

♀ Suffrage

A Dramatization Of The Journey
To National Women's Suffrage

By
Mademoiselle Centrafrique

BVA Publishing

©Copyright 2024

Foreword

The Suffragists movement caught my attention during a time when I was mainly surrounded by weak females due to some fieldwork. I grew up around a diverse group of strong and dignified females. Their presence in my life inspired me to also become a strong and dignified woman. While doing the fieldwork, I got lonely and longed for the types of women I was used to being surrounded by. I glanced at a book about the suffragette movement and read a few pages.

I casually looked into the movement for weeks until finding some Washington Post articles that were part of a series celebrating the 100th anniversary of the passage of the nineteenth amendment that led to universal women's suffrage. Here I found the most interesting story, full of "twist and turns", "ups and downs" and finally a happy ending. The remarkable part was that it was all true. A true story that read like fiction. Why didn't I ever hear of it? This story was way too important to be hidden in the annals of history.

I realized that the story could be boring to those who aren't interested in history. I took it upon myself to dramatize the facts in a way to entice you into reading up on the history of this amazing movement. It is my hope to raise interest in this issue so that none of the rights that women enjoy today will be taken for granted. There was blood, sweat and tears given to get us to where we are today, even if it doesn't seem as if we are quite there yet.

I sincerely found comfort in reading about these amazing women. They weren't perfect and had their flaws, but they did what was right and fought like hell for women's progress. They were clever and convincing. They were bold and assertive. They were my kind of girls. I like the fact that most of them were well-off girls like the ones that are so admired today but, dare I say, they had more substance than style. They enjoyed life, being well-off and looking good but they also understood their civic duties and gave back to the community through sacrifice that is unheard of today. I am not asking anyone to sacrifice their life, safety or wealth for a cause, only to appreciate these women's contribution and live a life with an equal amount of substance and style.

The Suffragists didn't do what was popular or would get the most likes, they did what was right. These are true icons, true feminists and true supporters for the advancement of women.

Disclaimer

This is a dramatization of historical facts. The characters are dramatized versions of real women who took part in the Women's Suffrage movement. They don't necessarily represent the actual person's personality or ideas. Some of the characters are fictional and have been added to provided a connection of the events that occurred. The credits and notes section provides some of the documents used to piece this story together and the reader is encouraged to look into the matter independently.

Table of Contents

The Story.....	pg. 9
Credits & Notes.....	pg. 27
Speaker.....	pg. 29

The government granted women universal suffrage through a constitutional amendment this week so I have decided to recount my journey covering the story for *The Crisis*. In this special edition of *The Crisis*, I will tell of my adventures watching a diverse group of women fight the war for voting rights. I am not the all-knowing narrator so what you'll read is a mixture of first, second and third hand information. I have endeavored to stick to the facts as much as possible.



A. Paul-Library of Congress (1)

I will begin with the upbringing of our protagonist, Anne Paul. She will be the main focus of this amazing story as she is the conductor of all that you are about to read. There will be other heroines who are equally as brave and accomplished as Anne but she was the head of the organization where they all met as a group of Amazons fighting for women's suffrage.

Anne and I didn't start off on good terms. She is very smart and strategic. Being that I am a women of color, my presence sometimes interfered with her achieving her goal to get southern supporters. With the help of Isabelle, a good friend of mine, Anne and I were able to get pass our initial but brief discord and also become good friends. She was well aware of the circumstances surrounding the suffrage movement and meant well but realized that her actions may have led to the exclusion of a group of women her family had a penchant to assist. I recognized her dilemma and determination to assist her own group. I understood how the presence of someone of my ethnicity could interfere with her efforts. Our fight for women's suffrage was two different fights encompassed into one. In that, the decision to choose one side of the fight or other was imminent. I soon recognized that her initial choice to save her own first is natural. Isabelle showed her that there could be a compromise that will not hurt her efforts while allowing for someone like myself to be present at certain times. I've jumped the gun and discussed the resolution without explaining the

problem. So let's start with Anne's upbringing, Anne was the daughter of a wealthy Quaker businessman. She was brought in a family that fought for other people's rights and equality. Her mother was a Suffragist so it was only natural that she joined the movement.

Anne went to college in England and was involved with the Women's Suffrage Political Union (WSPU). It was a militant women's right group. She heard Charlotte Parks, the daughter of a militant Suffragist speak and it changed her world. Quiet and polite Anne joined in the group's rebellious protests and was arrested a couple of times. Anne was fascinated by the bold methods of these Suffragists. It was a far cry from her pacifist Quaker roots. It was hard at first and she feared what her parents might think but since she was abroad, no one back home had to know what she did in England. Anne gleefully took part in the militant Suffragist's activities, within the limits of her upbringing. She couldn't bring herself to overstep the boundaries set by her family and went only as far as she felt comfortable. As fun as it was to behave badly for a good cause, later on when she started her own organization back in the states, she preferred civil disobedience over the militant methods.

Anne met Lois Burns during that time and they became friends. The militant protest tactics they learned in England became handy when they returned to the States. Anne and Lois joined the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) after leaving England. Anne headed the Washington, DC chapter of NAWSA. After a while both left to form their own group because of differences on whether to focus on State or Federal acceptance of suffrage. Anne wanted to lobby Congress and use more aggressive, though not militant, methods.

Contrary to popular belief, not all women supported women's suffrage. The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOTWS) was formed around the same time that Anne and Lois joined NAWSA. NAOTWS created pamphlets and posters illustrating their opposition to the vote. One would expect some well thought out reasoning for



Harris & Ewing-Library of Congress (2)

women rejecting women's suffrage because those who opposed were often found in the same circles as those who were for suffrage. It was mainly well off, often educated and socially active white women. Our protagonists are Mary-Jo Dodge and Ashley Millis. Although they both came from wealthy and influential families, Mary-Jo was the opposite of Anne. They both also

took part in social activism. For example, Mary-Jo took part in advocating for the establishment of day-care centers for working and immigrant mothers in New York City. Ashley founded New York City's first liberal arts college for women. Why would such accomplished women be anti-suffragist? One would think they had some reasonable arguments for opposing suffrage but the pamphlets they sent out offered only weak arguments. For example, some reasons were that it would lead to competition instead of cooperation between women and men or that more voting women than voting men will place some governments under petticoat rule. After reading the anti-suffragist arguments, the gist of it was that it would take women away from the home where their children and husbands needed them the most. They considered being a housewife a privilege. The anti-suffragists weren't a quiet and polite group either. They often ridiculed or heckled the Suffragists. They were vigilant and opposed the Suffragists whenever and wherever they could.

Anne and Lois' group was named the National Women's Party (NWP). Forming the NWP meant that Anne and Lois finally had the chance to do things their way. They decided to have the first national suffrage parade. The parade would be the day before the president's inauguration and a tour de force of the suffrage movement. Anne was media savvy and picked Isabelle to lead the parade. Isabelle Milford, my good friend, was

chosen because Isabelle was glamorous and the newspapers adored her. After the event one paper called her the most beautiful Suffragist. Isabelle was born to a wealthy family from New York. Her parents were good money, meaning that they earned their wealth the right way and were active in progressive movements. Her father fought against racism all his life and even bankrolled the salary of my boss, Webster Bois. That is how I met Isabelle. Webster was a family friend. My parents were slaves from Africa. They were bought around the same time and met while they were enslaved for a few years to kind slave masters. The slave masters decided to pursue a different trade and set their slaves free. After my parents' manumission, they moved to Great Barrington, Massachusetts because it was a safer place for freed slaves. There they met Webster and my father became good friends with him. At that time, Webster would come home from college to visit his family sometimes. He was the first black man to be accepted into a prestigious white school and my father had a lot of respect for him. They stayed in touch throughout the years. When my mother got pregnant, my parents made the trip back to Africa so that I could be born in Africa. They knew how hard it would be to raise a child and make a living so I stayed in Africa for a few years. I was able to absorb the culture and it allowed my parents to work tirelessly to afford a better life for their child. I was sent back to my parents in the States, after I became old enough to stay home alone while my parents worked.

Inspired by Webster, my father insisted that I attend college. After I graduated college, my father insisted that I go work for Webster. Webster just got a position to lead a newspaper called, *The Crisis*. *The Crisis* was a paper that reported things that affected blacks and was part of a newly formed organization that supported the abolition of slavery. Since her father bankrolled the first year of Webster's salary, Isabelle was often at the organization's office. I met her there and we became good friends. Isabelle wanted me to attend the parade and write an article on it for *The Crisis*. She had in mind to keep me as her personal press secretary as she took part in Suffragist activities.

Although Anne is our heroine, she is flawed. Anne was courting southern women's support and was afraid that the involvement of black women in the parade would drive them away. Anne wanted Isabelle to lead the parade not only because she would attract the media but also because she was feminine and beautiful. A silly anti-suffragist argument was that political involvement would corrupt the ideals of womanhood. By having graceful and feminine women highly visible in the parade, it would be hard to believe that argument. When Isabelle introduced me to Anne, she received me graciously. However, when Isabelle talked about my presence and the presence of other black women from a well regarded black university at the parade, Anne refused. I commented about the absurdity of refusing black women's participation in the parade since there were so many of us fighting for suffrage, too. Anne still refused, saying that her southern supporters might back out if she allowed it. She was working towards the greater good at this moment. Let's just say, Anne wasn't my favorite person at *that* moment. Isabelle said that she wouldn't participate unless black women were included. Anne knew that Isabelle meant it and decided to let black women participate only if they were in the back of the parade. I could stand with the crowd to take pictures and notes during the procession. Isabelle agreed because she understood Anne's plight with the southerners. It was a compromise that she could live with for now.

Before the parade I wanted to interview some anti-suffragists. The parade had brought in so many people from all over the nation that I practically had my pick. I was set to interview a few anti-suffragists when I got wind of some of the southern Suffragist's companions who were opposed to black women Suffragists. The surprising part was not only that these women were anti-black women's suffrage but they were black women themselves. Up to that time, I had been surrounded by the black women Suffragists from the black university and Chicago. They were extremely dedicated to the suffrage and determined to get the vote for all women. I, also, wanted to meet some of the southern white women

that Anne was so afraid of losing because of black women's participation in the parade. I met Susan, a wealthy southern belle who was accompanied by two black women. They told me of how they were all good friends and she bought them along for moral support. They were there to watch the parade, not to participate. They had no interest in black women gaining the vote but saw the importance in white women getting the vote so that women's views can be considered. They believed that voting white women would be enough to protect and present all women's views or rights. "After all, we are all women dealing with the same issues that all women deal with no matter the skin color or state. They don't need to be white to understand how to cook and I don't need to be black to understand motherhood. White women can represent every women's views because all women can understand the female angst," Susan explained in her southern drawl. I requested to interview her friends who were anti-black women Suffragists and they agreed.

I went in expecting them to parrot the same arguments as the white anti-suffragists and was ready for a debate. At the interview, Susan stood over the seated black women, looking at me sternly as she if she were a chaperone trying to prevent me from corrupting her friend's minds. I asked the first woman, Abby, why she didn't support votes for black women. "We are not the majority. This country was founded by white men and how can a woman, especially a black woman, understand the designs of elite white males? There is no amount of schooling or experience that can compensate for her lack of knowledge about these things. Unlike Susan or Nicola, I am not for women's suffrage. Susan is my husband's sister and I am here to support her, not necessarily the movement. You have already heard the white women's argument against suffrage and those reflect my own for women in general. For black women in particular, I don't believe we're capable, as a minority group, to lead the majority or even give useful insight into the things that affect the nation. We only know of our own experience and struggles and should focus our efforts in those areas. I am married to a white male and when he speaks of politics, I feel overwhelmed. Black women will only increase

the views of their inferiority if they should try to engage or even dare to affect political conversations or activities. Black women are well versed in home affairs and religious activities. Those are our strong points. We should pursue those and present ourselves in the best light, lest we give proof or cause others to continue to see us as inferiors," Abby said. I couldn't believe her line of reasoning. I could see how it could make sense to those of basic minds but not to an educated class. As if she knew what I was thinking, Susan chimed in, " Abby was able to attend a southern women's college at the expense of a benefactor, heads a domestic black women's club and is just as intelligent as any of the other learned black females who fight for black women's suffrage,". I kept quiet, although I was confused as to why an educated black woman could embrace racist ideology.

I turned to Nicola, the other black woman, and asked her the same question. " I am married to a black man and he also agrees with much of the views that Abby expressed. He was able to vote and said that even he felt overwhelmed by the issues presented during elections. Many times, he had to seek clarification or even explanation from a white man. He felt inferior and as if he didn't meet the requirements to cast an educated vote. He still votes from time to time but not until he has sought the guidance of white males who he recognizes as more in touch and close to the issues facing the nation. He dedicates his time to the issues that specifically affect black men because those are the things that are his area of expertise. He contributes his knowledge to the southerners on behalf of black males so that they can understand these perspectives and how to assist in reasonable ways. If a man, albeit a black man, has so much difficulty grasping issues that relate to the vote, can you imagine how a black woman may struggle? I don't even attempt to understand because it's beyond me. I get a headache hearing him talk of how the issues of the vote were explained to him by someone more knowledgeable. None of it can help me in my domestic work. None helps me clean house or attend to the children better. What is the use of my participation in politics? I may even hurt the country by voting for the

wrong candidate. There are even black males who sell their vote because they don't understand the issues but feel as if they can profit from the right to vote. Opening the vote to black women, could be just as detrimental if the wrong candidate can buy enough votes from black voters. Some poor black women may be apt to sell their votes just to get by. It opens up a can of worms and that is the last thing we need," she concluded.

I was shocked at both of their reasons and couldn't even think of how to argue their points. Up to this point, I could find no reason for a black woman to oppose black women's suffrage. This was the first time I heard the arguments against it. Although I knew it was faulty reasoning supported by the very views of black inferiority that they mentioned, I couldn't at that moment counter it due to my shock of those words coming from black women themselves. Hearing it from a white person, I could've gone into argument well armed but coming from other blacks, I was bewildered. I remembered something and said, "I know of a black woman married to a white male and she is part of the suffrage. She is highly educated like Abby and feels it is her duty to contribute her voice to the vote because although she is a minority, the vote affects her life all the same. What do you think of that?". Abby smirked and asked if she was married to a white northerner, at which I confirmed that was true. "White northerners have these ideological ideas about a mixed race government that isn't practical. If blacks were allowed to govern in lower offices and in places where there is a black majority, they could be effective leaders. However, on national affairs with many varying opinions among the white majority, what use can he be? Northern blacks will be too hostile to southern views because of their opposition to slavery. Those people only represent a small group of people with little income and couldn't make decisions for a majority of wealthy white males who support slavery. Would their decisions be fair? I don't think so. Your friend's white husband lacks the practical thinking that is needed to make sure that those in leadership roles do what is right for the nation while appreciating the economic contributions of the south to this country. He

has misled your friend into thinking that her right to vote is more important than it is. Unless it is a tight race, black women's votes won't even have an effect on an election because there aren't enough of us to have that much influence," Abby explained with force. I decided to remain silent rather than argue the point. Susan smiled with satisfaction at my reaction. She misread my reaction as them putting me in my place and they all gave each other a smile of victory. Nicola even smirked at me. I politely thanked them for their time and left. I couldn't believe that some blacks believed that black people in general were too incompetent to vote. They even used black people's minority status as claim against them. It was obvious that the black women's struggle for the vote was not that much different from the white women. Black women had their own anti-suffragists.



Women's Suffrage Parade-Library of Congress (3)

The parade was a success. There were some highlights and some low points. Isabelle looked untouchable leading the parade dressed in all white on her white horse. The parade was a three part demonstration that involved the parade, a performance in front of the treasury with women dressed as Columbia, Liberty, Charity,

Justice, Hope, and Peace, and speeches

by prominent Suffragists. The Suffragists from the black university marched in the back as Anne instructed. Ida Levitz, a black Suffragist stood by me in the crowd. She had refused to walk in the back and decided that she would rather watch from the crowd instead. As her Illinois group marched by, she jumped over the barriers and locked arms with the white women in her group. There were gasps and a brief silence. Risking an angry crowd, I let out the loudest cheer that I could and a few others joined me. They passed by without any incidents and I was able to stand there without glares or threats of harm. When the

Suffragists from the black university approached at the end of the parade, the crowd started to get rowdy. Then it turned violent with the participants being attacked, slapped, lit cigarettes were thrown at them and they were spat on. It wasn't only because of the black women's presence in the parade, a bunch of drunk men had



Crowd At Women's Suffrage Parade-Library of Congress (4)

blocked Isabelle's path. She had to use her horse to part the men. She told the DC police that they should be ashamed of themselves as they did nothing to help the marchers. Help finally came from the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania National Guards, as well as boys from the Maryland Agricultural College. They created a human barrier to protect the women from the angry crowd. When the path was cleared, the parade continued. The Suffragists were a bit shaken by the riot but it all ended well.

The newspapers reported on the riot that occurred during the parade and there was a public outcry. Within two weeks, Anne and the other participants met with the president. Although he agreed with the public outcry against the parade rioters, he said it was not time for a constitutional amendment for universal women's suffrage. Anne was frustrated and decided to send a "Suffrage Special" team of women to the western states to recruit people. Isabelle would be the featured speaker. Isabelle's father was on board and donated a lot of money to Anne for the campaign. Isabelle got great reviews and spoke to jam packed rooms. I accompanied her on these tours and noticed her fatigue. I questioned her about it but she insisted it was from all the work she was doing. She refused to stop to get rest because this was so important to her. No one argued with her because Isabelle was a

determined person and once she gets going, she won't stop. We did make her promise to get more rest.

During that time, we met Amelia Belmar. Amelia Belmar was one of the richest woman in the country. She was the widow of a millionaire and a Suffragist. She donated millions to the Suffragist and we probably couldn't have done so much without her. Amelia had gone to England a year earlier than Anne. While in England, Amelia observed the commitment of Eloise Parks to the suffrage movement. Eloise Parks was Charlotte's mother, so Anne and Amelia hit it off right away. They shared stories of their interactions with the rebellious two. At that time, Amelia had started the Political Equity League in New York and was trying to integrate the club by encouraging African-American women to create their own branch. Anne was surprised that a southern born woman would welcome black women into her clubs and even encourage them to form their own branch. She started to have a change of heart about her approach with not allowing black women to participate or segregating them.



Black Suffragists-Library of Congress (5)



Conference of Great Women-Library of Congress (6)

Amelia decided to have a "Conference of Great Women" at one of her mansions in Rhode Island. When Anne saw that her invitation list was full of elite white women as well as some black women, she was shocked. Amelia wasn't afraid to lose southern support. Even I was invited to that event. It was an amazing conference as so many wealthy and

elite woman gathered on the lawn to support the Suffragists. Isabelle spoke at the event to a round of applause. At one point during the event, Anne asked to speak to me privately. She apologized for her behavior the first time we met and said she was short sighted. She was so focused on winning national support to show that suffrage was accepted everywhere, including the South, that she didn't considerate the impact of excluding of black women. She regretted her instructions to make them walk in the back. Anne had learned a thing or two from Amelia and realized she was wrong. I accepted her apology and we became good friends thereafter. We went to California soon after for another campaign. Isabelle spook with gusto then collapsed on the stage. The crowd was in panic and she was rushed to the hospital. She was in serious condition and had to get a blood transfusion. Unfortunately, she didn't survive and we all mourned her premature passing. Each of us were guilt ridden that we hadn't paid more attention to her frailty or insisted she see a doctor. At the funeral, we all sent our apologies for failing to make her take better care of her health. Isabelle became our martyr and we would uphold her as the symbol of the suffrage movement from then on. I packed up to return home but Anne stopped me. She said that she wanted me to continue my reporting of the movement. I could follow and write about her, if I choose. It was not only what Isabelle would want but, also, herself. I agreed to stay on and she covered all the expenses.

By this time, Anne and Amelia had bonded to work closely together. Isabelle would be the icon and never forgotten for her dedication to the cause. They renewed their commitment to getting universal suffrage so that Isabelle didn't die in vain. They reformed the NWP with Amelia serving as one of the founders and president. Anne gladly took backstage to Amelia as graciously as Lois took back seat to her. Now with fire in their hearts, they decide to use more of the tactics learned from the rebellious two from England, the Parks Suffragists. Amelia organized the first picket of the White House. That was really bold since no one had ever picketed the white house before. She named the group of

picketers, The Sentinels. Everyday, rain or shine, the Sentinels would stand in front of the White House to remind the president that women were still waiting for universal suffrage.

The public was surprised at the women's boldness. The new NWP was more aggressive than any other Suffragist clubs. Aside from the pickets, Anne and Amelia used other non-violent tactics such as sit-ins and enlisting women from the west who were allowed to vote. For about a year and a half, the Silent



Picketing The White House-Library of Congress (7)

Sentinels picketed the White House by standing at the gates and holding signs that used the president's words to point out his hypocrisy. Isabelle's words, " Mr. President, how long must women wait for liberty?", were written across a banner and held up in her honor.

The Sentinels were verbally and physically attacked by some of the public but most were tolerant of the women. However, after the country entered into World War One (WWI), the attacks were more harsh and frequent. Even the rebellious two from England stopped their protest to support their country during the war. Anne and Amelia decided that this was their chance to get their message through to the country. The fight for women's suffrage is so important that it will not stop for any reason. The police, who had stayed out of it for the most part, warned that arrests would be made if the picketing continued. The first arrests were made for obstructing the sidewalk. The judge fined the Sentinels but they refused to pay and spent a few days in jail. They went back to picketing after their release. Although the Sentinels were exercising free speech and the right to peaceful assembly, some others were arrested for things like obstructing traffic. Anne was among those arrested and was sentenced to seven months in jail. While in jail, she organized a hunger



Force Feeding-Library of Congress (8)

strike. She was force fed which caused her to vomit and led to health problems.

A tragedy that turned into a blessing occurred and changed things. A deadly flu quickly spread during the war and for some strange reason, it mainly affected the male population. This caused a shortage of soldiers and male workers. In response to the shortage, women had to take jobs that were normally held by men. We were helping the war efforts and keeping the economy going to support the country. There was no time for the "damsel in distress" or the "happy housewife". The country

needed us to put on our boots and get to work. The Sentinels used this opportunity to show that women were equals. We were needed and as useful as any man; therefore, we deserve the right to vote. The Sentinels were not protesting the war or sabotaging war efforts, they kept picketing to make sure that the issue of women's suffrage was never forgotten while contributing to the war efforts. The anti-Suffragists had claimed that women do not make sacrifices for the country and therefore do not need to vote. Women's contribution to the war proved them wrong.



Women At Work-Library of Congress (9)

As the Sentinels were being attacked during their picketing, Anne was threatened with being sent to an insane asylum. However, after the psychiatric evaluation, the doctor found her to be sane and determined. These things frustrated those who were against suffrage and led to the "Night Of Terrors". Public attacks increased and the police became more hostile. The "Night Of Terrors" followed when some of the Sentinels were arrested and sent to the Occoquan. Our



Detained Sentinel-Library of Congress (10)

beloved Lois was forced to stand all night by having her hands tied above her head to the bars above her cell. Doris Danyon was slammed twice over the back of an iron bench after the male guards twisted her hand behind her back. Dora Lancaster was knocked out after smashing her head against an iron bed when the guards threw her into a cell without lights. She was thrown into a cell with Alice Crawford who had a heart attack because she thought Dora was dead. Alice was denied medical care until the next day. The Occoquan superintendent had Marines guard the compound and denied the Sentinels legal counsel. Luckily, one of the detained Sentinels had a husband who was a campaign advisor for the president. After the "Night Of Terrors", he quit his position to represent the Sentinels in court. The newspapers reported on the Sentinel's treatment during the "Night Of Terrors" and there was a public outcry. This caused the formerly hostile public to throw their support to women's suffrage.

By the next year, the president had announced his support for universal women's suffrage but there was still no amendment to the constitution yet. It all came down to Tennessee. The Suffragists had to convince an all-male legislature to ratify the the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution to allow women to vote. The Suffragists were in the Statehouse Gallery looking down at the male legislatures who wore roses on their lapels to signify their stance on issue. There was an even divide and the amendment could not move forward unless one of them changed their minds. The amendment had already passed the Senate but was being stalled in the House.

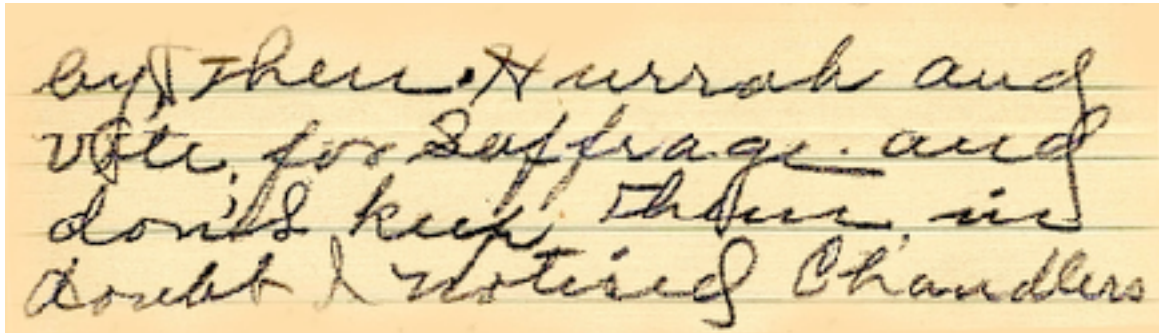
It took the Women's Suffrage movement about seventy years to get to this point. Anne and Amelia's NWP, had stood up to the White House while other suffrage groups focused on Congress. Federal lawmakers

finally passed the amendment the year before but it still needed the backing of three-fourths of the states to become law. Only thirty-five states had backed the amendment thus far and Tennessee seemed like the best state to help the suffrage movement because of its divided loyalty on different issues. The legislature had voted to table the amendment but were tied. This forced the vote to happen. Some of the Suffragists had lost hope and were hanging around only to find out what they needed to do next to continue fighting for the vote.

As the representatives gave an "aye" or "no" during the vote, some of the Suffragists already started talking about what to do next because they thought that nothing was going to happen that day. The male representatives were staying loyal to their position. The Suffragists had spent the day listening to fiery sexist and racist speeches by the anti-suffragists. One of them called the Suffragists low class and said they were trying to "put something over on the good women of Tennessee," "I am here representing the mothers who are at home rocking the cradle and not representing the low neck and high skirt variety.....This is the kind of woman who is trying to dictate to us. They would drag the womanhood of Tennessee down to the level of the Negro woman," he said. These types of speeches went on until the official vote was underway.

No one stood up to the racists comments. I guess at this time it would have not been prudent to fight that half of the battle when there was so close a chance to win the other half. I swallowed my pride and bit my tongue. The Suffragists were seeking support from this southern state and had to pick their battles. I sat quietly, fuming inside but with no expression outside. I distracted myself by watching a young representative read a note that he had taken out of his pocket. He had on a red rose which meant he was against the suffrage. He was also mentored by the speaker whose rant against the suffrage was mentioned earlier. The young man put the note away as his turn came to vote. He was up for reelection soon and we knew that his constituents were

anti-suffrage. I waited for his "No" but something else happened. He looked up, took off his red rose and said, "Aye,". There were gasps and the whole place fell silent as jaws dropped. The person taking the votes looked shocked, cleared his throat and continued the vote. Everyone else held their former position and before you know it, the amendment had passed.



By then Hurray and
vote for Suffrage and
don't keep them in
doubt I noticed Chandlers

The Letter-C. M. McClung Historical Collection (11)

For once, the Suffragists were left speechless. There were a few moments of silence until we all realized what happened and began to cheer and cry at the same time. It all came down to this. It was all worth it. We went outside, hugged and cried after the official closing of the voting. We thanked the representative whose single vote helped change the world. That night we celebrated and prepared our messages for the next day. What a day that was! So full of ups and downs but with a happy ending. It was a long hard road to women's suffrage and we lost so much along the way. We celebrated Isabella and her contribution to the cause. We laughed, cried and stared about in disbelief that this day had finally come. Women had universal suffrage. The fight was for something and now our daughters enjoy the same right to influence our country as our sons.

Credits & Notes

The credits and notes section is deliberately informal to make it easier for everybody to continue researching this milestone in American history. It is intended to make it easy to find the sources used in this story.

To get the full list of credits and notes, please order the booklet online or by attending a lecture. The complete list will help you learn more about the actual events and people who inspired this story. For more details, please visit:

Washington Post Articles

Diane Bernard
Katie Bettler
Samantha Schmidt
Terence McArdle

Other Sources

Debra Michals, PhD
National Women's History Museum
"On Her Own Wings-Oregon Women and the Struggle For Suffrage" Exhibit
Smithsonian Magazine
Wikipedia

Photo Credits

- (1) Alice Paul, United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division
- (2) National Anti-Suffrage Association headquarters (Harris & Ewing/Library of Congress)
- (3) Milholland at the Washington women's suffrage march (Library of Congress/via AP)
- (4) Crowd on Pennsylvania Avenue at women's suffrage march (Library of Congress)
- (5) Black Women Suffragists (Library of Congress/via NPR)
- (6) Suffrage meeting at Alva Belmont's Marble House in Newport (Library of Congress/via Newport Daily News)
- (7) Suffragists picketing the White House (Library of Congress/via AP)
- (8) National Women's Social and Political Union poster illustrating prison torture allegations (Library of Congress)

(9) The National League for Women's Service (Library of Congress)

(10) Lucy Burns in the Occoquan Workhouse in Washington, D.C. (Library of Congress)

(11) "Vote for suffrage, and don't keep them in doubt," Febb Burn wrote her son Harry Burn
(C. M. McClung Historical Collection)

The Suffragette research is part of the "Speak Out Series". The "Speak Out Series" will explore stories of those who fought against domineering behavior or policies. The BVA respects authority and rules, except when power is abused. People must speak out against abuse of power, subjugation, bullying and other forms of domineering behavior. A speaker is available to do an online presentation on the facts behind this women's suffrage story. For more information, please visit the BVA at:

bulliedvictimsassociation.com/speak-out-series

This booklet is also part of a full length research book by the same name. To get an email when the book is available and where to purchase it, please visit:

bulliedvictimsassociation.com