

# UPWARD TO EQUALITY: KANSAS WOMEN FIGHT TO VOTE



A SPECIAL EXHIBIT AT THE  
Kansas Museum of History

2020-2021

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# UPWARD TO EQUALITY: KANSAS WOMEN FIGHT TO VOTE



Laura Kelly, Governor of Kansas

*Please join me in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the courageous women who made it possible.*

*Support for the catalog was generously provided by Martha Hodgesmith; Honorable Karen Arnold-Burger; League of Kansas Municipalities; Chief Justice Marla Luckert; Honorable Rebecca Sanders; and Robert Quinn Rohde Endowment, Kansas Historical Foundation.*

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Special thanks to all the Kansas Historical Society staff who made this exhibit and catalog possible.

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Cover photo: Suffragists in a parade at the Douglas County Fair, circa 1910.



# The history of the past is but one long struggle upward to equality.

—Elizabeth Cady Stanton

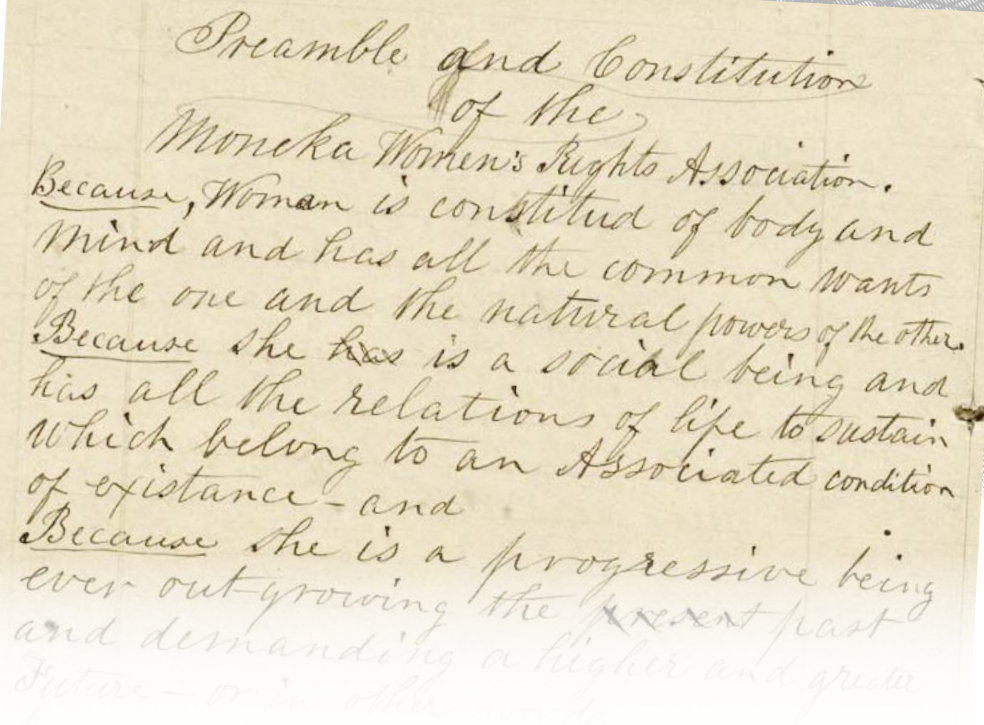
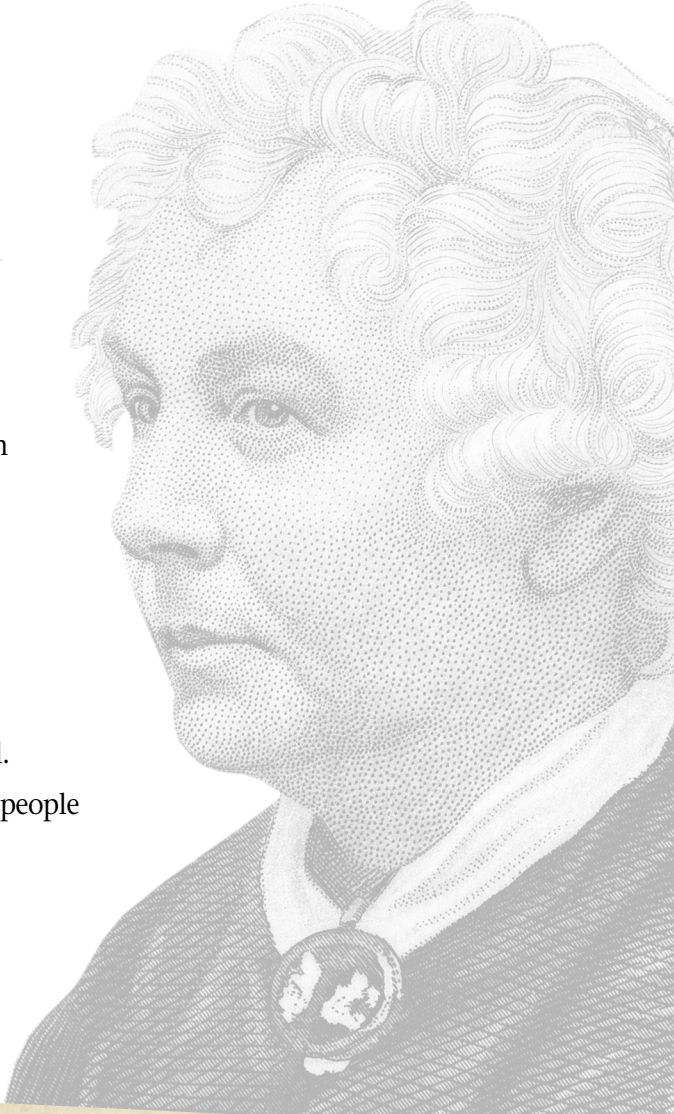
Elizabeth Cady Stanton's quote provided the title for this exhibit. She understood, like many other suffragists, that it would be a hard and long fight to gain the right to vote. It took Kansas women roughly 58 years, from the territory's founding in 1854 until 1912, to secure their voting rights. Their route was never easy or direct. In attaining their goal Kansans also played a major role in the national suffrage movement. Unfortunately, because of social beliefs at the time regarding race, white women largely excluded minority voices from being active participants in the movement.

## Women's demand for equal voting rights rested on several key arguments:

- ★ They were subject to laws that they had no voice in making, amounting to taxation without representation.
- ★ A democratic government should not exist without equal rights for all.
- ★ Without the vote, women saw themselves as classed with minors and people of unsound mind.
- ★ Women would bring a much-needed morality to politics.
- ★ Women had political views and agendas they wanted represented.

The national suffrage story is long and complex. This catalog highlights the Kansas story and the roles of women, and men, who secured universal suffrage in Kansas eight years before the passage of the 19th Amendment.

Preamble and Constitution of the Moneka Woman's Rights Association.



Preamble and Constitution  
of the  
Moneka Women's Rights Association.  
Because, Woman is constituted of body and  
Mind and has all the common wants  
of the one and the natural powers of the other.  
Because she ~~has~~ is a social being and  
has all the relations of life to sustain  
which belong to an Associated condition  
of existence - and  
Because she is a progressive being  
ever out-growing the present past  
and demanding a higher and greater  
Future - or in other words



## ALL EYES ON KANSAS: THE FIRST FIGHT (1854–1867)

*Kansas is to be the battle ground for 1867.  
It must not be allowed to fail.*

—Henry Blackwell

Kansas claims many “firsts” in the suffrage movement. Look for the yellow banners throughout the catalog to discover the numerous milestones achieved first in Kansas in the long struggle for women to gain the right to vote.

Women abolitionists actively partook in the fight against slavery in Kansas Territory. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 gave settlers the right to decide whether Kansas would be a free or slave state. The era of “Bleeding Kansas” placed the territory in the national spotlight as a reform leader. After the Civil War women turned their attention to gaining equal rights for themselves. Clarina Nichols helped lead the way.

In 1854 Clarina Nichols and her family left Vermont with the New England Emigrant Aid Society. This group of staunch abolitionists moved to Douglas County, Kansas Territory, to ensure Kansas would enter the Union as a free state. Nichols believed this new territory would be more receptive to women’s suffrage too.

The Moneka Woman’s Rights Association, organized in Moneka, Linn County, on February 2, 1858, made it its goal to secure rights for women. The association hired Nichols to attend the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention in 1859 to lobby for the inclusion of women’s rights in the state constitution.

When Kansas became a state in 1861, Nichols’ efforts secured liberal property rights for Kansas women, equal guardianship of their children, and the right to vote on all school questions. While unsuccessful in her attempt to secure full suffrage in the new state’s constitution, she laid the groundwork for future women’s rights advocates and drew the attention of national suffrage leaders.

When Kansas became a state in 1861 it was the first state to allow all women the right to vote in school elections. Michigan followed suit in 1867. Kentucky allowed partial privileges in school elections in 1838 but only for widows and unmarried women.

Clarina Nichols



***A little meek-looking Quakerish body, with the sweetest, modest manners and yet as unshrinking and self-possessed as a loaded cannon.***

—Abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson describing Lucy Stone



Credit: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-29701

Lucy Stone

The first resolution in the nation in favor of suffrage for women was introduced in Kansas in 1867. National suffrage leaders made the long trip to Kansas to help with the campaign, believing victory was certain. They arrived in Kansas supporting universal suffrage for women and African American men. The women spent months crisscrossing Kansas, speaking at churches, schoolhouses, barns, and anywhere they could gather an audience.

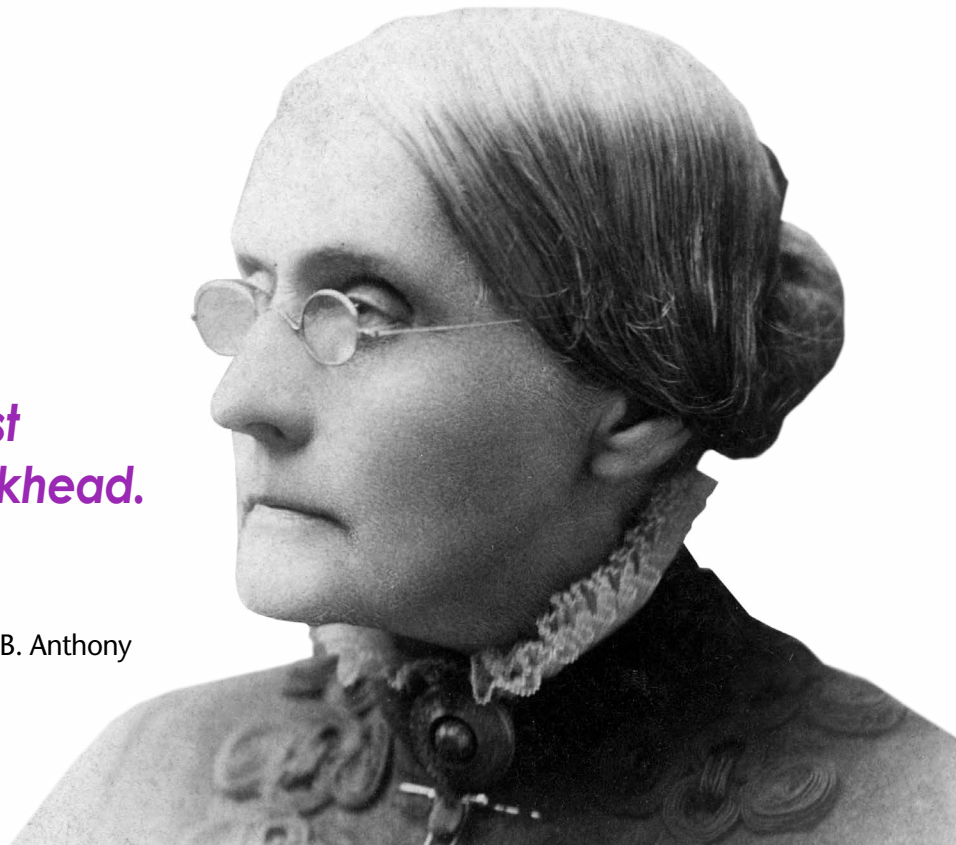
National suffrage leaders Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had a lot in common. They grew up in families that supported abolition and education for women. At an early age they felt the sting of inequality and spent their lives fighting against being forced into roles based on their gender.

The first resolution in the nation in favor of full suffrage for women was introduced in Kansas in 1867.

***Any man who voted against female suffrage was a blockhead.***

—Susan B. Anthony, 1867

Susan B. Anthony





**We hold these truths to be self-evident:  
that all men and women are created equal.**

—Elizabeth Cady Stanton

In 1868 Stanton, Anthony, and Parker Pillsbury published the first edition of *The Revolution*. The newspaper carried the motto, *Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less!* A year earlier, while campaigning in Kansas, the title appeared on this booklet heralding their campaign in Kansas. “Kansas will win the world’s applause/ As the sole champion of Woman’s cause/ So light the bonfires! Have the flag unfurled/ To the Banner State of all the world.”

The constitutional amendment for full suffrage for both women and African American men was ultimately voted down by Kansans in 1867. Women suffragists felt abandoned by the very men they had worked beside for the advancement of social change.

As a result, many suffrage leaders refocused efforts only on votes for women. The next significant push for women’s suffrage in Kansas would not occur for almost 20 years.

Left, *The Revolution*; below, Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Credit: Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries

THE GREAT EPIGRAM CAMPAIGN OF KANSAS.

CHAMPIONSHIP OF WOMAN.

BY  
GEORGE FRANCIS TRAIN.

THE REVOLUTION.

EPITAPH ON THE TOMBSTONE OF THE APOSTATES.  
The Garrisons, Phillips, Greeleys and Beechers,  
False prophets, false guides, false teachers and preachers,  
Left Mrs. Stanton, Miss Anthony, Brown and Stone,  
To fight the Kansas battle alone;  
While your Rosses, Pomroys and your Clarkes,  
Like neutral England's pirate barks,  
Stood on the fence, or basely fled,  
While WOMAN was saved by a COPPERHEAD!

THIRTY SPEECHES IN TWO WEEKS IN ALL PARTS OF KANSAS.

Kansas will win the world's applause,  
As the sole champion of Woman's cause,  
So light the bonfires! Have the flag unfurled  
To the Banner State of all the world.

LEAVENWORTH, KANS.  
PRESCOTT & HUME, DAILY COMMERCIAL OFFICE.  
1867.

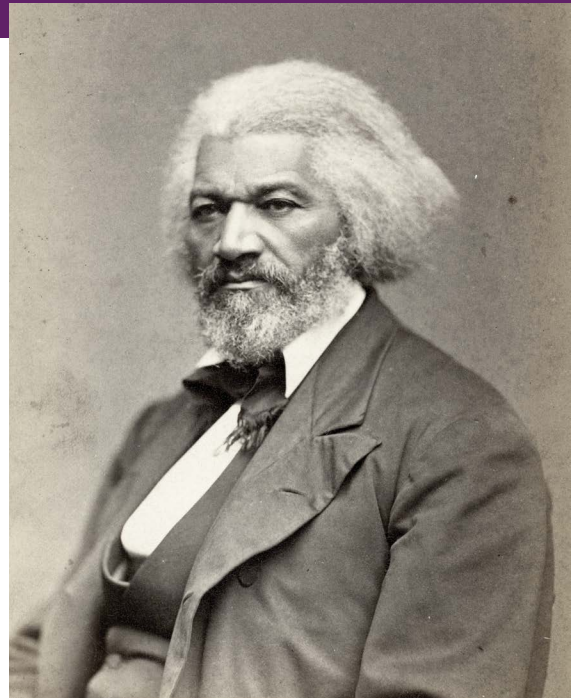




## SEGREGATING SUFFRAGE

The 1867 defeat also broke the alliance between white women and black men. At an American Equal Rights Association meeting Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony each argued that their side had a more urgent claim to the vote. Douglass maintained that for black men “it was a matter of life and death.” Anthony asserted that precedence should be given to women as the “more intelligent and moral group.”

The exchange marked the beginning of arguments that white women suffragists used to highlight their racial status for the remainder of their campaign. In 1869 the American Equal Rights Association fractured into two new organizations. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman Suffrage Association. Lucy Stone and her husband, Henry Blackwell, teamed up with abolitionist Henry Ward Beecher to form the American Woman Suffrage Association. They supported the 15th Amendment along with women’s suffrage.



Credit: Frank W. Legg Photographic Collection, National Archives, 558770

Frederick Douglass was a social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman.



Topeka political cartoonist Albert Reid exposes the split in the women’s suffrage movement.

African American men received legal and voting rights in 1870, five years after the end of the Civil War, with the passage of the 15th Amendment. The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the passage of this amendment. While African American men legally gained the right to vote, they still often faced racist obstacles on election day, including poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses. Not until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 did African Americans gain unrestricted access to the polls.

Charles Langston worked in Kansas for equal rights, suffrage, and education. In 1867 he gained support from Republican Governor Samuel J. Crawford to include both black male suffrage and women's suffrage on the Kansas referendum. This referendum ultimately failed. His daughter, Carrie Langston, carried on the fight for women's suffrage, women's rights, and civil rights.



Credit: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

Above, in this 1902 photograph Carrie Langston holds her famous son, Langston Hughes, of Lawrence. He became a strong voice for equal rights himself as a poet of the Harlem Renaissance; right, Charles Langston.



Credit: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-73349





Edward P. McCabe

Despite gaining the vote in 1870 few African Americans in Kansas served in state government.

Edward McCabe of Nicodemus began his political career as clerk of Graham County in 1880, making him one of the first African American officials to be appointed in Kansas. Two years later, running on the Republican ticket, he became the first African American to hold a statewide office as the state auditor.



## TEMPERANCE LEADS THE WAY (1884-1887)

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) worked to advance women's voting rights, in addition to its major focus to promote prohibition.

The WCTU believed alcohol should be banned because it ruined the home. At a time when women did not participate in politics, the WCTU provided a respectable way to be involved in public activities. Members justified public involvement because they believed they were protecting families from the evils of alcohol brought home by drunk husbands and fathers. Many WCTU women also supported suffrage because having the vote would give them more power to enforce prohibition.



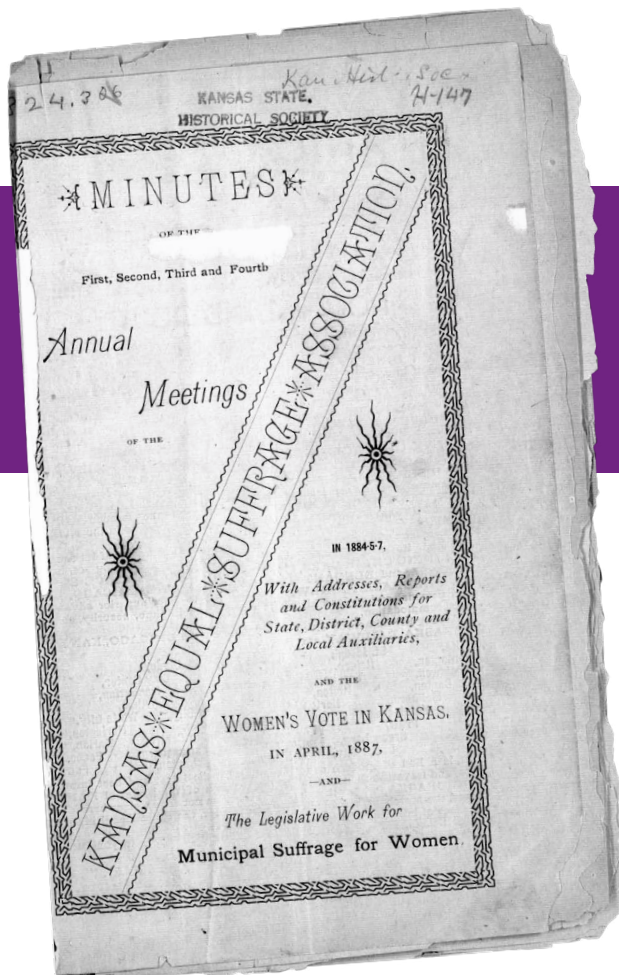
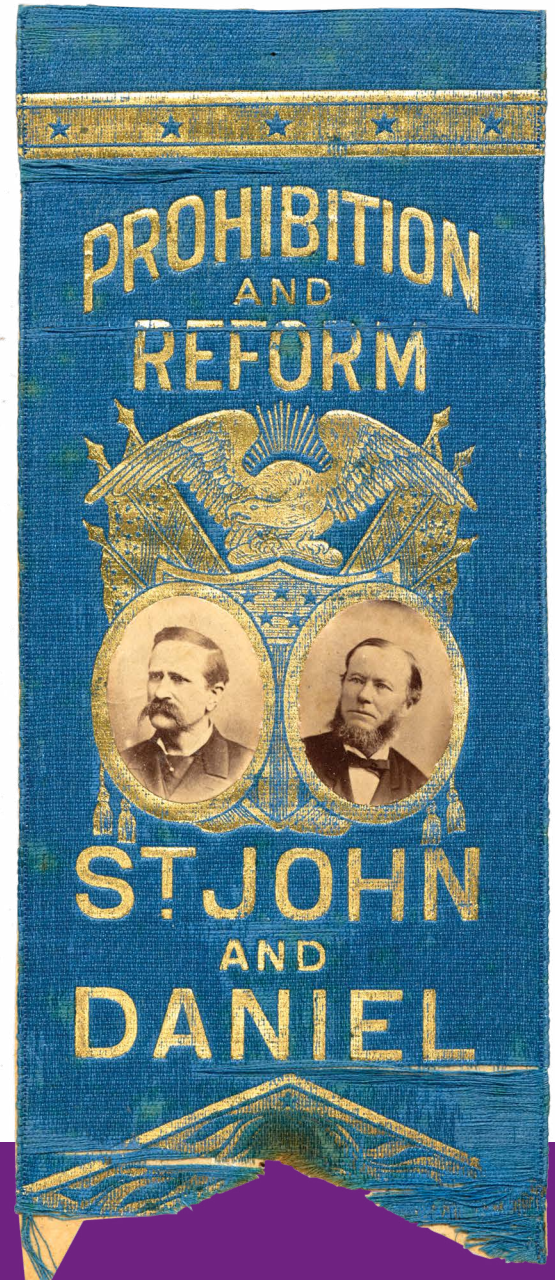
Topeka artist Henry Worrall painted this poster for the Kansas chapter of the WCTU, which they used at the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition in New Orleans in 1884.



By the mid-1870s Kansas Republicans had adopted the temperance cause. In 1878 voters elected Republican prohibitionist John St. John as governor. In his inaugural address the new governor called for decisive action on the liquor issue. The Kansas Legislature responded, sending a constitutional amendment to voters that would prohibit “the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors.” Kansans made prohibition effective January 1, 1881, becoming the first state to outlaw alcoholic beverages in its constitution.

George Glick, a Democrat from Atchison, was elected governor the following year. He thought the state’s stern prohibition law was too extreme and failed to serve its purpose. Enforcement proved difficult and often unfair. The only Kansans consistently benefiting from the law seemed to be the illegal bootleggers. Glick strongly recommended its abolishment, and this scared the Republican Party.

Suffragists saw their opportunity. They convinced Republican legislators to give women municipal suffrage, the right to vote in city elections, so they could help keep prohibition enforced locally. The Kansas Equal Suffrage Association (KESA), formed in 1884, campaigned for partial suffrage. They believed this would be the first step to full suffrage and one Republicans would support.



This pamphlet contains the minutes of the first four annual meetings of the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association, 1884–1887.

**In 1887 the Republican-controlled legislature made Kansas women the nation's first to vote in city elections.**

Together the KESA and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union lobbied state politicians. Unlike in 1867, municipal suffrage would not require a public vote or constitutional amendment. The decision was entirely in the hands of state lawmakers.

Anna Wait and Laura Johns helped form the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association (KESA). In 1887 they proved instrumental in convincing the Kansas Legislature to grant women the vote in city elections.

At the 1887 state KESA convention Johns proposed the suffrage badge be a yellow ribbon in honor of the Kansas sunflower. Stanton and Anthony had used yellow ribbons as early as 1867 when they campaigned in Kansas, but by 1887 the color was secured as the movement's badge.

**Since Kansas was the first state to gain municipal suffrage, the National Woman Suffrage Association adopted the color yellow for their campaign. It was a tribute to the Kansas sunflower and to honor Kansas as the most progressive state for women at the time.**



Laura Johns



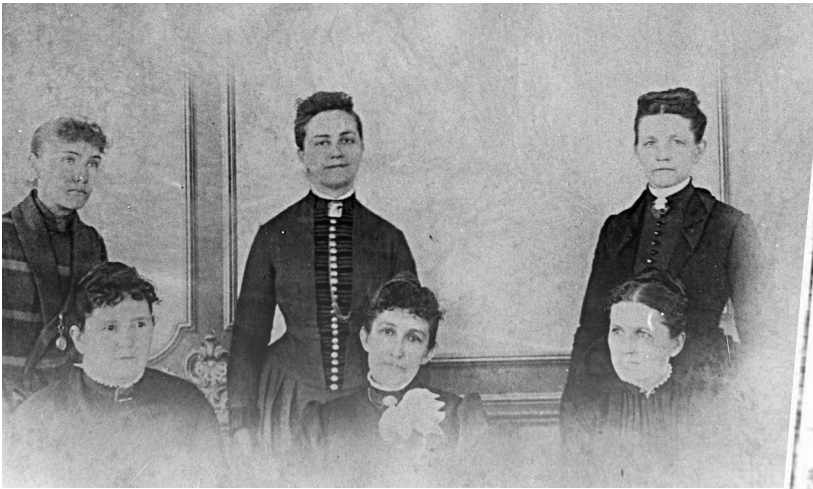
Anna Wait



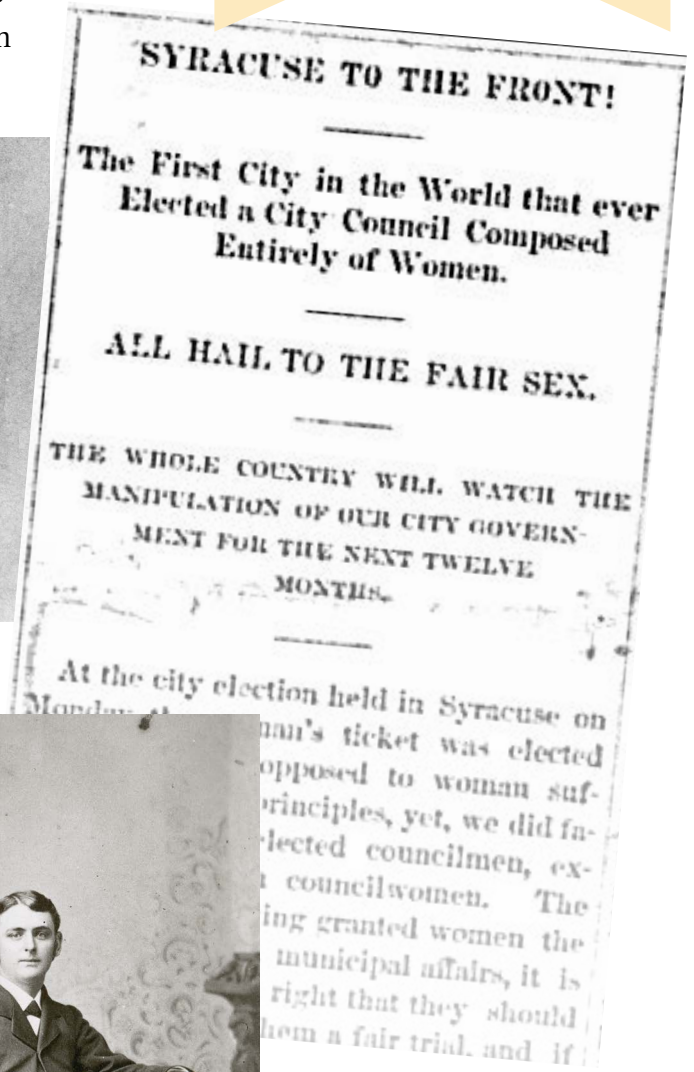
The same 1887 law granting municipal suffrage to women also guaranteed their right to run for city offices.

Nominated on the Prohibition Party ticket by several Argonia men as a joke, 27-year-old Susanna Salter knew more about politics than her detractors realized. The daughter of a former mayor won two-thirds of the vote. She was elected mayor on April 4, 1887, just weeks after Kansas women gained the right to vote in city elections. That same month, Syracuse elected an all-female city council. In northeast Kansas the city of Oskaloosa followed suit in 1888 with this all-woman city

Syracuse elected an all-female city council in April 1887, a national first.



Oskaloosa's all-woman city government, 1888



West Kansas News (Syracuse), April 7, 1887

In 1887 Susanna Salter became the first woman in the country to be elected as mayor.



Susanna and Lewis Salter, 1880



Not everyone believed women's suffrage was a good thing. Marsh Murdock, founder of the *Wichita Eagle* and city leader, wrote regular editorials against it. He argued that women should not vote because "God had placed them in the home," not in public life. He claimed that "good" women—the housekeepers, mothers, and wives—did not want to vote, and so only "bad" women would vote. Furthermore, "women should not need to vote," as men would "protect women's interests" at the polls.

As this letter illustrates, suffragists had to overcome societal beliefs held by both men and women about women's proper place in the home. Mrs. G. Monroe wrote to request that Governor John Martin veto the bill giving women the right to vote in city elections.

Credit: Division of Political and Military History, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution



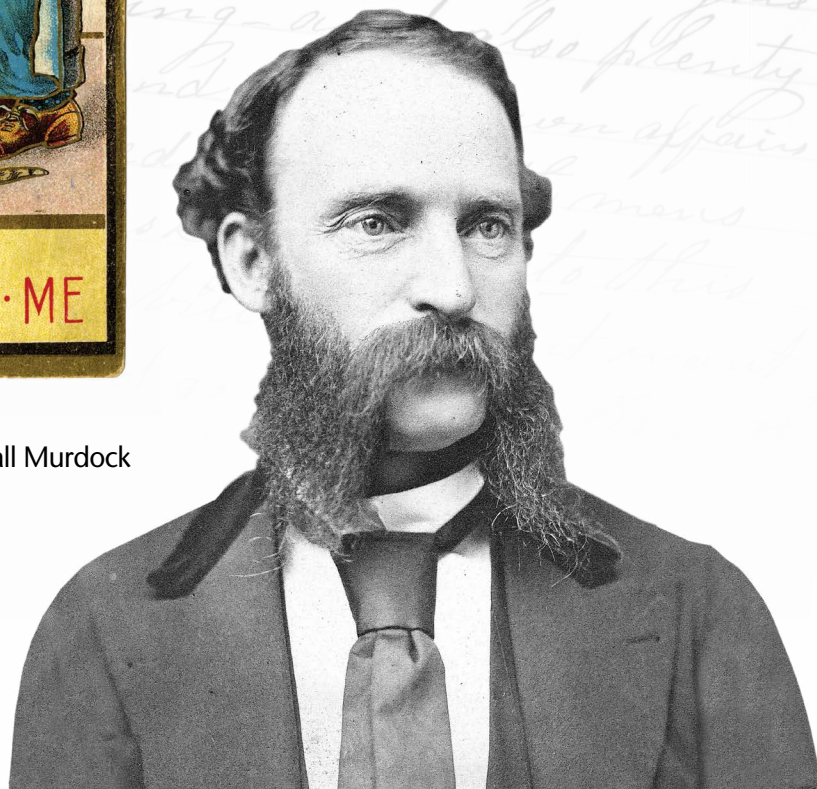
*Topeka Feb 11/87*

*To Gov Martin*

*Dear Sir*

*Ten thousand Woman who have enough rights without voting and also plenty to do, too attend to their own affairs without meddling with mens business, ask you to Veto this Sufferage bill \_\_ we don't want to vote, and go to the polls with [blacks] \_\_ and all kinds of woman*

*Mrs G Monroe  
and thousands of others*



Marshall Murdock



## THE SECOND FIGHT FOR FULL SUFFRAGE (1888-1894)

With the victory in 1887 national leaders assumed Kansas women would soon gain full suffrage. The women of Kansas positioned themselves for their second attempt. Colorado had passed full women's suffrage in 1893, and Kansas women hoped for a similar victory in 1894.

In the 1890s Laura Johns and Annie Diggs were president and vice president of the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association respectively. They did not share the same political alliances. Johns, a Republican, and Diggs, an avid Populist, sought to maintain a non-partisan suffrage organization. Unfortunately, the "Legislative War" that erupted between the two parties disrupted their suffrage campaign.

In the midst of these partisan tensions, Kansas women made their second attempt at full suffrage. They turned first to their traditional allies, the Republicans. This time, however, Kansas Republicans were too distracted by their fight with the Populists to support suffrage.

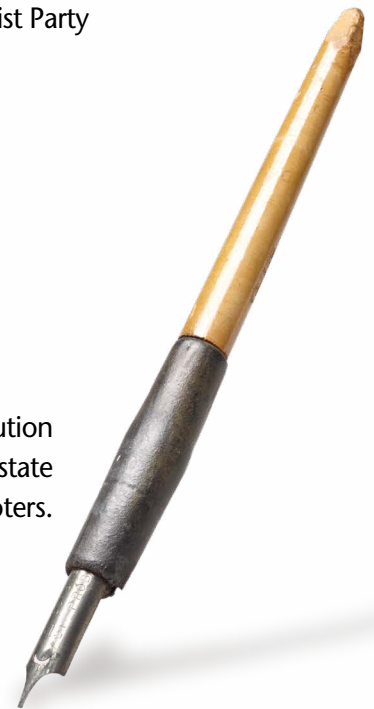
Suffragists next turned to the Populists. Populist Governor Lewelling lent his support by signing the resolution to submit the amendment to a vote of the people.

Unfortunately, the issue of women's suffrage proved too hot a topic for the Populist party after they lost control of the House of Representatives in the Legislative War.



Annie Diggs, Populist Party

Governor Lewelling used this pen to sign the resolution sending an equal suffrage amendment to the state constitution to be decided by voters.





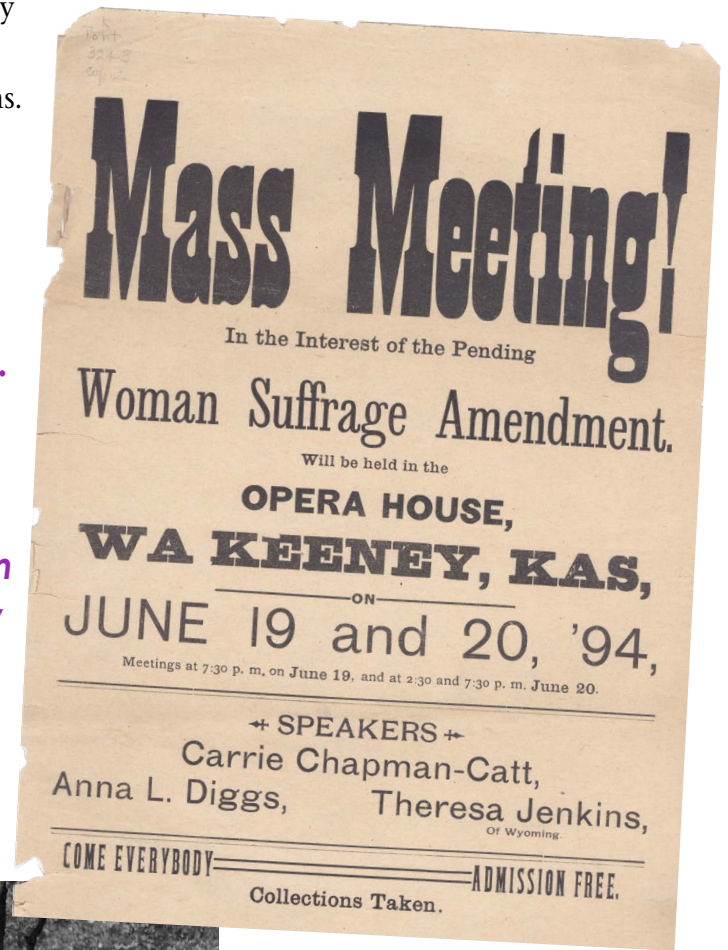
With the amendment on the ballot in 1894 national suffrage leaders again made the long journey to Kansas to help local organizers campaign. In June 1894 national and local suffragists including Carrie Chapman Catt, Annie Diggs, Theresa Jenkins, Susan B. Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw, Helen Kimber, and Rachel Child worked together to hold 100 meetings across the state.

In addition to mass meetings organized at churches and schools, suffragists took advantage of another public platform: the Chautauqua. This religious and cultural movement started in 1874 in western New York state. It soon spread to other states, including Kansas. Chautauqua's audience was primarily the white, middle class and reflected many other institutions during this time that segregated whites and African Americans.

Suffragists across the country used this platform to campaign for the vote, educate visitors on women's rights, and spread suffrage literature.

*Woman's Day...was a great day at Chautauqua. It was set apart for the discussion of political equality...The big Amphitheatre was beautifully decorated...in white and yellow...Everybody wore a yellow ribbon, and the speakers' platform was as yellow as a sunflower. Indeed, the yellow is intended to represent the "sunflower State," for Kansas was the first state to give women municipal suffrage.*

—*The Woman's Journal*, August 1, 1891

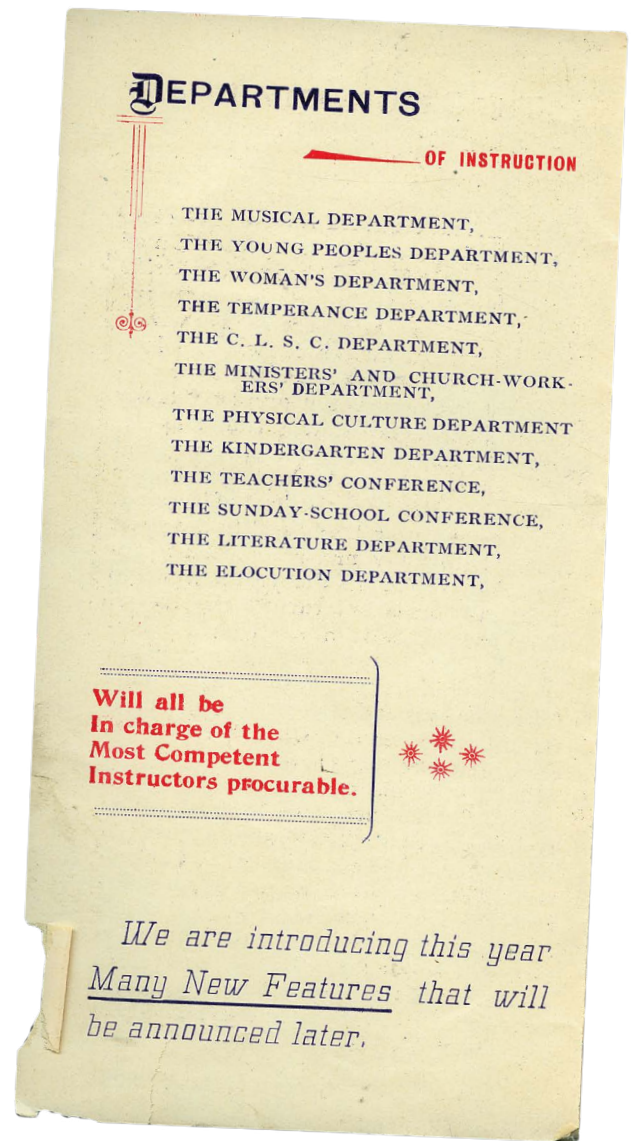


Above, this poster promotes a meeting in WaKeeney featuring national suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt; left, Ottawa Chautauqua Assembly in Forest Park, 1886.

In the state election of 1894 the Kansas women's suffrage amendment was voted down. Suffragists had failed to create a non-partisan movement. They also overlooked and segregated many groups of women during their campaign: rural women, working-class women, African Americans, and Catholic immigrants.

Fairly or not, many suffragists blamed Laura Johns for the unsuccessful campaign. Distracted by the war with the Populists, the Republican Party had dropped its support on her watch as president of the Kansas Republican Woman's Association. After the defeat Kansas suffragists remained mostly inactive for almost 15 years.

Instructor page from pamphlet for the 18th Chautauqua assembly at Forest Park in Ottawa, June 1896.



Credit: Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries

Mamie Dillard

Mamie Dillard led efforts in support of women's suffrage and leadership. She was the only African American in her graduating class at Lawrence High School and went on to graduate from the University of Kansas in 1896. When teaching school in Lawrence, poet Langston Hughes was one of her students.



By the end of the 19th century white suffragist speeches focused on promoting their own civilization and respectability as justification for the vote. In addition to distinguishing themselves from immigrants and minorities, white women argued that being denied suffrage made them the “political peers” of the most uncivilized and least respected members of society.

Henrietta Briggs-Wall of Hutchinson, was active with the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association and the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union. She designed the picture *American Woman and Her Political Peers* and commissioned William A. Ford, also of Hutchinson, to paint it. In this painting, educator and reformer Frances E. Willard is surrounded by a mentally disabled man, a convict, a “madman,” and a disenfranchised Native American.

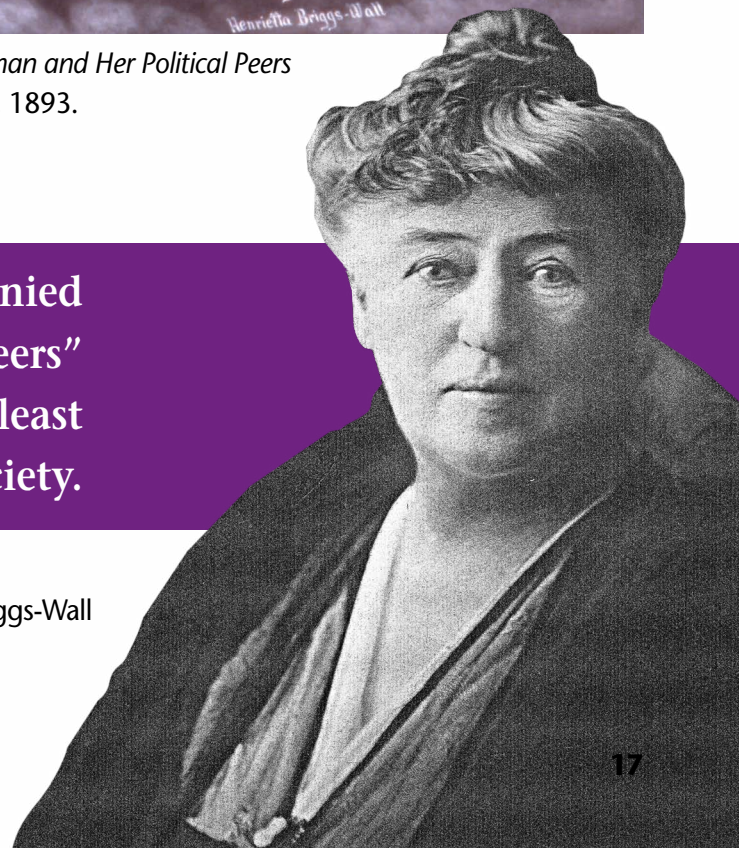
Briggs-Wall took the painting at her own expense to the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The *Alger County Republican* in Michigan reported that *American Woman* would be to suffrage what *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was to abolition.



*American Woman and Her Political Peers*  
by W. A. Ford, 1893.

White women argued that being denied suffrage made them the “political peers” of the most uncivilized and least respected members of society.

Henrietta Briggs-Wall



## A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS (1895-1907)

The world of politics was changing dramatically at the turn of the century. In Kansas a new generation of suffrage leaders emerged in the wake of the failed 1894 amendment. These women were college educated, involved in multiple organizations and reform movements, and eager to assert their influence in the world of politics.

Lilla Day Monroe attended the national suffrage convention in 1907. She returned to Kansas indignant that national leaders were largely ignoring western states. In response, Monroe argued that the state association should withdraw from the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

Monroe's decision to sever Kansas' ties signaled a larger trend. Washington, California, and Oregon all largely rejected national leadership in their final campaigns.

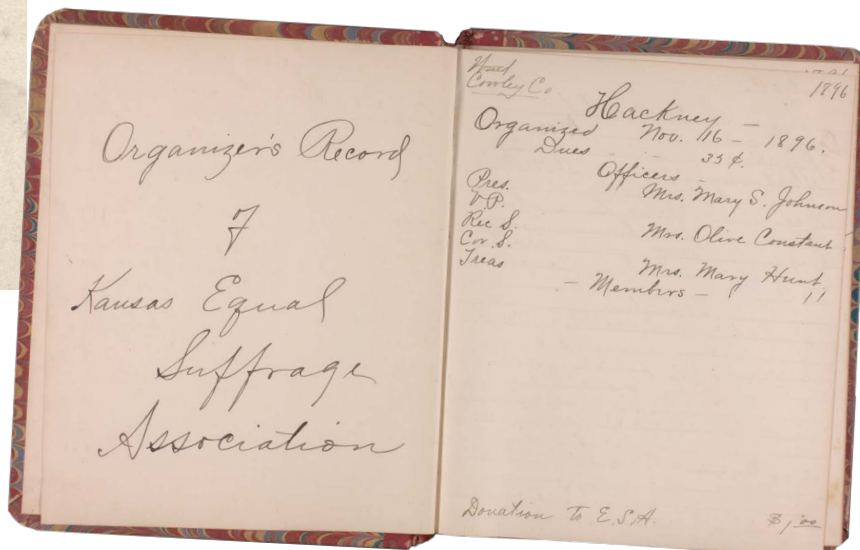


Lilla Day Monroe



Above, Laura Gregg; right, while organizing in southeast Kansas in 1896, Gregg kept this record book of the newly-formed chapters of the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association.

Suffragist Laura Gregg was also very active at this time. She lived in Garnett, but traveled the country working for women's rights on behalf of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Gregg wrote newspaper articles for more than 20 years, often for the *Woman's Column* in Boston edited by Alice Stone Blackwell. She wrote on behalf of the Garnett Equal Suffrage Association.





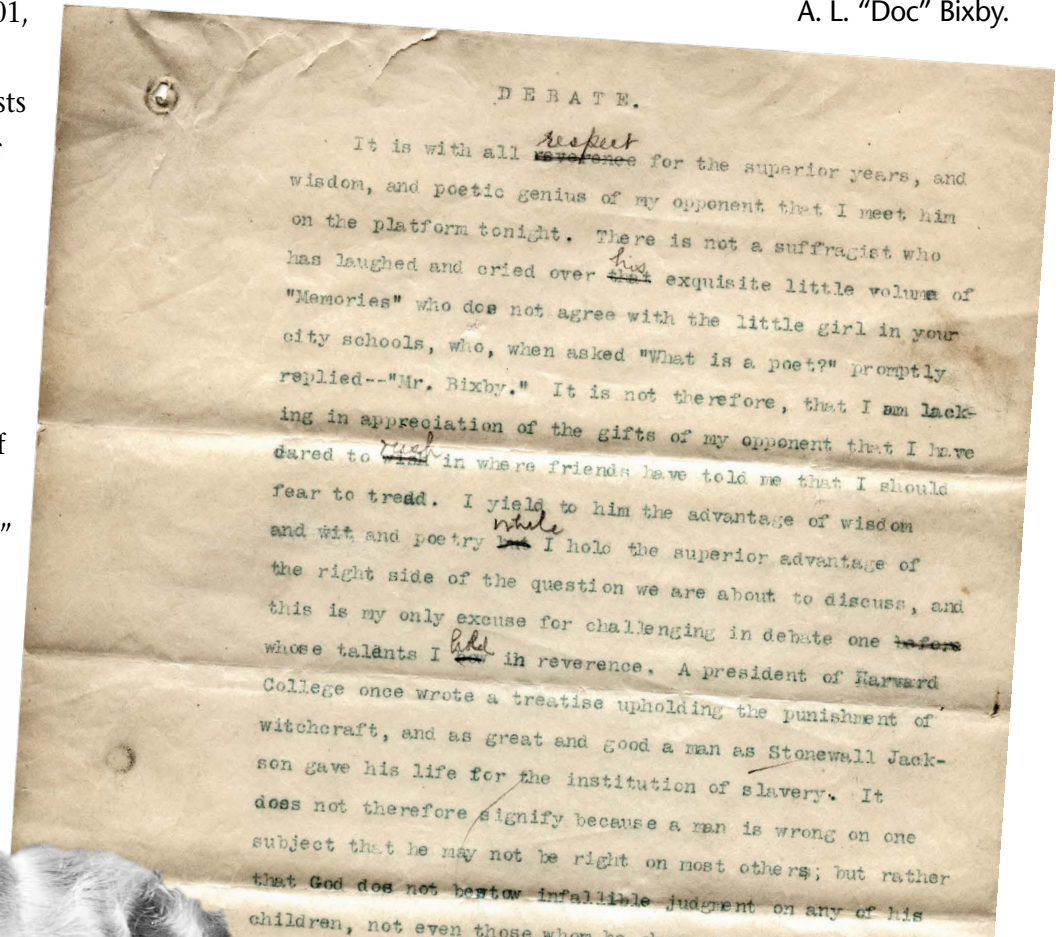
Laura Gregg had frequent correspondence with Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, who provided her with support and guidance. Catt praised Gregg for her strong organizing skills.

Laura Gregg often debated the issue of women's suffrage at public events. She used this script at her November 13, 1901, debate with A. L. "Doc" Bixby, one of Nebraska's best-known columnists and humorists. Nebraska Governor Ezra Savage served as "referee."

Gregg was still debating Bixby, or "Bix," in 1903. Catt congratulates Gregg on her success in the debate and declares that "Bixby is such an easy mark... for offering himself as such a willing sacrifice upon the altar of woman's enfranchisement."

Catt had a long history of her own with Bixby. Their frequent encounters resulted in this poem by "Bix."

Gregg's original script with her handwritten edits for the debate with A. L. "Doc" Bixby.



Credit: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-109793

*To Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt.  
Hereafter when I feel impelled  
To weave, as I have often done,  
Your name in wretched rhythmic pun,  
The fatal words shall be withheld.  
  
Until I cross the river Styx,  
Though I will never sit up nights  
And rend the air for woman's rights,  
I'll be your friend, God bless you, BIX*

Carrie Chapman Catt

## ***You refused me the vote and I had to use a rock.***

—Carry Nation speaking to the Kansas House of Representatives, 1901

Another strong voice for women's rights at the time was Carry Nation. She saw temperance as part of the larger movement for women's rights. She took her crusade to Wichita, Enterprise, and Hope before establishing headquarters in Topeka. As Nation explained, "If I could vote, I wouldn't smash."

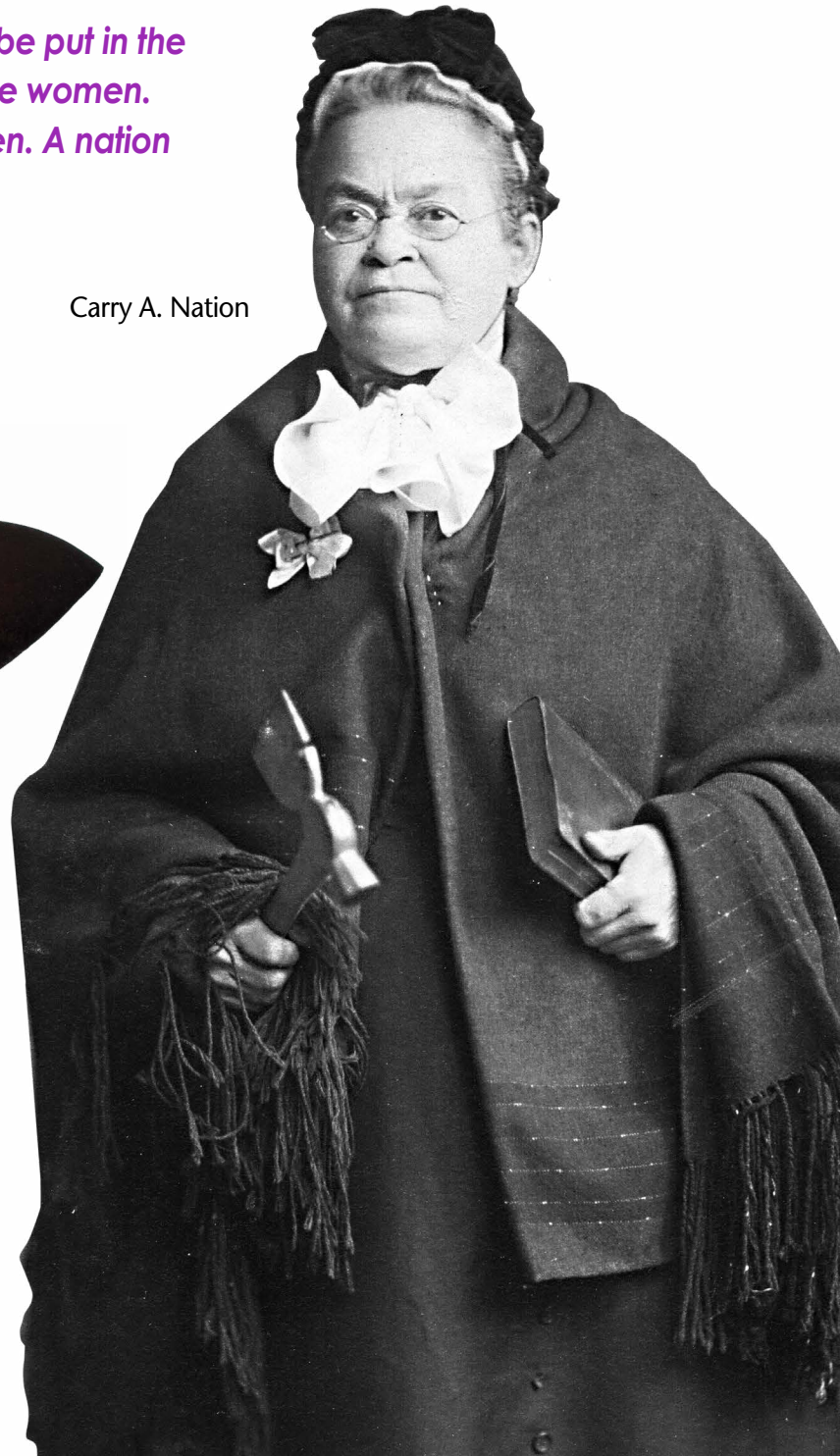
The Woman's Christian Temperance Union did not always agree with Nation's tactics, but it endorsed her objectives. Alcohol threatened women, children, and the home, and to defend themselves women needed the vote. In Nation's words,

***The loving moral influence of mothers must be put in the ballot box. Free men must be the sons of free women. To elevate men you must first elevate women. A nation can not rise higher than the mothers.***

Carry A. Nation



Hatchet used by Carry Nation when smashing saloons in Topeka, January 1901.





## ON TO VICTORY! (1908-1912)

Early in the 20th century the United States experienced economic, political, and social shifts as reformers addressed problems caused by industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and political corruption. In this “Progressive Era” of activism, the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association saw its next opportunity. Members had support from progressive politicians. The time was right.



The United States lagged behind other nations giving women the right to vote. Topeka suffragist Martha Farnsworth's drawing depicts Uncle Sam and an American woman wistfully watching Chinese, Finnish, Norwegian, Australian, and New Zealand women lining up to vote.



Lucy Johnston embodied the Progressive Era woman. She recognized the value of working with the national suffrage leaders. As one of her first acts as president, the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association rejoined the national organization.

The multistep process of adding a women's suffrage amendment to the Kansas Constitution required a coordinated plan. Lucy Johnston learned from the mistakes of the 1894 campaign. This time suffragists would avoid party politics and limit the involvement of national suffrage leaders.



Forty-nine blocks of ribbons make up this "crazy quilt" owned by Lucy and William Johnston. The 90 ribbons, dating between 1882 and 1930, show the couple's intense level of political involvement.

Lucy Browne Johnston

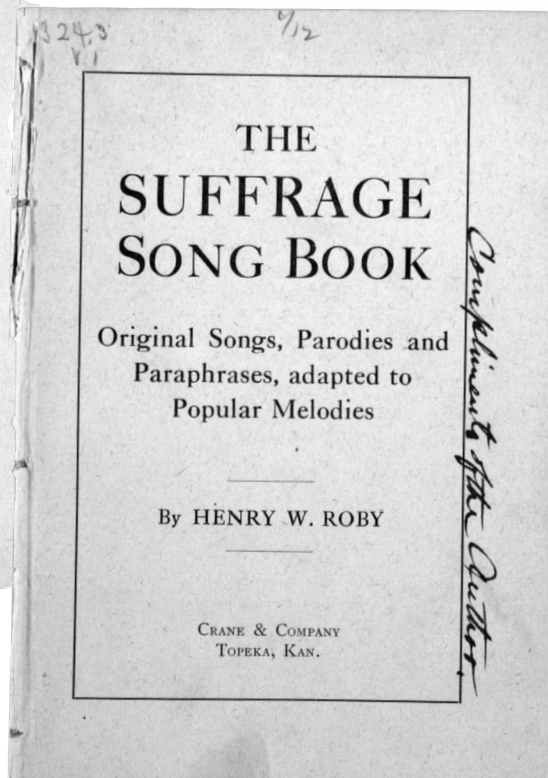
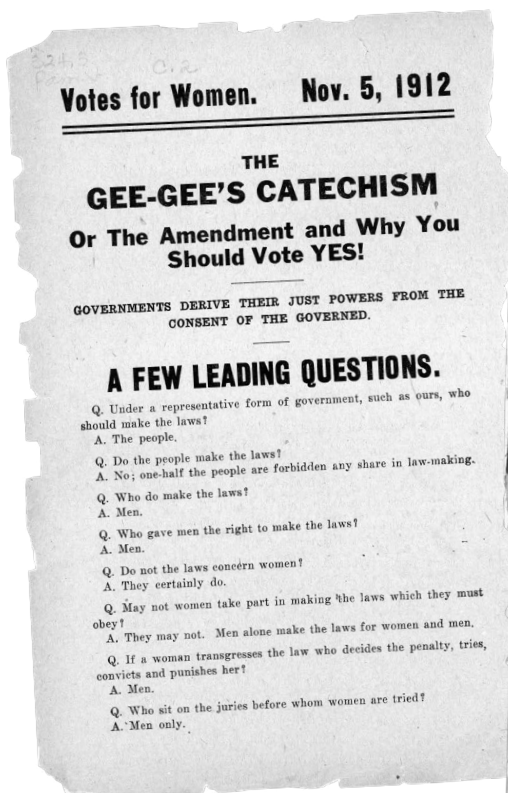


The path to victory first needed a suffrage amendment to pass the state legislature. To accomplish this a Kansas Equal Suffrage Association representative met with every single legislator. Influential progressives and suffrage supporters such as Governor Walter Stubbs and Chief Justice William Johnston also encouraged favorable votes among their peers.

On January 13, 1911, the lobbying paid off when a majority of both houses voted in favor of the amendment. The second step, a signature from Governor Stubbs, was easily accomplished on February 9, 1911. It was time for the third and final step: the people of Kansas would vote.

Traveling from Washington to New York and many places in between, this banner was used in 95 parades in 1912.

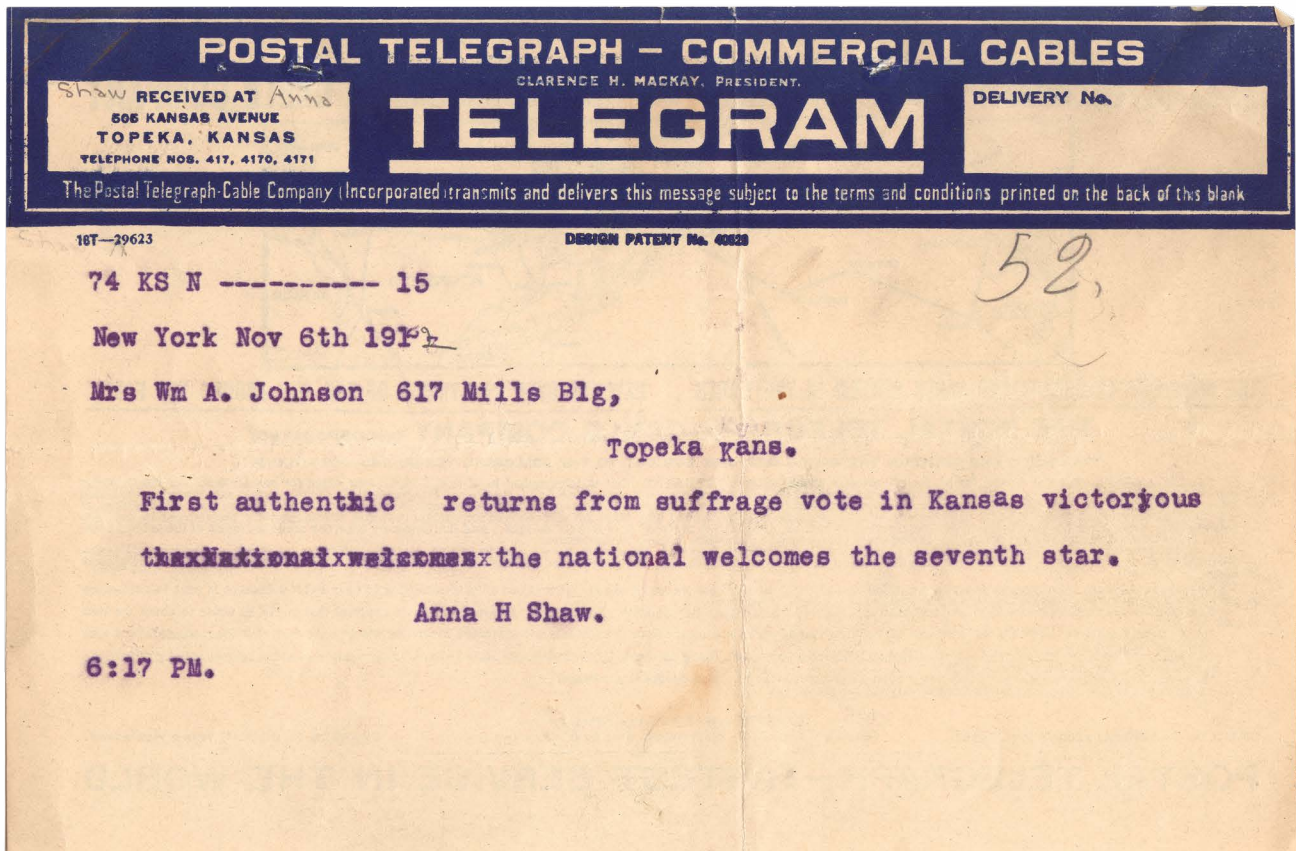
To improve their chances for success at the ballot box, suffragists produced an impressive variety of materials.



Far left, The Good Government ("Gee-Gee") Club of Topeka adapted this leaflet from a club in Rochester, New York. "Leading questions" guide the reader to see the inequity of the current system from a woman's perspective; left, published in 1909 by medical doctor Henry W. Roby, *The Suffrage Song Book* contains 28 songs covering major issues in the women's suffrage movement.

On November 5, 1912, Kansans went to the polls. After waiting through a stormy night, suffragists woke to a sunny morning and the news of victory. The constitutional amendment had passed 175,426 to 159,197. After decades of work by countless women, Kansas suffragists had won! Kansas became the eighth state in the nation to grant women full suffrage. Victory celebrations extended well beyond the state. Activists across the country saw Kansas as another step toward a national women's suffrage amendment.

On November 5, 1912, Kansas women gained full suffrage.



In this telegram national leader Anna Howard Shaw relays the win to state President Lucy Johnston, referring to Kansas as the "seventh star." Three other states passed amendments the same day and Kansas is usually credited as the eighth state. Shaw is referencing the tradition of suffrage leaders sewing stars on banners after a state voted favorably for women's suffrage.



Marion Kirk King, from the same hometown of Garnett as suffragist Laura Gregg, proudly wore this “hobble” dress on election day November 3, 1914. As the name implies, the narrow cut of hobble skirts made walking tricky. King managed to walk down the sloped street to vote, but her dress forced her to call a taxi to get back up the hill home. King’s trouble did not dissuade her from future elections. According to her granddaughter Kathleen King, “Voting was not a duty for her, and not something she ever postponed or evaded. Voting was a right, a privilege of her citizenship and something she prized.”

Marion Kirk King’s hobble dress.



Credit: City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 420

Hobble skirts were a short-lived fashion trend that peaked between 1908 and 1914.

# KANSAS AND PASSAGE OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT (1913-1920)

After winning in 1912 Kansas suffragists turned their attention to campaigns in other states and at the federal level, often working at the direction of National Association President Carrie Chapman Catt. In June 1916 there were 50 Kansas women who marched in the suffrage parade in Chicago during the Republican National Convention. Kansans raised money for the campaigns in Iowa and Oklahoma. They also sponsored two Kansas women who campaigned across the South, lobbying local legislators to vote for suffrage.

Kate Richards O'Hare spoke in front of the St. Louis courthouse on National Woman's Suffrage Day, May 2, 1914. A native Kansan, O'Hare spoke not only for women's suffrage, but also against the coming world war.



Credit Missouri Historical Society



The National American Woman Suffrage Association hired many Kansas women to work as organizers across the country, including Laura Gregg of Garnett.





Credit: Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-110995

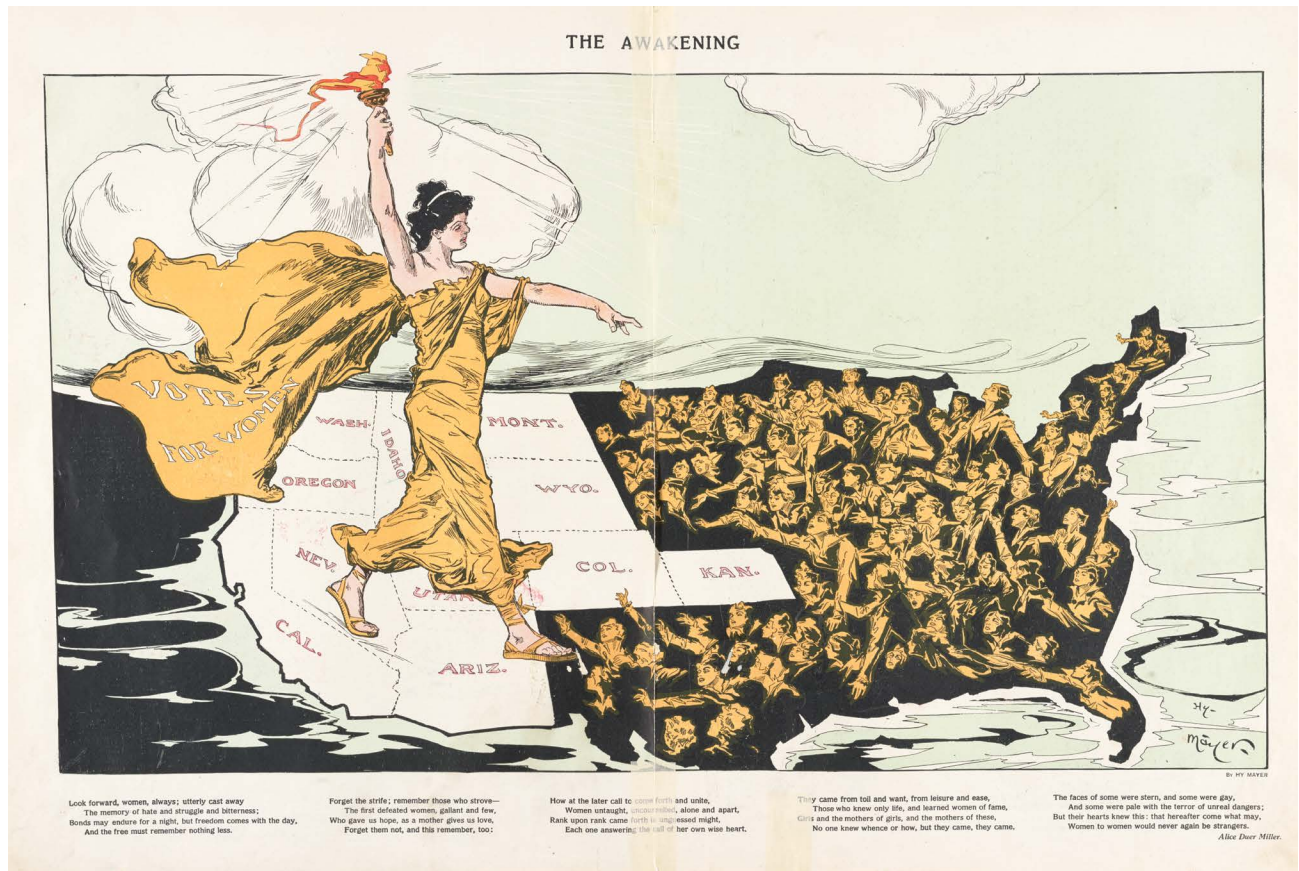
Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association

By 1912 the nation was clearly divided on granting women the right to vote. Suffragists needed to find a way to convince Eastern and Southern states to support women's suffrage. Leading suffragists disagreed about which tactics would bring victory. Alice Paul, leader of the National Woman's Party, borrowed militant tactics from the British. She called for women to protest, make a scene, and get arrested. Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, worked with state legislators and state organizations to bring about a federal amendment. Many called it "The Winning Plan."



Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ds-12369

Alice Paul circa 1920



Credit: Library of Congress, LC-DIG-ds-1236

In this 1915 illustration, suffrage follows Lady Liberty eastward in "The Awakening."





Under Alice Paul's direction, women picketed government buildings and public events, which resulted in their arrest. While in prison, suffragists engaged in well-publicized and personally dangerous hunger strikes.

Nina Allender was a cartoonist for the National Woman's Party. Originally from Auburn, Kansas, she designed this Jailed for Freedom Pin, a small silver prison door with a heart-shaped lock, for Alice Paul in 1917. Effie Boutwell Main Roussell, from Topeka, is the only Kansan to have received this pin.

By 1918 the publicity drawn by Paul's protestors and the shifting politics created by Catt's campaigning had swung momentum in favor of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Driven by pressure from the suffragists, President Woodrow Wilson finally came out in support of the amendment.



Jailed for Freedom pin



Credit: Records of the National Woman's Party, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division

Nina Allender



Effie Boutwell Main Roussell



In 1919 the U.S. House proposed the Susan Anthony Amendment granting women full suffrage. It cleared the U.S. Senate by two votes on June 4, 1919. One hurdle remained—voting by the states. Three states had voted for the amendment within a week. Kansas became the fourth on June 16, 1919, along with two other states. On August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment became law. **The suffragists had won!**



PAGE SIX

# FIRST GOAL IS REACHED

KANSAS WOMEN SET SELVES  
A NEW TASK

SUFFRAGE NOW A FACT

Association Will Change Name to  
Kansas League of Women  
Voters—Banquet  
Tonight.

Wichita Beacon, June 10, 1919

In 1919, the National American Woman Suffrage Association already had a League of Women Voters committee. As state chair Marie L. Allen, no relation to Governor Henry J. Allen, sent this formal letter thanking him for his suffrage amendment support.

On November 2, 1920, eight million women voted in national elections for the first time. While a significant step for many, not all women immediately benefitted. Jim Crow laws kept African American women from freely voting. The U.S. government did not recognize all Native Americans as citizens until 1924, and some states continued to block their voting rights well after that date. Asian Americans were granted citizenship and voting rights in 1952.

Jane Brooks from Wichita chaired the national committee to decide on the future of the suffrage movement. The outcome was the League of Women Voters under the leadership of Carrie Chapman Catt. Founded in 1920, its mission was to help women carry out their new responsibilities. The league began and continues as a nonpartisan organization working for advocacy, education, and voter registration.

## National American Woman Suffrage Association

*President*  
Mrs. CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT  
171 Madison Ave., New York

*Honorary President*  
Dr. ANNA HOWARD SHAW

*COMMITTEES*  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP  
Mrs. FREDERICK C. BAGLEY, *Chairman*  
8 Louburg Square, Boston, Mass.

PROTECTION OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRY  
Mrs. RAYMOND ROBINS, *Chairman*  
1437 W. Ohio Street, Chicago, Ill.

CHILD WELFARE  
(*Chairman announced later*)

IMPROVEMENT IN ELECTION  
LAWS AND METHODS  
(*Chairman announced later*)

SOCIAL HYGIENE  
Dr. VALERIA H. PARKER, *Chairman*  
42 High Street, Hartford, Conn.

UNIFICATION OF LAWS CONCERNING  
CIVIC STATUS OF WOMEN  
Mrs. CATHERINE WAUGH McCULLOUGH, *Chairman*  
112 W. Adams Street, Chicago, Ill.

FOOD SUPPLY AND DEMAND  
(*Chairman announced later*)

RESEARCH  
Mrs. MARY SUMNER BOYD, *Chairman*  
171 Madison Avenue, New York

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

*Chairman*  
Mrs. CHARLES H. BROOKS  
1007 N. Lawrence Avenue, Wichita, Kansas  
*Secretary*  
Miss KATHERINE PIERCE  
112 N. Broadway, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Wichita, Kansas.

June 15, 1919.

To the Honorable the Governor,  
Henry J. Allen,  
Topeka, Kansas.

Dear Governor Allen:

On behalf of the women  
of the Kansas League of Women Voters, allow  
me to express to you our sincere appreciation  
of the fact that you have called a Special  
Session of the Legislature for the ratification  
of the National Suffrage Amendment.

It is most desirable that  
the women of the entire Nation be enfranchised  
as soon as possible and the speedy action of  
Kansas will hasten the favorable action of the  
other states.

I am, sincerely yours,

*Marie L. Allen*

( Mrs. Henry Ware Allen, )

State Chairman.

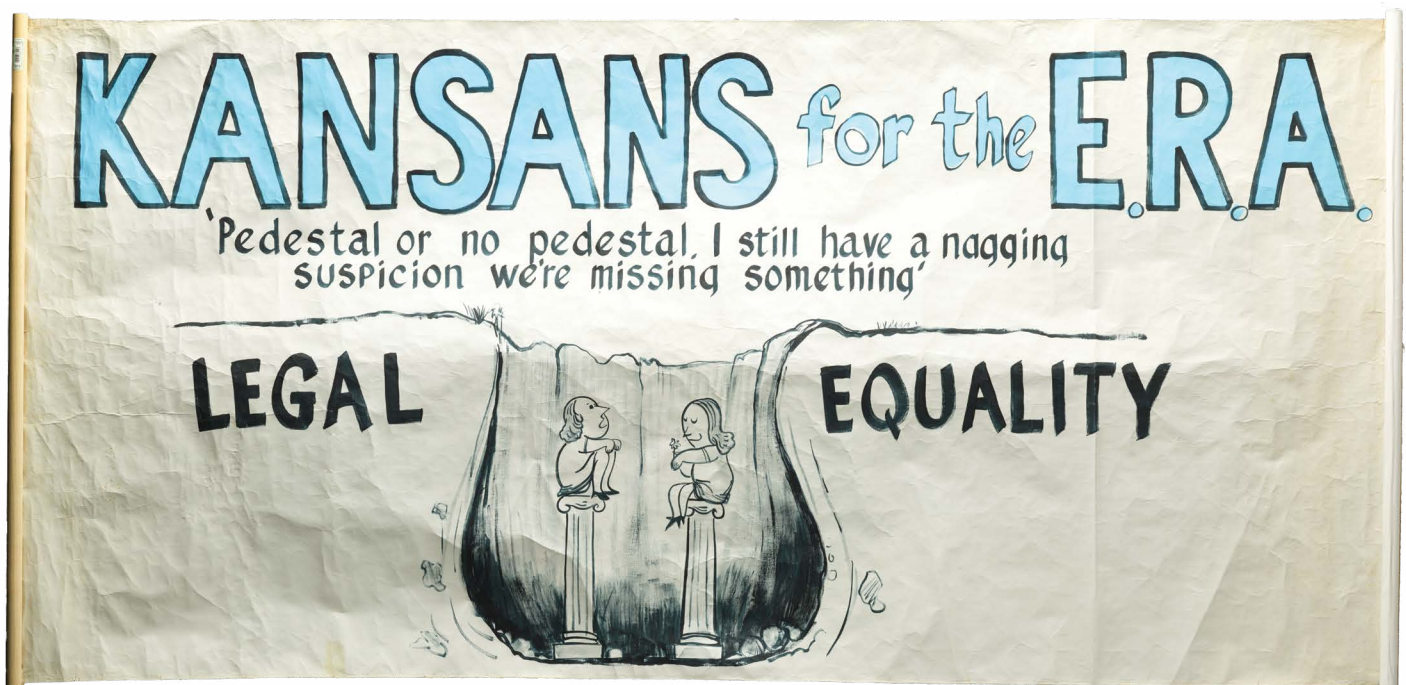
## CONTINUING UPWARD FOR EQUALITY

Efforts for women's equality did not end with the right to vote and Kansans again led the way.

In 1923 U.S. Senator Charles Curtis and U.S. Representative Daniel R. Anthony, Jr., both long-time lawmakers from Kansas, introduced the first proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). It failed to pass. Dwight D. Eisenhower became the first U.S. president to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1950s, but to no avail. Even so, the U.S. Congress reintroduced the proposal each year until it finally passed in 1972, promising that, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Kansas and 21 other states voted for the amendment in the first year. Ultimately the Equal Rights Amendment failed to reach the required 38 state majority for ratification within the allotted time.

In 1923 legislators from Kansas introduced the first proposed Equal Rights Amendment.



Kansans for Equal Rights created this banner, inspired by an editorial cartoon by Etta Hume of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Robert "Bob" Ault of Topeka did the artwork. Activists carried it in marches supporting the ERA in Washington in 1978 and the Women's March in Topeka in 2017.



Women gaining the right to vote opened the door to public office. While Kansas women have made great strides in the last 100 years, there continues to be many “firsts” in recent times.

Voting remains as important today as it was in 1920. This exhibit is dedicated to the memory of all the women who fought for the right to vote. Marion Kirk King appreciated that right, as retold by her granddaughter, “Voting was not a duty for her, and not something she ever postponed or evaded. Voting was a right, a privilege of her citizenship and something she prized.”



**Minnie Tamar Johnson Grinstead**  
First female elected to the Kansas state legislature (1918)



**Patricia Solander**  
First woman elected to the Kansas Senate (1928)



**Kathryn Ellen O'Loughlin McCarthy**  
First Kansas woman elected to U.S. Congress (1932)



**Nancy Landon Kassebaum**  
First woman elected to represent Kansas in the U.S. Senate (1978)



**Joan Finney**  
First woman elected governor of Kansas (1990)



**Ruby Gilbert**  
Appointed for the 1992 session, one of the first two African American women elected to the Kansas House. (1992)



**Barbara W. Ballard**  
One of the first two African American women elected to the Kansas House. (1992)



**Delia Garcia**  
First Hispanic woman elected to the Kansas House (2004)



**Oletha Faust-Goudeau**  
First African American woman elected to the Kansas Senate (2008)



**Ponka-We Victors**  
First Native American woman elected to the Kansas House (2010)



**Susan Wagle**  
First woman elected Kansas Senate president (2012)



**Sharice Davids**  
From Kansas, one of the first two Native American women in U.S. Congress (2018)

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Voting machine used in Shawnee County from 1964 to 1985,  
one of 300 used by the county.

For more information about your voting rights, contact  
League of Women Voters of Kansas  
225 SW 12th Street Topeka KS 66612  
[lwwk.org](http://lwwk.org)

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