the equal ballot"—the Everywoman Suffrage Club. Two days later, the new group held its first meeting in Francis's home, 606 St. Anthony Avenue, St. Paul.[21]

Nellie Francis, front row center, was a member of the Folk-Song Coterie of St. Paul, "organized for the serious study of Negro folk-songs," as described in the original caption for this 1910 photo from Musical America.

> **Francis showed that she could attract national suffrage speakers to Minnesota that would appeal to both Black and white audiences in the state.**

One of the people who attended the meeting was Emily Noyes, a white suffragist from St. Paul. She was the daughter of a businessman who, as a young man in Alton, Illinois, had risked his life during the riots in 1837 to offer shelter to the radical abolitionist newspaper editor Elijah Lovejoy, who was shot and killed by a proslavery mob. Her marriage to Charles P. Noyes, a successful Minnesota businessman, enabled her to spend a considerable amount of time doing good works in the community. Noyes founded and was the first president of the Woman's Welfare League of St. Paul, formed to "protect the interests and promote the welfare of women; to encourage the study of industrial and social conditions affecting women and the family; to enlarge the field of usefulness and activity open to women in the business and professional world; to guard them from exploitation and as a necessary means to these ends to strive to procure for women the full rights of citizenship." Such a mission no doubt endeared Noyes to Francis as one of the sincerest activists she knew.[22]

It was likely Noyes who decided that the time was right for Ueland and Francis to finally meet. This was how Ueland related her visit to Francis's home to her husband, Andreas:

> I went to a meeting of Negro women the other day that was very interesting. It was a suffrage club named "Every Woman's Club." They were a nice lot of women comparing favorably with the ordinary club women—with one or two exceptionally graceful and charming. But the leader of the club is a star! Mrs. Francis is petit and what we call a "lady," but her spirit is a flame. To help her race is her ruling motive. She talks well in an emotional, eloquent way—indeed talks constantly if she has a sympathetic listener.[23]

It was curious, then, that what the enthusiastic Francis said to Ueland "in an emotional, eloquent way" went unreported and seemed less significant than the décor of the Francis home.

> [It was] extraordinary for such intelligent people to have such an unattractive home: the walls covered with such cheap pictures while here and there would be

Residence of Nellie and Billy Francis, 606 St. Anthony Avenue, in St. Paul's Rondo neighborhood (left, now demolished), where the Everywoman Suffrage Club was founded. Crosses were burned on the lawn when they moved in 1924 to 2092 Sargent Avenue (right), in the nearby Macalester-Groveland neighborhood.

> Mona Lisa or the Battle of the Parthenon, but chiefly photographs of people (they probably were very interesting people). The furniture is ugly and things are cluttered and disorderly.

It seemed rich for one who had the benefit of two live-in immigrant servant girls and a workman living on their estate on the south shore of Lake Calhoun to describe in this manner the home of an extraordinarily busy couple. Though the two women would collaborate until suffrage ratification, the initial sparkle of admiration that Francis had displayed to Ueland seemed afterwards to dim.[24]

As Ueland prepared Minnesota to be "the next campaign state," Francis prepared to protest the upcoming showing of *The Birth of a Nation* in St. Paul. The film's romanticized murdering of Black men seemed to whet the audience's appetite to act on that impulse—a major concern for the NAACP, which kept records on lynchings throughout the country. While Francis worked to recruit members for the Everywoman Suffrage Club, she also became an officer of the local branch of the NAACP. With Billy, she researched and drafted an ordinance to ban the film and lobbied the city council to prohibit movie theaters from showing it.[25]

The effort to combat the showing of the film and coordinate the efforts of whites who had never before worked with Blacks demonstrated how her leadership had grown, leadership she would later exhibit in the anti-lynching campaign. To keep up the pressure on the St. Paul City Council to ban *The Birth of A Nation* in city theaters, Francis employed her contacts among a small group of primarily white women, powers-behind-the-throne, whose spouses and family ties effectively ran much of the business, civic, and political affairs of the city. By now, Francis was a member of this group of women. She made the case that they should join the colored people of St. Paul to protest the film. Going one step further, Colonel John X. Davidson, former owner and editor of a forerunner of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, and former president of the St. Paul chapter of the NAACP, joined Sophie G. (Mrs. George) Kenyon, president of the white Women's Welfare League, to have the group send resolutions to the city council to ban the film's showing, which the league agreed, without dissent, to do. In November 1915, the city council approved the ordinance. St. Paul's curiosity seekers now had to go to Minneapolis to be entertained. (Or if they lived in southern Minnesota, they could view the film in Albert Lea.)[26]

Francis had no time to reflect on this marginal victory. She had a national convention to promote. As Ueland had noted about her host at the meeting at 606 St. Anthony, "She is on the board of some society for the improvement of Negro women." Indeed, as the recently elected chair of the press and publicity committee of the National Association of CWCs, to generate enthusiasm for the upcoming convention, Francis set the context in a number of notices by reminding readers that the Wilberforce convention had provided the springboard that "was wonderful and

far reaching in its effects. On to Baltimore [the next site of the National Association's convention] is the slogan of every race organization of women, and where the women (and the men) will likewise be found."[27]

But Francis's path ahead would not be smooth. In the spring of 1916, a small story from Detroit caught her eye that would result in her effectively being rebuked by the Minnesota Federation of CWCs and censured by the national leadership. The all-white Detroit Federation of Women's Clubs had been informed that it would be banned from the all-white General Federation of Women's Clubs because the Detroit affiliate had included a colored women's club in its membership. In response, the Detroit members threatened to relinquish their memberships in the all-white group if it insisted on the discriminatory stance. Francis felt that Detroit's action might pose an opening for other white federations who similarly regretted their discriminatory policies to feel emboldened to welcome their Black sisters into the fold. In doing so, those white clubs might apply pressure on the national organization to change its racialized strategies. Francis also hoped that she could persuade her own national affiliate and her sister state federations of colored women's clubs to join the suffrage campaign, knowing that she could not rely on her own state group for support. Deep fissures remained within the state organization.[28]

In the end, Francis could only rely on the organization whose very name reflected its belief in interracial inclusion. She published a resolution calling for support for the Detroit women that read in part: "Be it resolved that the Everywoman Suffrage Club of St. Paul, Minn., Mrs. W. T. Francis, president, does hereby heartily commend the action of this magnanimous body of women, engaged as they are in an effort to uplift all women without respect to race or color, and to wish them success in this effort." And she urged "that the colored press make public the generous attitude of the Detroit Federation of Women's Club [*sic*], composed of white women's clubs, toward this colored club of their city."[29]

Francis had committed a twofold crime: she had signed the resolution as an officer of the National Association of CWCs, and she had published her resolution in local African American newspapers and *National Notes,* the journal of the National Association of CWC's, without the endorsement of the National Association. About the affair there was no public hue and cry, which likely occurred only behind closed doors. But nothing was mentioned for the record. The only indication of retribution appeared months later, when incoming president Mary B. Talbert announced a nationwide campaign to raise funds to rehabilitate Frederick Douglass's home in Washington, DC; Francis's name did not appear in the list of officers who would lead the effort. The omission was noteworthy; it implied that the major initiative would proceed without Francis in her official national role as chair of press and publicity. The only member listed from St. Paul was Clara B. Hardy, sister of Mary Talbert. Francis was completely cut out of the fold. This extreme rebuke suggested that the mounting antipathy toward her in Minnesota had spread to the national office. As if to buck up Francis after what must have been a difficult time for her, Charles Sumner Smith, editor of the *Twin City Star,* would later write, "In spite of jealousy and criticism, [Nellie and Billy] can look into the mirror of memory and see a pleasant past—a record of service to church, state, and society—the happy heritage worthy of a king's ransom."[30]

A more modest arena

Nellie Francis would go on to serve her community not on the showy stage of national activism but rather in Minnesota's modest, more manageable political arena. In July 1916, she led members of the Everywoman Suffrage Club—"Black St. Paul's representatives with the suffrage group"—in a grand street parade of prohibitionists held in conjunction with the convention of the National Prohibition Party, which met in St. Paul. Then in December Francis led a delegation from Everywoman Suffrage Club to Minneapolis to attend the thirty-fourth annual convention of the otherwise all-white Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association. The delegation "received a warm welcome at the hands of the president and the convention." The *Twin City Star* reminded its readers of the significance of the occasion: "Everywoman Suffrage Club of St. Paul is the only woman's suffrage club in the state composed entirely of Negro women." After the convention, Francis and the club began working assiduously on two fronts: (1) to educate Black women of the need to support MWSA's efforts, because in Minnesota a victory for MWSA was a victory for the Black women of the state; and (2) to further cultivate relationships with the white leaders of the state's woman suffrage movement. Francis recognized that both communities were concerned about the so-called Southern strategy, in which southern politicians promised to support woman suffrage if white women would agree to compromise the vote for Black women.[31]

To address this concern, in October 1918 Francis wrote a letter to the editor of the (white) *St. Paul Pioneer Press* that was reprinted in the *Appeal*. In it, she declared her support for white suffragists who stood with their

Black sisters in the national campaign for suffrage:

> Personally, I am not surprised at the high ground taken by the suffragists. It is exactly what I would have expected of suffragists, as I know them, and keen would have been my disappointment if they had failed to make this sacrifice. It is this broad stand, the actual practice of the principles for which they contend, that has inspired me to add my humble effort to the struggle for equal suffrage.

As a daughter of former slaves, Francis went on to pay sympathetic suffragists the highest compliment, writing, "They are the modern abolitionists, and fortunate indeed is the Negro woman to have in the suffragist a champion who is willing to sacrifice all that is dear rather than accept a victory that is tainted with dishonor." Francis concluded,

> This broad, united stand of the suffrage body for the principles of a democracy which must include black women as well as white will win for the cause of suffrage many sympathizers who would otherwise have been indifferent to its success. The cause of Suffrage will triumph, for it is just.[32]

After the 1920 election, the first after ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, these African American women were pictured in the St. Paul Daily News *(later reprinted in the* Appeal*) as being important factors behind "the recent Republican victory." Nellie Francis is number 3. Others: (1) Mrs. A. W. Jordan (2) Mrs. Frances M. Davenport, (4) Mrs O. C. Hall, (5) Mrs. J. H. Dillingham, (6) Mrs. Grant Bush, (7) Miss Lucille James, and (8) Mrs. Geo. W. James.*

This interracial accord was noted by virtue of her memberships in the influential Women's Welfare League and MWSA. For the remainder of 1918, Francis was often seen about the Twin Cities in the company of suffrage leaders, taking lunch at the exclusive Minneapolis Athletic Club with Sophie Kenyon, first vice president of MWSA and promoter of *The Suffragist*, the official publication of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (later the National Woman's Party), of which Francis was also a member. In December, Francis, "the pioneer suffragette among our women and [holder of] a high place in state affairs," led a small delegation from the Everywoman Suffrage Club to attend the annual MWSA convention in the Gold Room of the Radisson Hotel in Minneapolis.[33]

To be sure, Minnesota was on firm footing in terms of pushing for woman suffrage without the threat of excluding the state's Black women to appease bigots. Nellie Francis—in the greatest tribute that many suffragists could probably imagine, given the paternalistic sensibilities of the day—was the best of Black women. Perhaps her light skin facilitated her ability to circulate among white women. Regardless, in Francis, Minnesota's small Black population had an able and refined race and suffrage leader who could sit with poise in the stately Minneapolis Athletic Club and in the elegant Gold Room

at the Radisson Hotel, places where few of her sisters—all survivors of Jim Crow—had ever imagined going. She sat at ease in the presence of the doyens of the women's movement, as well as with many of the "great men" of the day, making the race issue that defiled the national movement seem unthinkable to Minnesota's white powerbrokers.

Yet, as historian Evelyn Higginbotham wrote, "In the very years when support for women's rights grew in intensity and sympathy, racial prejudice became acceptable, even fashionable, in America." To many in the Minnesota of 1919 it seemed inconceivable that this trend would extend to their state. At the time of the final push for ratification, the bestial impulse to use the lynch-man's noose that would surface the following year in Duluth—and that lurked just beneath the surface of Minnesota civility—seemed far, far away. And it seemed unthinkable that in 1924, five years after the Minnesota Legislature ratified the Nineteenth Amendment, all of Francis's purported white friends and allies would appear to abandon her when residents of the white Macalester-Groveland neighborhood in which she and Billy had purchased their new house, at 2092 Sargent Avenue, burned crosses on the front lawn.[34]

But to many with a long memory of race relations, it would all sadly be too familiar. In 1870, with the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, white supremacists terrorized America's newly enfranchised citizens, seemingly unimpeded by those whites who considered themselves friends of Francis's race. It would stand to reason that Francis—born in Tennessee during the violent years of Reconstruction, just miles from where the Ku Klux Klan had been founded, and an example of what happened to one who left the "village" to venture where they did not belong—would harbor the same skepticism of white commitment to racial justice. Yet, it was engrained in her to strive for change. In Minnesota, she achieved progress in 1921 when she persuaded the legislature to do what Congress would not—enact an anti-lynching law. But then what? Would race still matter? Would combating racial inequality become a sustainable priority? Or would this be a new failed Reconstruction?[35] ⊡

Notes

1. Clara Ueland to Andreas Ueland, in Brenda Ueland, *O Clouds, Unfold! Clara Ueland and Her Family* (Minneapolis: Nodin Press, 2004), 214.

2. Paul D. Nelson, "William T. Francis at Home and Abroad," *Ramsey County History* 51, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 3. The phrase "double duty" relates to an exchange between Ida B. Wells and Susan B. Anthony recounted in Wells's autobiography, *Crusade for Justice,* Alfreda M. Duster, editor, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 255. Wells noticed "the way [Anthony] would bite out [Wells's] married name." Wells finally asked Anthony whether she "believe[d] in women getting married." Anthony replied:

> Oh, yes, but not women like you who have a special call for special work. I too might have married but it would have meant dropping the work to which I had set my hand. . . . I know of no one in this country better fitted to do the work you had in hand than yourself. Since you have gotten married, agitation seems practically to have ceased. Besides, you have divided duty. You are here trying to help in the formation of this league and your eleven-month-old baby needs your attention at home. You are distracted over the thought that maybe he is not being looked after as he would be if you were there, and that makes for divided duty.

Regarding William T. Francis's appointment as US minister of Liberia, US senator Thomas Schall of Minnesota wrote a letter of endorsement to President Calvin Coolidge: "He is a recognized leader of his people. He is very light. I am told you would hardly know he is colored. His wife is also very light in color. They are both educated and refined." Nelson, "William T. Francis, at Home and Abroad," 7.

3. *Western Appeal,* July 11, 1885, 1.

4. *Western Appeal,* Oct. 15, 1887, 4; William D. Green, *Degrees of Freedom: The Origins of Civil Rights in Minnesota, 1865–1912* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 145, 253–55; Paul D. Nelson, *Fredrick L. McGhee: A Life on the Color Line, 1861–1912* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 54–55.

5. "Suffrage Week in Albert Lea," ad, Jan. 27–28, 1916, Minnesota Women Suffrage Association records, MNHS, Location 308.C.15.8F, box 5, 1916–1920 (digital), 2/117, "Pro-Suffrage Materials: Literature Relating to Suffrage, 1912–1920," http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00756/pdfa/00756-00083.pdf.

From 1882 to 1884, the majority of lynching victims were white. After that year, the majority of victims were Black, a trend that continued into the 1930s. "Lynchings by Year and Race," statistics provided by the Archives at Tuskegee Institute, http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/shipp/lynchingyear.html. The NAACP reported that over a 31-year period (1889–1919), 2,549 Black men and 51 Black women were lynched. In 1919, 78 Negroes were lynched; 11 of the Black men were ex-soldiers, one was a woman, and 14 were burned at the stake. Twenty-eight cities staged race riots in which more than 100 Black people were killed. *The Crisis* 19, no. 5 (Mar. 1920): 243.

6. Mary Church Terrell helped found the National Association of Colored Women in 1896 and served as its first president until 1901. Beverly W. Jones, "Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women, 1896 to 1901," *The Journal of Negro History* 67.1 (Spring 1982): 24; Rosalyn Terborg-Penn, *African American Women in the Struggle for the Vote, 1850–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 119; "Woman's World: Work for Humanity," *Minneapolis Journal,* Nov. 15. 1900, 8. The National Council of Women of the United States was an organization founded in 1888 to unify national associations of women, and was an affiliate of the International Council of Women.

7. "Mock Debate on Women's Suffrage," *Appeal,* Jan. 21, 1911, 3; "Women's Clubs Convene," *Twin City Star,* July 6, 1912, 1; "Women's State Federation," *Appeal,* July 6, 1912, 3. In 1889 the *Western Appeal* changed its name to *Appeal.* For a discussion of the Black woman suffrage activities in the Baptist Church, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 12, 76.

8. *Appeal,* June 12, 1909, 3 (Carnegie visit); *Appeal,* Apr. 24, 1909, 3 (Taft visit). Moses Clapp, a white man and a Republican, served as Minnesota attorney general (1887–93) and as US senator from Minnesota (1901–17).

9. *Appeal,* July 27, 1912, 3 (Nellie's photo included); Virginia Department of Corrections, State Penitentiary, Series 11: Prisoner Records, Subseries E: Execution Files, box 373, folder 3, Accession 41558; Roger Christman, senior state records archivist, "Virginia Christian: The Last Woman Executed by Virginia," Sept. 14, 2010, https://uncommonwealth.virginiamemory.com/blog/2010/09/14/virginia-christian-the-last-woman-executed-by-virginia/; David V. Baker, "Black Female Executions in Historical Context,"

Criminal Justice Review 33, no. 1 (Mar. 2008): 64–88, doi:10.1177/0734016808316782; Victor L. Streib, "Death Penalty for Female Offenders, January 1, 1973, Through December 31, 2011," 66 (2012): 7, https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/FemDeathDec2011.pdf.

10. McGhee's law practice left no assets behind: see Nelson, *Fredrick L. McGhee,* 195, 205.

11. "State President Resigns," *Twin City Star,* Apr. 18, 1913, 2.

12. Years later, Francis's friends would comment on this accusation, noted at the celebration of Francis's victory of passage of Minnesota's anti-lynching law.

13. Billy's last job at the railroad as clerk probably did not pay a significant wage, and the practice he inherited from McGhee had little property value at McGhee's death. Billy's clients were generally of modest means, and as busy as he was in community activities and fraternal organizations, he did not appear to spend much time developing the practice into a lucrative operation. When Nellie left her job as stenographer at West Publishing, she did not earn a wage for years, until after Billy's death. When they sought to purchase a modest house in St. Paul's Macalester-Groveland neighborhood, they had to borrow the down payment from Nellie's Aunt Juno. And when Billy died in Liberia, Nellie could not afford to transport his body to the United States to be buried in Nashville until she was able to lobby Congress for the necessary funds. Being Black and middle class did not mean the same as white and middle class. For whites, property ownership was part of the equation, but for Black people, it was about appearances.

14. "Federation of Afro-American Women of Minnesota Meet in Ninth Annual Convention," *Twin City Star,* July 4, 1913, 3; "Mrs. Mary Church Terrell," *Appeal,* Nov. 15, 1913, 3.

15. "Women's Clubs in Convention," *Twin City Star,* June 26, 1914, 2.

16. "Federated Clubs Resign," *Twin City Star,* July 3, 1914, 2; "Minneapolis," *Appeal,* July 4, 1914, 4, col. 1. Ione Gibbs (c. 1871–1923), a Black clubwoman from Minneapolis, served as the first president of the Minnesota Federation of CWCs (1905–11) and as vice president of the National Association of CWCs (1912–14). Franklin Lincoln Mather, ed., *Who's Who of the Colored Race: A General Biographical Dictionary of Men and Women of African American Descent,* vol. 1 (Chicago: The editor, 1915).

17. "Notes from the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs," *Twin City Star,* Aug. 14, 1914, 1, 2; "Notes from the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs," *Appeal,* Aug. 8, 1914, 3; Lillian Serece Williams and Randolph Boehm, eds., *Records of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, 1895–1992,* part 1, *Minutes of National Conventions, Publications, and President's Office Correspondence* (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1993), 3, microfilm frame no. 0406. Other luminaries present were Nettie Napier's husband, J. C. Napier; W. E. B. DuBois, founding editor of the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine; and William S. Scarborough, president of Wilberforce University.

18. "Notes from the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs," *Twin City Star,* Aug. 14, 1914, 2; *Appeal,* Aug. 15, 1914, 2.

19. "St. Paul Notes," *Twin City Star,* Aug. 14, 1914, 2; Barbara Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995), 86. Francis, Washington, and Napier traveled to Cincinnati, Toledo, Chicago, and Waukesha (WI). Soon, Francis would add prominent white leaders like Sophie Kenyon, vice president of MWSA, and Emily Noyes, president of the St. Paul Women's Welfare League, to her circle of contacts.

20. "Recognition for Colored Vocalists at State Fair," *Twin City Star,* Sept. 18, 1914, 2.

21. "Mrs. Victoria Clay-Haley," *Twin City Star,* Sept. 18, 1914, 2; "A Suffrage Meeting on Monday Night," *Twin City Star,* Oct. 9, 1914, 2; *Appeal,* Oct. 10, 1914, 3, col. 2; "Suffrage Meeting," *Appeal,* Nov. 7, 1914, 4.

22. Mary Dillon Foster, "The Woman's Welfare League, St. Paul," *Who's Who Among Minnesota Women: A History of Woman's Work in Minnesota from Pioneer Days to Date* (St. Paul: The author, 1924), 358; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 80; Rhoda R. Gilman, "'A Beautiful, High-Minded Woman': Emily Gilman Noyes and Woman Suffrage," *Ramsey County History* 32, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 18–20.

23. Ueland, *O Clouds, Unfold!,* 215.

24. Ueland, *O Clouds, Unfold!,* 42, 52.

25. Harriet Upton to C. Ueland, Feb. 25, 1915, 307.C.15.7B, box 1, 28/149, Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association Records, MNHS.

26. *Appeal,* Nov. 6, 1915, 3 (the meeting); Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 80 (Ueland's regard for the Woman's Welfare League); William D. Green, *Children of Lincoln: White Paternalism and the Limits on Black Opportunity, 1860–1876* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 391 (John Davidson); "Jose H. Sherwood: Defender of His Race," *Twin City Star,* Nov. 27, 1915, 4, quotes text of the St. Paul ordinance prohibiting exhibitions that "tend to incite riot or create race or religious prejudice, or purports to represent any hanging, lynching, burning, or placing in a position of ignominy any human being"; "A Damnable Photo-Play" *Twin City Star,* Nov. 27, 1915, 2.

27. Ueland, *O Clouds, Unfold!,* 215; "On to Baltimore," *Twin City Star,* Apr. 22, 1916, 4.

28. "Stands by Negroes," *Twin City Star,* May 6, 1916, 2; *Twin City Star,* July 1, 1916, 2.

29. "National Association of Colored Women's Clubs," *Appeal,* May 13, 1916, 4; "Women's Clubs Take Stand Against Race Prejudice," *Twin City Star,* July 8, 1916, 1.

30. "Women to Save Old Landmark," *Twin City Star,* Jan. 13, 1917, 1; *Appeal,* July 14, 1917, 2; *Appeal,* Aug. 12, 1916, 3; *Appeal,* Dec. 9, 1916, 3 (Hardy as Talbert's sister); "The Francis' [*sic*] Celebrate Their Silver Wedding Anniversary," *Twin City Star,* Aug. 10, 1918, 5. Mary Talbert (1866–1923) was a Black suffragist, orator, and reformer who served as president of the National Association of CWCs from 1916 to 1921.

31. *Appeal,* July 22, 1916, 3; "'Votes for Women' to Have Big Place in Parade of 'Drys,'" *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* July 20, 1916, 1; "Negro Women Attend Convention," *Twin City Star,* Dec. 9, 1916, 2.

32. "Mrs. W. T. Francis Praises Stand Taken by the Woman Suffragists," *Appeal,* Oct. 12, 1918, 3.

33. "Mrs. W. T. Francis Praises Stand Taken by the Women Suffragists," *Appeal,* Oct. 12, 1918, 3; *Appeal,* Nov. 2, 1918, 3 (lunch between Francis and Kenyon); Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 123; *Appeal,* Dec. 7, 1918, 3; "The Suffrage Delegation," *Twin City Star,* Dec. 14, 1918, 2.

34. Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent,* 185.

On June 15, 1920, Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson, and Isaac McGhie were lynched in Duluth. For the history, background, and documents of the event, see Minnesota Historical Society, Duluth Lynchings, https://www.mnhs.org/duluthlynchings/.

For references to the mob action that harassed the home of Nellie and Billy Francis, see Nelson, "William T. Francis, at Home and Abroad," 6, 12n24; *St. Paul Daily News,* Dec. 7, 1924, sec. 2, p. 1 (Arneson's quote); Douglas Heidenreich, "A Citizen of Fine Spirit," *William Mitchell Magazine* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 5.

35. For a general history on the spread of white supremacy throughout the South during Reconstruction and after, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. DuBois: Biography of a Race, 1868–1919* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1993). To find more on the anti-lynching law and Francis's leadership in getting the law approved, see "Mrs. W. T. Francis, Author of Anti-Lynching Bill," *Northwestern Bulletin,* May 12, 1923, 1, 4, http://www.mnhs.org/duluthlynchings/documents/Mrs_WT_Francis_Author_of_Anti-lynching_Bill-831.001.php.

Images on p. 128 (May 7, 1921), 130 (July 27, 1912), 134 (left, Oct. 28, 1911), 136 (Nov. 20, 1920), the *Appeal,* Minnesota Newspaper Hub, MNHS; p. 131,132, MNHS; p. 133, University of Minnesota Libraries; p. 134 (right), courtesy of Paul Nelson.

Newspapers

The *Appeal* (African American)

The *Appeal*, a national African American newspaper published in St. Paul from 1885 to 1924, was a crucial community resource for information on contemporary social movements and political opinion. On January 3, 1914, the newspaper printed a short editorial that summarized its position on woman suffrage: "One of the strongest arguments used in favor of female suffrage is: 'Women should have the ballot for their own protection.' Granted. But how about the black men in the Southern states who are deprived of the ballot by the 'grandfather clause,' or some other equally outrageous and unAmerican subterfuge? Do they not need protection?"[1]

Although it didn't take precedence over other contemporary issues of concern to African Americans, the *Appeal* typically covered woman suffrage in a positive light. Motivated by the desire for racial equity, the newspaper reported on suffrage alongside coverage of government suppression of Black men's voting rights and resistance to anti-lynching laws.[2]

African American women leading the movement for their right to vote were equally invested in many causes intended to improve the lives of all African Americans. The *Appeal* documented these endeavors in reports on various women's clubs activities, such as the "debate on the subject of 'Women's Suffrage'" by the So-Lit Club, the celebration of Douglass Day by the New Era Topic Club, and the debut of a play entitled *The Colored Suffragette* by the One More Effort Club.[3]

Frequently showcased within the *Appeal* was the leadership of the clubwomen organizing these events, including Nellie Griswold Francis. Francis led significant initiatives on African American equity, including the enactment of an anti-lynching law (for which she was credited by the newspaper). She was known for her work with both Black and white suffragists at the national and local level and founded the Everywoman Suffrage Club, a suffrage association for Black women.[4]

Another esteemed clubwoman, Amanda Lyles, was similarly recognized in the newspaper for her numerous accomplishments. One article asserted that Lyles—a socialite and businesswoman, and the honorary president of the State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs—remained committed to prohibition as much as any other cause considered pertinent to the Black community. Praising her on her new membership in the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, a July 22, 1916, article affirmed, "Mrs. Lyles is always for anything that is for the betterment of her race."[5]

Presenting Minnesota's Black women's clubs and their leaders as holistically invested in the community suggests that the *Appeal* did not perceive woman suffrage as a distinct issue. Rather, it was viewed as being intertwined with rights for African Americans as a whole, which is exemplified in articles highlighting the many achievements of Black women within the community.

—Sonia Miller Phouthavong

Sonia Miller Phouthavong was an Andrew W. Mellon Native American Museum Fellow at the Minnesota Historical Society in 2019. Working with the exhibit development team, she researched the role played by Black and Native Minnesotan women in achieving women's voting rights as well as their complex relationships with the movement as a whole. She is a member of the Lytton Band of Pomo Indians in California and holds a bachelor's degree in anthropology from University of California Berkeley.

Notes

1. *Appeal*, Jan. 3, 1914. From 1885 to 1889, the newspaper was known as the *Western Appeal*: "The Appeal," Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub, https://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/hub/appeal.
2. "National Federation: Women's Clubs Doing Good Work for the Race," *Appeal*, July 27, 1912.
3. "Minneapolis: The Doings In and About the Great 'Flour City,'" *Appeal*, Apr. 4, 1914; "St. Paul: Week's Record of Happenings in Minnesota's Capitol," *Appeal*, Feb. 13, 1915, and Mar. 16, 1918.
4. "Minnesota's Anti-Lynching Law," *Appeal*, Apr. 30, 1921. Articles within the newspaper suggest that bridging the segregated organizations was typical of Francis's approach. See "National Association of Colored Women's Clubs," *Appeal*, May 6, 1916, and "Mrs. W. T. Francis Praises Stand Taken by the Woman Suffragists," *Appeal*, Oct. 12, 1918.
5. "St. Paul: Week's Record of Happenings in Minnesota's Capitol," *Appeal*, July 22, 1916.

Dressing for Success, Suffrage Style

Annette Atkins

Clothing speaks—about ourselves, our relation to others, our politics, our identity, from Ruth Bader Ginsburg's dissent collar to Richard Nixon's American flag pin to Lizzo's sequin "siren" dress. When, fresh out of graduate school, I started teaching at a Catholic men's college, I bolstered my authority by dressing up: white blouse, skirt, blazer, tights, and low heels. By contrast, my colleague Tom dressed down—flannel shirt, jeans, and sneakers—so his students would relate to him better.[1]

My own clothing choices are simple compared to what woman suffragists had to manage. Their advocacy—speaking in public, trumpeting new rights for women, and upending the natural order of things—was distinctly unladylike. When they took their campaign to the streets in the 1900s–1910s and adopted tactics of union members and anarchists, they amped up their gender-bending. They were in a bind, however: if they wanted to be listened to, they had to balance their tactics with accepted gender behavior.

The first suffragists had learned hard lessons about clothing's symbolic power. In the 1850s, Elizabeth Smith Miller, the cousin of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, donned a shorter skirt with trousers, "Turkish style," that

"Turkish style" bloomer dresses of the 1850s were ahead of their time.

Ivory embroidered lingerie dress, ca. 1915–17.

was, in Stanton's observation, "altogether a most becoming costume and exceedingly convenient." When Stanton wore the outfit she reported that she felt "incredible freedom." A few sister suffragists, including Susan B. Anthony, also adopted the bloomers.

A year later Stanton admitted that she would never have put on bloomers "had [she] counted the cost." Her mother disapproved. Suffragist Jane Grey Swisshelm "hate[d] the dress most thoroughly." Sojourner Truth rejected it, too. She herself tired of the ridicule from the press and street boys. Anthony reported that she experienced a "mental crucifixion" whenever she wore the outfit. Moreover, Stanton found that bloomers made people deaf to her suffrage message (or gave them an excuse to dismiss it). So, she went back to her heavy, bulky, but "feminine" clothing.[2]

After the Civil War, the suffrage campaign quieted down. Activists concentrated on workplace issues, child labor, or food quality. Most ignored dress reform. Frances Willard wanted to use the image of traditional womanhood as one of the political tools of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and urged members to dress comfortably, but conservatively.[3]

Progressive Era suffragists remembered Susan B. Anthony's suffering at trying out clothing reform, but their campaign was happening in a changed world. The Sears catalog, the rise of the department store, and the invention and popularity of the Brownie camera all directed attention to visual images. Athletics, streetcars, more women holding jobs—these, too, were reshaping American women's fashion.[4]

Three new styles were catching on. Shirtwaists—practical and figure-flattering—featured soft, usually white blouses tucked into dark A-line skirts, often pleated toward the back. The lingerie dress, made of lightweight, usually cream-colored fabric, fell straight from the shoulders and was loose at the waist and decorated with lace and embroidery. The traveling suit, cut close to the body, was a softened and elongated version of a man's suit jacket.[5]

When suffragists turned their attention back to clothing in the 1910s, these new looks were ready and waiting, offering choices that their bloomer-era foremothers did not have. All three styles had the strategic advantage of speaking ambiguously. Take the suit, businesslike and dignified. Too masculine? The shirtwaist said both feminine and independent. The lingerie dress: Sexy? Pure? All of these blurred the boundaries between activists and non-activists and aimed

The shirtwaist was comfortable, widely available, and inexpensive. Mrs. Charlie Day with husband and daughter, Jenny, Net Lake, 1914.

to deflect the anti-suffragists' criticisms that the vote would masculinize the proponents. Their adoption of these styles had the potential to reassure the frightened, galvanize fence-sitters, placate critics, disarm detractors, demonstrate entitlement to the vote, and do it all without masculinizing themselves.[6]

These comfortable clothes were widely available and inexpensive. The shirtwaist could be sewn at home, of course, but it was also being produced in huge numbers—the New York Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, for example, turned out more than 1,000 a day in 1911—and could be purchased, "ready to wear," in one of the new department stores. The shirtwaist had the added advantage of being easily washable: "once having known the comfort of a dress that could be taken off and thrown into the laundry," the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* reported, young women "cannot be weaned away from it." Minnesota newspapers, urban and small town, Swedish and Polish, all carried ads for shirtwaists and then for dependable shirtwaist seamstresses. The African American Union picnic in St. Paul awarded a shirtwaist as the prize in the 100-yard dash for women teachers. In southeast Minnesota, the Houston County Fair included a contest for 13- to 18-year-old girls for the best laundered shirtwaist. The African American *Twin City Star,* advertised a "Grand Spring Shirt Waist Party," and the Duluth YWCA offered shirtwaist sewing classes. If the suffragists were looking for a uniform, this one was ready made.[7]

The shirtwaist, moreover, was most often white or light colored. So was the lingerie dress and, indeed, the traveling suit could be, too. A white "uniform" had many advantages. It photographed well, especially outdoors, and it stood out prominently against the background of downtown buildings, especially in a sea of men wearing dark suits or work clothes. Of special importance were the cultural associations of white with beauty and purity, uprightness, even incorruptibility. These women weren't a threat, their clothing seemed to say—they

Women wearing shirtwaists waiting in line to vote in a 1908 election.

In this 1915 photo of the officers of the Political Equality Club Clara Ueland (front row, second from right) wore white, the color that suffragists chose to represent their cause. She is flanked by colleagues wearing travelling suits. Ethel Edgerton Hurd is in back row, center.

were "normal," feminine, pretty. In their marches, many women even adopted a white suffrage hat (hats being part of the wardrobe of fashionable women of the day). These were not the bloomered rebels of the 1850s, but the sophisticated, fashionable women of the new century.

Some suffragists, adopting the colors of the British woman suffrage activists, wore a purple sash or a yellow flower or cape, but white came to be the suffragists' signature color.

Some suffragists objected to doing anything special about their clothing. Didn't their critics already accuse them of being frivolous? Dr. Mabel Ulrich, prominent Minnesota suffragist who had had an embattled time in medical school and in her career, held this view: "Clothes should never be used as an argument." But more suffragists adopted the white suffrage outfit and the carefully calculated new look became a strong argument.[8]

A 1912 *Minneapolis Tribune* article discussed the suffragists' shift from dowdy to fashionable. The president of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA), Emily Haskell Bright, was quoted: "Did you notice that I wore my very best gown at the last meeting of the Political Equality club?" She did it on purpose, she said, "to do [her] part" to change the image. "We are all beginning to realize that we must be fashionable." At a recent debate between the pro- and anti-suffragists in Cincinnati, the same article recounted "much confusion [occurred] in the audience" when the pro-suffrage speaker showed up in a "pretty and feminine looking costume," while the anti-suffrage representative presented herself much more severely. Indeed, the article concluded, the "suffragists can no longer be identified by their dowdiness."[9]

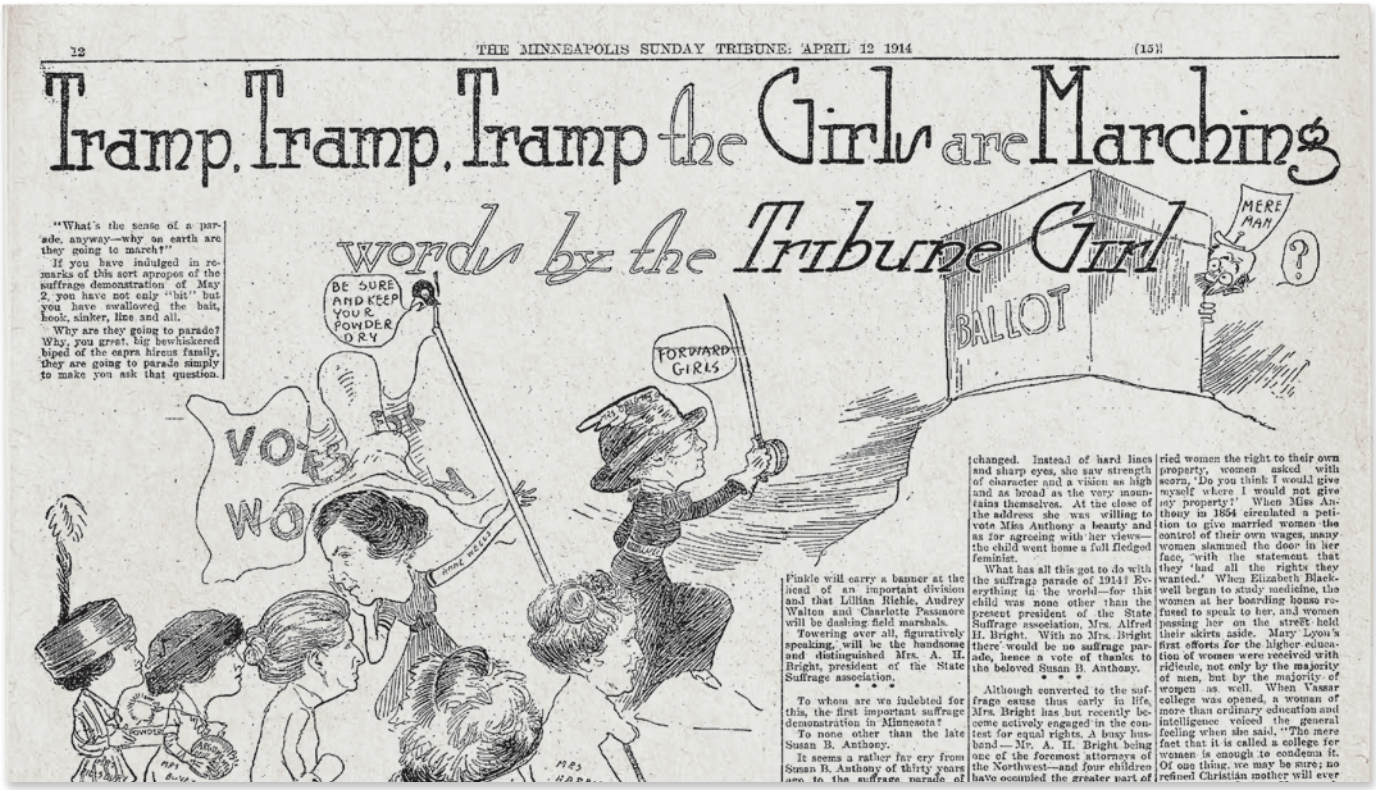
Of special importance were the cultural associations of white with beauty and purity, uprightness, even incorruptibility. These women weren't a threat, their clothing seemed to say—they were "normal," feminine, pretty.

When Minnesota suffragists planned a march in Minneapolis in 1914, MWSA president Clara Ueland, herself an adopter of the white suffrage look, encouraged it but didn't want the lack of a white outfit to deter anyone from joining. The same Mrs. Bright who had advocated the "undowdy" look took charge of the "costumes committee" and aimed for a "distinctly decorative" parade.[10]

Suffragists from all over the state marched through downtown Minneapolis on May 2, 1914, and, according to press coverage, they looked good! The front-page story in the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* focused on the women's appearance: "Perhaps you were one of those astounded. . . . Minneapolis awakes this morning with some distinctly new ideas of those who are engaged in obtaining the vote for women." The parade, the reporter wrote, was a "revelation" that "exploded" many misconceptions about the "personal appearance, motives, and manners of the American suffragist."

The marchers did not constitute "a bevy of hopeless spinsters, unhappily married women and persons who have nothing else to do," but rather, women "young and fair to look upon" and a "splendid . . . class of women of all kinds" that was "pleasing to the adult eye." The parade included "women of every walk of life, young women, old women, middle-aged women, working women, rich women, women beautiful, women otherwise, but always patiently dignified," who wore "their most tasty street finery."[11]

The reporter thought that perhaps the women "do not think this



12 THE MINNEAPOLIS SUNDAY TRIBUNE: APRIL 12 1914 (15)

Tramp, Tramp, Tramp the Girls are Marching

Words by the Tribune Girl

"What's the sense of a parade, anyway—why on earth are they going to march?"

If you have indulged in remarks of this sort apropos of the suffrage demonstration of May 2, you have not only "bit" but you have swallowed the bait, hook, sinker, line and all.

Why are they going to parade? Why, you great, big bewhiskered biped of the capra hircus family, they are going to parade simply to make you ask that question.

BE SURE AND KEEP YOUR POWDER DRY

FORWARD GIRLS

VOTES FOR WOMEN

BALLOT

MERE MAN

?

Pinkie will carry a banner at the head of an important division and that Lillian Richie, Audrey Walton and Charlotte Passmore will be dashing field marshals.

Towering over all, figuratively speaking, will be the handsome and distinguished Mrs. A. H. Bright, president of the State Suffrage association.

* * *

To whom are we indebted for this, the first important suffrage demonstration in Minnesota?

To none other than the late Susan B. Anthony.

It seems a rather far cry from Susan B. Anthony of thirty years ago to the suffrage parade of

changed. Instead of hard lines and sharp eyes, she saw strength of character and a vision as high and as broad as the very mountains themselves. At the close of the address she was willing to vote Miss Anthony a beauty and as for agreeing with her views—the child went home a full fledged feminist.

What has all this got to do with the suffrage parade of 1914? Everything in the world—for this child was none other than the present president of the State Suffrage association, Mrs. Alfred H. Bright. With no Mrs. Bright there would be no suffrage parade, hence a vote of thanks to the beloved Susan B. Anthony.

* * *

Although converted to the suffrage cause thus early in life, Mrs. Bright has but recently become actively engaged in the contest for equal rights. A busy husband—Mr. A. H. Bright being one of the foremost attorneys of the Northwest—and four children have occupied the greater part of

ried women the right to their own property, women asked with scorn, 'Do you think I would give myself where I would not give my property?' When Miss Anthony in 1854 circulated a petition to give married women the control of their own wages, many women slammed the door in her face, with the statement that they 'had all the rights they wanted.' When Elizabeth Blackwell began to study medicine, the women at her boarding house refused to speak to her, and women passing her on the street held their skirts aside. Mary Lyon's first efforts for the higher education of women were received with ridicule, not only by the majority of men, but by the majority of women as well. When Vassar college was opened, a woman of more than ordinary education and intelligence voiced the general feeling when she said, "The mere fact that it is called a college for women is enough to condemn it. Of one thing, we may be sure; no refined Christian mother will ever

The popular Minneapolis Tribune *columnist "Tribune Girl" previewed a May 2, 1914, march. The suffragists' clothing choices were calculated; reporters noticed.*

important"—but clearly, they did. A parade so well organized and orchestrated only resulted from careful thought and planning. The planners worked hard to create the look that revealed exactly what the reporter saw, a look that would be part of their arsenal of political weapons.

Nationally, suffrage organizers planned rallies in New York City and Washington, DC, in 1915. The following year they mounted "monster parades" in Chicago and St. Louis. The National American Woman Suffrage Association asked for at least one carload from every state ("At least twenty-five suffragists" from Minnesota planned to attend) and that they "wear a uniform costume," white preferably, or at least the same color outfit, along with a "uniform hat" and a sash bearing the state's name.[12]

A sea of white—New York City suffrage parade, May 6, 1912.

Other marches followed, but US involvement in World War I changed the look of the suffrage movement. To protest President Woodrow Wilson's recalcitrance on woman suffrage, suffragists took various actions, including chaining themselves to the White House railings. They didn't wear white.

The Nineteenth Amendment was finally ratified in 1920. The legacy of white, however, lives on, and many political women have paid homage to those earlier activists through their clothing. Among those women who have worn white at key moments in their political careers: Shirley Chisholm, the first African American woman elected to Congress (1968 and again in 1972 when she ran for president); Geraldine Ferraro, Democratic vice presidential candidate (1986); Hillary Clinton, Democratic presiden-

The author, Annette Atkins, at January 2017 women's march in Washington, DC.

tial candidate (2016), and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, the youngest woman elected to Congress (2019). In 2017, 2018, and 2019, Democratic congresswomen wore white to the president's State of the Union addresses.

In the tradition of the woman suffrage marches, thousands of women showed up again in Washington, DC, in 2017, the day after the presidential inauguration, in support of equal rights for women. We weren't so ladylike a century later, and not wearing white—but thousands of us made our politics visible and showed our solidarity when we adopted the uniform of the pink "pussy" hat.[13] ⊡

Notes

The author wishes to thank Laura Weber, Kristin Mapel Bloomberg, and the two anonymous reviewers who provided exceptionally helpful comments on an earlier draft. Special thanks to Lori Lahlum.

1. Marlen Komar, "Lizzo Brought Back Old School Glamour with Feather Boa at the MTV VMAs," *Bustle,* Aug. 26, 2019; https://www.bustle.com/p/lizzos-2019-mtv-vmas-outfit-marked-her-as-a-literal-siren-18691668.

2. Sylvia Hoffert, *Jane Grey Swisshelm: An Unconventional Life, 1815–1884* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 100–101, 141–42, writing in 1851; Theodore Weld Stanton and Harriot Eaton Stanton Blatch, eds., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary, and Reminiscences* (New York: Harper & Row, 1922), 1:175–77; Ida Husted Harper, ed., *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony,* vol. 2 (Indianapolis, IN: Bowen-Merrill Company, 1898). Lori D. Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: An American Life* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), 84. See also Carol Mattingly, *Appropriate[ing] Dress: Women's Rhetorical Style in Nineteenth-Century America* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), 110–11.

3. American Federation of Teachers, " 25 Labor Events and Organizations We Should Teach About During Women's History Month," *Medium* (blog), Mar. 19, 2015, https://medium.com/@AFTunion/25-labor-events-and-organizers-who-we-should-teach-about-during-women-s-history-month-8153fd50e71a; Mattingly, *Appropriate[ing] Dress,* 111–13. For more on Frances Willard's WCTU dress, see guest blogger post "'Dear Me! How Stupid the Fashionable World Is!': Frances Willard and Dress Reform," Francis Willard House (website), Nov. 27, 2017, https://franceswillardhouse.org/dear-stupid-fashionable-world-frances-willard-dress-reform/.

Active reformers included Lucy Gonzales Parsons (workplace issues), Mother Jones (child labor), Ella Reeve Bloor (food quality and purity), and Mary Elizabeth Lease (People's/Populist Party orator). Among WCTU members, only Carry A. Nation broke the traditional, womanly mold by brandishing her hatchet to demolish barrooms.

4. Einav Rabinovitch-Fox, "How White Became the Color of Suffrage," The Conversation (website), Feb. 15, 2019, https://theconversation.com/how-white-became-the-color-of-suffrage-111576.

5. Elizabeth Ewing, *History of 20th Century Fashion,* rev. ed. by Alice Mackrell (New York: Fashion Press, 1992), 75, 623; Keren Ben-Horin, "The Reign of the Lingerie Dress," *On Pins and Needles* (blog), Fashion Institute of Technology, Jan. 21, 2012, https://pinsndls.com/2012/01/21/1900–1910-the-reign-of-the-lingerie-dress/; Ann W. Braaten, "Kate Selby Wilder Dresses the Part," Lori Lahlum and Molly P. Rozum, eds., *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains* (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2019), 290–93; "He Did Not Doubt," *Little Falls Herald,* May 2, 1913, 4; "The Lyceum and Its Attractions," *Duluth Herald,* Oct. 8, 1910, p. 12. Some ministers reportedly banned the traveling suit for being "altogether immodest."

6. Diana Crane, *Fashion and Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 100; James E. Lough, "Science Explains How the Suffragettes Can Win: The Well-Recognized Laws of Psychology Which the Managers of the 'Votes for Women' Campaign Are Beginning to Learn and to Use with Effective Results," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 28, 1915, 62, https://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn83016772/1915–11–28/ed-1/seq-62. A professor of psychology, Lough refers to laws that include "beauty and the charm of fine clothes," and concludes, "The emotional appeal, of course, will not win unsupported," but "a beautiful woman does open up the mind of man to marvelous persuasion. And there the truth lies."

7. "The Winter Girl and Her Pretty Winter Shirt Waist," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Sept. 20, 1903, 8; "Caledonia to Resurrect the Houston County Fair," *Houston Signal,* June 13, 1912, 8; "Swing and Millinery Classes Reorganize for the Summer," *Duluth Herald,* Apr. 6, 1912, 18; "Now for a Lovely Time," *Twin City Star,* May 6, 1916.

8. "Suffrage and Dowdiness Come to Parting of Ways," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Apr. 28, 1912, 11. Mabel Ulrich received her medical degree from Johns Hopkins and subsequently served as a doctor on a naval ship before settling in Minneapolis. She also owned several bookstores and was head of the WPA's Federal Writers' Project in Minnesota in the 1930s.

9. "Suffrage and Dowdiness Come to Parting of Ways."

10. "Suffrage and Dowdiness Come to Parting of Ways"; "Suffragists Want All Women to March in Parade Next Saturday," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Apr. 27, 1914, 6; "Art to be Keynote of Suffrage Parade," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Mar. 29, 1914, 38. Emily Haskell Bright was always referred to as Mrs. A. H. Bright. Clara Ueland was always referred to as Mrs. Andreas Ueland. The color white has long been associated with purity—both sexual and moral—which offered "a useful way for suffragists to refute negative stereotypes that portrayed them as masculine or sexually deviant." See Rabinovitch-Fox, "How White Became the Color of Suffrage."

11. "Paraders Place Equal Suffrage on a New Plane," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune,* May 3, 1914, 1, 3.

12. "Suffrage Parade, October 23: Promoters Hope to Have 25,000 Women in Line on Fifth Avenue," *New York Times,* Aug. 31, 1915, 9; "50,000 Women March in Vast Plea for Vote," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Oct. 24, 1915, 1; "State Suffragists to Take Part in Monster Parades," *Twin City Star,* May 6, 1916, 3.

13. "Women's March Reflections," *Minnesota Women's Press,* March 2017, p. 39. https://www.womenspress.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/March-2017.pdf "Women's March, Washington, D.C.," Collection I.493.8 dig, Minnesota Historical Society. http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/display?irn=11473435

Images on p. 140, Wikimedia Commons, original source https://www.kvinfo.dk/kilde.php?kilde=253; p. 141, 142, 143, MNHS Collections; p. 144 (top), Minnesota Newspaper Hub, MNHS; p. 144 (bottom), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division; p. 145, courtesy of author.

"Those Who Came from Curiosity Remained from Interest"

Militant Suffragettes Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst in Minnesota

Jacqueline R. deVries

Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, 1912.

Sylvia Pankhurst, date unknown.

Minnesota's suffragists maintained connections with an international network of activists working for the common cause of women's equality. As the international speaking tour became a regular phenomenon in the 1910s, a series of overseas lecturers came to the state, including Rosika Schwimmer, a Hungarian feminist and peace activist, and Ethel Snowden, a British socialist and human rights activist. But no one drew more attention than Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of Britain's militant suffrage organization the Women's Social and Political Union, who twice visited Minnesota. Her visits generated intense press coverage and stirred up discussions about the meaning of the vote and what strategies were necessary to achieve it.[1]

Pankhurst was the leader of the "suffragettes"—British activists who adopted militant tactics such as huge parades, open-air meetings, direct confrontation of political leaders, as well as window breaking, arson, and acts of vandalism. Their calculated invasion of public space was unprecedented and shocking at a time when women were expected to be subservient and demure. At the height of the British militant campaign, between 1910 and 1914, suffragettes gained celebrity status in the United States through extensive press coverage of their dramatic protests. Minnesota's press covered the British suffragettes closely, sometimes with greater detail than the American movement. From the *Bemidji Daily Pioneer* to the German-language *New Ulm Post*, Minnesota's newspapers elevated Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, Christabel and Sylvia, into household names. When given the chance to see a suffragette in person, Minnesotans turned out in droves. While many Minnesotans were critical of militant tactics, they were also eager to see these "law-breaking" women speak. Local activists proved remarkably supportive of the Pankhursts, even while they agreed that militancy was not the right strategy in Minnesota.[2]

On separate trips, Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Sylvia came to Minnesota in 1911, a crucial year in the US suffrage movement. Following the horrific Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City that April, suffragists were redoubling their efforts to broaden the base of supporters and frame the vote as a tool for achieving Progressive reforms. Similar efforts had begun in Minnesota, where a handful of small suffrage organizations were attempting to recruit wider memberships. In 1913, when Emmeline returned to the Twin Cities, she helped provide momentum to reinvigorate the local movement. In total, Emmeline made six trips to the United States—in 1909, 1911, and 1913 to campaign for suffrage, and in 1916, 1918, and 1919

FACING: *Emmeline Pankhurst being carried by a policeman, as two other men stride along beside, during her arrest at Buckingham Palace, 1914.*

to raise awareness about World War I and its aftermath. Her affinity for American audiences had been nurtured through correspondence with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as well as through a personal friendship with Stanton's daughter, suffragist and labor activist Harriot Stanton Blatch. The Pankhursts used these tours to build alliances, raise money, and explain the necessity of the Women's Social and Political Union's militant approach, and in so doing they stirred up a great deal of local interest in the suffrage cause.[3]

Sylvia was the first Pankhurst to visit Minnesota, on a short but much publicized stay in January 1911. She kept a lower profile than her mother, preferring labor meetings to society luncheons and drawing crowds in the hundreds rather than thousands. But the press still followed her movements closely. During Sylvia's visit to the Twin Cities the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* gave her a full-page cameo, together with the famed actress Ellen Terry. Twenty-eight years old and petite, Sylvia was often infantilized by the press. The *Sunday Tribune* reporter gossiped that she had a cold and was "tucked up in bed like an ordinary little girl," but then conceded she was "no ordinary girl." In actuality, Sylvia was a witty speaker who connected to younger audiences. Her visit was sponsored by the Political Equality Club, the longest-running suffrage organization in Minneapolis, as well as the newly formed Workers' Equal Suffrage League and the 1915 Suffrage Club, both of which attracted younger, wage-earning and "business" women. In the *Sunday Tribune* interview, Sylvia was forthright—"women are human beings with brains and should be treated as such"—but she was careful not to tell local women what they needed. Contrasting the social evils in the "old" country with the possibilities of the "new" United States, she observed, "In England we need the ballot far more than you do in this country," although she was quick to add, "I am sure you could improve conditions if you were to be enfranchised."[4]

Emmeline's visit to Minnesota in November 1911 also generated a flurry of press coverage. On this, her second trip to North America, she traveled the length and breadth of the United States and Canada, covering an exhausting 10,000 miles. She visited Minneapolis and Duluth in mid-November, undeterred by an early winter blizzard and cold snap. The statewide press had drummed up interest for days prior to her arrival. Calling her "the famous English suffragist who . . . is perhaps one of the most talked of women in the world," the *Duluth Herald* declared: "Equal rights for women is the live question of the day and a great deal of interest is being shown by both men and women in her coming to this city." Pankhurst found enthusiastic audiences.[5]

Duluth, a town of stark social contrasts between immigrant laborers and an upper crust of Yankee industrialists and socialites, offered a wide potential audience. Emmeline Pankhurst was at home among many different social classes. After her husband's death in 1897, Emmeline had worked as a local registrar of births and deaths, which helped her develop an affinity with the laboring women of Manchester, England, whom she later worked to recruit to the movement. She also had the confidence to navigate the highest social echelons. When making public appearances, Emmeline carefully dressed in a refined style to conform to the most discerning femininity and counteract criticism that suffragettes were masculine "amazons." As the *Duluth Herald* noted:

> Perhaps many people have formed a set idea of the typical suffragette. If this idea pictures the type as a bold woman, aggressive and free of the womanly charm, Mrs. Pankhurst is far from the type. She is a little woman with large gray eyes and a charm of voice that wins confidence. Her chief charm seems to lie in her gentleness of character."[6]

Audiences were surprised to discover that Emmeline Pankhurst was petite, feminine, and soft-spoken. A large

keen interest and pleasure in her coming.

"VOTES FOR WOMEN."

Some Achievements of the English Suffragist Who Will Visit Duluth.

MRS. EMMELINE PANKHURST is the noted Englishwoman, who a few years ago started her suffragette society with but a few shillings. This year more than $250,000 was handled by the treasurer.

When the movement was first launched, the office consisted of but half a small office room. The London office now consists of thirteen office rooms. Fifty young women are employed for stenographic work alone.

In addition, the society has branch offices scattered all over Great Britain.

The militant methods of Mrs. Pankhurst and her followers have made world-wide gossip. "Votes for women" was the inscription carried on signs by thousands of Englishwomen, who swear by their leader, Mrs. Pankhurst.

In the midst of the London demonstration, Mrs. Pankhurst was thrown into prison with hundreds of other

MRS. EMMELINE PANKHURST.

women. It was Mrs. Pankhurst who planned the bombardment of parlia-

The Duluth Herald *anticipates Emmeline Pankhurst's upcoming visit in the Nov. 4, 1911, "Clubs and Musical" column.*

contingent from Superior, Wisconsin, joined more than a hundred from Duluth to hear her talk, which the *Duluth Herald* described as "eloquent" and "sweeping." Emmeline urged the crowd to consider woman suffrage as "the great movement of modern times," a phrase often repeated by Minnesota's suffragists. Her public presentation was followed by an elegant reception at the Spalding Hotel, where she networked among Duluth's society women, gently pressing them for donations.[7]

Emmeline Pankhurst demonstrated a remarkable ability to adapt her message to local American audiences. She capitalized on deeply held skepticism of the British political system and filled her speeches with clever references to the colonists' rebellion against British tyranny. When questioned whether suffragette violence was degrading, she asked if they believed violence was necessary in the American Revolution. Alongside references to the Boston Tea Party, she would strategically quote Patrick Henry's eloquent defense of the American Revolution: "We have petitioned, we have remonstrated, we have supplicated, we have prostrated ourselves at the foot of the throne, and it has all been in vain. We must fight—I repeat it, sir, we must fight."[8]

During her November 1911 visit, Pankhurst spoke to a large crowd at the Minneapolis Auditorium, the city's imposing civic structure on Eleventh Street and Nicollet Avenue, with box seats and space for several thousand. Ushers wore yellow streamers printed with "Votes for Women," and the stage was decorated with a huge bouquet of yellow chrysanthemums, symbolizing woman suffrage. Front-page headlines trumpeted her demands for women's representation on the city council and claim that women's votes could stem the tide of "racial degeneration,"

Emmeline Pankhurst spoke to a large crowd at the Minneapolis Auditorium during her November 1911 visit to Minnesota.

a common term that tapped into fears of declining fitness especially among white men of military age. Raising some eyebrows, she spoke on Sunday at the First Congregationalist Church, hosted by the church's Men's Club. Her talk won over many skeptics of militant tactics, including Clara Ueland, the soon-to-be leader of Minneapolis's Equal Suffrage Association and later the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA). Ueland was critical of Pankhurst's long, rambling lecture but was moved enough by her rhetoric to agree that militant tactics might be "as justifiable as the Battle of Lexington."[9]

While their stays in Minnesota were brief, both Pankhursts left a deep impression. Over the coming months and years, Minnesotans would continue to follow their protests and imprisonments, at times stepping in to defend their actions. When British suffragette militancy reached a fevered pitch in 1912, Minnesota suffragists rose to their defense. Kate Finkle, one of the 1915 Suffrage Club hosts of Sylvia's visit, argued, "The Pankhurst women have made suffrage a serious issue all the world over and have taken it out of the silly column." Her colleague, Dr. Mabel Ulrich, president of the 1915 Suffrage Club, observed that suffrage riots may have been justified in England because of the "pig-headed" English men, but she assured readers that they were unnecessary in the local movement.[10]

That support for the Women's Social and Political Union militancy would be tested as it further intensified in 1913. In January of that year, Britain's prime minister declined to sponsor a suffrage bill, propelling suffragettes to cut telegraph lines, break windows, and place bombs in politicians' homes and churches. Emmeline was imprisoned again for incitement to violence and commenced a hunger and thirst strike. Minnesota newspapers avidly followed her arrest, release for ill health, and re-arrest, sometimes with grim humor. Noting that none of the suffragette-planted bombs had yet exploded, the *Duluth Herald* quipped, "Can it be that the British suffragette is displaying a sense of humor which the British temperament and femininity . . . are supposed to lack?"

In June 1913, Minnesotans read headlines reporting of the death of British suffragette Emily Wilding Davison, who was trampled by the king's horse when she stepped onto the racetrack at Epsom Downs carrying a "Votes for Women" banner. Davison's funeral cortege in London, which drew more than 5,000 marchers and 50,000 observers, was widely reported in Minnesota's press.[11]

To escape the frenzy of the militant campaign in Britain, in autumn 1913 Emmeline Pankhurst announced another trip to the United States. This time, it caused a serious dilemma for American suffragists: should they risk being affiliated with a lawbreaker? As suffrage militancy grew increasingly violent, leaders of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) were cautious. Carrie Chapman Catt likened Emmeline to radical abolitionist John Brown and could not decide whether she was "a liberator of her sex or a serious troublemaker. Time will tell which." Minnesota's suffragists were also in a quandary. *The Appeal,* an African American newspaper in St. Paul, articulated it well:

> Most of the suffragette leaders say they honor Mrs. Pankhurst as a woman, but that they don't approve of her methods. Her visit is going to put them in an awkward position. If they don't pay any attention to her they will be accused of a slight to a woman who has spent her life working for 'the cause.' If they do show her attention their action may be interpreted as an approval of militant methods.[12]

Despite these concerns, Minnesotans continued to provide support. When the 1913 tour began with Emmeline's detainment at Ellis Island and order of deportation due to "moral turpitude," Minnesota's US senator

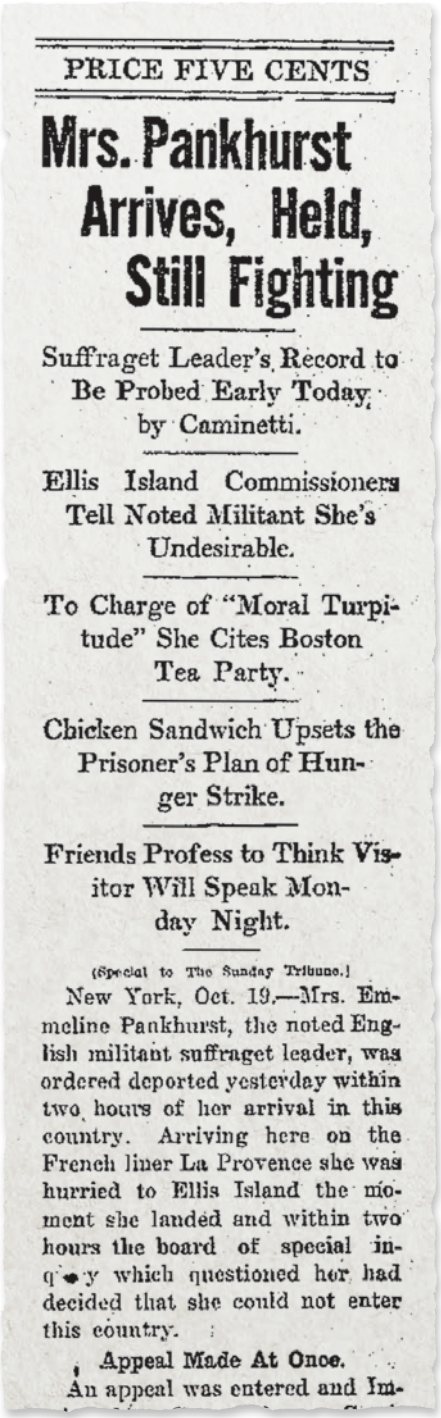
Minnesota US Senator Moses E. Clapp (1905 photo) sent a telegraph to immigration officers demanding Pankhurst's release from detention at Ellis Island, 1913.

Moses E. Clapp intervened, sending a telegraph to immigration officers demanding her release. Along with other midwestern suffragists, the board of the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association voted to send a letter of protest. Two days later, President Woodrow Wilson personally reversed the decision and allowed Pankhurst to commence her tour.[13]

By the time she reached Minneapolis, Emmeline Pankhurst's 1913 speaking tour had drawn both controversy and enormous crowds. At Madison Square Garden in New York City, NAWSA president Dr. Anna Howard Shaw boycotted Pankhurst's speech, in protest of the high ticket prices and blatant appeals for donations, which Shaw felt drained potential funds from the US movement. Debates flared when Pankhurst spoke openly about white slavery (i.e., prostitution) and the problem of venereal disease. But her bold rhetoric only heightened interest in her appearances, and despite messages from NAWSA leaders to boycott her speeches, thousands turned out to see her. Minnesota's suffragists ral-

Dr. Mabel Ulrich (left) was president of 1915 Suffrage Club. Here, in her later role as WPA Writer's Project head, with Minnesota WPA administrator, Victor Christgau, 1936.

lied to her support, raising $500 to sponsor her upcoming visit to the state and donating more than $1,000 through collections at her various appearances—numbers that the *Minneapolis Tribune* bragged "put all others in the shade."[14]



PRICE FIVE CENTS

Mrs. Pankhurst Arrives, Held, Still Fighting

Suffraget Leader's Record to Be Probed Early Today by Caminetti.

Ellis Island Commissioners Tell Noted Militant She's Undesirable.

To Charge of "Moral Turpitude" She Cites Boston Tea Party.

Chicken Sandwich Upsets the Prisoner's Plan of Hunger Strike.

Friends Profess to Think Visitor Will Speak Monday Night.

(Special to The Sunday Tribune.)

New York, Oct. 19.—Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the noted English militant suffraget leader, was ordered deported yesterday within two hours of her arrival in this country. Arriving here on the French liner La Provence she was hurried to Ellis Island the moment she landed and within two hours the board of special inquiry which questioned her had decided that she could not enter this country.

Appeal Made At Once.

An appeal was entered and Im-

Emmeline Pankhurst's 1913 US tour began with detention at Ellis Island. Minneapolis Sunday Tribune, *Oct. 19, 1913.*

On her three-day visit to the Twin Cities in early November 1913, a group of "enthusiastic local suffragists" met Emmeline Pankhurst at the train; among them was Grace Boutelle, a Minneapolis musician who had been imprisoned several times in London for demonstrating with the suffragettes. Pankhurst's stay in the Twin Cities was filled with a whirlwind of events, large and small. Escorted by a Mrs. Kimball, the editor of the *Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Employees' Magazine,* a publication for railroad workers, she spoke to the press about women's right to well-paid employment. She also dined at the University Club, where Minneapolis society women strained for a chance to meet her, and at the St. Paul Hotel with 50 select guests. Her public address at the Minneapolis Auditorium brought in record crowds, with thousands more attending her St. Paul talk the following day. While women outnumbered men by an estimated five to one, nearly 6,000 spectators heard her speak. Despite her fragile health—one paper observed she "shows the effect of her four hunger strikes, [and] of worry over members of her own family"—she held the crowd's attention for several hours at each event.[15]

In the absence of personal accounts, it is hard to reconstruct precisely how most Minnesotans responded to her visits. Press coverage was voluminous but superficial and prone to editorial bias. After Emmeline Pankhurst's 1913 talks, the conservative *New Ulm Review* concluded, "She charmed, amused and persuaded them, but when the last word is said they listened to her with a sort of amused tolerance, as if they did not take her quite seriously." Yet other evidence suggests that Emmeline and her daughter galvanized supporters and convinced at least some doubters. One of them was the (anonymous) author of the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*'s popular Sunday column "Tribune Girl," who penned a long and sympathetic portrait of Emmeline Pankhurst and the suffragettes' "revolutionary war." The columnist admitted to at first being "a bit prejudiced against the leader of the militant suffragets [*sic*]. It is so easy to judge. . . . [But] when the suffrage movement in England is explained by Mrs. Pankhurst, it takes on a different meaning."[16]

Through their international speaking tours, Emmeline and Sylvia Pankhurst not only generated sympathy for militant tactics but also provided examples of fortitude and persistence. Their celebrity appeal drew thousands who might not otherwise have been engaged. In the years following their visits, Minnesota suffragists would turn what had been a rather staid local movement into something much more effective and exciting, adopting more deliberate organizational strategies and recruiting much greater numbers of participants. Perhaps the *Duluth Herald* put it best: "Those who came from curiosity remained from interest."[17] ⊡

Notes

1. E. Sylvia Pankhurst, *A Suffragette in America: Reflections on Prisoners, Pickets and Political Change,* ed. Katherine Connelly (London: Pluto Press, 2019), 12; Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association Records, 1894–1923, microfilm reels 16 and 17, MNHS. For Minnesota's connection to an international activist network, see Allison Sneider, "The New Suffrage History: Voting Rights in International Perspective," *History Compass* 8, no. 7 (2010): 692–703; Sandra Stanley Holton, "From Anti-Slavery to Suffrage Militancy: The Bright Circle, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the British Women's Movement," in *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives,* ed. Caroline Daley and Melanie Nolan (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Bonnie Anderson, *Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Movement, 1830–1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Leila J. Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's*

Movement (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

2. Nearly every Minnesota newspaper carried coverage of the Pankhursts and the militant suffragettes, including the German, Swedish, and Norwegian press. In addition to the major Minneapolis and St. Paul newspapers, short articles appeared in the *Caledonia Argus, Duluth Herald, Ellendale Eagle, International Falls Press, Little Falls Herald, Mantorville Express, New Ulm Review, Pine Island Record, Post and Record, Republican Press, Spring Grove Herald, St. Charles Union, St. Paul Tidende, Stillwater Messenger, Tower Weekly News,* and *Windom Reporter,* to name an inexhaustive list.

The term *suffragette* was coined in 1906, when the British newspaper the *Daily Mail* used the word in a derogatory manner to distinguish between British suffragists who were militant and those who were not. British activists embraced the term and reclaimed it as one denoting radical action; however, American activists preferred the more serious and respected term *suffragist.* Both contemporaries and historians have debated whether suffragette attacks on property constituted terrorism. For one heated exchange on this topic, see C. J. Bearman's rather provocative article "Confronting the Suffragette Mythology," *BBC History* (Feb. 2007): 14–18, with a response from June Purvis, "Radical Fighters in a Just Cause," *BBC History* (Feb. 2007): 20–21.

3. Ellen Carol Dubois, *Suffrage: Women's Long Battle for the Vote* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020), 179ff; Paula Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 160–61. See also Jane Marcus, "Transatlantic Sisterhood: Labor and Suffrage Links in the Letters of Elizabeth Robins and Emmeline Pankhurst," *Signs* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1978): 744–55. Some coverage of Emmeline Pankhurst's international tours can be found in Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst;* June Purvis, *Emmeline Pankhurst: A Biography* (London: Routledge, 2003); and Sandra Adickes, "Sisters, Not Demons: The Influence of British Suffragists on the American Suffrage Movement," *Women's History Review* 11, no. 4 (Dec. 2006): 675–90.

An incomplete list of Minnesota's suffrage organizations in 1911 includes the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association, a statewide umbrella organization; the Political Equality Club; the College Equal Suffrage Club; the Workers' Equal Suffrage Club; the 1915 Suffrage Club; and the Minnesota Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association. All had small, localized memberships. New clubs formed in 1912 and 1913 include the Equal Suffrage Association of Minneapolis; see Barbara Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995), 76–77.

4. "Sweet Ellen Terry, Fair Sylvia Pankhurst," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune,* Jan. 29, 1911, front page, second section; "Wisdom Gleaned in London Will Be Imparted by a Girl," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Jan. 15, 1911. A renowned English actress, Ellen Terry was also a suffrage supporter. For more on Sylvia Pankhurst's American tours, see Katherine Connelly's excellent account in her introduction to *A Suffragette in America: Reflections on Prisoners, Pickets and Political Change* (London: Pluto Press, 2019).

Founded in 1910 by Minneapolis women, the 1915 Suffrage Club aimed to achieve equal suffrage by 1915. My thanks to Sophie Hunt for sharing her research on this group. For more, see the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune,* Nov. 17, 1912, 30. On the Political Equality Club and Worker's Equal Suffrage League, see Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 65ff, 81; Kristin Mapel Bloomberg and Erin Parrish, "'She Will Marvel that It Should Have Been Possible': The Political Equality Club of Minneapolis," *Minnesota History* 60, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 113–22.

5. Emmeline Pankhurst, *My Own Story* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1914), 160–61; Bartley, *Emmeline Pankhurst,* 160–80; *Duluth Herald,* Oct. 30, 1911, 11. Extensive coverage of Pankhurst's trip can be found in British suffrage newspapers, *Votes for Women* and *The Suffragette,* as well as in US newspapers. Despite widespread interest, Pankhurst was not without vocal local critics. See the scathing letter to the editor, "Mrs. Pankhurst and Gentle Brick Throwing," *Duluth Herald,* Nov. 9, 1911.

6. Richard Hudelson and Carl Ross, *By the Ore Docks: A Working People's History of Duluth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); *Duluth Herald,* Nov. 13, 1911, 3.

7. "Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst Creates Deep Impression," *Duluth Herald,* Nov. 14, 1911, 6; *Duluth Herald,* Nov. 13, 1911, 3.

8. "Mrs. Pankhurst in America: Chicago's Wonderful Welcome," *The Suffragette,* Nov. 21, 1913, 124; Pankhurst, *My Own Story,* 281.

9. "Woman's Suffrage Urged as a Remedy for Race Decline," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 12, 1911, 1; "Suffragette Defends Sunday Talk on the Vote," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 13, 1911, 1; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 70. Yellow was the traditional color of US suffragists, who adopted yellow sunflowers, roses, daffodils, or chrysanthemums as symbols. Red was the color of anti-suffragists.

10. "Suffragists Here Defend Riots of English Women," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* July 28, 1912. Single and in her thirties, Kate Finkle worked as a probation officer in Hennepin Juvenile Court and was an active volunteer for the Minneapolis Women's Rotary Club as well as for suffrage organizations. Dr. Mabel Ulrich was a frequent speaker around the state on sex education and public health; later, she was director of women's work for US Public Health Services and served on the Minneapolis Board of Public Welfare.

11. *Duluth Herald,* May 22, 1913. For a Minnesota headline on Emily Wilding Davison's death, see, for example, *Tower Weekly News,* June 20, 1913, 2. A member of the Women's Socialist and Political Union, Davison devoted her life to the militant suffrage movement with a religious zeal. While imprisoned in 1909, she experienced police brutality, force-feeding, and an early equivalent of waterboarding. In 1910, she spent 28 hours perched in a hot air shaft in the House of Commons. See Carolyn Collette, ed., *In the Thick of the Fight: The Writing of Emily Wilding Davison, Militant Suffragette* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).

12. Jacqueline Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt* (New York: Feminist Press, 1987), 109; "Strange Greeting for a Militant," *The Appeal,* Sept. 27, 1913, 1.

13. "Sympathy Expressed for Mrs. Pankhurst" and "Militant Is Defended by American Women: Middle West Suffragets [*sic*] Are Against Deportation of Mrs. Pankhurst," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Oct. 19, 1913, 1; "Local Suffragists Plan Protest to the President," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Oct. 20, 1913, 2. Moses E. Clapp, a Republican, served as Minnesota attorney general (1887–93) and US senator (1901–17). According to the British *Daily Telegraph,* protest meetings were called in Chicago, Detroit, Denver, Cincinnati, and other cities. News of this drama was widely reported in Minnesota's press. See, for example, "Mrs Pankhurst Is Held Undesirable," *Windom Reporter,* Oct. 24, 1913, 2.

14. "Mrs. Pankhurst Heckled at Garden," *New York Times,* Oct. 22, 1913, 3; "American Suffragists and Mrs. Pankhurst," *The (UK) Scotsman,* Oct. 11, 1913, 7; "Mrs. Pankhurst in America," *Votes for Women,* Oct. 24, 1913, 32; "Close of Her Campaign in America: A Disgusted Public," *Western Gazette,* Nov. 28, 1913, 12; "Pankhurst Tour Chilly," *Hawaiian Gazette,* Nov. 18, 1913, 5; "Mrs. Pankhurst to Get $500 from the State," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 5, 1913, 9; "Mrs. Pankhurst in St. Paul," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 8, 1913, 1. Dr. Anna Howard Shaw served as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1904 to 1915. The funds raised by Minnesota suffragists were relatively modest. In total, Pankhurst raised £4500 on her 1913 tour, worth approximately $219,000 at the time.

15. "Mrs. Pankhurst to Reach City Today," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 6, 1913, 11; *New Ulm Review,* Nov. 12, 1913. Grace Boutelle was active in the Minneapolis arts community, singing, acting, and directing operettas. Many Minnesota newspapers printed short summaries of Pankhurst's visit, including the *Willmar Tribune* and the Swedish-language *(Minneapolis) Svenska Folkets Tidning.*

16. *New Ulm Review,* Nov. 12, 1913; "One Ain't Wot it Used to Be," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 9, 1913, section 3, 2. Tribune Girl was a regular Sunday feature with witty discussions of events and people around town.

17. *Duluth Herald,* Nov. 14, 1911, 6.

Images on p. 146, 147, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division; p. 148, 151, Minnesota Newspaper Hub, MNHS; p. 149, Wikimedia Commons; p. 150, MNHS Collections.

EXPANDING THE SUFFRAGE STORY THROUGH

Newspapers

Der Nordstern and the *New Ulm Post* (German)

Germans constituted the largest immigrant group in nineteenth-century Minnesota. The majority were farmers, with concentrated settlements in Lyon, Brown, Stearns, and Otter Tail Counties, where German immigrants and their descendants made up more than 50 percent of the population. Others became urban professionals, bankers, and business owners in growing cities like St. Cloud, New Ulm, and St. Paul. German-speaking communities maintained close ties through marriage, schools, and language.[1]

Ideological fractures and religious divisions between German Catholics, Missouri Synod Lutherans, and Mennonites prevented German immigrants from coalescing into a statewide political voting bloc. Nevertheless, they shared cultural values, including an orientation toward traditional gender roles and paternalistic families in which the husband decided the family position on public affairs. For many German Americans, beer drinking was another common bond—a cultural rite. Indeed, they owned virtually all Minnesota's breweries. Because many suffragists belonged to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, they were presumed to support prohibition—a stance that fueled German opposition to woman suffrage.[2]

German-language newspapers serve as barometers of these values. For example, *Der Nordstern* (St. Cloud) was a firm champion of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, church) and portrayed independent, enfranchised women as a threat to state and family unity. Reporting on the suffrage movement in Germany, where leftist Social Democratic women dominated, *Der Nordstern* spread fear that enfranchisement would breed radicalism. Articles about the progress of US woman suffrage bills were punctuated by editorial comments that women belonged in the home, caring for husbands and children. The paper criticized suffrage activities in states like Colorado and Oklahoma, where the editors claimed women's enfranchisement had been a big disappointment.[3]

Not all Germans, however, were so hostile. The *New Ulm Post* (published by Albert Steinhauser as the German-language counterpart to the *New Ulm Review*) took a more moderate view, publishing informational articles with less editorializing. It even featured a complimentary obituary for the famous US suffragist and modern woman Inez Milholland when she died prematurely in 1916.[4]

Nevertheless, local suffragists often expressed frustration with German immigrants' reluctance to embrace modern roles for women. When public opinion turned against German Americans after the United States entered World War I, midwestern suffragists cast their opposition to woman suffrage as un-American. Unwittingly, through their conservatism local German Americans may have contributed to the future suffrage victory.[5]

—Jacqueline R. deVries

Jacqueline deVries is a professor of history at Augsburg University. For full biography, see p. 85.

Notes

1. David Peterson, "'From Bone Depth': German-American Communities in Rural Minnesota Before the Great War," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 31.

2. Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Germans in Minnesota* (St. Paul: MNHS Press, 2003), 32. Interestingly, the *New Ulm Post* published an analysis showing that prohibition came more quickly in states where women were not yet enfranchised (Mar. 9, 1917, 6).

3. *Der Nordstern,* Oct. 21, 1915, 3; Dec. 27, 1917, 1; July 16, 1914, 4. *Der Nordstern* was published between 1874 and 1931.

4. *New Ulm Post,* Dec. 1, 1916, 1. On the eve of World War I, Minnesota supported 19 German-language newspapers: see Conzen, Germans, 68. In addition to *Der Nordstern* and the *New Ulm Post* (1864–1933), German publications included *Der Fortschritt* (1891–1915) and *Der Wanderer* (1867–1957), available on microfilm at MNHS. For more information, see MNHS's digital newspaper collection at http://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/hub/der-nordstern, as well as the National Endowment for the Humanities, "Chronicling America's Historic German Newspapers and the Growth of the American Ethnic Press," by Leah Weinryb Grohsgal, posted July 2, 2014, https://www.neh.gov/divisions/preservation/featured-project/chronicling-americas-historic-german-newspapers-and-the-grow.

5. Sara Egge, *Woman Suffrage and Citizenship in the Midwest, 1870–1920* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018), ch. 5.

The Fifteenth Star

Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party in Minnesota

J. D. Zahniser

Alice Paul, 1915.

On June 3, 1915, Alice Paul hurriedly wrote her Washington headquarters from the home of Jane Bliss Potter, 2849 Irving Avenue South, Minneapolis: "Have had conferences with nearly every Suffragist who has ever been heard of . . . in Minnesota. Have conferences tomorrow with two Presidents of Suffrage clubs. . . . I do not know how it will come out."[1]

Alice Paul came to Minnesota in 1915 after Potter sought her help in organizing a Minnesota chapter of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage (CU). The CU was a newcomer on the national suffrage scene, founded by Paul in 1913. She focused on winning a woman suffrage amendment to the US Constitution. Paul, a compelling—even messianic—personality, riveted attention on a constitutional amendment long before most observers considered it viable; she also practiced more assertive tactics than most American suffragists thought wise.[2]

Indeed, the notion of Paul coming to town apparently raised suffrage hackles in the Twin Cities. Paul wrote from Minneapolis that the executive board of the only statewide suffrage group, the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA), had earlier declined to approve a Minnesota CU chapter; MWSA president Clara Ueland had personally written Paul to discourage a visit. Nonetheless, once Paul arrived in town, she reported that Ueland "has been very kind and has spoken at both of my meetings, which she previously announced she would not do. I have spent some hours with her."[3]

After Paul's visit, Ueland and the MWSA decided to work cooperatively with the Minnesota CU; their collaboration would prove a marked contrast to the national scene. State suffrage history has largely erased the work of the Minnesota CU. Yet the Minnesota

chapter proved one of the more vigorous branches of the controversial organization, with numerous members who actively furthered the cause by organizing and demonstrating, in addition to contributing financially. The synergy between the MWSA and Minnesota CU would break down in 1917. Nonetheless, the Minnesota suffrage scene maintained a respect that was sorely lacking at the national level.

Alice Paul's storied persuasiveness won the day in June 1915. She salved the frustration of local activists who had labored for years to pass a state suffrage amendment. Paul shone light in a new direction, urging direct lobbying of the Minnesota congressional delegation to win votes for the federal amendment.

Now convinced that the CU offered promise rather than threat, Clara Ueland and eight other members of the MWSA state board signed the call to convene a Minnesota CU chapter on June 28. As Paul noted, "Everyone signed whom we asked & we asked nearly everyone of importance." Members included women in their 20s like Ueland's daughter Elsa and seasoned, well-to-do suffragists like Potter and Emily Bright (both in their 50s). Paul left town with nearly $1,200 in pledges or cash, including $2 from Clara Ueland herself. [4]

Minnesota reflected the success Paul had enjoyed elsewhere. She emerged on the American suffrage scene in early 1913 as the organizer of the first national suffrage parade, held in Washington, DC, on the eve of Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. After unruly spectators harassed the marching women, Paul engineered a Senate hearing on the melee. The event and its aftermath gave heightened visibility to the suffrage cause. It also lent the 28-year-old Paul a national reputation as a woman who could get things done.

Congressional Union member Elsa Ueland, daughter of Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association president Clara Ueland, 1908.

Many suffrage devotees longed for just such a leader. The movement to win the vote for American women had languished. Years of petitioning Congress to pass a constitutional amendment for woman suffrage, led by Susan B. Anthony, had proved fruitless. Women in a few sparsely populated western states won the vote prior to 1900; then state-based initiatives stalled. After Anthony's death in 1906, the sole national suffrage group, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), chose to focus on state campaigns once a resurgent Jim Crow South made enfranchising Black women a political minefield. By 1910, however, the last state victory was 14 years in the past.[5]

Alice Paul's National Woman's Party created a suffrage flag. A star would be added for each state that ratified the Nineteenth Amendment. On September 8, 1919, Minnesota added the fifteenth star. (Note: this depiction is not from Minnesota.)

The most engaging suffrage news in American newspapers was now coming from abroad. Long-time activists Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter Christabel had founded the UK's Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1905. They brought the brash militancy of labor protests to the British suffrage movement, organizing spectacular parades and marches on Parliament; news correspondents—including Americans—ate it up. American women on tour soon made a point of attending WSPU rallies and came away energized. Alice Paul, in Britain for graduate work, became a "heart and soul convert." Paul worked for the WSPU as an organizer, ultimately enduring several arrests, imprisonments, and hunger strikes. She returned to the United States in January 1910 determined to continue the work that had captivated her.[6]

She wasn't the only one. A new spirit was invigorating the suffrage movement. Some Americans who had witnessed the Pankhursts in action injected the new assertive tactics into their hometown suffrage groups. Street rallies, parades, and automobile tours began to augment the closed-door meetings and conventions of years past. The first American suffrage parade took place in the spring of 1910. Women in five western states won the vote between 1910 and 1912.[7]

Many felt the movement's leadership was not seizing the moment. NAWSA leaders feared the Pankhursts' influence, remembering how American suffragists were once ridiculed for trying to take women where many felt they didn't belong. They worried that marching, speaking out of doors, and other unwomanly activities would damage the movement's reputation and lead, as in Britain, to arrests and worse. They believed a woman's reputation was her most important asset [8]

Paul returned to the United States a celebrity as a result of press coverage of the Pankhursts' demonstrations. Studying the American movement, Paul became convinced that a constitutional amendment was the quickest way for American women to win the vote. Despite more practiced hands insisting that key states must be won first, she sought to lead NAWSA's 1913 Congressional Committee, a role that took her to Washington. After the success of the parade in March 1913, however, relations quickly soured between the impatient young Paul and the battle-hardened NAWSA leadership. Their ideas about acceptable methods and overall strategy were poles apart.[9]

By early 1914, NAWSA had jettisoned Paul from their ranks. Paul responded by establishing the Congressional Union as the national alternative to NAWSA. NAWSA leaders were none too pleased to compete with Paul's controversial attention-getting tactics. By the time Jane Bliss Potter contacted the CU leader in 1915 about starting a Minnesota chapter, Paul's activities had thrilled some and horrified others. It was little wonder that Clara Ueland was at first wary of Paul.[10]

After the successful Washington, DC, suffrage parade in March 1913, relations between Alice Paul and national suffrage leadership suffered.

After being ousted by NAWSA, Alice Paul established the Congressional Union (later known as the National Woman's Party) as an alternative.

MWSA leader Ueland had an open mind, but she also had clear notions about propriety for women engaging in politics. When Emmeline Pankhurst came to Minneapolis for a speech in November 1911, she gave Clara Ueland a new outlook on "militant tactics," later writing "[They] may be as justifiable as the Battle of Lexington." Nonetheless, when Ueland read in 1914 of CU organizers campaigning in western suffrage states against Democrats, encouraging those women voters to "hold the party in power responsible," as the Pankhursts put it, she, like many others, decried what they saw as partisan activity. NAWSA had always been proudly nonpartisan. The fact that the Democratic Party controlled the White House and both houses of Congress did not alter her thinking.[11]

Others, like Jane Potter, had no such qualms. She and 78 other Minnesota women had joined the Congressional Union well before Alice Paul came to town. Other early members included Gertrude Hunter, founding member of two women workers' clubs and one of Paul's 1914 campaign organizers in Wyoming, and Sarah Tarleton Colvin, an Alabama native and trained nurse, who had moved to St. Paul after marrying Dr. Alexander Colvin in 1897. Colvin discovered the CU in early 1915 while visiting Washington, DC. She had soured on NAWSA, judging it to be in "a completely static condition without possibility of progress."[12]

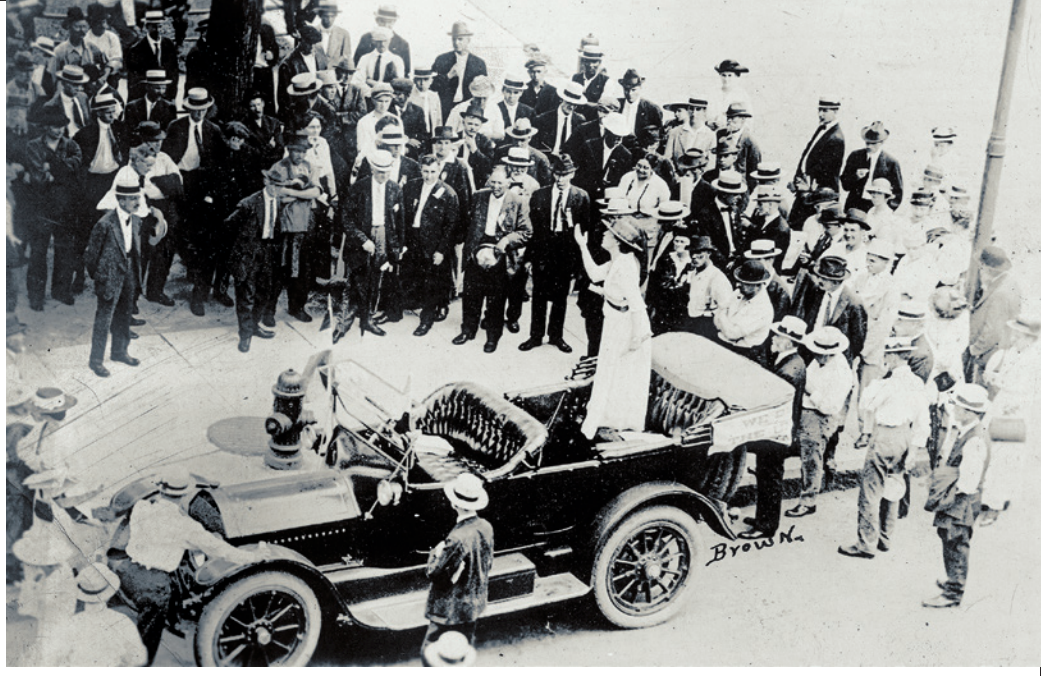
Early on, the memberships of MWSA and the Minnesota CU overlapped. It was common for large urban areas to have several suffrage groups, each with a different focus; some women joined multiple clubs. At the June 1915 founding convention, Jane Potter, already an officer in MWSA, was elected state chair of the Minnesota CU, with sister Minneapolitan Emily Bright (a former MWSA president) as vice chair. Summit Avenue resident Sophie Kenyon (MWSA vice president) took charge of soliciting new subscriptions for the CU newspaper *The Suffragist*. Gertrude Hunter and Elsa Ueland were elected organizers.[13]

Clara Ueland was impressed with the flurry of activity that followed. She wrote: "With their usual vigor, the Congressional Union has sent some young women out into the State into places in which there has never been a suffrage meeting. . . . The girls are not in any way militant; they are Minnesota girls—one of them is my own daughter—and their work certainly reinforces our own. . . . I see no reason why we should not work together in this way, indefinitely." Ueland wrote Paul that the CU campaign "is receiving more publicity and apparently making a deeper impression than anything that has been done in the state." By December, the Minnesota CU boasted 533 members.[14]

Shortly after the Minnesota CU's founding, Clara Ueland, Jane Potter, and others of the MWSA had even more reason to appreciate the organization. They attended a mid-year NAWSA meeting in Chicago, convened to reassure state officers about a rival constitutional amendment that NAWSA leaders had begun to push in Congress. NAWSA leaders resisted MWSA and other states' contentions that competing amendments confused supporters and blunted momentum. NAWSA also seemed intent on attacking the CU. MWSA members openly expressed their dismay.[15]

"A splendid opportunity for constructive work it seems to us was entirely lost," Clara Ueland wrote one NAWSA leader a few weeks later. She confirmed that many MWSA members were "much alienated" and considering withdrawal from NAWSA. These MWSA members opposed any rival suffrage amendment; after all, icon Susan B. Anthony had authored the original amendment language.

Sarah Tarleton Colvin was an early member of the Minnesota Congressional Union, portrayed here in 1935.



Elsie Hill, a confidant of Alice Paul, speaking at a street meeting during a Prohibition Party convention in St. Paul that endorsed a plank advocating a suffrage amendment, July 1916.

They did "not like the campaign of public criticism of the Congressional Union." Based on the CU chapter's energetic work in Minnesota, Ueland wrote, "it would be folly for us to say anything except 'God bless you' to them."[16]

By 1916, the Minnesota CU was flourishing, and some members contributed on the national level. Large donors Jane Potter and Emily Bright joined the CU's national advisory board. An April *Suffragist* article described Gertrude Hunter's vigorous organizing in the Twin Cities and in smaller towns like Sandstone and Isanti. Hunter was also exerting pressure on newly elected congressman Thomas D. Schall to mirror colleagues in the Minnesota delegation who favored a suffrage amendment. Sarah Colvin represented Minnesota on the "Suffrage Special," a whistle-stop train tour through states where women now voted. Paul was founding a new political party, the National Woman's Party (NWP), to leverage the voting power of these western women. Suffrage Special speakers like Colvin urged women to attend the inaugural convention to be held in Chicago in June. Jane Potter wrote Paul, "We expect to have 20 or 25 Minnesota women in Chicago."[17]

"The girls are not in any way militant; they are Minnesota girls—one of them is my own daughter—and their work certainly reinforces our own. . . . I see no reason why we should not work together in this way, indefinitely."

Shortly after the successful June 1916 launch of the NWP, the Minnesota CU held its first annual convention at the St. Paul Town and Country Club. Elsie Hill, a Paul confidante and CU stalwart, was the high-profile guest; she later ventured north to Duluth CU meetings. Sarah Colvin, after regaling the gathering with anecdotes from the Suffrage Special, was elected the new chapter chair; she would remain so through 1920.[18]

Events in Washington, DC, took center stage as 1917 began. After years of tolerating CU delegations beseeching him to publicly endorse the suffrage amendment, President Wilson spurned further visits in January 1917, citing more pressing concerns. In response, Paul initiated the first-ever picket at the White House gates, after attorneys assured her that peaceful picketing was legal.

Though presidents have no role in the constitutional amendment process, Paul believed that Wilson, as head of a Democratic Party that controlled both houses of Congress, held the key to securing enough votes to pass the constitutional amendment for woman suffrage. Minnesota women joined in the picketing, both in the early months, when their efforts received little attention, and later in the year, when the highly charged atmosphere accompanying the US entry into World War I caused many Americans to view the pickets as disloyal.[19]

In 1917, the cooperative relationship between the MWSA and Minnesota NWP would be tested. (The CU was absorbed into the NWP in March 1917.) Daily picketing at the White House began on January 10; public reactions ranged from bemusement to sarcasm. Casting about for more press coverage, Paul designated special days for occupational and state groups. She declared February 28 "Minnesota Day" on the picket line, and CU members Potter, Colvin, and others traveled to Washington to brandish banners reading "Minnesota Branch/Congressional Union" and "Scandinavian Suffrage Association Minnesota" at the White House gates. (See photo on p. 124.) In Minnesota, national NWP organizer Sarah Grant persuaded groups such as the Mothers' Council, the Monday Literary Club, and the Farmers Non-Partisan League to urge passage of the suffrage amendment. Each week in St. Paul, Grant ensured that the most recent issue of *The Suffragist* was "sold in front of the Capitol, as a kind of modified picket that has proved valuable to interest recruits for the work."[20]

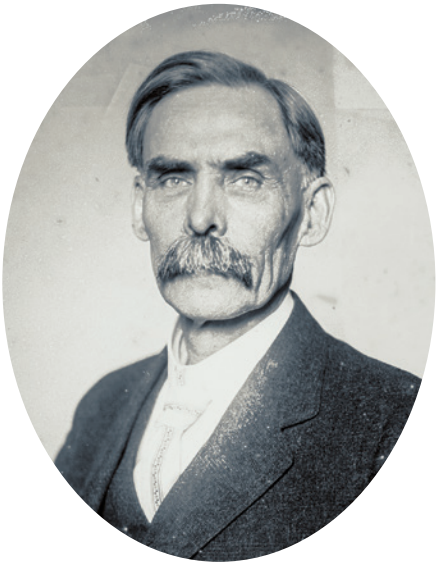
The White House picketing turned into a flash point in spring 1917. In early April, the National Woman's Party voted to remain neutral on US entrance into World War I (NAWSA publicly supported the US entry). The daily picket line increasingly drew the ire of angry civil service and military workers. By mid-June, the police made the decision to arrest the women for "obstructing traffic," hoping to discourage them. Paul had deliberately provoked the arrests and instructed pickets to refuse assessed fines and choose jail to ramp up media attention.

In response, Clara Ueland issued a MWSA press release that refrained from name-calling but criticized the NWP by noting that the MWSA "regrets that a body of suffragists should employ a policy tending to embarrass and discredit our government in the present difficult situation" and declaring, "We believe that the enfranchisement of women should be brought about by orderly and constructive methods." The statement recorded controversy over the picketing within the chapter. Only NWP member Sophie Kenyon now remained among MWSA officers pulling double duty. However, the MWSA congressional liaison, young Bertha Moller, became angry about the chapter's disavowal of the pickets and later joined the NWP.[21]

Three Minnesota NWP members participated in the late 1917 picketing. On August 23, early convert Gertrude Hunter and Little Falls resident Clara Kinsley Fuller carried a banner to the White House quoting the president's words, in part, "[W]e cannot postpone justice any longer in these United States . . ." Hunter and Fuller were in the thick of a tumultuous two weeks of near riots over the pickets. They were arrested within 10 minutes. Fuller was a widow who had taken over the ownership of the *Little Falls Transcript* upon her husband's death and now served as its editor–publisher. She made an impassioned speech before the magistrate: "I pay taxes to this government, yet I have nothing to say in the making of those laws which control me, either as an individual or as a businesswoman." Hunter and Fuller were given 30 days in jail after refusing to pay their fines.[22]

Shortly thereafter, Minnesota congressman Andrew Volstead defended the pickets in the US House. Volstead took issue with the "ruthless warfare" pursued against the pickets. He reminded the chamber of the "disgraceful attack" on the 1913 suffrage parade and declared it "high time something besides cheap politics be demanded."[23]

Later in the fall, Minnesota NWP officer Mary Short of Minneapolis joined the November 10 picket line alongside 40 other women. The unusually large vigil protested the harsh treatment of the jailed Paul, who was being subjected to psychological torture and forced feeding. Short was sentenced to 30 days in jail. All the women were arrested and chose jail over a fine. Short was sentenced to 30 days in jail, but after a week, the need for her at home prompted her to pay the fine and she was released. *Suffragist* and other news accounts spurred public outrage over the treatment of the jailed pickets and prompted the president to release all the suffrage prisoners in late November. Debate about the efficacy of the picketing campaign raged within NWP's ranks as well as outside them. Members wrote Paul to protest and resign in anger; many more praised her, and NWP membership increased. It is unknown whether Minnesota NWP members disagreed about the picketing. Still, the chapter added members that fall and ended the year with more than 800.[24]

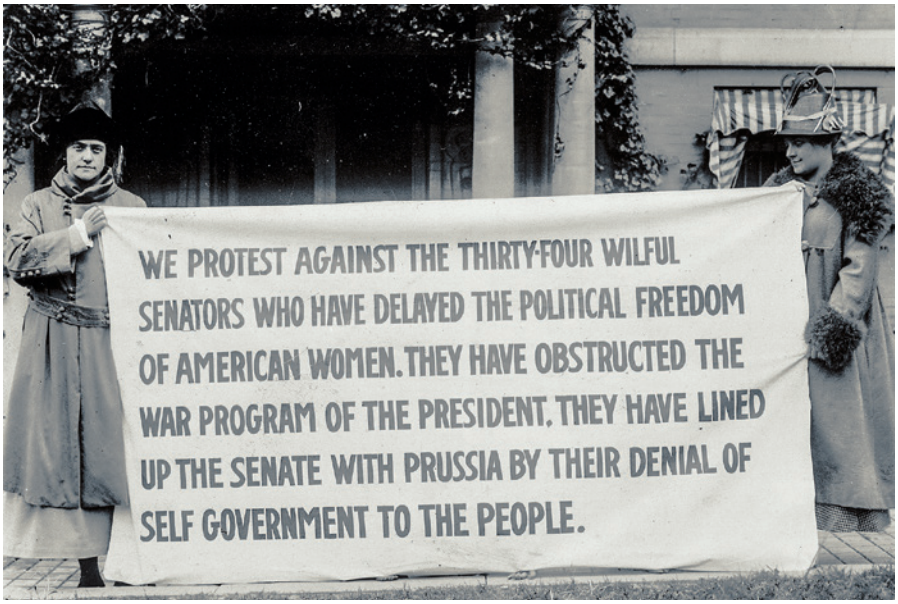


Congressman Andrew Volstead, about 1921.

In January 1918, President Wilson finally lent his support to the constitutional amendment for woman suffrage. Why? Historians debate how much credit the picketing campaign is due versus New York state women winning the vote in mid-November 1917.

The House of Representatives passed the suffrage amendment in January 1918, but the Senate was a much tougher sell. By August 1918, the NWP began new demonstrations at the White House gates or outside the Senate. These renewed protests, often featuring watch fires, continued into 1919.

Several Minnesota women took part in the watch fire demonstrations. A photographer captured Bertha Moller holding a banner outside the Senate Office Building in October 1918, one of several times she joined protests. The banner called out "thirty-four wilful [*sic*] senators" for delaying amendment passage. Moller also worked to corral Senate votes in New Jersey and New Hampshire. She was back in Washington in early 1919 to accompany fellow Minnesotans Rhoda Kellogg and Gertrude Murphy at a trial for NWP protesters. University



Minnesotan Bertha Moller (left) holding banner at Senate Office Building, ca. 1917.

of Minnesota student Kellogg had joined the university's Equal Suffrage Club trip to witness the watch fire protests; Murphy, a teacher, was probably part of that group as well. The three young Minnesotans were jailed overnight for defiantly applauding one NWP arrestee after the judge ordered silence. On January 27, the three joined a picket at the White House and were arrested.[25]

Sarah Colvin, whose husband was then stationed in Baltimore, joined similar watch fire protests and later wrote about her time in jail. Arrested in late January and again in early February 1919, Colvin ended up in jail for a total of ten days, an experience she reported as "indescribably revolting." After her release, she and her husband discussed her arrest only once, briefly. Dr. Colvin, she wrote, was shocked "that I could possibly consider anything of more importance than his career." Colvin soon joined the Prison Special, another multistate train journey, this time with some of the other former NWP prisoners. Dressed in faux prison garb, the women alarmed audiences with details of their jail time and urged listeners to pressure their senators to pass the suffrage amendment.[26]

In early June 1919, Colvin welcomed Paul to her home on Davern Avenue in St. Paul. Paul and suffragists across the nation felt confident that the new Republican-controlled US Senate would swiftly pass the suffrage amendment and send it on to the states. On June 4, their hopes were gratified. Sadly, the discord between the MWSA and the Minnesota NWP that had erupted over the picketing campaign now meant separate celebrations.

The NWP held a dinner for Paul at the St. Paul Athletic Club. Surrounded by acolytes including Jane Potter, Sophie Kenyon, Bertha Moller, Emily Bright, and Clara Fuller, Paul said, "Women who have taken part in the long struggle for freedom feel today the full relief of the victory." She declared the ratification campaign open, and pledges totaling $1,500 quickly poured in.[27]

The NWP leader later attended a Minneapolis luncheon and visited the University of Minnesota and Duluth before moving on, though not before securing a pledge from Governor J. A. A. Burnquist to call a special session of the legislature to ratify the amendment. The upsurge in support for woman suffrage at the close of World War I meant Paul was no longer an outlier. Indeed, Burnquist was a strong supporter of the federal amendment; he had enthusiastically signed a bill granting Minnesota women the right to vote for president.[28]

Perhaps it was the strength of the Minnesota NWP chapter that prompted Alice Paul to loan her much-publicized suffrage flag to Emily Grace Kay, 44, of St. Paul, a member of the Macalester College music faculty. On September 8, 1919, Kay carried the NWP flag and climbed


Will Have Charge of Piano Round Table

MISS EMILY GRACE KAY, St. Paul.

Miss Emily Grace Kay will be in charge of the piano round table at Thursday's meeting of the Music Teacher's association here next week. She will be assisted by Miss Josephine Carey, who will discuss, "Shall the Piano Teacher be a Specialist?"

Emily Grace Kay had the honor of sewing star number 15—Minnesota's—on the National Woman's Party suffrage flag.

the steps of the Minnesota State Capitol to attend the special session. She came prepared to sew star number 15 onto the suffrage flag, which indicated that Minnesota had become the fifteenth state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment. Fifteen minutes after the session opened, Emily Kay took up her needle and thread.[29] ⊡

Notes

1. Alice Paul to Webster, June 3 and 6 [1915], National Woman's Party Papers (hereafter, NWPP), Group III, box 1, folder 5, Library of Congress.

2. Brief biographies of all Minnesota NWP activists mentioned, except for Sophie Kenyon, may be found at "Online Biographical Dictionary of Militant Woman Suffragists, 1913–1920," https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/c/1006939749. Jane Bliss Potter (1861–1929) was a suffragist who would serve as Minnesota state chair of the Congressional Union and who picketed the White House as part of the "silent sentinel" protests.

3. Paul to Webster, June 3 and 6 [1915], NWPP.

4. Paul to Webster, June 3 and 6 [1915], NWPP; Barbara Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995), 133. Emily Bright (c. 1856–1930), was a suffragist who served as president of the Political Equality Club of Minneapolis for two years prior to her election as president of Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA) in 1913.

5. Mary Walton, *A Woman's Crusade: Alice Paul and the Battle for the Ballot* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010), 43–44. J. D. Zahniser and Amelia R. Fry, *Alice Paul: Claiming Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, 2019), 105–6.

6. Linda G. Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party, 1912–1920* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 26–30; Zahniser and Fry, *Alice Paul,* 47.

7. Zahniser and Fry, *Alice Paul,* 115; "Crusade for the Vote: Woman Suffrage Timeline," National Women's History Museum, http://www.crusadeforthevote.org/woman-suffrage-timeline-18401920. Arizona, Kansas, and Oregon granted women suffrage in 1912; California in 1911; Washington State in 1910; Utah and Idaho in 1896; Colorado in 1893; and Wyoming in 1890.

8. Zahniser and Fry, *Alice Paul,* 115–16.

9. Zahniser and Fry, *Alice Paul,* 178–91; Ellen Carol DuBois, *Suffrage: Women's Long Battle for the Vote* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2020), 196–97.

10. The Congressional Union began in 1913 as an independent fundraising arm when Paul ran NAWSA's congressional committee. It was then refashioned as a full-fledged suffrage group in early 1914.

11. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 70, 133.

12. "Members, Jan 1–Apr 30, 1915," NWPP, I, reel 126; Inez Haynes Irwin, *The Story of Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party* (Fairfax, VA: Denlinger's Publishers, 1977), 82–83; Sarah Tarleton Colvin, *A Rebel in Thought* (New York: Island Workshop Press, 1944), 129.

13. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 133–35; Alice Paul to Lucy Burns, July 13, 1915, NWPP, II, reel 17; Alice Paul to Lucy Burns, Aug. 6, 1915, NWPP, II, reel 18. Some information on Sophie Kenyon (1864–1956) is available at https://www.rchs.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/We-Persisted-Women-Leaders-20190529.pdf.

14. Clara Ueland to Mrs. Orton H. Clark, Aug. 8, 1915, NWPP, I, reel 1; Alice Paul to Clara Ueland, Jan. 20, 1915, NWPP, I, reel 1; "Report of Membership Chairman," Dec. 4, 1915, NWPP, I, reel 88.

15. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 135–36.

16. Clara Ueland to Mrs. Henry Wade Rogers, Aug. 3, 1915, NWPP, I, reel 1.

17. "Minnesota," *Suffragist,* Apr. 1, 1916, 5; "All Aboard for the Suffrage Special!," *Suffragist,* Apr. 1, 1916, 7; Sarah Colvin to "Mrs. Wolfe," June 2, 1916, , and Jane Potter to Alice Paul, May 30, 1916—both NWPP, II, reel 28. Thomas Schall served Minnesota's Tenth District as a US representative from 1915 to 1925 and as US senator from 1925 to 1935. He first served as a Progressive and later a Republican. Paul Nelson, "Schall, Thomas D. (1878–1935)," MNopedia, https://www.mnopedia.org/person/schall-thomas-d-1878–1935.

18. "Minnesota Branch Holds Annual Convention," *Suffragist,* July 15, 1916, 10. Photo of Elsie Hill speaking in St. Paul: https://loc.gov/item/mnwp000253/. A brief biography of Hill is at the Online Biographical Dictionary of Militant Woman Suffragists, https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/d/1006939755.

19. DuBois, *Suffrage,* 226–27.

20. "The Legislative Situation, *Suffragist,* Feb. 17, 1919, 9. For a history of the Scandinavian Suffrage Association, see Anna Marie Peterson, "Adding 'A Little Suffrage Spice to the Melting Pot': Minnesota's Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Organization," *Minnesota History* 62, no. 8 (Winter 2011–12): 288–97, and Elizabeth Loetscher, "Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association," MNopedia, https://www.mnopedia.org/group/scandinavian-woman-suffrage-association.

21. Catt to Paul, May 24, 1917, NWPP Part 2 microfilm, Reel 43; Clara Ueland, Press Department statement, noted as "Official Copy," [c. June 27, 1917], Press releases, undated and 1913–1918, 35, Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association Records, Minnesota Historical Society, http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00756/pdfa/00756-00064.pdf. Stuhler notes the MWSA statement was signed by a variety of members, Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors*, 141.

22. Irwin, *The Story of Alice Paul,* 243–44; Clara K. Fuller, *History of Morrison and Todd Counties: Their People, Industries and Institutions* (Indianapolis: Bowen & Co., 1915) 103–4; *Suffragist,* Jan. 5, 1918, 10.

23. "A House Woman Suffrage Committee Created," *Suffragist,* Sept. 29, 1917, 7–8. Brief biography of Andrew Volstead: https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/V/VOLSTEAD,-Andrew-John-(V000114)/.

24. *Suffragist,* Nov. 24, 1917, 4; "Forty-one Suffrage Pickets Answer the Attempt of the Democratic Administration to Crush Suffrage," *Suffragist,* Nov. 17, 1917, 6–7; Zahniser and Fry, 292–95; Report of Membership Dept., Oct. 1917, NWPP II, Reel 26. There are no extant records for the Minnesota NWP, to my knowledge. Little is known of Short beyond her activism in the NWP.

25. Irwin, *The Story of Alice Paul,* 382–83, 391, 408; Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom,* 363, 365, 366; "Guilty of—?" *Suffragist,* Feb. 1, 1919, 6.

26. Elizabeth Kalb, "The Watch Fire Goes On," *Suffragist,* Feb. 8, 1919, 8–9; Colvin, *A Rebel in Thought,* 135–39, 140–42; Irwin, *The Story of Alice Paul,* 412–19; "The Prison Special," *Suffragist,* Feb. 22, 1919, 3.

27. Sarah Colvin to Alice Paul, May 30, 1919; "Ratification," *Suffragist,* June 21, 1919, 6; "The Ratification Campaign," *Suffragist,* June 28, 1919, 7.

28. "Suffragist Open US Drive Here," *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* June 5, 1919, 1; "Planned Dinner Here for Miss Alice Paul," *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* June 6, 1919, 9. For more on the details of Minnesota's ratification, see Linda A. Cameron, "Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in Minnesota," MNopedia, https://www.mnopedia.org/event/ratification-nineteenth-amendment-minnesota. In March 1919, the Minnesota Legislature extended women's limited suffrage rights through the right to vote in presidential elections: see https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/1919/0/Session+Law/Chapter/89/pdf/.

29. "Historic 'Sewing Bee' will Fizzle if Legislators Hold Up Suffrage," *St. Paul Pioneer Press,* Sept. 8, 1919, 5; "St. Paul," *Music News* 9 no. 40 (Oct. 5, 1917): 45; *Macalester College Bulletin* 9, no. 3 (Apr. 1921): 8, 81.

Images on p. 155 (top), 159, MNHS Collections; all others, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division; p. 160, *Duluth News Tribune*, July 5, 1913, MNHS microfilm.

EXPANDING THE SUFFRAGE STORY THROUGH

Newspapers

The *American Jewish World*

The *American Jewish World* (*AJW*) was founded in 1912 by Minneapolis rabbi Samuel Deinard as a way to bridge a divide in the local Jewish community. At the turn of the twentieth century, Minnesota's German Jews and those from eastern Europe had little contact with each other. They lived in different neighborhoods and worshiped at different synagogues. Divisions among them centered on religious practice, language, and income.[1]

German-speaking Jews arrived in Minnesota in the mid-nineteenth century and had quickly Americanized, including adopting English and a less ritually stringent form of Judaism known as Reform. Beginning in the 1880s, large numbers of Jews from eastern Europe—mostly impoverished, ritually observant, and Yiddish-speaking—arrived in the United States and Minnesota. By 1910, Minnesota's Jewish community numbered 13,000 (slightly under 10,000 of whom lived in St. Paul and Minneapolis). The English-language *AJW*'s circulation in 1918 was 8,793.[2]

Samuel Deinard was uniquely positioned to act as a community mediator. Born in eastern Europe, he had made the spiritual and intellectual journey to the Reform rabbinate. Deinard arrived in Minneapolis in 1901 to assume the pulpit of Shaarai Tov (Gates of Goodness; today, Temple Israel), Minneapolis's first synagogue. The entire Jewish community respected him for his erudition and compassion. The editorial voice of the *AJW* reflected his Americanized and liberal sensibilities, including enthusiastic support of the right of women to vote.[3]

Deinard expressed his pro-suffrage stance in two talks he gave in February 1916. Pro-suffrage sentiments were published on the *AJW*'s editorial pages unsigned. A May 1916 editorial welcomed delegates to the Mississippi Valley Suffrage Conference, to be held in what was soon to be "Mecca of the Equal Suffrage pilgrims" —Minneapolis. "We firmly believe in equal suffrage," the editorial proclaimed. The following week, the paper noted acerbically, "When we listen to some of the clever, yea, brilliant women who are the leaders and workers in the equal suffrage movement and compare them with some of the men talkers we know, we wonder why men should have suffrage at all."[4]

Extending the vote to women was equated with American democracy. After New York granted women full suffrage in November 1917, the *AJW* wrote, "Simple justice and the principle of democracy demand that woman be given this right." The following year, the *AJW* pointedly asked, "Now that the National Congress has passed the Women's Suffrage Amendment, will our State Legislatures act in the true spirit of democracy and ratify it?"[5]

A Minneapolis-based Yiddish newspaper, *Der Shabbosdige Post* (the *Saturday Post*), existed in the years surrounding ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, and Deinard himself added a Yiddish-language supplement to one of his earlier attempts to establish a Minnesota Jewish newspaper. Unfortunately, there are no extant copies of these papers, which might have yielded evidence of the suffrage sentiments of those Minnesota Jews for whom Yiddish was their native tongue (estimated at 13,000 in 1913), many of whom were religiously and socially conservative.[6]

—*Laura Weber*

Minnesota History editor **Laura Weber** is the author of some 30 MNopedia articles on Minnesota Jewish history.

Notes

1. Laura Weber, "American Jewish World," MNopedia, Minnesota Historical Society, http://www.mnopedia.org/thing/american-jewish-world; Weber, "From Exclusion to Integration: The Story of Jews in Minnesota," MNopedia, http://www.mnopedia.org/exclusion-integration-story-jews-minnesota. The *AJW* is still published as of 2020.

2. Weber, "From Exclusion to Integration"; Hyman Berman, and Linda Mack Schloff, *Jews in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2002), 12; *American Jewish Yearbook, 1910–1911*, 278, https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/1910-1911amjewishyearbook.pdf; *N. W. Ayers & Sons Newspaper Annual and Directory* (1918), 1222. Over 2 million eastern European Jewish immigrants arrived in the US from the 1880s to 1924.

3. Michael G. Rapp, "Samuel Deinard and the Unification of Jews in Minneapolis," *Minnesota History* 43, no. 6 (Summer 1973): 213–21; Weber, "Temple Israel, Minneapolis," MNopedia, http://www.mnopedia.org/group/temple-israel-minneapolis.

4. "Social News: Club Notes," *AJW*, Feb. 4, 1916, 412; "The Coming of the Equal Suffrage Hosts," *AJW*, May 5, 1916, 616; "Editorial," *AJW*, May 12, 1916, 632.

5. "Editorial Notes," *AJW*, Nov. 9, 1917, 169; *AJW*, July 12, 1918, 750.

6. Albert I. Gordon, *Jews in Transition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1949), 177–78, lists publication dates of *Der Shabbosdige Post* as 1917–21, dates repeated in Rapp, "Samuel N. Deinard," 219n19; W. Gunther Plaut, *The Jews in Minnesota: The First Seventy-five Years* (New York: American Jewish Historical Society,1959), 298, and Norman Drachler, *A Bibliography of Jewish Education in the United States* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1966), 463, list years of publication as 1921–23. Estimate of Yiddish speakers in 1913, Hy Berman, "The Jews," in *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, ed. June D. Holmquist (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 498. Before immigration restrictions were put in place in 1924, some 20,000 eastern European Jews settled in Minnesota: Gordon, *Jews in Transition*, 5.

The "Antis"

Minnesota Women Opposed to Female Suffrage

Hannah Dyson

Lavinia Gilfillan was a modern woman. She supported women's education and petitioned the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents in 1902 to allow her to raise funds for a campus building dedicated to women students. She devoted her time to philanthropic work to improve the lives of women and children. She participated in various organizations around the Twin Cities, including the Peripatetics (a women's study club) and the Society of Fine Arts. A patron of the arts, Gilfillan hosted concerts for the Thursday Musical, as well as art auctions at her home, 222 Clifton Avenue in Minneapolis. She was also an anti-suffragist.[1]

In most respects, Gilfillan was indistinguishable from Minnesota's woman suffrage leaders fighting for the ballot. For the most part, this group of anti-suffragists and suffragists came from the same middle-to-upper class and believed in the same causes, such as prohibition, protecting the welfare of children, and public health reforms. These like-minded women disagreed, however, over how to best achieve their desired reforms.[2]

Although Minnesota's anti-suffrage leaders were well-off and typically held more conservative views than their suffrage counterparts, they did not oppose the vote because they opposed the "modern woman." In fact, many anti-suffragists encouraged women's involvement in public life, education, philanthropy, and business. Instead, the antis, a common nickname for the anti-suffragists, fought against equal suffrage because they argued for the power of female nonpartisanship, the importance of preserving their vision of US democracy, and the necessity for division of labor between men and women based on their "natural" strengths. They didn't believe that women were inferior, just different; they believed gender differences helped society to thrive.

Women themselves led and supported the anti-suffrage movement. Although some contemporary critics characterized the anti-suffragists as "puppets of more powerful male forces," historian Thomas Jablonsky

Anti-suffrage postcard, 1920.

coined the phrase "conservative activists" to describe them, implying their opposition to votes for women was based on their autonomous beliefs about American democracy and citizenship. Another historian, Susan E. Marshall, identifies anti-suffragists as "a privileged urban elite of extraordinary wealth, social position, and political power." She asserts that their platform was antimodern and their primary concern was maintaining the status quo, but she refers mainly to East Coast anti-suffragists. Historian Manuela Thurner provides an alternate view: anti-suffragists were not retrogressive society women fighting against progress but rather activists who ardently believed that women could best improve society when remaining nonpartisan. Lavinia Coppock Gilfillan more closely represents the later definition, although both types of anti-suffragists participated in the Minnesota movement.[3]

Exploring Minnesota's anti-suffrage personalities, their organizational activities, and their complex, sometimes contradictory rhetoric illuminates why not all women wanted the ballot. Anti-suffrage and the women who championed it have little space dedicated to them in the broader discussion about suffrage in the United States, especially in the Midwest. Yet broadening the scope of the suffrage movement to include anti-suffragists furthers the understanding of how different women positioned themselves in society during the Progressive Era.

Mrs. William Davis and Lavinia Coppock Gilfillan, right.

The anti-suffrage cause came to Minnesota in November 1913, when nationally known anti-suffrage lecturer Bertha Lane Scott (Mrs. William Forse Scott) traveled to the Twin Cities to facilitate the creation of anti-suffrage organizations. Once a suffragist herself, by 1909 she had switched sides and was vice president of the Guidon Club, an anti-suffrage organization based in New York. The movement was most successful in the eastern states, and anti-suffragists hoped to extend their influence westward, where suffrage victories had occurred more frequently—Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, and Washington had all granted equal suffrage by 1910. Characterized as a woman with a fierce personality and ardent zeal, Scott hosted conferences and lectures during her Twin Cities trip, outlining the anti-suffrage cause and sharing plans for creating an anti-suffrage movement in Minnesota. Among the attendees was Lavinia Gilfillan. By the end of 1913, three anti-suffrage organizations had been founded: the Minneapolis Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women, the St. Paul Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, and the Minnesota Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.[4]

The leaders of the new anti-suffrage associations were prominent and well-connected Twin Cities socialites who took up activist causes. They came from and married into powerful and wealthy families. Gilfillan's husband, John Bachop Gilfillan, served as both a state senator and US representative. As president of the Minnesota Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, Gilfillan brought vision and determination. Ella Pennington and Florence Carpenter, president and vice president, respectively, of the Minneapolis association, brought oratory skills that some believed Gilfillan lacked. More than just an anti-suffragist, Pennington, the wife of Edmund Pennington, an executive with the Soo Line Railroad, considered herself a patriot and was involved in the national preparedness movement after World War I broke out in Europe in 1914. Carpenter served as a trustee of New York's Wells College, her alma mater (class of 1887), and she enjoyed golf, horseback riding, and music. In addition to anti-suffrage activities, Carpenter, Gilfillan, and Pennington collaborated closely on philanthropic work and other pursuits. Gilfillan and Carpenter sponsored and hosted balls for young debutantes. They also shared an interest in seeing that women received a quality college education.[5]

Nationally, relations between suffragists and anti-suffragists were often hostile, but not in Minnesota. Unlike the case on the East Coast, Minnesota women on both sides of the issue participated in the same clubs and social circles. To maintain cordial ties, several women's clubs chose not to directly address the suffrage issue to avoid alienating members. Gilfillan, Carpenter, and Clara Ueland, a leading figure of Minnesota's woman suffrage movement in the 1910s, discussed literature, history, and philosophy together in the Peripatetics study club. According to historian Barbara Stuhler, Ueland admired Carpenter and felt comfortable sending her daughter, Anne, to Wells College, knowing that Carpenter was a graduate. Anne Ueland seems to have admired Carpenter's intellect, writing in a letter that she considered her a "fluent creature." During the 1915 legislative session, where suffrage was a highly contested topic, the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* noted, "both suffragists and 'antis' smiled pleasantly at each other."[6]

The leaders of the new anti-suffrage associations were prominent and well-connected Twin Cities socialites who took up activist causes.

Minnesota niceties, however, did not prevent the occasional accusation from breaking out on either side. Anti-suffragists critiqued the most liberal suffragists, who took part in the feminist and socialist movements, as well as the militant strategies brought to the United States by east coasters Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, who had worked on suffrage in Great Britain. Ella Pennington decried liberal suffragists this way: "[T]he emotional nature of woman has carried many Suffragists to the disgraceful conduct of the Militant, and the repelling doctrine of the Feminist. Where would emotionalism carry these women in the Political Arena?" Nonetheless, Pennington also made sure to acknowledge the good work to which many suffragists were committed. Although anti-suffragists were social reformers, they typically held more conservative views than many suffragists and felt socialist and feminist ideas threatened a successful democracy.[7]

For anti-suffragists, successful democracy looked very similar to the status quo. Women engaged in public life, but their influence lay primarily in the domestic and philanthropic spheres while men worked in the political sphere. This gender balance of work tied into men's and women's supposed natural talents, thereby enabling the United States to prosper. Women were not considered less important because of their position in the domestic sphere. In fact, the domestic sphere was seen as the "bulwark against social disorder." According to Carpenter, women "play their part in public affairs . . . by their immense influence upon public opinion." They exerted this influence through philanthropic efforts and through rearing children to have strong morals and beliefs.[8]

Young people also participated in the anti-suffrage movement. Both the Minneapolis Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women and the Minnesota Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage had junior auxiliaries. A newspaper article written by a college woman laid out the appeal of anti-suffragism to young adults: "The situation is dangerous. We often hear the remark that women will get the vote if they try hard enough and persistently enough; and if they do get it, they will play havoc with it for themselves and society." Young anti-suffragists believed equal suffrage threatened traditional womanhood by forcing women away from their familial and loving natures and into the corrupt world of politics.

Ella Pennington


Florence Carpenter

Tessie Wilcox Jones, the face of the younger generation of anti-suffragists in Minnesota (and the daughter of Herschel V. Jones, publisher of the *Minneapolis Journal*), warned in a pamphlet titled "The Philosophy of Anti-Suffrage" that the United States would face a similar fate to the Roman Empire if women were enfranchised. Jones quoted journalist Margaret Bisland, who claimed that only "through her motherhood and her domesticity, does woman safeguard the whole nation." Thus, both younger and older anti-suffragists presented domesticity as instrumental to stabilizing and maintaining democracy.[9]

By 1915, anti-suffrage associations focused on educating the public about their cause. They sought to dispel misunderstandings about their platform circulated by suffragists. In her anti-suffrage pamphlet, Tessie Jones addressed possible reader misconceptions concerning anti-suffrage supporters: "You have heard of the anti-suffragist as a woman of leisure, knowing nothing of industrial problems, little of the ills of society, and caring less. . . . Espousing a retrogressive cause, she is a slave to the tyranny of convention, a parasite in the existing economic order, and a menace to society and democracy."[10]

To combat the "woman of leisure" stereotype, Jones and other antis strove to clarify that they encouraged women to participate in public life, just not in politics. They explained that they did not oppose voting because they viewed women as less intelligent. Rather, they maintained that suffragists viewed the vote as a solution to social problems, whereas antis did not. Backing up their claims with statistics comparing suffrage states to non-suffrage states, antis argued that suffrage states were no more successful than non-suffrage states at passing laws that women championed, such as prohibition. Florence Carpenter asserted that Illinois women had been less successful than Minnesota women in shutting down saloons even though they were enfranchised. Ultimately, the anti-suffrage cause represented the desire to maintain prosperity in society through nonpartisanship and separate spheres for men and women.[11]

In many ways, the anti-suffrage education platform mirrored the action plan of the suffragists. In this regard, Minnesota anti-suffragists seem to have been influenced by New York anti-suffragists. In contrast to Minnesota anti-suffrage activists, antis in other states were "very reluctant to use suffragist techniques to fight enfranchisement." These techniques included participating in debates and engaging with state legislators.[12]

To combat the "woman of leisure" stereotype, Jones and other antis strove to clarify that they encouraged women to participate in public life, just not in politics.

Addressing various women's groups and city communities, Minnesota antis hoped to extend their message and influence throughout Minnesota. The anti-suffrage headquarters at the Meyers Arcade on Ninth and Nicollet in downtown Minneapolis provided a venue for women to explore the cause. In addition, Lavinia Gilfillan traveled throughout the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota to speak on anti-suffrage. She and other antis tailored their message to each audience. When Gilfillan addressed 60 young women from the Minnesota Business College, she explained, "The Anti-Suffragist also believes in women in business, in public life, but she does not believe in women in politics." Outreach fostered burgeoning anti-suffrage communities in Excelsior, Long Lake, Winona, Stillwater, Duluth, St. Cloud, and others. Although the movement remained mostly urban in Minnesota, organizations in rural Minnesota provided crucial support.[13]

Anti-suffragists also used racist and xenophobic arguments to oppose the vote. During a 1914 debate, Carpenter expressed concern about "masses of foreign born women, even more illiterate than their men; masses of ignorant Black women of the South; masses of indifferent and corrupt women in our cities" taking part in the vote. To the antis, these "ignorant" and "corrupt" women posed a threat to society because they supposedly did not have the education required to vote. Anti-suffragists didn't want the vote for themselves because they viewed it as a responsibility and a burden, not a right. They expected voters to be well researched and educated about the American political system, and antis believed they did not have time for this in their already busy schedules. Anti-suffragists assumed that African American women, immigrants, and prostitutes were uneducated and indifferent to learning the voting process. They also believed that corrupt businessmen and politicians could manipulate these women to vote a certain way. Not surprisingly, anti-suffragists were not unique in their racism. Both regionally and nationally, suffragists were also guilty of excluding people of color and debating the amount of influence

Meyers Arcade, 920 Nicollet in Minneapolis, headquarters of the anti-suffragists, 1910.

African American women would carry in elections.[14]

Anti-suffragists increased their visibility at the 1915 Minnesota State Fair, distributing literature in English as well as in German and Scandinavian languages. According to the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* the literature was widely popular. Anti-suffragists also hosted public events, including the Flower and Garden Fete held on August 17, 1915, with animal competitions and a sale of flowers, candy, and dairy products. Red and pink roses, the symbol of anti-suffrage, decorated the fair and were sold to attendees. The successful event raised more money than expected.[15]

When the Minnesota Legislature focused on suffrage in 1915, the anti-suffragists changed their tactics. Despite their reluctance to engage in politics, Gilfillan led a group, all wearing red roses, to the state capitol on January 12, to make the anti-suffrage sentiment visible to legislators. The antis sat in the gallery alongside their suffrage counterparts, watching senate proceedings take place. At adjournment for the day, the antis were approached by a senator from Hennepin County who invited them to speak with other senators. To their surprise, the senators requested that the antis hold a public hearing before the Senate Elections Committee on their reasons for opposition. Gilfillan agreed. Although the anti-suffragists usually chose to let men speak for them in the political sphere, they decided to speak for themselves during the hearing. Gilfillan explained away any possible contradictions by insisting that it was their patriotic duty to meet the senators' request. Speaking to fellow anti-suffragists, Gilfillan summarized their 1915 legislative efforts: "We, who believe in men speaking for us at the polls, did not ask their assistance that day. . . . It was said our arguments fitted the demand of the hour, and the Senators who wanted us to have the hearing were very glad we had come."[16]

At the hearing, anti-suffragists from communities around Minnesota attested that they were not interested in receiving the ballot. Perhaps because of their testimony, the suffrage bill failed in the senate. Almost immediately, however, another bill was introduced that proposed giving women the right to vote in presidential elections. The antis quickly mobilized against this bill. Speaking against statutory law, Gilfillan asserted that "right to modify the Government is a power inherent with the people" and should not be decided by the legislature. This bill, too, failed. By the end of the 1915 legislative session, prospects looked bright for the anti-suffragists.[17]

US entrance into World War I in 1917 brought a halt to anti-suffrage activity. As suffrage gained victories across the country, Gilfillan responded: "When our soldiers are safely home and the war against autocracy won, anti-suffrage can again logically take up the question of votes for women." Meanwhile, the anti-suffragists turned to patriotic work supporting the home front. Gilfillan became the head of the machine knitting division for the Minneapolis chapter of the Red Cross, producing socks and other clothing for soldiers abroad. She also worked with suffragist Clara Ueland on the home economics committee, educating homemakers on food conservation. Anti-suffragists condemned those suffragists who refused to participate in the war effort or who prioritized the suffrage cause over fulfilling their patriotic duty.[18]

After the war ended, Minnesota's anti-suffrage activity never resumed in earnest. One of the few allusions to an active anti-suffrage movement appeared in a short paragraph in the *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* calling for the house to delay voting on a suffrage bill introduced in early 1919 by state representative Theodore Christianson Jr. that granted Minnesota women the right to vote in presidential elections regardless of the outcome of the federal suffrage amendment. Surprisingly, when Minnesota set about ratifying the Nineteenth Amendment, no mention was made of an anti-suffragist presence at the capitol, nor was a documented statement given by any anti-suffragist when the amendment

was ratified on September 8, 1919. Both in Minnesota and nationally, anti-suffragism peaked from 1911 to 1916. The main anti-suffrage associations left standing prominently after World War I were on the East Coast. On October 5, 1919, the Minneapolis College Women's Club moved into the old anti-suffrage headquarters at Meyers Arcade, signaling the end of the movement in Minnesota.[19]

Minnesota anti-suffragists opposed the ballot for women because they believed it could jeopardize US democracy and women's place in society. They believed that preserving domestic womanhood and a nonpartisan position was the best way to achieve the social reforms that both suffragists and anti-suffragists sought. As Florence Carpenter put it, a woman "is very much more potent because she is non-partisan. She is now able to approach any public measure with an unprejudiced mind because she is not bound to party lines." Anti-suffragists opposed the vote not because they were antimodern or antiwoman but because they believed they could best fulfill their patriotic duty without the vote. The anti-suffragists' belief in patriotic duty best explains why, when women gained the right to vote with the Nineteenth Amendment, Lavinia Gilfillan and countless other anti-suffragists voted, too.[20]

Notes

1. "Round about the State," *Stillwater Messenger,* Apr. 19, 1902, 2; "November 22 Date Set for Artists' League Auction," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 12, 1911, 26; "Thursday Musical," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Dec. 5, 1915, Society section, 2.

2. Barbara Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors: Clara Ueland and the Minnesota Struggle for Woman Suffrage* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1995), 93.

3. Manuela Thurner, "'Better Citizens Without the Ballot': American AntiSuffrage Women and Their Rationale During the Progressive Era," *Journal of Women's History* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 34, Jablonsky coinage cited, 39; Susan E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 5.

4. "Anti Woman Suffrage Club Will Be Organized Here," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 11, 1913, 11; John William Leonard, ed., *Woman's Who's Who of America: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Women of the United States and Canada, 1914–1915* (New York: American Commonwealth Company, 1914), 723; 63rd Congress, 2nd session, House of Representatives Document No. 298, 106; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood,* 26. Scott (1860–1938) was an active anti-suffragist from New York State who lectured nationally on that topic.

5. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 95; Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association Records, 1894–1923, M508, microfilm reel 14, MNHS; "Duffle Bags Made for State Soldiers," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Aug. 19, 1916, 14; Leonard, ed., *Woman's Who's Who of America,* 162; "Society," *Minneapolis Journal,* Oct. 28, 1906, Dramatic and social section, 4; Nick Steffel, "The Minneapolis Association *Opposed* to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women," Hennepin County Library Tumblr, https://hclib.tumblr.com/post/137898946993/the-minneapolis-association-opposed-to-the-further.

6. Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 95; "Red Roses and Yellow Jonquils Symbolize the Suffrage Battle," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Mar. 5, 1915, 1.

7. Ella Pennington, "Woman the Helpmate," Pamphlets Relating to the Women's Suffrage Movement in Minnesota, 1899–1920, JK1896, MNHS (hereafter cited as Pamphlets), 2.

8. Susan Goodier, *No Votes for Women: The New York State Anti-Suffrage Movement* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 2; Florence Carpenter, "A Fair Share for Women," Pamphlets, 2.

9. "A College Woman Tells Why She Is Opposed to Equal Suffrage," *Pioneer Press,* Pamphlets; Tessie Jones, "The Philosophy of Anti-Suffrage," Pamphlets, 2; Margaret Bisland, "The Curse of Eve," *North American Review* 177 (July 1903): 117. Jones (1886–1967), an active clubwoman, was, with her father, a patron of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. See Jones Family Papers, MNHS, http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/00910.xml.

10. Jones, "The Philosophy of Anti-Suffrage," 1.

11. Carpenter, "A Fair Share for Women," 3.

12. Goodier, *No Votes for Women,* 10.

13. "Well-Known Women Will Assist at Anti-Suffrage Tea on Monday Afternoon," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Oct. 6, 1915, 14; "Mrs. Gilfillan Addresses Girl Students of Business," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Dec. 11, 1914, 12; Lavinia Gilfillan, "Report of Committee on Legislation for the Session 1914–1915," Pamphlets, 1.

14. Quoted in Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 97.

15. "Literature in Foreign Languages Distributed by Anti-Suffragists," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Sept. 8, 1915, 2; "Flower and Garden Fete," *Cannon Falls Beacon,* Aug. 27, 1915, 1.

16. Gilfillan, "Report of Committee on Legislation," 1, 2. Unfortunately, Gilfillan did not record the name or political party of the senator who approached her.

17. Gilfillan, "Report of Committee on Legislation."

18. Gilfillan, "Report of Committee on Legislation," 4; "Firemen Here Knit 6,000 Pairs of Socks," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* July 21, 1918, Women and War Work section, 4; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 152–54; "Anti-Suffragists Score Idea of Votes for Women as War Work Reward," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* May 13, 1917, Society section, 15. It's important to note that Emmeline Pankhurst was a staunch supporter of the war and a major recruiter of women volunteers.

19. "Women Ask Delay," *National Advocate,* Mar. 15, 1919, 4. Christianson (1883–1948) served five terms in the Minnesota House, was governor of Minnesota from 1925 to 1931 and later represented Minnesota in the US House and Senate. The bill he introduced in 1919 did not give women the right to vote for state, county, or municipal offices, which would only come to Minnesota with full federal suffrage. This passed in March 1919 (Laws 1919, Chapter 89). Minnesota was the fifteenth state to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment, ensuring full suffrage for women; see Linda A. Cameron, "Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in Minnesota," MNopedia, https://www.mnopedia.org/event/ratification-nineteenth-amendment-minnesota; Allison Lange, "National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage," *National Women's History Museum,* Fall 2015, http://www.crusadeforthevote.org/naows-opposition; "College Women to Have Club Room in Loeb [*sic*] Arcade," *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune,* Oct. 5, 1919, Society section, 6.

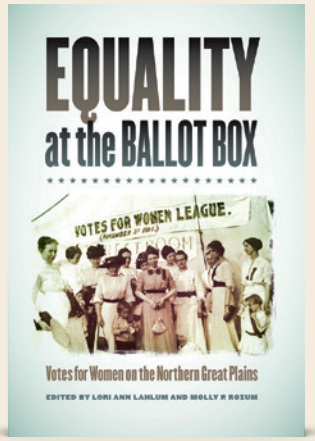
20. Carpenter, "A Fair Share for Women," 2; Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* 224–25; "To the Women Voters of the 4th Ward," *Minneapolis Morning Tribune,* Nov. 6, 1922, 13.

Images on p. 163, 167, MNHS Collections; p. 164, scanned from p. 94, Stuhler, *Gentle Warriors,* via *St. Paul Pioneer Press*; p. 165 (left, *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, March 5, 1915), Minnesota Newspaper Hub, MNHS; p. 165 (right), Hennepin County Library.

Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains

edited by Lori Ann Lahlum and Molly P. Rozum

(Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2019, 300 p., Hardcover, $34.95.)



The story of woman suffrage has long been told from the national perspective. More recently, state studies have drawn attention to local experiences and histories of suffrage and how they converge and diverge from broader narratives. *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains* approaches woman suffrage in a novel way by examining its history within a regional framework. This perspective illuminates how geography and a sense of place shaped woman suffrage and the ways in which local events and efforts resonated regionally and nationally and vice versa. The suffrage movements of North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana had unique trajectories but also shared commonalities. In particular, the authors explore how the struggle for woman suffrage was long—the issue had been debated for more than 50 years when the Nineteenth Amendment was passed—and often uneven, marked by promising opportunities and demoralizing failures.

The volume covers a wide range of topics—from school suffrage to battles over the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment—but common themes emerge across these myriad subjects, including how the broader context of the Civil War and Reconstruction, westward expansion, settler colonialism, and nationalism inflected suffrage debates. While the chapters focus on suffrage in particular states, they also reveal how suffrage networks and activism crossed state lines. For instance, Kristin Mapel Bloomberg's chapter on Cora Smith Eaton traces how Eaton's participation in North Dakota's suffrage movement paved the way for activism in Minnesota and other parts of the United States. Similarly, Sara Egge highlights how Julia B. Nelson drew upon her experiences working among Norwegian immigrants in Minnesota while advocating for the necessity of engaging immigrant communities in South Dakota's movement.

Another theme throughout the volume is how suffrage intersected (or not) with other movements, most notably temperance. As the editors, Lori Ann Lahlum and Molly P. Rozum, note in their introduction, one of the features that distinguished the suffrage movement in the northern Great Plains is the crucial role the Woman's Christian Temperance Union played in its success. While national suffrage leaders opposed linking the causes, local leaders realized that temperance could bolster suffrage, a topic explored by Ann W. Braaten in her chapter on Kate Selby Wilder and by Lahlum in her essay on the South Dakota Scandinavian Temperance Society. The fraught connection between temperance and suffrage relates to another theme in the volume—conflicts between national suffrage leaders and local leaders. Paula M. Nelson and Ruth Page Jones explore this topic in their respective chapters on anti-suffrage women in South Dakota and school suffrage in the Dakota Territory, and it is also central in Egge's chapter on South Dakota.

Both Egge and Rozum examine discourses of white supremacy surrounding the 1890 election in South Dakota but through different lenses. While Egge focuses on ethnicity, Rozum centers her analysis on Native American suffrage. In particular, Rozum discusses how racialized assumptions not only kept suffragists from supporting Native American suffrage but also caused them to neglect how Native Americans could be key allies. The possibilities of collaboration between the Native American rights movement and the woman suffrage movement are explored in greater detail in Dee Garceau's chapter on Blackfeet Indian empowerment. Garceau examines how women like Helen Piotopowaka Clark and Virginia Billedeaux viewed suffrage as an opportunity to increase the political voice for the Blackfeet people. These chapters give new insights into Native American women's involvement in and exclusion from the suffrage movement, but as the editors themselves note, much more work needs to be done on this topic as well as on the role and experiences of African American and other minority women in the suffrage movement.

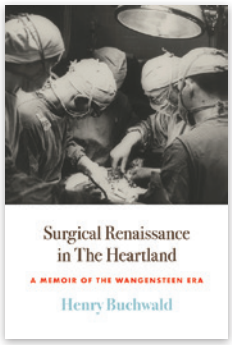
Further research on these and other topics is replete with challenges, not least of which is the archive. Various essays indicate the possibilities that lay in looking beyond conventional sources as scholars continue to study woman suffrage on the northern Great Plains. For instance, Braaten's study on Wilder's dress demonstrates the value of examining material culture, specifically clothing. Kelly O'Dea's essay on German-language newspapers and Lahlum's work on the South Dakota Scandinavian Temperance Society demonstrate how foreign-language sources can challenge ideas about immigrant communities' views on suffrage.

Consequently, *Equality at the Ballot Box* not only deepens our understanding about the woman suffrage movement and experiences within and beyond the northern Great Plains but also provides generative discussions about future research.

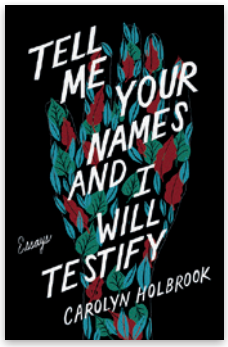
—Elizabeth Dillenburg

TAKE THREE

The Conservative Heartland: A Political History of the Postwar American Midwest edited by Jon K. Lauck and Catherine McNichol Stock (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020, 392 p., Paper, $29.95). This timely volume examines how and why the Midwest has arguably become America's most contested political battleground. The editors' introductory essay and the 17 essays gathered here reveal how the roots of conservative victories in state legislatures and national elections in the early twenty-first century reach back across decades of political organization in the region, defined as nine states from the Dakotas to Indiana and Ohio. Deindustrialization, environmentalism, second-wave feminism, mass incarceration, debates over same-sex marriage and abortion, and more played roles in transforming the prewar Republican Party into the New Right, a transformation associated with the Sun Belt but in which the Midwest, the authors contend, was an equally key player. The sole Minnesota-specific chapter covers the "white working-class revolt" that led in 1969 to the election of Charles Stenvig as mayor of Minneapolis, but references to Minnesota are abundant.



Surgical Renaissance in the Heartland: A Memoir of the Wangensteen Era by Henry Buchwald (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020, 208 p., Hardcover, $24.95). After a stint in the air force, Henry Buchwald was recruited in 1960 by Dr. Owen H. Wangensteen to join the Department of Surgery at the University of Minnesota. The culture of innovation Wangensteen created was a perfect fit for Buchwald, then a young surgeon who had chafed against the rigidity of East Coast medical practice. The foundations of open-heart surgery, implantable infusion pump therapies, and other medical landmarks originated during the Wangensteen era at the U of M's Medical School. In an entertaining and inspiring style, Buchwald evokes the personalities and character of the department during his time working with Wangensteen, 1960 to 1967, as well as telling his personal story. Buchwald attributes the freedom of thought and value of innovation that were crucial to creating the "Minnesota legacy" to the midwestern and western origins of Wangensteen, Richard Varco, C. Walton Lillehei, Richard C. Lillehei, and other pioneering surgeons.



Tell Me Your Names and I Will Testify by Carolyn Holbrook (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020, 200 p., Paper, $18.95). In the face of adversity, prominent writer, arts activist, and teacher Carolyn Holbrook has created opportunities for herself at every turn. She started the Whittier Writer's Workshop in 1981 so she could take writing courses she couldn't afford. To support herself and her children she rented a typewriter, took out an ad, and started a secretarial service. This essay collection traces, in direct and affecting prose, Holbrook's path from troubled Minneapolis childhood to leadership positions in the Twin Cities literary community, where she now leads More Than a Single Story, a series of panel discussions and community conversations for people of color and Indigenous writers and arts activists.

MORE RECENT BOOKS

Open Window: The Lake Julia TB Sanatorium: A Community Created by Tuberculosis by Pat Nelson (independently published, 2020, 283 p., Paper, $19.50). The history of the northern Minnesota sanatorium as told through the intertwined stories of Dr. Mary Ghostley, Lake Julia's superintendent from 1929 until it closed in 1952, and nurses, patients, and employees, including the author's parents.

Taconite: New Life for Minnesota's Iron Range—The History of Erie Mining Company by the Erie Mining Company History Project Team (Duluth: St. Louis County Historical Society, 2019, 352 p., Hardcover, $45). Active and retired employees of Erie Mining Company (in operation from 1940 to 2001) put in more than 25,000 hours of volunteer time over an almost six-year span to document the history of one of the world's first and largest taconite mines and processing plants, with a research facility in Hibbing and taconite demonstration plant near Aurora. The success of the demonstration plant led to the construction and operation of a commercial mine and plant with an annual rated capacity of 7.5 million tons of iron ore pellets processed from taconite ore. Beyond the book, the Erie Mining History Project includes a study guide, traveling exhibit, future permanent exhibit at the St. Louis County Historical Society, and scholarships.

The Soul of the Indian: An Interpretation by Charles A. Eastman (Ohiyesa), with new introduction by Brenda J. Child (Lincoln: Bison Books/University of Nebraska Press, 2020, 156 p., Paper, $18.95). Fortieth-anniversary edition of the Dakota physician and writer's classic exploration of religion as he experienced it during the late nineteenth century.

NEWS & NOTES

■ Fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic over spring and summer 2020 resulted in temporary closures of MNHS sites and facilities and layoffs of 216 staff out of the 595 people who were employed in April, representing a 36 percent reduction in staff.

Over the summer, MNHS reopened **Jeffers Petroglyphs, Lower Sioux Agency, Oliver Kelley Farm** (on select Saturdays), **Split Rock Lighthouse,** and the trail sites **Birch Coulee Battlefield, Marine Mill,** and **Traverse des Sioux**. The **Minnesota History Center** and the **trading post (retail store)** at the **Mille Lacs Indian Museum** opened October 1. (The Mille Lacs Indian Museum, which normally closes for the season at the end of October, will remain closed.)

Visitors to the History Center can take in special exhibits including *First Avenue: Stories of Minnesota's Mainroom* and *Prince: Before the Rain*, which have been extended to January 3, 2021. Entry will be limited; advanced tickets are recommended. Market House by D'Amico café will offer grab-and-go items, and the History Center store is open.

The **Gale Family Library** at the Minnesota History Center is being reconfigured to accommodate in-person researchers and will open later this year. Look for more information, including the opening date, at mnhs.org/library.

MNHS is prepared to offer self-guided tours at the **State Capitol** as soon as the Minnesota Department of Administration reopens the building. Reopening plans are still being developed for **Mill City Museum** and additional historic sites, although it is unlikely that any will open in 2020. The updated list of what is open may be found at mnhs.org/media/news/12106.

To ensure the health and safety of guests, staff, and the community, MNHS is limiting the number of daily visitors at historic sites and museums. Tickets can be purchased online or through the box office at 651-259-3015. A limited number of tickets will be available for walk-ups. MNHS is following recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and will adjust reopening plans as necessary.

■ For the first time ever, MNHS's annual meeting will be held virtually. The 171st annual meeting will be held from 6:30 to 8 pm, November 5, 2020. A panel discussion about pivotal moments in Minnesota history—150, 100, and 50 years ago—will be moderated by Kevin Maijala, MNHS interim deputy director for learning initiatives. Panelists are Kate Beane (Flandreau Santee Sioux), director, Native American initiatives, MNHS; journalist Curt Brown, author of the Minnesota history column in the Sunday *Star Tribune*; and Brittany Lewis, founder and CEO of Research in Action and senior research associate at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Correction: The W. *K.* (not, as was published, W. *H.*) Kellogg Foundation did not and does not own the Kellogg Company, maker of breakfast cereals, as described in "Something in the Water: Brainerd's Water Fluoridation Battle," p. 58, in the Summer 2020 issue.

LETTERS

Congratulations on two powerful stories in the Summer 2020 issue. Both "Something in the Water: Brainerd's Water Fluoridation Battle" by Paul Nelson and "'In That Very Northern City': Recovering a Forgotten Struggle for Racial Integration in Duluth" by Chad Montrie reflect the issues which continue to divide us into those who are comfortable with the status quo, unhealthy or unjust as it may be, versus those who insist that we can improve both our personal well-being and the well-being of the greater community. At the bottom lies fear: fear that fluoride in our water or measles vaccines might make us sick or that black or brown homeowners next door might lower the value of our property.

Let's hope that these timely articles help Minnesotans reflect more deeply and productively on how to move our lives, and the lives of our children, toward health and inclusivity. I hope to see more articles of this sort, which by [reflecting on] past events, shed bright light on current emotional and divisive issues.

—Dutton Foster, St. Paul

Reader Tom McCarthy wrote to express his disappointment over use of the term "costume" to refer to the garment portrayed in the Curator's Choice feature (Summer 2020, p. 51): "If an article were to be written about the history of Vikings football players' 'costume,' I imagine you would receive ample complaint. Please begin using gender equal language."

Sondra Reierson, MNHS 3D objects curator and coauthor of the article, replies: "In retrospect I should have used 'uniform' rather than 'costume,' as we are referring to the clothing of athletes. Clothing curators regularly refer to 'costume' and 'costume collections' in a non-gendered way, but this usage is museum jargon that should have been stripped from an article meant for public consumption. I fully understand that in this context the word 'costume' appears gendered, and I apologize for this oversight."

Contact us Comments, questions about *Minnesota History*? Send them to 345 Kellogg Boulevard West, St. Paul, MN 55102-1906 or mnhistmag@mnhs.org. We'd love to hear from you! Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

OUR BACK PAGES

From the Bound Volumes of *Minnesota History*

1920 ▪ 100 Years Ago

A story of "When Minneapolis Flashed as a Film Making Possibility" in the pioneer period of the motion picture industry is narrated in the *Minneapolis Journal* for February 29. From the very incoherent account it appears that "Hiawatha," the first dramatic production of "the independents," was filmed in Minnehaha Glen in 1909, with such present day stars as Mary Pickford and Thomas Ince in the company. —*"News and Comment," Vol. 3, No. 6, June 1920, p. 383*

1945 ▪ 75 Years Ago

A pamphlet about *The First Fifty Years* of the Young-Quinlan Company of Minneapolis contains reprints of nine newspaper advertisements published in March, 1944, to mark the firm's golden anniversary (1945, 11 p.). They deal with such events in its history as the opening day, the fire that destroyed the company's first store, and the building of its present home. —*"News and Comment, Local History Items," Vol. 26, No. 3, September 1945, p. 288*

1970 ▪ 50 Years Ago

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of its founding in October, 1919, the League of Women Voters of Minnesota has published a small booklet entitled *The First Fifty Years*. . . . The author, Margaret Fearrington Hargraves, traces the history of the state organization, which predates the National League of Women Voters by several months. Despite program and leadership changes through the years, Mrs. Hargraves writes, the Minnesota league has retained its original purpose—to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. . . . The state league has maintained its relevance, according to the author, and is currently involved in election law reform and citizen education. —*"News & Notes," Vol. 42, No. 3, Summer 1970, p. 78*

1995 ▪ 25 Years Ago

"Motherhood protection" was a polite name for a cause that was unmentionable and not entirely legal when the [Motherhood Protection] League [later, Minnesota Birth Control League, forerunner of Planned Parenthood of Minnesota] first met in 1928. Only 12 years before, the national movement's outspoken leader, Margaret Sanger, had gone to jail for opening a birth-control clinic in an immigrant neighborhood in Brooklyn. Access to contraceptives was restricted under the same laws, more than a half-century old, that governed obscenity. —*"'Motherhood Protection' and the Minnesota Birth Control League," by Mary Losure, Vol. 54, No. 8, Winter 1995, p. 359–70*

Find these and all articles published in *Minnesota History* since 1915 at mnhs.org/mnhistory.

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VOTES FOR WOMEN

What actions will you take to shape our democracy? On the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, find your inspiration in these stories of Minnesota women. Learn how the landmark 19th Amendment was one step in the struggle to overturn barriers to voting rights that persist to this day.

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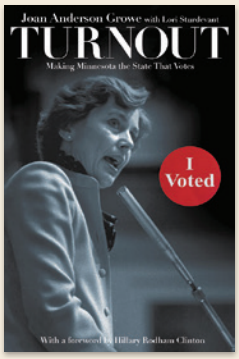
NEW BOOKS

from the Minnesota Historical Society Press

TURNOUT

Making Minnesota the State that Votes

By Joan Anderson Growe, with Lori Sturdevant, Foreword by Hillary Rodham Clinton



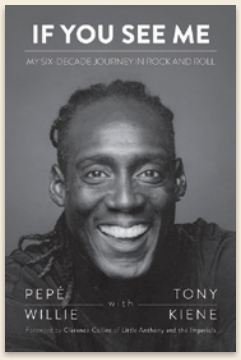
"Joan Growe made Minnesota's democracy stronger. This book describes how—by making voting easier, running orderly elections, and paving the way for women to run for high office. It also explains why that work mattered while she was secretary of state, and why it matters more than ever today."
—Vice President Walter F. Mondale

PAPERBACK, $19.95

IF YOU SEE ME

My Six-Decade Journey in Rock and Roll

By Pepé Willie, with Tony Kiene, Foreword by Clarence Collins of Little Anthony and the Imperials



"When I auditioned for Prince in October 1978, it was in Pepé Willie's basement in Minneapolis. Pepé made me feel like I was part of the family as soon as Prince brought me into the fold. A few months later, with Pepé's help the new band performed for the first time, at the Capri Theater in Minneapolis. Pepé made me an honorary soul brother after that show, and we've been best of friends ever since!" —Matt "Dr." Fink, keyboardist, songwriter, producer, and member of the Revolution

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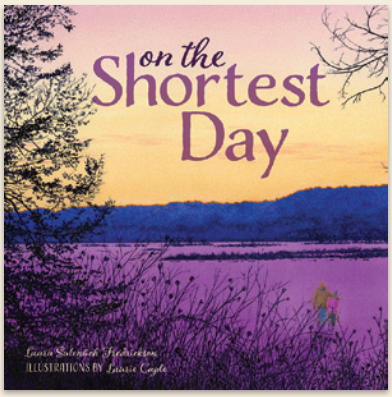
THE SHORTEST DAY

By Laura Sulentich Fredrickson, Illustrator Laurie Caple



As child and grandparent hike through the woods and along streams, they encounter deer and eagles. They find mounds and lodges, homes for muskrats and beavers. They are watched by cottontail rabbits, red foxes, and snowy owls. These animals and many more survive and even thrive during winter's deepest chill. Poetic storytelling evokes the crisp air, the sparkling snow, and the seasonal calm, while vibrant illustrations teem with wild creatures and dazzle with the bright hues of sunset on snowy landscapes.

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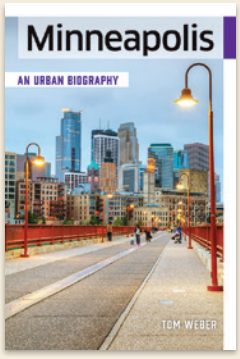
MINNEAPOLIS

An Urban Biography

By Tom Weber



"Tom Weber provides a fresh, inclusive, and timely look at the people and events that continue to shape Minneapolis. Playing with chronology, he artfully melds often-told stories with lesser-known ones. This book helps us understand the paradox of a proud city with a sterling reputation that nevertheless struggles with basic issues of equity for its citizens." —John Crippen, executive director, Hennepin History Museum

PAPERBACK, $18.95

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