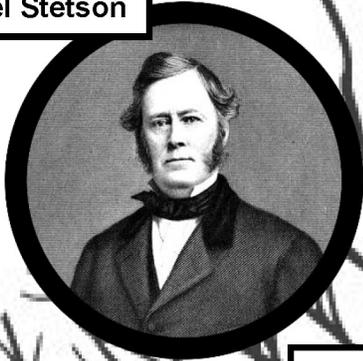


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Lemuel Stetson



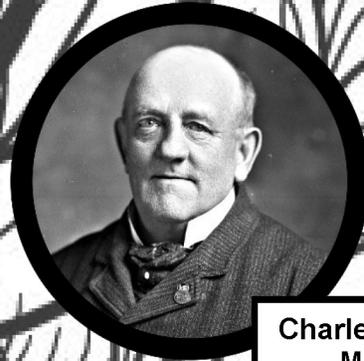
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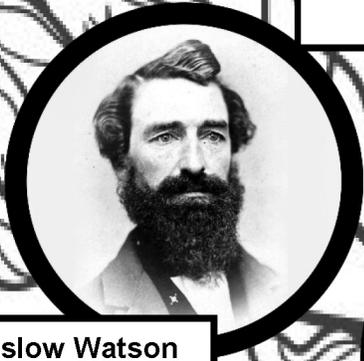
Harriet Dudley
Bell



Charles Halsey
Moore



Winslow Watson



Hannah Straight
Lansing



Marian 'Dot'
Parkhurst



CLINTON COUNTY SUFFRAGE STORY

Paris Blais - ToniAnn Buscemi - Sean Kessler
Alexander Meseck - Helen Allen Nerska

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ISBN-13: 978-1-890402-26-6 ISBN-10: 1-890402-26-5

This book is available for sale at
Clinton County Historical Association and Museum
98 Ohio Ave
Plattsburgh, NY 12903

www.clintoncountyhistorical.org

Cover design by Julie Dowd

Printed and bound by
Central Stores / Central Mailing
Clinton County Government Center
137 Margaret Street, Suite 208
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

Printed in the United States of America

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Preface

In the spring of 2016, after fielding emails from various state organizations encouraging us to commemorate, in November 2017, the 100th Anniversary of Woman Suffrage in New York State, the Clinton County Historical Association began talking to women in the historical community who might want to be involved in researching what happened in our county during the suffrage movement.

While this booklet may finally answer that question, many activities preceded it. In 2016, our group quickly began to plan and execute commemorative programs to educate and enlighten our particular audiences. We attended conferences in Seneca Falls and Albany devoted to the New York State Woman Suffrage struggle. In the spring of 2017, we collaborated with the League of Women Voters, Chapel Hill and the Strand to host Petticoats of Steel, a professional production telling the stories of New York State women and the roles they played getting voting rights for all. That fall, suffrage speaker Sally Roesch Wagner, one of the first women in the United States to receive a Doctorate in Women's Studies, accepted our invitation to speak at the Giltz Auditorium at SUNY, cosponsored by SUNY Plattsburgh and the New York Council for the Humanities.

We wrote articles for the local newspaper, set up a Facebook page, worked with SUNY Plattsburgh students in Gender and Women Studies, and sponsored a Suffrage Trivia night with the League. We gave numerous informational presentations on the county suffrage story to groups such as the League, Plattsburgh Rotary, SUNY classes, Delta Kappa Gamma, and CCHA members and the public. CCHA set up an exhibit at the museum and a display at the county building to tell our county story. Woman's Equality Day on August 26 is now a permanent part of our CCHA annual programming.

Lastly but perhaps most importantly, we added the significance of the county's suffrage movement to our association's institutional memory and hopefully the memories of those who participated in the various events. In addition to those already mentioned, the following acknowledgments further credit the support given to telling this story. Without them, it would not have been told.

Acknowledgments

Professor Willow Noland and Dr. Susan Mody at SUNY Plattsburgh Gender and Women's Studies Department for the opportunity to work with their students in the Fall of 2017.

SUNY students Paris Blaise, ToniAnn Buscemi, Sean Kessler, and Alexander Meseck for sharing their research.

Debra Kimok at SUNY Plattsburgh Special Collections for her support and encouragement.

Karen Batchelder at the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System for sharing a very thorough recommended reading list.

Julie Dowd for designing the cover and agreeing that the New York State Woman Suffrage Conferences were a worthwhile use of our time.

Bernie Bassett, Luke Cyphers, Julie Dowd, and Alex Nerska for reviewing content.

Suzy Johnson of the League of Women Voters for sharing her knowledge and support.

The anonymous donor of the photograph of the "Invasion" force near the Witherill Hotel.

Simon George for making it easy to retrieve portraits of local heroes from the CCHA portrait collection.

Ellen Adams, Director at the Alice T. Miner Museum, for sharing our story through Facebook.

Calvin Castine at Home Town Cable for filming the Story of Clinton County Suffrage at CCHA.

Lake Champlain Weekly for publishing the story of Anna Dickinson.

Larry Gooley for sharing his research.

Jill Jones for her technical support and guidance.

The Rotary Club of Plattsburgh for supporting the publication of the Clinton County Suffrage Story which is available free to town and village historians and county and high school libraries.

The women and men of Clinton County who fought for the right of woman suffrage for over 62 documented years.

Helen Allen Nerska
January 2019

The Clinton County Suffrage Story

Helen Allen Nerska

They who have no voice nor vote in the electing of representatives do not enjoy liberty, but are absolutely enslaved to those who have votes.—Benjamin Franklin.

Men their rights and nothing more; women their rights and nothing less.—Susan B. Anthony

In the adjustment of the new order of things, we women demand an equal voice; we shall accept nothing less.—Carrie Chapman Catt

Every argument for Negro suffrage is an argument for women's suffrage.—W.E.B. Du Bois

Prologue

Clinton County is the home of some of the most important battles in American history. Not all victories in the struggle for human rights and self-determination are made on the battlefield. One such struggle was the pursuit of woman suffrage. The suffrage movement was a major national movement and was also fought in Clinton County by Clinton County residents. What I discovered researching the movement in our County was how quiet and perhaps lonely was the fight for the right to vote. No one chose marching or picketing in County towns. And unlike slavery, where it was assumed that the majority of the enslaved wanted freedom, it became clear to me that in the beginning a majority of women did not want nor care to vote. So, it was a long struggle, seemingly too long, for that basic right we so take for granted today.

The Early Days

When did the Woman Suffrage movement begin in Clinton County? An insightful excerpt can be found in the July 14, 1838, edition of the *Plattsburgh Republican* which had been appropriated from the New York Journal of Commerce. The subject was the Rights of Women and the gentleman author, in reacting to Angelina Grimke's assertion that women are "kept in a condition of inferiority to men," referred to the current etiquette norms as a reason to counter that women, in fact, had many rights and, indeed, were treated much better than men. He argued that men had to "give it up" to women when passing on the street or sitting at a gathering or hearing "no" to a proposal of marriage. Women were accorded a greater respect and deference than men, so what was the problem? The author's method of turning a courtesy into a right was probably not lost on Miss Grimke. It was evident that a significant obstacle in the struggle was a lack of comprehension of the type of equality women were looking for.



Angelina Grimke

Had contemporaries in Clinton County heard about the 1848 Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls and, if yes, what was their reaction? The convention declared, "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." This was part of the "Declaration of Sentiments," which went on to define how women were disenfranchised in every way with no legal rights at any level and that this was unacceptable.



Seneca Falls, New York

Our local newspapers were mute, and no diary tells us whether Clinton County women were energized by the convention—or were shocked into silence. Several years later the *Plattsburgh Republican* devoted a column to the pros and cons of a new mode of dress, the Bloomers. Amelia Bloomer, the designer of this clothing, was from Seneca Falls and was associated with the suffrage movement there. Local reporting labelled the dress “a costume” with gaiter pants and most definitely not for ladies with ugly ankles.



Susan B. Anthony

In 1848 or the early 1850s, most County women who later pursued their right to vote and most of the women who helped them in the struggle were in their late teens or early twenties - or had not been born. They were just starting their lives, looking at whom they might marry and probably teaching until marriage. Teaching was generally the option for those allowed to finish school.

Why is the story of the pursuit of woman suffrage in Clinton County important? First, we should recognize our unsung heroes in the County, who struggled openly over at least two generations for the right to vote. Second, over the period from 1855 to 1917, our county heroes hosted well known state and national suffragists and anti-suffragists who made the trip way up north to talk to voters and those who one day hoped to vote.

Opening the first window

In 1855 a small window into the future opened for Clinton County women and men. Susan B. Anthony and Antionette Brown (Blackwell) came to town. The word ‘suffrage’ was not used in the newspaper coverage, but their visit highlighted reforms promoted by the New York State Women's Rights Society. The meeting was held in Clinton Hall on the corner of Clinton and Margaret streets. Anthony was described as an “easy and agreeable” speaker, at odds with the “forwardness and even boldness” the press had led the audience to expect. While respect was paid to her message, the newspaper report reminded the reader that “in no country is greater deference paid to women than in the United States. We think she has no right to complain of her social position here.” Women had only recently gained the right to own property separate from their husbands. Anthony's message now was dealing with widows who did not have legal access to their husbands' estates or to their minor children. Brown's address was not recorded, but she had recently resigned her hard-earned pulpit in the Congregational Church, believing the theological doctrine she had been preaching was unsound. Neither woman would have been

complaining about one's social position but rather one's political position and rights. The reporter had missed the point. Noted County Historian Marjorie Lansing Porter was later to document her grandmother's presence at this meeting. Hannah Straight Lansing would go on to play a major role in the Clinton County Suffrage Movement.

Woman Suffrage Supporters on the Stage

The Woman Suffrage movement came to a halt during the Civil War but picked up again soon after although the major issue until 1870 was male African American suffrage. The territory of Wyoming gave women full suffrage rights in 1869, and several short paragraphs in local papers related this news. The P&S Monash local dry goods store advertisement, in the July 8, 1870, edition of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, made fun of the fact that there were important suffrage speakers—but not at their store. County citizens must have known enough about Anna Dickinson, Wendell Phillips, Horace Greeley and Julia Ward Howe's commitment to suffrage for P&S Monash to invest ad space on the sarcasm. Such was the state of the County suffrage movement then that a purveyor of goods sold to women could afford to insult local suffragists.

Our first recorded local suffragist speaker was Ida Francis Leggett. Ida and her husband William Fox Leggett were Shakespearean actors and hoteliers who lived in a residence off Lake Placid. Ida was advertised as a temperance speaker but is recorded as giving a strong woman suffrage message in an early fall lecture in Keeseville in 1870. Her messages resonated through the next 50 years and beyond—women were paid less for the same work, women were groomed to be playthings, women were denied access to higher education and women should have the right to vote. She spoke at Good Templars Lodges throughout Clinton County, including Plattsburgh, Mooers, Ellenburg, Sciota, and Beekmantown. Ida left the speaking circuit in the early '70s to own and operate, with her husband, Castle Rustico on Lake Placid. Later she opened a resort in Lake Helen, Florida. She died in 1893.

In early 1872, Herman Veeder delivered a strong speech for woman suffrage, and women's rights in general, to the Young Men's Debating Club of Plattsburgh. The speech on the "Conditions, Needs and Rights of Women" was reported in full by the *Essex County Republican*. Mr. Veeder, coming here from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was an executive at the Saranac Horse Nail Factory. He commented that he knew he was speaking to an audience receptive to the idea of woman suffrage, but he felt there was more than voting rights to be dealt with. Later in 1872 the Plattsburgh Literary Club was formed. It was also a debating club and their first debate of the season was to resolve that "the best interests of society demand that women should exercise all rights of citizenship." The affirmative side included Messrs. Martin, Peck and Hathaway; the negative side included Messrs. Gilmore, Orvis and Vilas. The spouses of these men do not appear on any references to the suffrage movement in the County. The outcome of the debate was not reported.

In 1874, on a cold January evening, Anna Elizabeth Dickinson hit the North Country by storm. After Susan B. Anthony, Anna was one of the first women of national prestige to speak on

Woman Suffrage Convention
EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK,
(Sundays Excepted.)
At No. 1 Bridge St.
ANNA DICKENSON,
WENDELL PHILLIPS,
JULIA WARD HOW,
HORACE GREELEY,
AND OTHERS, will not be there.
The meeting, however, will be made attractive by a
MAGNIFICENT DISPLAY
—OF—
DRY GOODS, &c.,
under the management and for the benefit of
P. & S. MONASH.
ADMISSION, - - - FREE.

suffrage in Clinton County. She was vivacious, petite and came with the reputation as the Joan of Arc of the Civil War on account of her spirited defense of Abraham Lincoln. During the fight for suffrage, Clinton County would host many national personalities on both sides of the issue. Anna's audiences were usually described as good church going people. The Plattsburgh crowd on this night was described as the most intellectual and cultivated in the community, and as such they would have known her reputation.



Library of Congress

By 1874 Anna had been on the speaking circuit for nearly 15 years. During the 1871-72 lecture season she was bringing in from \$150 to \$400 a night speaking almost every night from October to April. This translates to the equivalent in today's dollars of between \$2,800 and \$7,500 a night. At her peak she earned more than Mark Twain. Twain's comment? "She talks fast, uses no notes whatever, never hesitates for a word, always gets the right word in place, and has the most perfect confidence in herself. Indeed, her sentences are remarkably smoothly-woven and felicitous. Her vim, her energy, her determined look, her tremendous earnestness, would compel the respect and attention of an audience even if she spoke Chinese."

Before arriving in Plattsburgh, she had travelled the nation to give her orations on negro and woman suffrage. Wyoming Territory had made a push for Anna to come out so they could elect her to Congress. On that January night in Plattsburgh, her voice was described as rich, deep and mellow. She entered the Palmer Hall stage in Plattsburgh not as the audience expected a radical, nonconformist to appear. Her dark brown silk dress included a train. There were diamonds on her ears, around her neck and on her fingers. Her passport described her as 5" 2" with large grey eyes, a fair complexion, a Grecian large nose, full lips, a round chin and a round face. Her stage presence was not that of a petite woman. She was a dramatic orator with a message and used the full stage to deliver it. The title of her speech was considered odd and suggestive—"What's to Hinder? What's to Hinder Women from helping themselves?"

She began with the premise women are weak and dependent and need to understand how to overcome their "disabilities." Women are their own worst enemy. As a consequence of their typically gentle upbringing, they are not toughened for real work as their brothers are. Further, for women to do men's work they needed to have the same training. There would be no free ride. One will not get something for nothing. If all women are waiting for is marriage, they are not fitting themselves for good work and will not receive rewards for good work. "The key of a woman's success is in the brain and in the skill and cunning handcraft that come only with practice." An *Essex County Republican* reporter felt she did far more than other female orators in the country to create "a correct public sentiment for the best interests of her sex." It is not clear which organization in Plattsburgh sponsored her lecture or if admission was charged. An abridged story of her life was published in the October 4, 2016, edition of the *Lake Champlain Weekly*.

Very sorry, but afraid not.

In preparation for the 1876 centennial year, the New York State Women's Suffrage Committee suggested to the legislature that this would be a very appropriate year to give women the right to vote. This was denied and was reported in the *Plattsburgh Republican* with the editorial comment "Very sorry—afraid not," like what one might tell a child asking for a second piece of candy or asking to stay up late. Women were not to be allowed to vote for another 41 years.

Some County men, in addition to Herman Veeder, were supporters of the woman suffrage movement.

Judge Winslow C. Watson, Judge Charles Halsey Moore, the Young Men's Association and later the Plattsburgh Literary Club came forward early on. Long before County women organized, the subject of woman suffrage appeared as topics for men's meetings.

Mary Livermore and Wendell Phillips were to be hosted by the Plattsburgh Young Men's Association's lecture course, Mary Livermore in late 1875 and Wendell Phillips in early 1876. Both were strong supporters of woman suffrage, and while there was no report of Wendell Phillips' lecture, much was published about Mary Livermore.

In November 1875, as President of the American Woman Suffrage Association and President of the Massachusetts Women's Christian Temperance Union, Mary Ashton Rice Livermore began what became a 19-year-long series of lecture engagements in the Plattsburgh area. This is a description by the *Plattsburgh Republican* of what the public could expect from her at this first event. "Whenever this lady has appeared before the public she has elicited the universal praise of both press and people. Her manners on the platform are always those of a refined lady, never indulging in the loud, blatant style which female lectures with a 'mission' are too apt to affect, and while she shows not the least trace of prudery or false modesty, she carefully avoids the other extreme. She is undoubtedly the Queen of the lecture platform and her subject 'The Battle of Money' is one well calculated to bring out her full strength."



Mary Livermore

Like other activists of that era, Mary Livermore was an abolitionist, suffragist and temperance supporter. When she returned in January of 1877 to lecture on the history of women in society, she garnered the same conclusion as before, this time from the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*. "Her second appearance in Plattsburgh only served to heighten the former high appreciation of her and we sincerely hope she will be engaged for another year." In 1883, a page long *Plattsburgh Sentinel* column described Mary as a mother, wife, and a "scholar, author, orator and a humanitarian and if the field were open, she would doubtless obtain eminence as a stateswoman." The article reflected that her 1877 lecture had been "one of the best they had ever listened to from either man or woman." When she returned in 1888 for a lecture sponsored by the Plattsburgh Methodist Episcopal Church, the Reverend Joseph Cook described her as "a lady whose eloquence has had a larger public recognition than that of any other woman in ancient or modern times." In 1892, at age 72, Mary was a highlighted speaker for a university extension course offered in Plattsburgh for the first time. The *Sentinel's* rave review recognized a "magnificent effort" and her topic "Boy of To-day" was the "crowning effort of her genius."

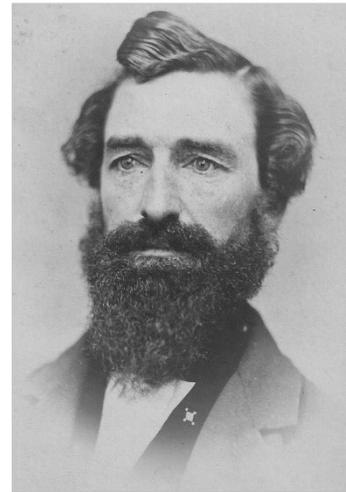
In 1893 and 1894, she spoke to the County Women's Christian Temperance Union and was promoted as a woman people would come miles to hear. At her last engagement in the County, in January of 1894, she was lauded as "marvelous" and "courageous" and that people should support the W.C.T.U. if only because they were given the privilege of hearing Mary Livermore. Mary Livermore died in 1903 and never had the right to vote.

In January of 1879, Susan B. Anthony returned to Plattsburgh's Academy Hall sponsored by the Young Men's Association. Her visit was reported extensively in the *Plattsburgh Republican* with several paragraphs describing her physical appearance and then many paragraphs reporting her speech. The *Plattsburgh Sentinel* gave a couple of sentences to her appearance before summarizing her speech but also revealed in their report that in her 1855 visit, her arguments had been challenged by the lawyers present with the discussion led by Judge and former US Congressman Lemuel Stetson, a powerful political figure in Plattsburgh at the time. He was

described in his obituary as possessing a “high degree that form of temperament usually called nervous, susceptibility of mind and body.” He was outspoken and his judgments were not known to be overturned. Anthony’s 1855 visit was also seen as poorly attended in retrospect, but it appears that the Judge did not deter her from returning to Plattsburgh.

The *Sentinel* summarized her 1879 visit. “We think the majority of her hearers went away feeling more favorable impressed than they expected to be.” She had spoken for two hours. This same Association hosted Wendell Phillips a month later to a packed hall. Phillips was an abolitionist, a suffragist, and a supporter of native American rights and temperance. After the Fifteenth Amendment was passed, he used his considerable communication skills to support woman suffrage and universal suffrage. He was a high-profile orator and philanthropist and died five years later. He lived to see that the American Negro male got the right to vote but not the American woman.

Locally, Judge Winslow C. Watson gave an “elaborate defense of woman suffrage” in March of 1880 at Academy Hall. To quote: “and yet a woman, as teacher, accountant, or manual laborer, is compelled to do the same work in the same time that a man does for half the pay which he receives. Another article of our National creed is equal suffrage, and yet the better half of our population, the women, are not permitted to vote.” Judge Watson went on to argue that the Chinese would be excellent citizens which was a very unpopular sentiment at the time. He also complimented the principled efforts of John Brown, William Lloyd Garrison and Charles Sumner. He saw women as the “modern crusaders” fighting their battle for equity with spirit and faith. Judge Watson was described in his May 29, 1908 obituary as “one of the most respected and esteemed men in Northern New York.” He did not live to see the women, or the Chinese gain the right of the full citizenship he supported in 1880.



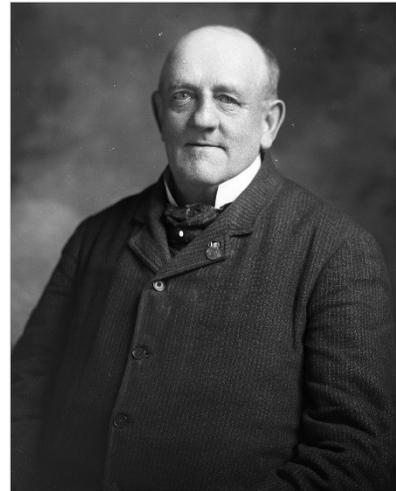
Judge Winslow C. Watson

New York State did finally agree to begin the Suffrage Amendment process, after the 1876 rejection of even a consideration. In May of 1882, a woman suffrage bill was brought to the Assembly and lost by a vote of 59 to 54. The Essex County representative J.W. Sheehy voted against. The Clinton County representative B.D. Clapp voted for the bill. A good sign one would think. Nationally, in 1884, Belva Lockwood, a Supreme Court Justice, ran for President, except that she did not have the right “to vote or to hold office.” No suffrage leader supported her at the time. Upon her death in 1917, the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* acknowledged her accomplishments. She was described as “the first woman admitted to practice before the supreme court, a pioneer in the woman suffrage movement and the only woman who ever was a candidate for president of the United States.” Like many suffragists, she began her life as a school teacher before fighting on for more education, and she died before getting the right to vote.

Again, in 1885, a bill was brought before the New York State legislature proposing “no member of the state shall be disfranchised or disqualified from voting at any election by reason of sex.” Credit for this effort is given to Lillie Devereux Blake, President of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association. The bill was funneled off to the Assembly committee on grievances with the assurance that this in no way meant the bill was endorsed but was only open for discussion. County newspapers covered Lillie Blake’s work, giving her credit for the law allowing women to vote at school meetings. Her strengths were acknowledged as a “handsome advocate” because of her beauty and “well-formed features.” She was in fact an author of note having published five novels and over 500 articles, speeches and lectures.

Ramping up

There was very little organized suffrage activity recorded in Clinton County until 1894. As the State was preparing for a Constitutional Convention, the woman suffrage groups were rallying forces to make themselves heard. One objective was to circulate a petition and present the New York convention with over a million signatures supporting the right for women to vote. Another objective was to hold meetings in all parts of the state to further emphasize the message that women wanted the vote and to prepare a resolution to be presented to the Convention. Judge Charles Halsey Moore was the local delegate to the Convention. He would bring to the Convention the petitions and resolutions from this area. Judge Moore was born in Plattsburgh, educated in Wisconsin, and returned to study law with his uncle George Moore. He was described as “one of Plattsburgh’s most active and conspicuous citizens.” He died in 1908 and the local suffrage movement lost a strong and respected supporter.



Judge Charles Halsey Moore

The Convention preparatory meeting in Clinton County was called the Clinton County Political Equity Convention and was held in late April of 1894 at the Court House in Plattsburgh. Representatives came from all over the County to what was reported as the first significant suffragist meeting in the area. Preparation rallies had been held in Peru, Mooers, Champlain, Rouses Point, West Chazy and Keeseville in mid-April by Sara Winthrop Smith, a lecturer in the Constitutional Convention Campaign for Woman Suffrage in the state. The County women were ready to act.

There were three important speakers at the County Convention. Harriet May Mills of Syracuse was reported to be the manager of the event. A Cornell graduate, former teacher and daughter of an abolitionist, she was secretary of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association and had been active in the movement since 1886. She was a sought-after lecturer and speaker. She was described as “well calculated to win friends for the cause.” With her were Mary Seymour Howell and Susan B. Anthony. Howell had drafted the bill granting women the right to vote in New York State which was passed by the assembly in 1892 but still needed to be passed at the constitutional convention. Susan B. Anthony was making her third and, as it turned out, last trip to Plattsburgh. On the last evening of the convention, at age 74 and still retaining her “intellectual vigor,” she filled the Court House and “her convincing arguments ... were evidently well received.” Neither Howell or Anthony would live to vote.



Hannah Straight Lansing

The Clinton County Convention was also supported by a strong local contingent who formed a county support organization, with Mrs. D.W. Whyte as President, Hannah Straight Lansing as Secretary and Hannah’s daughter, Ida Lansing Wilcox, as Treasurer. Members were women from the towns of Ausable (Pauline Keese), Beekmantown (Miss F. McFadden), Black Brook (Mrs. H. Stetson), Champlain (Jennie Scales), Dannemora (Margret Thompson), Ellenburg (Mrs. W. Holden), Mooers (Maria Knapp), and the six Plattsburgh Districts (Miss L. Pease, Mrs. Howard, Mrs. H. Stay, Helen Palmer, Mrs. J.Q. Edwards and Mrs. J.M. Collins). This group formed a committee on resolutions headed by Hannah Lansing, Helen Palmer and Mrs. J.M. Collins. The resolution they created urged the State constitutional convention to submit an amendment removing the word “male” from Article II, Section 1. And they strongly urged their local

representative Judge Charles Halsey Moore to vote for the amendment. Judge Moore was among four men who presented petitions to the New York State Constitutional Convention in favor of granting suffrage to women.

The meeting of the Clinton County Political Equity Convention was one of the first where the name of Hannah Straight Lansing appeared as a suffragist. Hannah was the daughter of Charles and Louisa Straight and was raised in Plattsburgh. Prior to marrying Abram Wendell Lansing, son of abolitionist Wendell Lansing of Keeseville and Wilmington, she was a school teacher. Abram inherited two newspapers, the *Essex County Republican* and the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, from his father. Hannah would go on to co-own these papers. In the 1900 Census her occupation was listed as Editor. Her obituary states she was in the editorial department of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* for fifteen years.

In the 1870s she was noted as a founder of the Home of the Friendless in Plattsburgh and had joined the local temperance movement. As an historian she wrote a paper on the Old Homes of Cumberland Head, which was presented (after her death) as part of a program at a DAR Meeting in 1937. She also wrote a series of biographical sketches of local men and women of Lake Champlain for the *Sentinel*. Beginning in the 1860s and for the next 40 years she wrote stories under the pen name Nell Clifford. Her stories appeared in local newspapers and the *Flag of Our Union*. She wrote a children's book, "Ten Little Tales for Nice Little Folks." In the 1890s and early 1900s, as the suffrage movement picked up in Clinton County, Hannah was documented as an officer of the Political Equity Club and the George Williams Curtis Club, both dedicated to suffrage. In 1894, she wrote to John Osborne, Governor of Wyoming, questioning whether suffrage was working in his state and received a response confirming that "Wyoming is proud of her state constitutional provision which grants equal rights to all." Osborne's letter can be found in SUNY Plattsburgh Special Collections.

As women's clubs began to form outside the Church, the first local club devoted to suffrage was the George William Curtis Club. George William Curtis was a writer, editor and public speaker who died in 1892. Clubs were formed in his name. Members of these clubs were entitled to membership in local, state and national suffrage groups. His daughter spoke at the New York State Constitutional Convention on behalf of suffrage in 1894 but there is no record of this Club in Clinton County until 1898. The Tuesday Club (Clover Club) had formed in 1890 concentrating on literary topics and the Saranac Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1885. Many members of the Tuesday Club and the local DAR were members of suffrage clubs. The Clinton County Farmers Association program in March of 1901 included two suffragists who were officers of the George Williams Curtis Club, but their presentations were on other topics. Then other clubs directly connected to suffrage began to appear in the newspapers under the names Suffrage Club, Political Equity Club and Political Study Club with anti-suffragists openly welcome to the latter one.

The George William Curtis Club lasted until at least 1906 under that name. Membership was 50 cents a year and was open to men and women. Most meetings were held in private homes and included information sharing on suffrage issues, refreshments and entertainment. Judge Charles Halsey Moore was the honorary Club President and Judge Winslow C. Watson was a guest speaker. The Club sponsored a lecture by Rev. Anna Shaw in May of 1900, and they hosted a spelling bee to raise money for the visit, as they wanted Rev. Shaw's lecture to be free.

In June of 1901 women who owned property could vote on a local bond issue to improve the streets and sewers in the Village of Plattsburgh. Club members were challenged by a letter to the editor of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* to prove that they really wanted the vote by coming out to vote

on this issue. The paper reported on June 6 that “almost without exception the ladies voted in favor of bonding and the people of the northwest and south sections owe them a debt of gratitude for coming forward so loyally in favor of bettering their condition.” Seventy-six women of property voted; 201 men voted.

Between 1870 and 1917, there were over 150 County women whose names appeared in the local newspapers as supporters in some way of the suffrage movement. And given that lecture halls were packed when suffragist programs came to town, there were many more supporting behind the scenes.

Harriet (Hattie) Dudley Bell’s involvement with the County suffrage movement is only documented through the local newspapers, but fortunately that includes her obituary. She was born in Keene, New York, in 1864, married William Wood Bell in 1890 and moved to Plattsburgh in 1897. They had two children, Katherine and Russell. From the newspaper reports we see Hattie was involved in it all—she was either a host or an officer of every suffrage group in Clinton County. Her home on Broad Street was often the meeting place for early suffrage planning meetings. Like Hannah Lansing who was inspired by Susan B Anthony’s 1855 visit, Hattie was inspired by Anthony’s visit in January of 1879. She “often told of Miss Anthony’s visit to Plattsburgh and of building the fire herself to warm the room for the meeting.” Hattie was considered one of the original members of the Susan B.



Harriet Dudley Bell

Anthony movement for Women Suffrage. She was an activist and a teacher, and she held the position of Plattsburgh city chamberlain for a number of years. Like many other suffragists she was also a member of the Tuesday Club and the DAR. She was reported as giving a “bright and spicy paper” about taxation without representation to the Political Equity Club in 1900. Her daughter Katherine went on to marry the son of local anti-suffragist Judge Frank Hagar, but only, or coincidentally, after the elder Hagar’s death. She continued to be active in local women’s groups until her death in 1944.

Another family of suffragists active at the turn of the century were Jasper and Marian Robertson. Jasper was principal of the Commercial Department at the Plattsburgh High School, President of the Clinton County Teachers Association, and one-time president of the George William Curtis Club. Jasper got his Bachelor of Philosophy degree from Alfred University, one of the first campuses to be co-educational and racially integrated. He and Marian hosted many of the suffrage meetings, giving lectures and writing letters to the editor. They were neighbors of the Bells. Speaking in a 1901 meeting of the Plattsburgh Institute, Jasper stated that the seeming disinterest of women in suffrage was due to social conditions and education. In the fall of 1902, after years of activism in Plattsburgh, they “removed” to Omaha, Nebraska.

A Practical Opportunity for Female Suffragists to Exercise the Right.

The suffrage and temperance movements went hand in hand, as both movements were a priority to women. In Clinton County many women supporting the temperance movement were also suffragists. There was concern that energies going into one movement would take away from the importance of the other. There is no indication that the groups were at odds in Clinton County, and as the opportunity for full suffrage grew closer, the groups actively pulled together.

Closing In

As the suffrage movement grew stronger, new consumer marketing strategies were introduced directed at women whose physical weaknesses were holding them down. Plattsburgh papers advertised tonics touting the need for a woman to ingest them to “feel like a new woman.” If you were weak (and you were because you were a woman), your future was at risk. Ads questioned how women could vote or practice law or compete with men because “few indeed are in normal health.” With Pe-ru-na tonic, for example, women’s sufferings would cease. They also might not be sober. Pe-ru-na tonic reportedly contained 28% alcohol. Electric Bitters, Dr. Greene’s Nervura, Lydia Pinkham’s Vegetable Compound, and Smith’s Green Mountain Renovator advertisements were all to be the salvation of the unhealthy woman and were also alcohol based to about 18%. Using testimonials to market to women was relatively new at the turn of the century. These testimonials by women attributed their revived interest in life to doses of these products. The market was clearly seen as victims waiting to be healed.



Plattsburgh Sentinel, September 22, 1899



Sarcastic cartoons on postcards were common and there was a deck of cards for the game “Old Maid,” with the old maid being the one who voted. Being unmarried always raised questions, and those questions were asked of Susan B Anthony, Anna Dickenson and Harriet May Mills. The acceptable answer was their devotion to the cause was the purpose of their life. This, however, was the case for both married and unmarried women in the movement.

Meanwhile other states and territories had granted full suffrage to women: Wyoming in 1869, Colorado in 1893, Utah in 1895 and Idaho in 1896. Some other states offered voting rights to women for school and municipal elections, but many more continued to defeat attempts for woman suffrage.

The Clinton County suffrage movement in the early 1900s was active, especially as suffrage groups were working to influence the voters to amend the New York State constitution. Speakers from around the nation came to the area to share their message and to inspire local women to become more active in the cause.

In May of 1903 the Reverend Doctor Anna Howard Shaw, a minister, physician, author and Vice President of the National Suffrage Association, and Harriet May Mills, Vice President and organizer of the State Association, came to town sponsored by the George William Curtis Club. This was the third visit by Reverend Shaw. She first came to Plattsburgh in 1901, already acclaimed as a dynamic speaker and one to whom both pro- and anti-suffragists eagerly listened to. She was known to leave quotable thoughts behind, as in 1901 during her already famous



Rev. Anna Howard Shaw

lecture, "The Fate of Republics," in which she said, "No state in the history of the world has ever been permanent where women were excluded from public life." In 1901 she spoke for 2 hours described as sarcastic, bright, witty and with the "logic of the keenest lawyer." In 1902, Rev Shaw returned upon the personal request of Hannah Lansing, again on behalf of the George William Curtis Club. In preparation for her May 1903 lecture in Plattsburgh, 15 questions were posed to Rev. Shaw. The questions can be summarized as challenging that the woman's vote would not fit into the current man's world with respect to the family, business, and the military, or how the man could fit into the woman's world. The questions assumed that it must be one or the other. These were ingrained in the arguments of the time against suffrage for women. These questions expected that suffrage was more than the vote, but was tipping over the current balance of power in households where the wife currently "obeyed" the husband. Additionally, voting was equated to upsetting every other accepted responsibility of men, such as military service and being the chief breadwinner.

"It is often said that women can accomplish more by their influence and prayers than they could by the ballot if they had it," Rev. Shaw said. "I believe in prayer. If I wanted anything from the Almighty, I would pray for it, but if I wanted anything from a legislature, I would prefer to vote for it." She concluded her 1903 talk thusly: "Women are today better fitted to exercise the right of suffrage than say any class of men when suffrage was given them." Rev. Shaw returned to Plattsburgh in 1915 as the main speaker for the Clinton County convention of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association. The court house was packed.

The Reverend Shaw died July 2, 1919, in time to see the women of Clinton County, for whom she offered so much inspiration, vote. She did not live long enough, however, to see the laws of her home state of Pennsylvania changed to extend the franchise to herself, yet she is remembered as one of the most remarkable women of her time.

Harriet May Mills who accompanied Rev. Shaw in 1903, had made her first visit to Clinton County in 1894 in her position as recording secretary of the New York State Women's Suffrage Association. Harriet was New York born, a Cornell graduate, a gifted speaker, an effective organizer and tireless in her determination to see that women achieved the right to vote. As a friend of the greatest of the movement originators, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone and Carrie Chapman Catt, Harriet established her own legacy by creating or supporting suffrage organizations both in New York and across the nation. In 1894, her skills were described as "well calculated to win friends for the cause." By her 1903 visit to Plattsburgh with Rev. Shaw, she was chairman of the New York Suffrage Committee of Organization and as such was encouraging local women to become members.



Harriet May Mills

Mills returned in July of 1911, as President of the New York State Woman's Suffrage Association, when she joined three other women and one man travelling by automobile through 20 Northern New York counties to promote suffrage activism and explain their work with the legislature in Albany, the success of suffrage in other countries, and the need for woman suffrage to improve "industrial, sanitary and moral conditions." The *Plattsburgh Daily Press* reported the event in advance as a planned "invasion" by representatives of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association, acknowledging it would be of interest as "suffrage has long had intelligent friends and supporters in Clinton County."

On July 20 the five arrived and spoke on customs house square to a “large and enthusiastic crowd” from a car decorated with a “big yellow banner” marked “Votes for Women.” The Plattsburgh “invasion,” with the Hotel Witherill as the backdrop, lasted for nearly two hours. Although previously acknowledging that County citizens had been interested in and supportive of suffrage, the *Daily Press* now concluded that this event offered the first opportunity for them to be part of the movement. The Clinton County Woman Suffrage Convention of 1894, which presented a plea to strike the word “male” from the New York State Constitution was perhaps a distant memory for all, but Harriet May Mills who was at the meeting in 1894 and was in Plattsburgh again as a speaker for the “invasion.” The suffrage work of local women began long before July 1911.

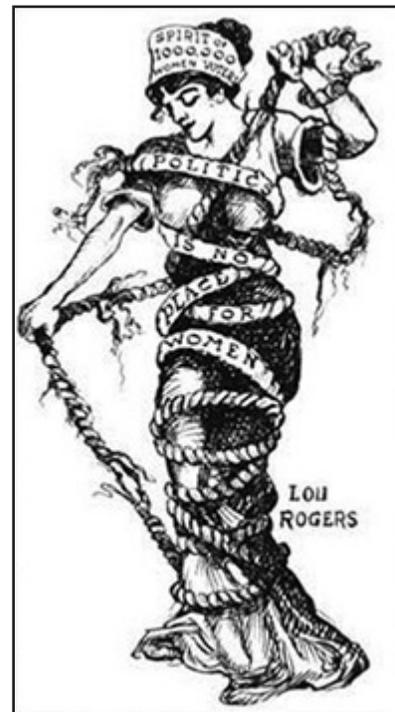


After 1911, Harriet May Mills visited Clinton County one more time. In December of 1914, she would debate woman suffrage with Marjorie Dorman, known nationally to be opposed to woman suffrage. Harriet’s final message to Clinton County was a letter to the editor which appeared in the December 29 issue of the *Sentinel*, accusing Dorman of “misrepresentations and false accusations.” Fortunately, Harriet May Mills did live to vote and continued her political activism until her death in 1935.

The Antis

Between 1900 and 1915, the issues became clearer. There was a strong anti-suffrage component developing in the state and certainly Clinton County was no exception. Nationally there were posters and cartoons developed to scare men, and women, against supporting woman suffrage. Vote “no” was promoted giving multiple reasons: a majority of women don’t want to vote; it would nullify or double votes on a proposition (one man gets two votes per family—or gets no vote); women would compete instead of cooperate; and finally, fear of the unknown—why “risk the good we already have for the evil which may occur.”

A local hearing on state suffrage legislation reported in the *Plattsburgh Daily Press* in early 1907 suggested that woman suffrage be given a “trial” test for one or two years and if women “passed” by accomplishing what women were promising—purifying politics—then consider making it permanent. This was first reported as a joke with a turn to a serious proposal. In 1907 two bills were dropped by the State Senate Judiciary Committee, one asking for the word “male” to be removed from the constitution’s qualification for voters and the second to allow women to vote on issues of taxation in cities described as third class or with a population of under 50,000.



The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage was formed in 1911 in New York City, and their list of reasons against suffrage concluded with suffrage being a “backward step.” Reasons

why women should not vote were published in local papers as early as 1867, including the subtler message in the tonic ads which always assumed women to be unwell.

The Committee on Suffrage at the 1894 New York State Constitution Convention read into their findings that most New York City ladies were “seriously and sincerely alarmed” that the Convention would even consider woman suffrage. This was the convention where Clinton County’s Judge Charles Halsey Moore asked that the suffrage amendment be added. In the June 1909 Chateaugay Record, Catholic Bishop William Doane’s commencement speech to graduating women at the St. Agnes High School was reported with the headline “New Woman a Freak.” In his address he went on to describe suffragists as “a horrible misshapen monster,” “howling and dervish.”



Elizabeth and Frank Hagar

In 1910 the Plattsburgh Methodist Episcopal (M.E.) Church sponsored a debate on “shall women be afforded the right to vote.” There were three highly respected citizens—two attorneys and a doctor—on either side. The audience was reported to be 95% women. Siding with the anti-suffragists were attorneys Frank Hagar and James Stearns from Rouses Point and Dr. Jefferson McKinney. Frank Hagar, whose wife Elizabeth would go on to join the Plattsburgh Anti Suffrage Association, felt that suffrage would divide families and demoralize women. He had recently authored a book which clearly defined the role of the woman in the household as totally loving and supportive. He also felt that the problem with educating women too much was that they then would not be interested in managing the home. James Stearns from Rouses Point could not see any reason why women should vote and felt few were even capable. His wife Lillian was a

local artist and headed the M.E. Church’s Ladies Aid Society. Dr. McKinney felt women wanted power without responsibility and would end up competing with men. He was active in the Knights of the Maccabees, a fraternal organization offering low cost insurance. On the other side of the debate, Dr. Willard Thompson felt that woman would improve conditions if given the right to vote. Judge Lucien Sheddon saw women as intellectual equals and as such would make fine political equals. His wife Kate was an officer of the Home of the Friendless and a member of the DAR. Attorney E.C. Everest suggested that the word “men” in the constitution was meant to be generic and women could still vote and educate their children. His wife Lillian Pike Everest was active in the suffrage movement. There were insults thrown, such as women preferring fashion to voting and suffragists being short haired women and long-haired men. In any event the “ayes” seemed to take the “win” and all debaters graciously agreed “woman was the best thing ever created” and should get what they wanted—even the ballot. This was the reporter’s conclusion.

Moving past the Antis

The activities of County woman suffrage supporters were notable, constantly working to influence the voter and the voter’s spouse.

Women's Civic League of the Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce was formed in October of 1912 and included names of both suffragists and anti-suffragists. The League was responsible for bringing in such names as Harriet May Mills, Marjorie Dorman (anti), and Inez Milholland. The League members were described as prominent women from both a social and executive standpoint, with membership open to every woman in the County. The Civic League's mission was cleaning up the County, tuberculosis education, public health issues, children's playgrounds and support for deserted families. Members of the League were the first women permitted to join the Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce.

National suffragist Inez Milholland visited Plattsburgh in December of 1912. In reporting on Inez's visit, the *Plattsburgh Daily Press* complimented the Women's Civic League for their choice of speaker and their plans for the year ahead. Inez, from New York City, came into town for the holidays with Joseph McCormick, a member of the Illinois house of representatives and part owner of the Chicago Tribune. Joseph's wife Ruth was an active suffragist. It turned out that Joseph did not know he was to speak and gave an impromptu talk on Women in Politics, perhaps not difficult for a journalist. He felt humanitarian issues were the most serious that government should deal with and that women were the best suited to handle these. Inez



Inez Milholland

felt it was evolution, not revolution, that made it time for women to have the vote and, like Joseph, she felt women could and should handle the great humanitarian problems while protecting and safeguarding their own interests. She argued that women in the work force, including school teachers, had no power to contribute to the political management of these occupations. She might well have been referring also to her position as a lawyer. She graduated from Vassar where she was a suffrage activist and an athlete. After being rejected by Harvard Law, she obtained her degree from New York University and was accepted into the New York State Bar as a labor lawyer. In March of 1913 she would be riding a white horse through the midst of a violent Washington DC Suffrage Parade forever imprinting her image on the history of woman suffrage in the United States. By late November of 1916, Inez would be dead from pernicious anemia, a condition she ignored in favor of campaigning for women's rights. She died on stage in California and is buried in Lewis, New York, on "suffrage hill." Each year homage is paid to her contributions to the movement.

In Clinton County, suffrage news was available, but reporting was mainly on State activity. The local newspapers were relatively quiet on the subject with "suffrage" being mentioned in approximately 23 editions in 1911, 29 in 1912, 108 in 1913 and 101 in 1914. Both major newspapers, the *Plattsburgh Daily Press* and the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, were from the same publisher with the same "president." Articles did not reflect a difference in approach over this period. Yet, the "greatest suffragist in the world," Carrie Chapman Catt, was to visit Plattsburgh in May of 1914. The occasion was the official organizational meeting of the Clinton County Equal Suffrage Association and the election of officers. Assembly District Leader was Marian "Dot" Parkhurst.



Carrie Chapman Catt

At the time of her visit, Carrie Chapman Catt was President of the International Suffragist Alliance. She was past president of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association and would become President again in 1915. She was considered one of the suffrage greats and in 1948 she appeared on a stamp with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott commemorating the Woman Suffrage Movement. According to the National Women's Hall of Fame, Carrie Chapman Catt did more than any other women, other

than Susan B. Anthony, to enfranchise women. In 1914 at the Court Street Theatre, she spoke to a packed house. The *Sentinel* reporter was clearly impressed with her, describing her address as the most powerful “it has been the pleasure of Plattsburgh’s people to hear in the past decade.” She was credited with “calm logic,” which set her apart from others, a “silvery voice” that placed her with the greatest orators, and a “graceful dignity which has won for her the title of ‘America’s Uncrowned Queen.’” She received multiple ovations during her speech.

The November 24, 1914, Plattsburgh Sentinel headline read: Women Who Want the Vote. From that, one would sense that there were some women who did not want the vote, but the guest speaker made it clear she saw it another way. On November 21, Dr. Cora Smith Eaton King had addressed the audience at the County Court House on the subject, to either a “fair sized” or a “not largely attended” group, according to the reporter for the Sentinel.

Dr. Smith, as she is known at the University of North Dakota where she was a member of their first graduating class, was in town as the guest of organizers of the Political Equity Club and as a representative of the National Council of Women Voters (NCWV). The latter organization was founded after Washington State granted their women the right to vote in 1910. Washington State was the fifth state to allow women full voting rights and the first in the twentieth century. NCWV objectives were to educate women voters, to provide lobbyists for legislation and to work for suffrage nationwide. Dr. Smith was Chair of their congressional committee and current treasurer. And she was much more. She was the first licensed female physician in North Dakota before moving and continuing her practice in Seattle, Washington where she was active in their successful campaign for suffrage. The woman before the audience at the Court House was the first woman to climb to the summit of the East Peak of Mount Olympus, had climbed all of six of Washington’s major mountains, testified before Congress, met President Wilson, was licensed to practice medicine in six states and organized the July 1913 suffrage amendment demonstration where women from all over the country brought their petitions for suffrage to Washington, DC.

Dr. Smith was introduced by Wm. E. Parkhurst, co-owner of Parkhurst and Taylor General Insurance on Clinton Street, along with John Booth, husband of Marie Booth, a well-known member of Plattsburgh suffrage groups. Dr. Smith did not mince words. “Equal suffrage was granted to states in proportion to the intelligence of their men, and in Washington there was the highest literacy average in the United States.”

She railed against indifference. While she almost understood where the “antis” may be coming from, she could not tolerate those who didn’t take a stand either way. In her experience, once the vote was won, the antis seemed to disappear and reappear as voters, which she said seemed to happen in Washington. Now teachers had pensions, and there were better roads and punishments for the property holders of houses of ill repute. She concluded by advising women not to declare a political party until they got the vote and urging them to join their Political Equality Club.



Dr. Cora Smith Eaton King

The Disputes Continue

In December of 1914, the Women’s Civic League of the Plattsburgh Chamber of Commerce sponsored a debate between Harriet May Mills and Marjorie Dorman. These were very high-profile speakers. Harriet, who had been in Plattsburgh twice previously, had written offering to speak, and the League went to look for someone of the same profile for the opposing opinion.

Marjorie Dorman was of equal station and had presented anti-suffrage arguments to the US Congress in March of 1914. Both women were the heads of their respective organizations. According to Marjorie Dorman in 1913, suffragists were “relentless, ranting and deluded females.” The Dorman stance against woman suffrage was the “married woman argument.” With the majority of women married, they would either double the vote for a candidate or nullify the vote cast in the family. Was her message to the Plattsburgh audience in 1914 any different?



Marjorie Dorman

It is not clear when the Plattsburgh Association Opposed to Suffrage was formed, but it was clear that the community was divided, and community leaders could be found on either side of the fence. Members of the local anti-suffrage league were well known in the community. President Erminia Whitley was a teacher, first at the Plattsburgh High School, and then, after graduate school at Wellesley, became a teacher at the Normal School. She was actively involved in the DAR where many of her sister members were suffragists. Despite her distinction as President of the Plattsburgh Antis, she was later celebrated as demonstrating a “milestone in emancipation” as the first woman elected to chair an annual meeting of bank stockholders, in this case the Plattsburgh Bank & Trust Co. She also held an office with the Normal School Alumni Society beside suffragist Hattie Bell’s daughter Katherine.



Helen Smith

Antis Vice President, Helen Smith, a farmer, was the first President of the Champlain Valley Hospital Women’s Auxiliary and a founder of the Plattsburgh Humane Society. Her obituary described her as devoted to the “highest ideals of womanhood.” Three other women, also members of the anti-suffragist organization in Plattsburgh were Mrs. Elizabeth (Frank) Hagar, Mrs. Frances (William) Levy and Mrs. Frances (George) Weed, daughter-in-law of prominent Plattsburgh political figure Smith Weed. All these ladies were involved in similar good works. Helen Smith died before having the choice of casting a vote, or not, in 1918. Frances Weed was actively involved in the National League for Women’s Service. Frances Levy went on to join the League of Voters. We don’t know if Elizabeth Hagar experienced a change of heart, but she enjoyed membership in the DAR and Garden Club alongside her suffragist sisters.

As with the suffrage movement, the anti-suffrage group attracted well known speakers to Clinton County, most notably before the 1915 state vote. In the spring Alice Hill Chittenden, President of the New York State Anti-Suffrage Association, came to speak at the Y.M.C.A. To prepare for her visit, the public was reminded that she was friends with some of the most influential women in the County. Additionally, an article she wrote on the work of the New York State Anti-suffrage Association was published in the *Plattsburgh Daily Press* just prior to her visit. She attracted a large crowd and was declared a forceful speaker. She shared 40 reasons, in less than an hour, why women should not be given the ballot, and part of her legacy is that not everything she said was actually wrong. She stated, for example, that in most states where



Alice Hill Chittenden

women can vote there is no noticeable effect on the prohibition ballot. That was true to date. The audience that April night was large and reported to be favorably impressed. After her speech, the Plattsburgh Anti-suffragists included her comments in their first edition of "Anti-Suffrage Notes" in the *Daily Press* and the *Sentinel*.

In August of 1915 anti-suffragist Lucy Price debated with suffragist Helen Todd at the summer Redpath Chautauqua at Cliff Haven. These two ladies were on a circuit and debated for eight straight weeks that summer in various locations across New York State. Helen Todd, originally a factory inspector from Illinois, was credited as being from California as she worked on the successful suffrage movement there. She was described by the *Sacramento Union* as "one of the most prominent suffrage workers in the United States." Lucy Price was from Cleveland, and being in her mid-twenties, was declared to be the youngest anti-suffragist worker for the National Anti-suffrage Association. She was credited with helping to defeat woman suffrage in Ohio in 1913 before expanding her range. Inez Milholland was quoted as hoping that Lucy could be persuaded to change her mind.



Helen Todd

Anti-suffragists both nationally and in Clinton County stood behind those influential people who were against suffrage, such as Mrs. William Taft and the former Mrs. Grover Cleveland. "Anti-Suffrage Notes" were printed almost weekly in the *Plattsburgh Daily Press* and the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* prior to the 1915 vote for the amendment to the New York State Constitution. In addition to arguing that suffrage "gives additional power to the unscrupulous to organize the undesirable female vote," the conviction that women did not want to vote was prominent.

On page 3 of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel's* January 24, 1915, edition, wedged between 4 Killed on a Cruiser and the Baptist Church notes, was a column by suffragist Caro Robinson of Plattsburgh with news that 16 national organizations representing millions of people had officially endorsed suffrage. Those organizations included the American Federation of Labor, the National Grange, the Nation Association of Letter carriers, the Grand Council United Commercial Travelers, and the National Association of Postal Clerks. The other 11 were women's organizations. The list, however, seemed to support the fact that women were indeed on the same page and not as divided as the anti-suffragists were reporting.

Rallying for the Right to Vote

Finally, in early 1915, the New York Assembly and Senate passed the recommendation that the Suffrage Amendment be added to the constitution. The County was bustling with activity. All the towns without exception had pro-suffrage organizations. Speakers and meetings were frequent. Preparations were numerous and constant on both sides of the issue. The *Plattsburgh Daily Press* and the *Sentinel* printed columns from both the suffragists and anti-suffragists, each refuting the veracity of the other's claims. Local newspaper headlines included: Grange Endorses Suffrage, All Signs Point to Victory, Ex-governor of New York Martin Glynn Now a Convert, Woman Suffrage is going - not coming, Prominent New York Men on Anti-Suffrage Campaign, Farmers for Suffrage,



Woman Suffrage snowed under in New Jersey, and Suffragists Fighting Hard to the Last. Hope was in the air.

On June 18 the Clinton County Convention of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association was scheduled to meet at the Court House with important business to be handled. In preparation for the meeting, Portia Willis came to town as State Organizer for Woman Suffrage. Portia was a member of the Plattsburgh "invasion" team in 1911 and since then had travelled across New York State on the lecture circuit for the suffrage cause. She also had fought for suffrage in New Jersey and Massachusetts without success and now was concentrating on New York. She was a house guest of Judge and Mrs. John H. Booth. Marie Booth, a suffragist, was at that time Chairman of the Fourth Judicial District of the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs.



Portia Willis

Portia spoke in West Chazy, Schuyler Falls, Beekmantown, Rouses Point, Champlain, Plattsburgh, Churubusco, and Morrisonville, hoping to confront "every voter" with her message. In Morrisonville, she pointed out that both major political parties are willing to register illiterate men to vote but not their mothers, sisters or daughters. She was described by her peers as a "live-wire" and early on was defined as the prettiest suffragist. At each stop, delegates were appointed to the June 18 Convention and canvassers assigned.

Representatives from every town attended the June 18 Clinton County Suffrage Convention. The business at hand was to elect County officers, appoint delegates to the State convention and hear reports from the various suffrage clubs. Speakers were from around the state including Mrs. Robert Ford from Canton, who early on was active in the Federation of Women's Clubs and a recognized suffragist in St. Lawrence County. Dr. Anna Shaw was the keynote speaker. The event was coordinated by Marian (Dot) Parkhurst, who was the Assembly District Leader of the New York State Woman Suffrage Association and chaired by Lillian Pike Everest.

Born in Plattsburgh in 1885, Marian Inman Parkhurst, always known as "Dot," was a twin to Millard Parkhurst and sister to fellow suffragist Marie Parkhurst Booth. In 1904, she graduated from Plattsburgh High School first in her class.

Dot's name appears in the County Suffrage History in early 1914 as corresponding secretary of the Clinton County Equal Suffrage Club. At the time, her occupation in the census was insurance agent, probably for Parkhurst and Taylor General Insurance on Clinton Street. Her role in the movement was, among other things, to provide articles for the *Plattsburgh Daily Press*. These articles attacked the anti-suffragists and drew attention to the writings of the famous Alice Duer Miller and included Miller's piece on *Why women should not travel on trains*. In October of the 1915, she marched as a star in the "living flag" during the suffragist parade in New York City. In December of 1915, she and longtime County suffrage supporter Helen Boomhower attended the annual convention of the New York State Women's Suffrage Association.



Dot Parkhurst, c1920

Dot went on to become the first female head of the Balance of Supply Division for the War Department in Washington. In 1918 she was involved with the Women's Division of the Republican National Committee. In 1920 she toured abroad studying economic conditions of women and



Dot Parkhurst, c1945

returned to become a Washington lobbyist for the Bill for Education and Child Labor. In 1924 she was President of the New York State Women's Federated Clubs, Congressional secretary for the National Committee for a Department of Education, and Congressional secretary for the League of Women Voters. An admirer of Carrie Chapman Catt, Dot was known to quote one of Catt's favorite slogans, "And I wouldn't subscribe to *that*." Later Dot's niece Bea remembered that shortly after World War I, she and Aunt Dot attended a Thanksgiving dinner at Catt's New Rochelle home where many of the leading feminists were present. Catt later came to Plattsburgh to appoint Parkhurst President of the Clinton County League of Women Voters. Dot died in Plattsburgh at the age of 90 and is buried in Riverside Cemetery. But back on June 18 in 1915, she was just beginning.

The audience was enthusiastic, and the meeting was described as the "most successful and largest gathering of its kind" in the city.

After the June meeting, the press printed columns from both the local antis and the local suffrage supporters. In July there was the Price/Hobbs debate at the Chautauqua at Cliff Haven and newspaper headlines with articles covering suffrage news across both the state and nation. All focus was now on the November 2 Vote for Woman Suffrage. Once again in Clinton County, meetings were organized, and famous names came forward to encourage men to vote for woman suffrage. Frances Maule Bjorman, field secretary and speaker for the Empire State Campaign Committee for Woman Suffrage, returned and spoke in Keeseville in early October. Bjorman was an orator and writer originally from Nebraska. She was a reporter for a number of years in Colorado, where women had had the vote for over 20 years, before she moved on to Chicago and New York City. She had spoken the previous year at the Catholic summer school presenting the "claims of woman suffrage" and a week later at the Court House. She was described as a "bright and interesting speaker and a serious student of social welfare."



Frances Bjorman



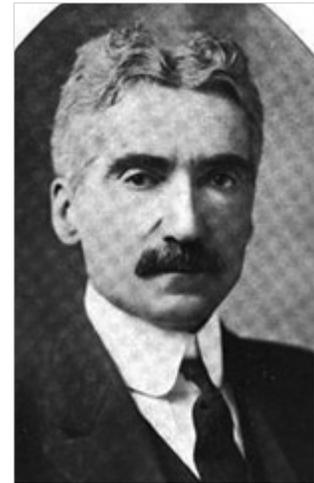
John Temple Graves

Soon preparations began for what was now described as the biggest suffrage rally of the season, a mass suffrage meeting on October 15 and 16, 1915. Former Lieutenant Governor Thomas Conway presided, and the special guest speaker was John Temple Graves. Graves was a noted newspaper man and sought-after orator. Disturbingly in 1903 he supported mob lynching as a means to curb the rape of women by negroes and supported the separation of races. A relatively recent term, a race baiter, has been attached to descriptions of his stand on the subject and support of Black Colonization. He went on to strongly support woman suffrage referring to men who took advantage of the working woman as "bipeds in britches."

To Plattsburgh audiences he was heralded as an "editorial writer of high reputation and wide influence." The content of his speech at the October 16 County Suffrage Meeting was not recorded as he apparently spoke too fast. He was credited with the "gift of oratory," which made the listener forget he was "undersized" in stature. The *Sentinel* reporter recognized that Graves was intended to be the big "draw" and too recorded his small stature. Apparently, Graves presented his argument

as he would in presenting a case before a jury, with woman suffrage as the client. He spoke like a “Gatling gun,” and Conway, the former lieutenant governor, was impressed.

Conway’s message was recorded, and he was an “out and out advocate of woman suffrage.” He stated that women were capable of voting and entitled to vote. The *Daily Press* reporter thought this might have surprised his Democratic party associates, but certainly the organizers of the meeting knew this is what he would say. He was complimented for “getting in line with the other real men of the country.” The reporter went on to extend Abraham Lincoln’s statement that “the nation could not endure half slave and half free” to politicians now realizing that the nation could not continue to deny half their population the right to vote.



Thomas Conway

The meeting opened with Conway’s address followed by the introduction of Hannah Straight Lansing as the “Mother of Clinton County Suffrage.” Hannah spoke of the history of the movement in the area beginning with her first connection with the 1855 visit of Susan B. Anthony.

Other persons of importance at the meeting were John E. Milholland, father of Inez, and Emma Smith Devoe. John’s message supported suffrage, and he did not support an education qualification for voters. Emma Smith Devoe, who too was inspired early in her life by a speech by Susan B Anthony, came to Plattsburgh with the experience of having worked to give women the right to vote in the state of Washington in 1910. She then continued her activism to help women in other states to get the vote. Her speech dealt with the objections against woman suffrage. She did not feel that suffrage would change a woman’s role in the home. She was involved in the founding of the nonpartisan National Council of Women Voters, a forerunner of the League of Women Voters, and when she died in 1927, the headline of the Tacoma newspaper recognized her as the “Mother of Suffrage.”

Several days after the October 16 County Suffrage meeting, the *Daily Press* front-page headline read “Woman Suffrage Snowed Under in New Jersey.” The women of New York were counting on their voters to not repeat this defeat for woman suffrage in New York. The New York Tribune felt that if New York City voted for suffrage, and their poll seemed to indicate they would, it would be carried.

On the same weekend as the County Suffrage meeting, the Clinton County Women’s Christian Temperance Union was meeting in Schuyler Falls. Mrs. L. M. De Silva from Onondaga, a delegate to the National W.C.T.U., gave a “spirited, appealing and convincing address on woman’s suffrage.” Her oratory was further described as powerful enough to send those not agreeing (antis) into hiding. The W.C.T.U. was on board with suffrage going into the November 1915 election.



Lillian Pike Everest

Also, in October, speaking at various Grange meetings and locations across the County, Mrs. Lillian Pike (Egbert Charles) Everest was on the stump for suffrage. Lillian Pike Everest is recorded as giving presentations on suffrage from 1912 on. Her husband, an attorney, was on the “pro” side of the 1910 debate. Lillian was born in Sciota, and her father Calvin and mother Jane were early members of the County Temperance Society. Her obituary states a varied education, attending the University of Colorado, Scott Saxon School of Oratory, the Baron Posse School of Swedish Gymnastics and Emerson

College in Boston. In Denver, Colorado, she was a school teacher of elocution and gymnastics for eleven years. When she returned for visits to Clinton County, beginning in 1894, she was hailed for the dramatic readings she performed at Academy Hall in Plattsburgh and Champlain Hall in Champlain. She came highly recommended by Nebraska and Colorado newspapers who reported her presence would guarantee a full house. She married Champlain born E.C. Everest in Colorado in 1898 and they soon returned to Plattsburgh to live. Upon her return she continued with speaking engagements, taught oratory in her home, directed plays and applied her theatrical education to the founding of the Plattsburgh Little Theatre. With her other suffrage sisters, she was a member of the Saranac Chapter of the DAR and the Tuesday Club. She was reported to be a "faultless entertainer," without peer.

The last recorded meeting before the November 2 vote was on October 25 at the YMCA. Prior to the meeting was a parade led by the Keeseville City Band with a suffrage sign travelling downtown Plattsburgh and ending at the Y.M.C.A. having gathered a crowd that filled the auditorium. Guest speakers were State of Washington Congressman Clarence Dill and Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale. Lillian Pike Everest presided. Forbes-Robertson Hale was described as a "fluent speaker and a thoroughly informed advocate of the cause." Dot Parkhurst (Parkhurst) described her as "one of the most sought-after suffrage speakers now in the field." Beatrice was an author and an actress and at the time the mother of 3 children under 4. Her message was a strong plea for suffrage recognizing the progress that had been made in the cause over the years. The *Daily Press* reported it to be the "best address upon suffrage ever delivered in the city." Clarence Dill was 31 years old, a lawyer, elected to Congress in 1914, and unmarried. Emma Devoe supported him wholeheartedly and recounted that he had been voted in by a large majority. Congressman Dill spoke of having seen suffrage successfully put into action. The reporter felt he left no argument against the cause. The next day before leaving town he spoke to the students at Plattsburgh High School about the importance of keeping mentally and physically fit.



Beatrice Forbes-Robertson Hale

The *Daily Press* gave instructions several times to voters on how to vote for the Woman Suffrage Amendment: "Put your cross in the square after the Yes for Amendment No. 1." And on November 2, a front-page headline said, "Suffragists Fighting Hard to the Last" and in the same headline "Antis Are Sure Suffrage Will be Beaten." On November 3 the front-page headlines in both the *Sentinel* and *Daily Press* read: "Majority in State 200,000 against Suffrage." The final number was 194,984. With the final County vote in, of the 40 districts, a majority in 4 of the districts voted for suffrage and 4 other districts were close. The vote in 32 districts was clearly against. New York now joined with Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Massachusetts in rejecting woman suffrage that year.

1916

Of course, the suffragists were disappointed. Dr. Anna Shaw, however, was able to regroup immediately saying: "This is not a defeat . . . We shall go on and win." This would be true for New York but not the others until their states ratified the Nineteenth Amendment. In January of 1916, President Wilson refused to consider woman suffrage as an amendment to the U.S. Constitution, so any woman suffrage could only come at the state level.

Clinton County suffragists may have begun to regroup, too, but there is little record of it in 1916. The first awareness of a local suffrage activity was an article in the February 4 *Sentinel* refuting

the “Hymn of Hate” being circulated around town by the anti-suffragists. The “poem” equates woman suffrage with socialism. The *Sentinel* published this editorial in late February: “Those people who cherished the thought that last fall’s defeat had killed the suffrage cause must begin to realize by this time that they were badly in error. No sooner had the votes been counted than the women began to plan new campaigns and now everybody knows that they are going to fight harder than ever for the ballot. In fact, it is plain the war has only just begun and the women who want the vote will not quit fighting until they get it.”



In April the headline read “Suffrage Fight in House Starts.” Representative Jeanette Rankin from Montana was the first woman ever elected to United States Congress and made her first speech to Congress on woman suffrage. “If we ever have national woman suffrage, it must be by constitutional amendment.” She felt that the state constitutional amendments would not always work because it could be derailed simply but not getting the approval of “one man,” the governor. It felt like the tide was finally turning.

Local news reported that the suffrage amendment to the state constitution was being resubmitted to the assembly. The National Woman Suffrage Association declared May 1 as Suffrage Day and encouraged women to recognize this in some way

to remind voters that this was still an important issue. The suffrage attitudes of various politicians at the state and national levels were relatively frequent in the local newspapers, roughly 117 times throughout the year, although few referred to local meetings.

On May 20, the Third Annual Clinton County Suffrage Convention was held at the Y.M.C.A. Three speakers were brought in: Mrs. Norman De R. Whitehouse, New York State Woman Suffrage Party Chairman, Mrs. Frank J. Shuler, state director of field work for the party, and Mrs. Robert Ford, leader of Second New York Campaign District which included St. Lawrence, Franklin and Clinton Counties. Shuler was praised by anti-suffragist Lucy Price as an excellent organizer. Shuler’s topic was “What you might do with the ballot.” Whitehouse’s presentation was “How to secure a plank in the political platform in this state and in the platform of the National Political Parties.” Mrs. Ford was described as an “argent” suffragist and was well associated with Plattsburgh suffragist Marie Booth as both had early on been active in the Federation of Women’s Clubs. Lillian Pike Everest was the leader of the event and Dot Parkhurst the reception’s organizer. Dot was District leader for Clinton County and had attended suffrage meetings with Mrs. Ford in St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties.

The day before the County Suffrage meeting, it was announced that the Methodist Church gave their support to Suffrage. Not all religions were supporting suffrage. The highly respected and well-known Catholic Cardinal James Gibbons said, “I regard women’s rights and the new school of female progress as the worst enemies of the female sex.” Once the Nineteenth Amendment was passed he urged women to vote as a duty.



Plattsburgh Sentinel, June 23, 1916

On July 3, Mrs. Jennie (John L.) Clark of Peru reported back to the Plattsburgh auxiliary of Anti Suffragists on her

attendance at a meeting of the New York State Association of Women Opposed to Woman Suffrage. There was nothing available on the content of her report. She died in December of 1916 never having the option to vote.

The Suffrage tent for the Eight Regiment on the Plattsburgh Post opened in August for the second year in a row. It was managed by the Plattsburgh Woman Suffrage Society, now called "suffs." Set up at the edge of the encampment, the tent was open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Everything was prepared in the homes of the women. The tent could seat about 125 people. Feeding them pancakes and chocolate cake was thought to give suffrage a good name.

October 20 was the Forty-Third Annual Meeting of the County W.C.T.U., with almost every Union in the County represented. Lillian Pike Everest, representing the Suffrage Club, and Marie Booth, Chairman of the Fourth Judicial District of Federated Women's Clubs, spoke. Their addresses were called "valuable, interesting and instructive." Both were experienced enough to reply to any challenge given.

Marie Parkhurst Booth and her husband John H. Booth, married in 1891, both supported the local suffragist movement. John would often serve as master of ceremonies, and Marie would usually organize or represent an organization at suffrage meetings. Their home on Cumberland Avenue was frequently identified as where suffrage speakers would be staying or meeting. Margaret Wilson, the President's daughter, stayed with the Booths in 1913. John Milholland refers to the Booths in his diary, specifically looking forward to having dinner with them. And very often Marie and her sister Dot were involved in the same events. Marie was for many years the President of the Fourth District of the New York Federation of Women's Clubs. The Fourth District consisted of eleven counties. She would go on to be President of the Federation after the vote was won. She also took a turn at being President of the Plattsburgh Women's Civic League and was active in the League of Women Voters. She died in a tragic accident in 1946, and her obituary recognized her for her work as County Chairman of the Council of National Defense during WWI and her continuing work with the local Red Cross and the Champlain Valley Hospital Auxiliary. Like the obituaries of most suffrage workers, her work with the suffrage movement was not mentioned.



Marie Parkhurst Booth

In early November of 1916 came the news that Inez Milholland was dead. The suffrage movement had lost "one of the bravest soldiers and the most unselfish knight the world has seen since the days of Joan of Arc." A large memorial service was held in New York City, and she was buried in the Lewis Cemetery in Lewis, New York. Nearly a thousand people paid tribute to her in Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C., on Christmas Day. The vision of her leading suffragists on a white horse is the signature of her life as a suffragist who "gave all."

In early December 1916, Alma Benecke Sasse, originally from Kansas City, Missouri, arrived. She represented the New York State Suffrage Party and her purpose in town was to begin organizing for the 1917 Woman Suffrage campaign. Alma went to Vassar at age 18 for several years, returned home and had just graduated from the University of Missouri at age 23. She stayed with Clara Miller at her rooming house on Couch Street. Clara was a member of the Tuesday Club to which a number of suffragists belonged. Mrs. Robert Ford returned to town to help Alma organize what was billed as the "first womans meeting of the Plattsburgh branch of the New York Suffrage

Party." The meeting was held at the Y.M.C.A. At this meeting campaign plans would be laid out for the City, the County and the Fourth District, which included Clinton, St. Lawrence and Franklin counties. One order of business was to place "The Woman's Journal" in the Plattsburgh Public Library. This journal was an eight-page weekly paper printed in Boston and edited by Alice Stone Blackwell, the daughter of suffragist Lucy Stone, one of the organizers of the first national women's Rights Convention in Worcester Massachusetts in 1850. The Journal was dedicated to "winning equal rights and specially to winning equal suffrage for women." Through this journal, readers were now able to keep up to date on suffrage issues across the United States and overseas. Names familiar to Plattsburgh residents would appear. The works of the antis were covered as were all government suffrage related activities, along with suggestions on changes for the overall good health of women, children and the nation. No drug ads were offered to combat woman's frailties, but a book was recommended on "How to develop your personality" and an ad for hats. States with full suffrage were called "Free States."



1916 ended with renewed optimism for the New York State Constitutional Suffrage Amendment to be passed in November of 1917. The year ahead would find the local newspapers heavy with suffrage information, both encouraging and discouraging. Meanwhile WWI was taking the headlines, and the antis were using a woman's role in aiding our armies to distract from the movement. It was positioned to be one (suffrage) or the other (helping at home). In fact, the women were able to manage both.

1917

"Women Worse than Silly"—that was the title of a piece on the second page of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* in January of 1917. It referred to the suffragists picketing in front of the White House as "disgraceful" and "an affront to the sober judgment of the American people." The message was that the women need to be polite, not annoying, if they want the President to consider their cause. It was reported that women on exhibition like this are too sensational and undignified. There were never any marches or protests of this nature recorded for Clinton County



suffrage groups other than the sanctioned parade prior to the October 25, 1915, meeting led by the Keeseville City Band with a suffrage sign traveling through downtown Plattsburgh. American suffragists can add the introduction of peaceful protests in front of the White House to their list of accomplishments.

But even with the war escalating, 1917 would be the year suffrage for New York State women would not be put aside. The local newspapers would report regularly on New York State government progress and local meetings and visiting supporters. Once again, Clinton County would be visited by state and national workers to persuade local voters to agree to woman suffrage.

Some saw the war as a possible detriment to supporting the cause. The Anti-suffragists felt supporting the war was the only responsibility women had or could handle. Contrary to that position was the truth. The New York State Suffrage Party offered up the services of their over 500,000 members in every one of the 160 assembly districts for any war-related work the Governor wanted them to do. This was in the form of a formal party resolution printed in the February 13 *Sentinel*. What this meant was the Governor now had the support of the largest group of organized women in the state, in addition to the Women's Christian Temperance Union, although here, too, there was overlap as many W.C.T.U. members were suffragists. This offer was introduced to the Plattsburgh suffrage league by Mrs. Robert Ford at their meeting on February 10 at the Y.M.C.A. It was reiterated that the war effort took precedence over all other work and women should be ready to act within 5 hours of being notified of the need.

Later in February the local suffrage league and the management of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* collaborated to devote an edition to the suffrage cause. The paper was clear that the ideas expressed did not "represent the editorial policy of the paper." They reserved the front page for general news and the last two pages for local news. On pages 2 through 6 you would read the Suffrage Creed, the fight for suffrage in England, how men are organizing to grant suffrage and why, a comment on women's war service, a meeting of the Rouses Point Suffrage group, more men unifying to support suffrage, a masonic social gathering, recognition, with photos, of Carrie Chapman Catt, Mrs. Robert Ford and Alma Sasse, a tribute to Jeanette Rankin, acknowledging support by the Grange, and data on national and international woman suffrage status to date. There were no ads targeting women's poor health except one, a testimonial by Hattie Warren's husband, using her photo, as to her improved health by taking "fruit-a-tives" for kidney problems and dropsy. As an aside, fruit-a-tives were

**The Suffrage Creed
We believe**

**That governments derive their
just powers from the consent of
the governed;**

**That a democracy is a
government of the people, by
the people and for the people;**

**That women are people and are
governed;**

**That no state can be a true
democracy in which one-half
the people are denied the right
to vote;**

**That women need the vote for
the same reason that men need
it;**

**That because laws regulate a
women's life, tax her property
and may even sentence her to
death, she should have the right
to share in the making of the
laws;**

**That democracy bides everyone
stand up and be counted and
that on Election Day no one
should be counted for more
than one.**

**If you believe this, join the
Votes for Women Movement**

shortly thereafter identified as “quack medicine” and were pulled from the market and ordered destroyed by October of 1918.

A Plattsburgh branch of the National League for Women’s Services was formed in March. The league provided “stateside services” for soldiers and other war workers. This group contained both suffragists and anti-suffragists. Ida Lansing Wilcox (pro) and Frances Weed (anti) were both vice chairs.

In March, the W.C.T.U. and suffrage groups continued to recognize their commonality was stronger than their differences. Alma Sasse presented just that reminder at a W.C.T.U. meeting on March 17. Earlier in March, the Pomona Grange for the County voted to go on record to support suffrage.

In April we see the suffrage discussion moving into the Point au Roche school. Pupils Ruth and Catherine Gale upheld the argument that “Suffrage Should be Granted to Women.” Ruth Nelson and Mildred Parsons presented the anti side. The ladies were high school freshmen and their teacher Sara Dunn organized this debate. It was reported that one of the anti-debaters changed her mind in the end, but it wasn’t identified as to whether it was Ruth or Mildred. We also see the local suffragists solidly behind and involved with Red Cross work. It was possible to do both.

The anti would not be forgotten in this push to the next voting opportunity. The *Daily Press* was asked to reprint an article that accused suffragists of being socialists. The newspaper disclaimed knowledge as to whether it was true and was leaving it to suffragists to defend themselves. Alice Stone Blackwell, editor of the *Woman Journal*, was accused as was Inez Milholland. Inez was accused because some of those commemorating her life at the Statuary Hall were said to be socialists.

Suffrage groups were not the only female organizations in the County, the latest being the formal organization of the Young Women’s League of Plattsburgh on May 22. Here too declared suffragists, anti, DAR and Tuesday Club members were working together, with Lillian Pike Everest in the center of this organization’s development. Leagues of this nature were organized around military training camps with goals to support the further education of women while rendering “patriotic and social service.” The League was to be divided into sub groups, one for Normal School “girls,” “business girls of the city” and High School girls. General Leonard Wood and President Wilson were both mentioned as recognizing the need for “woman strength as well as the man strength.”

The May 25 W.C.T.U Meeting showed that suffrage, the war and temperance causes were in sync. Lillian Pike Everest was again taking the lead. At this meeting Grace Cheeseman from Ellenburg read the Anti Suffrage Monologue. This popular piece was written in 1913 by Marie Jenny Howe for the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Drama and plays were vehicles suffrage groups used to get the message across. This Monologue parodied anti-suffrage arguments, dramatizing how very insulting the anti-arguments were. Anyone reading this in front of an audience was without a doubt a strong and committed suffragist.

Excerpt from the Anti-suffrage Monologue

Woman suffrage is the reform against nature. Look at these ladies sitting on the platform. Observe their physical inability, their mental disability, their spiritual instability and general debility! Could they walk up to the ballot box, mark a ballot, and drop it in? Obviously not. Let us grant for the sake of argument that they could mark a ballot. But could they drop it in? Ah, no. All nature is against it. The laws of man cry out against it. The voice of God cries out against it—and so do I.

Almost like clockwork, an anti's message appeared again in the *Daily Press*. This challenge was in the form of questioning the real commitment of women with the assumption that voting means doing exactly what the men were required to do—support a family, pay taxes, run for political office and go to war. The assumption was that women are not and, as a result, should not be involved in any of this. Meanwhile the New York City Woman Suffrage Party had provided financial support to setting up a “Rest and Recreation Room” at the Y.M.C.A. unit on the Plattsburgh Post.

The Fourth Annual Convention of the Clinton County Suffrage Association was held in the City on June 9. Mrs. Norman de R. Whitehouse, New York State Suffrage Organization Chairman, presided and reported that the organization was “recognized as the largest and most perfectly organized association of women in the world.” It was reported too at this meeting that Clinton County had proven to be “one of the backward counties in the state in the movement.” Nothing was reported about what the local women felt about this or were going to do about this.

Before the end of the month, a Canadian suffragist came down to help the local cause. On June 23, Mrs. Flora MacDonald Denison arrived with her son Merrill in tow. Merrill was reported to have just returned from France and that he was one of four of her sons who went to war. She may have been misquoted as she only had one son. Flora was received in Plattsburgh as the Canadian Suffrage Association chairman whose services were “tendered” for the New York Campaign, and she was credited with influencing the successful April 1917 vote for suffrage in Ontario. She in fact had been dismissed from the Canadian Association for being too radical. She felt women should be freed from all “customs and prejudices that have made her discriminated against.” She was described in a biographical encyclopedia of women in history as one of the few women who saw women as “equal and autonomous.” She and her son spoke at the Suffrage Coffee House and she at the Barracks theatre. Both were well received by a large crowd. Alma Sasse was the local organizer. Later in the week Alma spoke to the Saranac Valley Grange.



Flora MacDonald Denison

In the summer of 1917, the Suffrage Coffee house, opposite the officers' training camp, described as both a restaurant and a coffee house, was full of activity. The house was financially supported by New York Suffrage Party who brought in Mary Elizabeth Carter from New York City to take charge in early June. A few days later a “sunrise breakfast” was held encouraging local women to come to the Coffee House, at 6:30 am, to meet with their favorite “rookie.” One objective of the coffee house was to make sure the trainees were registered to vote. The location was regularly used as a suffragist meeting location with women from out of town often speaking there. The location also emphasized that the suffrage movement was strongly supporting local war efforts. It was clear by July that the local Red Cross volunteers and the ladies in the suffrage movement were one in the same. The coffee house lasted until the November vote, when it was closed.

Open air meetings began in late June. The first reported, but apparently the second to be held, was in front of the Witherill Hotel. New York State Suffrage Party treasurer Mrs. Ogden Mills Reid spoke. She was the daughter-in-law of Whitelaw Reid, the former US ambassador to England. She was reported to be “one of the most prominent suffragists in the state.” District leaders from Washington and Warren Counties accompanied her. The following day the speakers moved to the Suffrage Coffee House.



Margaret Foley

Miss Margaret Foley with a national reputation as a suffragist orator came to Plattsburgh in early July. She spoke at the Suffrage Coffee house and was described as “logical, forceful, witty” and “possessed of a voice of the most remarkable carrying power.” She was also described as an excellent swimmer, gymnast, and musician. Many suffragists would come to Plattsburgh over the summer.

Later in July, a suffrage meeting held in the Witherill Hotel included five women from around the state and nation. At this meeting local suffragists reported in on their activities. The collaborations between suffrage and the war effort were part of the discussion. Various meeting places were chosen, and the public encouraged to attend.

August newspapers did not include any local suffrage meetings, but suffrage was in the news, and California women were celebrating their freedom to vote. The August Chautauqua at the Catholic Summer School at Cliff Haven hosted three speakers supporting suffrage including the well-known orator, author and educator Frank Wakeley Gunsaulus, who opened the event. He was quoted as saying, “I hope I am not mistaken—I hope the women as well as the men here are voters. I come from the great commonwealth of Illinois where the women vote as well as the men—thank God.” His audience did not include female voters yet. There is no record of the antis presenting at this Chautauqua.

At the end of August, the New York State Suffrage Party held their annual convention in Saratoga. A highlight was the announcement that President Woodrow Wilson, New York Governor Republican Charles Whitman and New York City Mayor Democrat John Mitchel had declared their support for woman suffrage in New York State. Both parties being on the same page was remarkable, although Mayor Mitchel was not reelected in 1917. Also, at the meeting, the membership passed a vote of censor condemning the picketing of the White House. The New York State Suffrage Party needed politically to separate itself from the perceived unpatriotic suffragist activities in Washington, D.C., where women were jailed for picketing and their banners on the White House fences torn down. This declaration of separation was important and editorialized in the *Daily Press* to assure readers that the Party did not sanction this type of unpatriotic demonstration and had accomplished many patriotic acts, even giving up their own state campaign for a while to help with war efforts. The editorial in the *Daily Republican* concentrated less on the DC activists and more on the value of women getting the right to vote. Their headline was “A Prophecy of Victory” and concluded with “We prophesy victory for the Suffragists this fall.”

Moving into fall with less than 2 months from the next opportunity for the suffrage amendment to be added to the New York State constitution, there were 4000 members of suffrage organizations reported in Clinton County. This number seems high but when looking ahead, there would be 4,097 more County voters in the 1920 Presidential election than in 1916. Local headlines reminded readers that while suffrage was an “unqualified success” in California, it was defeated in Maine.

On Tuesday, September 13, at the Forty-Fifth Annual Clinton County Woman’s Christian Temperance meeting at the Methodist Church in Ellenburg Depot, the agenda covered the activities

supporting the war and the temperance movement, and the guest speaker Mrs. Linnie Carl spoke on suffrage. Linnie Carl, from Portland Oregon, was a national organizer for the W.C.T.U., and her speech further confirmed “the liquor traffic and suffrage hinge on each other.” This meeting was reported in full by Emily Clark Clough, recording secretary and leader of the Fourth City District suffrage group. Emily’s obituary recognized her support of woman suffrage. This recognition was not found in the obituaries of other local suffragists.

On September 19 the Fourth District of the Federation of Women’s Clubs met, chaired by suffragist Marie Booth. This was the first meeting where the name of State Party representative Edna Wright appears. Edna and Linnie Carl were to stay in the County, helping the local suffragist movement, until the November vote.

Suffrage Sacrifice week organized by the New York State Suffrage Party was declared for September 24 to 30. This was a fundraising campaign as the party coffers had been depleted by the setting up of the Y.M.C.A. unit at Plattsburgh, census taking, organization of Red Cross chapters and “Canning Clubs,” and “other works too numerous to mention” related to the war effort. Women were asked to make more personal sacrifices to the cause.

In October suffrage was mentioned almost daily, with front-page coverage next to the war. The *Antis* had not shown up for several months, but on October 10 a *Daily Press* article reported the beginning of the “prosecution of a vigorous campaign against woman suffrage amendment” by the Man Suffrage Association in New York City, and the local *Antis* had a meeting. The New York City Association was headed up by Everett P. Wheeler, founder of the New York Bar Association and supporter of the Citizens Union, which was formed “as a watchdog for the public interest and an advocate for the common good.” The public interest and common good did not include woman suffrage.

In early October, Vida Milholland, sister of Inez Milholland, arrived in town. She was a committed suffragist herself and had been arrested for picketing the White House in July. Vida was a professional musician and gave a concert, the proceeds of which would support the French refugee children.



Vida Milholland

The papers also supported voter registration. Deadlines were published, and men were encouraged to weigh in, especially on suffrage. The *Daily Press* felt “advocates of woman’s suffrage in this county have up to the present time made little or no stir in the matter,” but credit was given to all the activities in other counties. If a sense of complacency was suggested, it was soon to be reversed. Patriotic Suffrage Rallies were held in six communities across the County, and the speakers were Edna Wright and Linnie Carl. Rallies were held in Morrisonville on October 15 at Riley and Rugar Hall, in Rouses Point on October 16 in the town park, in Mooers on October 17 at Samples Hall, in Peru on October 18 in the town hall, in Schuyler Falls on October 19 at the Methodist Church, and in West Chazy on October 21 at the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

The local *Antis* met at the Y.M.C.A. on October 17 but there is no further record of their actions. The only recorded information on *Antis* was an October 29 report in the *Daily Republican* that prominent New York men were supporting suffrage and “*Antis* are neurotic—so says a famous neurologist who finds it normal to desire the vote.”

The vote was less than a week away. Over a million New York women were asking for suffrage. Ads appeared every day encouraging men to vote and to vote for woman suffrage. The New York Woman Suffrage Party distributed posters on how to vote—and in the largest print it said Vote YES on Amendment No. 1.” On voting day, November 6, The *Plattsburgh Daily Republican* reported that “at all meetings held in the campaign this fall the speakers have been warmly received by Clinton County and Plattsburgh audiences, and there is every reason to believe that the men of the city and county will vote to grant woman the ballot today.”

Throughout the state women were assigned to work at the polls. In the City of Plattsburgh, watchers, with helpers, were assigned to polling booths in each of the six wards. The watchers were all familiar names in the County suffrage struggle—Dot Parkhurst, Hattie Bell, Emily Clark Clough, Lillian Everest, Helen Boomhower and Marie Booth, to name just six of the 31 women identified. The “Woman Citizen” recorded that watchers had to attend evening sessions to learn the duties of a polling officer and this training resulted in “expert election officials.” There is no record of local watchers in 1915. On the state level in 1915 the Antis had declared their total confidence in how the election would be run, and watchers from their group were not necessary essentially because women were not “fitted or qualified” for this work. There is no record of their opinion on the fitness of women watchers in 1917. It was concluded that polls were quiet this year “due perhaps to the presence of women watchers.”

All watchers were to meet at the Post Coffee House at 9:30 p.m. to receive the results of the vote. They would not get the result then. The *Plattsburgh Sentinel* delayed printing of their November 6 paper to cover the election and at press time for their November 7 edition they still felt there was “every indication that the cause had won out not only at the state at large but in this County.” It was yes for the former, no for the latter. The *Daily Press* on the seventh reported “Suffragists Carry State,” and the victory was declared a “landslide” with 54% voting “YES.” In a local article it was reported that 21 out of the 40 County districts supported the amendment but it was not a majority of County voters. The final tally showed that only 11 out of the 40 districts supported suffrage. Both voter districts in Ausable voted for suffrage. Voter districts in Beekmantown, Black Brook, Mooers, Town of Plattsburgh, City of Plattsburgh and Schuyler Falls were split between suffrage and no suffrage. The majority of voters in Altona, Champlain, Chazy, Clinton, Dannemora, Ellenburg, Peru and Saranac districts were clearly against.

The result was bittersweet for Clinton County. The amendment passed in the State, but County voters were 3,071 for and 3,622 against, a difference of 551. In 1915 the difference between those

AS A WAR MEASURE	
The Country is Asking of Women Service	Women Are Asking of the Country
AS	
FARMERS MECHANICS NURSES and DOCTORS MUNITION WORKERS MINE WORKERS YEOMEN GAS MAKERS BELL BOYS MESSENGERS CONDUCTORS MOTORMEN ARMY COOKS TELEGRAPHERS AMBULANCE DRIVERS ADVISORS TO THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE	
AND	
The Country is Getting it!	Are The Women Going To Get It?
ENFRANCHISEMENT	
Vote for Woman Suffrage Nov. 6	

for suffrage and those against was about 1,600 votes, so 1,000 minds were changed in those two years. In Clinton County it was called the “anti-Suffrage” vote. The conclusion was over 1 million voters could now be added to the State voting rolls effective January 1, 1918.



Epilogue

Edna Wright from the State Suffrage Party was given much credit for the lowering of the Clinton County’s vote against suffrage. She left Plattsburgh for New York City the day after the

vote and was sent on to work for the passage of the Federal Amendment with credit for this appointment being given for her work in Clinton County. She had been working in Plattsburgh since mid-August.

So what next? The suffrage struggle was over, but the woman struggle for true equality would resonate into the present. In Plattsburgh after the vote there began the series of Citizenship classes for women who wanted to learn “the intelligent use of the ballot.” High school teacher H. Clay Niles spoke to the DAR on “Our Civic Responsibility,” which meant that much responsibility had been placed on the woman voter to now revise and clean up politics. Professor Niles was acclaimed to be the local expert on county, state and federal government and headed up a series of classes for the Young Women’s League. Both those who would vote and those who may choose not to vote were invited. The *Ticonderoga Sentinel* pointed out that only citizens could vote and American women who were married to aliens had lost their citizenship and could not vote, while alien women who married American men gained citizenship and with it the right to vote. Additionally, women would have to give their correct age in order to vote and it was suggested that this might deter some women. The Suffrage Coffee House was dismantled and the “silver, glassware, dishes, furniture and kitchen utensil” were sold at auction.

Women’s right to vote came with the “responsibility” that the antis felt was a suffrage negative. The first time City of Plattsburgh women had the opportunity to vote on an issue was April 16, 1918, when an election was held to make the City of Plattsburgh “dry” effective October 1, 1918. It was called the “No-License Campaign” and was meant to prohibit the sale of liquor in stores, hotels, bars, and drug stores. It was remarked that Plattsburgh would not only be “dry” but “bone dry.” New voters were given two days to register, April 5 and 6. There was much publicity including fears that women were being threatened to not register and there was concern that women would be deterred by needing to give their exact age. It was clarified that a woman could not be refused if she did not read or write. This method of disenfranchising a voter was not legislated by New York State until 1922.

Reports differ slightly on exactly how many new voters registered but the final tally showed that there would be an increase in City of Plattsburgh voters by 2,000, and only about 300 of that number were men. The polls were described as quiet as there were women watchers again, and the vote to eliminate the purchase of liquor in the City of Plattsburgh was passed by 832 votes. Women were given credit for this decision. The sale of liquor in the City of Plattsburgh would cease October 1. Most towns in the County were dry or going dry, and the local W.C.T.U., now, with the full dedication of those members formerly prominent in the suffrage movement, was

dedicated to helping banish the sale of liquor in the state. The September 3, 1918, Republican primary for Governor was the first time women were asked to vote for party candidates, and again women were reminded that it was their duty to vote. Saranac women were reported to have voted in large numbers. The first federal and state election voting opportunity was in November of 1918. Additional opportunities for voter registration were offered on October 11 and 12 and was considered light with only 903 additional voters in the City of Plattsburgh. The influenza scare was credited with a low voter turnout that year. A quarantine against influenza had been in place in Plattsburgh from October 10 to November 16, 1918. A majority of the many obituaries in local papers referenced pneumonia as the cause of death.

Meanwhile, the push was on to get New York State to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment. The official ratification on August 26 was announced on the front pages of the *Plattsburgh Daily Republican*, the *Daily Press* and the *Sentinel* on August 27, 1920. The ratification did not solve the issues of equal wages for equal work or job restrictions based on sex. These and other battles were to be continued.

In Clinton County women were quick to go back to their regular affiliations such as the Women's Civic League with anti-suffragist Frances Levy as President and suffragists Marie Booth as Honorary President and Hattie Bell as secretary. Suffragist Helen Boomhower encouraged women to put aside their anger over politicians who had opposed suffrage and prohibition because they were worthy of support in other ways. The League of Women Voters was formed in the County with suffragist Dot Parkhurst working side by side with Frances Levy.

The Clinton County Suffrage Story represents the decades of struggle in just one of hundreds of counties across the State and the United States. This struggle resulted in a massive reform, which only runs a close second to the abolition of slavery. Still today the fight for rights regardless of race or sex is an ongoing struggle, and the right to vote is now the most powerful weapon.

Resources

Northern New York Library Network – Historic Newspapers; SUNY Plattsburgh Special Collections; Women's Rights National Historical Park - Seneca Falls, NY; Lawrence P. Gooley; Saranac Chapter of the DAR Scrapbook; The New York Times; Pinterest; Wikipedia; The Plattsburger 1917; Ultimate History Project; Library of Congress; Civil War Women Blog; Mr. Lincoln's Whitehouse; Encyclopedia Britannica; America's Joan of Arc: The Life of Anna Elizabeth Dickinson; Embattled Maiden: The Life of Anna Dickinson; A Ragged Register (of People, Places and Opinions) by Anna Dickinson; Chittenden New York Historical Society Museum; Clinton County Historical Association; Ancestry.com; National Women's Hall of Fame; Washingtonhistory.org; Congressional Hearings 1914; Not for Ourselves Alone by Ken Burns; Tuesday Club Membership Lists; Find A Grave; Old Plattsburgh by Marjorie Lansing Porter; Harrietmaymills.org; The Freethought Trail; Sacramento Union; History of Woman Suffrage 1900-1920 edited by Ida Husted Harper; League of Women Voters; The Suffragist; Woman's Journal and Suffrage News; YouTube; womenshistory.org; Dpsinfo.com; Sunyjcc.edu.; The American Family by Frank Nichols Hagar; Are women people?: a book of rhymes for suffrage times by Alice Duer Miller; An Anti-Suffrage Monologue by Marie Jenny Howe; Forward into the Light – the Inez Milholland Story by Marian Wheeler

The Legacy of The League: The History of Suffrage and The League of Women Voters Between 1917 and 1924 in Clinton County

Alexander Meseck
12/15/17

Introduction

From a church in Seneca Falls to a movement that spanned across the nation, the women's suffrage movement has been one of the longest active social rights movements in American history. After over eighty years of active campaigning, and generations of women leaders, the Nineteenth Amendment finally passed. Over the past century, many historians have studied the women's suffrage movement, however a surprisingly few have seriously addressed what, other than the right to vote, the amendment accomplished. I seek to pose the question of the Nineteenth Amendment's impact on the women's movement. I argue that although the victory of the Nineteenth Amendment was significant, by using a local study of Clinton County, New York, the decisions and events through the 1920s ultimately prove that the women's suffrage movement's success was limited, and was ineffective at accomplishing most of its broader goals.

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."¹ In these short two sentences, 71 years after the Seneca Falls Convention, the women's suffrage movement came to a close. Countless women fought for these two sentences, and most of those women who helped start the movement never saw it pass nationally. August 18, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment signaled the end of the suffrage movement. However, the women's rights movement that spawned with the suffrage movement did not end in 1920. Temperance, mother and child health care, world peace, rights over children, divorce, and property, maternity leave, women's representation in politics, the Equal Rights Amendment, equal pay, higher education, access to contraception, and legal rights in rape cases are some of the many examples of these political rights that had yet to be addressed. While some of these would pass soon after suffrage, many of these took decades to be resolved, and others have yet to come into fruition.

In my study of the women's suffrage movement in Clinton County, I hope to shed light on the murky period between the 1920s and 1950s, in which the women's rights movement seems to fade from typical discourse. I will accomplish this by examining national and local policies, events, and media. I will begin this paper by exploring the two years following national suffrage, and the immediate effects and accomplishments that were seen nationally. I will then focus this period on the events and ground work in Clinton County during this brief period. After discussing the

transition from the women's suffrage movement into a broader women's rights movement, I will explain how changes in the National League of Women Voters led to an abrupt halt to national progress of the movement and the division it caused. I will support these claims by using local examples of this shift. The second half of my research will look at how commentators viewed the effects of women's suffrage during the 1920s, and the broader narrative of the post-suffrage years. I will conclude with the overview of the last century's women's rights movement, and why understanding the legacy of women's suffrage is necessary for the success of current social rights movements.

The League of Women Voters

After a state ratified the Nineteenth Amendment, many of the suffragists from that state continued their work at the national level, or in other states. The same was generally true for women in New York. However, with the victory of suffrage in sight, general anxiety over suffrage soared. With the voting populace of the United States doubled, revolutionary change was expected. The nation watched in anticipation, as many who opposed the suffrage movement felt that women's votes would take away their voice and power, and those who supported suffrage hoped that this would be simply the first step in a movement much larger. Those who fought for, and against, suffrage did so for a wide variety of reasons, such as for health care, labor laws, and for women's rights in the workplace. The expectation was that all these would soon be passed now that millions of women could now vote.

As the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was created for the sole purpose of passing suffrage, the national organization required a major reconstruction for a nation of women who now had voting power. NAWSA was created in 1890, as the two major rival women's rights organizations, the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association, merged together for a renewed push for suffrage. From 1900 to 1904, NAWSA created the "society plan," which was a policy aimed at recruiting college-educated, privileged, and politically influential members and to broaden the organization's educational efforts. Despite the failure from 1896 to 1910 of a single new state to ratify a state suffrage amendment, much of the organizational groundwork had been laid. Given this stagnation, Alice Paul split and formed the National Woman's Party.² According to the League of Woman Voters website, the organization "was founded in Chicago just six months before the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified and women got the vote. Maud Wood Park was elected as the first president of the League and the League quickly began to spread throughout the nation. By 1924 there were National Leagues organized in 346 of 433 congressional districts."³

The success of suffrage in New York state, in 1917, added 5 million women voters to the electorate, bringing national suffrage much closer to fruition⁴ These 5 million additional women made up over 4% of the nation's population, which could be seen as absolutely instrumental in the amendment's success. Carrie Chapman Catt's "fight on all fronts," which had hoped to force those opposed to suffrage to fight on all fronts against it, was the final major policy of NAWSA, as it was slowly transforming into this new organization.⁵ Catt's aggressive blitz policy proved successful, and she intended to keep the policy for other issues women had to now address since they had suffrage. Catt didn't trust either political party and viewed them both as problematic. She felt the only successful way forward was for a solid, national, unified women's movement which would continue to fight for issues that women faced. Catt was criticized for this by those who feared that women voters might form a new political bloc.⁶ At the Jubilee Convention on March 24, 1919, Catt urged the army of women citizens to "finish the fight" by outlining three immediate goals for the new League of Women Voters. The first was to complete the enfranchisement of American women, the fight was nearly over, so this was more of a preliminary goal for the new post-suffrage League. The second goal was to remove legal

discriminations against women, which had encompassed many issues that the League still had yet to define. The third goal was to fight for women's rights internationally, as many prominent suffragists had gotten extremely involved in the creation of the League of Nations, and saw world peace as a central issue women needed to address.⁷ In *Woman Citizen*, April 26, 1919, Peck describes how Catt and Brooks wanted a "union of all intelligent forces within the state" to attack illiteracy, and social and industrial evils. The early goals were to address issues head on, and to focus particularly on policy.⁸ Catt's intention for the organization was to continue the policies which made NAWSA successful in the end, and to hold politicians in both parties accountable for specific laws.⁹ If a politician did not address women's concerns on their platform, women should vote for the other party. This put both parties on the hotseat of a non-partisan women's political organization.

Not all suffragists supported the shift from NAWSA to the League of Women Voters. Partisan women leaders were the driving force in trying to prevent the formation of the League of Woman Voters, as they feared the organization did not have a clear purpose, was too focused on policy, and would pull women out of party politics.¹⁰ This skepticism was rightly placed. Many questions enveloped the organization immediately upon its creation. The question of how would authority be organized, how should the committee be structured to function, how would the new organization be financed, what relation did the state leagues have to the national, how would they recruit members and leaders, and how should they relate to other women's groups were some of these many questions.¹¹ NAWSA was successfully able to function as a unified national organization to push for suffrage, but without the unification on the issue of the right to vote, the ability to maintain such a large organization was made much more difficult. The National Woman's Party was one example of the many different women's organizations that posed issues of keeping a unified movement. The issue of financing posed an issue, as the Suffrage movement relied heavily on large sum donations, whereas the new organization would have to find a new way to be financed. Thus, a membership fee was created, which created many other issues, especially between state League's and the national League. Lower population and poorer states had a much harder time paying the national fee, and some states had much more active League's than others. The split between state interests and national interests would be the prime issue the organization would face.

After suffrage had been won, the League of Women Voters had to set new issues to galvanize and direct its constituents. The National League created thirteen platform issues in 1920. The first issue, which had already been in the workings for years, was the Sheppard-Towner Act, also known as the Promotion of the Welfare and Hygiene of Maternity and Infancy Act, which would provide federal funding for maternity and child care. The second was a constitutional amendment against child labor. The U.S. Congress had passed two laws, in 1918 and 1922, but the Supreme Court declared both unconstitutional. In 1924, a constitutional amendment prohibiting child labor was finally proposed, but the states did not ratify it. It wasn't until 1938 that Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act. The third was adequate funding for the Children's Bureau. The fourth was a federal department of education, which wouldn't be created until 1980. The fifth was federal aid for combating illiteracy and raising teachers' salaries. The sixth was compulsory civic education in schools. The seventh was federal regulation of food marketing and distribution (the FDA wouldn't be around until 1930). The eighth was increased federal aid for home-economics training. The ninth was women's representation on federal commissions dealing with women's work. The tenth was the creation of a federal-state employment service including women's departments headed by qualified women. The eleventh was an end to discrimination against women in the civil service. The twelfth was for continued funding for public education in sex hygiene. The last was for independent citizenship for American-born women married to aliens as well as identical naturalization procedures for men and women. Of these thirteen, only five were adopted.¹²

The 1920 national election saw a very low voter turnout, which questioned the actual success of suffrage. In 1920, just 36% of eligible women turned out to vote (compared with 68% of men). The low turnout was partly due to other barriers to voting, such as literacy tests, long residency requirements and poll taxes. Inexperience with voting and persistent beliefs that voting was inappropriate for women may also have kept turnout low. The gap was lowest between men and women in states that were swing states at the time, such as Missouri and Kentucky, and where barriers to voting were lower.¹³ The Gender Voter Gap created a large sense of failure, and many suffragists saw this as a major defeat. Given the dramatically slow change compared to what had been hoped, it seemed as if nothing had changed. Power had not shifted hands, and the political process remained virtually untouched. Women did not cease to be the governed, because the culture and mindset in America had not changed as dramatically as some had wished.¹⁴ After the 1920 election, Catt wished to remove “women” from The League of Women Voters in order to allow progressive minded men in the organization and to create an “independent political party for the nation.”¹⁵ Catt grew unsatisfied with the loss of momentum, and fought fervently to push forward. As the League of Women Voters began to deal with its largest challenges, Catt’s influence on the organization dissipated.

While the League of Women Voters fought to find a firm footing going forward, the National Woman’s Party fought for radical change. The NWP took up arms pushing for the Equal Right Amendment, which was introduced originally in 1923 (and later in 1971), yet never was fully ratified. The questions the ERA posed made the League dispute their support of the amendment, which left the organization slightly more conservative going forward.¹⁶ With the distancing of parts of the League from Catt’s vision and Alice Paul’s vision, the vision for the organization became even less clear than it did when it had begun.

“I think that all the politicians dread a floating vote which can be thrown from one party to the other and could split party platforms”¹⁷ Many of the fears of a Women’s Bloc from before suffrage continued afterwards, and many in the League shared the sentiment, such as Marie Edwards above. People were afraid of the traditional technique of fighting for policies. Women felt that fighting for policies through a party posed the risk of splitting party tickets and isolated women’s issues from national and local issues. There was a fear of women serving as their own political party of sorts, as Catt had suggested, as political parties at the state and local level attacked the organization for “insulating women from the parties.”¹⁸ The success of the organization depended on how they responded to these sentiments. The argument of whether the League should be a supplemental organization for women, with a priority on joining a party, clashed against those who argued that a nonpartisan but national political organization was impossible.¹⁹ This direction of the League was further complicated by the division of the state chapters of the organization.

“The activism in the New York City League marked it as a prototype of the organization envisaged by Catt.” They held positions both within the League and in political parties, emphasizing direct action, pushing for state policies.²⁰ New York state followed the ideas of Catt in the period after 1920, and the women formed a list of social policies they wished to pass through the state. While New York represented the goals Catt had in mind when creating the League of Women Voters, Pennsylvania stood as the firm rival. The Pennsylvania League was one of the most effective of the new state organizations. Lucy Miller, the president of the Pennsylvania League, pressed for state autonomy over program and policy, and to limit the organization to solely educating women.²¹ Pennsylvania held strong opposition to much of the National policy, as the state League had a strong view that the state League’s serve a far greater purpose than the national League. The New York and Minnesota Leagues were criticized by the Pennsylvania League for their lengthy agendas and their failure to accomplish much, whereas Pennsylvania was accomplishing selected goals.²²

The criticisms the Pennsylvania League set forth eventually took hold in the organization at large. Due to troubled membership, internal arguments, and state rebellion, the national League severely weakened, and primary focus shifted to primarily focus on education of women voters rather than fight specific issues.²³ The League of Women Voters made a silent national shift in 1922 from the policy centered organization it began as, into an organization primarily focused on educating women and encouraging them to join a political party of their choice. The Carrie Chapman Catt LWV was finally over, as the League finally found itself a new brand. The change to the league at this time can still be questioned today of whether it helped or hurt the organization. It wasn't until the 1950s that women's rights would enter into public discourse again. In 1969, the League of Women Voters reached its peak, having 157k members. Today it stands at only 90k members.²⁴

Clinton County

Clinton County, New York, comprised of 1 city, and 14 townships in 1920. The county held nearly 44k people, 21k of which were women. When suffrage passed in New York state in 1917, Clinton County voted with 1,794 votes for suffrage, and 1,893 against. Given the weather, the *Press* believed that the reason for low voter turnout was due to the fact that many decided to work in the farms while it was nice. The voter turnout was low, even compared to an off-year.²⁵ While many counties voted against suffrage, the majority approved, finally giving women in New York their victory. Despite the county's decision, Plattsburgh did marginally vote in favor of suffrage.

Despite gaining the right in New York, few women ended up voting. The low voter turnout of women held true for those in New York, with literacy test, long residency requirements, poll taxes, accessibility and transportation, and cultural and social stigma of women voting. What was, and has been, not taken into full consideration was the fact that women and men did not fill out pink and blue ballots, so official voting records generally cannot tell us the number of women who voted. While states now maintain records of who votes in which elections, in the 1920s and before, this type of information was either not recorded, not preserved, or did not include the sex of the voter.

Catt's national policy of active pushes for policies were present at the local level in Clinton County as well. Women in Clinton County used bloc voting in line with the national League, by focusing on particular issues. Women in Clinton County fought alongside many of the national policies, pushing for the Sheppard-Towner Act, to fight illiteracy, to increase teacher's wages, as well as other national platforms. Two of the best examples of these issues in Clinton County were the issues of child health care and education and infant mortality rates in the county. While many women in the North Country lived in rural areas, the issues of healthcare and childcare remained a shared grievance in both rural and urban settings.

Many women in Clinton County found primary education a major area of concern. Regardless of location, the area of education remained relatively unanimous. The League of Women Voters of Clinton County, led by Mrs. William Levy and Mrs. W. F. Brown, found that most schools in Clinton County needed improvements of their equipment and facilities in order to ensure proper health and student care. They listed many different issues that they found, including the need for playgrounds, for health testing, adequate school meals, and civic education.²⁶ The issues of education and child care was present in many discussions of the League, and the information gained in Clinton County was also sent to help improve the issues in other counties and at the state level.

A different study by the League investigated the rampant problem of infant mortality rates in the county. The statewide initiative found that in 1920, infants under the age of 1 had a mortality rate of 10.7% in Clinton County. This was generally high in comparison with other parts of the

state, with Genesee County having the lowest rate in New York at 4.1% and Franklin County (the county directly south of Clinton) having the highest rate at 12%.²⁷ Infant mortality rates has been a national issue since the nations beginning, and poor hospital sanitation, difficulty of transportation, and lack of maternity care are some of the reasons the issue was so pervasive.

There were a few major events in which key women from Clinton County attended. One woman who was one of six women representatives of the League of Women Voters that met with President Harding in 1921 was Ms. Marian Parkhurst. The League met before him to talk of international peace and of disarmaments, and stands as a good representation of how the League, and of how New York members interacted with the national League, felt about major national policies, as was Catt's intentions.²⁸ Another significant event around this period was the Pan-American Congress at Baltimore, in which four local women attended and were mentioned in the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*. The women were Mrs. C. S. Johnson, Mrs. John H. Booth, Mrs. E. G. Moore, and Mrs. C. H. Winship. The event was held in hopes of sharing knowledge and unity with women from across North and South America, and to create better international relations with these foreign nations. Ms. Marion Parkhurst was also applauded in this paper as well, and she was responsible for running the reception at the White House.²⁹

Many career politicians, particularly men, feared and opposed this policy of the League's, even those who were widely seen as progressive. Governor Nathan L. Miller from Albany in 1921 was quoted in a brief article of his opinion stated at a local meeting in which he criticized the League for its policy of asking women to move their vote to whichever party candidate that takes up women's issues. Mrs. Frank A. Vanderlip, the president of the New York League, wrote a letter to him, which I could not find. However, a couple weeks later he wrote a letter back that was published in the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, which replied to the criticisms in her letter. His response is useful in describing both Vanderlip's ideas and policies in the beginning of 1921, and also political pushback:³⁰

It is evident from your letter that I failed to make myself understood on the occasion of your banquet on the twenty-seventh. I do not deny your "right to work as a group outside the political party for political measures." I do not condemn non-partisan groups. In criticizing the exertion of political power by such groups I did not refer to the right of petition or the undoubted right to favor or oppose measures or candidates. I thought I made it plain, at any rate I now wish to make it plain, that I referred only to the use of voting power by such groups as groups to cajole or coerce, to reward or punish public officials. My objection to that is that it tends to substitute minority for majority rule, irresponsible, for responsible government, group or class interest for the public welfare. All groups which use group voting power to impose their will on others are dangerous to the extent of their ability to control by such methods.

As what had happened nationally, and as Pennsylvania urged its ideas onto the larger League, the New York League slowly started to slow down its unified attacks on particular issues and split into the binary party system. In 1922, The League of Women Voters shifted its policy towards focusing on educating women so they can join a party and vote. Vanderlip in 1922 dramatically changed tone, and there are three clippings in Plattsburgh newspaper that represent her new goals and platform. In the *Plattsburgh Daily Republican*, they reported on Vanderlip's trip to Plattsburgh as a speaker, to "address women interested in the success of the Democratic and Republican parties," with no mention of specific women's issues made.³¹ A couple weeks earlier in the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, reports on a banquet held in the Macdonough Inn, in which Mrs. Vanderlip and Mrs. Willis G. Mitchell, from Hudson Falls, were invited as special guests. "Mrs. Vanderlip spoke on the purpose of the League and outlined the history of the political parties. Speaking on the League, she stated that the League was organized for the purpose of training women in citizenship so that they may enter politics informed, intelligent and be of real value to the party of their choice."³²

These strong sentiments and policy change is further proved by a similar article later in the month on a different event. At the annual convention of the New York State League, Vanderlip came to Plattsburgh to address the women of Clinton County. Vanderlip reported to the newspaper in an interview that “politics needs the woman’s viewpoint, her thrift and economy, her independent spirit, her devotion to what she thinks is right. The League of Women Voters urges women to study facts, use their own common sense, and then vote according to their own conscience.”³³ By 1923, the movement had officially changed. The state had finally shifted to a focus on streamline into party politics rather remain as an outside social justice organization.

It wasn’t long until many questioned the success of suffrage. As women’s organization started to divide and national groups dissolve, the noise of the previous decade seemed to be over. With the low voter turnout in 1920 and 1924, commentators began to declare the suffrage movement as a failure. A vulgar article written by Charles Russell says one reason women’s suffrage was a failure was because women tended not to vote along NAWSA or LWV lines. He stated that more women voted for male politicians who were vehemently against suffrage than men who supported it.³⁴ Looking back from today’s perspective is important in understanding the complexities of the movement. Women voted at much lower rates than men, not closing the gender voter gap for another 80 years. While the national amendment had passed, it took the remaining 12 states over 60 years to finally ratify the Nineteenth Amendment. Mississippi was the last state to do so on March 22, 1984.³⁵

Notes

1. U.S. Const. amend. XIX.
2. “National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).” (*Encyclopædia Britannica*. July 14, 2016).
3. “History.” (League of Women Voters).
4. Louise M. Young. *In the Public Interest: The League of Women Voters, 1920-1970*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989): 21.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, 22.
7. *Ibid.*, 33.
8. Mary G. Peck. *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Bibliography*. (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1944): 307.
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Ornaments, Helpmates, and Spheres: The Anti-Suffrage Movement in Clinton County

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Fall 2017

The wrong sides of history are rarely discussed. Though it is important to recognize the contributions of history's heroes, and to ensure that their efforts were not in vain, the value of examining the "other" side is substantial. It can tell us a significant amount about what had to be overcome, the context within which events unfolded, the rationalizations people often still make and the systems that encourage those justifications. The other side can also relay the living history of a place, the reality of living there hundreds of years ago. Perhaps it's a place that has a past not everyone is proud of, or one most people are simply unaware of, but it almost certainly has a past worth finding out about.

Whatever the case may be, New York State is filled with such places; some that are celebrated and others, not as much. With one-hundred years having now past since the state finally granted women the right to vote, the people and places that influenced that event, for better or worse, however famous or obscure, are more important to acknowledge than ever. The similarities, deviations, and interactions of what was occurring in New York City and what was happening more than three-hundred miles north in Clinton County more than a century ago reveals not just events that occurred but its surrounding circumstances and culture. In looking into the uglier counterpart of the women's suffrage movement, that culture is now clearer; an honest depiction of what rural activism -- and its consequences-- looked like in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As women and other disenfranchised groups had never been integrated into the United States' democratic systems, most early opposition to women's suffrage was largely unorganized -- the status quo doesn't need much defending, after all. Save for the stray sermon or newspaper article, the efforts of the early suffrage movement were met with incredulity (Goodier 15). Those that did publicly oppose the early suffrage movement were almost exclusively men, all of whom held positions or beliefs the enfranchisement of women would threaten. Though many did not consider the question a valid one in the mid-1800s, the response from lawyers, doctors, politicians, and priests made it clear that those that cared were hostile to the concept, and, even then, not many people outside of the movement seemed to care at all (Camhi 2).

The values these powerful men and, later, the larger opposition movement were defending were not just baseless fear-mongering but a long-growing insecurity about the roles men and women were 'meant' to fulfill: their "spheres of influence." The important factor in this is that actions and reputations within this culture were heavily gendered. The "masculine" pursuits of men included business, scholarship, and, of course, politics. Theirs was a corrupt and vicious world, many believed, one marred by gruesome war and virulent corruption. Women's role was, predictably,

in the home, but their responsibilities extended far beyond domestic chores. As men were meant to be the fearsome leaders of the public world, women were appointed the compassionate core of private life, tasked with being gentle “guardians of morality” that guided the home and family towards generosity and mercy (Camhi 6-7, Goodier 22). In 1913, Archbishop of Baltimore, J. Card Gibbons, praised these “charms and graces,” that “exalt womankind” and “make her the ornament and the coveted companion of men.” Women already had a great deal of inherent power, Gibbons claimed, but in “her own and proper sphere” as God and nature intended (Gibbons 17). “Woman is queen, indeed,” he specifies, “but her empire is the domestic kingdom” (Gibbons 18). Should women wish to combat unjust legislation or advocate for social change she would be free to do so, but only by way of raising her children well. “[Woman] brings into the world and rocks the cradle of the nation’s future citizens,” Gibbons explains, “those who are to be the future rulers and statesmen; the heroes and benefactors of the country.” “Surely,” he expects, “this is glory enough for her” (Gibbons 18).

Inevitably, for the suffragists and their long campaign, it was not. As more and more women became convinced that the vote would be more effective than acting as a charming ornament, women’s suffrage was suddenly a very real threat. By the tail end of the nineteenth century, enough had ventured into the “masculine” sphere of influence to frighten many into thinking the advancement of feminism had begun to decay the foundations of gender itself (Camhi 6). Fearing a unified female voting bloc should suffrage be granted, powers like the textiles industry and other wealthy business owners began to take suffrage seriously. Liquor companies, assuming the worst, started supporting anti-suffrage sentiment in the hopes that it would spare them from prohibition should women of temperance movements gain the vote and ban their products. Setting aside their many differences, the conservative republicans and Tammany Hall democrats of New York quietly agreed that preventing women’s suffrage was a non-partisan project they could all get behind (Goodier 9).

Curiously, women began contributing significantly to the opposition of their own enfranchisement, publishing works and engaging in debates that often parroted anti-suffrage rhetoric previously introduced by men (Goodier 17). Far from the apathetic outlooks held decades before, conservative and wealthy women of the late nineteenth century feared they would lose their places in a potentially non-patriarchal society. It seemed women’s suffrage and, more specifically, the feminist ideology that motivated it was destroying what it meant to be a woman (Camhi 6). In (relatively) historically progressive areas like the northeastern states, women who remained silent on the issue were now assumed to be suffragists by default (Goodier 15). No longer willing to put up with this assumption nor the failure of disparate factions’ attempts to delay what was now seen as an inevitable suffragist victory, women against suffrage began to organize (Camhi 2-3).

For the wealthy, republican women of New York City, this meant the founding of the New York State Association Opposed to Women’s Suffrage (Goodier 15, 17). Positioned at the hub of pro-suffrage activity and the forefront of urban high-society, women like Josephine Dodge and Alice Hill Chittenden lead the organization in a crusade not just to oppose suffrage, but to safeguard the status and tools so valued by conservative women at the time. Preserving the much lauded “spheres of influence” was a primary goal of the NYSAOWS as well as other groups, but for much more altruistic purposes (Camhi 10, Goodier 5, 11, 17, 22). Instead of just raising well-mannered male children, these anti-suffragists believed that their innate kindness and generosity was best put to use for various important causes, including women’s education and labor reform (Goodier 6-7, Camhi 11-14). To strip women of that non-partisan, motherly influence, as they believed would happen if suffrage were granted, would be to remove something natural and powerful in exchange for something toothless and corrupted by the dangerous world of business and politics (Goodier 5, 17).

The contradictory nature of these groups and efforts is apparent even within the context of the public and private spheres despite the justifications for them. With a surprisingly progressive policy, men were typically kept out of these organizations' leadership entirely, allowing the educated and professional women who led them to do so without outside influence (Goodier 6). Despite this, many anti-suffrage arguments used by these leaders originated within the initial backlash towards the suffrage activism, a product overwhelmingly sourced from men. Points about women's inherent biological and emotional inferiority and/or differences, the loss of womanhood or sex when not fulfilling a natural role, the potential ineffectiveness or chaos women voting would purportedly cause: each are retellings of the same core reliance on sacred, gendered public and private spheres and an invention of men (Goodier 17).

Despite their relatively late arrival and some seemingly paradoxical beliefs, organizations like NYSAOWS are thought to have been successful in delaying and complicating the road to women's suffrage. NYSAOWS specifically worked locally within New York state on a more intimate level than many pro-suffrage organizations, often choosing specific ballots or debates to focus on in specific communities (Camhi 3). They used encounters with suffragists as practice, endeavoring to become as charismatic and persuasive as they knew seasoned activists to be. "Antis" like Lucy Price and Marjorie Dorman toured the state giving lectures and participating in debates, a campaign that surely influenced audiences within communities that had very little exposure to open discussion of such topics (Goodier 87, 103).

One such group of communities was Clinton county. As in most rural areas, things were significantly more quiet but generally followed a similar pattern to others. Though there were certainly advocates for women's suffrage working diligently towards winning the vote, the issue remained a mere curiosity in the county's public eye for a majority of the movement's seventy-two year lifespan.

When the question of enfranchisement did arise, it was discussed with the same air of incredulity and hostility seen elsewhere. As with the larger opposition movement, it was first the influential and educated men who spoke out. The vocal unorganized anti-suffragists of Clinton county consisted almost exclusively of lawyers and scholars, most of them white men from Plattsburgh or neighboring towns. These men remained largely silent until the late 1800s, when, as before, the reinvigorated suffrage movement -- and the responses from organized opposition groups -- began to enter the public eye as a serious issue. When their silence was broken, their views on the subject were often even more negative than others of their peers. Responding to a pro-suffrage lecture given to the Plattsburgh Institute in 1901, real estate agent and civic icon Hiram Walworth remarked that "he could see nothing to be gained by forcing the ballot upon [women]," who, according to him, had already obtained "equal and in some cases superior civil rights." -- an argument often seen elsewhere in anti-suffrage rhetoric and in the county. Local scholar Dr. Charles Rivier went even further, expressing an "outspoken ... opposition to the question" of women's suffrage. Though Rivier's comments were "disapproving of the woman in politics," the *Plattsburgh Daily Press* reports his remarks were still, somehow, "most gallant" and "greatly appreciated" -- a sign of the deep bias most news outlets subtly or overtly displayed. (*Daily Press*, Feb. 1901).

Frank Hagar, an acclaimed Plattsburgh lawyer well-known to locals, was also known for his opposition to the women's vote and, perhaps more importantly, his crusade against the encroaching "danger" of feminism. His 1905 book, *The American Family: A Sociological Problem*, describes in great detail what he thought of women and their place within a patriarchal family structure, and, amongst other things, offers a great insight into the scientific and social context in which many educated anti-suffragists placed their opposition.

As seen in most of his peers, Hagar strongly believed in those same “spheres of life” men and women were meant to inhabit, going so far as to cite it as one of the fundamental defining factors in differentiating the sexes. These differences, he claimed, were a part of the way in which men and women develop their natural dispositions and even primary sex characteristics. According to him, “primary sex qualities ... are much more prominent and important in the female, so that her actual life and sphere are far more directly affected by sex than the male” (Hagar 23). The less advanced and ingrained in these spheres a civilization is (amongst other influencing factors like environment), he suggests, the less distinct the two sexes become. The idea of “less advanced” and “unnatural” civilizations is, of course, a perspective deeply entrenched in the colonial racism of the era, but this particular comparison is heavy-handed even for its time:

The differences between male and female among savages, even in bodily structure, are far less than among the civilized, and increase with growing civilization. That a portion of this may be true due to environment, or sex spheres or institutions may be true, but what are institutions in the main, but a continuance of natural processes, though they may originate in part from the conscious human mind? An approximation then to likeness of sex can be no proper ideal, and is against the course of nature. (Hagar 24)

These spheres and the differences between the sexes then, are supposedly a natural achievement of evolved civilizations, a height reached by those who have progressed enough. To abandon those differences and “cross the spheres” then, would be to roll back the progress of evolution and civilization itself.

Hagar continues to detail these differences, surprisingly denying the view that women are simply an underdeveloped or inferior version of men, a widely circulated belief within scientific theories like Darwinian evolution through which many justified sexist beliefs:

... it has appeared to scientific men as Darwin and Spencer, that woman is a case of the undeveloped or the arrested development of man. This in a measure is physically true, but it would seem somewhat strange and unjust, that in the creation of conscious human beings women did not have a compensating factor, a factor of superiority to equal or balance the superior element in man, a factor pertaining to the mind or soul, and not merely to the body. Woman does, indeed, possess this superior element or factor, and the basis of it lies in her very nature and constitution. It is the element of superior sensibility, that takes by feeling nature’s concrete picture and which arises from that delicate body formation required for reproduction, and love made for and called forth by maternity. (Hagar 24)

Though this description may seem to offer women more power and admiration than one might expect from Mr. Hagar, it does so by maintaining that women are equal only in their ability to nurture and their delicate poise within the natural, private sphere of the home, far from the legal and social equality suffragists were seeking.

Indeed, one of the more convoluted claims he makes is that, were men and women truly equal under the law, women would be left to their “natural condition,” the “state of lesser honor in which she is held in oriental countries.” In this state, he explains, she could be “deserted at any time” and left “comparatively helpless,” possibly even falling “into a state of concubinage.” Because the law does not allow you to abandon women to this “natural condition” and women were naturally equal to men evolutionarily, it meant, according to Hagar, that women were afforded special privileges and protections by the law already (Hagar 79-80). This line of reasoning, that those seeking empowerment or justice have not only received it already but are now asking for even more, is

an argument deployed by many anti-suffragists and, unfortunately, many people living today. Since a woman's right to vote is, of course, predicated upon the idea of equal rights, and Hagar believed that actually meant demanding "special privileges," when he reminds us that democracy "is based upon the idea of equal burdens" his stance on women's suffrage becomes even more overt (Hagar 80).

In case there was any doubt, Hagar publicly described his disdain for women's enfranchisement and feminism in general five years later in Plattsburgh during a debate between six professional men (including himself) on the merits of women's suffrage. Fearing voting women would shatter the family, Hagar lamented that feminism had already "within the last 30 or 40 years been responsible for the almost destruction of the family idea," had stunted the "growth of the race," and had "made marriage unpopular" (*Sentinel*, April 1910). At the same debate, Plattsburgh physician Dr. J.G. McKinney agreed with Mr. Hagar, reportedly asserting that "advocates of suffrage consisted principally of short-haired women and long-haired men," a clear jab at the "confusion" of traditionally gendered physical characteristics among those who dare to cross their assigned spheres. "Woman suffrage," McKinney said, "would make woman man's rival and competitor and not his companion and helpmate" (*Sentinel*, August 1900, April 1910). Rouses Point attorney James B. Stearns took a different but entirely familiar approach to belittling the issue, arguing that "women should not vote until they can show that society would benefit and that change would be for the better and not for the worse." Very few women would be able to vote even if granted the right said Stearns, an issue that did not matter regardless as he "didn't think the majority of women cared for it, but to the contrary preferred to talk about and discuss the styles" ("Rouses Point News," 1910).

Despite these crude and widely circulated arguments, this marks a shift in public perception that would challenge the status quo even as far north as Clinton county. The audience for that 1910 debate was dominated by women by ninety-five percent, a fact that, according to the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, marked the pro-suffrage competitors like Judge L.L. Shedden as clear winners of the evening (*Sentinel*, April 1910). In a rural, northern town like Plattsburgh, which had rarely entertained the idea of women's suffrage previously, a debate with a pro-suffrage winner was no small feat. Though it took longer than most other areas in the northeast, the woman's vote was finally a topic of open discussion.

The Good Templars, one of the most influential temperance unions in the area, began talking about women's suffrage earlier than most. The prohibition of alcohol was obviously the group's primary concern, and no public declaration of a stance on suffrage has been discovered, but several references to one Ida Leggett reveal that the topic was one of many discussed in a tour around Clinton county as early as 1870. Leggett was a well-educated and charismatic speaker by all accounts and, from her available writing, seemed fiercely independent in a way not many of her peers dared to be (*Sentinel*, Nov. 1870). Her 1870 letter to the editor of the *Sentinel* contains a series of seemingly progressive and affirming statements that initially seem to support the independence of women, but ultimately support the traditional roles enforced by the separate spheres. She expresses her admiration of the *Sentinel*, a publication widely-known to be more pro-suffrage than its competitors, and, in response to potentially being asked by a man to stop talking, she responds "no, sir, we women stop when we see best fit." Her support of women's traditional place -- in the home and at her husband's side -- is apparent however, even if expressed in a deceptively progressive manner:

Bring into politics the pure, refining influence of the fireside -- our mother, our sister, our wife, our *loved one*. Let each male arm himself with his household angel, let his home star be his political star. Let the prayers, the pleadings, the truthful, fascinating power

of woman, be ever in his ear, ever by his side, and wondrous reformations will follow.
(*Sentinel*, Sept. 1870)

This thinking may initially appear to support women's direct involvement in politics, and, in some ways, it does. The idea of bringing women's supposed charms and morals into politics as a cleansing force, even if through appealing to the better nature of powerful men, was a controversial view shared by many of the anti-suffrage women in larger organizations like the NYSAOWS. This force, they believed, was far more powerful than the power of the vote that would destroy this advantage. It is important to note, however, that even this supports the traditional spheres of men and women, regardless of how the innate "power of woman" is repurposed. Leggett confirms this as her letter continues, advocating for women to educate themselves and devote themselves to a cause not for their own sake, but to better serve men. "Yes, girls, the day of dolls and butterflies has passed," she writes, encouraging her fellow women to take initiative. "Men want helpmates and companions for wives, not know-nothings" (*Sentinel*, Sept. 1870).

Ida Leggett's stance on women and suffrage was likely shared by the Good Templars that hosted her, but no public statement of support nor opposition to the vote was ever made. As many temperance organizations around the country had thrown their support behind pro-suffrage groups in the hopes of passing prohibition legislation, the Good Templar's silence on the issue implies they may have opposed or simply ignored it beyond Leggett's touring discussions, likely viewing it as a distracting or regressive influence in their campaign to ban alcohol and repair the traditional Christian family (*Sentinel*, Mar. 1894).

With no other locally organized anti-suffrage groups and growing support for suffrage in the state, Clinton county soon became host to the Plattsburgh Association Opposed to Women's Suffrage. Little is known about this short-lived organization save for the lengthy anti-suffrage propaganda they had published weekly in the *Plattsburgh Daily Press*. These "Anti-Suffrage Notes" contain everything from economic analysis that argues suffrage will hurt the economy to appeals to racism and xenophobia. "In our large cities, especially New York, the mass of uneducated and often unprincipled voters would be doubled," they argue. "We have enfranchised already a mass of men who are unfit to vote, will the doubling of this number improve conditions at the polls in our cities and in our state" (*Daily Press*, Apr. 1915)? Preying on the insecurity that black men already gained the right to vote and black women and other minorities may gain the right to vote alongside white women was a tactic seen more in the southern U.S. than the northeast, but unfortunately counts among the many anti-suffrage techniques used in Clinton county.

These notes also invoked a very familiar and increasingly tired concept -- the separate spheres and responsibilities of men and women. Like the NYSAOWS and Ida Leggett before them, the group argued that women's power laid not within direct political influence, but in guiding the morals of men:

Where and when have women proved their supreme moral influence as the mothers, wives, daughters, sisters and teachers of men as 'inferior' to the ballots and bullets that men must sometimes use? What reason can suffragists give for asking women to use the weapons of men in a vain attempt to exercise political power, when the wishes of women and the wisdom of the centuries teach us to rely on the moral might that women wield in the church, the school and the home, where our citizens are made and molded -- by women? (*Daily Press*, Apr. 1915)

As previously stated, this view was not without its detractors, but ultimately proved a powerful enough stance to convince many that women had enough power as things were.

The parallels of local and statewide arguments were not just a coincidence, however, as contact with larger groups, movements, and influential people are what kept the county connected to the outside world. Marjorie Dorman, the influential and persuasive NYSAOWS orator, came to Plattsburgh in 1914 to debate Harriet May Mills, a famous activist and suffragist. The debate made front-page news that detailed Dorman's defense of the role and natural power of women, a defense of spheres yet again. No clear winner was declared, though Dorman is reported to have been "supported by warm applause" (*Sentinel*, Dec. 1914).

Less than a year later, in the summer of 1915, the travelling Chautauqua Tour came to Plattsburgh. Named for its birthplace, the touring show featured lectures, debates, and entertainment as they travelled around New York, settling in a selected town for a week-long festival. The Chautauqua was a significant event for Plattsburgh, having been selected for the first time as one of 1915's tour stops. "Probably nothing in the way of entertainment ever came to Plattsburgh that was more deserving of support than is the Chautauqua," reported the *Daily Press*, clearly satisfied with the excitement the tour provided (*Daily Press*, Aug. 1915). Among the list of performing musicians and lecturers was Lucy Price, another NYSAOWS debater that had been touring upstate New York on an anti-suffrage platform. Her debate opponent was Helen Todd, a suffrage advocate from California that travelled across the country to participate. These two experienced and lively debaters clashed on the tour's third day and, though no transcript nor outcome of the debate has been found, it seems likely that a preview for the event that described it as "a spirited contest" was ultimately accurate (*Daily Press*, June 1915).

Perhaps inspired by these talented public speakers or maybe even in direct contact with them, the Plattsburgh Association Opposed to Women's Suffrage stayed in touch with the NYSAOWS. They eventually sent Mrs. J.L. Clark to represent the town of Plattsburgh at the NYSAOWS's 1916 conference in New York City and report what she had learned from attending (*Daily Press*, July 1916). This established a connection between the two groups that would serve them well for just one year, before New York state recognized the right of women to vote in 1917.

In Clinton county, however, the victory was still on the side of the Antis. Despite the statewide vote, the county remained opposed to women's suffrage throughout the seventy-two years of suffragist activism in the area and beyond. A 1915 referendum allowed citizens to vote directly on the issue, and, having been witness to public silence followed by an onslaught of hostility and organized resistance to suffrage, Clinton county voted against the right being granted. According to a 1917 suffragist handbook, the county vote resulted in 2,657 in favor and 4,126 against, an upsetting but decisive blow to women's rights in the area (Stapler 95).

Fortunately, as the state decided to pass the amendment regardless in 1917, the efforts of suffragists local and otherwise were not entirely in vain. Due in part to the deeply entrenched social barriers of public and private life and the efforts of organized anti-suffrage groups, the march towards equal rights for women was delayed but, thankfully, not halted. Though these factors may seem archaic now, aspects of them still inform the history of cities like Plattsburgh, counties like Clinton, and the ongoing efforts of those who fight for equal rights to this day.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Helen Nerska, the Clinton County Historical Association, Debra Kimok, Willow Nolland, and SUNY Plattsburgh for assistance in research and writing.

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The Suffrage Movement in New York State: Race, Gender, and Occupation

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GWS 300 - Fall 2017

Introduction

The very first Women's Rights convention was held in 1848 and would forever be known as the Seneca Falls Convention. There were almost 200 women at this convention, and it was hosted by famous suffragists and abolitionists such as Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. At the convention, the women in attendance created the Declaration of Sentiments and Grievances which outlined many injustices and inequalities that women had to face. Among these injustices, was the fact that women did not possess the right to vote. This was the beginning of the suffrage movement in the United States; one of the longest movements in American History. The suffrage movement would last 71 years, until the creation of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919. For New York State, though, this battle would be 69 years as women gained suffrage in November of 1917.

Many famous suffragists came from New York State, some notable ones being Susan B. Anthony who resided in Rochester, New York and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who lived near Seneca Falls. Local to the North Country, there were suffragists such as Hannah Lansing, who is noted as the Mother of Suffrage in the North Country, and Inez Mulholland, most famously known for a photograph of her riding a white horse through a suffrage parade in New York City. There are countless women who were involved in the suffrage movement. We have learned about women's involvement in the movement all our lives, which makes sense as it is a movement about women. What we haven't learned about though is about the men. What were their attitudes about suffrage? Were there male suffragists at all? Who were these men? This paper serves as a purpose to dive deep into that question. Who were the men of the suffrage movement, and what were their opinions and attitudes about women gaining the right to vote?

Woodrow Wilson's Impact: 1913- 1921

Woodrow Wilson, the twenty-eighth president of the United States, served from 1913 to 1921 and was the President in office during the end of the Suffrage movement. There are many famous images of the White House being picketed by suffragists who desperately wanted President Wilson to help women win the battle. Wilson may be remembered by historians as a man who loved women, as he had two wives and three daughters, but actions speak louder than words. Wilson was not a friend to the suffrage movement, at least not at first. Wilson had a very Victorian view on women, and his first wife, Ellen Louise Axson Wilson also shared these ideas. She agreed with her husband, in that women had to be ideal house keepers, beautiful, and nice and that if a woman could not preserve her individuality within her family, then she simply had no individuality

worth preserving. Bryn Mawr, a new Women's College, offered Woodrow Wilson a position as a Professor, and his wife Ellen, was concerned that it would not be a fulfilling job to have because he would be educating women. He later on went to teach at Princeton University, of which he would later become the President.¹

Several months after Woodrow Wilson's Presidential inauguration, suffragists picketed the White House. President Wilson would also meet with Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, the President of NAWSA (the National American Woman Suffrage Association). When Shaw asked President Wilson about supporting suffrage and using his power to impact congress, President Wilson responded by saying "I am not a free man," in regards to the fact that he is not free to persuade congress any which way.² This would have undoubtedly angered Shaw and other suffragists; the President of the United States of America, claiming that he was not a free man, is comical. The epitome of privilege and the ultimate citizen claimed that he was not a free man to a woman who was not considered a citizen at this point in time and was truly not free to make her own decisions, let alone vote for people who could help her and other women. President Wilson remained relatively silent on the issue of Women's Suffrage until the passing of his first wife, despite NAWSA's consistent lobbying and activism. He later then became involved with Edith Bolling Galt, who eventually would become his second wife, and would become the first First Lady to assume presidential functions.

In August of 1914, President Wilson's wife, Ellen, died. Her death "plunged him into profound grief and despair" and he did not recover until he met his second wife, Edith Bolling Galt in March 1915. When President Wilson announced his engagement to Edith on October 6, 1915, he also stated to reporters that he'd be voting in favor of women's suffrage in New Jersey. He said, "I intend to vote for woman suffrage in New Jersey. I believe the time has come to extend the privilege and responsibility to the women of the State, but I shall vote ... only upon my private conviction. I believe that it should be settled by the State and not by the National Government and that in no circumstance should it be made a party question." Congress was upset with President Wilson for his engagement and marriage to Edith Bolling Galt, presumably because it was so soon after the death of his first wife, Ellen, and they believed this would impact women voters in the West, as the 1916 election had not passed yet.³ Edith Wilson was a strong woman, and after their marriage some would say that she was the one who was running the country, not Woodrow Wilson himself. I believe that it was Edith Wilson's strong willed attitude, independence and personality that swayed President Wilson to change his mind about suffrage, and eventually try to get the Nineteenth Amendment to pass.

By 1917, President Wilson had become acquainted with suffragist Alice Paul. Alice Paul was the chairman of the National American Woman Suffrage Association's Congressional Committee. She was unlike NAWSA strategists- she was convinced that concentration on suffrage in state constitutional amendments were a waste of time.⁴ Because her views on how to attain suffrage were different from NAWSA, she went and founded the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage in 1913. The Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage believed that for there to be real change and for women to really attain the right to vote, it needed to be done on a federal level. The CU campaigned against all Democratic candidates in the 1914 and 1916 elections. In December of 1916, Alice Paul began strategizing a new plan of attack- picketing the White House. In January of 1917, Alice Paul and fellow suffragists picketed the White House with signs that said, "*MR. President, How Long Must Women Wait for Liberty?*"⁵

From 1914 to 1920, President Wilson held fifty interviews about suffrage. He had met with Congress around eighty times to discuss women's suffrage. In 1918 he secured the divisive votes in the House, and in 1919 and 1920 he worked heavily on the ratification of the amendment. Wilson was only a strong supporter of suffrage for the last three years of the movement.⁶

The Men's League for Women's Suffrage

American men as individuals had publicly supported women's suffrage and women's rights as far back as 1775, when Thomas Paine published his essay, "An Occasional Letter on the Female Sex." In 1848, after the Seneca Falls Convention, more men began writing in favor of women's rights and their enfranchisement. Men like William Lloyd Garrison, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Frederick Douglass supported the movement.⁷

In 1907, Reverend Anna Shaw (the president of NAWSA) sent Oswald Garrison Villard, a progressive publisher and editor for *Nation* and the *New York Evening Post*, a letter inviting him to speak at a suffrage convention in Buffalo on October 15. Villard told her that it was too far in the future for him to commit, and he did not want to be involved.⁸ But, in this letter, Villard proposed something to Shaw that had not been done before in the United States: forming a pro suffrage club composed of exclusively men. Villard was a highfalutin businessman. He knew a lot of other famous, wealthy men, and he thought that he could use his high status in Manhattan society to influence other wealthy men into becoming a part of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage. When Shaw invited Villard to speak at the convention in Buffalo, she was acting on word from Villard's mother, Helen Frances Garrison Villard, a suffragist who went by the name of Fanny. Among these men would eventually be William Lloyd Garrison, W.E.B Du Bois, Stephen Wise, H.G. Wells, Thomas Hardy, Bertrand Russell, John Crosby, John Dewey, George Harvey, Charles Sprague Smith, Charles F. Aked, Frederick Douglass, William M. Ivins, Melville Stone, and lots of other influential men of the time period.

Before those men joined the male only club, Villard wanted to find a secretary. In 1909, he chose Max Eastman as the perfect choice for the League. Eastman was the son of two progressive ministers and came from Elmira, New York. Eastman's family was wealthy; his parents were close friends with Mark Twain. Eastman graduated from Williams College in 1905 and had a fellowship from Columbia University in 1908. His mother was Rev. Anna Ford Eastman, a suffragist who was well acquainted with other notable suffragists at the time. Max Eastman was also dating Inez Milholland, a local hero to the North Country. In April of 1909, Eastman gave a speech on suffrage at New York University School of Law. He sent out invitations to the League (which at this point was being called the Voters' Woman Suffrage League). At this point in time, the League did not have any meetings- it just existed as a club for men to say that they were pro-suffrage. Eastman had sent out the invitations to NYU law students along with a list of 28 names of men who were already members. This list was leaked to the public in May of 1909, and a *New York Times* article published them. The title of the article was, "Male Suffragettes Now in the Field: The Deeper Notes to Join the Soprano Chorus for Women's Votes." Along with listing the names of the members, the article pointed out that the League did not do activist work- they just existed as a group of pro-suffrage men. The article read, "The league will do no active work of any kind, at least for the present, but will simply announce itself, also its membership, and then stand pat. This fact seems at first sight to put it far below the Suffragettes, whose watchword is activity."⁹

Several years later, in 1911, the League gathered with other suffrage groups to march in the second annual suffrage parade in New York City. The men who marched alongside women in the parade were verbally attacked for their stance on women's enfranchisement. They were shouted at and called names. By 1912, the men of the suffrage movement had become more visible. The number of men who were involved in the League nearly tripled from its original list of 150 members.

W. E. B. Du Bois' Involvement

The Fifteenth Amendment was passed in 1870. At the time, the Suffrage movement had been going on for several decades, and the white women who were leading the movement didn't

have anything positive to say about this Amendment. In fact, they were perplexed as to why the government was giving black people the right to vote before they gave women suffrage. The Fifteenth Amendment outlawed racial discrimination in determining qualification for voting. "Previous enslavement" was added to the amendment several years later, when Jim Crow laws were put into place and were preventing black people from voting because they were once slaves. Black women were technically covered by this amendment, but they were after all, still women. White women excluded black women from the movement because they believed that the nation could only handle one form of discrimination at a time. Supposedly, it's not because these white women suffragists didn't *care* about black women and their enfranchisement, but because they believed they had bigger things to deal with. But, despite the mainstream movement's exclusion of black women, W.E.B. Du Bois was still an active member of the suffrage movement.

W.E.B. Du Bois was a big advocate for women's rights throughout his life. When Frederick Douglass died, he passed the torch of advocating for civil liberties to Du Bois. His involvement in the suffrage movement is widely unspoken of, but he did indeed make a lot of contributions to the movement. Du Bois wrote more than twenty essays and editorials on women's rights throughout his lifetime. He also gave a major address at the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and was involved in many other suffrage events.¹⁰ By his contemporaries, W.E.B. Du Bois would be known as a "woman's rights man" because of his activism within women's rights. Du Bois also recognized the intersection of race and gender and tried to convince black men who were anti-suffrage that women having the right to vote would be beneficial to them; if black women could vote then there would be more black votes.

White women were highly offended when the Fifteenth Amendment was passed. They were appalled that the government was caring for African Americans before they took care of women's rights.¹¹ The Fifteenth Amendment created a divide in the women's suffrage movement. There was the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) which supported the Fifteenth Amendment and strived to include black women, and the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA- which was different than NAWSA) which opposed the amendment. AWSA was an inclusive group, and NWSA was exclusive to white women. NWSA had women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who vowed they would focus on women's suffrage and believed that including black women in their movement would distract the nation from their main goal: attaining suffrage.¹² Du Bois wrote a number of editorials and articles on the subject of suffrage. He understood the intersection of race, class, and gender and often spoke of the link between the struggle of Black suffrage and the struggle for women's suffrage. In one of his editorials on women's suffrage, he wrote, "Is there a single argument for the right of men to vote, or for the right of black men to vote, that does not apply to the votes of women, particularly for Black women?"¹³ The exclusion of black women in the movement is no secret. Du Bois worked for the NAACP as the editor for *The Crisis*, and he used this position to allow black women to write articles about suffrage. He let black women speak for themselves in this way, instead of speaking for them. Black women were politically diverse, and you can see this by looking at *The Crisis*' issues. *The Crisis* serves as a documentation of black women's involvement in politics at this time- without it, black women's political activism may have been unknown. In August of 1915, *The Crisis* published a special issue called "Votes for Women" that featured Sojourner Truth and Abraham Lincoln on the cover. This issue was the second issue that Du Bois published about women's suffrage. This issue had articles from both black men and women writing in favor of women's suffrage. Some of them were written by notable black suffragists, such as Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, the Pioneer of the Black Women's Club Movement, Mary Church Terrell, the president of the NAACP, Nannie Helen Burroughs, the Secretary of Woman's Auxiliary of National Black Baptist Convention, and several others.¹⁴ During this time, black men were more pro suffrage than their white male counterparts. Perhaps it was because of their own history with being marginalized that made them want to help women. The mainstream suffrage movement demonized black men during this time period, and

often used racist tactics to make it appear that black men were vehemently against women's suffrage, when in reality it was quite the opposite. In fact, suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Anna Shaw used propaganda within their circles to make it seem that black men were against the suffrage movement, and it was particularly abhorrent to Du Bois because he knew that within the black communities in America, women's suffrage was widely uncontroversial, unlike in White America.

Suffrage in the North Country

While doing my research for this paper, I utilized New York Historical Newspapers a lot, because it occurred to me that if I was going to find men's opinions on the suffrage movement, newspapers would be a good source of information. Presumably, the newspapers were male dominated, male owned, and male written. There were a lot of articles that spoke about suffrage in positive lights, and some that spoke about it negatively. In an article in the *Plattsburgh Daily Press* from December 16, 1909, titled "A Woman of Quick Wit" the writer (whose name is unknown) wrote about a speech Susan B. Anthony made in Plattsburgh. The author described Anthony as an extremely dramatic person who had a very quick wit, and always knew what to say back to the people who retorted the suffrage movement.¹⁵ The article says that during the speech, she spoke about the segregation of occupations between men and women, and when she did the men in the audience laughed. To which she "dramatically" responded with, "Do you not see that our society says woman has not brains enough to be a doctor, lawyer or minister, but has plenty to be a teacher...?"¹⁶ While what the author is saying about the suffrage movement is relatively objective, there is still a very negative undertone when he is talking about Anthony- it is clear that this journalist did not like outspoken women. The closer to the November 6 election in 1917, the more pro-suffrage the articles I found were. In an article written in February of 1917, titled, "Men Organize to Grant Suffrage in This State" from the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, several men were listed as pro-suffrage. Frank A. Vanderlip was one of the men mentioned in this article. Vanderlip was the lead member of the Men's Advisory Board of the New York State Women's Suffrage Party. The Advisory Board banded together in support of women's suffrage. Other men that were listed were also on the board of executives. These men were: James Byrne, William M. Chadbourne, Grosvenor B. Clarkson, Frank W. M. Cutcheon, Adolph Lewison, V. Everit Macy, Herbert Parsons and George W. Perkins. I tried looking for these men elsewhere, but it was difficult to differentiate the names. There were lots of men with the same names on the Ancestry Library, and also in other papers so it was difficult to tell which man was involved with the suffrage movement and who wasn't. When I first began my research, I originally wanted to research the men I found and dive deep into their demographics, but that information wasn't readily available for one single semester. Other men who I found who were involved in the suffrage movement from local historian, Helen Nerska, were: Charles Halsey Moore, who was a prominent attorney in Plattsburgh. Herman Veeder, an industrialist, Judge John Booth whose wife and sister-in-law were suffragists, and Jasper Robinson a teacher and member of the George William Curtis Club in Plattsburgh. The George William Curtis Club was a club devoted to discussing civil rights. George William Curtis was a writer and advocate of civil rights, and the GWC Club in Plattsburgh was the first openly pro-suffrage group. There were also lots of men who were anti-suffrage living in New York State. In August 1915, an article titled, "Anti-Suffrage Notes: Prominent New York Men on Anti Suffrage Campaign Committee" listed men who announced themselves as Anti suffrage. These men were: Jonathan Buckley, Walter C. Childs, Arthur B. Church, Lincoln Cromwell, John R. Dos Passos, Chas S. Fairchild, Eugene D. Hawkins (related to Dr. George Hawkins- Hawkins Hall?) Henry W. Hayden, John G. Milburn, George Douglas Miller, Robert K. Prentice, Louis T. Romaine, Herbert L. Satterlee, George W. Seligman, Professor Munroe Smith, Charles Steele, Francis Lynde Stetson, John C. Ten Eyck, J. Kennedy Tod, Gilbert M. Tucker, Everett P. Wheeler, George W. Wickersham, Talcott Williams.

On March 21, 1872, Herman Veeder gave a speech about women's suffrage in Keeseville, New York. In his speech, he compared the suffrage movement to the abolition movement- he stated that slavery was abolished because African Americans are no less human than anyone else and women should have the right to vote for the same reason.¹⁷ It's hard to compare abolition to suffrage, because not being considered humans and being exploited for decades is certainly different than women not being able to vote, but there are similarities in the logic of wanting to abolish slavery and being pro-suffrage.

On October 30, 1917, an article in the *Plattsburgh Daily Republican* was published titled, "An Appeal to Plattsburgh's Men to Vote for Women's Suffrage." A man named W. R. Ellis wrote into the *Plattsburgh Daily Republican* with the hopes of persuading men to vote for suffrage on November 6. In this article, Ellis, who was from Utica, New York was stating that there were a great deal of men who planned on voting pro-suffrage, and he believed that Plattsburgh should do the same. His reasoning for voting for suffrage was that being able to vote was a right given by the Declaration of Independence, and women should be privy to that right as well as men. He stated that the power of government is derived from its people, and that women are also people and should be able to contribute to democracy as well. He said in this article, "I believe that the ballot is the badge of complete citizenship and no man or woman can give his or her fullest service or measure up to the highest standard of responsibility without the vote."¹⁸ Ellis also wrote that after this great war was over (meaning World War I) the country would face a lot of hardships and that it was difficult to believe that only men would have the answer to these problems. Another article published in the same paper, was about a woman named Miss Edna Wright. Miss Edna Wright is presumably a notable suffragist of this time, but when I tried to find more information on this woman there was nothing out there. Upon more research that could be done outside of the span of a single semester, I'm sure that we could discover who this woman was. According to this article, though, Miss Edna Wright was a force to be reckoned with. Wright hosted an event about women's suffrage at the local YMCA as she was a representative sent from Woman Suffrage Party. The author of this article quoted Wright during this event, and she spoke about the war, and how during this great war women were a great asset. Not only did women deserve the right to vote because women were people just like men, but women *deserve* the right to vote because of their work during the war.

In an article written in the *Plattsburgh Daily Republican* on October 31, 1917, mere days before the election, there was an ad directed at men telling them to vote for women's suffrage in the upcoming election.¹⁹

Men of New York, cast your Votes for Women!

THERE is a man's work for you to do on Election Day. It is to let your vote count for Women Suffrage. Your vote is just as vital to the women of your State—to your wife or mother, or daughter or sister—as it is to you.

This is the year of all years!

LET no one say that a war year is not the time to extend suffrage to women. It is the time of all times! Since January seven states have given women the vote.

England has announced that it will gladly give its women votes: In advocating it, former Prime Minister Asquith said: "The war could not have been carried on without the women." Before the war, he opposed suffrage bitterly. "To give women no voice," says Prime Minister Lloyd George "would be an outrage."

France, through its Chamber of Deputies, has promised women the vote.

Italy has taken a step in the right direction.

Russia takes Women Suffrage as a matter of course in planning the new government.

Canada, in the midst of war, and with the votes of her soldiers included, has adopted Woman Suffrage in the five great Provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario.

The Allied Countries at War
have either granted Woman Suffrage or are seriously considering it at this moment.

Here today, in your own state, 1,012,594 enrolled women are asking to be allowed to take the same full share of responsibility that has been given to the women of other states and countries. To give them what they ask is more than duty. It's your privilege—the highest exercise of civic right you can perform.

**Let nothing keep you from the polls next Tuesday!
Your vote may win the day for Woman Suffrage!**

NEW YORK STATE WOMAN SUFFRAGE PARTY
233 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY

Conclusion

Women suffragists are the ones who spearheaded the movement and made the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment possible. Without women like Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul and others, the Nineteenth Amendment may not have passed when it did. Though, the men are the ones who passed the Amendment, and without their

understanding of why it was necessary (and inevitable) for women to possess the right to vote, it may not have passed for several more decades. I believe there is a correlation between education and being pro-suffrage. The men in the Men's League for Women's Suffrage were all highly educated men. Men like William Lloyd Garrison, Israel Zangwill, W.E.B. Du Bois, and H.G Wells and of course, Oswald Garrison Villard, the founder of the organization/club. It's no coincidence that the men who were pro-suffrage in Clinton County were also men of high status, who had high levels of education. Perhaps, upon greater research, we could find more about these men. Where they lived and who their wives were and whether or not their wives were suffragists, too. I wish I'd had more time to find that out, and definitely wish I had more time to find out about the anti-suffrage men, as well.

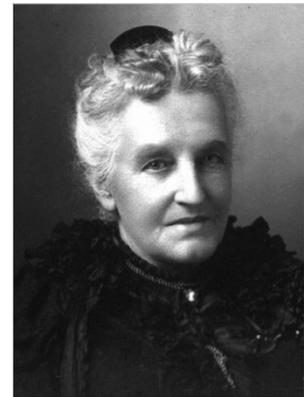
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19. Figure 1. "Men of New York Cast Your Votes for Women." *Plattsburgh Daily Republican* (Plattsburgh), October 31, 1917.

Hannah Lansing and Other Local Heroes

Paris Blais
Fall 2017

Many have heard the names of some of the key national suffragists like Susan B. Anthony or Carrie Chapman Catt, but many don't know about the local heroes of their own towns. This paper will highlight our local heroes and introduce the impacts they left on suffrage and our community that made it what it is today. Clinton County is very much an isolated area from other places. Some even said that, "In rural Clinton County some felt disadvantaged at being so far removed from the national and international scene and denied higher education," but with this disadvantage that didn't stop these women.¹



The first woman who was an important figure in suffrage in Plattsburgh was Hannah Straight Lansing. Hannah Straight Lansing, also referred to as the "Mother of Clinton County Suffrage," was a leading member of the suffrage movement in Clinton County.² She married Abram Wendell Lansing who was a very esteemed member of the Plattsburgh community. Abram W. Lansing was the son of a local abolitionist of Keeseville and Wilmington named, Wendell Abram Lansing, who was called a pioneer of the anti-slavery cause. Wendell Lansing owned the Essex County Republican and the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*. W. A. Lansing purchased the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* in 1864. In 1865, he formed a partnership with his son, Abram W. Lansing. The paper's circulation increased from 500 to 2,500 copies.³ The partnership between W. A. Lansing and his son was formed after Abram returned from the Union Army.⁴ Upon W. A. Lansing's passing, Abram inherited the two papers from his father.⁵ It was said that the *Sentinel* was the most popular of the two and was a leading model in the county.⁶ Hannah not only co-owned these papers with her husband, Abram, but she also worked in the editorial department. "In the 1900 Census, her occupation was listed as Editor. Her obituary states she was in the editorial department of the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* for fifteen years."⁷

The *Sentinel* played a large role in helping spread the word of pro-suffrage and even advertised petitions. In 1894, Susan B. Anthony was at a Political Equality Convention talking about women's suffrage. Hannah and other women on the resolution committee presented a speech saying, "Whereas, We, citizens of Clinton County, in mass meeting assembled, believe that justice and a consistent adherence to the principles upon which our government is founded demand the full enfranchisement of women, therefore. Resolved, That we urge the coming constitutional convention to submit an amendment striking out the word "male" from article II, section 1, of our state constitution. Resolved, That we especially urge the members of the convention representing the Twenty-First Senatorial District, i.e., C. H. Moore of Plattsburgh, Chester B. McLaughlin, of Port Henry, Edgar A. Spencer of Gloversville, Frederick Frazer of Salem, and Thomas W. McArthur of

Glens Falls, to vote for such an amendment, and to use every means in their power to secure its passage.” This was adopted by the convention. It was at the end of the article’s reflection of the convention, one of the petitions was said to be at the *Sentinel* office and that if anyone wanted to sign then to just call and sign their names.⁸ The *Plattsburgh Sentinel* primarily wrote on pro-suffrage. It wasn’t until after the death of Hannah’s husband, Abram, that the paper was sold in 1896.⁹ It was seen after this that more anti-suffrage articles were written. In fact, The *Plattsburgh Sentinel* had an anti-suffrage column devoted to writing on a weekly basis why women shouldn’t get the right to vote. “From week to week in this column we shall publish reasons why we oppose ‘Votes for Women’.”¹⁰ Hannah’s work for the *Sentinel* was praised by the community and one person commented, “The *Sentinel* seems more interesting than ever since Mrs. A. W. Lansing has become one of the editors.”¹¹ Hannah wasn’t limited to just writing for the newspaper though. She also worked on small stories and children’s books. She wrote a series of tales for children called “Ten Little Tales for Nice Little Folks” under the pen name Nell Clifford.¹² There were even advertisements in the *Plattsburgh Republican* and *Sentinel* that featured Hannah’s book as a book for the Holidays.¹³ Hannah also hosted an event at her home where articles and other novelties were sold for the holidays. They were for those who didn’t have time to make Christmas gifts for loved ones.¹⁴

Probably one of the most widely read series Hannah Lansing wrote was about “Noted Men and Women of the Champlain Valley and the Adirondacks,” which began in the 1889 in the *Plattsburgh Sentinel*. The stories were extremely valued by many and even scrapbooked throughout Clinton and Essex Counties. The stories included a picture of the featured individual along with their story and what made them so valued.¹⁵ Hannah Lansing was such a well-regarded writer and member of the community that she was able to be a judge for a contest that was a debate on book reflections and presentations primarily on Dickens and Kenilworth books. The debate was held at the Plattsburgh State Normal School by the young ladies of the Alpha Gamma Delta Society.¹⁶

Hannah also used her skill of writing in the groups she was a part of. She and her husband were both members of the Clinton County Farmers’ Association. Farmers were very prevalent in the area although I didn’t find any information confirming Hannah and Abram Lansing’s involvement with a farm of their own. Hannah read many papers for the Clinton County Farmers’ Association at meetings and events.¹⁷

Hannah Lansing and her husband’s passion for writing didn’t end at just working for the paper or small stories. Both were involved in groups that held literature at a very high standard and looked to offer education to others who could not afford or spare time for it. College was too expensive for many people in the community and for some it wasn’t an option because their livelihood required most of their time. Hannah and Abram Lansing both seemed to be very aware of systematic poverty and that it’s difficult to get out of poverty without the ability to pay for the resources, materials or education. They wanted to work out a way to offer the community a free form of education. To do this they were involved in a movement that had circles across multiple counties called, “Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle.” It originated seven and a half hours away in Chautauqua County, but influenced other countries, like Clinton, to start their own circles. The movement’s main goal was to encourage individual study by opening the college world to people who were unable to attend higher education. The access to this free form of education was said to benefit many and “... which may be pursued by the mechanic, the farmer or the housewife, while at home attending to their daily duties.”¹⁸ It was meant to be easily accessible and flexible. It was around the mid-1880s that the C.L.S.C. of Clinton County surfaced. It was posted in the *Sentinel* of a reader from Mooers Forks saying “There is some talk of a Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle in town. Who wants to join?”¹⁹ Hannah was a member of the C. L. S. C. in Clinton County and even hosted a meeting at her home.²⁰ A way that the County’s circle brought free education was in the form of the Free Public Library. Both Hannah and her husband were

honorary members of the “The Young Men’s Free Reading Room” that had 48 members at the time. Meetings for this group were held at the back of the Baptist church. Back in May 3, 1893, the group requested that the Village Board of Trustees appropriate the sum of \$200 for the beginning of a Free Public Library. The Village Board of Trustees granted them the \$200, and they were able to make a small Free Public Library in the rear room of the Baptist church. Throughout the years with donations and fundraising, the library outgrew multiple locations. One location was at the City Hall. Today it resides on 19 Oak Street, Plattsburgh, NY. In an article from 1940, it was said of the library, “When first it came to the City Hall it boasted of a circulation of 19,000 ,but last year the annual report showed the circulation had jumped to 77,800 for the year with a total of 28,413 volumes on the shelves.”²¹ It’s quite amazing that Hannah and Abram Lansing were among the individuals who started up the Public Library that is here to this day.

A fascinating observation to make is that during this time, the topic of the homeless and impoverished was very big. There was not a high awareness of systematic poverty in America in the 1890s. It was a widely shared assumption that being poor was a self-inflicted mortification, so during this time there were a lot of articles, activism and people speaking on systematic poverty. The Lansings seemed to understand this which lead to their active roles in providing the community with a free public library and other resources.

Another resource that Hannah Lansing helped bring to the community was The Home of the Friendless. In 1874, Miss Marcia Brown visited the Clinton County Poor House where she saw a young child in poor condition. She later asked, “Are there no benevolent women in Plattsburgh to care for such a case?” This led to The Home of the Friendless, founded by 8 women, one being Hannah Straight Lansing. The original purpose of The Home of the Friendless was to take in homeless women and children and care for them. In 1875, the New York State Legislature decided to exclude homeless and/or poor children from the poor houses. In addition to this they granted some funds to the Home of the Friendless. The home was originally based on Court Street and was donated and free of rent. They later moved a few more times to larger locations to keep up with the growing capacity. One of these locations was the present site of Plattsburgh High School. They later decided to only take in children who were homeless or orphaned due to having issues with keeping adults and children separate. By 1919, there was a greater understanding of welfare problems which had made the name “Home for the Friendless” no longer appropriate. The name was also no longer fitting as these children had found friends. The organization decided to change the name of “The Home of the Friendless” to the “Children’s Home of Northern New York.” They provided the children with a playground, schoolroom, infirmary, and dormitories. They grew to a capacity of 40 children at their last move to Bailey Avenue. They were able to provide the children with resources and move locations so much, because the community helped out quite a bit and donated clothes, food and money. The organization was one of the most common places to donate for charity.²² One man even left a thousand dollars to the organization in his will.²³ The Children’s Home cared for several generations of children. Some of those children visited as adults and spoke of what they owed the Home, many thanking for the opportunity that the Home gave to be who they are and make something of themselves. Many of the children that went through the Home would have never had a chance without the Children’s Home and the women who founded it. The Founder’s Day is on May 20. Last known location was 14 Bailey Avenue²⁴ In its later years, it provided a day care treatment center for emotionally disturbed children and emotionally disturbed adults.²⁵ I couldn’t find records indicating when it closed, but the last date I have of it being active is in 1993.²⁶ Today an apartment building resides at this location by the name of “Tiffany Way Apartments.”

In the 1870s Hannah had joined the local temperance movement as well. Hannah joined the WCTU (Women’s Christian Temperance Union) in Plattsburgh, which met in a room at the top of the old academy (site of today’s Plattsburgh Public Library).²⁷ Hannah hosted many events at

her home and her husband, Abram, was also involved in the Temperance Movement. Hannah held a parlor meeting at her home where the WCTU spoke about the presence of alcohol in cider and its effects.²⁸ Abram W. Lansing even signed his name certifying the success of The Hagey Bi-Chloride of Gold Institute. The title of the message in the paper read, "It is estimated that Whiskey kills 100,000 men Annually!" The message was trying to encourage those who needed help with rehabilitation to go to the Hagey Institute and expect to see improval or successful rehabilitation. The message signed by many community members accounted a testimonial that "Restoration to sobriety, health, and usefulness of many of our friends and acquaintances who have indulged to excess in the use of stimulants, we no longer entertain doubts as to the efficacy of this treatment; and we therefore recommend this treatment to all who are addicted to the use of Liquor, Morphine, Opium, Cocaine and Tobacco." They later say that this message is not to be seen as an advertisement, but the general concern of others well-being and wanting them to get help that could truly help them.²⁹

It was believed that Susan B. Anthony inspired Hannah Lansing to get involved in women's suffrage after Anthony's and Rev Antoinette Brown (Blackwell) visit to Plattsburgh in 1855 when Hannah was in her late teens.³⁰ Something interesting was in 1889, it was recorded that Abram W. Lansing was an inspector of elections who is a person appointed to count ballots and announce results.³¹ This could have provided Abram and Hannah with connections to people holding offices of more or be more ??? educated on the voting process. In 1895, Hannah was appointed a notary for Plattsburgh in Clinton County by the Governor and was able to hold the office for two years.³² This shows that not only was Abram involved in politics and could have connections, but so could Hannah. In 1892, a Woman's Republican Association meeting was held at the Lansing's home. The association was for women who were interested in informing themselves on the issues that affect welfare of the American people and take part in discussions.³³ In an article from 1964 written by historian Marjorie Lansing Porter, who was the granddaughter of Hannah, it was said that Hannah was aware that she was a part of "interlocking and overlapping communities-local, state and national." It was also noted that Hannah wrote to John Osborne, Governor of Wyoming, and received a response from Osborne on February 13, 1894, saying "I have watched the effect of female suffrage for a period of fourteen years and feel justified in saying that every state in the Union would do well to follow the example set them in this respect by the young state of Wyoming-Wyoming has less illiteracy, fewer criminals, paupers and other state charges in proportion to its population than any other state in the Union." He goes on to say that, "Wyoming is proud of her state constitutional provision which grants equal rights to all and if the proposition to discontinue female suffrage was put to a vote of our people today, it would be opposed by over ninety percent of male voters."³⁴ On June 8, 1896, Hannah became a widow when her husband Abram passed away from pneumonia.³⁵ Hannah never remarried after this and continued on her own. Hannah was also involved in the George William Curtis Club which was a local pro-suffrage group. For one event, on December 13, 1901, Hannah read letters from Lillie Devereux Blake and Miss Elizabeth Curtis (the daughter of George William Curtis).³⁶ On December 2, 1903, a George William Curtis Club meeting was held at Hannah Lansing's home. It was at this meeting that officers were elected.³⁷ Lastly, on October 18, 1915, Hannah Lansing brings her work with suffrage full circle when she refers to the Susan B. Anthony and Rev Antoinette Brown (Blackwell) visit she attended in her teens. This was her final appearance in the suffrage movement and at the biggest local rally recorded in the County for that year. Like many suffragists of her generation she died on May 8, 1916 before receiving the right to vote. She is buried in Riverside Cemetery, Plattsburgh, NY.³⁸ Even after Hannah's death, her legacy was carried on by her daughter, Ida Lansing Wilcox.

Ida Wilcox was commissioner of the Champlain Valley Council of the Girl Scouts of America and was greatly praised for her work. She believed that it was important, because "Youth cannot wait. The citizens who will be holding jobs, making homes, and helping to run the world tomorrow are being prepared for those jobs now."³⁹ She worked with the Girl Scouts for 18 years.⁴⁰ Ida also

sat on the executive committee of the Women's Civic League.⁴¹ Lastly, Ida was President of the Women's League of Physicians, and she was so well regarded that she was re-elected for a second term.⁴²

Another key suffragist in Plattsburgh was Marie Therese Parkhurst Booth. Marie was married to a judge by the name of Judge John H. Booth who was the Surrogate Judge of the county for two terms. John H. Booth had practiced law after graduating from Columbia Law School. Marie and John were married in 1891 when John was 28 and Marie was 20 years old. They had three children, one son, Robert C. Booth, who continued his father's legacy by becoming an assistant attorney general.⁴³ And another son, John P. Booth, who also practiced law in Plattsburgh(1915) after studying and graduating from Yale(1914), worked in politics and ran as a candidate for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in the state of Florida, and also served as a Captain in the army(1917).⁴⁴ Marie was active in the community just like Hannah Lansing was. Marie was on the auxiliary board for the Musical Art Society whose main goal was to be "purely philanthropic and educational." as well as "encourage the love for and study of the highest models of musical art." To do this they said they would bring great artists and composers to town, having home concerts where local performers played and aid anyone who had a musical project that they wanted to show to the public.⁴⁵ In 1921 Marie Booth was a vice president for the Musical Arts Society.⁴⁶ In 1927, Mrs. John Booth was elected vice president of the Whiteface Mountain Memorial Commission.⁴⁷ Marie was also a member of The Clinton County Humane Society.⁴⁸ For her suffrage involvement, she was a past president of the Women's Civic League of Plattsburgh in 1914.⁴⁹ Marie even made the trip to Utica to attend The State Federation of Women's Clubs sessions there in 1920.⁵⁰ It wasn't long after in 1922 that Marie Booth was elected president of the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs.⁵¹ She was president when the State Federation of Women's Clubs had 400,000 members.⁵² On April 25, 1946, Marie, 75 years old, was struck by a train in her automobile. She died on impact. Train Engineer said that "he applied brakes 200 yards south of the crossing, but that the crack passenger was traveling at too great a speed to be halted." Authorities couldn't say for certain that Mrs. Booth didn't see the approaching train. "The double track has an unobstructed visionary depth of more than a quarter-mile south of the crossing." Witnesses say she was also driving very slow after her visit to her gardener's home. Mrs. Booth's body was thrown clear of the wreckage about 150 feet north of the crossing. Death was attributed to multiple fractures and internal injuries that caused her to die on impact of the train hitting her car.⁵³ In her obituary, the paper accounted her for her work and leadership positions she held. Including being the "county chairman of the Council of National Defense during the first World War, and for years had been one of the guiding directors of the county's Red Cross unit the Auxiliary of the Champlain Valley Hospital."⁵⁴

Marie was not the only one in her family that fought for suffrage. Her sister, Marian Parkhurst, was another local suffragist. She worked as a legislative secretary of the National League of Women Voters.⁵⁵ Miss Marian "Dot" Parkhurst was the first woman employed by the War Department (World War I), and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt came to Plattsburgh to appoint Miss Parkhurst president of the Clinton County League of Women Voters.⁵⁶ She was also Valedictorian of her high school class and for her position in the War Department, she was in charge of a department of the Army Ordnance. Marian was also a part of the "living flag" in a parade in New York City when Inez Milholland rode on a big, white horse.⁵⁷ She also traveled to Franklin County to be a speaker at the convention of Women Suffrage Clubs in 1915.⁵⁸ Marian never married and passed away on November 19, 1975.⁵⁹

These women mentioned and among many others of Clinton County fought for women to not only have suffrage, but basic rights. If it wasn't for their courage and persistence, then women would not have gotten to where they are now. We owe these women our greatest thanks, whether man or woman giving thanks, as they were strong pillars in the community and suffrage.

Notes

1. "The Revolution was for Women, Too." (*Press-Republican*, October 13, 1975.) Page 5.
2. "Big Suffrage Rally at Court House Tonight." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, October 16, 1915), Page 3. This was a newspaper article published calling Hannah Lansing the "Mother of Suffrage in Clinton County" prior to the biggest local rally recorded in the County for that year.
3. "Wendell Lansing Early Newsmen In Essex County." (*Plattsburgh Press Republican*, July 06, 1964) Page 19.
4. Marney Glavin. "The Hour Glass." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, June 11, 1964.) Page 8.
5. Helen Nerska. "Suffragists of Clinton County," interviewed by Paris Blaise, Clinton County Historical Association and Museum, Plattsburgh, NY, November 11, 2017.
6. "In Memorial." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, June 10, 1896.) Page 3.
7. Helen Nerska. "Suffragists of Clinton County," interviewed by Paris Blaise, Clinton County Historical Association and Museum, Plattsburgh, NY, November 11, 2017.
8. "The Political Equality Convention Last Week." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, May 04, 1894.) Page 1.
9. Marjorie Porter. "The Essex County Notes." (*Plattsburgh Press Republican*, May 18, 1964.) Page 4.
10. "Anti-Suffrage Notes." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, April 27, 1915.) Page 3.
11. "Valcour." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, March 17, 1899.) Page 1.
12. "Literary Notes." (*Plattsburgh Republican*, December 09, 1893.) Page 1.
13. "Ad for Ten Little Tales." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, December 15, 1893.) Page 4.
14. "Sale of Fancy Articles." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, December 15, 1863.) Page 1.
15. Marjorie Porter. "Essex County Notes." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, May 18, 1964.) Page 4.
16. "Our State Normal School: The Alpha Gamma Delta in Battle." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, January 22, 1892.) Page 8.
17. "The Farmers' Convention." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, February 15, 1901.) Page 1.
18. "The Well Known Sunday School Representative and Popular Educator." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, November 16, 1883.) Page 1.
19. "Mooers Forks." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, July 01, 1887.) Page 7.
20. "C.L.S.C." (*Plattsburgh Republican*, November 28, 1885.) Page 1.
21. "New Public Library Is Near Completion." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, August 24, 1940.) Page 5.
22. "Children's Home of North'n New York Notes Founders' Day Sunday, May 20." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, May 16, 1951.) Page 8.
23. "Institutions Remembered: By H. W. Cady in His Last Will." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, December 14, 1917.) Page 5.
24. "Founder's Day of Children's Home." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, May 20, 1941.) Page 4.
25. "Children's Home Centennial Celebrates Colorful History." *Press-Republican*, May 17, 1974. Page 10.
26. "Kids Collect Scraps." (*Press-Republican*, January 24, 1993.) Page 21.
27. "The Revolution was for Women, Too." (*Press-Republican*, October 13, 1975.) Page 5.
28. "Paragrams." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, March 25, 1892.) Page 1.
29. "It is estimated that Whiskey kills 100,000 men Annually!" (*The Elizabethtown Post*, June 28, 1894.) Page 4.
30. Helen Nerska. "Suffragists of Clinton County," interviewed by Paris Blaise, Clinton County Historical Association and Museum, Plattsburgh, NY, November 11, 2017
31. "The Town Board." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, March 22, 1889.) Page 8.
32. "Clinton County's New Notaries Public." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, March 15, 1895.) Page 8.
33. "Paragrams." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, December 09, 1892.) Page 1.
34. Marjorie Porter. "Essex County Notes." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, May 18, 1964.) Page 4.
35. "Death of Abram W. Lansing ." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, June 09, 1896.) Page 3.
36. "George William Curtis Club." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, December 13, 1901.) Page 1.
37. "George William Curtis Club." (*Plattsburgh Sentinel*, December 04, 1903.)
38. Helen Nerska. "Suffragists of Clinton County," interviewed by Paris Blaise, Clinton County Historical Association and Museum, Plattsburgh, NY, November 11, 2017
39. "Leaders Needed For Girl Scouts." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, September 26, 1946.) Page 8.
40. "A Proud Record." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, January 16, 1947.) Page 4.

41. "Appointment of Police Woman." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, April 10, 1917.) Page 3.
42. "Annual Report of Women's League of Physicians Hospital." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, January 22, 1937.) Page 5.
43. "Hon. John H. Booth Dies at Plattsburg." (*The Adirondack Record-Elizabethtown Post*, May 06, 1943.) Page 5.
44. "John P. Booth is Senate Candidate In Florida State." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, December 25, 1951.) Page 3.
45. "Musical Art Society." (*Plattsburgh Republican*, November 26, 1910.) Page 4.
46. Frank Provost. "The Old Days." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, August 25, 1956.) Page 4.
47. Frank Provost. "The Old Days." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, July 19, 1957.) Page 4.
48. "Humane Society Opens Campaign." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, June 17, 1947.) Page 3.
49. Frank L. Provost "The Olden Days Here and Elsewhere." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, April 15, 1954.) Page 4.
50. Provost, Frank. "The Old Days." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, October 05, 1955.) Page 4.
51. "25 Years Ago." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, October 15, 1947.) Page 4.
52. "The Revolution was for Women, Too." (*Press-Republican*, October 13, 1975.) Page 5.
53. "Valcour Auto-Train Crash Kills Mrs. John H. Booth." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, April 25, 1946.) Page 3.
54. "Valcour Auto-Train." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, April 25, 1946.) Page 4.
55. "The Old Days." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, September 12, 1956.) Page 4.
56. "When Miss Anthony Came to Plattsburgh." (*Press-Republican*, July 21, 1975.) Page 5.
57. Glavin, Marney. "The Hour Glass." (*Plattsburgh Press-Republican*, June 04, 1964.) Page 9.
58. "25 Years Ago." (*Plattsburgh Daily Press*, April 19, 1940.) Page 4.
59. "Marian I. Parkhurst." (*Press-Republican*, November 21, 1975.) Page 9.



Helen Smith



Alice Paul



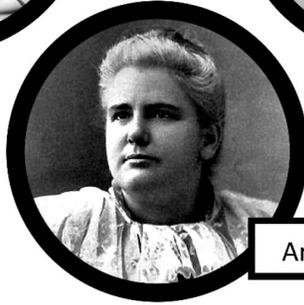
Alice Hill Chittenden



Thomas F. Conway



Antoinette Brown Blackwell



Anna Howard Shaw



Frances Ross Weed



Clarence Dill



Custom House Square - Brinkerhoff Street - Plattsburgh - July 1911
Harriet May Mills, President of the NYS Woman Suffrage Association, and associates



Anna Dickinson



Inez Milholland



Harriet May Mills



Susan B. Anthony



Carrie Chapman Catt



Emma Smith De Voe



Mary Seymour Howell



Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Rotary

Club of Plattsburgh



Clinton County
Historical
Association