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A HISTORY OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN  
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A HISTORY OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE

IN NEBRASKA,

1856-1920

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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INTRODUCTION

United States Senator Gale McGee of Wyoming stated in his forward to the first issue of The American West, published in 1964, that "There is no area of the country with a history more interesting and more distorted in the public mind that the American West." He might have added that no area exhibits more lacunae in its history than that same section. The paper which follows is intended as a preliminary attempt to fill one such gap in the social history of one state, Nebraska, "where the west begins."

The particular topic explored, that of the woman suffrage movement in the Cornhusker State, was suggested to the author by the character of existing printed works devoted to Nebraska history. The student of such material will find much that is engaging and informative relative to pioneer life, settlement of ethnic groups, general economic development, agricultural problems, the ins and outs of political warfare and much more. He will not find in print any work of a serious nature having as its goal the portrayal of any element of Nebraska history in which the women of the state played dominant or even markedly significant roles. The casual reader, indeed, would be justified in assuming that the women of Nebraska were a remarkably passive lot, content to act as a decorative background before which their men could posture, unaffected by the hopes, dreams or ambitions of their mothers, wives, and daughters. Finding this rather hard to believe, the author was led
to investigate the activities of these women and found himself introduced, perforce, to evidence indicating that the ladies of Nebraska were far from passive; that a vast variety of concerns animated them, pre-eminent among which was a truly serious interest in and desire for the right of suffrage.

Exploration of existing materials relevant to the matter of woman suffrage in Nebraska revealed two things: first, that the issue was of more significance than had been expected and, second, that no work had been done aimed at producing any sort of coherent overall description of the suffrage movement in the state. Relative to the first point, it was found that the right of suffrage took on a potent symbolic importance in the minds of its female advocates. It seemed to them a vitally significant first step toward the achievement of full equality with men as human beings and was thus invested with a psychological value beyond its intrinsic worth. This discovery, coupled with the realization that no general work designed to offer a clear portrayal of the struggle for the enfranchisement of women in the state was extant, motivated the author to attempt to remedy the situation.

The form taken by this paper was virtually dictated by the virgin character of its subject. The need patently existed for a "first step" which would provide a basic skeleton of data, narrative in form and capable not only of later expansions and emendations, but suggesting of topics for further research in the field. With this need in mind, the paper was so shaped as to concentrate upon the sequence of key events which served as benchmarks in the sixty-four year course of the Nebraska suffrage struggle.

As parts of the story, and vital parts, special and detailed atten-
tion is paid both to the post Civil War period of organization, thought and effort which provided the foundation for later work, and to the rationale and activities of those persons who, from time to time, joined the ranks of the anti-suffrage forces.

It is hoped that readers of this essay, which admittedly purports to be nothing more than a preliminary investigation of the field, will be led to a realization of the human significance of the matters discussed. More, it is hoped that they will be led to feel, with the author, the need for and desirability of further explorations at the state level, both in the area of suffrage *per se* and in the wider field of women's rights. The author plans such adventures for himself and will welcome any and all companions on the trail.
CHAPTER I
THE GENESIS OF THE WOMAN SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN NEBRASKA

The Western Milieu

It is general knowledge that the honor of being the first territory
and the first state to grant the right of full and equal suffrage to its
women goes to Wyoming. In 1869, led--indeed pressured--by the tough,
tall and able Mrs. Esther Morris, the Territorial Senate passed the
following bill by a vote of 6-2 (with one abstention):

That every woman of the age of twenty-one years,
residing in the territory, may, at every election
to be helden (sic.) under the laws thereof, cast
her vote; and her rights to the elective franchise,
and to hold office, shall be the same, under the
elective laws of the territory, as those of the
electors.  

The lower house followed suit by a vote of 6-4 (with one abstention),
and it would seem that the women of Wyoming gave their men little
reason to regret this action, for, when the question of statehood for
Wyoming, achieved in 1890, was discussed in Congress, the suggestion
that the equal suffrage clause of the proposed state constitution might
have to be abandoned provoked the Wyoming legislature to reply that:

We will remain out of the Union a hundred years
rather than come in without woman suffrage.

Wyoming, then, was the first Territory and State to take the

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1 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage,
The History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. III (Rochester, New York:
Charles Mann, 1887), p. 727.

2 Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 999-1000.
plunge and provide full equality in suffrage for its women, but other states soon followed. Colorado joined the list in 1893, followed in turn by Idaho and Utah in 1896. A period of quiet then ensued, but Washington added her name to the list in 1910, California in 1911, Arizona, Kansas and Oregon in 1912, Alaska Territory in 1913, and both Nevada and Montana in 1914. Indeed, by the year in which the war to end war broke out, practically all of the far western states had removed the sex qualification for voting.

At this point a preliminary question arises. Why do we find the Western states and territories leading the way relative to full woman suffrage? This is the case, for until 1913, when the Illinois legislature conferred upon the qualified woman of the state the right to vote for presidential electors, little concrete progress had been made east of the Mississippi River, except in such limited areas as school and bond suffrage.

As part of the answer, the special position in western society occupied by woman has been mentioned. It has been suggested that the prestige and power deference enjoyed by women in the West—the high esteem in which they were held—was a function of their scarcity. As Flexner has pointed out, in 1865 California had three male inhabitants for each woman, while the ratio in Washington Territory stood at 4 to 1. Nevada was even worse off with a ratio of 8 to 1 while Colorado suffered a 20 to 1 imbalance. Such a set of circumstances, as she rightly insists, had very real sociological and political effects.²

An interesting comment in the state of affairs alluded to above is found in the letters from America sent home to his native Poland by the author of *Quo Vadis*, Henry Sienkiewicz, during his visit here in the years 1876-78. Sienkiewicz asserts that:

The respect with which a woman is treated here is easily explained by the fact that the demand for the fair sex is far greater than the supply, to speak in economic terms. There are comparatively few women in America, and in newly settled regions the ratio is only one woman to twenty or thirty men. This explains why rough, unmannerly fellows treat women just as though they were made of glass.

American politeness toward women, however, must not be confused with French or European etiquette. The American will remove his coat in the presence of ladies or do other things, according to his habit, which a European woman would regard as impoliteness or indifference. But whereas French politeness generally has deception as its goal, and is eager to take advantage of a good opportunity, here a woman is entirely safe: a hundred fists and revolvers will threaten the impertinent fellow who dares to offend her in any manner whatsoever.

Sienkiewicz closes this comment by noting wryly that of course, the women are aware of this and it is not surprising that they consider themselves select beings entitled to adulation.4

Scarcity, then, suggests itself as one possible factor which placed the western woman in a relatively unique position vis-a-vis the western male. There can be little doubt that the very character of frontier existence, whether undergone on an isolated farm or ranch, or in a new-born town, provides a second factor, for, in either set of circumstances, heavy responsibilities were placed upon women. However

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possible it might be in the East to consider woman, generically speaking, as a tender blossom suitably relegated to a glass-case existence, the harsh realities of life in the trans-Mississippi West frequently placed the woman shoulder to shoulder with her man rather than a demure two paces behind him.

However traditional might be the ideas of a transplanted western man—and even these might well show marks of erosion caused by feminist progress in education and organized feminist activities made in the east by 1850—the need for close cooperative action between the sexes on farm and in town operated to reduce the distance between them and to promote a sense of de facto if not de jure equality.

The story of the ranch or farm woman, necessarily working, and sometimes fighting, in parallel harness with her husband, has already become a cliche, but, as Andrew Sinclair has pointed out, the woman of the western town lived in an atmosphere which was as conducive, in its own way, to de facto equality, as were the pressures of more isolated living. Such towns tended to abound with speculators, both in dollars and ideas. Such speculators depended for survival on the boom psychology necessary to attract immigrants. The result was that local ideas were kept in a state of flux which allowed new perspectives and values to flourish to a greater extent than was possible in more sedate and long-established urban areas.5

Sinclair also attests that such western towns provided the wealthier and better educated women with an incentive to take part in reform

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movements. Living as they did in an atmosphere of speculative flux and fervor, and denied the money making activities of their husbands, they sought something to occupy themselves, so, when a chance for action along the lines of reform activity arose, such women leapt at the opportunity to forget themselves in such work. As Sinclair puts it, "Reform activity was the theatre of the small town in the early days."

Apparently this "theatre" was well attended, for the "forced neighborliness of the new small town led to rapid spread of new ideas once a social leader had been converted to the faith."6

Beatrice Hale has commented on the appeal which the "faith" of the suffrage cause must have had to such women. Its attractiveness, she asserted, stems from the fact that:

It is not selfish, but altruistic; it is not performed alone, but in groups, and often in the open air; it is always varied and never dull; it is co-operative, social, and idealistic...The movement for equal suffrage brings to countless women their first glimpse into a larger and more socialized life, and is of inestimable value to them, quite apart from their attainment of its object.7

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the sociologist might well have a field day attempting to determine why the trans-Mississippi west of the late 19th and early 20th centuries proved more congenial to the suffrage cause than areas further east, but the comments made suggest at least a few of the possible factors which were involved in the situation. Our task is that of examining the specific course of events in Nebraska.

6Ibid., pp. xix-xx.
The First Shot, 1856

It is possible to date the overt beginning of the woman suffrage movement in Nebraska with a fair degree of certainty. The date was January 8, 1856 at 7:00 P.M. The location was the Hall of the House of Representatives, Nebraska Territorial Legislature, in Omaha. The personage involved as a Speaker was Mrs. Amelia Jenks Bloomer, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, described by Mrs. Belle G. Bigelow in 1882 as "preeminently the pioneer worker in Nebraska, she having been the first one who spoke out upon that question in 1856."^8

Since it is possible to date the Woman Suffrage movement in Nebraska from this occasion, a few words concerning it may not be amiss. The invitation to speak before the Nebraska House of Representatives was the fruit of a previous address delivered by Mrs. Bloomer in November, 1855, at the Methodist Church in Council Bluffs. This address, the theme of which was "Woman Suffrage", was received with approval, especially by one gentleman in the audience—General William Larimer, Jr., recently of Pittsburgh, Pa., and now of Omaha. General Larimer, a member of the first Nebraska legislature, approached Mrs. Bloomer after her talk and urged her to repeat it before the Nebraska lawmakers. This verbal invitation was followed by a formal written invitation dated December 28, 1855. Twenty-five signatories, including General Larimer, besought her to "deliver an address on Woman's Rights, or any other subject you may select, in the Hall of the House of Representatives, on any evening that suits your convenience, during the sitting of the legislature."^9

Mrs. Bloomer, though new to the area, having first set foot in Iowa in mid-April of 1855, when she and her husband settled in Council Bluffs, decided to accept the invitation, which she did. Her note of acceptance, dated December 31, 1855 suggests the character of her concern. She states that, "Feeling as I do, the importance of the Woman's Rights movement, and its bearings upon the welfare of the whole human race—realizing most deeply the injustice done to women by the laws of our country in relation to the property rights of married women, etc., I shall take pleasure in complying with your request by presenting for the consideration of your citizens generally, and the members of the Legislature particularly, some thoughts on the question of woman's right of franchise. It will afford me especial gratification to bring this subject before you at this time, when your legislature is about adopting a code of laws for the government of the territory."10

The evening of January 8, 1856, chosen by Mrs. Bloomer for her address, found the Hall of the House of Representatives in Omaha literally jammed with auditors. As she describes the scene, "Indeed, it was a packed house, men standing up between those who were sitting on benches around the room, and leaning against the wall, and the platform was so packed up to the very desk that I hardly had elbow room." The address was listened to with observed interest and was greeted with vigorous applause. Indeed, a request was made on the spot that she give the lecture for publication. She declined to do so on the grounds that, "Omaha was hardly large enough and was without daily papers and, besides, I feel that I might wish to make further use of the lecture and publishing it would prevent its again being brought out."11

10 Ibid.
Despite Mrs. Bloomer's refusal to publish her lecture, its work had been done. Those who heard it were moved by it and the papers gave it flattering notices for the perusal of those who had not been able to be present. The correspondent of the Council Bluffs Chronotype, writing under the pseudonym "Oneida", was moved to praise the self-possession, dignity, lack of bashfulness, and eloquence of the speaker, who held the attention of her audience for a full hour and a half. "Oneida's" positive reaction was shared by others, as the writer reveals in stating that:

In mingling with the people next day we found that her argument had met with much favor. As far as property rights are concerned, all seemed to agree with the lady that the laws of the country are wrong, and that woman should receive the same protection as man. All we have time to say now, is, that Mrs. Bloomer's arguments on Woman's Rights are unanswerable.\(^2\)

However deeply the Bloomer speech struck into the public mind, there can be no doubt of its impact on the Territorial Legislature. The tangible result of this address was a bill, House File No. 79, "an act describing the qualifications of electors and electees", which would confer suffrage upon women equally with men.\(^3\) This bill was introduced by Representative Jerome Hoover, representing Nemaha and Richardson counties, on January 16, 1856. Debate on the bill was lively with General Larimer acting as champion of the measure.


\(^3\)Nebraska, Journal of the House of Representatives at the Second Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Territory of Nebraska (Omaha City, N.T.: Hadley D. Johnson, Public Printer, 1856), pp. 111, 163, 166, 177, 179.
Success was achieved on January 25, 1856 when the House passed the bill by a vote of 14 ayes and 11 nays. The bill then went to the Council for consideration.

The closeness of the vote suggests that opinion was anything but unanimous in the House relative to the suffrage measure. Two immediately subsequent developments show that this was indeed the case. First, on the very evening the bill passed the House, a party of gentlemen, including J. S. Morton, W. E. Moore, A. F. Salisbury and L. L. Bowen, approached General Larimer in order to make him a present of a woman's petticoat. This episode, understandably, stirred up a considerable amount of furor, leading the correspondent of the Council Bluffs Chronotype to report that:

The general, of course, was justly indignant at such treatment, as were also the other members. The proposal was characteristic of the prime mover on it, and we are astonished that the other gentlemen named should have been willing to associate themselves with him in offering this indignity to the oldest and most respected member of the body—a man who was elected to the station he has so ably filled by unanimous vote of the people of Douglas County. General Larimer had a perfect right to advocate or oppose the bill according to his own sense of duty, and any man, or set of men, who would attempt to cast insult or ridicule upon him for so doing, is worthy only of the contempt of decent people.14

The second indication that a clique holding anti-suffrage sentiments existed in the House is an event of January 26, the day following passage of House File No. 79. Representative Decker rose to move that the vote passing the Hoover bill be reconsidered. The vote on this motion was affirmative, the totals being 16 ayes and 5 nays. No sooner had this

14Council Bluffs Chronotype, January 30, 1856, p. 2. Bloomer, "First Female Suffragist Movement in Nebraska", p. 60.
vote been recorded than Representative McDonald offered a motion to postpone the bill indefinitely. This motion carried by a vote of 16 ayes to 3 nays. The fruit of this change of course by the House was a message from the House to the Council which was written and sent with the utmost dispatch. The message read:

Mr. President: I am instructed to inform your Honorable Body, that the House have rescinded the vote by which House File No. 79, an act describing the qualifications of electors and electees was passed, and have indefinitely postponed the further consideration of the same, and request the council to return said bill to the House.

I. L. Gibbs, Chief Clerk

Interestingly enough, the Council paid no attention to this message. The bill went through both first and second readings and was then referred to the committee on elections. This committee studied the bill and issued both a majority and a minority report on it. The majority report recommended passage of the bill; the minority report made no recommendation. These preliminaries being concluded, the bill was placed upon the agenda for the last day of the Council session.

Apparently, the decision to deal with the Howes bill on the last day of the session unwittingly sealed the doom of the measure, for other matters absorbed the attention of the members to such an extent that no time was left for its consideration. As Mrs. Bloomer put it:

The session came to an end before it (the bill) could be reached for a third reading—the last hours being consumed by the wrangling of the members over the fixing of county boundaries and the location of city sites. Men talked to kill time till the last hour expired and the session adjourned sine die. A number of important bills were not reached, the woman suffrage bill among them.

15 Journal of the House, p. 179.
Thus the first effort to secure equal suffrage for women in Nebraska failed. Mrs. Bloomer, however, was consoled by the assurance of Governor Richardson that shortage of time alone had caused the bill to fail.\textsuperscript{18}

Here indeed was the first shot in the battle for woman suffrage in Nebraska. What events might have followed in its train had not the Civil War intervened to absorb the interests and energies of Nebraskans, as well as all others, North and South, cannot be imagined. The war did come and "the cause" languished for the duration.

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 214.
CHAPTER II

THE POSTWAR DECADES, 1865-1882

Continued Interest

It should not be a matter for surprise that the Nebraska woman suffrage movement did not blossom again immediately after the war, for the post-war years were full and busy ones in the area. New settlers were moving into Nebraska in significant numbers. As proof of this, one need only cite the census figures for 1860 and 1870. The former enumeration listed 28,841 persons in the territory, while the latter testified to the presence of 122,993 citizens in Nebraska, which had become a state on March 1, 1867. Nonetheless, the spark of interest in woman suffrage had not died. This fact was revealed in part by the warm reception accorded suffrage speakers in 1867. On November 15 of that year, the city of Omaha was visited by three suffrage luminaries, Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Miss Susan B. Anthony, and George Francis Train. Each spoke on the woman question with good effect to an appreciative audience. Other evidence of concern for feminine rights in the new state is found in the legislation passed by the Nebraska Legislature in its early life. Indeed, Mrs. Clara B. Colby, of Beatrice, Nebraska, a leader in the Nebraska movement of whom more will be said, was of the

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opinion that Nebraska legislation with regard to women's rights passed in the 1860's and 1870's was much ahead of that passed in the older states in the same period. Another careful observer of the time, the journalist and statesman, Erasmus Correll of Hebron, Nebraska, was of the same general opinion. In his words:

The legislation of this state has been generally of a progressive nature. Many of the old common-law discriminations against women have been abolished. By a law passed in 1871 and amended in 1875, a married woman's property, personal, real and mixed, owned by her at the time of the marriage, or acquired after marriage by purchase or otherwise, or the property that comes to her by descent, devise or the gift of any person except her husband remains her sole property and may be disposed of by her to the same extent, and with like effect as a married man may with his. She can also sue and be sued the same as if unmarried, and may carry on trade or business and perform any labor or service on her own account, and the proceeds of her labor, business or services, are her sole and separate property, and may be used and invested by her in her own name. She can also devise or bequeath her property as fully as a married man can dispose of his by will.

E. M. Correll

It is possible to say, then that the intellectual soil of Nebraska was of such a nature as not to repel or cause to wither such seeds of concern for the status of women as were strewn upon it in this period. It is with this realization in mind that we may focus our attention on the activities of a gentleman who, more than any other single male Nebraskan, was responsible for creating a fresh wave of interest in the subject of woman suffrage in the state in the 1870's and 1880's. That gentleman was Erasmus Michael Correll (1846-1895) of Hebron.

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3Erasmus Correll, "Woman Suffrage in Nebraska," 4th File, Correll Manuscripts Nebraska State Historical Society Collection. (Unpaged pencil manuscript).
E. M. Correll was reasonably typical of the enterprising jack-of-all-trades so often found on our American frontiers. A pioneer settler and founding father of Thayer County and of the town of Hebron, Nebraska, Correll counted his residence there from 1869. By 1871, he had established himself as a surveyor, notary public, real estate agent and editor of the first newspaper in the vicinity, the Hebron Journal.4

From the first, this newspaper betrayed a pro-woman suffrage bias. In the initial edition we find Correll announcing that a correspondent labelled as "Ruth" would submit a series of articles on "Eminent Women of the Bible". Close by this piece of news is found the statement that "The New Post Office Building, erected by Miss Potter is now completed with the exception of a few minor details. Bring forth for execution the man who is opposed to female suffrage."5

These early pieces of evidence do not mislead us, for, on January 30, 1879, Correll proposed that a column in the Journal be devoted to the interests of women and that it be under their control.6 As Andreas remarks, "The women promptly responded and have ever since made good use of this department of the pioneer paper in equal rights."7

That women's concerns were not a mere passing fancy on Correll's part is shown by the fact that in 1881 he inaugurated a monthly paper, published at Lincoln, entitled Western Woman's Journal. This periodical was designed for monthly publication and was, as the sub-title indicated,

4Hebron Journal, Feb. 9, 1871, p. 4.
5Ibid.
"Devoted to woman and her Home, Industrial, Educational, and Legal Interests -- especially advocating Woman Suffrage." Correll proudly listed himself as "Editor and Proprietor (also Editor and Proprietor of the Nebron Journal)." Subscription rates were within reason, being $1.25 in advance for one year, or $1.00 per year "in clubs of ten or more." Sample copies were to be obtainable on payment of ten cents.  

This periodical, the first in the state to devote itself almost entirely to the suffrage question, was to be of vital importance in the task of organizing, strengthening and promoting "the cause" in the years 1881 and 1882. More will be said of it apropos the great campaign of 1882 for an equal suffrage amendment to the Constitution of the state of Nebraska.

Justice to Correll demands that we note not only his journalistic activity, but several honors that were his. In 1880 he won election to the Nebraska House of Representatives as a member for Thayer County. The next year witnessed both his election as president of the Nebraska Editorial Association, made up of Nebraska newspapermen, and his elevation to the position of president of the American Woman Suffrage Association. Correll's career was capped in 1892 by a successful campaign for a seat in the Nebraska Senate, which body honored him by choosing him as its president. It is unfortunate that his already substantial career was cut short by an untimely death on September 5, 1895 at the age of 49.

Correll and the Rebirth of the Movement

The task now arises of fitting the work of Correll into the current of interest in the suffrage question which was evident in the State in  

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the 1870's and 1880's. Clara Bewick Colby, a co-worker of Correll's from Beatrice, Nebraska, has recorded the general course of this activity in her report on the period found in the third volume of the massive *History of Woman Suffrage* by Stanton, Anthony, and Gage. Mrs. Colby recalls that an abortive effort was made toward establishing a State Woman Suffrage Association during the early months of 1871. This attempt was stimulated by Susan B. Anthony who, in the Bloomer tradition, was given the privilege of speaking to the Nebraska legislature on January 28, 1871. Unfortunately, the effort to organize failed, even though it was headed by the wife of the Governor of Nebraska, Mrs. Lydia Butler. Apparently, the task of state-wide organization in Nebraska, where distances were great, transportation poor, and both the time and the financial resources of women totally inadequate, was too large to be handled successfully.\(^{10}\)

This first effort at organization, though a failure in terms of its principal goal, did encourage the interested women of Nebraska to think in terms of corporate effort as early as 1871. It might be pointed out that this year was one in which any type of such action prosecuted with vigor might bear fruit, for a Constitutional Convention was scheduled for 1871. Pressure brought to bear might be expected to influence that body in a direction favorable to woman suffrage—and such pressure was brought to bear. A petition was drawn up and circulated during the winter months which, in the end, contained the names of approximately 1000 women.\(^{11}\) The petition prayed that the State Legislature pass a resolution urging the coming Constitutional Convention to omit the word


\(^{11}\) Ibid.
male from the suffrage article of the new document. The suffrage article
currently in force, and in which the aforementioned change was desired,
read as follows:

Article II

Every male person of the age twenty-one years or
upwards, belonging to either of the following classes
who shall have resided in the state, county, precinct,
and ward, for the time provided by law, shall be an
elector.

First - White citizens of the United States
Second - White persons of foreign birth who
have declared their intention to become
citizens conformable (sic.) to the
laws of the United States on the sub­
ject of naturalization.12

The result of the women's efforts was that the House of Represen­
tatives, in February, 1871, did prepare a memorial to the convention,
scheduled to meet that summer. The memorial, drawn up by the House
Judiciary Committee, read as follows:

Whereas, the Constitution of the State of Nebraska
prohibits the woman of said state from exercising the
right of elective franchise; and
Whereas, Taxation without representation is repugnant
to a republican form of government, and applies to women
as well as to all other citizens of this state: and
Whereas, All laws which make any distinction between
the political rights and privileges of males and females
are unbecoming to the people of this State in the year 1871
of the world's progress, and tend only to deprive the latter
of the means necessary for their own protection in the
various pursuits and callings of life. Therefore be it

Resolved, By the House of Representatives of the State of
Nebraska, that the Constitutional Convention be begun and

12 Nebraska, Nebraska Constitutions of 1866, 1871, and 1875
O. A. Abbott, "Recollection of a Pioneer Lawyer", Nebraska History
Magazine, Vol. XI, No. 3, 1928, Opposite p. 149 conveniently reprints
the Suffrage Article in the Constitution of Nebraska for 1866, 1881, 1875,
and 1920.
The Constitutional Convention of 1871, thus memorized, did consider the question of a suffrage amendment, and, from all accounts, the discussion must have been a lively one. During the debate on the desirability of such a step, one delegate, a Mr. Stephenson, did a magnificent job of stating the conservative anti-suffrage sentiment in these salty terms:

"Mr. President, I really think that if the ballot were placed in the hands of woman, the old American eagle that stands with one foot upon the Alleghenies and the other upon the Rockies, whetting his beak upon the ice-capped mountains of Alaska, and covering half of the Southern gulf with his tail, will cease to scream and sink into the pits of blackness amidst the shrieks of lost spirits that will forever echo and reecho through the cavernous depths unknown." 

Apparently the Convention did not share Mr. Stephenson's fears concerning the fate of the American eagle, for it chose to submit the

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14 Ibid., pp. 679-680.
following proposition to the voters:

The legislature may extend by law the right of suffrage to persons not herein enumerated, but no such law shall be in force until the same shall have been submitted to a vote of the people at a general election, and approved by a majority of all votes cast on that question at such election.\textsuperscript{15}

The voters of Nebraska, faced with the new constitution, chose not to accept it. The suffrage proposition, sad to say, shared in the general rejection, going down to defeat by a vote of 3,502 for and 12,688 against.\textsuperscript{16}

While success obstinately refused to crown suffrage efforts, such defeats did not dampen the interest of Nebraska women. In the years between 1871 and 1879 two short-lived suffrage associations were formed; one at Fairbury by Mrs. H. Tyler Wilcox, and another at Alexandria, by Mesdames Davis and Cornell, both towns being in southeastern Nebraska.\textsuperscript{17}

The associations failed, it would seem, because of problems of communication. Members, for the most part, were rural ladies who found it difficult to attend meetings in good weather and virtually impossible once winter had set in.

Despite the obvious problems involved in attempting to bring a degree of organization to suffrage supporters, yet another attempt was made, this time in 1879, with Mr. Correll serving as the catalytic agent. We have noted the "suffrage slant" of the Hebron \textit{Journal} from its inception and the offer, in 1879, was gladly accepted, to provide a column for women by women. It should not be a matter for surprise, then, that Correll should seek to bring suffrage luminaries to Thayer County as guest

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. III, p. 681.
speakers. As early as October of 1877 he invited Susan B. Anthony to speak at Hebron. She accepted the offer and spoke on the theme "Bread vs. the Ballot" on October 30.\textsuperscript{18} Response was such that when Elizabeth Cady Stanton became available for a lecture, in April of 1879, Correll was quick to invite her to speak under the auspices of the Hebron Library Association. Not only did she speak to a patently enthusiastic audience, but she offered to meet privately with interested Hebron and Thayer County ladies on April 15. This private meeting, at which Mrs. Stanton presided, featured an appeal by that lady to the effect that the women present form a County Suffrage Association. This they did, and the first permanent Women Suffrage Association in Nebraska, that of Thayer, was formed on that day, counting a total of fifteen members.\textsuperscript{19}

Organization Progresses

The founding of the Thayer County Woman Suffrage Association, sparked by Correll, marks the beginning of a new phase of interest and activity relative to woman suffrage in Nebraska. The example of the successful Thayer County Association, strengthened by the impact of the initial issues of the\textit{Western Woman's Journal}, led women in other parts of the state to emulate the pioneer group.

By December of 1881 some thirty-nine associations had been created in Nebraska, including a State Woman Suffrage Association, of which more will be said. The associations below the state level were:

\begin{center}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Associations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thayer County -- at Hebron</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gage County -- at Beatrice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin County -- at Bloomington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnson County -- at Tecumseh</td>
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\end{center}

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
Fillmore County — at Fairmont
Buffalo County — at Kearney
Adams County — at Hastings
Seward County — at Seward
Lancaster County — at Lincoln

II Local Associations
Lincoln Fairbury Norfolk
Osceola Juniata Columbus
Crete Genoa Table Rock
Geneva Madison Pawnee City
Fairmont Albion Sterling
Riverton Oakdale Belvidere
Red Cloud Neligh Madison Precinct (Fillmore Co.)
Kearney Seward West Blue Precinct (Fillmore Co.)
Ashland Dorchester East Lincoln Precinct (Lancaster Co.)
Humboldt Exeter

Such efforts on the local and county levels might be expected to promote interest in and concern for a State Woman Suffrage Association, and such was the case. Particular mention in this regard should be made relative to the efforts of three women, Mrs. Lucy L. Correll, Mrs. Harriet S. Brooks, and Mrs. M. C. Bittenbender. Mrs. Correll had charge of the Woman's Section of the Hebron Journal, while the latter two ladies held similar positions with papers which had followed Correll's lead in offering such a facility, namely the Omaha Republican and the Osceola Record.

It may be said with justice that the forming of the State Association resulted from the initiative of Mrs. Brooks, who received letters from across the state suggesting such a course of action. Acting upon these requests, Mrs. Brooks, through her column, called a meeting of interested women, said meeting to be held at Lincoln, Nebraska on the 26th of January, 1881. In addition, Mrs. Brooks set the stage for the participation of Lincoln women in this enterprise by summoning them to an organizational meeting of several days duration, beginning on the

20Ibid., Dec. 1881, p. 135.
19th of January. This gathering, presided over by Mrs. Brooks and sitting in the Methodist Church, was a success and its fruit was the Lincoln Woman Suffrage Association, founded on January 22.21

On the 26th, a mass convention of Nebraska women was held at the Opera House in Lincoln, again led by Mrs. Brooks. The very next day, the 27th, the Nebraska State Woman Suffrage Association was established with the following ladies being chosen as officers:

President, Mrs. Harriet S. Brooks (Omaha)

Vice President at Large, Mrs. Clara Bewick Colby (Beatrice)

Vice Presidents of Judicial Districts,
First, Mrs. B. J. Thompson, (Hebron)
Second, Mrs. E. L. Warner (Roca)
Third, Mrs. P. Nicholls (Omaha)
Fourth, Mrs. J. S. Burns (Scribner)
Fifth, Mrs. C. C. Chapin (Riverton)
Sixth, Mrs. D. B. Slaughter (Fullerton)

Recording Secretary, Mrs. M. C. Bittenbender (Osceola)

Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. J. B. McDowell (Fairbury)

Treasurer, Mrs. L. Russell (Tecumseh)

Executive Committee,
Mrs. M. J. DeLong (Tecumseh)
Mrs. Dr. Dinsmore (Omaha)
Mrs. C. B. Parker (Lincoln)
Mrs. J. B. Finch (Lincoln)
Mrs. J. C. Roberts (David City)
Mrs. E. M. Correll (Hebron)
Mrs. J. H. Bowen (Hastings)22

Thus, briefly, we have observed the vital stage of initial permanent organization of Woman Suffrage Societies in Nebraska, beginning with the Thayer County group and culminating by late 1881 in the existence of a State organization supported by a growing number of county and local associations.

As a footnote to these labors of organization, it is interesting to observe the techniques of organization endorsed by Correll in the Western Woman's Journal. The issue for April of 1881 reprints with approval, an article from the Fayetteville, N. Y., National Citizen (sic.) and Ballot Box which urges the following steps—steps which are worthy of full description since they were followed by the women of Nebraska.

First, the article admonishes the hopeful organizer should contact her neighbors, hoping to increase interest in the suffrage question among those already aware of it and to rouse interest in those blind to its existence. Secondly, having "induced thought", the issuing of invitations to a gathering "on a convenient afternoon or evening" is advisable. If half a dozen women show up, this is sufficient. Stress is laid upon the desirability of inviting women only, no male supporters, to the first few meetings. This course of action is justified on the grounds that "Women are timid, brought up from childhood to have their opinions criticized, laughed at and treated with contempt, they will speak more freely if no man is present".

As soon as the group has gathered, officers are to be elected, and elected in large numbers so as to give all or nearly all of the ladies a sense of participation. It is suggested that "an energetic, go-ahead woman" be selected as President and that she be supported by up to three Vice Presidents, a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary, and a Treasurer. In addition, an Executive Committee should be established at once. An interesting suggestion states that it should be seen to that the chairman of the Executive Committee be a "worker". "It does not matter so much in regard to the rest."
It is urged that meetings be held frequently at first, even to the extent of holding one meeting per week, so as to accustom the members to the formal procedures and discipline of organized effort. Then, when the members do feel at ease in leading and taking part in meetings, male sympathizers may be invited to become members. "But," warns the anonymous author, "let women control the society, hold the offices and decide what is to be done. Women need this responsibility as an educator, and besides they are more interested in their own enfranchisement than man can be."

As beneficial activities for the association, it is mentioned that good results are obtained by having the members investigate compilations of laws, seeking in particular for references to such terms as woman, wife, widow, mother, parent, child, wills, inheritance, divorce, separation, etc., so as to observe concrete evidence of sexual discrimination in the law. Brief essays on these matters, read before the company, are urged as extremely useful and provocative. In addition, reading aloud from suffrage tracts and papers, to be followed by discussion, is advised, as is a close study of the Constitution of the United States.

A particularly useful feature of the article is a model Constitution for the use of Woman Suffrage Associations. The model, brief and to the point, reads as follows:

Constitution

of the (insert name) Woman Suffrage Society

Article I  This organization shall be called the (insert name) Woman Suffrage Society.

Article II  The object of this society shall be to secure protection for women citizens in the exercise of their right to vote.
Article III  All citizens of (insert name of place) subscribing to this Constitution, and paying its (weekly or monthly) dues, shall be considered members of this society with right to participate in its deliberations.

Article IV  The offices of this society shall be a President, Vice Presidents, a Corresponding and a Recording Secretary and an Executive Committee of not less than five.

Article V  The officers of this society shall be women, elected at each annual meeting.

Article VI  The annual meeting shall be held on the _____ of _______ in each year.23

The editor of the Western Woman's Journal, Mr. Correll, asserts in a headnote that he is in full accord with the procedures described and urges subscription to the National Citizen and Ballot Box as well as to the Journal.

The First State Convention

Finally, in order to suggest the flavor of this early period of enthusiasm, it will be useful to look in upon the first state convention of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, held at Omaha in the Masonic Hall on Wednesday and Thursday, July 6 and 7, 1881. Such an effort is made possible due to the existence, in manuscript form, of the Secretary's Minutes of that gathering, these minutes, by the way, constituting the only record extant of the actions and deliberations of the assembly.24

24 The following information is taken from the unpaged Manuscript Minutes of the Convention, Correll Manuscripts, 3rd File. Nebraska State Historical Society Collections.
As one might expect, the delegates to the convention were enthusiastic auditors of a series of formal speeches. Mrs. Brooks presented a presidential address, Mrs. Amelia Bloomer offered an extensive memoir of her ground-breaking activities, while Mrs. Colby expounded upon the constitutional and legal argument for woman suffrage. It is to be regretted that the secretary did not see fit to record the highlights of these offerings.

Much interest was aroused by the comments of Mr. Edward Rosewater, editor of a leading paper opposed to woman suffrage, the Omaha Bee. Mr. Rosewater was asked to speak in explanation and justification of his sentiments on the issue and did so, being answered, point for point, by Mrs. Colby of Beatrice. Again, no details of what was said were set down in the minutes.

Musical renditions and recitations of inspiring poetry were scattered throughout the formal agenda and were well received, but the greatest interest of the delegates centered upon the proposal, discussion and unanimous passage of a set of resolutions offered for consideration by the Executive Committee of the State Association. These resolutions, revelatory of the deepest beliefs and feelings of the women attending this first convention, speak so clearly that they must be appended here:

Resolved, That an aristocracy of sex is inconsistent with republican principles.

Resolved, That the fundamental principles of our American republic are:

First - Government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed:

Second - That 'Taxation and representation are inseparable': as woman is
governed and as woman is taxed, woman is clearly entitled to a voice in the government and representation in the halls of the legislature; and that the constitution in prohibiting woman suffrage, not only violates natural rights, but is equally antagonistic to itself.

Resolved, That the act of men in continuing the disfranchisement of one-half of the citizens of this commonwealth, is an unwarranted use of power no longer to be patiently tolerated.

Resolved, That as long as woman is unjustly withheld from exercising her right of suffrage, she should not be held answerable to the laws nor subject to taxation.

Resolved, That the abridging of woman's right to hold office and have trial by a jury of her peers, is a tyrannical exercise of power.

Resolved, That the most unjust distinction is made in the statutes of Nebraska in favor of man; Therefore, we urgently request the legislature, at its next session, to reconstruct the laws, doing away with all discrimination between the sexes.

Resolved, That it is clearly the duty of the women of Nebraska to become intelligently acquainted with the laws by which they are governed; that the apathy of woman in regard to the wrongs of her sex, instead of being a plea for remaining in her present condition, is the strongest argument against it.

Resolved, That the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association sends heartfelt greeting to the woman suffragists of Indiana and Oregon, and wishes their success in the grand cause of equal rights to be gained, as in Nebraska, by the adoption of the suffrage amendment to the constitutions of their respective states.

Resolved, That we owe a debt of gratitude to the labors of Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Amelia Bloomer, Lucy Stone, Matilda Josslyn Gage, and a host of other noble women who, amid the jeers, ridiculous misrepresentations and discouragement of forty years, have so ably and persistently advocated woman's enfranchisement.

Resolved, That to the noble workers in the cause of equal rights everywhere we extend our warmest sympathies, and express our hope in near victory.
Resolved, That the thanks of the women of Nebraska be extended to Hon. E. M. Correll for the publication of the Western Woman's Journal, and his able advocacy of the cause. Furthermore, acknowledging the press as the great public educator, and fully recognizing the power that the journal is destined to exert in the crisis now pending in Nebraska, we pledge ourselves to its support, and urge all friends of the cause to do all in their power to increase its circulation.

Resolved, That we express our appreciation and thanks to the papers of the State which have given us words of cheer, endorsed our views, and adopted our cause.

Resolved, That we pledge ourselves not to relinquish our untiring efforts to wipe out forever the stigma of aristocracy of sex.

Needless to say, many minor items of business were handled. These need not detain us. However, one such item, admittedly insignificant, was of such a poignant character as to merit mention. Shortly before the convention adjourned, the Executive Committee proposed the following separate resolution:

Resolved, That we cannot close this first convention, assembled in this State as an organized body, to consider woman in her larger liberty and her rights as a citizen, and to reaffirm before the people of the State that a 'government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed', without expressing our pleasure at the appointment of a woman to the office of notary public by the President of the United States, it being the first judicial appointment of a woman under any of our Presidents since the foundation of the Republic, and we hopefully regard this as an omen of her advancement to her proper place in the body politic.

This resolution was adopted without dissent.

All in all, then, by the early 1880's the Woman Suffrage Movement in Nebraska had found fresh life and was sufficiently organized, or in the process of organization, to take firm and widely-supported positions on the suffrage question and to initiate actions aimed at converting proposals and resolutions into legal realities. With these developments
behind us, the greatest effort of nineteenth century Nebraska suffrage
enthusiasts—the attempt to gain a woman suffrage amendment to the
Nebraska Constitution in 1882—may properly receive our attention.
CHAPTER III

HOUSE ROLL NO. 162 AND ITS CONSEQUENCES, 1881-1882

Passage of the Joint Resolution

It would seem that by 1881 Erasmus M. Correll had already done enough for the suffrage cause to make his name notable in the history of Nebraska, but as a member of the Nebraska House of Representatives, he was to make it even more memorable. As an interested legislator, he was in a position to respond in suitable fashion when petitions from various Woman Suffrage Associations in the state reached his desk, in January of 1881, asking that the Nebraska Constitution of 1875 be amended by striking the word "male" from Article VII, Section I, the Suffrage Article, which read as follows:

\textbf{Suffrage}

\textbf{Article VII}

Section I Every male person of the age of twenty-one years or upwards belonging to either of the following classes, who shall have resided in the state six months, and in the county, precinct or ward for the terms provided by law shall be an elector:

First, Citizens of the United States.
Second, Persons of foreign birth who shall have declared their intention to become citizens conformably to the laws of the United States, on the subject of naturalization, at least thirty days prior to an election.\footnote{Nebraska, Nebraska Constitution of 1866, 1871 and 1875. (Lincoln: American Printing Co., 1920), p. 118}
Correll's response to the prayer of these petitions was swift. On January 13, 1881, he introduced a proposed measure entitled "House Roll No. 59, a bill for an act to provide for the submission to the electors of this state an amendment to Article VII, Section I of the Constitution of Nebraska". The amendment suggested in the bill was indeed the erasure of the word "male" from the offending section.

The life of this bill was short. Although it received first and second readings and was then referred to the House Committee on Constitutional Amendments, Correll chose to let it die there. As he put it, "Desiring to avoid several minor points in the bill which might have afforded grounds for technical opposition, I, on February 3rd, introduced as a substitute for the bill above mentioned, 'House Roll No. 162, Joint resolution providing for the submission to the electors of this State of an amendment to Section I Article VII of the Constitution'". The only real difference between the two measures was the substitution of the "Joint Resolution" approach for that of the simple submission of a bill. Both aimed at the same target, namely, the elimination of the word "male" from Section I of Article VII.

Correll realized from the start that the task he had taken on himself was far from light and by no means certain of reaching a successful conclusion. In his words, "The difficulty of carrying this measure through to a successful termination may be imagined, when it

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2 The data in the following account of the presentation and passage of the Suffrage Amendment Bill of 1881 are drawn from (1) an undated, unpaged manuscript essay entitled "Woman Suffrage in Nebraska--Victory of the Bill" by E. M. Correll, Correll Manuscripts, 4th File, Nebraska State Historical Society Collection, all comments by Correll being taken from this source, (2) Nebraska House Journal, 1881. (Omaha: Henry Gibson, State Printer, 1881), pp. 315, 342, 411, 446, 585, 597, 616, 636, 801, 818, 819, 822, 840, (3) The original House Roll No. 162
is known that the constitution itself required a three-fifths majority of each branch of the legislature to submit an amendment. In the House there were eighty-four members and thirty in the Senate. The majorities required being respectively fifty-one and eighteen—an almost impossible effort in the case of a radical and unpopular measure like this.

Realization of the dimensions of the job he had assumed did not prevent Correll from attacking it, however. Even though "a first quiet canvass" revealed only ten members of the House who were in favor of the joint resolution, he began the long and difficult task of changing minds. His techniques were simple, but effective. Correll states that "By personal conversation, and persistent, though courteous, advocacy, the measure gradually won adherents. Particular pains were taken to avoid antagonizing members by too ardently urging its merits or radically combatting the oftentimes foolish objections of opponents. There was neither ultraproselytizing or fanatical haragues. Such a procedure would have killed the bill at once".

Correll admits that the most effective course of reasoning by which many unfavorable to the joint resolution were induced to vote for it took the form of a statement and a question. Upon approaching a member and engaging him in conversation relative to the measure, Correll would insist that "The bill does not enact woman suffrage; it only proposes to submit this question, according to the provisions of the Constitution, in the form of an amendment to be decided by a majority of

as found in Legislative Bills, 16th Session, 1881, Archives of the State of Nebraska, and (4) Nebraska Senate Journal, 1881. (Omaha: Henry Gibson, State Printer 1881), pp. 433, 437, 458, 465, 478, 491-2,501, 516-518, 520.
the electors". Having driven home this point, Correll would ask: "Now, sir, do you care to say in effect by a negative vote, that you will not permit the people to have an opportunity of amending their Constitution?"

If Correll is to be believed, this approach was a highly successful one, but he did not rely on his personal efforts alone. Correll makes it quite clear that the eventual success of his measure was due in very large part to the efforts of others, chief among whom were several deeply concerned and dedicated ladies. He singles out, as especially praiseworthy, Mrs. H. S. Brooks, Mrs. Orpha C. Dinsmore, Mrs. Clara B. Colby, Mrs. Lucinda Russell, Mrs. J. F. Holmes, Rev. Mary J. DeLang, and Mrs. B. J. Thompson. These women devoted themselves to the writing of letters to legislators and to the tiring task of securing personal interviews with as many of them as possible. Correll freely admits that "The ladies worked almost incessantly to obtain a favorable vote and too much praise cannot be given them for their tact, perseverance and ability."

Secondly, the influence of the Omaha Republican is emphasized by Correll as being a factor of no small importance in securing victory for his measure. That he should have found it so is not surprising, for this newspaper was then under the editorial management of Mr. Datus Consider Brooks and had been since 1876. Mr. Brooks was a pro-woman suffrage man who, with his wife, Harriet S. Brooks, had been prominent in Illinois suffrage circles before removing to Nebraska. Mrs. Brooks, as we have seen, was chosen as the first president of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association.

Thirdly, Correll gives credit for earnest and meaningful help to
State Senators Warrington, White, Coon, and Turner, and to Representative Schick, Kaley, Mickey, Howe and Slocumb.

Altogether, the forces at Correll's disposal in his fight for the joint resolution were, if not overwhelmingly strong, at least far from negligible. That they were effectively used is shown in the results obtained. However, one must keep in mind, throughout, that the struggle for the resolution was a fight against very real and serious odds. It may be too strong a comparison to mention Alexander Hamilton's battle for the ratification of the Federal Constitution at the New York Convention in the same breath with the effort presently under consideration, but surely the two were not totally unlike in terms of odds faced and of victory compelled in a seemingly hopeless situation.

If it were desirable, a full and detailed legislative analysis of the passage of House Roll No. 162 could be provided, for Correll, with the pride of a parent, left behind a comprehensive day-by-day account of the history of his measure in House and Senate. For our purposes, however, let it be recorded simply that, despite numerous applications of delaying tactics by the opposition forces, the hard, dedicated work of Correll and his phalanx of supporters bore fruit. One episode in the campaign does merit mention, however.

On Monday, February 21, the bill came up for final passage and "a scene of intense feeling and thrilling dramatic interest developed. The list of members was called and the vote stood, when all present had cast their ballots, at fifty votes in favor of the bill and twenty-two against it. Fifty-one votes were required for passage." One can imagine the feelings that surged through the crowd of spectators, large
numbers of them women, when this result became apparent. The day, however, was not yet lost. As Correll reports:

There was a bare chance that before the vote was announced, some absentee might come in and possibly vote in its favor. The Chief Clerk, Mr. Slaughter, a gentleman of unusual quickness of mind, generally announced the result almost the instant of the last vote. But, possibly, his belief in the justness of the bill, his sympathy for those who had worked so hard for its passage, and a hope that something might yet occur to change the result, delayed the adding up process. He was a long time in footing up the totals. The intense anxiety of the friends of the bill was fast fading into the hopelessness of despair, and the Speaker had already risen to announce the vote as soon as the clerk should inform him, when the very event occurred that had been hoped for. A German representative (one who had not been considered in favor) entered and passed rapidly to his seat on the further side of the room, where he said, "Mr. Speaker, I wish to vote." The clerk called his name; "I wish to vote aye" was the response. The clerk at once announced the vote. The bill had carried. The reaction from intense anxiety to victory was celebrated by a tempest of applause.

One is tempted, even at this late date, to join in the applause, but this desire is tempered by the realization that success in the Senate had yet to be gained.

The Senate, to an even greater degree than the House, constituted its hall into a battle-ground relative to the suffrage measure. An intricate series of attempts were made either to delay consideration of House Roll No. 162, or to shelve it indefinitely. Finally, however, on the morning of February 25, 1881, the measure had passed and was immediately signed by the governor.

All that remained, now, in the way of technicalities was for the Governor, at the proper time, to issue a formal proclamation to the people of the State of Nebraska informing them officially, as the State Constitution required, that the proposed amendment was to be put before them for their consideration. This was done on the tenth of July, 1882.
The proclamation reads as follows:

Proclamation

Whereas, A Joint Resolution was adopted by the legislature of Nebraska at the sixteenth session thereof, and approved February 26, 1881, proposing an amendment to section one (1), article seven (7) of the constitution of said State, and that said section as amended shall read as follows, to wit:

Section 1. Every person of the age of twenty-one years or upward, belonging to either of the following classes, who shall have resided in the State for six months, and the county, precinct or ward for the time provided by law, shall be an elector:


Second. Persons of foreign birth who have declared their intention to become citizens conformably to the laws of the United States on the subject of naturalization, at least thirty days prior to an election.

Therefore, I, Albinus Nance, Governor of the State of Nebraska, do hereby give notice in accordance with section one (1), article fifteen (15), of the constitution and the provisions of an act entitled "An act to provide the manner of proposing amendments to the constitution and submitting the same to the electors of State:, approved February 12, 1877, that said proposed amendment will be submitted to the qualified voters of this State for ratification or rejection at the general election to be held on the 7th day of November, 1882.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the great seal of the State.

Done at Lincoln this 10th day of July, A.D. 1882, the sixteenth year of the State and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and seventh.

(Signed) Albinus Nance
Governor

Attest (Signed) S. J. Alexander
Secretary of State

By E. P. Roggen, Deputy

Needless to say, the proclamation quoted above, and dated in 1882,
merely confirmed that which all concerned persons had known since the passage of H. R. No. 172 by the Nebraska legislature. Indeed, work of a most serious and detailed nature in support of the proposed amendment had been going on almost from the moment of passage. As Correll stated:

The result of the coming election cannot be foretold. We can only work for the right, and hope that the elements of justice and progressiveness will succeed in making this young commonwealth a true republic—the realization of the best principles of human government; and that state after state will follow her example until all unjust restrictions based on sex will be abolished. Then will our nation be glorious in her robes of equity—then will this government be "a government of the people, for the people, by the people".4

It is our task, now, to examine the nature of the work done in preparation for the great day when it was hoped victory would be won.

The Campaign for the Amendment

If the historian be concerned with the question of how an affirmative vote might possibly be secured in November of 1882, we may rest assured that those involved with the actual campaign were concerned to an infinitely greater degree. Indeed, the double question of deciding what was to be done and how to do it was the center of discussion at the convention of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association which met at Kearney, Nebraska on October 18 and 19 of 1881.5 This gathering, which was the first true delegate convention of the organization, convened in the Methodist Church on the afternoon of the 18th, beginning its efforts with the singing of "Hold the Polls for We are Coming". The

4Correll, "Woman Suffrage in Nebraska—Victory of the Bill" (Unpublished manuscript article. Correll Manuscripts 4th File)
5Data on this Convention are drawn from an extended account contained in the Western Woman's Journal, Vol. I, Nos. 7 and 8 (a double issue) October and November, 1881, pp. 119-124.
first piece of solid business transacted by these determined women, one of whom had ridden thirty-five miles in a lumber wagon and another forty miles on a load of wheat to get there, was that of hearing a practical address by Mrs. Ada M. Bittenbender, Secretary of the State Association.

Mrs. Bittenbender's speech was entitled "How to Secure an Affirmative Vote on the Proposed Amendment" and contained several concrete suggestions. As she saw the situation, the big problem was that the men of Nebraska were convinced that women really didn't want the right to vote. Some men, to whom she had spoken, had made this statement, coupled with the assertion that if women really did desire the franchise, the men would vote to give it to them. This being the case, and she was certain that it was, the strategy to be adopted by the ladies of Nebraska was obvious.

First, it would be necessary to show the men, beyond a shadow of doubt, that Nebraska women did in truth desire the right to cast their ballots equally with the men. This evidence could be provided, she felt, by having the Kearney Convention prepare an unequivocal petition to the electors of the State in which their interest and their hope of male support would be shown. Secondly, Mrs. Bittenbender suggested that this petition be circulated in every part of the State so as to secure the signatures of as many women as possible. She stated that Nebraska contained 75,421 adult females, so to sign up a majority of them would require 37,412 signatures. If these signatures were gained, no man could be unaware of the desire of a majority of Nebraska women that the ballot be given to them.

Going further, the energetic Secretary suggested how the signature
campaign should be handled. It was her opinion that the local school districts, of which Nebraska had 3,132 at the time, would make ideal campaign units. It should be the task of each County Suffrage Association to appoint a three-woman committee for each school district existing in its county boundaries. These committees, then, would canvass their school districts, seeking to gain as many signatures of resident women as possible. Indeed, asserted Mrs. Bittenbender, the names of the committee members alone would add up to 9,396 names—a good start.

It was Mrs. Bittenbender's conviction, however, that simple personal contacts in search of signers comprised only part of the job which committee women should take upon themselves. She insisted that, in addition, they should hand out tracts, "short, pithy articles on woman suffrage", publicize the Western Woman's Journal, and seek to induce their local newspapers to set up departments for women and edited by women. If all of these tasks were carried out, the Secretary felt, the interest and concern of all Nebraska women would be aroused and the job of getting signatures would be a relatively easy one.

Finally, Mrs. Bittenbender sounded a word of warning which, in retrospect, has a prophetic ring. It was her belief, she asserted that the crucial problem in the whole campaign enterprise was that of money. "If we lose," she warned, "it will be because of a lack of funds." Relative to this point, that of finances, it is worth mentioning that Mr. Correll sensed the same very large problem. As he indicated in a letter to Prof. Henry Upton of Decatur, Michigan, who was a strong supporter of the cause:

Those most interested are poor. The people as a rule are not wealthy, being new settlers in a new country. Money is needed to awaken the masses.
$25,000, besides what can be raised in Nebraska, is needed for speakers, pamphlets, space in foreign language newspapers, to secure more space in friendly papers, public-halls for speakers, leaflets, handbills, posters. Travelling is expensive in Nebraska, the State of "magnificent distances".6

Upon the completion of Mrs. Bittenbender's address, action was taken. The State Association's Executive Committee produced a petition of the type urged by Mrs. Bittenbender for consideration by the assembled delegates. The petition reads as follows:

Whereas, We, the women of Nebraska, are disfranchised by the Constitution solely on account of sex; and

Whereas, We do respectfully demand the right of suffrage—a right which involves all other rights of citizenship—which cannot justly be withheld as the following admitted principles of government show:

First—All men are created equal.
Second—Government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed.
Third—Taxation and representation are inseparable.

Therefore, We, the undersigned women of Nebraska, earnestly petition the qualified electors of the state, at the general election to be held in November of 1882, to vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the Constitution striking out the word "male".

The success attained by Mrs. Bittenbender's address is shown by the fact that the convention accepted both the petition and her ideas as to how it should be used. This acceptance was fortified by the statement of a delegate who, in commenting on the petition scheme, opined that not 20 per cent of the male voters of Nebraska even knew that an amendment was pending!

6Correll Manuscripts, File 2, Correll to Upton, December 19, 1881.
Taken as a whole, the Kearney Convention revealed both a solid realization that a sizeable piece of work lay before the members and a firm determination that the work would be done. This determination was emphasized in the words of the so-called "Platform" adopted at the closing session of the gathering. The document states that:

We, the representatives of the Nebraska State Woman Suffrage Association, in convention assembled at Kearney, Nebraska, October 19, 1881, hereby declare our fealty to the great principles on which our government is founded, and reiterate the principles of the National Woman Suffrage Association adopted October 18th and 19th, 1850, whose object is to secure woman political equality with man . . . Our declared purpose shall be . . . (to) consecrate our lives and united energies to the ultimate adoption of the proposed constitutional amendment securing to the women of Nebraska the right of franchise.

The last moments of the convention were devoted to resolutions of thanks directed to the Nebraska legislature for passing H. R. No. 162, to Erasmus Correll for his concern and work, to the Burlington and Union Pacific railroads for courtesies shown, and to the people of Kearney, including the trustees of the Methodist Church, for their hospitality.

The foregoing shows that one of the facets of pro-amendment campaigning was to consist of an enterprise aimed at convincing the men of Nebraska that the women really and truly desired the franchise. A second technique, urged by Mr. Correll, was that of securing the support of men eminent in the public life of the State and/or their localities. Once gained, this allegiance was to be publicized in newspapers, tracts, pamphlets, etc. Correll began this effort as early as April of 1881 when he announced, via the Western Woman's Journal, that General Estabrook of Omaha, State Attorney General C. J. Dilworth, General
A. H. Bowen of Juniata, and ex-Chief Justice (of Nebraska) O. P. Mason had stated their approval of the suffrage amendment. By November of 1881, seventeen state and local men of repute had placed their names on the list. Correll was thus able to announce support for the amendment from:

- Senator Alvin Saunders
- Senator Charles H. VanWycke
- ex-Chief Justice Mason
- Attorney-General Dilworth
- General Manderson
- General Bowen
- General A. H. Connor
- Regent Fifield
- Judge A. J. Weaver
- District Attorney W. H. Morris
- Major Yocum
- Colonel Crabb
- Colonel Paul Vandervoort
- Hon. Thomas Majors
- Hon. John Sobieska

This effort continued through the period of campaign, with the list growing ever longer as the months passed. Apropos of this growing support, Correll wrote, facetiously, that he had been apprised of a "straw which shows which way the wind blows", specifically, that a brand of flour in Nebraska had been named "Woman Suffrage Flour". It was reported to "rise splendidly".

A third campaign technique was directed at the women of Nebraska. Correll suggested that every effort should be made to see that women, committed or uncommitted, be supplied with newspapers written on behalf of the interests of women. This action would fortify the convictions of workers and provide them with data for argument while presenting new views on their status, rights and duties to women who, heretofore, had been lethargic or even totally unconcerned relative to the movement. Correll urged that the following periodicals were especially suitable for such use:

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8Ibid., Vol. I, Nos. 7 and 8 (October and November, 1881), p. 98.
9Ibid.

The National Citizen and Ballot Box, edited and published by Matilda Joslyn Gage, Syracuse, N. Y.

The Alpha, edited by Caroline B. Winslow, M. D., Washington, D. C.

The Anti-Polygamy Standard, published by the Anti-Polygamy Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Colorado Antelope, edited by Mrs. C. M. Churchill, Denver, Colo.

The Woman's Herald of Industry and Social Science Co-operator, edited and published by Mrs. J. W. Stowe, San Francisco, Cal.

The New Northwest, edited by Mrs. Dunniway, Portland, Ore.

Our Herald, edited by Mrs. Helen M. Gougar, LaFayette, Ind.

Women's Suffrage Journal, edited by Lydia E. Becker, Manchester, England. 10

Fourthly, the aid of suffrage associations in other states was to be gained as well as that of the nation-wide groups, the National and The American Woman Suffrage Associations. This aid was forthcoming and welcome. As examples of such help, it may be noted that in December of 1881, the New England Woman Suffrage Association, joined by the Massachusetts group, informed the Nebraska Association that 20,000 suffrage tracts and leaflets were on their way to help in the campaign. The Missouri Woman Suffrage Association found it possible, in the same month, to send $50. Correll remarks that this was most useful, since the State Association treasury contained the grand total of $78.00.

10 Ibid., p. 103.
This figure is ominous in the light of a comment, made by Susan B. Anthony in an undated letter to Correll, to the effect that, "It needs a mint of money to educate your state, as well as a myriad of lecturers, but we must do all we can to encompass it".11

The national associations, as well as state and local groups, did what they could to support the campaign in Nebraska. Indeed, both the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Association chose to hold their annual conventions at Omaha in 1882. The American Association chose to meet at the Baptist Church in Omaha on September 12th and 13th, while the National Association decided to meet in Omaha, at the Opera House, September 26-28, and at the Lincoln Opera House on September 29 and 30.12 It was hoped that these conventions would rouse latent interest and imbue workers with the courage and determination needed to fight for the amendment right down to the last moment. Additional support was pledged by the American Woman Suffrage Association in June of 1882, when it informed Correll and the Nebraska Association that a number of well-known figures, including Julia Ward Howe, Margaret W. Campbell, Mary F. Eastman, Dr. Mary F. Thomas, H. B. Blackwell, J. P. Fuller, and Rebecca N. Hazard, would remain in Nebraska after the convention to speak and make themselves generally useful.13

A fifth method of operation in the campaign was that of enlisting speakers whose task it would be to speak as often and to as many people as possible. This particular task, among others, was placed upon the collective shoulders of a Central Campaign Committee having its

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headquarters at Lincoln. The Committee was composed of Erasmus Correll, Mrs. Clara B. Colby, Miss Rachel G. Foster, Mrs. Ada M. Bittenbender, and Mrs. Lucinda Russell. Working to good effect, the Committee was able to announce in September, through Mrs. Bittenbender, that the following speakers had been engaged:

1. Mrs. Lucy Stone, of Boston, Massachusetts and her husband, Dr. H. B. Blackwell.
2. Miss Susan B. Anthony, of Rochester, N. Y.
3. Miss Matilda Hindman, of Pittsburgh, Pa.
4. Mrs. Margaret W. Campbell, of Maine.
8. Mrs. Hanna Tracy Cutler of Illinois.
11. Mrs. Helen M. Gorges of Indiana.
12. Mrs. May Wright Sewell of Indianapolis, Indiana.¹⁴

The itineraries drawn up for these speakers reveal that scarcely any town of even the slightest pretensions was to be ignored, despite the tremendous physical and mental strain this placed upon the various advocates who were to participate in the campaign. For example, Lucy Stone and her husband were scheduled to make twenty-seven speeches in twenty-seven separate locations, all to be delivered in one month's time. Miss Margaret Campbell, in like manner, found herself obligated to speak thirty times at seventeen locations, all between the 18th of September and the 16th of November, 1882. The schedules of the other speakers were hardly less demanding.¹⁵

Study of these itineraries reveals that the major thrust of the speaking campaign, taken as a whole, was aimed at the principal urban

¹⁴Western Woman's Journal, Vol. II, No. 6, (September, 1882), pp. 278,279. ¹⁵Detailed itineraries are to be found in the Western Woman's Journal, Vol. II, No. 6 (September 1882), p. 279, and in a pencil memorandum in Correll Manuscripts, 2nd File, Nebraska Historical Society Collection.
areas such as Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, and Kearney, with minor forays being launched into the rural but still significantly populated areas of the north, east, south, and central Nebraska. The sparsely settled western reaches of the state appear to have been seen as worthy of only sporadic and peripheral effort. In short, the speakers were to go where the voters were, and where they could be reached with a reasonable expenditure of valuable travel time.

A sixth campaign technique involved the exploitation of state and local festivities and other gatherings, formal and informal. Whenever possible, permission was to be gained from the appropriate authorities to present speakers, printed materials, etc. at picnics, Old Settlers' gatherings, soldiers' reunions, fairs, and political conventions. Mrs. Colby reported that with few exceptions the officials extended the courtesies asked. As might be expected, the heaviest efforts along these lines were pressed during the summer of 1882, but the total impact of this technique was lessened by a "fact of life" relative to Nebraska women, specifically, a lack of time for such efforts on their part. Mrs. Barbara J. Thompson, Secretary of the Thayer County Woman Suffrage Association, gave voice to this problem in a report in which she underlined the basic willingness of women to work, but added, "nearly all our women are young mothers with from one to five children, and these cannot do anything more than attend the meetings occasionally when they can leave the children".

The seventh method of securing support in the campaign and of publicizing its growing strength was initiated by Correll and consisted

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16 Ibid., p. 687.
Correll sought from these gentlemen a statement of support and a promise to publicize both the work and the arguments of local and state pro-suffrage groups. Correll carried out this task indefatigably and published the results of his efforts in the *Western Woman's Journal*. As early as May of 1881, he was able to report that sixty-two newspapers, fifty-eight of the Republican persuasion and four supporting the Democrats, had formally indicated their support of the woman suffrage amendment and of the movement in general. These ranged from such urban papers as the *Omaha Republican*, the *Lincoln Globe* and the *Lincoln World*, to rural publications such as the *Blue Valley Blade*, the *Saline County Union*, and the *Friendville Telegraph.*

Opposed to the movement, with that opposition flatly and uncompromisingly stated, were eleven papers, mainly urban in situation. Among these hostile publications were the *Lincoln Democrat*, the *Omaha Bee*, the *Omaha Herald*, the *Grand Island Times*, the *Hastings Democrat*, and the *North Platte Nebraskan*. Of special interest in the ranks of the opposition was the leading German language newspaper, the *Nebraska Staats-Anziger*, which continually played upon the theme that women were especially liable to yield to control by clergymen and likely to become tools of the churches in politics.

By June of 1881, Correll was able to add eleven more papers to his list of those positively oriented toward suffrage and three more to that of the opposition. Special value was attached to the expressed support of the *Kearney Press*, the *Beatrice Democrat*, the *Western Woman's Journal*, Vol. I, No. 2 (May, 1881), p. 19.

Beatrice Courier, and the David City Republican. The most influential acquisition by opposing forces was the North Platte Telegraph.

An interesting bit of by-play is revealed in the report that the Wilber Opposition, which originally joined ranks with the enemies of suffrage, found it expedient to shift its position and to join the positively oriented forces.\(^{19}\)

As said, Correll pursued this line of endeavor, seeking pledged newspaper support, throughout the campaign. By September of 1881 he was able to announce the presence of eighty papers in the pro-suffrage brigade while only fourteen had made their opposition clear.\(^{20}\)

Apropos of this listing of papers, a perusal of Correll's records concerning the positions adopted by the newspapers of the state, while interesting, reveals one curious fact. Nowhere does he suggest that a paper adopt a neutral position. However, it is certain that there were those editors who did follow such a course, for Mrs. Ada M. Bittenbender, Secretary of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, reported in January of 1882 that she had addressed a letter of inquiry to 186 newspapers in the state, asking for their official sentiments on the coming election in terms of the suffrage amendment, and that ninety-two editors had responded. According to her tabulation, of the ninety-two, sixty-five had replied that they were strongly in favor of the amendment and of "woman's emancipation" in general, fifteen reported themselves strongly opposed, and twelve listed their stance as neutral.\(^{21}\)

\(^{19}\) Ibid., Vol. I, No. 3 (June, 1881), p. 34.
\(^{20}\) Ibid., Vol. I, No. 6, (September, 1881), p. 83.
Be that as it may, by June of 1882 Correll was able to assert that "fully three-quarters of the papers in the state" were in favor of woman suffrage, to which comment he appended the observation that "nearly all judges of supreme and district courts, numerous other officials, and a majority of ministers" shared this sentiment.22

On the surface, this listing of techniques utilized by the workers for the cause sounds formidable. One would think that such engines of persuasion could hardly fail to succeed in their appointed tasks, but Susan B. Anthony placed her experienced finger on the outstanding weakness in the whole approach in a letter to Correll dated December 13, 1881, from Tenafly, New Jersey. She warned Correll that:

The difficulty is that the men who will vote no neither go out to lectures nor read tracts or newspapers. They cannot be reached by our educational instrumentalities—they are amenable only to bribes and bitters, neither, nor both of which can we stoop to. She proceeds, in a tone of courageous despair, to assert that, what you must have to reach the strongholds of opposition is regular, sunny, jolly saloon fellows for advocates, who are hail fellows down there with them, and such men are not earnest on our side, but intensely against us—every one—because they know their own mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters would vote down the three great pet institutions of such men—grog shops, brothels, and gambling houses. Still I cannot but hope for Nebraska, in spite of my three times and out experience. But whatever we feel the result may be, OUR DUTY in the premises is the same—that is to do all in our power to educate every voter to vote for woman’s right to vote. How I long to be in the midst of the battle in Nebraska, and as I have said, am bound to be there the minute this history duty is off my head and hands and purse.23

As we shall see, the words quoted above were to be proven prophetic. The opponents of the suffrage cause were not to be reached

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22Western Woman’s Journal, Vol. II, No. 3 (June, 1882), p. 225
by the "educational instrumentalities" of the pro-amendment workers. Indeed, a common report of pro-suffrage speakers was to the effect that such opponents could not be brought to public discussion of the issues. They were simply not present. Nonetheless, the call to duty, sounded so eloquently above and repeated by other workers, was heard and acted upon. The work did go forward, albeit, it must be admitted, not without internal tensions. Data are lacking relative to the bickerings which went on among the workers, but that quarrels did take place is indicated by a plea from Correll in May of 1882 in these words: "We earnestly call upon every worker in the state to bury any personal feelings (if any exist,) and work unselfishly and harmoniously for the good of the common cause. It is no time now for any feelings except the one for the success of the Amendment." The existence of internal dissension is further suggested by a call from Mrs. Belle Bigelow, State Secretary of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, also made in May of 1882, in which she urges, "Let us all stand 'shoulder to shoulder' in this work; let all strifes and personal antagonisms be laid to rest; this is no time for such things." Apparently it was necessary for Correll to issue battle cries from time to time; cries which assumed the inevitability of victory if only all would work as they should. Typical of such utterances was his exhortation of June, 1882, cast in the following form:

To our friends we say: relax no vigilance, but on the contrary, work all the more vigorously; to the indifferent: join our ranks at once, for if you wait until just as victory is gained, your tardy alliance will be construed as springing from 'flunkeyism'; to our opponents: prepare to be snowed under by ballots on election day; to the world: Nebraska hopes

25Ibid., p. 222.
to lead her sister states in the adoption of a reform as in-evitable as the progress and development of the human race.  

Clara Bewick Colby

At this point, with the suffrage amendment pending and work in support of it begun, justice demands that at least brief mention be made of a lady whose work was not only valuable but essential to the achievement of such partial success as was gained by the efforts of 1881 and 1882, namely, Mrs. Clara Bewick Colby. Indeed, as Mrs. Gertrude M. McDowell recalled in 1916, it was Mrs. Colby "whom we considered our general".

A full biography of Mrs. Colby would lay stress upon her English parentage, her education at the University of Wisconsin and her praiseworthy efforts as a social and cultural leader at Beatrice, Nebraska. In addition, much would be said of her courageous work in editing the Woman's Tribune from 1883 until 1909. Here, however, we shall concentrate on the character of the woman herself.

It would seem that Miss Ellen C. Sabin, a classmate of Mrs. Colby and later president of Milwaukee-Downer College, caught an essential element of Mrs. Colby's character when she noted that, as a student, "her question as to work was not 'Do I have to do this?' but 'May I add this subject?'" Indeed, this willingness to work hard and long at any personal or social task which had call upon her sympathies was a hall-mark of the woman. This is reflected in Albert Watkins'

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comment, made in 1913, that "Whether her causes were worth the sacrifice or not, she has, of a surety, been a martyr (to them)."29

This image of Mrs. Colby as a person ever ready to expend self in service is strengthened by the words of a life-long friend of hers, Mrs. Carrie Harrison, who asserted that:

She was a democrat of the democrats, and her interest was confined to no class or condition of men or women, but wherever there was need of help, a call for sympathy, or a cause requiring sacrifice, she was always ready. She wanted to help everybody and instruct everybody.30

This comment, to which many others might be added, encourages the author to sense in Mrs. Colby a sort of undifferentiated "press" toward service and reform which could be channelled and focused by whatever cause or interest was thrown into prominence by the circumstances of time. Such, then, was the woman who became the distaff head of the Central Campaign Committee of the Nebraska Suffrage Association in its fight for the suffrage amendment in 1882.

One might assume, with justice, that a campaign guided by Clara Colby, assisted by her aide, Miss Rachael Foster, and pressed with the dedicated help of a corps of energetic workers, would be well and truly guided. Such was the case. Every possible detail was handled with care, ranging from the "securing of half-rates for speakers on the Burlington and Missouri River and Union Pacific railroads," to seeing "ten thousand German tracts through the press".31

The work did go forward, then, though not without some snide commentary, from unsympathetic observers. As an example of such commentary, the

30 Brown, Democratic Ideals, p. 56.
issue of the Western Woman's Journal for July, 1882, included the following undated excerpt ascribed to the Chicago Times:

There is a gathering of the clans in Nebraska. All the short-haired males from the Passamaquoddy to the Golden Gate are on their way thither to take part in the woman suffrage campaign. What Iowa and Kansas have undergone from the prohibition and anti-prohibition exhorters is not a circumstance to that which is in store for Nebraska. The male and female shriekers intend to go through the summer and fall without intermission. In September the national convention of the suffragists will be held in Omaha, and all the celebrities will be there. Life in a new state is not without drawbacks, after all. If no other plague is visited upon Nebraska this year its cup will be full.\(^{32}\)

Opposition to the Measure

It goes without saying that there were Nebraska voices as well as out of state ones raised in condemnation of the suffrage campaign: voices of men and women who truly did see the "cause" as a plague, or potential plague, of most virulent description, well worthy of spirited and determined opposition. It is to these opponents and their views that we now turn.

Miss Eleanor Flexner devotes a full chapter of her thoughtful work *Century of Struggle* to the question, "Who Opposed Woman Suffrage?" In this chapter she analyzes the nature and extent of the opposition to woman suffrage offered by the liquor interest, political machines, the Catholic Church, and business and industrial interests. The chapter is concise and meaningful, but most significant for our purpose is the fact, admitted by Miss Flexner, that the information she sets forth was known only in part by the suffrage leaders who

\(^{32}\)Ibid., p. 242
What were the interests which, with such intensity, fought woman suffrage, and why? None of the suffrage leaders ever fully answered this question. Even Mrs. Catt (Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1900-04), who gave it considerable space in her book, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, was inclined to stress only one aspect of the opposition, largely to the exclusion of any other.33

One is reminded here of the old saw that no one knows less about a battle than the soldier who in the thick of it, and the saying seems to be correct in the context of the Nebraska campaign of 1882. The leaders of the fight, Erasmus Correll, Mrs. Colby, and their cohorts, proved to be forerunners of Mrs. Catt in that they too tended to sense but one major source of opposition as being the most serious, specifically the liquor interest, an interest which employed the foreign-born as the willing tools. This being the case, let us turn first to this wing of the opposition phalanx.

One of the cliches relative to the suffrage crusade is the virtually symbiotic relationship it enjoyed with the temperance movement, and, like many cliches, there is both truth and falsity in this one. There can be no doubt that many women active and even prominent in the suffrage cause were deeply concerned with the temperance effort and *vice versa*. Lucretia Mott and Lucy Stone, for example, were temperance workers before they entered the suffrage ranks, while Frances Willard, whose efforts made the W. C. T. U. the largest women's organization in the country, espoused suffrage as a facet of her overall program, seeing suffrage both as a means and as an end. However, there were women who viewed the suffrage reform as

desirable in itself, apart from any incidental earth-altering effects it might have. One of these, Mrs. Esther L. Warner, of Roca, Nebraska, commented rather tartly that:

We are tired of being obliged to deny so often that we expect woman suffrage to usher in the millenium. We regard it as one step forward, and a step which the exigencies of the times demand, but we do not expect to see the miracle of the world suddenly transformed into a paradise.34

Be that as it may, there can be little doubt that there existed, in the minds of many Nebraska opponents of woman suffrage, a firm conviction that enfranchisement of the sex would lead almost automatically to drastic restrictions relative to the production and sale of spirituous beverages—restrictions which seemed undesirable. A Thomas Weston Tipton (U. S. Senator from Nebraska, 1867-75) asserted relative to the suffrage amendment:

The manufacturers of spirituous liquors, the retailers, and many of the drinkers, were a united phalanx against it, on the ground that the ballot of women would be directed against the traffic and in behalf of sobriety, pure morals, and better government.35

Mrs. Colby speaks to the same point in her narrative when she describes how the Brewers' Association worked in opposition to the measure, striving especially to arouse the antagonism of "foreigners" by insisting that "woman suffrage meant prohibition."36

In all fairness, it must be admitted that there was some logic behind the common belief that woman suffrage and restrictions on the liquor trade were close and dangerous relatives. Alert and interested contemporaries might well remember that Frances Willard had been able

to swing the Women's Christian Temperance Union into a pro-suffrage orientation as recently as 1879. Even more recent, and still rankling in the hearts of many Nebraskans, was the passage in 1881 of the Slocumb Liquor Law, or, as it was often called, the "high License Law", by the State Legislature. This measure, which was a fruit of the month of February, as was the woman suffrage amendment resolution, had exacerbated the whole liquor question to a painful degree at the very time when it would be easiest for "bar-stool logicians" to perceive a relationship between the liquor and the "woman" measures. Since this unfortunately-timed liquor law does seem to have added fuel to anti-suffrage sentiment, a brief account of it may well be appended here.

The Slocumb Law of 1881 was the end result of agitation in Nebraska dating back to Territorial days. As early as 1861, temperance advocates secured an act requiring "an applicant for license to pay for the use of the school fund not less than $15.00 nor more than $200.00 at the discretion of the County Commissioners".\textsuperscript{37} At this date, the Temperance forces were still largely unorganized, but this condition was soon to be remedied. The year 1867 witnessed the organization of the Good Templars, a body which, by 1881, comprised 113 local lodges with total membership of 5000. Joining forces with the Templars were the Temple of Honor and the Red Ribbon Clubs, both of which dated back to 1877. Together, the united forces attempted to secure a state prohibition amendment from the state legislature in 1879, but failed. In 1881, however, the attempt was made again and failed again--but the Legislature did pass, as a substitute, a

\textsuperscript{37}Tipton, \textit{Forty Years}, p. 146.
bill sponsored by the Honorable C. B. Slocumb of Jefferson County. This law provided a semblance of prohibition in that it was made penal offense to sell or give away intoxicating liquors in any precinct or township where thirty freehold petitioners could not be found, and in any case made it discretionary with the county boards to decide the expediency of granting a license. A "prohibition" county could thus elect a board to carry out their will. Going further, the law prohibited utterly the sale of liquor to minors, apprentices, or servants under twenty-one years of age; and to Indians, insane persons, idiots and habitual drunkards. The law also prohibited the sale of liquor anywhere on about fifty-five days in the year, including Sundays and election days.

It is worth noting that advocates of temperance reform had contended that the need to support paupers, criminals, insane and poor, and the "robbery" of wives and children in the community were largely due to the traffic in liquor and should not be borne by the charities. This proposition was conceded by a provision in the Slocumb law holding that "the retailer should pay all damages resulting to the community or individuals, and support all paupers, widows and orphans made so by the traffic; and pay for all civil and criminal prosecutions growing out of it".38

Finally, relative to licenses themselves, the law provided that the cost of a license to sell liquor was not to be less than $500 nor more than $1000. Added to this was the requirement that each licensee was to post a bond in the amount of $5000 with which legal damages and

38 Ibid., p. 147.
costs would be defrayed. These various provisions, combined with prohibitions on "treating", or giving away liquor to be drunk in any saloon or place where they were sold, and on obstructing the view of doors or windows with screens, paint, blinds, or other articles, add up to a solid and formidable piece of anti-liquor legislation. As Tipton remarks:

This law, under which the traffic was to live, if it existed at all, was the most fearsome commentary on its infamy ever published, and was only accepted by the craft as more desirable than legislative prohibition.  

It requires little imagination to be able to understand how the pro-liquor forces, with nerves rubbed raw by the Slocumb Law, would respond to the threat, real or imagined, of the woman suffrage proposal, linked in their minds with temperance sentiment. A man sentenced to execution by shooting and with his back to the wall is unlikely to welcome the word "fire", even if spoken in the softest of feminine accents. That the word was "Fire" could not be doubted by any reader or hearer of these words:

Do not women need the ballot? There are thousands of women today struggling in poverty, disgrace and misery, to whom woman suffrage will bring respectability and comfort, for women will as certainly vote alcohol out of the nation as they obtain the ballot. For this reason if for no other, for the sake of temperance, women need the ballot . . . You know it, too, you liquor seller, you moderate drinker, and that is why with all your powers you oppose this movement.  

So far we have seen why the opposition to the suffrage amendment on the part of retailers of liquor is not a subject for amazement or

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39 Ibid.
bewilderment. Suffrage workers expected it and fought against that opposition, seeing it as normal. We should note, also, that opposition from the consumers of such beverages was considered to be every bit as formidable as that coming from the producers, if not more so. The reason for this is not hard to find. In Nebraska, as elsewhere, a taste for the products of brewery and distillery was considered by native Americans as inherent in the foreign born, of which Nebraska had her full share. Suffrage workers, and Erasmus Correll is a good example, tended almost automatically to count the foreign born as being anti-suffrage and pro-liquor without the slightest question. Indeed, in September of 1882, Correll published, as a warning to his fellow workers, the following data:

1. Total population of Nebraska: 452,402.

2. Total number of voters: 128,082, of whom 88,334 are native born, 44,864 foreign born, and 884 are colored.

3. The greatest concentration of foreign born is located north of the Platte River.

4. Three of the most populous and politically significant counties have heavy proportions of foreign born voters:

   Douglas: 5,758 foreign born to 6,662 native voters.
   Lancaster: 2,838 foreign born to 5,673 native voters.
   Saunders: 2,007 foreign born to 2,022 native voters.

5. Five counties, all north of the Platte river, have more foreign born than native voters:

   Cedar: 419 to 252
   Dodge: 1,616 to 1,445
   Howard: 645 to 532
   Pierce: 220 to 193
   Stanton: 272 to 167
6. South of the Platte one county, Clay, shows the largest proportion of foreign born voters, the total being 1,150 foreign born to 1,917 native voters.41

One can see from these figures why Correll was so deeply concerned about the problem of the foreign born voter. If such voters acted as a bloc, their strength would be quite likely to overwhelm the inevitably divided native vote on the suffrage proposal. There can be no doubt, then, that the shadow of the "foreigner" tended to darken the hopes of even such natural optimists as Correll and Mrs. Colby and to raise fears not easily put down.

As a footnote to the problem of the "foreigner", it should be mentioned that the highly influential German-American Liederkranz Society of Grand Island, an organization dating back to 1870, gave birth to an anti-suffrage, anti-Slocumb Law splinter group in 1881. Taking the name of the Sons of Liberty and led by the powerful businessman and editor Mr. Fred Hedde, this group waged a war of propaganda against both of the "evils" it was founded to combat. Although evidence is lacking relative to the precise degree of influence, the Sons of Liberty were able to exercise over the votes of German-Americans in Nebraska, it is not unlikely that the efforts of the Sons confirmed the anti-suffrage sentiments of many of their compatriots and rendered them impervious to pro-suffrage arguments.42

Disturbing as the opposition of the foreign element was, it was not nearly as upsetting to dedicated suffrage workers as the apathy and even outright opposition to the suffrage amendment of members of

that sex which it was proposed to benefit. Professor Henry Upton, the Michigan suffrage sympathizer, was of the opinion that the apathy or indifference of women was the greatest obstacle to success in the campaign. This view was also expressed by Mrs. Electra E. Hoag who, canvassing the towns of Blue Springs and Wymore, south of Beatrice, was compelled to admit that "There are many women indifferent and a few opposed. How often I hear the remark, 'I have all the rights I want!'" Her letter continues with a description of the humiliation she felt at having men tell her that the women of the state generally were not deserving of the ballot because they were so indifferent about it.

Perhaps the crowning blow by a woman against the suffrage proposal came in a well publicized series of six articles, published between Sunday, March 12, 1882, and April 16 following, in the Omaha Herald, the strongest of opposition papers. These articles are worthy of extended considerations in light of the fact that they were felt to be final answers to all of the chief points made by advocates of the Nebraska suffrage proposal. Most interesting is the fact that they were, as said, products of a feminine mind and pen, the one of a lady described only as "one of the most worthy of our Omaha wives and mothers".

At the outset, the author states that she will ask and answer certain questions of primary importance. Specifically:

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Esther Bienhoff, "The Original German Settlement at Grand Island, Nebraska" (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Nebraska, June, 1929), pp. 6-8.


Electra Hoag to Erasmus Correll, ibid., p. 269.

Omaha Herald, Sunday, March 12, 1882, p. 4.
1. Is female suffrage a right?
2. Do the representative women of the country wish to vote?
3. Who are the leaders of the movement?
4. Is taxation without representation tyranny, and should all who are taxed vote?
5. Would female suffrage increase the intelligence and morality of the voting class?
6. Do the laws of Nebraska now favor man, and would female suffrage improve them?
7. Should women vote because naturalized foreigners do?
8. Would the ballot secure better wages for women?
9. Should women vote on school and temperance questions?
10. What would be the practical effects on home happiness?

Having asked these questions, she proceeds to answer them. Her first article, dated Sunday, March 12, 1882, is entitled "Strong and Sensible" and deals with the first three questions listed. She is quick to deny that suffrage is a right. Instead, she holds it to be a privilege dependent on a specific condition, namely the independence of the voter. Wives, she asserts, are not independent. Further, they are unable to perform jury duty, military service, etc., and hence have no right to equality of suffrage with men, who do possess the required independence and do offer services in support of the government which they help to choose.

Turning to her second question, she states flatly that women collectively do not desire the ballot. She describes suffrage meetings she has attended and asserts that they are ill-attended despite heavy publicity, leading her to conclude that women, generally, are not enthused over the suffrage proposal and, if permitted, would not vote in large numbers.

Loading her pen with vitriol, she passes on to her third query concerning the leaders of the suffrage movement. Mentioning no names, but implying her familiarity with these ladies, she insists that they
are not "representative" women. Far from it. They are, she claims, women who "are seeking happiness in public affairs since it has eluded them in their own homes". They are "hobby-riders!" In a savage passage, she snarls that "Believers in spiritualism, seekers after perpetual motion, disciples of Oscar Wilde and the advocater of female suffrage may all be classed together." She closes with the observation that "I do not believe that these women come from the better classes. They seem to spring from a stratum of society peculiarly their own."46

The second article in the series, entitled "Franchise Females", appeared on Sunday, March 19, 1882 and was devoted to the fourth and fifth of her questions. She begins with the question: "Is taxation without representation tyranny, and should all who are taxed vote?" Indeed, fully three-fifths of the article is given over to a consideration of this item, which she plainly conceived as being of key significance.

She begins, accurately, with the statement that "Suffragists constantly reiterate that taxation without representation is tyranny." It is held to be, she remarks, their most powerful argument, but, seen in the proper light, it falls to the ground. In a well-organized sequence of logical argument, she stresses the view that in this country the right to vote is independent of property considerations and of taxation. It pertains to the person alone and is given in equal measure to rich and poor. Taxation, she insists, is directed not at the person, but at property. In her words, "The property not the

46Omaha Herald, Sunday, March 12, 1882, p. 4.
individual pays the tax; not because its owner is or is not a voter, but because the property itself is guarded and protected by the government which its taxation supports. For example ... a man in New York may own a million dollars worth of property here and nothing there. He pays taxes here and not there; yet he cannot vote here and can there."

She brings her discussion of this topic nearly to a close by declaring that "a complete and decisive answer to all this talk about 'taxation without representation' is the fact that the suffragists do not claim representation on account of taxation. They do not ask to vote simply because they pay taxes. If they did, the number of female voters would be small indeed, consisting only of those who own taxable property, but they ask the ballot for all women, rich and poor, taxed or untaxed, as a personal and not as a property right. A claim entirely unreasonable, illogical and unfounded."

With all this said, the author finds it necessary only to remind women who assert that non-tax-paying males have power by vote to tax the property of women helpless--because voteless--to defend it, that there are far more non-tax-paying women than men. Obviously, then, "Woman suffrage would vastly increase the non-tax-paying vote, thus making the possibility of unjust and oppressive taxation greater."

Having delivered this powerful set of assertions, the author devotes the remainder of her space to a discussion of the question, "Would female suffrage increase the intelligence of the voting class?" She notes at once that suffragists argue that the votes of intelligent and educated women are needed to offset the votes of ignorant men. What is not mentioned or understood, says our author, is that suffrage
gives the vote to all women, the ignorant as well as the educated. To make matters worse, she insists, women as a class are not as well educated as men. They have less "wordly wisdom". "Therefore, if all women vote, it will decrease the average intelligence of the voting class. As a parting shot, she reminds us that Negro women would vote as well as their white sisters. This would be calamitous, since Negro women are less competent than Negro men, who, themselves, are hardly models of intelligent, educated voters. All in all, then, woman suffrage would "double the already unwieldy voting population and would, at the same time, decrease its average of experience, intelligence and education."47

The third in this series of articles was a feature of the paper which appeared on Sunday, March 26, 1882. It is noteworthy that this article, entitled "Sensational Sisters," finds our author departing from her set schedule of questions. She begins, here, with the question: "Should woman receive the vote because she is man's intellectual equal?" Her answer is brief but eminently clear. "The female mind", she states, "is not inferior to Man's. It is different." Elaborating, she asserts that men and women differ mentally as their tasks in life differ. The matter is not one of inferiority or superiority, but of plain and simple variety. Her point, however, is that "the ballot is not given as a reward for superior mental acquirements. Woman has a huge responsibility for home and children. She should do those things her peculiarities fit her to do." Voting is not one of these.

47*Omaha Herald*, Sunday, March 26, 1882, p. 4.
Having disposed of the matter just discussed, yet another unscheduled question is raised for consideration: "Is female suffrage more likely to obtain in highly educated communities?" Her answer is in the negative. As justification, she offers a fact which, to her mind, is conclusive proof of her contention. It is that the Senate of the State of Massachusetts, a state which is a "center of education and culture", has recently refused (21-12) to submit a proposed suffrage amendment to the people. On the other hand, Wyoming, where "society...exists without much regard to the observance of law, and...life and virtue are held so lightly that one may be taken or the other lost almost with impunity", possesses woman suffrage! The comparison is considered crushing and further comment superfluous.48

The fourth article in the series, entitled "Lady and Law", and published on Sunday, April 2, 1882, finally returns to the program of questions set forth at the outset. However, the author cannot refrain from a preliminary bombardment in which she explains why she refuses to make use of the term woman suffrage, preferring throughout the label female suffrage. It is revealing of her own orientations that to her "the word woman expresses something far too pure and noble to be bandied about in the discussion of such a subject". In a passage of quiet savagery, she asserts that:

I do not believe the women of the country as a class are demanding the ballot, and to give it the name of woman suffrage would dignify it with a much grander name than it deserves, a movement originated and urged forward by those females whose greatest regret seems to be that they are not men, and who deny to their sex the

48Omaha Herald, Sunday, March 26, 1882, p. 4.
possession of those womanly characteristics which distinguish them from the males, and of those graces and refinements which through all the ages past have won and held for them the chivalrous protection of those whom God and nature created sterner and stronger.

Such being her outlook, her choice of labels is understandable.

At this point, our "worthy Omaha wife and mother" returns to her promised agenda and takes up the question: "Do laws of Nebraska now favor man, and would female suffrage improve them?" She prefaces her answer with a brief but cogent warning which allows her essentially conservative orientation to become unmistakably clear. "No great change," she states, "should be made in the existing condition of things, unless it can be shown that such change is certain to result favorably, or that the present condition is very bad and any alteration would probably be for the better." Even then, in her opinion, redress should be sought by women through the right of petition to the legislature of the state.

Be that as it may, it is our author's firm view that the laws of Nebraska do not favor men. From it: the advantage, if any, is on the side of woman. In order to prove her point, she adduces a long list of examples, typical of which are these:

That a woman can deed or will away all her real estate—a man can't, for the widow takes "dower interest" in his property (the use during her life of one-third of all his property).

That a married woman cannot be punished for a crime committed in the presence of her husband; the law presuming that she acted under coercion by him, and he alone can be tried and punished for it.

Her reason for setting forth these and other examples, she claims, is to show that suffragists have mis-stated the situation and have implied that woman is currently at a disadvantage legally. This,
she insists with emphasis, is not so. Perhaps it was true in the past, she says, but suffragists who dwell on past evils, neglecting more recent corrections of the law, are simply not telling the truth about present legal conditions and produce the falsest of impressions in the minds of their auditors and readers. "Candid examination of existing laws will show," she is sure, "that man's legislation for woman is more favorable than for himself." Here she rests her case.49

On Sunday, April 9, 1882, the fifth article of the series, entitled "Sisters, Shriek!" was offered to the public. The first question handled herein is the seventh on the original list, namely: "Should women vote because naturalized foreigners do?" One anticipates a negative answer and is not disappointed. The rationale behind the rejection of the proposal is two-pronged. First, we are told, suffrage workers forget that female suffrage would give the vote to ignorant, uneducated foreign born women who know nothing of our ways and who would vote without comprehension of the issues, just as do the foreign-born men to whose franchise they object! It is plain to our author that female suffrage would not cure the "evil" of ignorant voting by the foreign-born, but would, on the contrary, increase the dimensions and danger of the problem. This alone, it is held, would be sufficient answer to the suffragists on this point, but yet another consideration needs to be underlined. It is that foreign-born men who have declared their intention to become citizens, which declaration is a prerequisite to voting, are subject to call for military service. In a sense, such men have paid for the right

49*Omaha Herald*, Sunday, April 2, 1882, p. 2.
to vote with a lien on their very lives! This obligation is not laid upon women of any status or condition, and thus weakens their position relative to this specific question.

Having disposed of the previous issue, our author presses on to ask: "Would the ballot secure better wages for women?" A lengthy argument is offered in support of her rejection of this contention, but the entire thrust of her words is contained in the statement, which she considers axiomatic, that "people are paid according to their ability and without reference to their sex." If one seeks the reason for the fact that women are paid less than men for equivalent work, we are informed that the reason lies in the disparate degrees of preparation and energy invested in their work by the two sexes. Men expect to devote their whole lives and total energies to a particular job or profession and prepare themselves accordingly. Women, on the other hand, expect to marry and so do not prepare for work with all their effort, and, when employed, do not expend the energy men would expend if in the same position. Although the word itself is not used, it is obvious that our author considers women to be mere dilettantes in the "world of work", hence unworthy of pay equal to that of a man similarly employed.

Going further, we are told that married men have families to support, while even unmarried men have the fees of courting to consider: "concert, lecture, opera and livery bills to pay for the girl as well as for themselves." In short men need more money than women do. Closing, she returns to her primary argument. The key to pay levels is ability. Whoever does a thing best is paid most. Voting will not improve women's abilities. Ergo, women will not be paid the
same as men for equivalent work—nor should they be.

Now that our author is back on schedule, she turns to the next in her list of questions: "Should women vote on school and temperance questions?" Here again an involved and lengthy—even tiresome—argument is presented. As a launching pad, the pro-suffrage stand is outlined as follows.

Woman should vote on school and temperance issues because her interests in these are greater than man's, her moral character stronger, her sense of right and wrong more acute. The answer to this position is provided under several heads.

First, if women's interests in the issues listed above are greater than men's, it should not be so. To this moralistic assertion is appended the warning that "no young girl should give her heart and hand into the keeping of a man she considers unworthy to do the voting for the family".

Secondly, women would be "soiled" by stepping into the "slimy cesspool" of politics. She would sink to man's level morally: he would not rise to her moral level. The result would be the loss of woman's moral superiority over man.

Thirdly, the fear is expressed that innocent, inexperienced women might be led astray with ease "by some wily lobbyist or flattering diplomat".

Finally, we are informed that "statistical facts show that women do not desire to vote even upon educational questions". To give point to this assertion, the Massachusetts experience is called upon. "In Massachusetts the law giving (women) that privilege went into effect
in 1879. That year, out of the 60,400 women in Boston, 934 voted. In 1880, 683 voted, and last year only 640, the percentage of voting women having decreased each year." Turning to the record of the city of Omaha, we hear that "In Omaha, at the school election one year ago, of the 5,000 women qualified to vote for members of the board of education, but three appeared at the polls. This year . . . I cannot ascertain that a single one deposited her ballot."

Can a conclusion be drawn from these figures? We are informed that one can be drawn, namely, that "the truth is, the demand of the female suffragists is not based on any expectation of reforming evils. They simply crave the unnatural stimulus with which they imagine political life would furnish them".

As a parting shot and general summation on the question before us, the author stresses her belief that woman's great strength is in her moral power. "If she attempts to exchange that for the power of suffrage, she will undoubtedly lose her moral superiority, and her vote will produce no different effect than that of man."50

The sixth and final installment of this series of articles appeared on Sunday, April 16, 1882, under the simple heading "Woman Suffrage", a heading obviously supplied by the editor and not by the author! Herein the last of the scheduled questions receives treatment, specifically: "What would be the practical effects of female suffrage on home happiness?"

As one might expect, the effects described are of an unfortunate nature. Holding that suffrage would place woman on an exact level with man, the author warns us that the result would be a lessening of man's

50Omaha Herald, Sunday, April 9, 1882, p. 2.
reverence and affections for woman and the development in man of a dis-
taste for marriage and home life. As a consequence, "Home circles
would diminish in number, to the disadvantage of the state, which
needs the moral, virtuous men produced by good homes". Aphoristically,
she remarks that "The family cannot be regerated by the state, but
the state can be regenerated by the family."

We have been told, thus far, that men will shun connections of
a familial nature with women whose status has been rendered equivalent
to their own. But what of women themselves? It is held that they
too will develop a distaste for the duties of the "Home circle".

Putting her views sharply, our author states:

  Give women the right to vote and hold office.
  Let her start but with the same ideas of pursuing, as
  a man does, a certain occupation through life, of money
  getting, of making for herself an enduring name and
  fame, and she too will eventually shun the innocent as-
  sociations and protecting influence of home, husband
  and children.

  All in all, then, the "practical effects" of suffrage relative
to the home are drawn in the darkest of colors. We should expect an
erosion of home life in quantity and quality; an erosion which, in
its consequences, would bode ill for the future of the state itself.

Having dealt with her schedule of questions and even introduced
a few unscheduled ones, the author completes her task with an obiter
dictum on the possible success of the suffrage amendment at the polls.
It is her opinion that the pro-suffrage forces are entirely too san-
guine. While it is true that a sizeable number of significant men have
expressed support for the measure, such expressions are not to be re-
lied upon.
For instance, one of our own good members, who last winter voted in favor of submitting the proposed suffrage amendment to the people next fall, when asked why he did so, he replied, "Oh, it did no harm; it was the only way I could get away from those women, when it comes to decisive action at the polls, I shall vote against it."

This being the case, that women and supposed supporters of the measure are in truth against it, there remains but to sound a final warning, to point to a single danger. It is that electors will "carelessly neglect to deposit their ballots for or against it". Our author urges all voters to be certain to cast their ballots, for or against the measure. She does not fear the result, insisting that:

If a full vote can be secured, it will be defeated by such an overwhelming majority as to put an end to agitation in this state forever.51

The series of articles discussed above has been dealt with at length because of the fact that it epitomizes the general thrust of anti-suffrage argument presented to the people of Nebraska during the months before the election itself and because of its publication in one of the most formidable and widely-read anti-suffrage newspapers in the state. It will be found that diatribes in other papers, large and small, tend merely to enlarge upon or otherwise emphasize one or more of the points made by our Omaha Matron. It may be said, with justice, that the heart of the anti-suffrage polemic has been exposed in these six articles. Fairness demands, at this point, that space be given to the "counter-battery fire" discharged by the pro-suffrage forces. Again we are fortunate in that a summary of their views, comprehending the key points made in the pro-suffrage press, is

51 Omaha Herald, Sunday, April 16, 1882, p. 2
available to us. The writer is none other than May Wright Sewall, one of the most devoted of workers for "the cause".

Mrs. Sewall's Reply

Mrs. Sewall entitles her article, published in the *Western Woman's Journal* for September, 1882, "Replies to Current Objections". It is her opinion that there are five objections most commonly urged against woman suffrage. She intends to state them and answer them definitively, starting with the slogan-like objection that "the bullet and the ballot must go together", or put another way, "that since women have not the strength to execute the laws in case of resistance to them, they ought not be clothed with law-making power".

The author's answer to this first objection is that fitness for military service is not the condition on which men hold the ballot. Turning to statistics, she informs us that, during the Civil War, surgeons reports showed that three hundred out of every thousand volunteers were rejected for physical reasons, while of every thousand drafted men four hundred were thus rejected. Yet no one suggests that these rejected men lose their franchise! Physical strength in terms of fitness for military service, then, is not the criterion for the franchise. If however, service itself be the criterion, Mrs. Sewall has an answer immediately at hand. "By taking the place of men in the productive industries, by their labors in the Sanitary Commission, by the service to the wounded and the sick soldiery on the battlefield, in camp and in hospital, American women showed no less ability to rise to the level of war emergencies, during the

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52 *Western Woman's Journal*, Vol. II, No. 6 (September, 1882), p. 277
years from 1860 to 1865, than did American men." The services of men and women differed in type and form, but not in the essential quality of being service.

The second common objection raised for consideration is that "bad women would vote". Mrs. Sewall's tongue is deep in her cheek when she replies: "Well, virtue is not the condition upon which manhood suffrage at present rests. If virtue is to be made the test of citizenship, it must be applied equally to men and women. Women can well afford to accept this test, if men will pledge themselves to abide by it." More to the point, Mrs. Sewall inquires as to what classes of women are demanding the vote? Are they the classes which tend to be "bad"? Her answer is decidedly in the negative. We are asked to write out lists of women illustrious in the realm of charity, literature, education, philanthropy and reforms. Such lists, almost without exception, will be lists of suffragists. Mrs. Sewall is equally firm on the point that patriotic women will vote "as patriotism is a sentiment not limited to the vicious and the vile". Finally, she expresses the strong belief that orthodox Christian women will vote. Granting that religious timidity has led some women to oppose or at least deprecate suffrage, Mrs. Sewall opines that "these same women now desire it to secure great moral ends". On the whole then, she feels, it is fair to state that while all women, good and bad, will vote, there is no need to fear an absence of "good women's" ballots from the box or a preponderance of "bad women's" votes.

The third objection taken up receives short shrift from our commentator. It is that "women are too ignorant, too narrow in their views, too personal in their judgements, to be trusted with this
mighty agent of power, the ballot." Mrs. Sewall asks to be shown
the statute wherein are specified wisdom, breadth of view and generous
sentiments as qualities the possession of which are prerequisite to
the franchise. No such statute exists. However, if some sort of
educational test were to be made a prerequisite to voting, women
would not object, says Mrs. Sewall, so long as the test were exacted
from men and women alike. Indeed, women would suffer less than men
from such a test since "statistics show that there is fifteen per
cent more illiteracy among the men of the United States, than among
the women".

Fourthly, Mrs. Sewall attacks the two-pronged, reversible pro­
position that the influence of women would be bad upon politics, and
that the influence of politics would be bad upon women. Her reply
to the first half of this proposition is that women are already en­
gaged in politics without conspicuous damage to the enterprise.
Women attend political meetings, write for the daily press on political
affairs, and serve as hired lobbyists in state and national capitols.
"The question", she asserts, "is no longer whether women shall in­
fluence politics (this they are already doing), but whether they shall
continue to influence politics secretly and by dubious means for
personal ends, or whether they shall influence politics openly,
directly, and for public ends by the one legitimate agent, viz: the
ballot."

That women will not be harmed by participation in politics is
clear to Mrs. Sewall. Reminding the reader that American women are
pronounced by men of all nations "to be the most truly, modest, in­
telligent, industrious, domestic and attractive women in the world",
she insists that these qualities have been the result not of lack of freedom but of a plenitude of it. American women have come to enjoy opportunities in industry, education and the professions without harm: surely participation in politics will not prove the exception. Indeed, says the author, "with responsibility and self-respect does the capacity for virtue increase". The right to vote would supply both.

Finally, Mrs. Sewall comes to grip with one of the most serious of all objections. It is that "women do not want the ballot". Two answers are provided. First, she states, granting for the sake of argument that the objections be true, it is not a valid objection for four reasons.

First, it is invalid because the men of the several states did not publicly demand the ballot before suffrage was conferred upon them. Secondly, no such objection was held in the case of the Negro. Thirdly, there need be no fear of a tyrannical imposition of a duty upon women, since exercise of the franchise is voluntary and, lastly, the very character of our republic is such that it implies the right of all citizens who so desire to take part in the government. "Women are citizens and it is unjust to exclude any of them from the right of suffrage on the ground of sex.

However, Mrs. Sewall insists, the objection is not true. Women do want the ballot. In particular, we are told, women engaged in any work of reform, in literature, in professional activity and business, most decidedly do desire the right to vote and "the number of women included in these classes is increasing rapidly year by year". As added evidence, the author points to the growing size and influence
of both the National and American Woman Suffrage Associations and the flourishing local and state societies devoted to the reform.

Summing up, Mrs. Sewall states her belief that: "What educational, industrial and social freedom has begun to do for American women, political freedom will complete. Therefore, and because the interests and the fate of man and woman are indissolubly linked, do we ask the men of Nebraska for their own sake, not less than for the sake of the women of their state, to give the women of that state the unobstructed exercise of the ballot."

The Suffrage Associations Conventions of 1882

Having suggested the flavor of the debate which enlivened the period of campaign before the election itself took place, there remains the task of reporting upon the two great gatherings of suffrage forces which served to focus public attention on the "cause" during the final stages of the campaign, namely, the Omaha conventions of the American and the National Woman Suffrage Associations. These took place on September 12th, 13th, and 14th and September 26th, 27th, and 28th respectively and were well covered by the press. Even the hostile Herald greeted them with a degree of humorous grace, saying that:

The advocates of this form of lunacy who come to us from abroad are very respectable and, for the most part, well meaning people, and we are glad to greet them with courteous personal welcomes to our city.53

Turning first to the meeting of the American Woman Suffrage Association, to the presidency of which Erasmus Correll had been elected in 1881, we find that the meetings were held in the newly

53 Omaha Herald, Tuesday, September 12, 1882, p. 2.
re-furnished auditorium of the Baptist Church. The decorations were in keeping with the tenor of the meeting, there being a large motto, "Equality Before the Law", hung at the rear of the platform, while a bust of Pallas Athene graced the top of the organ. Profuse floral gifts lent a gay color to the scene, as did a vase of symbolic prairie grasses.

President Correll called the initial evening meeting to order at 8:00 P.M. and, after prayer and a speech of welcome by the Rev. W. E. Copeland of the Unitarian Church, Mrs. Lucy Stone, the nationally famous suffragist, rose to reply to the welcome on behalf of the guests. Rapt attention was paid to her, especially when she remarked that:

> When our feet touched Nebraska soil we felt as though we should take off our shoes, for the place on which we stood was holy ground. Not because of her grand prairies, her magnificent harvests or her grand limitless boundaries, which we do not have in Massachusetts, but because her men are so noble and progressive that they have offered their wives and mothers and sisters equal rights with themselves.\(^54\)

Following this stirring address, speeches of a general exhortatory nature were offered by Dr. H. B. Blackwell, Mrs. Dinsmore and Governor John W. Hoyt of Wyoming Territory, who replied to a question from Dr. Blackwell that he had never heard of any domestic discord coming from the enfranchisement of women. After this exchange, Mr. Correll called the proceedings to a close, announcing gatherings for 10:00 A.M., 2:30 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. the following day.

The 10:00 A.M. meeting on the 13th of September was given over to speeches of a general exhortatory nature.

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\(^54\) Western Woman's Journal, Vol. II, No. 6, September, 1882
Omaha Herald, Wednesday, September 13, 1882, p. 2.
Omaha Daily Republican, Wednesday, September 13, 1882, p. 1
largely to reports of committees. The Credentials Committee made its report next, with Mrs. Stone, as chairman, at the podium. After outlining the work of the Association since its last (1881) meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, Mrs. Stone remarked that:

At no time in the history of the woman suffrage movement has there been so much to encourage its friends as at this moment. The republicans of Indiana and Kansas in state convention have adopted resolutions in favor of woman suffrage. Iowa, Indiana, Oregon and Nebraska have amendments to their state constitutions pending to give women suffrage. The work both in Europe and America is progressing rapidly, and the day is not far distant when success is sure.55

Other reports and the reading of congratulatory letters followed, after which the meeting adjourned until 2:30.

The afternoon meeting was marked by the presentation of several addresses and reports. Amid a great ovation, Susan B. Anthony rose to offer an address the essence of which was that Nebraskans now faced a great opportunity to be the first state to adopt woman suffrage and that this opportunity must not be lost.

Miss Anthony's offering was followed, first, by a report on the results of the thirteen-year trial of woman suffrage in Wyoming made by Judge John W. Kingman of Cheyenne, Wyoming. As might be expected, the results were interpreted as positive on all counts. Judge Kingman then yielded the floor to Mrs. Belle G. Bigelow of Geneva, Nebraska, the State Secretary, who provided a resume of suffrage work done in Nebraska since the start of the movement. Honor was paid to Mrs. Bloomer, Miss Anthony, Mr. Correll, Mrs. Stanton, Mrs. Brooks, and Mrs. Colby. In closing, Mrs. Bigelow offered these general and in part poetic words of praise:

And now, in conclusion, let me say, all honor to the silent workers in Nebraska; the brave hearts and true hands who have stood by us always. The husbands, the wives, the mothers, yes, and the mothers-in-law, who looks after the 'buttons and babies'. Their names may never be heard, but to their names belong the praise; to their crowns shall be added the stars.

'Not chance of birth or place has made us friends,
Being of times of different climes and nations,
But the endeavor for the self same ends,
With the same hopes and fears and aspirations.56

Following Mrs. Bigelow's lengthy report, several talks of a general and encouraging nature were presented, after which the meeting was adjourned until 7:30 P.M. that same evening.

The evening session was begun by Dr. Blackwell, who announced the names of next year's officers. Mrs. Elizabeth B. Chace was honored with the presidency, while Erasmus Correll and Mrs. C. B. Colby were recognized by appointment as two of the eleven Vice Presidents at Large. Two other Nebraskans were named to posts of responsibility as well. Mrs. Ada M. Bittenbender, as President of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, was named Vice President ex officio, each state having a state organization being granted one Vice Presidency, while Mrs. J. F. Holmes was placed on the Executive Committee.

Addresses constituted the next order of business, President Correll introduced Miss Mary B. Clay, Mrs. Mary E. Haggert, Mrs. Kate I. Kelsey, Judge John W. Kingman and Gov. John W. Hoyt, the last two being "guests from Wyoming", in that order. Each spoke words of hope, confidence and encouragement to the assembly after which the session was adjourned.

Omaha Daily Republican, Thursday, September 14, 1882, p. 4.
The main source of interest at the final session on the 14th, the adoption of the platform and attendant resolutions, now occupied the attention of the delegates. This document, expressive of the spirit and framework of thought typical of the workers who drew it up and secured its adoption, is worthy of full attention and quotation here. It reads as follows:

The American Woman Suffrage Association bases its demand for equal legal and political rights for women on the principles of the Declaration of Independence, viz.:

'Governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed.' Women are governed.

'Taxation without representation is tyranny.' Women are taxed.

'Political power inheres in the people.' Women are people.

'All persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens thereof and of the states wherein they reside.' Women are citizens, therefore.

Resolved, That a government of the people, by the people, for the people, must be a government composed equally of men and women; that the equal cooperation of the sexes is essential alike to a happy home, a refined society, a Christian Church and a republican state;

Whereas, the United States Supreme Court has decided that women are citizens, and as such may be made voters by appropriate state legislation; therefore

Resolved, That societies should be formed in every state to secure full rights of citizenship for women.

Resolved, That every legislature should be petitioned to remove all legal restrictions now imposed by the state upon the equal personal and property rights of women; also to give women suffrage in municipal and town affairs, and in choice of presidential electors (under Art. 2, Sec. 1, paragraph 2 of the United States Constitution); also to submit a constitutional amendment to the voters to abolish all political distinctions on account of sex.
Resolved, That Congress should be petitioned to remove all legal restrictions now imposed by federal or territorial legislation on the equal personal and property rights of women; also to give women suffrage in the territories, any territorial legislation to the contrary notwithstanding; also to submit a constitutional amendment abolishing all political distinctions on account of sex.

Resolved, That the woman suffrage constitutional amendments now pending in Nebraska, Oregon, Indiana, and Iowa, and the school suffrage already granted women in twelve states, are indications of progress and recognition of the justice of our claims.

RESOLUTIONS OF THANKS

Resolved, That we thank the Republican, Herald, and Bee for their reports as full as the crowded conditions of their columns has made it possible.

Resolved, That the thanks of the convention are due to Hon. E. M. Correll, for presiding with admirable grace and ability, and also for his steadfast championship of the rights of women.

Resolved, That we tender to the citizens of Omaha the cordial thanks of our delegates for hospitality generously offered us at a time when an immense concourse of strangers has made such attentions unusually difficult.\footnote{Omaha Daily Republican, Friday, September 15, 1882, p. 8. Western Woman's Journal, Vol. II, No. 6, (September, 1882), p. 287.}

Upon adoption of this platform and body of resolutions, the convention was adjourned.

Hardly had the excitement of the first convention faded when Omaha found itself host to the second, that of the National Woman Suffrage Association, which was held on September 26th, 27th and 28th. This time Boyd's Opera House was honored by being named as the center of the festivities and was decorated to suit the occasion. Convention headquarters were located at the Paxton Hotel.\footnote{Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, September 20, 1882, p. 8. Omaha Daily Republican, Tuesday, September 26, 1882, p. 8.}
It had been hoped that Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton would be able to preside, but her absence abroad made it necessary for the Vice President of the Association, Miss Susan B. Anthony, to assume the chair, dressed, we are told, "in black, relieved by white lace fichu". At her side on the platform were such luminaries as Miss Rachel Foster, Corresponding Secretary, and three ladies of preeminent energy and devotion to the cause, Mrs. Harriet R. Shattuck, Miss Phoebe Couzins, and Mrs. May Wright Sewall, with whose defense of woman suffrage against objectors we are familiar.

Miss Anthony gavelled the convention to official life at 7:45 P.M. on Tuesday and, after an invocation by the Rev. A. F. Sherrill, introduced the Hon. A. J. Poppleton, a Nebraska statesman well-known in Douglas County, who offered the formal welcome of the state to the delegates. As Mr. Poppleton himself remarked, he was a strange choice for this task, as he held anti-suffrage views. However, he admitted, his bias had always been in the direction of advancement for women through education and in favor of equality for women in terms of wages, property rights and personal liberty. To his chagrin, Mr. Poppleton was forced to end his speech in mid-period due to the patent inadequacy, for reading purposes, of the lights in the hall, but Miss Anthony responded graciously nonetheless and, in turn, offered to the convention a lengthy letter from Mrs. Stanton. As might be imagined, this letter welcomed the convention to its work, urged it to ever higher levels of endeavor, and expressed the sincerest of hopes for victory in the Nebraska campaign.

50Omaha Herald, Thursday, September 28, 1882, p. 8.
51Omaha Daily Republican, Wednesday, September 27, 1882, p. 8.
Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, October 4, 1882, p. 8.
Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, October 4, 1882, p. 8.
Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, October 4, 1882, p. 8.
The evenings work was then taken in hand. The chief address of the first session, that by Mrs. Eveleen Mason on the subject "Queens of the Home", proved to be a rhapsody on the blessings to mankind yielded by good homes presided over by loving mothers and was well received. The last item on the night's agenda was a talk by Mrs. May Wright Sewall, who spoke, in terms now thoroughly familiar to us, on "Popular Objections to Woman Suffrage", a theme which appears to have been a favorite of hers. 62

Mrs. Sewall having finished, the session was adjourned and the delegates left the hall with evidences of excitement not completely attributable to the force of the speeches they had heard. Indeed, an announcement had been made, as the convention closed, to the effect that Miss Anthony had accepted a challenge to debate one of the hostile anti-suffrage Nebraska editors, Mr. Edward Rosewater of the Omaha Bee, a paper which never failed to deride both the "cause" and those who labored for it. More will be said of this debate in the proper place, but the prospect of it easily explains the pleased agitation of the departing delegates. 63

The morning of the second day of the convention witnessed the meeting, at 10:30 A.M., of an Executive Session of the Convention which was not open to the general public. The topic of conversation was the Nebraska campaign and final plans were made for assisting in this effort with all available resources.

The afternoon session on the 27th was given over to a series of addresses of varying length and diverse subject matter. In all, eleven ladies took the floor. It is no sign of disrespect to assert that of these eleven, only four require that we pay them reasonably close attention,

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62 Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, October 4, 1882, p. 8.
Omaha Herald, Wednesday, September 27, 1882, p. 8.
the remainder ringing changes on the themes that are already familiar.

First at the podium was Mrs. Marietta Bones of Dakota Territory. She was able to wring tears from the audience by recounting her own unfortunate experiences with a cruel husband whose brutalities drove her to flee with her two children--children whom the courts then ordered her to hand over to her husband. Eventually she was able to secure both a divorce and custody of the children, but at the cost of being left penniless and without hope of alimony. The moral of Mrs. Bones' tale, as she saw it, was pointed and clear. If women were to be able to defend themselves and their rights in society, they had to be given the right to vote so that they would have a forcible voice in shaping and reshaping that society.64

The second significant speaker was Mrs. Clara Neyman of New York, who chose to answer certain objections raised by women themselves to feminine participation in politics. Countering the view that such enterprise would diminish the stature of women, Mrs. Neyman assured her audience that respect for women in general would increase, in that they would no longer be inferior to men in terms of the franchise. More women would find that their usefulness to society would grow from the realization of this by both sexes. Going, perhaps, to extremes, Mrs. Neyman insisted that participation in politics by women would increase conjugal love, decrease brutality to women and enhance the happiness of men. Above all, though, the key benefit of the voting right for women would be that "Suffrage changes women's life into one of happy responsibility and of lively interest in the affairs of government."65

The third speaker of consequence was Mrs. Matilda Hindman of

64Omaha Herald, Thursday, September 28, 1882, p. 8.
65Omaha Daily Republican, Thursday, September 28, 1882, pp. 4 and 8.
66Omaha Herald, Thursday, September 28, 1882, p. 8.
Pennsylvania, "who spoke without manuscript and delivered one of the most logical arguments on the suffrage question that has been delivered during the convention."66 The point of her remarks was that disfranchised classes in any society, regardless of form of government, are powerless to protect their own interests. In our country, she stated, twenty-five million women are disfranchised, hence powerless. As for the much lauded right to petition the government for redress of grievances, she found it largely a farce. Drunken legislators ignored women on their knees before them. Her experience with the problems of women led her to the sole conclusion that it was essential for women to have the franchise if they were to protect their property, homes and personal rights. Women, the weaker sex, needed this protective device more than did the men. To be sure, the conservative element would stand forth against the measure, but the liberal-minded, knowing change to be the great rule of life, would see the logic of the situation and support the proposal.67

The last speaker to offer a lengthy and well-considered appraisal of the suffrage issue during this particular session was Mrs. Helen M. Gougar of Indiana, whose address centered upon the function of the ballot in bringing the beneficent influence of women to bear upon the pressing social problems of the day. This portion of her talk was well received and politely acknowledged. Real interest flared, however, when Mrs. Gougar indicated that she would entertain and dispose of any question put from the floor by male members of the audience. This challenge was met by a Mr. G. M. Hitchcock, Esq., a local property owner of note who engaged

66Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, October 4, 1882, p. 8.
67Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, October 4, 1882, p. 8.
Omaha Herald, Thursday, September 28, 1882, p. 8.
Omaha Daily Republican, Thursday, September 28, 1882, p. 4.
Mrs. Gougar in a lengthy, confused debate over the extent to which participation in politics would contaminate women, Mr. Hitchcock contending that it would, while Mrs. Gougar defended the negative position. This exchange, productive as the saying has it "of more heat than light", was the final occupation of the members during this session.68

The final afternoon session of the convention got underway at three o'clock in the afternoon on the 28th. Mrs. Shattuck of Massachusetts was the first to speak, dwelling in her own way on the idea already stressed by Mrs. Neyman, that the prime reason behind women's desire for the ballot lay in the respect its possession would bring them. To women, the speaker asserted, the ballot was a symbol of equality carrying an importance beyond any practical or expedient value it might have to them.69

Upon the conclusion of Mrs. Shattuck's remarks, Mrs. Saxon of New Orleans rose to offer some sharp criticism of the tone taken toward the ladies of the convention in the pages of the Omaha Herald. She remarked that:

Ridicule is not argument, but it hurts, and the ladies composing this convention are entitled to something better.70

Mrs. Saxon was referring to comments of an editorial nature made by the editor, Dr. George Miller, in the issue of September 28. Dr. Miller went so far as to describe Mrs. Sewall as "the Wabash female" and "the Wabash crank". Even more stinging, he attacked Mr. Poppleton's eulogy of Miss Anthony, which had praised her as a stimulator of progress in the "woman movement", by asking:

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68 Omaha Daily Republican, Thursday, September 28, 1882, p. 4.  
Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, October 4, 1882, p. 8.  
69 Omaha Daily Republican, Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.  
Omaha Herald, Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.  
70 Omaha Herald, Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.
Where is the progress of a cause that has been going backward for a quarter of a century as championed by the Stanton and the Anthonys? 71

Miss Phoebe Couzins of St. Louis interrupted Mrs. Saxon in order to add her own words of indignation on this matter, but in the midst of her flow of warm language, Mrs. Sewall asked for the floor and stated that, though she thanked her defenders for their comments, it was necessary to say that the words of the Herald did not trouble her. Indeed, as the Herald reporter tells us, "she was glad to have felt for once the sting of personal insult—the sting that those who had gone before in the cause had felt. This was the first time in her suffrage work that she had ever met a discourteous word. Her opponents had hitherto spoken the English language in a refined dialect." 72

It might be expected that Miss Anthony would not remain silent. She did not. At the conclusion of Mrs. Sewall's remarks, she insisted that she "regarded this demonstrating on the part of the Herald and the opponents of woman suffrage as one of weakness, and that the enemy showed they knew the suffragists had power to hurt them." 73

Having taken the floor, Miss Anthony used the opportunity to respond publicly to a question asked her before the session began relative to the desirability of securing a Sixteenth (Woman Suffrage) Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. While indicating that she was in favor of such an amendment, she stressed her optimism regarding the chances for success of the Nebraska amendment and suggested the classes likely to vote for and against it. Recalling the experience of Colorado,

71 Ibid., Thursday, September 28, 1882, p. 2.
72 Ibid., Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.
73 Omaha Daily Republican, Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.
Omaha Herald, Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.
Native-born white men, temperance men, liberal-minded, decent men voted for it. Against it were the rank and file of Mexicans in southern Colorado, miners, foreigners, German, Irish. The Negro also voted against it. Another class was that imbued with the bigotry and superstition of the past, who believed if the right were given her, that St. Paul would have greatly erred.74

Having said this, Miss Anthony left the speaker's stand and adjourned the session until 7:30 P.M. that evening.

The evening gathering began its work with yet another talk by Mrs. Neyman of New York which, to the surprise of many, took an anti-prohibition stand on the liquor question. Her essential position was that "prohibition laws are of unrepublican tendencies and ought to be opposed in the name of freedom". It was her view that "moral suasion" was a better anti-liquor weapon than were legal statutes when urged by inspired temperance lecturers and reformers.75

This rather unexpected statement of opinion was followed by the reading of a telegram of support and encouragement by the California Woman Suffrage Association and by addresses offered by Mrs. Minor of Missouri and Miss Couzins. Both ladies covered old ground on the suffrage issue and exhibited the warmth of emotion to be expected of workers who considered themselves shock troops of an important reform standing at a crucial juncture in its history. Mrs. Minor concluded her peroration by urging the men of Nebraska "to stand before the world and prove that they had been educated up to the point where they were willing to give woman an equal political status with themselves and not assign to her a position inferior to that enjoyed by the Chinese coolie".76

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74Ibid.
75Ibid.
76Ibid., p. 8.
Omaha Republican, Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.
The next to last order of business at this session was the adoption of a resolution and the offering of thanks to those whose efforts had combined to make it a success. The resolution, adopted unanimously, read as follows:

Resolved, That Nebraska has the full sympathy and aid of the National Woman Suffrage Association in its present effort to secure to all citizens equality before the law, by popular vote.77

The thanks were tendered by Mrs. D. Brooks on behalf of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, who expressed the appreciation of Nebraska workers for the presence of the convention in the state at this time and for past and future support.

Finally, the officers for the coming year were announced, it being stated that the presidency would be held by Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, while Vice Presidencies at Large would be occupied by Mrs. Matilda Joslyn Gage, Miss Phoebe Couzin and Mrs. Olympia Brown. These announcements preceded the falling of the final gavel, after which those who so desired, and there were many, retired to the parlors of the Paxton Hotel where a reception was held. The Herald reporter remarked on the throng attending this informal social occasion, saying that so dense was the crowd that movement was nearly impossible. Most who so wished, however, had the privilege of shaking hands with the principal officers and of hearing a few last words of encouragement from Miss Anthony, Miss Rachel Foster, the corresponding secretary, and Mrs. Colby, who had carried the burden of making all local arrangements.78

77 Omaha Daily Republican, Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.
78 Omaha Herald, Friday, September 29, 1882, p. 8.
The Anthony-Rosewater Debate

It is not a matter for surprise that, following the adjournment of the second of the two suffragist conventions, the whole topic of the amendment should virtually disappear from the press, except for random comments pro and con. The year 1882 was, after all, one in which midterm elections were to be held and the highly partisan newspapers had political concerns of a pressing nature to occupy their strongly flavored columns. There were congressmen to be elected as well as a lengthy slate of state and local officials. However, the suffrage issue did find itself in the limelight once again before election day, the occasion being that of the public debate between Miss Susan B. Anthony, Vice President of the National Woman Suffrage Association, and Mr. Edward Rosewater, prominent Democratic partisan and editor of the Omaha Weekly Bee, a gentleman whose anti-suffrage sentiments were well known throughout the state.

This debate, the challenge to which has been mentioned previously, was scheduled for Friday, October 13, 1882, at 8:00 P.M. The location was announced as Boyd's Opera House in the city of Omaha. The topic was to be the simple question, "Shall Women Vote?"

That interest in the suffrage question had not yet faded is shown by the fact that far more people tried to attend the debate than could be accommodated by the facilities available. The cress circle and gallery were filled by 7:30 P.M., while the "general admission" area was occupied to capacity by 7:45. Indeed, even though a charge of twenty-five cents per person was levied, a sufficient number of people had to be turned away to form a throng outside the Opera House that absolutely filled
Farnum Street. It was estimated that at least two thousand eager patrons were disappointed. 79

Precisely at 8:00 P.M., Phoebe Couzins, who had been asked to chair the debate, called for order. To her right sat Mr. Rosewater, while Miss Anthony occupied the left flank position, both resting comfortable in plush chairs. As had been agreed between the disputants, Miss Anthony was to speak first and to utilize approximately an hour in making her position clear. Mr. Rosewater was to follow, observing the same time limitations. Rebuttals would be allowed, followed by a rising vote on the part of the audience.

In point of fact, Miss Anthony held the rostrum for an hour and ten minutes before relinquishing it to her opponent. The time was used by Miss Anthony to pound home a "theme with variations", the theme being that disfranchisement may be equated with degradation of the individual in the economic and social as well as in the political spheres of life. It was her contention that a disfranchised person is a person helpless to defend or work for his or her own best interests in the face of opposition by enfranchised opponents. As she read the evidence no group of people will be heard and heeded by those who exercise the power of government unless they possess the political power to compel a hearing by those persons. Miss Anthony, addressing herself to the workers and Negroes in the audience, recalled to their minds that the working men of England and

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79 Omaha Weekly Bee, Wednesday, October 18, 1882, tipped-in unnumbered page between pages 4 and 5.
Omaha Herald, Saturday, October 14, 1882, p. 8.
the colored men of our country remained virtually voiceless and helpless until they received the right to vote, the former by the Reform Act of 1867, the latter by the Fifteenth Amendment of 1870. The women of today, she insisted, find themselves in the same unfortunate position as did English working men and American Negros before they were enfranchised. Indeed, it was her opinion that contemporary American women are as much at the mercy of politicians in the political sphere, and capitalists in the economic sphere, as are the Chinamen who spend their labor, without a voice in their own fates, helping to build up the country. Only the right to vote, she concluded, would permit women to "clutch justice from the capitalist, and command respectful consideration from the politician". Having underlined her basic point with a wealth of illustrations, Miss Anthony resumed her seat, amid loud applause, and waited to see what Mr. Rosewater would have to say. She was not long in finding out. Her opponent, known for his graceful carriage and stage presence, began at once to make his own position clear.

At the outset, he expressed his personal regard for the numerous qualities of the finest nature possessed by women. There was no disagreement between himself and his opponent on that score. However, he did disagree with Miss Anthony, and with suffragists generally, with respect to the channels through which those fine qualities might be brought to bear upon society. It was his opinion, and he cited as examples the wife and mother of the martyred Garfield, that the

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80 *Omaha Daily Republican*, Saturday, October 14, 1882, p.5.
positions of wife and mother offered the most effectual opportunities for the exercise by women of true, deep, and lasting influence upon society. In these realms, he insisted, woman's influence is virtually beyond measure and, exercised with loving skill and concern, can virtually make society whatever she wishes to make it.

Having made this point clear, Mr. Rosewater proceeded to take issue with some of the pro-suffrage arguments offered by his opponent and by her allies. Suffragists assert, he noted, that suffrage is an inherent right which belongs to women as well as to men. Mr. Rosewater denied this contention, stating that:

Suffrage is not an inherent right. It is a duty which is demanded of those who can enforce the results of suffrage and whose mental grasp and physical constitution renders them fit to carry upon their shoulders the burdens of state.\(^{81}\)

Pressing on, Mr. Rosewater denied that women are physically qualified to participate in politics and that women are entitled to vote because they are taxed. Going even further, he suggested that far from being hurt by state laws which, allegedly, discriminate against women, the sex enjoys even greater personal and property rights than do men. The able editor continued his remarks by denying that women are injured by discriminatory rates of pay in their daily work. Far from it. As he saw the matter, "women are on an equal footing with men, and working women can earn on an average more than the common laborer".\(^{82}\)

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\(^{81}\) *Omaha Herald*, Saturday, October 14, 1882, p. 8.

\(^{82}\) *Ibid.*
Finally, and as a point which he considered a telling one, Mr. Rosewater expressed his opinion that women should not sit in legislatures as an act of delicacy on their part. He reminded his audience that "at one recent session (of the state legislature) it was necessary to pass a law to punish offenses against chastity and to pass a law to prevent bulls from running at large". Such matters, he averred, were not fit for the ears of pure and gentle ladies.

If one must summarize the basic theme of Mr. Rosewater's address, the summary might be stated in these terms: that home is woman's natural center in our society, that the job of being a wife and mother is work enough for any woman, that the right of suffrage would place added burdens on an already over-burdened sex, and that no greater tyranny of man over woman could be exercised than that which would compel her to perform duties for which she is, by nature, unfitted.

Following Mr. Rosewater's address, rebuttals were offered which were turned into a three-cornered debate due to the insistence of Miss Couzins on inserting her comments. Finally, a comedy of sorts ensued as each of the three tried to "have the last word". Irritated, Mr. Rosewater was pushed to far enough beyond the bounds of propriety as to wonder how the federal government might be carried on if thirty-eight "Senatoresses" found themselves confined to nursery duties for six months at a time. Audience reaction to these remarks let Mr. Rosewater know that he had gone a bit too far, so he subsided.

When all three principals had taken their seats, Miss Couzins

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83 Ibid.
closed the proceedings and called for the vote of the audience. As the *Herald* reports:

First she asked all those who favored giving women the ballot for protection to rise and a majority rose. Then she asked those who would 'withhold the ballot from defenseless women' (and be mean generally) to rise and a half-dozen ladies and gentlemen rose. It was after eleven when the meeting adjourned.  

Thus ended one of the more colorful confrontations of the 1882 campaign. The impact of the arguments, pro and con, upon the secret thoughts of the audience is impossible to gauge, for Miss Couzins' question, as put to it, was a "loaded" one, but Mr. Rosewater appears to have been moved. Speaking in 1906, Rev. Newton Mann, Miss Anthony's pastor for eighteen years, remarked that "At all events, this woman who talked straight on, discarding all tricks of oratory, won the hard-headed editor's hearty esteem, and ever after he sought to do her honor when she came to the city".

The Election of 1882

We are aware of the intention of ladies and gentlemen of both great suffrage associations to remain in Nebraska until election day, adding their voices to the chorus of indigenous workers. Following the schedules already listed, they went about their tasks with vigor, receiving on the whole a courteous and dignified welcome and looking forward to election day, on November 7, with hope.

Election day dawned bright and promising, not only in Omaha, but

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84 *Omaha Herald*, Saturday, October 14, 1882, p. 8.
across the state. Reporting "clear and genial weather" for all of Nebraska, the Herald forecast a heavy turnout of voters, many of them anxious to vote early so as to avoid being caught in last minute lines.\textsuperscript{86} From the moment the polls opened, pro-suffrage ladies were on hand, ready to carry into effect a state-wide plan of last minute solicitations which provoked much comment. At each polling place, a refreshment booth offering coffee, cake and sandwiches was set up, and voters were urged to partake of these as well as of a few final words of argument in favor of the amendment. With tongue in cheek, the Republican surmised that:

\begin{quote}
Instead of the usual 'What'll you have-- whiskey or beer?' the invitation "Come and take a drink of coffee with me' will be heard. We advise the suffragists to put handsome ward-workers in the field, and if they do, we venture the assertion that the indication to sip coffee will be quite generally accepted, even if it doesn't catch a vote every time.\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quote}

The reception afforded the ladies at the polls was generally of a decorous nature, only a few "happy drunks" being in evidence at scattered polling places. The trade in edibles was brisk and, in general, the scene was one to rejoice the heart of pro-suffragists. As Mr. Colby remarked, "It looked like a holiday picnic--the well-dressed people, the flowers, the badges, and the flags." \textsuperscript{88}

In some places, carriages were used as mobile advertisements, being draped with streamers bearing pro-amendment slogans, while nearly all refreshment pavilions were decked with banners reading

\begin{quote}
86\textit{Omaha Herald}, Tuesday, November 7, 1882, p.2.
87\textit{Omaha Daily Republican}, Tuesday, November 7, 1882, p. 8.
"Are Women Citizens?", "Taxation Without Representation Is Tyranny!", "Governments Derive Their Just Powers From The Consent Of The Governed", "Equality Before The Law", etc. All in all, a pleasant sight was afforded by the ladies and their decorations. One wonders, due to lack of evidence, if any of the workers at the polls in Omaha had knowledge beforehand of certain anti-suffrage work of a dubious nature alleged by the Republican to be in process.

A leading editorial in the Republican's election day issue warned that there was a good deal of underhand trickery going on in the city to nullify the vote in favor of the Woman Suffrage Amendment. The Rosewater-Miller outfit had been secretly at work for the past week devising ways and means to cheat the women of the state out of the votes to which the amendment was entitled. 89

The method of cheating was specified in a warning cast in these words:

Read your tickets! It was never so important as today that every voter read his tickets through, and see that he is not cheated out of his suffrage rights by the men who are trying to ruin the Republican Party by fraud and forgery. The main stock in trade of the Rosewater democrats is bogus tickets. 90

One might discount this statement as mere campaign bombast had not Mrs. Colby herself insisted, after the event, that many tickets were fraudulently printed, such ballots containing no mention of the

89 Omaha Daily Republican, Tuesday, November 7, 1882, p. 2.
90 Ibid.
suffrage amendment at all. Also, as she demands be remembered:

Tickets which contained no mention of the amendment were counted against it, as also were tickets having any technical defect or omission; for instance, tickets having the abbreviated form, 'For the Amendment', were counted against it.\textsuperscript{91}

Further strength is added to Mrs. Colby's charge by a perusal of the detailed voting instruction relative to the amendment issue offered by the Republican. These instructions admonished the pro-suffrage voter to be absolutely certain that his ballot read: "For proposed amendment to the constitution relating to the rights of suffrage," such being the official form acceptable to the authorities. Further, the editor warned the voter to take careful note as to whether a separate box for suffrage ballots was in evidence at his polling place. If such a box had been provided, the ballot relating to the amendment should be placed therein. However, simple as this sounds, a danger lurked in it. Before placing his second ballot, the ticket of candidates for office, in the other box, the voter must make certain that it contained no space in which to vote for or against the amendment, since such a blank ballot on the issue might well be counted against it, thus cancelling out the legitimate one. Where no separate box was provided, "then should every friend of the amendment see to it that he deposits a ballot therefore in the regular ballot box, and we are of the opinion that such ballot should be separate and distinct from the ticket of candidates which he deposits."\textsuperscript{92} Whether or not one sympathizes with the suffrage cause, honest folk must agree with the editor's remark that:

\textsuperscript{91}History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. III, p. 693.
\textsuperscript{92}Omaha Daily Republican, Tuesday, November 7, 1882, p. 2.
It is unfortunate that the formal mode of voting on the amendment has not been decided by some competent and authoritative tribunal, and officially announced, with necessary instructions to those in charge of the polls and the ballot boxes. But inasmuch as that important matter has been overlooked or neglected, it now remains with the voters of the state who favor the amendment to see that their ballots are deposited in such form that they will be counted, and will 'count' in favor of the measure.93

At this late date it is difficult, if not impossible, to judge of the true extent to which corruption played a role in the counting of votes relative to the suffrage proposal, but on another plane a certainty may be asserted: namely that the Nebraska ladies at the polls, and one Omaha-based worker in particular, had a busy and an exciting day. The Omaha worker was Miss Phoebe Couzins, who was one of those who had stayed on in Nebraska after the conventions. Miss Couzins made the rounds of Omaha polling places in a carriage, accompanied by three other ladies, and attempted to speak at several locations. In the First Ward she was shouted down by rowdies in one of the few exhibitions of discourtesy to mar the day. Undaunted, Miss Couzins proceeded to the Fourth Ward, where an event had transpired which caused her to lose her temper, a temper which, if contemporary comments are to be trusted, was always hair-triggered and easily jarred off.

That very morning, a group of ladies had approached the Fourth Ward voting booth, passed by the ten refreshment tables, and demanded the right to cast their ballots for the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Nebraska. The officials present, being confused and not thoroughly aware of the law on this point, allowed eight of the ladies to vote. At that point Mr. G. M. Hitchcock, Esq., who came to our attention previously, appeared and challenged the right

93 Ibid.
of the women to vote for the office of Superintendent. Mr. Hitchcock pointed out that while women did have the right to vote at district school elections, this privilege was not theirs relative to state offices. The ladies, yielding to the point of law, retired.

Miss Couzins was informed of this development and, after lunch, drove to the Fourth Ward where she confronted Mr. Hitchcock, who had remained at the spot, presumably "on guard". A heated exchange occurred which ended only when Miss Couzins denounced her male opponent as "not worthy of the United States, Nebraska, Omaha, or the mother who bore him", and drove off. Not content with what she had said already, this angry lady appeared at the Sixth Ward polling place later in the afternoon and spoke bitterly to the crowd about her feelings relative to Mr. Hitchcock.94

It may be presumed that it was a weary band of workers which returned home after the polls closed that night across Nebraska. A full, active day had been had by all, but weariness was no doubt tempered by the feeling of optimism which suffused the campaign as a whole and which had mounted as it drew to a close. Next day, however, as returns began to filter in, this optimism was extinguished. It gradually became evident that the amendment had been resoundingly defeated. Even the Republican headed its report on the issue, "Suffrage Buried by an Avalanche of Votes Beyond the Possibility of Resurrection".95

The final official figures, for: 25,756, against: 50,693, were not available for nearly a week, but even partial returns were

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94 *Omaha Daily Republican*, Wednesday, November 8, 1882, p. 8.
95 *Ibid.*, Thursday, November 9, 1882, p. 4.
convincingly indicative of defeat.96

Aftermath

It was, then, in an atmosphere of gloom and more than a little indignation, that a special meeting was called by Susan B. Anthony for Wednesday evening, November 8, in Boyd’s Opera House. The gathering being a public one, open to all who were interested in the suffrage movement, the Opera House was filled to capacity by 8:00 P.M.

The platform was occupied by Miss Anthony, Miss Couzins, Mrs. Blake, Mrs. Saxon, Mrs. Shattuck and Mrs. Haidman, all of the National Association, all of whom presented short talks of from five to ten minutes duration.

The tenor of the speechmaking varied little from speaker to speaker. The orators tended to review the course of the campaign, the results of their experiences on election day. Determination was expressed not to yield but to fight on until victory was theirs. Particularly noteworthy was Miss Anthony’s statement to the effect that she too would fight on, but not on the battlefield of state elections such as the one just lost. In her opinion, the true route to success was via a Sixteenth (Suffrage) Amendment to the Federal Constitution. "She had had enough of soliciting votes for the cause."97 Nebraska itself, she asserted, was totally impossible to canvass as it was such a large state with such a scattered population. In closing, she asked

96Official Report of the Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Election held November 7, 1882, (no publication date), p. 2.
97Omaha Daily Republican, Thursday, November 9, 1882, p. 8.
her Nebraska friends never to submit the question of suffrage to the popular vote again.98

Mrs. Colby struck a more typical note in her assertion that the gathering had not met "to sound a requiem for a lost cause, but to exchange congratulations for the grand work done, and to implore God for the future." At any rate, she was pleased to note that the vote cast on Tuesday was the largest ever cast for woman suffrage in a single state.

Mrs. Saxon contented herself with a eulogy of Miss Anthony, showing herself to be an unwitting prophet when, at the close of her oration, she declared that "the name of Susan B. Anthony will flourish when the names of Nebraska editors shall rot in oblivion and forgetfulness."99

Upon the conclusion of Mrs. Saxon's remarks, Miss Anthony rose to declare herself flattered, and to call a most practical matter to the attention of those present, specifically, that the National Association had invested over $5000 in the Nebraska campaign and was not $500 in debt. A silver donation by those who were friends of the movement was requested and ushers moved through the hall with containers to collect it.

Up to this point, the proceedings had been marked by decorum, but with the silver collection in hand, Miss Phoebe Couzins asked for the floor and offered the audience something of a spectacle. Admitting at the outset that she was too angry to talk, she launched into a tirade against Mr. Rosewater of the Bee, Dr. Miller of the Herald and, to no one's surprise, Mr. G. M. Hitchcock, Esq., a gentleman who, by this

98*Omaha Herald*, Thursday, November 9, 1882, p. 8.
99Ibid.
time, must have taken on some aspects of a Nemesis to the passionate Phoebe. As for Mr. Rosewater, she threatened to have her stalwart six-foot brother thrash him. (The gallant editor, it should be mentioned, was observed to move to a seat very close to the exit.) Mr. Hitchcock received a second helping of the abuse he had taken the day before, being informed once more that he was unworthy of the mother who bore him.

Just how far Miss Couzins might have gone in her rage is interesting to speculate upon, but we shall never know the answer, for Mayor James E. Boyd of Omaha, beside himself with anger, answered Phoebe's assertion relative to Mr. Hitchcock with a truly sentorian shout: "That is as false as hell!"100 As might be expected, confusion reigned at this point and there were those present who feared a riot. Discretion demanded the adjournment of the meeting immediately and this was done. As a footnote to the whole affair, the editor of the Republican suggested two days later that, "Miss Couzins perhaps ought to spell her name with two 's's instead of a 'z'.101

Our task to this point has been that of suggesting the course of development followed by the woman suffrage movement in Nebraska from its beginnings under the auspices of Mrs. Bloomer, through the years of organization and gathering strength, to the "day of battle" on November 7, 1882, when all previous work was put to the test. Were this essay a novel, the ending would have been contrived as a happy one. Suffrage would have been won and the story could have been completed in a warm haze of mutual congratulations and high hopes for the

100Omaha Daily Republican, Thursday, November 9, 1882, p. 8.
101Omaha Daily Republican, Friday, November 10, 1882, p. 2.
future. Real life, however, provides fully as many defeats as victories, and workers for the suffrage cause had suffered a stunning setback.

It should not be a matter for surprise, then, that we are about to enter a period of doldrums relative to the movement in Nebraska. "Lost in the horse latitudes", the cause will languish, showing only intermittent signs of life. Indeed, not until 1913 will true vigor return to it and efforts on the 1882 scale be made to achieve victory. It is this dull, quiet period and then to the happier time of fresh effort and eventual victory that we must now turn.
CHAPTER IV

THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN NEBRASKA, 1883-1913

A Period of Waiting, 1883-1911

Writing in 1886, Mrs. Colby characterized the attitude of woman suffrage sympathizers in Nebraska as being one of "hopeful waiting". Both words are significant. While waiting seems a passive posture to adopt, it does suggest anticipation that, in future, affairs may shape themselves closer to a desired pattern. Hope may also appear passive, but it too expresses a sensitivity to the truth that while matters may have taken an unfortunate turn in the past, there is no reason for total despair or abject surrender. Both hope and waiting, then, can be of an active, even a dynamic variety, and such seems to have been the case in Nebraska.

As evidence for the point of view just expressed, one might well consider the fact that annual conventions of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association continued to be held, plans made, and work carried out. Indeed, the only year after 1882 which failed to witness a convention was 1893, when all efforts were concentrated on making an effective presentation at the Chicago World's Fair. The locations of the annual gathering varied. Omaha and Lincoln were the favored locations, but

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2 Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 803.

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other cities in the eastern half of the state were occasionally so honored, Grand Island, York, Kearney, Fremont, Hastings and Beatrice being examples.

It would be a mistake to conceive of these conventions as being of an elaborate and lengthy nature, attended by large numbers of interested ladies. A typical convention of the 1880's lasted, at the most, two days and was of the simplest possible description. Taking the Lincoln convention of 1885 as an example, we find that fewer than one hundred delegates attended the gathering, which consisted of an afternoon and an evening session on Friday, January 16th and a single morning session the next day. Speeches by various Nebraska leaders, two musical selections, and the election of officers for the next year made up the entire program. It is sad to note that the press failed to devote more space to the event than a plain announcement of its occurrence and program required. Reports of the content of addresses and of resolutions passed are conspicuous by their absence. It might be mentioned in passing that even such a brief notice as this was an improvement on the treatment received by the York convention of the previous year, a convention passed by in utter silence by the York newspapers and mentioned only in a single-line comment by the big urban dailies of the state.

The conventions of the 1890's, especially mid and late '90's, received somewhat better press coverage. This was due, in large part, to one technique of publicity-seeking used in that decade, namely the setting up of special Suffrage Headquarters booths at public gatherings

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such as Chautauquas, Grand Army of the Republic encampments, Epworth League conferences, etc. The suffragists were able in this way to secure notice as part of the attention paid to the larger meeting.4

Though the post-1882 conventions of the Nebraska association were sparsely attended and relatively unpublicized, one must not assume that they were merely symbolic functions devoted only to the maintenance of morale. Serious work was planned and carried out, as a perusal of such Annual Reports of the association as are extant will show. The presidential addresses and committee reports contained in these documents reveal that eighteen separate techniques were employed in the late 1880's, throughout the 1890's, and into the new century to publicize and further the suffragist interest and gain adherents to the cause. These may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. Suffrage campaigns in other states were assisted financially. The sums ranged from thirty-four dollars to one hundred dollars.

2. Suffrage Headquarters booths were set up at large public gatherings including state and county fairs, chautauquas, Old Settlers' picnics, Grand Army of the Republic encampments, etc.

3. Attempts were made to secure adoption of resolutions endorsing suffrage principles by various organizations such as Home and Foreign Missionary Societies, the Epworth League, political parties, etc.

4. Suffrage articles were sent to newspapers across the state in the hope that they would be published. In connection with this activity, ladies were urged to interview their local newspaper editors and press them to accept and use such material.

5. Local suffrage associates were kept active and new ones formed wherever possible.

6. Ladies were asked to use their personal influence to swing friends and neighbors to a pro-suffrage position.

7. Clergymen were approached by suffragists and asked to preach pro-suffrage sermons.

8. Church groups of all kinds were asked to endorse a resolution stating their support of all movements directed toward the emancipation of women, socially and politically.

9. Speaking tours by both native Nebraskans and suffragists from other states were organized. As part of this effort, Nebraska's university women were urged to make themselves available as orators.

10. Debates on the suffrage question were organized in the High Schools of the state.

11. Leaflets containing the opinions of eminent Nebraska men and women relative to the suffrage issue were compiled and published.

12. Poster campaigns advertising woman suffrage were waged. Any suitable location in town, in the country, and at public meeting places were utilized for this purpose.

13. Bound volumes of suffrage tracts and leaflets were placed in local public libraries by the suffrage clubs or associations served by these facilities.

14. Political candidates were recipients of letters from suffragists, asking their opinions on the issue and stating those of the writer.

15. Special committees of writers were established having the task of corresponding with all public and/or prominent men who expressed positive or negative views on woman suffrage. Special care was taken to respond to negative comments in such manner as to correct misconceptions and false statements.

16. Local groups were set up to investigate histories and books on civics and economics used in the schools. False or misleading statements in such works were to be called to the attention of the authors and publishers so that changes might be made.
17. County suffrage associations assumed the task of working diligently to secure the election of state senators and representatives favorable to women suffrage and likely to vote as well as talk for it.

18. Prizes were established for essays in favor of woman suffrage written by students in the degree granting institutions in the state.\(^5\)

It will be admitted readily that such activities as those just listed do not stir the blood or excite the imagination with their scope, but they do stand as evidence of continued effort for the cause on a scale suited to the numbers, resources and available time of the Nebraska enthusiasts. It is plain that the defeat suffered in 1882 did not paralyze the will or snuff out the enthusiasm of the Nebraska Movement.

In addition to convention-sparked enthusiasm, it must be admitted that developments on the legislative scene also played a role in keeping pro-suffrage men and women alert and interested. The years between 1883 and 1913 witnessed yearly efforts by members of the Nebraska House and Senate to achieve some sort of break-through on the suffrage front. Not a single one of these proposed measures was enacted into law, but knowledge of their existence and discussion of their possibilities helped to sustain suffrage-oriented men and women who had little else to buttress their courage.

Typical of the measures mentioned above were Senate File No. 253 (1891), which proposed the granting of the city and village franchise to all adult females, and Senate File No. 195 (1893), which

\(^5\)The data above were drawn from: Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, Annual Report (Humboldt, Nebraska: Leader Print) for the years 1886, 1888, 1892, 1897, 1900, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909. See presidential addresses and reports of standing committees.
proposed to allow adult female property owners to vote for such officers as County Superintendent of Public Instruction and County Commissioners.\(^6\)

The single bill aimed at securing full suffrage for women during the post-1882 decades was House Roll No. 212 (1893), which failed to pass its house of origin by five votes.\(^7\)

It would be possible, if it were desirable or necessary, to record the seemingly unending series of suffrage bills introduced in the Nebraska legislature, thus tiring and even irritating the reader. Let it be said, simply, that bill after bill was introduced as the years of the 1890's and the early 1900's passed. They varied slightly in aim, as the examples cited above indicated, but the themes already set forth in the titles listed were the central ones. One thing shared by all these bills, without a single exception, was failure. The one reason for mentioning them at all is that they offer at least some concrete evidence that the suffrage cause was not forgotten after its single defeat in 1882, and that it continued to generate at least a bit of interest in the breasts of legislators. One surmises, too, that it reflected certain pressures, however weak, extant in the home districts of the gentlemen who introduced the various bills. If so, we are fortunate in having this implied evidence, for the supporters of woman suffrage in these "doldrum years" tended to exhibit a quietude and a reluctance to enter into public debate which bring


despair to the heart of the historian, who has more than a little trouble interpreting silence.

There is at least a negative pleasure to be derived from the realization that the state of affairs just described was not peculiar to Nebraska and thus indicative of some flaw indigenous to the suffragists within the borders of the Cornhusker State. Miss Flexner reports that a similar condition of lassitude prevailed throughout the nation.⁸

While it is true that the two great suffrage associations had completed the process of merging by February of 1890, thus creating the National American Woman Suffrage Association with Mrs. Stanton at its head, the change seemed to herald decay rather than fresh vigor. Mrs. Stanton, for example, became increasingly interested in the divorce question and in an educated (as opposed to universal) franchise. The able Lucy Stone withdrew from the new association after the convention of 1892. Mrs. Stanton's death in 1902 cleared the way for the still vigorous Miss Anthony to take over as president, but she passed away in 1906, leaving a vacuum filled only in part by Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, whose talents, though many and remarkable, did not include administrative ability.⁹ To quote Miss Flexner's moderate comment, "Such a situation was not conducive to much activity."ⁱ⁰

The portrait of affairs drawn in the preceding paragraphs is not one likely to move the reader with its color, highlights are dynamic

⁸Flexner, Century of Struggle, p. 248.
⁹Ibid., p. 220.
¹⁰Ibid., p. 249.
tension. It reminds one of the atmosphere that prevails in the locker room of a defeated football team after a hard-fought game. However, change, as the philosophers tell us, is a rule of life and we shall witness some alterations in suffrage fortunes without undue amazement. We shall turn our attention then, at this point, to an examination of the effects of a specific development which infused new life and vigor into the woman suffrage movement in Nebraska and provided that determination — grit, if you will — which carried the workers to final victory.

The Initiative and Referendum Amendment

It is a commonplace in history textbooks that the Progressive Movement lent impetus to various pieces of social legislation. Indeed, it has been credited with providing the final emotional thrust which carried the woman suffragists to national victory. Whether this be true or not, there can be little doubt that the enthusiasm for the political reforms known as the Initiative and Referendum, sparked by the Progressive Movement, was significant relative to the woman suffrage enterprise in Nebraska.

In order to trace this significance, we must begin with the effort to amend the Nebraska constitution of 1875 as made by the legislature in 1911. As Professor James C. Olson has shown, the Progressive ferment created powerful tensions within both great parties in Nebraska. The result of this tension was the election in 1910 of a legislature dominated by Democrats, many of whom were devoted to reform. Among these Democratic electees was one Charles M. Skiles, a lawyer, whose home was in David City and who represented the 19th
electoral district. It was Senator Skiles who, on January 11, 1911, introduced Senate File No. 1, entitled:

A bill for a joint resolution proposing amendments to Section 1 and Section 10, Article 3, of the constitution of the State of Nebraska.\footnote{Nebraska, Senate Journal, 1911, p. 101.}

This resolution, in essence, would add both Initiative and Referendum articles to that document. On January 12th, second reading was held and the bill was referred to the Committee on Constitutional Amendments. The bill was reported out with favorable recommendations and was considered by the Senate sitting as a Committee of the whole, on February 3, 1911. After deciding that more time was needed for debate, the Senate, on February 14th, allowed third reading to be held and put the bill on its passage.

The vote taken revealed unanimity among those present, the results being 26 Ayes, 0 Nays, 7 absent and not voting.\footnote{Ibid., p. 265.}

The House, to which the bill was now sent, considered it and reported to the Senate on March 13, 1911, that it had passed the resolution. The final step, that of signature by the governor, Honorable Chester H. Aldrich, took place on March 24, 1911.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 505, 632.}

The Petition Campaign of 1913-1914

With the Initiative and Referendum now among the political techniques available to citizens of Nebraska and encouraged by suffrage victories in the states of Washington and California in 1910 and 1911, we find that the women were not slow to see the possibilities of the
situation. In November of 1912, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, a tireless correspondent, suggested by letter that an Initiative petition for an amendment to the Nebraska state constitution which would grant suffrage to women be circulated. Mrs. H. H. Wheeler of Omaha, who had gradually risen to an eminent position among Nebraska suffragists, accepted the onerous task of serving as State Chairman and an effort was launched in the summer of 1913 to secure the necessary signatures required so that a suffrage amendment might be placed before the people of Nebraska at the general election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 1914.

The petition campaign of 1913 was notable for several of its aspects. First of all, the factor of organization was conspicuously in evidence. Under Mrs. Wheeler's able guidance, committees were set up in each electoral district in the state. These committees operated in a concerted fashion, with a constant interchange of information going on between district and state headquarters.

The actual work of securing the required number of signatures, namely fifteen percent of the voting population, or in round numbers, 50,000 signatures, was launched at the Omaha meeting of the State Suffrage Association on Sunday, June 15, 1913. Workers and officers from all over the state came together at a luncheon meeting in order to plan their strategy. It was announced, afterward, that:

July 16 has been set aside as the date when the State Suffrage Association will make a special attempt to secure the necessary signatures to guarantee a
referendum on extending the ballot to Nebraska women...
Petitions will be sent out and circulated in every county on that day. To arouse special interest, exercises will be held.\textsuperscript{15}

Mrs. Frank Harrison, the able State Executive Secretary, struck a stern note when she insisted that "Women must abandon petty ways of doing things. The church social and pink teas included, and get down to business."\textsuperscript{16}

The suffrage workers of Nebraska heard and obeyed. On July 16th, known to the supporters of the cause as "Petition Day", the district meetings were held across the state and the arduous task of securing signatures was begun. In the First District, Omaha, a particularly lively gathering was held. Approximately one hundred workers shared a morning meeting in the Assembly Hall of the Omaha Y.M.C.A. and enjoyed an afternoon convocation in the meeting rooms of the Rome Hotel. An equally enthusiastic gathering met in Lincoln at the state headquarters located at 1236 "O" Street.\textsuperscript{17}

Of particular interest was a statement made to the Omaha meeting by Mr. J. L. Kennedy, an Omaha business man and politician, strongly pro-suffrage in his views. Speaking of the collecting of signatures, Mr. Kennedy gave this advice:

The men of Nebraska are great big-hearted, strong-minded men; they are the pioneers of this western country and are the bravest in this big country of ours. If they are approached in the right way, you will have no trouble in getting them to sign your petitions. Be good natured,

\textsuperscript{15}Omaha Daily News, Sunday, June 15, 1913, p. 8C.
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17}Omaha Morning World Herald, Thursday, July 17, 1913, p. 1.
but be persistent with your work and get all the signatures you can as fast as you can. You are required to have 15% of the signatures of the voters of the state, but my advice to you would be to get 55% and then you cannot be questioned.  

It may be imagined with what vigor the supporters of suffrage went about their task, a task made easier now than in 1882 by the presence of the automobile on the scene. Indeed, to everyone's surprise, a filled petition arrived at the office of the Secretary of State in Lincoln on July 29, having been sent by Mr. J. M. Amsberry of the town of Miller in Buffalo County. The forty names were gratefully received, of course, but State Headquarters let it be known at once that it would be preferable to send all petitions to their office in Lincoln so that the lists of names might be checked for mistakes and duplications.  

Actual filing of the petitions with the Secretary of State was not anticipated before October or November of 1914.  

Working with a will, the ladies and gentlemen concerned with the petition effort made excellent progress. Just before the election, Mrs. Wheeler, reported that "Nebraska women secured 48,000 signers to the suffrage petition by the Spring of 1914." On the whole, too, the work was harmoniously done. Mrs. Wheeler, Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Draper Smith of Lincoln, Miss Daisy Doane and Mrs. Z. T. Lindsey, both of Omaha, performed prodigies of effort in stimulating and coordinating both out-state efforts and the work in the two key cities of Lincoln and Omaha. This is not to say, however, that there were no "rifts in

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18 Omaha Bee, Wednesday, July 16, 1913, p. 7.
19 Omaha Daily News, Wednesday, July 30, 1913, p. 5.
20 Lincoln Star, Sunday, November 1, 1914, p. 8.
the lute". One, in particular, stands out: the so-called Rupp Debate.

The newspapers of early August, 1913, contained the story of an incident which divided Nebraska readers into two camps. A Mrs. Lawrence Rupp, of New York, had spoken at a suffrage meeting in that state and had been interrupted by her husband, who demanded that she return home immediately and cook his supper. Mrs. Rupp, in turn, had her husband arrested for disturbing the peace and thrown into jail. At once, Nebraska suffrage leaders took sides on this episode and issued statements which were contradictory and productive of mild disunion within the ranks of Nebraska workers.

The principal antagonists were Mrs. W. E. Shafer, a past president of the Omaha Suffrage Association; Mrs. Draper Smith, president of the Nebraska Suffrage Association; Mrs. Mary B. Newton, president of the Political Equality League of Omaha, and Mrs. George W. Covell, current president of the Omaha Suffrage Association. Summarizing their views, Mrs. Shafer, Mrs. Newton and Mrs. Covell adopted positions in support of Mrs. Rupp, holding, respectively, that "principle is more important than food," "the kitchen is not woman's only area of duty", and that "Mr. Rupp was a publicity seeker who merely wanted to do something spectacular." Mrs. Draper Smith, a lady of potent influence in the state, was equally vehement in insisting that Mr. Rupp was in the right. It was her view that a married woman virtually "contracts to perform all necessary household duties - including the preparation of meals at the proper times - and that it is the duty of woman, Mrs. Rupp's other interests notwithstanding, to fulfill her contract."21

21 *Omaha Daily News*, Saturday, August 9, 1913, p. 1.
Fortunately, the Rupp debate did not prove to be lastingly divisive. The wounds it inflicted revealed themselves to be shallow and easily healed under the pressure of work to be done and victory to be gained.

The factor of organization has already been mentioned as being a key element in the campaign of 1914. A second such element worthy of notice is the brute fact of the existence of the automobile. It will be remembered that a principal difficulty facing the workers of 1882 had been that of Nebraska's "magnificent distances" - distances which made close coordination of efforts and the effective canvassing of towns and countryside a task of almost impossible dimensions. To be sure, the railroads were of great help and made possible the itineraries adhered to by suffrage speakers active in the first great campaign, but even with this facility at their disposal, a truly "blanket-type" campaign was out of the question.

In 1913 and 1914, however, and especially in the latter year, the automobile proved a weapon of exceptional might, permitting district workers to reach every nook and cranny of their areas, while officers from State Headquarters found it possible to visit strategic locations repeatedly. The listing of itineraries, under these conditions, becomes a task impossible because of the very numbers of speakers who travelled in the suffrage interest, some for a day, some for a week-end, others for several weeks at a stretch.\(^\text{22}\) It is both possible and worthwhile to offer what appears to be a representative sample of the type of automobile campaign, waged by a typical campaign team.

The four days of Wednesday through Saturday, October 21 through

\(^{22}\text{Lincoln Daily News, Wednesday, October 21, 1914, p. 5.}\)
October 24, 1914, were set aside for an automobile tour, out of Lincoln, by Mrs. A. L. Weatherly, Miss Helen Todd, and a Mr. and Mrs. Hardy.

Their itinerary was established as follows:

**Wednesday, October 21, 1914**

- 10:30 A.M. Adams, Nebraska
- 1:30 P.M. Sterling, Nebraska
- 4:00 P.M. Crab Orchard, Nebraska

**Thursday, October 22, 1914**

- 10:30 A.M. Elk Creek, Nebraska
- 1:30 P.M. Steinauer, Nebraska
- 4:00 P.M. Table Rock, Nebraska
- 7:30 P.M. Pawnee, Nebraska

**Friday, October 23, 1914**

- 10:30 A.M. Burchard, Nebraska
- 1:30 P.M. Liberty, Nebraska
- 4:00 P.M. Barneston, Nebraska
- 7:30 P.M. Wymore, Nebraska

**Saturday, October 24, 1914**

- 10:30 A.M. Odel, Nebraska
- 1:30 P.M. Diller, Nebraska
- 4:00 P.M. Harbine, Nebraska
- 7:30 P.M. Beatrice, Nebraska

The impressive thing about this itinerary is the large area of southeastern Nebraska covered by this team in a relatively short space of time. The very act of speaking in four towns on a single day would, undoubtedly, have seemed an incredible one to workers who had been active thirty-two years earlier. Let it be kept in mind, too, that activity of this sort was being carried out in every district in the state, with local efforts being strongly reinforced by such visits as state and even national officials were able to make. Dr. Anna Howard

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23*ibid.*
Shaw, for example, climaxed her efforts with a ten day, state-wide tour beginning on Thursday, October 22, 1914, and ending with a great rally in the Lincoln Auditorium on Saturday evening, October 31, at 8:00 P.M.24

The rally mentioned above is entitled to more than passing notice in our narrative of the campaign, for it was at this gathering that Dr. Shaw dealt with the arguments against woman suffrage that were set forth at this time by enemies of the cause. It was her opinion, she stated, that four arguments comprised the anti-suffrage battery in the current Nebraska campaign. They were:

1. That women are ignorant of war and are incapable of serving their country under arms. Women, therefore, do not deserve the ballot. (It will be noticed that the existence of war in Europe lent timely strength to this argument.)

2. That women, as wives and mothers, are so busy raising and educating men who will vote that they have no time left over for exercising the franchise themselves.

3. That women are a "dangerous class" in that they are emotional rather than rational creatures, hence led astray easily. The ballot, in their hands, would be abused.

4. That suffrage will inevitably result in women being compelled to serve on juries, to the detriment of their work at home, their families and their own moral character.25

Dr. Shaw disposed of these points with ease, showing, first, that knowledge of war is not a prerequisite to enfranchisement, and that service to country can and does take other forms than that of weapon-bearing. Secondly, she dismissed with derision the idea that women are fit to raise and train voters, but are unfit to vote themselves. This, to Dr. Shaw, was logically absurd. The third argument roused her indignation and led her to ask if men truly believed that honored mothers,

24Ibid., Saturday, October 31, 1914, p. 7.
revered wives and respected sisters were "dangerous". This allegation, she asserted, was an emotional plea left over from a less enlightened period in the history of the relations between the sexes. As for the final point, that suffrage would result in compulsory service on juries by women, Dr. Shaw pointed out that state laws determined the requirements to be met by jurors and that the enfranchisement of women would have no effect upon those statutes.26

Those reading the speech by Dr. Shaw referred to above will notice that the time and space set aside for consideration of the fourth and last point - that relating to jury duty - exceeds those devoted to any of the other three points. This was not accidental. It appears that the opposition forces considered the jury duty question to be a most potent weapon in their arsenal and used it, in speeches, posters and newspaper advertisements, more than any other single argument.

Typical of this technique was a half-page advertisement which appeared in Omaha and Lincoln newspapers during the last two weeks before the election. Sponsored by the Nebraska Men's Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, the advertisement stated unequivocally that enfranchised women would be compelled to serve on juries and to hear evidence in cases of such nature as to revolt them and shatter their tender sensibilities. Going further, the statement is made that good women do not want this kind of freedom, preferring to avoid circumstances erosive of their purity of mind and morals. As a final volley, the advertisement makes it quite clear that the more rabid suffragists

26 Ibid.
envisioned the ballot as being but the first step on a path which
would lead women away from home and family and towards adherence to
the philosophy and practice of free love.27

The Opposition

It is apropos, at this point, to ask whence came the opposition
to the suffrage amendment in 1914. The answer to this question must
be sought in a variety of informational sources. For example, the
work of the Nebraska Men's Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage was
carried on in an above-board, visible fashion. This organization,
made up in the main of conservative business and professional men in
the urban centers, particularly Omaha, Lincoln and Grand Island,
sponsored newspaper advertisements, such as the one mentioned above,
and both posters and pamphlets containing instructions on how to vote
against the amendment when election day came.

Equally illustrative of the anti-suffrage animus of certain
business and professional men is the list of chief contributors to the
association mentioned above and to the Women's Anti-Suffrage League of
Omaha, which was the only women's group active in opposing the suffrage
amendment. This list, published on election day, contained the follow­
ing names:

F. A. Nash, former president of the electric light company
Paxton and Gallagher, wholesale grocery company
F. H. Davis, bank president
Arthur C. Smith, factory president
J. H. Millard, bank president
L. F. Crofoot, lawyer
E. P. Peck, grain man
H. W. Yates, bank president

Frank T. Hamilton, president, Omaha Gas Company
E. E. Bruce, capitalist
John A. McShane, lumberman
Arthur Drake, bank president
John L. Webster, attorney

Women listed in this same document were:

Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge (of New York)
Miss Jessie Millard
Mrs. J. C. Cowin
Mrs. William Wallace
Mrs. F. T. Hamilton
Mrs. H. W. Yates

The occupations recorded for the male contributors tell their own story with regard to the social and economic strata of the men occupied. As for the ladies, two of them, Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Yates, were wives of male contributors, while Miss Jessie Millard was the daughter of J. H. Millard.

Interesting as the above revelations are, they do not exhaust the document as a source of information. It is stated that the persons listed comprised all of those who had contributed twenty-five dollars or more to the anti-suffrage campaign, the men giving a total of $785.00 and the women $758.30. Suffragists immediately pounced on these low figures as offering proof that out-of-state money had indeed flooded Nebraska and had paid for the veritable deluge of posters, pamphlets and newspaper advertisements used as tools by forces opposing the amendment. Suffragists did not "name names" relative to the sources of such funds, but the presence of Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge's name at the head of the list of lady contributors is suggestive.

Mrs. Dodge was the original leader of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, an organization created in 1911 in the state of Nebraska.

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28 Lincoln Star, Tuesday, November 3, 1914, p. 10.
29 Ibid.
of New York. A lady of social position, as were nearly all of the other members, Mrs. Dodge subscribed to the creed that suffrage would place yet further obligations and duties on women who had already had more than enough to do in their legitimate sphere of the home. Being already well represented politically by their husbands, Mrs. Dodge and her co-believers did not feel the need of the direct representation offered by the ballot. For our purposes, the facts that Mrs. Dodge's organization worked through donations, pamphleteering and letters to newspapers, and that she contributed to the Nebraska campaign seem to suggest the strong possibility that her power was felt in the struggle for the amendment in 1914.

Before leaving the matter of business and professional opposition to the amendment, it is legitimate to seek the reason for this opposition. One wonders whether statements made in advertisements, in pamphlets and on posters truly revealed the underlying well-springs of such anti-suffrage sentiment. Unfortunately, the evidence available merely states and re-states the four points held up for rebuttal, ridicule and disposal by Dr. Shaw. Deeper and more fundamental elements of opposition are not revealed by the existing data. Miss Flexner, however, has offered several comments which appear germane to our problem. They are quoted here not as generalizations definitely linked by evidence to the Nebraska campaign of 1914, but as suggestive statements illustrative of evidently widespread attitudes prevalent among businessmen and industrialists. Miss Flexner insists that:

It is not too difficult to see why such corporate intersts as railroads, oil companies, and other manufacturers were opposed to giving women the vote. The Federal Income Tax, which had

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30 Flexner, Century of Struggle, p. 296.
been authorized by the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1913, had been bitterly opposed as 'communistic'; so had popular election of United States Senators, provided by the Seventeenth Amendment in the same year. Other elements of the 'New Freedom', such as the institution of the Federal Reserve banking system, the Tariff Commission and the Federal Trade Commission, along with new anti-trust legislation and a widespread movement for the initiative and referendum, all appeared as cumulative threats to vested interests. In such circumstances, the addition of a large body of new voters, control of which appeared uncertain and many of whose leaders were vocal in the cause of further reform, presented a fresh menace. 31

Going further, Miss Flexner alleges that "There was also a strong feeling, particularly in some of the industries that would be most closely affected, that women would use the vote to improve the conditions of working women." 32 Here, then, are two sets of sentiments which may have played roles in powering the anti-suffrage efforts of Nebraska business and professional men. As said, direct evidence of their influence is wanting, but one's suspicion of it is strong and calls for further research in this area.

Although the anti-suffrage efforts of the business and professional men and their feminine allies were the most visible in the 1914 campaign, it is evident that opposition stemming from the liquor interests and from the foreign element also played a role of some significance. In an address before a delegate convention of Methodist Youth Groups held at Hastings, Nebraska, Sunday, October 18, 1914, Mr. U. S. Roher, a leading Nebraska Anti-Saloon League speaker, warned of the efforts being put forth by the liquor interests to defeat the amendment. Liquor groups, he asserted, were purchasing editorial support in the newspapers and following the old but effective technique of enlisting the

31 Ibid., pp. 301-302.
32 Ibid., p. 302
help of bar-tenders and saloon-keepers, who were charged with the task
of delivering quotas of anti-suffrage voters to the polls on election
day. Mr. Roher expressed his certainty that such methods would not
prevail, and that victory for the amendment in 1914 would be followed,
within two years, by state-wide prohibition laws.33

Further support for the contention that the liquor interests
were active is offered by statements made by Mr. William Jennings Bryan,
then Secretary of State, in his speeches in support of the amendment.
Mr. Bryan served the pro-suffrage forces well, fully implementing the
promise made to State Headquarters on October 25, 1914, that he would
"do all in my power to aid suffrage amendment."34 He expressed his
pro-suffrage views and offered his warnings concerning the machinations
of the liquor interests repeatedly during his late October swing across
the state, and at the giant rally held in the Lincoln Auditorium on
Monday night, November 2, 1914. Typical of his statements was this
question-and-answer which he repeated with variations in his Nebraska
addresses: "Why are all the evil influences of society arrayed against
woman suffrage? Is it not because they recognize that woman suffrage
is a menace to wrong doing and the wrong doers?"35

It should be said at this point that Mr. Bryan had some reason
to know whereof he spoke. Having to take a stand in 1910, Mr. Bryan
had declared for county option and had faced since then the opposition
of the powerful "wet" wing of the Nebraska Democratic Party, a party
so thoroughly linked with Nebraska brewing interests that it was widely

34Telegram quoted in Lincoln Daily News, Monday, October 26, 1914,
p. 1.
35Lincoln Daily News, Tuesday, October 20, 1914, p. 12.
known in the state as the "Whiskey" party. The editor of the Lincoln Daily News described the influence of the brewers in these words:

Fear of prohibition or some other form of interference with their business and their profits led them (the brewers) to put every proposed piece of legislation under the microscope, and if they saw therein any possible menace, they sent word to the men they had supplied with campaign funds or otherwise helped into the legislature to kill - and it was killed.36

Lest the above seem to be a partisan utterance, it should be noted that the editor was equally disillusioned with the Republicans. He points out that they, the brewers, considered the Democratic legislators to be so "safe" that they frequently offered aid to Republican candidates as well; an aid so effective and binding in its character that, as a result, "Neither Republican nor Democratic parties could keep campaign pledges unless the liquor makers permitted it."37 Knowing, then, the antipathy of these brewing interests to the suffrage cause, the statements of both Mr. Roher and Mr. Bryan take on an aura of probable truth, despite the palpable pro-suffrage bias shared by the two men.

The problem of opposition to the amendment by "foreigners" was not nearly so clean cut and obvious as it had been in 1882. A degree of amalgamation had been reached in Nebraska which reduced the crystal clarity of the differences between the foreign-born and the native American citizen which had been so painfully obvious thirty-two years earlier. Nonetheless, suffragists made every effort to win the support of the potentially hostile foreign element and to blunt the edge of such anti-suffrage propaganda as was directed at them, particularly that

37 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
sponsored by the German-American Alliance, the one organized body of Nebraskans of foreign extraction to declare publicly against the suffrage amendment. The techniques used were of two main types: posters and speeches. Posters advocating woman suffrage were distributed to the appropriate areas in the Czech language, in German and in Danish. The burden of their message was that home life would not be injured by granting women the franchise and that women were seeking simple justice, not an opportunity to revolutionize society.

Typical of the speech-making approach to the foreign element was a street-corner meeting held in Lincoln's Fifth Ward on the evening of Thursday, October 29, 1914. A platform was erected on the corner of 10th and South streets, squarely in the center of an area inhabited largely by people of German and Russian extraction. The Lincoln High School band offered several selections, after which pro-suffrage speeches were made in English, German and Russian. The speakers were a Dr. Steen, Mrs. W. S. Jay and Miss Marie Bauck, all members of the Lincoln Suffrage Association. All speakers said essentially the same things, namely, that times had changed, that progress was in the wind, that men had come to grasp the justice of women's demand to be allowed a more realistic part in the shaping of affairs, and that ancient prejudices against alterations in the role of women in society were unworthy of enlightened and patriotic citizens who had enjoyed the many blessings of American freedom.38

The report of this gathering informs us that at least three hundred people assembled to hear these addresses and that the meeting itself was held at the close of an intensive door-to-door canvass of the

38Lincoln Daily News, Friday, October 30, 1914, p. 5A.
ward by pro-suffrage workers. Fragmentary reports to be found in the press of the time suggest that this Lincoln affair was not unique, but a fairly ordinary example of efforts along this line underway in all of the areas wherein foreign folk comprised a significant element of the population. Indeed, after the election, Mrs. Anna Kovanda of Table Rock in Pawnee County received special commendation for spearheading the campaign in the "Bohemian" areas of the state, a campaign in which voters were addressed in the Czech tongue.39

The Election of 1914

Ever growing in intensity, the 1914 campaign moved along toward election day, Tuesday, November 3, 1914. The eyes of the public were kept focused upon the issue by events great and small. Serious attention would be commanded by the great rallies led by Dr. Shaw and Mr. Bryan, while amusement would be offered by the sight of high school girls wearing tiny stickers marked "Votes for Women" as beauty patches. Street corner meetings, held in abundance, offered food for thought, while the efforts of the "antis" to foil them, using several corps of small boys to shout down the speakers, raised both laughter and a sense of irritation in the onlookers.40

All in all, a feeling of impending victory suffused the hearts of pro-suffrage workers, a feeling which was made all the deeper by a flood of reports to State Headquarters describing the support, both physical and spiritual, given to lady workers by men who had become converts to the cause. Indeed, so heavy had been the male support

39Omaha Bee, Saturday, December 5, 1914, p. 4.
40Lincoln Star, Tuesday, November 3, 1914, p. 10.
offered that Mrs. F. M. Hall, Lancaster County chairman of the campaign, gave in advance a large share of credit to the men, should the amendment prevail. In her words, "These men have given us the value of their experience in campaign work, have used their influence to our advantage and have made numerous sacrifices to help us in our case. The women workers all have lists of these men and will not forget them soon."41

Sensibly, the leaders of the campaign did not allow their feelings of "victory in the offing" to lull them into a false sense of security. Work would be carried on down to the very moment when the polls closed. Illustrative of this determination to fight to the last moment and in the final ditch was the call to supreme effort issued on Monday, November 2, 1914, by Mrs. F. M. Hall, Mrs. H. H. Wheeler, Dr. Emma Demaree, Mrs. A. E. Sheldon, and Miss Ida Robbins, all of the State Headquarters. The value of last minute work was stressed and an appeal was made for volunteers to come to Headquarters, 1236 "O" Street and assist in decorating vehicles, placing placards, distributing sample ballots, placing informational posters, etc. The announcement stated also that similar efforts were going on all over the state, with a veritable explosion of street corner meetings being planned to wind up the campaign, sixty-seven being scheduled for Lancaster County alone.42

It should be mentioned in passing that store windows in the towns and cities of Nebraska were specially favored as locations for instructional posters, many windows containing both pro and anti-suffrage cards. Since these cards were a prominent feature of the campaign, their contents may well be noted here. The anti-suffrage posters admonished

41Ibid., Sunday, November 1, 1914, p. 12.
42Lincoln Star, Monday, November 2, 1914, p. 5.
the voter to "Look for number 307: don't forget to vote 'no' on the equal suffrage question. In every woman suffrage state, women must serve on juries. Do you want your wife, your daughter, your mother, your sister, forced to do jury duty?" The pro-suffrage posters were equally to the point: "When you go to the polls, be sure to cast your vote for the woman suffrage amendment, No. 306, near the top of the ballot. A cross in the party circle is not a vote for woman suffrage. You must put your cross on the square numbered 306." It will be noted that the anti-suffrage posters adverted once again to the jury duty issue previously mentioned. That the issue was a live one is indicated not only by Dr. Shaw's lengthy handling of it, but by a technique adopted at the last moment by the pro-suffrage forces. In newspapers appearing on the very eve of the election, November 2, 1914, suffragists managed to have an advertisement inserted directly above the half-page advertisement sponsored by the "Nebraska Men's Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage." It directed the attention of the readers to the Revised Statutes of the State of Nebraska, Chapter 16, Article 1, section 576, in which it is flatly stated that only men may serve on juries. The effect of such a last-minute effort can only be conjectured.

The definition of a suffragette as a "sting of beauty and a jawer forever" may well have come to the minds of voters as election day dawned, for women workers were plentifully and vocally in evidence. Throughout the state, volunteer workers patrolled the vicinities of

43 Ibid., p. 10.
45 Omaha Bee, Monday, November 2, 1914, p. 2.
the polling places, being scrupulously careful to adhere to the law which required solicitors of voters to remain at least one hundred feet away from the actual polling sites. So scrupulous were the Omaha ladies that many of them carried tape measures with which they carefully measured off the legal distances.46 Behind this one hundred foot barrier, solicitation went on apace. In Lincoln, each polling place was guarded by from two to four ladies who did not fail to accost each voter and press upon him one of the yellow handbills which adjured him to "Vote for Suffrage Amendment No. 306, 3rd from the top of the long ballot, just above the party circle."47

On the whole, it may be said that the ladies were treated with a generous courtesy that made the few examples of boorish behavior conspicuous by comparison. There was but one case of a man seizing a suffragist's handbills, tearing them up, throwing them in her face, and requesting her to go and get more handbills so that he might tear them up too! Similarly, a single lady reported a drunken man refusing to accept a yellow slip because, as he said with a laugh, "his arm was broken."48 Other than these two incidents, the only attempt at serious harassment by the "anti" forces took the form of two mobile displays which journeyed from one Omaha polling place to another. The first comprised a goat in a cage, dressed in the yellow and black colors of the suffrage movement, bearing a sign which read: "The antis have got the suffrage goat." The second took the form of a rickety wagon, upon which had been erected a tentlike billboard carrying the legend: "Do you want your wife and daughter to serve on the jury in murder

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46Ibid., Wednesday, November 4, 1914, p. 1.
48Omaha Bee, Wednesday, November 4, 1914, p. 6.
trials? If not, vote against woman suffrage."49 Aside from these rather feeble efforts, "anti" work was inconspicuous. Most women workers reported that it was rare for a man to refuse one of their handbills or, having accepted it, to fail to promise his vote for the cause.

In addition to the encouraging effect of the positive atmosphere engendered by male decency toward them, the suffragists' spirits were kept high by their own mobile displays. Parades of automobiles, bicycles, and horse-drawn wagons, all cheerfully decorated with banners, pennants and streamers of black and yellow, were features of the election day scene across Nebraska and markedly so in the urban centers. The "inner woman" was not neglected either. In Omaha, ward chairmen had as one of their main tasks the provision of sandwiches and both hot and cold drinks for the lady solicitors at the polls. By nightfall it was agreed that a major effort had been mounted that day and that the workers might go home to bed secure in the knowledge that all had been done that could have been done. There was a general feeling among workers that found terse expression in the words of the editor of the Lincoln Star: "If any man forgot to vote on the woman suffrage amendment today, it was not the women's fault."50

As was the case in 1882, sentiment leads one to wish that the hard and earnest work by the determined ladies of Nebraska might have been crowned with success here in 1914, but such was not the case. Early returns on November 4th indicated that the issue was being hard fought, but that defeat loomed in the offing. Reports showed that thirty-two counties outside Lancaster and Douglas counties had recorded 22,644 negative votes to 19,563 positive ones. The situation in the

49Ibid.
two heavily settled, strongly urban counties was still unclear.  
Understandably, spirits tended to droop at State Headquarters, but 
Mr. Bryan, who visited the ladies on the 4th, sounded an encouraging 
note of defiance when he urged: "Do not lose heart; you cannot know 
whether suffrage has carried or not until the last vote is counted."  
One wonders how effective his words were in the face of the realiza­
tion, now rapidly dawning among the workers, that they had received 
more promises than votes. A sense of shock was widespread and tended 
to dilute the sincerity of the oft-repeated sentiment that "Suffragists 
will never say die." Nevertheless, shocked or not, determination 
was expressed that if their campaign were indeed lost, a fresh one 
should be launched at once.

The worst fears of the suffrage workers were in fact realized 
when the final official figures on the election were made public on 
December 2, 1914. These showed the votes for the amendment to have 
totalled 90,738, while votes in opposition numbered 100,842, with 
Lancaster County being won (6,117 to 5,227) and Douglas County lost 
(1,486 to 10,654). The race had been a close one, but the result 
was indeed defeat for the amendment.

Needless to say, the leaders of the movement in Nebraska did not 
wait for the official figures to confirm a fact which had been indicated 
by partial data constantly trickling in to State Headquarters. 
Mrs. Draper Smith sounded the call to fresh endeavor in an announcement

51 Ibid., Wednesday, November 4, 1914, p. 1. 
52 Ibid., Thursday, November 5, 1914, p. 1. 
53 Ibid., Wednesday, November 4, 1914, p. 5. 
54 Omaha Bee, Wednesday, December 2, 1914, p. 3.
made public on Sunday, November 8, 1914, which read as follows:

The Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association in executive session at the headquarters in Lincoln hereby announces that its campaign for 'Votes for Women' will continue uninterruptedly. The statewide organization will be enlarged and made more effective; the campaigns of education waged as never before, because of the thousands of men and women who desire to be active in a movement which commands constantly widening sympathy with its high aim. The question will again be submitted and Nebraska men then further on their way toward realization of the motto of the state, 'Equality Before The Law', will return the proper answer. No question is ever settled until it is settled right.55

Women animated by the spirit expressed above naturally found themselves looking forward to the next regular convention of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, which was scheduled to be held in Omaha on Thursday and Friday, December 3 and 4, 1914. It was anticipated that the lessons of the past campaign would be made clear and plans laid for future work. Such was to be the case.

The host organization for the 1914 convention was the Omaha Suffrage Association, a body which closed out its campaign efforts with but $10.24 in the group's cashbox. Fortunately, in the face of such pecuniary embarrassment, the Omaha Suffrage Association had no difficulty in securing the use of the Council chambers in the Omaha City Hall for the two days of the gathering. Courtesy provided that for which funds were lacking. The decorating chore was assumed by the Lincoln delegation. The ladies provided a large banner showing the enfranchised states, this to be flanked by the flag of Omaha Suffrage Association and by Mrs. Draper Smith's personal flag, that of the president of the state association.

It should be noted at this point that the 1914 convention was

55Lincoln Star, Sunday, November 8, 1914, p. 4.
held in the relatively chaotic and emotion-laden period that followed the culmination in defeat of the campaign of 1914. Little time or effort had been invested in planning for the convention, so little in fact that Mrs. Draper Smith could say that, "This meeting is such an informal affair it is more of a conference instead of a convention. We have not even printed programs, but will follow the one outlined by the executive committee." When one realizes that the executive committee did not arrive in Omaha until noon on December 2nd, and that it held its one and only meeting that very afternoon, the "catch-as-catch-can" atmosphere of the convention becomes even more apparent.

Despite all difficulties, the executive committee did manage to draw up a program to guide the activity of the sixty-five attending delegates. It provided, first, for addresses of greeting by three ladies: Mrs. E. M. Fairfield, President of the Omaha Equal Franchise Society; Mrs. F. D. Weald, President of the Political Equality League; and Mrs. S. A. Capen, President of the Omaha Suffrage Association. These speeches, scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, would be followed by a reply offered by Mrs. F. M. Hall, President of the Lincoln Equal Franchise Society.

Little in the way of excitement was expected from these addresses, but a surprise lay in store for the listeners. After the welcoming orations had been offered and politely received, Mrs. Hall rose and electrified that audience at once. She took issue with the content of the preceding talks, which had interpreted the recent defeat as "almost a victory" and lashed out at her hearers in these words:

56*Omaha Bee*, Thursday, December 3, 1914, pp. 7-8.
We lost. Let us strip ourselves of this self-content, for we didn't do nearly as well as we might have done. It was the women of Nebraska who defeated us, for the men of this state are more for suffrage than the women are. Let us acknowledge our weak spots, for we have them. Don't be satisfied with the praise of politicians who tell us that we put up a splendid fight. They are the very ones who defeated us. It is time to change tactics, and the next campaign must begin this very minute because the other side is at work already for the next fight.58

At this point, with the delegates in a state not too far from consternation, Mrs. Draper Smith took the floor in order to offer her analysis of the recent campaign. In a tone less belligerent than that of Mrs. Hall, she assured the delegates that, "It was a good, clean fight and we would have won had we not overestimated our ability to reach the voters in the outlying districts. Since election day, I have had an increase of fifty per-cent in the offer of service by women who took the victory for granted in the last campaign and did not assist us."59 Having said this much, Mrs. Smith concluded by urging a quiet but intense campaign of the "personal contact" variety for the next two years. Upon conclusion of these remarks, the convention was adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

Mrs. Smith's first action, once the convention had been reconvened, was to give the floor to the Treasurer of the Association, Mrs. W. E. Hardy of Lincoln. Mrs. Hardy reported that a grand total of $25,000 had been spent in prosecuting the 1913-1914 campaign. $13,000 of this total had been disbursed by the state organization and the remaining $12,000 by county groups. As for the two key counties, $5,000

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
had been spent in Douglas County and $2,000 in Lancaster County. In conclusion, the Treasurer offered the opinion that day-to-day work could be carried on, barring a major campaign, for the sum of $3,000 per year. Her report was accepted and a committee established to work out the details incident to raising this sum.60

The second speaker of the afternoon was Mrs. W. E. Barkley, the Publicity Chairman of the state association. It was her task to review in detail the steps that had been taken to awaken the public to the suffrage issue and to suggest more effective techniques for future use. Swiftly listing methods her committee had utilized, she mentioned the value of presenting speakers and handing out literature at political conventions, grange meetings, picnics, chautauquas, and at social gatherings held in local school houses. When possible, she continued, such work should be carried out in moving picture houses as well, as part of the entertainment program.

Mrs. Barkley had special paeans of praise to sing relative to the virtues of automobile tours. The automobile, in her opinion, was a powerful tool in suffragist hands. As she put it:

The day has gone by when people congregate in a certain house to listen to speeches. The picture show and the theater have taken both our young people and the older ones so that we must do something spectacular in order to advertise our causes. If you know anyone that has an automobile, just love them to death until the next campaign. We'll need their auto then.61

The Publicity Chairman completed her remarks by commenting on three potentially valuable sources of support, all of which deserved careful future cultivation. First were the school teachers of the state. This body of women, she averred, was a virtually untapped

60 Omaha Bee, Friday, December 4, 1914, p. 7.
61 Ibid.
source of strength. The reason for their failure to enlist in the suffrage cause was the fear common to many that their jobs would be lost if they became known as suffragists. Mrs. Barkley urged the women present to do all in their power to see to the election of local school board members who, if not actually pro-suffrage, would not discharge a teacher for holding suffragist views.

Second on Mrs. Barkley's list were clergymen. Using plain language, she advised her listeners to exert pressure on their ministers to preach pro-suffrage sermons and to work for the reform. She urged the ladies to "Make them talk your way. You women are always working their way, baking pies and cakes and such things for church affairs."

Finally, the speaker referred to the chautauquas. These, she felt, could be used with much effect by the suffragists. But, she warned them, "The Chautauqua of today is not what it used to be. It is no longer for uplift, but it is a commercial project. They're in for the business and you will have to adopt business methods too."62 After hearing these words, the gathering adjourned until 7:30 P.M., when a round table discussion of county activities during the campaign was held.

The second day of the convention witnessed the holding of two sessions, one at 9:00 A.M. and the other at 2:00 P.M. The morning session was given over to attendance at the Hipp Theater, where a showing of Mrs. Medill McCormick's suffrage film "Your Girl and Mine" was enjoyed. This activity was followed by a round table discussion of the film conducted by Mrs. Halleck Rose, the report of the Credentials  

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62 Ibid.
Committee and luncheon, at which the delegates were guests of the Omaha Commercial Club.

The afternoon session, devoted to the election of officers, closing business and to final comments by ladies who felt moved to speak, offered a bit more color than had the morning meeting. The election revealed that confidence in the incumbent officers had not waned. All were re-elected, the slate being:

President: Mrs. Draper Smith of Omaha  
Vice-President: Mrs. Anna Kovanda of Table Rock  
Recording Secretary: Miss Daisy Doane of Omaha  
Corresponding Secretary: Miss Mary Williams of Kennesaw  
Treasurer: Mrs. W. E. Hardy of Lincoln  
First Auditor: Mrs. H. H. Wheeler of Lincoln  
Second Auditor: Mrs. George F. Cooper of South Omaha

As for closing business, the Resolutions Committee, headed by Mrs. T. J. Doyle, offered a single resolution which characterized the recent defeat of the suffrage amendment as being "in the light of a deferred victory," and resolved, "That the suffrage organizations of the state enter immediately into an active educational campaign, designed to cover the state."  

The floor being opened to individual commentary at this point, Mrs. F. M. Hall requested the floor and repeated her comments relative to the blame attaching to women for the defeat of the amendment. In her words:

It was lethargy and indifference that made us lose just as much as active opposition. I have come to the conclusion that half of the women who promised to work weren't on the job election day.

Warming to her subject, Mrs. Hall observed that in Lancaster County, she had usually been afraid for newspaper reporters to attend

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63 Ibid., Saturday, December 5, 1914, p. 4.  
64 Ibid.  
65 Ibid.
meetings, rallies and social functions sponsored by the county suffrage association for fear they would see and report on how sparsely these functions were attended by the very ladies who claimed such a vital interest in gaining the right to vote.

The last minutes of the convention were devoted to final decisions on the character of the work to be carried on in the future. An educational campaign had already been suggested and approved, but Mrs. W. S. Jay of Lincoln, who boasted of having driven some 2,000 miles in her own auto in the recent campaign, offered another and complementary suggestion. It was her opinion that the state legislature might be induced to grant presidential suffrage to Nebraska women, since that could be done without a constitutional amendment. Therefore, she urged the establishment of a committee to lobby for this type of suffrage at the State House. Her suggestion was well received and the convention voted to have the Executive Committee of the association appoint a leader to carry on this task, co-opting such other helpers as the work seemed to require. Meeting hurriedly, the Executive Committee appointed Mrs. H. H. Wheeler, a Lincoln resident, as the association's lobbyist in the interest of the presidential suffrage. This business having been transacted, the convention was adjourned.66

At this point, the natural desire of the historian to present a complete narrative of events runs afoul of one of those sets of "rocks and shoals" which, with unfortunate regularity, appear in the current of Nebraska history, namely an evidential lacuna. There are many hints in the press that lobbying work was proceeding: that Mrs. Wheeler

Omaha Bee, Saturday, December 5, 1914, p. 4.
and her co-workers were hard at their tasks but details are conspicuously absent. We simply do not know at present how these ladies operated. It is a truism, of course, that lobbying is not done in the full glare of publicity and with adequate reporting of its every twist and turn, but it is an exasperating truth in this instance. One would relish information regarding the precise pressures and degrees of pressure brought to bear - and upon whom. At present, though, for better or for worse, we must rest satisfied with the knowledge that for roughly two years persistent endeavor was made to interest legislators in the matter of granting presidential suffrage to the women of Nebraska and that the campaign was not mounted in vain.
CHAPTER V

THE PARTIAL SUFFRAGE LAW OF 1917: PASSAGE AND AFTERMATH

House Roll No. 222 and Senate File No. 78

These two years of apparently careful and devoted lobbying bore fruit in the simultaneous introduction in the Nebraska legislature of two bills: House Roll No. 222 and Senate File No. 78. Both achieved first reading in their respective houses on January 22, 1917, the former being sponsored by Representative J. N. Norton, a Democrat and farmer from Polk County and the latter by Senator C. E. Sandall, a Republican lawyer representing York and Hamilton Counties. Both bills were identical in title and form, the titles reading:

A bill for an act relating to elections: To amend Section 1940, Revised Statutes of 1913, relating to qualifications of voters, and to repeal said original section, and to provide for separate ballots and ballot boxes for female voters.¹

Since a modicum of confusion arose in the minds of Nebraska citizens relative to the exact contents of the proposals, it would seem wise to clarify the situation at this point by quoting the entire documents, which, as said, were identical in form. The original House Roll, fortunately preserved, reads as follows:

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Nebraska:

Section 1. That section 1940, Revised Statutes of 1913 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 1940. Every person of the age of twenty-one years or upwards shall be an elector and shall have the right to vote for all officers to be elected to public office, and upon all questions and propositions submitted to the voters, at any and all elections, authorized or provided for by the constitution or laws of Nebraska: Provided, however, that no female person shall be permitted to vote for United States Senator, United States Representative, or for any officers specified in the constitution of Nebraska, or upon any question or proposition submitted to the voters, the manner of the submission of which is specified and designated in the constitution of Nebraska.

No person shall be qualified to vote at any election unless such person shall have resided in the state six months, in the county forty days, and in the precinct, township, or ward ten days and shall be a citizen of the United States, or shall be a person of foreign birth who shall have declared his intention to become a citizen, conformably to the laws of the United States on the subject of naturalization, at least thirty days prior to such election.

Section 2. That separate ballots and ballot boxes shall be provided for female electors. Such ballots shall contain the names of the candidates, and the questions and propositions submitted, as female electors may vote for and upon. The ballots cast by female electors shall be counted and canvassed with and in the same manner as the ballots of male electors.

Section 3. That said original section 1940, Revised Statutes of 1913, is hereby repealed.

The submission of duplicate bills was adopted as a technique in hope that at least one of the two might win through the legislative process and become law. This, in fact, is what happened. Senate File No. 78, the Sandall bill, failed to achieve passage in the Senate. House Roll No. 222, the Norton bill, passed both houses and was signed into law. The legislative history of these two measures is interesting and worthy of note.

2Nebraska, House Rolls, 35th Session of the Nebraska Legislature, 1917, House Roll No. 222. Archives of the State of Nebraska.
Senate File No. 78, be it noted, was submitted by a Republican to a Senate which contained ten Republicans and twenty-three Democrats, all strongly partisan men. It received first reading on January 22, 1917, and second reading the next day, being referred at that point to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. On February 2, 1917, this committee reported the bill out, with the recommendation that it be put on general file. Seven days later, Senator R. C. Streklow, an anti-suffrage partisan, moved that Senate File No. 78 be returned to the Committee for further consideration. This motion was adopted and the bill returned as ordered. On February 28th, the Chairman of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, Senator A. J. Sawyer, reported to the President of the Senate as follows:

Your Committee on Privileges and Elections to whom was referred Senate File No. 78...have had the same under consideration and instruct me to report the same back to the Senate with the recommendation that it be placed on general file as amended.

Amend by striking out all of Section 1 and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

Every male person of the age of twenty-one years or upwards, belonging to either of the following classes, who shall have resided in the state six months, in the county forty days, and in the precinct, township, or ward ten days, shall be an elector:
First, Citizens of the United States.
Second, Persons of foreign birth who shall have declared their intention to become citizens, conformably to the laws of the United States on the subject of naturalization, at least thirty days prior to an election. Provided, however, that any female person who, aside from sex, possess the qualification of an elector, shall be permitted to vote in all municipal elections and upon all municipal questions submitted to the voters of the municipality.

Strike out all of Section 2.
Strike out the figure '3' following the word 'Section' in Section three, and insert the figure '2' in lieu thereof.

A. J. Sawyer, Chairman
The report of the committee was accepted and the bill was placed on general file as amended. The bill never reached third reading and a vote on passage due to the crowded Senate schedule. On Thursday, April 19, 1917, a so-called sifting committee headed by Senator John Mattes, representing Cass and Otoe Counties, presented to the Senate a list of pressingly important measures which required action before adjournment. Forty-four of the ninety bills pending were on the list. Senate File No. 78 was not one of them.  

House Roll No. 222, the Norton bill, was one of the fortunate forty-four bills to survive Senator Mattes' sifting process and to it we shall now turn our attention.

This bill received first reading on January 22, 1917, as did its Senate twin, and achieved second reading the next day, being referred to the House Committee on Privileges and Elections. On January 31st, the bill was reported out of committee with the recommendation that it be placed on general file. The recommendation was accepted and the bill so placed. Three days later, on February 3rd, the House sat as a committee of the Whole on H.R. No. 222 and voted to amend it as follows:

Amend Section 1, line 24, by inserting after the word 'his' the words 'or her'.
This amendment changed the pertinent line to read:
   or shall be a person of foreign birth who shall have declared his or her intention to become.....

The bill as amended was acceptable to the House. The report was adopted and the amended bill placed in the general file.

After being engrossed and reported as such on February 6th, H.R. No. 222 was read for the third time and put upon its passage. The

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Lincoln Daily News, Friday, April 20, 1917, p. 7A.
question, "Shall the bill pass?" was answered by seventy-three Yeas and twenty-four Nays, with one representative absent and not voting, and two excused. A parliamentary majority having voted in favor of the bill, it was declared passed and was then transmitted to the Senate by the Chief Clerk of the House, Mr. G. W. Potts. We may note here that this bill, introduced by a Democrat in a House containing sixty-one Democrats and thirty-nine Republicans, enjoyed a happier fate than its senatorial sister.4

The Norton bill was read for the first time in the Senate on February 8, 1917. Five days later second reading was achieved and the bill was referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. Over a month passed before the Committee reported the bill out with a recommendation that it be placed on general file, but this was done on April 19, 1917, and the Senate, sitting immediately as a Committee of the Whole on the bill, reported favorably on it and recommended engrossment and third reading. Three days later, on the 21st, the measure was read for the third time and put upon its passage, with the result that of the votes cast, nineteen were favorable, ten opposed the bill, and four members were reported as absent and not voting. H.R. No. 222, having received a parliamentary majority in favor, had passed the same Senate which had stricken down its twin, S.F. No. 78.5

It will be remembered that Senator John Mattes, a Nebraska City manufacturer and Democrat, had been chairman of the "sifting committee" which had denied S.F. No. 78 a chance for passage by excluding it from

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the "favored forty-four". Senator Mattes, to no one's surprise, was one of the ten men who voted against passage of H.R. No. 222. More, he insisted upon explaining his vote for the record in the following revealing terms:

Government may, without great loss of efficiency, permit a certain amount of idealism and sentiment to be woven into the governmental fabric but in the main, to be successful and efficient it must be highly practical. Practical government requires attention in exactly the same degree as does private business. Male voters who advocate woman suffrage now raise the 'S.O.S.' signal of distress, because they have made a failure of government and try now to unload the responsibility upon the shoulders of women.

This is not a question of compliments to women, not a matter of sentiment but a plain question of the practical results. No one can serve two masters successfully, and I believe the loss to womanhood and family will be greater than the gain to state and society.

He who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before is considered a human benefactor; but he who makes two votes grow where one was cast before, with exactly the same results, has benefited no one.....

One claim advanced for suffrage is that it will purify politics and make the polling places of the state a sort of 'pink tea' affair. Conditions in California, a suffrage state with which I am somewhat familiar, shows no such results and even Luther Burbank, the plant wizard (sic) who has produced the spineless cacti, and God knows we already have enough spineless ______, would not undertake to graft American Beauties upon the rotten stump of politics.

To sum up woman suffrage tersely, government and society may lose much and this inherent danger is the foundation of my objection.6

Regardless of the opposition of Senator Mattes and his nine like-minded colleagues, the Senate did pass H.R. No. 222 and now only the final steps in the legislative process remained to be completed. On April 21, 1917, the President of the Senate signed the act and sent it to Governor Keith Neville, who signed it that same day.

The Politics of the Matter

The reader may find it more than a bit strange that the Senate passed House Bill No. 222, while killing its identical twin, Senate File No. 78. A clue to this apparent mystery is to be found in a passing comment of an editorial nature found in the pro-suffrage Lincoln Daily News for Monday, June 18, 1917, which alleges that the "Germans of the Senate" are untrustworthy! Having passed H.R. No. 222 in return for votes against repeal of the "language law", they now turned to the referendum technique to destroy the Norton Law!^7

Although the comment has the flavor of sour grapes, a careful perusal of the House and Senate Journals for 1917 reveals reasonably persuasive evidence that the comment might well have had more than a modicum of truth in it. Events appear to have transpired as follows:

On January 24, 1917, Representative C. W. Trumble, a Democrat and hardware dealer from Sherman County, introduced House Roll No. 291, entitled:

A Bill for an Act to repeal Section 6941, Revised Statutes of 1913, providing for teaching of modern European language in the schools.8

The section referred to in the title is part of Article III, Miscellaneous Subjects, and reads as follows:

Section 6941:
In every high school, city school or metropolitan school in this state, the proper authorities of such school districts shall, upon the written request, when made at least three months before the opening of the fall term of such school, by the parents or guardians of fifty pupils above the fourth grade then attending the school, employ competent teachers and provide for

the teaching therein, above the fourth grade, as an elective course of study, such modern European languages as may be designated in such request; Provided, not more than five hours each week and not less than one period each day shall be devoted to the teaching of any such modern European language in any elementary or grade school. 9

Under the aegis of Section 6941, the Germans of the state of Nebraska had been able to foster knowledge of their traditional tongue in the schools of the areas in which they predominated. H.R. No. 291, the Trumble bill, constituted an obvious threat to this desirable privilege and, due to the emotional antipathy to things German already beginning to make itself felt, stood a very good chance of being passed. In fact, the bill did pass the House. It was read for the first time on January 24th, and received both second reading and referral to the Committee on Education the next day. On March 9th, the Committee on Education reported the bill out with the recommendation that it be placed on general file. March 30th witnessed consideration of the bill by the House sitting as a Committee of the Whole. The result of this discussion was that H.R. No. 291 was recommended for engrossment and third reading, the vote on this question standing at seventy-five Yeas, fourteen Nays, ten absent and not voting, and one excused.

The crucial moment in the life of this measure in the House came on April 3rd when third reading was held and the bill put upon its passage. The vote revealed seventy Yeas, fifteen Nays, twelve absent and not voting, and three excused. The measure was then signed and, next day, sent to the Senate. 10

First reading in the Senate was held on April 4, 1917. Second reading and referral to the Committee on Education were events of the next day. Some delay was anticipated, but did not eventuate. On April 9th, the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Wallace H. Wilson, reported to the Senate that it was the sense of his group that the Trumble bill should be returned to the House for further consideration. A confused debate arose immediately, with Senator Wilson moving acceptance of his report, Senator Beal moving not to accept it and that H.R. No. 291 be placed at the head of the "sifting file", and Senator Moriarty moving to table the matter pertaining to H.R. No. 291. In the end, Senator Beal's motion prevailed.

Next day, April 10, 1917, found the Senate sitting as a Committee of the Whole on the Trumble bill. Discussion waxed hot and heavy, but, in the end, a motion was made to the effect that H.R. No. 291 be indefinitely postponed. The vote on this motion revealed twenty-one Yeas, nine Nays, three absent and not voting. This, to all intents and purposes, killed H.R. No. 291. The point of this entire episode is that the final vote saw pro-suffrage men, including Senators Sandall, Adams, and Albert, voting for the postponement, while Senators Bennett, Douthett, and Tanner, pro-suffrage men, were those who absented themselves. While only a rash person would presume to state positively that a 'trade' had been made, suffrage votes in return for postponement votes, the possibility does seem fairly strong, for it was quite unusual for the gentlemen mentioned above to be seen voting with, or abstaining in favor of, such men as Senators Mattes, Kohl, Lahners,

11Nebraska, Senate Journal, 1917 (York, Nebr.: York Blank Book Co.), pp. 809, 832, 852.
Soost, Streihlow, Burkman, and Haase. On this note, we shall have to let the matter rest.

It requires little imagination to picture in one's mind the scenes of feminine joy and relief that took place in the halls of both Senate and House on the afternoon of April 21st. A large party of ladies visited the Senate carrying gifts of flowers. One large bouquet bore a card reading, "In graceful appreciation of the services of the members of this Senate who have given presidential and municipal suffrage to the women of Nebraska, all the suffrage within their power to give." After singing "America" to the Senators and repeating their thanks and congratulations, the ladies went on to the chambers of the House and performed in similar fashion.

Mrs. Barkley, president of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, marked the day with a public statement of thanks and appreciation on behalf of the Association. Singling out Senator Sandall and Representative Norton for special praise, Mrs. Barkley insisted that:

Credit must be given to a number of senators and representatives in both parties who rendered efficient help at critical stages of the bill. With this good beginning the women of Nebraska hope to complete the work by getting full suffrage in 1918.

The "Anti" Response: The Referendum Campaign of 1917 Mrs. Barkley's remark about "completing the work" appears, in the light of subsequent events, to be a case of 'counting chickens before they were hatched', for anti-suffrage forces had indicated, even before the Norton bill was passed in the Senate, that they were not going to accept defeat with noticeable grace. A telephone campaign directed at the

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Senators urged them to defeat the bill, while telegrams poured in from "antis" directed at the same goal. One telegram in particular deserves mention in light of the fact that it foreshadowed the actual course of action that the "antis" were to adopt as the next phase of their campaign. As the Lincoln Daily News reported it:

A telegram was read in the Senate from Mrs. Peck of Omaha, in which she said:

Please vote against woman suffrage bill. It is not just or right to force suffrage on the women of the state, 90 per cent of whom do not want it, without their consent. If this bill becomes law steps will be taken to submit it to a referendum of the voters.  

The "Mrs. Peck of Omaha" referred to above was Mrs. Edward Peck, one of the social leaders of the city and a lady whose anti-suffrage sentiments were similar in nearly all respects to those of the New York "anti" leader, Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge. Indeed, although the evidence is fragmentary, there is some reason to believe that the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, headed by Mrs. Dodge, supplied the Nebraska Senate, through Mrs. Peck, with anti-suffrage circulars of various types during the period when H.R. No. 222 was under consideration by that body.  

Be that as it may, the "antis" clearly signalled the true character of their next move even before the partial suffrage act became law, proving that two can play the same game. The "antis" sought to make use of the initiative and referendum, this time to prevent the suffrage law from becoming effective according to schedule on July 24, 1917.

The strategy of the anti-suffrage forces was forced upon them by the provisions of the state constitution relating to referenda. The

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14 Ibid., Friday April 20, 1917, p. 7A.
15 Ibid.
referendum clause provides that a petition of ten per cent of the number of voters of the state who voted at the last state election is necessary in order that it may be invoked against any bill passed by the legislature. The petition must be filed with the Secretary of State within ninety days, or, as in the case of the suffrage law of 1917, before July 24, 1917, the operative date. The clause provides that if the act in question does not have an emergency clause attached, calling for the act to go into effect immediately upon signature by the governor, its operation will be suspended by the filing of the petition and will remain suspended until action is taken by the voters.16

Taking the provisions of the constitution into consideration, the anti-suffragists found themselves faced with the task of securing an estimated 30,268 signatures to their petition. Organization was obviously necessary if the work was to be accomplished in the relatively short time available. Thief among the groups providing this organization was the Nebraska Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, a body having headquarters in Omaha and close linkage with Mrs. Dodge's New York-based society. It was the N.A.O.W.S. that took the lead in printing and distributing the petitions throughout the state, although a Lincoln "anti", Mrs. Frank E. Helvey, who was a close friend and associate of Senator Mattes and an ally of the German-American Alliance, was also quite active.17

By June 1, 1917, the petitions were ready for distribution. Accompanying the copies of the petition was the following explanatory statement:

16Ibid., June 2, 1917, p. 1.
In a state election of 1914, your county gave a pronounced majority against woman suffrage and the state defeated the proposition by a decisive majority.

Disregarding the positive expression of the sentiment of the people, the last legislature passed a law granting partial suffrage to the women of Nebraska. This was accomplished through unfair tactics and mis-representation of the sentiment of the people.

The Nebraska Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage is placing petitions before the voters of Nebraska, referring this legislative act to them for rejection under the provisions of the referendum law. A copy of the petition is herewith enclosed.

Representatives of our association will soon visit your county and make a canvass for signers to our petition, the law requiring that we get ten per cent of the total vote cast in the last state election.

Your cooperation in this work of getting the necessary signers to our petition would be highly appreciated. We should be pleased to receive any helpful suggestions you might have to offer.

Yours,

Mrs. Edward Porter Peck
Mrs. L. F. Crofoot
Mrs. C. C. George
Mrs. William Archibald Smith

Address all replies to headquarters, 1119 City National Bank Building, Omaha.18

The petition itself deserves quotation not only as an historical document hitherto unpublished, but because of the "warning" paragraph at its head and the statement avowing the honest intentions of the signers in the body of the document. It was virtually a foregone conclusion that many signatures on the petitions would be challenged by pro-suffragists, and these "honest intentions" sections provided the basis for challenge. The petition read as follows:

WARNING!

It is a felony for anyone to sign any initiative or referendum petition with any other than his own name, or

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knowingly sign his name more than once for the same measure, or to sign such petition when he is not a legal voter, or falsely to certify to the signatures upon any such petition.

Petition for Referendum
To the Honorable Charles W. Pool, Secretary of State of Nebraska: We the undersigned citizens and legal voters of the State of Nebraska and the County of ______________, respectfully order that House Roll No. 222, entitled 'An act relating to elections, to amend section 1940, Revised Statutes of 1913, relating to the qualifications of voters, and to repeal said original sections; and to provide separate ballots and ballot boxes for female voters', passed by the legislature of the state of Nebraska at the thirty-fifth session of said legislature be referred to the people of the state for their approval or rejection at the regular election to be held on the 5th Day of November, 1918, and each for himself says: I have personally signed this petition; I am a legal voter of the State of Nebraska, and the County of ______________, my residence and post-office are correctly written after my name.  

As might be imagined, the petition campaign launched in June of 1917 stirred up a hornet's nest of controversy and discussion. Mrs. Barkley insisted that neither she nor her co-workers were afraid of the result, for she "refused to believe that the manhood of the state would permit interests that (she) need not name because all knew what they were, to find 30,000 men so undemocratic and so unfair as to take from the women of the state what they have fairly won."  

The editor of the Lincoln Daily News, a paper which by this time had become virtually a "newspaper of record" for the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, was not so sanquine. It was his contention that Douglas County politicians, operating out of Omaha, were key figures in the petition campaign and would work strongly and efficiently in that cause. The reason behind their efforts was, as he saw it, a

19Ibid.
simple one. The "old crowd" of machine politicians had been gradually losing voting strength since 1900 and feared for their jobs if a horde of feminine votes, estimated at 20,000, was to become a factor in Omaha politics. In short, woman suffrage, in the opinion of the "old crowd", would end machine politics in Omaha. Describing the "anti" campaign as "liberally financed and well organized", the editor warned that "the only thing that can stop suspension of the limited suffrage law is the refusal of enough voters to sign the petitions."21

To the dismay of the suffragists, the "antis" were able to secure the required number of signatures. On the afternoon of Saturday, July 21, 1917, a petition containing 32,000 names was filed with the Secretary of State, Mr. Pool. Mrs. Crofoot, who had assumed leadership of the "anti" forces in the state, presented the petition in the presence of the governor, as required by law, and before other of her colleagues, including her husband, Mr. L. B. Crofoot, Mrs. C. C. George of Omaha, Mrs. E. W. Truman of Lincoln, and Mr. Jamison of Omaha.

In a statement to the press, Mr. Crofoot said that while the petitions contained 32,000 names, it was his opinion that few more than 29,000 were really necessary to comply with the letter of the law.

The immediate future might well have looked dark to those who had worked so hard to gain even partial suffrage. The filing of the referendum petitions effectively blocked the operation of the Norton law until after the general election of 1918 when, indeed, the referendum might go against the law and render it null and void. That suffragists were bitter over this set-back was clear, and the proper targets for their bitterness were largely agreed upon among them. The Lincoln

21Ibid., June 18, 1917, p. 1.
Daily News expressed the feelings of many when it charged that the forces behind this suffrage defeat were "the wet anti-suffragists working hand in hand, with many influential businessmen backing them." Adding to their discontent was the statement made on July 21st by Secretary of State Pool that "suffragists would not be allowed to copy and publish the names of petitioners because I do not believe the publication would be in accord with public policy."22

Dim as the days to come seemed, there was no lack of activity on the part of suffrage leaders. On the morning of Saturday, July 28, 1917, Mrs. Barkley, accompanied by Mrs. W. E. Hardy, called at the office of Secretary Pool. Their purpose in going was not to ask leave to copy the 32,000 names on the petition, but simply to ask permission to look them over carefully for obvious signs of illegality. Although their comments to Mr. Pool indicated nothing precise in the way of future steps to be taken, Mr. Pool felt certain that a challenge to the legality of the petition was in the offing.23

The Suffragist Challenge: The Barkley-Pool Case, 1918-1919

Mr. Pool was both right and wrong in assessing the situation as he did. The legality of the petition was to be challenged, but not immediately. In fact, six and a half months were to pass before Mrs. Barkley filed suit against Mr. Pool---six months during which that determined lady and her co-workers checked and re-checked the names on scores of petition sheets satisfying themselves that many of them were fraudulent and that a solid basis for legal action did in fact exist.

By mid-February, however, Mrs. Barkley was ready to try her case at law in defense of the Norton Law and took the required steps.

On February 14, 1918, Mrs. Barkley, joined by eighteen pro-suffrage ladies filed suit against Mr. Charles W. Pool, Secretary of State, thus giving us the case of Barkley et. al. v. Pool. The suit was filed in the Third District Court of Nebraska, Lancaster County, and was to be heard by Judge Leonard A. Flansberg. The plaintiffs asked that an injunction be issued by the court preventing the defendant from carrying into effect the referendum petition filed in his office in July. If granted, the injunction would forbid Mr. Pool to cause ballots to be prepared for submission of the Norton Law to the electorate at the next general election scheduled for November, 1918.24

The attorneys for the plaintiffs were John M. Stewart, C. A. Sorenson, Francis A. Brogan, Elmer E. Thomas, H. H. Wilson and T. J. Doyle. Acting for the defendant were John Lee Webster, Jacob Fawcett, L. F. Crofoot and Byron G. Burbank.

Action was brought in this case pursuant to Section 2339, Revised Statutes of Nebraska for 1913, which specifically permits the seeking of an injunction against the holding of a referendum in cases where illegal procedures are believed to have been used in securing signatures to a petition. As for the precise charges made, they were six in number:

1. That the petitions were "insufficient in law and in fact to comply with Section I B, I C, and I D of Article III of the Constitution of Nebraska."

24 The data which follow relative to the trial of the case of Barkley et al. v. Pool in District Court are drawn from the records of the 3rd District Court of Lancaster County, Lincoln, Nebraska, and are found in Appearance Docket 64, pp. 127 and 302, and in Document
2. That no affidavits were attached to petition sheets as required by law.

3. That a law granting presidential suffrage is not subject to a referendum, since the state legislature has exclusive jurisdiction in determining the means by which presidential electors shall be chosen.

4. That the petition "did not contain the genuine signatures of ten per cent of the voters at the last state election." It was argued here that since 291,466 voters had cast votes for the office of Governor in November of 1916, 29,147 signers to the petition were required. That number, it was asserted, had not been achieved, since "1,233 petition sheets, containing not less than 21,460 signatures (were) improperly, falsely and fraudently certified by the circulation thereof." An example of such a sheet was attached as Exhibit I.

Furthermore, "sixty-six petition sheets, containing not less than 1135 signatures, were certified by infants incapable at law of properly circulating and certifying said petition sheets." An example was attached as Exhibit II.

5. That certain circulators of petitions, namely J. J. Sullivan and others, twenty in all, "had engaged in a systematic course of fraud and forgery in procuring and writing names on said petition, thereby invalidating all petition sheets circulated by and certified by each of said circulators." Exhibit III comprised an example of such a petition sheet.

6. That said petition "does not contain the genuine signatures of ten per cent of the legal voters in each of two-fifths of the counties of the State of Nebraska as prescribed by law." Proof of this contention was contained in papers labelled as Exhibit IV.25

It is worth noting at this point that Mr. Pool was not to remain the only defendant in this case. On March 16, 1918, John C. Corwin and eighty-six other men and women active in the anti-suffrage movement petitioned the court to be made "parties defendant" and to be allowed, with Mr. Pool, "to resist the action of the plaintiffs." Judge Flansberg granted the prayer of these petitioners, known henceforth in the case as "Intervenors", and, from that date, the official title of the case

Petition in the case of Barkley et al. v. Pool, filed February 14, 1918, pp. 39-44.
became Barkley et al. v. Pool et al.\textsuperscript{26}

As the case proceeded, it became obvious that factual material satisfactory to the court would have to be sought and introduced. To this end, on May 27, 1918, Judge Flansberg appointed Mr. Calvin A. Emery as Special Examiner, with power to take testimony relative to the referendum petition sheets throughout the state. In addition, parties to the case were granted the right to introduce testimony at the trial not taken by or before the examiner, and to take depositions of any witnesses who did not desire to give their testimony before the examiner.\textsuperscript{27}

Mr. Emery began his work on June 3, 1918, and persisted in it until October, 1918, visiting thirty-two cities and towns across the state in the process. As the data indicated, this was a time-consuming process. Indeed, there was a real possibility that a final decision based on Mr. Emery's evidence might not be ready for issuance before the November election. It was with this in mind, and to forestall any action by Mr. Pool, that the plaintiffs requested Judge Flansberg to issue a restraining order forbidding Mr. Pool to place the suffrage referendum on the November ballot. Judge Flansberg agreed to this and issued such a restraining order on July 6, 1918, stating in the order that if, in future, the referendum petition were to be held as valid, the suffrage issue could then be submitted to the voters at the next general election following such a decision.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{26} Intervention petition in the case of Barkley et al. v. Pool, filed March 16, 1918, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{27} Commission to Mr. Calvin A. Emery relative to the case of Barkley et al. v. Pool et al., filed May 27, 1918, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{28} Restraining order addressed to Mr. Charles W. Pool, filed July 6, 1918, pp. 1-2.
Now that Mr. Pool had been restrained, the case continued. Mr. Emery finished gathering his material, as did the parties to the case, and submitted it before Judge Flansberg. In truth, it would be more accurate to say that the plaintiff submitted all of their evidence, some 5,035 pages of it to be exact. It was with this amount of evidence before him that Judge Flansberg decided to issue a temporary injunction against Mr. Pool, even more forcefully preventing him from taking action on the referendum petition. This temporary injunction was issued on October 16, 1918, and was justified by the Judge on the grounds that the plaintiffs had proved that the names of many signers were fraudulently written on the petition sheets by three of the circulators, namely Messers Barclay, Norton and McCabe. In the case of Barclay, the court found that twenty-eight of his petitions appeared to be in the same handwriting, while 105 witnesses denied their signatures. Three of the purported signatures on his petition were names of persons previously deceased.

As for Mr. Norton, his petitions contained 172 fraudulent signatures, while twenty of the signatures in Mr. McCabe's petitions were found to be forgeries. On thirty-two different petitions, filed by the latter, the court found that 173 names appeared in Mr. McCabe's own handwriting. Having these facts before it, the court ruled that:

A certificate being made by a circulator whose oath has been impeached in this transaction, lacks evidentiary value and in order that said petition be counted, if valid it is necessary to furnish testimonial proof of the genuineness of the signatures and the truthfulness of these certificates, and the proof would fall upon the defendants...and they have failed to offer such proof. 29

29 Explanatory statement attached to temporary injunction addressed to Mr. Charles W. Pool, filed October 16, 1918.
Holding, then, that a prima facie case had been made by the plaintiffs and that the referendum petitions did in fact fall short of having ten per cent of the voters required as legal signatories, the temporary injunction was issued, an event which understandably upset the defendants, who chose at that point to carry the matter of the temporary injunction to the Nebraska Supreme Court. As for the plaintiffs, nothing short of a permanent injunction was viewed as a satisfactory culmination of the case and they were determined to press for it as soon as the Nebraska Supreme Court made its ruling on the temporary injunction.

The case of Barkley et al. v. Pool et al., in the matter of the temporary injunction, was heard by the Supreme Court of Nebraska in November of 1918 and the decision reached was filed on November 30, 1918. Mr. Justice (Albert J.) Cornish, speaking for a majority of five justices, dismissed the appeal on the grounds that the District Court's decision was not a final order, hence it was not a matter coming within the Court's jurisdiction.30

Resuming in December of 1918 in District Court, the case now featured the completion of testimony by the defendants. By mid-January the taking of their testimony was completed and Judge Flansberg prepared to make his final decision. Holding that the defendants had produced insufficient evidence to alter his views relative to the facts before him, the Judge ruled for the plaintiffs and issued a permanent injunction against Mr. Pool which "perpetually enjoined Mr. Pool from

submitting the Norton Law to the electors by referendum."

Three days later, the defendants gave official notice to Judge Flansberg that they intended to appeal his final decision to the Nebraska Supreme Court. Mr. Weber, one of the defending attorneys, made it clear to reporters that he intended to challenge the decision on two grounds: first, that women, not being legal voters, were not the proper parties to have brought the original suit and secondly, that the lower court erred in throwing out all the petitions because a part of the names were forged. It was Mr. Weber's contention that enough bona fide signatures had been obtained to permit the referendum despite the forged signatures affixed to the petition.

Arguments began in this case on June 6, 1919, the defendants hoping to have the permanent injunction set aside by the Supreme Court, while the plaintiffs sought to have the lower court's ruling affirmed. The taking of testimony proceeded through the month of June and involved the reviewing of the masses of testimony presented in District Court in the matter of the granting of a permanent injunction against Mr. Pool. It was the opinion of all eight justices that the evidence presented by the plaintiffs was sufficient in all respects to justify that injunction.

Relative to the two principal points raised by the defendants, specifically that of the competence of women to bring an injunction suit under Section 2339 of the Revised Statutes, and that of the

\[3^1\]Permanent injunction addressed to Mr. Charles W. Pool, filed January 25, 1919.
\[3^2\]Lincoln Star, Friday, June 6, 1919, p. 2.
legality of rejecting entire petition sheets if a part of the signatures
be proved fraudulent, the Supreme Court ruled as follows:

1. Under Section 2339, Revised Statutes 1913, being a part
   of the initiative and referendum act, any citizen may invoke
   the remedy by injunction therein provided to enjoin the
   Secretary of State from certifying or printing on the official
   ballot for the ensuing election the ballot title and number
   of an act sought to be referred.

2. When the certificate of a circulator of a referendum peti-
   tion under the initiative and referendum act is impeached on
   the ground of fraud the probative value of such certificate
   is destroyed and none of the names appearing on such petition
   will be counted when affirmatively proven to be genuine.34

This decision constituted a complete vindication of the position
adopted by Mrs. Barkley and her cohorts relative to the referen­
petition. The headline of the Evening State Journal on June 28 summed
up the situation accurately in these words: "Suffragists Win Smashing
Victory". Supreme Court Holds with Women on Disputed Points. Puts
an End to Litigation Over Right of Women to Vote Under Limited Suf-
frage Act of 1917."35

34 Ibid., p. 629.
35 Evening State Journal (Lincoln, Nebr.), Saturday, June 28, 1919,
p. 1.
CHAPTER VI

THE FINAL CAMPAIGN, 1919-1920

The Status of States, 1919

Before proceeding further with the story of the woman suffrage question as it developed in Nebraska after the court victory just described, let us refresh our minds relative to the status of woman suffrage across the nation in 1919. Women were proud of the fact that by that year some sixteen states and territories had granted full suffrage to women. The number included: Wyoming (1890), Colorado (1893), Idaho and Utah (1896), Washington (1910), California (1911), Oregon, Kansas and Arizona (1912), the Territory of Alaska (1913), Montana and Nevada (1914), New York (1917), and Michigan, South Dakota and Oklahoma in 1918.

Presidential suffrage had been granted by or in 1919 by thirteen states: Illinois (1913), North Dakota, Nebraska, Rhode Island and Michigan (1917), with Michigan giving her women full suffrage the next year; Indiana, Maine, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin and Tennessee, all in 1919. Kentucky granted this form of suffrage in 1920. Primary election suffrage, usually called just "Primary Suffrage," was granted by Arkansas in 1917 and by Texas in 1918.1

With this general picture of progress in mind, we are ready to

enter upon a description of the final stages of the suffrage struggle, touching at reasonable length on the passage by Congress of the Federal Suffrage Amendment, and stressing two subsequent events: the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment by the Nebraska Legislature and the action of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention of 1919-1920 in submitting to the people a proposed amendment to the state constitution allowing full suffrage to women. The events mentioned above followed so closely upon one another's heels that a perusal of a brief list of significant developments and their dates may prove worthwhile before a detailed treatment is attempted:


June 4, 1919: The Federal Amendment is passed by the Senate.

June 28, 1919: The Nebraska Supreme Court affirms the decision of the District Court in the case of Barkley v. Pool.

August 2, 1919: A special session of the Nebraska legislature ratifies the Federal Amendment.

August 26, 1919: Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby declares the Federal Amendment ratified.

September 21, 1920: Nebraska electors approve full woman suffrage amendment to the state constitution as proposed by the Constitutional Convention of 1919-1920.

The Federal Amendment

Turning first to the Federal Amendment, it seems safe to say that the plan which bore fruit in the passage of the so-called "Susan B. Anthony Amendment" through both houses of the federal legislature
in 1919 was the brain-child of Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt. Mrs. Catt had been hand-picked as Miss Anthony's successor in 1900. She served as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association from 1900 until 1904, relinquished administrative leadership to Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, 1904-1915, and assumed the mantle of general-in-chief once again in 1915, Dr. Shaw being recognized in that year with the office of Honorary President.

Maud Wood Park, who had formed a suffrage association at Radcliffe College in 1900, and had risen to the position of congressional chairman of the combined association in 1917, tells us that Mrs. Catt's plan called for the piling up of state victories until their cumulative effect proved irresistible. Speaking of Mrs. Catt, Mrs. Park informs us that:

At a closed meeting of the executive council following the emergency convention in Atlantic City in September, 1916, she outlined the campaign, dividing the state auxiliaries into four groups and assigning to each a particular task.

First, the twelve states where women could vote for presidential electors were to secure from the next sessions of their legislatures resolutions asking the Congress to submit a woman suffrage amendment.

Second, the few states where there was a chance of carrying a state constitutional amendment were to try for that.

Third, the largest group of states was to work for presidential suffrage.

Fourth, southern states, where the primary virtually determined the election were to try for primary suffrage.²

This plan was to be carried out with as little publicity as to its scope and coordination as possible in order to prevent the opposition forces from concentrating their resources in a few key states, 

²Ibid., pp. 123-124.
thus rendering the overall campaign useless. That the plan succeeded is obvious. Mrs. Park remarks that the state organizations did their work so well that before the Nineteenth Amendment was adopted twenty-six legislatures sent resolutions to the Congress asking for the amendment; four states won constitutional amendments; thirteen legislatures granted presidential suffrage to women; two gave primary suffrage. In less than three years the number of presidential electors for whom women could vote jumped from 91 to 339.3

An interesting use of psychological pressure is revealed in Mrs. Park's assertion to the effect that as soon as a state took favorable action on a suffrage measure, her congressional committee made a point of congratulating its senators and representatives. Then, and only then, the friends of the amendment in both houses were called and urged to bring up the news in cloak room, halls and other gathering places. In Mrs. Park's words, "Thus a belief in the inevitability of woman suffrage was built up. 'Nothing succeeds like success.'"4

The entrance of the United States into the First World War upset the ladies' timetable somewhat, for the members of the Sixty-fifth Congress made a "gentleman's agreement" not to take up pieces of general legislation until the war measures were dispatched. In addition, such eminent suffrage leaders as Dr. Shaw, Mrs. Catt and Mrs. Stanley McCormick accepted responsibilities relative to the Women's Committee of the Council for National Defense. As for the national association itself, the task of maintaining a hospital unit in France, manned exclusively by women, was accepted. Together, these developments placed

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3Ibid., p. 124.
4Ibid., pp. 126-127.
a discouraging road block in the path of the suffrage effort, but failed to halt its forward movement.

In an attempt to improve the tactical position confronting the Federal Amendment in the House of Representatives, the congressional committee of the national association decided to work for the creation of a House Committee on Woman Suffrage. Suggested by Dr. McKelway, the association's adviser on procedural matters, the creation of such a committee would result in the prompt reporting of a suffrage amendment bill and would guarantee that it reached the floor of the House in the hands of a friend. The hopes of the women were realized when, on September 24, 1917, their bill for the creation of exactly such a committee passed by a substantial majority.5

With war measures well in hand, the date was set for a House vote on the Federal Amendment, specifically, January 10, 1918. Early in January, congressional hearings on woman suffrage were given in the new committee and the suffrage bill was reported out favorably, the vote being thirteen to three in support. General debate followed, in which forty speeches were given, twenty-three for the bill and seventeen against it. On the 10th, the roll was called on passage of the bill, the result being that 274 votes were cast in its favor and 136 in opposition. As Mrs. Park recalls, "Outside the gallery someone started 'Praise God from Whom all blessings flow' and hundreds of women's voices took up the refrain."6

The bill faced difficulties in the Senate, for, as an informal poll showed, fifty-four senators favored it, while thirty-six were

6Ibid., LVI, p. 810; Morrisson, Victory, p. 133.
opposed and six were doubtful. The task facing the women was that of securing ten more favorable votes. The months between January and October of 1918 were devoted to this piece of work, and the efforts of the women bore fruit. Social functions were used as occasions for influencing the wives of senators, while the mail and both telephone and telegraph were pressed into service in seeking supporting resolutions and endorsements from organized groups. Especially gratifying were resolutions sent by the American Federation of Labor and the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

A typical example of the painstaking and realistic work being carried on by the congressional committee of the national association is reported by Mrs. Park as follows:

To maintain our non-partisan stand we were obliged to balance support by one party with some corresponding testimonial from the other. Neither party wanted its rival to have the monopoly of women's gratitude if and when the amendment went through. As our knowledge of the partisan attitude of the senators increased we hit upon the plan of having a steering committee of our own, in which Miss Hay (Mary Garnett Hay of New York), an avowed Republican...was our Republican 'steer' and Mrs. Guilford Dudley (of Tennessee), well-known as a Democrat, our Democratic 'steer'. When it seemed wise to have a strictly party approach to a man in public life, one of them did the interviewing. What they learned was reported to me with the understanding that the information would not be given to the representative of the other party.7

The period of work just described came to a close with the beginning of a five-day debate on the amendment in the Senate. Starting on September 26, 1918, the discussion eventuated in a vote taken on October 1, 1918. As for the debate itself, the arguments revolved largely around the concept of states' rights and became so heated that

7Morrison, Victory, pp. 134-135.
by the third day of discussion the women in the audience began to despair of success. Hoping to snatch victory from the jaws of impending defeat, two pro-suffrage senators, Messrs. Shafroth and Pittman, went to the White House that very afternoon of the 28th in order to implore the intervention of President Wilson. The President responded to the call upon his services and spoke to the Senate on Monday, September 30, 1918, closing with the plea:

I tell you plainly as commander in chief of our armies and of the gallant men of our fleets...as the guide and director of forces caught in the grip of war and by the same token in need of every material and spiritual resource this great nation possesses--I tell you plainly that the measure which I urge upon you is vital to the winning of the war and to the energies alike of preparation and of battle.  

Mrs. Park is of the opinion that if a vote could have been taken immediately after the President completed his remarks, the amendment would have been passed by the Senate. However, as she reports:

As soon as the President left the Chamber opposed senators began to refute his arguments and to rattle once more the dry bones of state rights objections. Our chief enemies moved about the floor to see whether their forces were still unbroken. The two floor leaders, Lodge of Massachusetts and Martin of Virginia, were arm in arm comparing notes - the 'unholy alliance' we called them.  

The next day, October 1st, the vote was taken, revealing fifty-three in favor and thirty-one opposed to the amendment. The measure had failed to gain the required two-thirds majority.  

The results of the balloting just mentioned made clear the tactical steps to be taken next by the suffrage forces. It was obviously necessary to achieve the defeat of at least two unfriendly senators at the

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8Quoted in Morrisson, Victory, p. 136.
9Ibid.
10U.S., Congress, Senate, 65th Cong., Oct. 1, 1918, Congressional Record, LVI, p. 10987.
next election. Indeed, four gentlemen were selected for electoral beheading by the leaders of the national association: Senators Weeks of Massachusetts, Saulsbury of Delaware, and Baird of New Jersey, and Mr. Moses, the hostile nominee in New Hampshire. Work against these men was carried out with the result that Senators Weeks and Saulsbury were defeated, while Senator Baird and Mr. Moses were elected with reduced majorities. It will be seen, at this point, that, except for untoward circumstances, victory was assured in the Sixty-sixth Congress. Such was to be the case.

Although a final abortive effort was made in the Senate during the short session of the Sixty-fifth Congress, an effort which resulted in the failure of the proposal by one vote on February 10, 1919, the full attention of the suffrage forces was concentrated on gaining an early vote in the first session of the Sixty-sixth Congress.11 In this they were successful.

On the third day of the new session, May 21, 1919, Mr. Mann, the new chairman of the House Woman Suffrage Committee, managed to bring the joint resolution on the Federal Suffrage Amendment to a vote. The tally showed 304 Ayes and ninety Nays. The resolution had passed.12 The new Senate, acting with equal vigor, brought the resolution to a vote on June 4, 1919, at 5 P.M. The result in this house was fifty-six Ayes and twenty-five Nays, a total which supplied the resolution with the required two-thirds majority. At long last, the Federal Suffrage Amendment had won out. The honor of announcing the Senate vote was

given to Senator Cummins of Iowa, long a friend of suffrage. Replacing Mr. Marshall in the chair, Senator Cummins said: "The joint resolution having received the affirmative vote of more than two-thirds of the senators present and voting, is declared to have passed the Senate in accordance with the Constitution of the United States."13

As an epilogue to the matters discussed above, it may not be without interest to observe the positions taken by Nebraska's senators and representatives as revealed by their votes. Turning first to the Senate, we find a consistent pattern. Nebraska's two senators, the Republican George W. Norris and the Democrat Gilbert M. Hitchcock, expressed diametrically opposed views, Senator Norris being strongly in favor of the "Susan B. Anthony Amendment" and Senator Hitchcock being equally strong in opposition. Neither man gave in. All three ballots on the amendment, those of October 1, 1918, February 10, 1919 and June 4th of the same year, found Senator Norris voting for the amendment, while his Nebraska colleague cast his vote against it.

The pattern of the votes cast by Nebraska's members in the House of Representatives reveals with remarkable clarity the tendency of these men to trim their sails to this prevailing wind. Let us note first that the Sixty-fifth Congress found Nebraska's six districts represented, in numerical order, by Messrs. Charles F. Reavis, Charles O. Lobeck, Dan V. Stephens, Charles H. Sloan, Ashton C. Shallenberger and Moses P. Kinkaid. Representatives Lobeck, Stephens and Shallenberger were Democrats, the other three being Republicans. Apparently convinced by the preceding debate that little was to be feared from the establishment of a House Committee on Woman Suffrage, all but Mr. Stephens

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13 Ibid., p. 635.
(absent and not voting) cast their votes in favor of its creation on September 24, 1917. That this virtual unanimity did not express their feelings relative to the suffrage amendment itself is shown by the fact that all six voted against its passage on January 10, 1918.

The Congressional elections of 1918 brought changes to the Nebraska roster in the House. The three Democrats, Messrs. Lobeck, Stephens and Shallenberger, were replaced by Republicans, specifically and respectively, Messrs. Albert W. Jefferis, Robert E. Evans and William E. Andrews. Of the two Republicans, two kept their seats, these being Mr. Reavis and Mr. Kinkaid, while Mr. Sloan of the Fourth District, not choosing to run again, was succeeded by a fellow Republican, Mr. Melvin O. McLaughlin. Although these members of the Sixty-sixth Congress did not verbalize their views, it is not unlikely that they were aware of the virtual inevitability of success for the suffrage amendment in 1919 and of the political desirability of appearing in favor of the measure. Be that as it may, the Nebraska men, without exception, cast favorable votes when the roll was called on May 21, 1919, thus allowing both the state and her Republican element to seat themselves firmly "on the side of the angels."

Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment: The Special Session

With the passage of the joint resolution for a Federal Suffrage Amendment through both branches of the federal legislature behind us, attention must now be focused upon the process of ratification by the states, and by Nebraska in particular.
Far from being a sluggard, Mrs. Catt began the ratification campaign within an hour of the passage of the joint resolution by the Senate. Operating out of New York City, Mrs. Catt sent telegrams to all the governors of states where ratification would require the calling of special sessions of state legislatures, urging the calling of such sessions. As for states wherein the legislatures were in regular session, prompt action was asked for, and, in several cases, received. Illinois and Wisconsin, where legislatures were in session, ratified the amendment on June 10, 1919, as did Michigan, whose governor had called a special session with breakneck speed so as to "come in" with the first two states mentioned. Six days later, three more states ratified the amendment, Ohio in regular session and both Kansas and New York in special session. Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and Texas followed swiftly, making a total of nine ratifications in June.

July witnessed three ratifications as Arkansas, Missouri and Iowa joined the ranks, while Montana and Nebraska ratified in August. At this point the initial rush of ratifications slackened, and we are provided with the opportunity to dwell upon the process of ratification in the state of Nebraska.

On the twenty-third day of July, Governor Samuel R. McKelvie issued the following call for a special session of the Nebraska legislature:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Nebraska, under Section 8, of Article 5, of the Constitution of Nebraska, I hereby call the Legislature to convene in Extraordinary Session at the State House in Lincoln at twelve o'clock, noon, Tuesday, the 29th day of July, 1919, to consider the passage of the following legislation, to-wit:
First, the passage of a Joint Resolution adopting the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States, extending the right of suffrage to women.

Second, to provide for the payment of the members, officers and employees, and the incidental expenses of said Extra-ordinary Session.

Witness my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska, this the 23rd day of July, 1919.

(signed) Samuel R. McKelvie, Governor

The Nebraska Senate and House convened as directed on Tuesday, the twenty-ninth day of July, 1919, and organized themselves for business. The morning sessions in both houses were given over to various procedural matters which need not detain us. The afternoon sessions, however, saw the first real work launched. At 2:30 p.m., Senate and House met in joint session to hear an address by Governor McKelvie. In his twenty-minute speech, the governor explained why he had called the special session, remarked that the time seemed propitious for such a gathering in light of the expressed sentiments of legislators relative to suffrage, and concluded by saying that he deemed it "a rare honor to be privileged to serve the state at a time when the vote is to be given to women of the nation." Going further, he congratulated the legislators present "upon the opportunity that is afforded you now to write your names high in the history of our nation thru (sic) the vote you will cast upon this question.15

Returning from the joint session, the senators plunged immediately into the task of carrying out the job for which they had met. The

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14 Nebraska, Senate and House Journals of the Legislature of the State of Nebraska, Thirty-eighth Session (Special). (Lincoln: Jacob North and Co., 1919), p. 15.
15 Ibid., p. 20.
Senate Committee on Judiciary reported that it had considered the question of the form a joint resolution ratifying the Federal Suffrage Amendment should take and that it recommended the following form:

Legislature of Nebraska
Thirty-eighth (Extraordinary) Session
Senate File No. 1

Introduced by Messrs. Peterson, Neal, Sears, Cooper, Weaverling, Chappell, Johnson and Cordeal

A JOINT AND CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ratifying a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America.

WHEREAS, Before a proposed amendment of the Constitution of the United States can become valid and a part thereof, it must be ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the states, and

WHEREAS, Both houses of the sixty-fifth (sic) Congress of the United States of America did propose by a constitutional majority of two-thirds thereof, to amend the Constitution of the United States, in the following words, to-wit:

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women.

RESOLVED, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein),

That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the Legislature (sic) of three-fourths of the several states.

'Article ____________.

'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.'

(signed) F. H. Gillett
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Thomas R. Marshall
Vice-President of the United States
and President of the Senate

BE IT RESOLVED, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Nebraska in Legislature assembled:

Section 1. That the above and foregoing proposed amend­ment to the Constitution of the United States of America be, and the same is hereby ratified by the Legislature of the State of Nebraska.

Section 2. That certified copies of this joint resolution be forwarded by the Governor of this State to the Secretary of State of the United States and to the presiding officers of each House of the National Congress.16

The committee further recommended that the resolution be read on three separate days as provided by law, and that the joint resolution be introduced as a Senate File, not as a House Roll. These recommenda­tions having been accepted by leaders of both Houses informally before the special session met, there was no opposition to them.

Senate File No. 1 was then put upon first reading and the Senate adjourned for the day. The House busied itself with two necessary pieces of work, namely the introduction and first reading of House Rolls No. 1 and No. 2, the first appropriating the sum of $10,600 to provide payment for members, officers and employees of the special session, and the second providing for the payment out of appropriate funds of incidental expenses incurred during the session. The House adjourned when this work had been completed.

16 Nebraska, Senate and House Journals, pp. 20-22.
The second day of the special session, Wednesday, July 30th, witnessed a flurry of activity in both Houses. In the Senate, Senate File No. 1 was read for a second time and referred to the Committee on Constitutional Amendments and Federal Relations. This body swiftly reported the measure out of committee with the recommendation that changes be made in the list of senators included in the lines devoted to recognizing the introducers of the bill. The list as amended by the committee read: "Introduced by Senators Peterson, Neal, Chappell, Sears, Cooper, Johnson, Weaverling, Siman and Hoagland."\(^{17}\) The bill as amended was placed on general file and the Senate immediately resolved itself into a committee of the whole to consider it. Once again the problem of properly recognizing the introducers of the measure arose. After discussion, the Senate decided upon the following list as being acceptable to it: "Introduced by Senators Cordeal, Peterson, Neal, Chappell, Sears, Cooper, Johnson, Weaverling and Siman."\(^{18}\) With this difficulty overcome, Senator B. K. Bushee reported Senate File No. 1 out of the committee of the whole and recommended its engrossment for third reading the following day.

The House, on this day, had occupied itself with two matters extraneous to our subject, but of real interest to the people of Nebraska. After reading and passing House Rolls No. 1 and No. 2, the representatives busied themselves with discussion concerning daylight-saving time, which they opposed, and alleged profiteering in business and industry, which seemed to them an evil requiring immediate action. For our purposes, let it be said only that debate waxed hot, resolutions aimed at

\(^{17}\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 25.  
solving both of these problems were passed, and that no concrete results ensued.

The special session met for its third day of deliberations on Thursday, July 31, 1919. In the Senate, Senate File No. 1 was reported as correctly engrossed, received third reading, and was put upon its passage. The result was the casting of twenty-seven votes in its favor and none against it. At the conclusion of the unanimous balloting, Mrs. Barkley, who was present in the Senate Chamber, was asked to address the Senate. The press reported that, "In response, she said that an invitation to speak to the Senate on this momentous occasion spoke volumes for the men of Nebraska. As a humble member of the state association she expressed her gratitude to have worked with men and women of Nebraska in a great cause soon to triumph." The only other business facing the Senate at this juncture was that of granting first reading to House Rolls No. 1 and No. 2, which was speedily accomplished. The Senate then adjourned.

The House, on this third day, began its work by providing first reading for Senate File No. 1 and pressed on to further discussion of the two emotion-laden matters previously mentioned.

The fourth day of the special session, Friday, August 1, 1919, found the Senate with little to do. Second reading was accorded the two House Rolls, and the remainder of the day was devoted to matters such as hiring Assistant Secretaries (stenographers), and resolving to commend the United States Senate on the passing of Senate Bill 1309 relative to the construction of a national highway system.

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19 Ibid., p. 28.
The House, on the other hand, enjoyed a busy and an exciting day. Second reading and placement upon General File were granted Senate File No. 1. With this work speedily accomplished, the rest of the day was devoted to hearing an address by Governor McKelvie relative to the profiteering issue, and to discussion of his remarks.21

The fifth and final day of the special session, Saturday, August 2, 1919, witnessed the completion of the last details of business by both legislative Houses. In the Senate, the two House Rolls were read for the third time and put upon their passage. Both were passed unanimously.22 Other than these actions, the only things remaining on the Senate agenda were the formality of signature of Senate File No. 1 by the President of the Senate, which was accomplished when a messenger from the House appeared with the document, duly passed by that body, and the forwarding of the measure to Governor McKelvie for his approval. These items were accomplished during the afternoon session, whereupon the Senate adjourned sine die.

The House of Representatives had a busier schedule. The first item of business was that of according third reading to Senate File No. 1. This was done without delay, and the measure was put upon its passage. The tally showed ninety-four Ayes and no Nays. Two members were absent and not voting.23

In a rather unusual move, Representative Milton M. Wildman, a Republican attorney representing York County, asked permission to explain his vote in poetic form and to have the poem made part of the

21 Nebraska, Senate and House Journals, pp. 66-67.
22 ibid., pp. 34-35.
23 ibid., p. 71.
official record. This was allowed and, since the poem has a rough charm of its own, apart from its function as a procedural matter, it is quoted here in full:

Equal Suffrage

Can it be the day has really come
That men who have been seemingly dumb,
Have at last acquired sufficient light,
To grant woman her legal right?

Will we admit that we've been so blind,
We could not see 'twas very unkind
Not to allow the right of franchise
To women, yet claim to be so wise?

Indeed, it seems very, very strange,
We've been so long removing this mange
From our much be-clouded brain,
And have just observed a right so plain.

To gain this, her own lawful right,
She has been forced to make a hard fight,
She has gone up, down and across the land,
Taking her very life in her hand.

We're just granting a right long past due,
To women, who have always been true
To us, and every worthy cause,
Though long denied the right to make laws.

Just why should the man assume to be
Ruler of the woman? Please tell me.
He should protect her, because he's strong,
But to deny her rights is wrong.

Is she some poor thing, too young or old,
To do anything but that she's told?
Nay, she is the peer of you or I,
In mind and wisdom, this we'll not deny.

Because we wear pants instead of a skirt,
Does that make us any more expert
In affairs of government and life
Than mother, sister, daughter or wife?

Hats off to the women, every one,
They've gained a victory long since begun;
By hard work and grit they've broken down
All barriers, and should wear the crown.
Crowned with citizenship they shall be
And vote alongside of you and me,
Help make the laws under which they live,
To the government, their aid will give.

I am pleased to vote Aye---Wildman\(^24\)

When Mr. Wildman had finished reading his explanation of vote, the House moved to offer Mrs. Barkley an opportunity to address the assembly. Her remarks on this occasion were rather more extended than were those she made before to Senate. The \textit{Evening State Journal} reported as follows:

She recited part of an ode to democracy. She said the House had the thanks of every suffragist in the state, and the women of Nebraska were glad to have the opportunity to express their appreciation of the act which placed Nebraska on record as one of the necessary states to ratify the enfranchisement of all women of the United States. As a representative of the association she desired to thank them for their absolute, splendid courtesy, co-operation and respect shown...She thought it simply a forewarning of the help and comradeship that would come when all were equal citizens in all respects.

She desired to have the members who might go to the constitutional convention know that the women desired to see in the document produced no qualifications of sex. The women desired this because they wanted the ballot through the special act of men of their own state and not owe all to the men of the nation.

Mrs. Barkley said that no greater happiness can come to a human being than 'to espouse a great cause and be allied in the work that brought contact with the splendid men and women who love it.'\(^25\)

With these words of appreciation fresh before them, the members of the House voted to adjourn \textit{sine die}. The special session was over, its tasks completed.

If this essay were centered upon the struggle for woman suffrage at the national level, the story of the battle for ratification of the

\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 73.
\(^{25}\)Evening State Journal (Lincoln), Saturday, August 2, 1919, p. 2.
Nineteenth Amendment in the twenty-two remaining states needed for adoption would be told at length and in vivid colors, for it was stirring indeed. The epic fight in Tennessee alone deserves a volume by itself. Here, however, we must content ourselves by recording that a total of twenty-two states had ratified the amendment by the end of 1919, Nebraska being the fourteenth, while the remaining fourteen required states did so by the middle of August, 1920. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby was thus able to sign the proclamation announcing the incorporation of the amendment into the Constitution of the United States at 8:00 a.m., Thursday, August 26, 1920.26

The Nebraska Constitutional Convention of 1919-1920

It will be remembered that Mrs. Barkley, addressing the Nebraska House of Representatives on August 2, 1919, had expressed the hope that women might receive the right to the ballot "through the special act of the men of their own state." She had reference in her address to the pending constitutional convention and "desired to have the members who might go to the constitutional convention know that the women desired to see in the document produced no qualifications of sex."27 With this expression of sentiment in mind, we shall turn our attention to the final episode in the tale of the suffrage struggle in Nebraska, that of the Nebraska Constitutional Convention of 1919-1920 and the subsequent election in which the people voted on the amendments to the state constitution proposed by that gathering.

As the second decade of the twentieth century drew to a close, a

26) Morrison, Victory., p. 153
27Evening State Journal (Lincoln), Saturday, August 2, 1919, p. 2.
growing realization of the inadequacy of the Nebraska Constitution of 1875 became evident across the state. Verbalizing this burgeoning discontent, the noted Nebraska statesman and historian Addison E. Sheldon remarked that the document was widely known as the "Grasshopper Constitution", since it was adopted on November 1, 1875, in the wake of the grasshopper plague of that year.28 This nickname, Sheldon observes, was meaningful, for the constitution gave expression to the frontier economic philosophy and the sense of "hard times" which were characteristic of the period. As examples of this outlook, Sheldon cites the limitations it placed on government. Among other things, the document forbade creation of new executive offices, required that a general property tax be levied equally by value upon all kinds of property, and even went so far as to prohibit payment of any money for "clerk hire" in the offices of Attorney-General and State Superintendent of Education. Above all, he points out, the constitution was difficult to amend. Changes could be brought about only by a majority of all the electors voting at a general state election, or by the calling of a constitutional convention. Unfortunately, the "amendment by election" method had proved woefully inadequate. Sheldon laments that "In forty years, thirty-eight amendments were submitted, but only ten were adopted."29

As said, the Constitution of 1875 was in fact inadequate to the needs of the state in the present century, and sentiment favoring a constitutional convention became more and more evident during the second

29 Ibid.
decade. This sentiment was recognized in concrete fashion during the Thirty-fifth Session of the Nebraska legislature in 1918. On January 10th of that year, Representative J. N. Norton, whom we have met before, introduced House Roll No. 2, entitled:

A Bill for a Joint Resolution relating to the calling of a Constitutional Convention

The Norton bill met with virtually no opposition, being passed by the House on January 19th and by the Senate on February 27th. The act, in final form, read as follows:

House Roll No. 2. A Joint Resolution relating to the calling of a Constitutional Convention

Be It Enacted and Resolved by the People of the State of Nebraska:

Section 1. That at the next general election of members of the Legislature there shall be submitted to the electors of the state, the question of calling a constitutional convention to alter, change and amend the Constitution of the State of Nebraska. Any amendment which such constitutional convention may propose shall be submitted separately to the electors for approval or rejection when demanded by twenty-five per cent of the duly qualified and elected delegates of such convention.

Section 2. That at said general election the question of calling a constitutional convention shall be submitted to the electors of the state upon the official ballots in the following form:

FOR the calling of a constitutional convention to alter, change and amend the Constitution of Nebraska; any amendment to the Constitution to be submitted separately to the electors when demanded by twenty-five per cent of the duly qualified and elected delegates of such convention.

AGAINST the calling of a constitutional convention to alter, change and amend the Constitution of Nebraska; any amendment to the Constitution to be submitted separately to the electors when demanded by twenty-five per cent of the duly qualified and elected delegates of such convention.

This measure was speedily dealt with by the legislature. The

31 Ibid., p. 1292.
Senate passed it on the 26th of February, the House following suit on March 19th. Governor Neville affixed his signature six days later.\textsuperscript{32}

The "next general election of members of the Legislature" referred to in House Roll No. 2 came on Tuesday, November 5, 1918. On that day Nebraskans cast their ballots for one United States Senator, six members of the federal House of Representatives, a complete ticket of state officers, various county officials and two special proposals. One of the two proposals was for a constitutional amendment denying foreign-born persons the right to vote on possession of first papers. The other was the proposal that a constitutional convention be held.\textsuperscript{33}

The question of how one was to cast one's ballot for or against the two proposals agitated a sufficient number of minds to elicit an explanatory comment from the Commissioner of Elections, Mr. Moorhead, who informed an electorate faced with four separate ballots that:

A voter may vote for these two propositions in either of two ways. If he makes a cross in the party circle (on the general ballot), that carries with it a vote for both of these amendments (sic), unless he indicates a contrary wish. If he does not vote in the party circle he must place a cross in either the 'Yes' or 'No' square opposite each of the two propositions, if he wishes to vote upon these issues.\textsuperscript{34}

The election day turnout was brisk, the polls being open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The result was a Republican landslide.

Mr. Samuel R. McKelvie unseated the incumbent governor, Mr. Keith Neville, in a remarkably good-humored contest between old classmates at the University of Nebraska. As for the issue of the constitutional convention, the official canvass reveals that 121,830 votes were cast in favor of the convention being held, while 44,491 votes were cast in favor of the convention being held, while 44,491 votes were cast in

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 1314.
\textsuperscript{33}Omaha World Herald, Tuesday, November 5, 1918, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{34}Ibid.
opposition, giving the pro-convention forces a majority of 77,339 votes.\(^{35}\)

Now that a joint resolution submitting the question of a constitutional convention had been passed by the Nebraska legislature, and the electorate had signified its approval of the idea, all that remained to be done in order to fulfill constitutional requirements was for the state legislature to pass an act officially calling such a convention into existence. This step was taken on February 5, 1919, when the Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendments and Federal Relations introduced Senate File No. 217, securing first reading of the measure that same day. The title of the bill informs us that it is: "A Bill for an Act to provide for the calling of a Constitutional Convention to revise, amend, or change the Constitution of the State of Nebraska and to declare an emergency."\(^{36}\)

This measure was speedily dealt with by the legislature. The Senate passed it on the 26th of February, the House following suit on March 19th. Governor McKelvie affixed his signature six days later.\(^{37}\) The expeditious handling of Senate File No. 217 is not surprising in light of the fact that on January 9, 1919, both the out-going governor, Mr. Neville, and in-coming Governor McKelvie had expressed deep interest in the convention question, especially as it related to the suffrage issue. Mr. Neville, an old friend of woman suffrage, had remarked that: "The new constitution will, without doubt, grant equal suffrage to all without regard to sex, and to confer upon women the right of

\(^{37}\)Ibid., p. 1478.
franchise will be a merited recognition of their efforts and sacrifices in assisting the government to successfully prosecute the war."^38

Governor McKelvie expressed equal interest and congratulated the Nebraska legislature on the privilege it enjoyed in being authorized to issue the call to the convention.^39

The official call having been authorized and issued by the legislature, a campaign ensued centering upon the election of a non-partisan body of delegates to the convention itself. As Mr. Sheldon remarks:

Freed from party lines in the selection of members of the constitutional convention the natural division of society into progressive and conservative groups appeared. A 'Progressive League' was formed with state-wide membership. A 'New Nebraska Federation' was the reply of the conservative element.^40

Despite the emergence of these two main bodies, the lines of division between them remained vague. In some counties there were no opposition candidates. In others there was no material difference in the personal platforms put out by rival candidates. In still others there was active rivalry both of candidates and of principle.

Be that as it may, the election of delegates, which took place on Tuesday, November 4, 1919, revealed to those knowledgeable relative to state affairs that roughly forty of the members chosen could be described as conservatives, while thirty merited the label "progressive." Of the remaining thirty, few were assignable to either group. However, as the acute Mr. Sheldon remarks, "The sequel disclosed that a majority (of the independents) were clearly conservative, but some of that

^38Ibid., pp. 20-21.
^39Ibid., p. 32.
^40Sheldon, The Land and People, p. 2.
were not always dependable to follow the lead of the pronounced con-
servatives.\textsuperscript{41}

The constitutional convention convened on Tuesday, December 2, 1919, in the chamber of the Nebraska House of Representatives. Looking ahead, we shall see that there were to be seventy-four days of deliberation, and 336 proposed amendments offered for consideration by the convention, of which forty-one would be approved by the delegates for submission to the electorate on Tuesday, September 21, 1920.\textsuperscript{42}

Organizing the first day, the convention chose Mr. A. J. Weaver, a middle-of-the-road Republican farmer from Falls City, as its presiding officer, and Mr. George Jackson, a progressive Democrat and merchant from Nelson, Nebraska, as vice-president.\textsuperscript{43} With this necessary business transacted, the convention began its work.

The topics discussed by the delegates, and the amendments proposed, ranged over the entire spectrum of questions pertinent to the details of state government. We however, are concerned with those proposed amendments having a bearing on the matter of suffrage. That suffrage was a topic of interest is revealed by the fact that no fewer than eleven separate amendments pertaining to the details of the suffrage article in the state constitution were introduced. This list of proposed amendments would present us with a staggering task if all were to be followed in detail through their legislative histories. Fortunately

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{41}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{42}Nebraska, Office of the Secretary of State, \textit{Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the State of Nebraska as adopted by the Constitutional Convention, 1919-1920.} (Lincoln: Kline Publishing Co., 1920) p. 4.
  \item \textsuperscript{43}Nebraska, Office of the Secretary of State, \textit{State Constitutional Convention, State of Nebraska, General Roster of Delegates and State Officers.} (Havelock, Nebr.: Israel, Printer, 1919), p. 2.
\end{itemize}
for the reader, all but two of the eleven proposed amendments followed identical paths in the convention: first reading, referral to the Committee on Suffrage, and indefinite postponement as a result of the recommendation of that committee. The two exceptions were Proposed Amendment No. 158, offered by Mr. Walter L. Anderson, of Lincoln, and Proposed Amendment No. 228, brought forward by Mr. John H. Wiltse of Falls City. The first item need not detain us, for it dealt with the granting of the franchise to Nebraska men in the Regular Army of the United States.44 The second item, Proposed Amendment No. 228, is of concern to us as it touched directly upon woman suffrage.

The Convention Journal tells us that Mr. Wiltse submitted No. 288 as a substitute for Proposed Amendment No. 2, which he had offered for consideration on the second day of the convention. This being the case, let us examine both amendments. Proposed Amendment No. 2 reads as follows:

Proposal to incorporate the following provision in the new constitution:

Every person of the age of twenty-one years or upward, belonging to either of the following classes, who shall have resided within the state six months and in the county, precinct or ward for the term prescribed by law shall be an elector.


Second. Persons of foreign birth who shall become citizens of the United States by naturalization or otherwise, conformably to the laws of the United States, at least thirty days prior to an election.

Proposed Amendment No. 228 is phrased in these terms:

Proposal to substitute the following for Proposal No. 2:

Every citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years or upwards, who shall have resided within the state for six months, and within the county, precinct, or ward for the term prescribed by law, shall be an elector.\(^5\)

First reading was accorded Proposed Amendment No. 228 on January 12, 1920, after which it was referred to the Committee on Suffrage. On January 27th, the committee reported the amendment out with the recommendation that it be put on general file. Two days later, the convention sat as a Committee of the Whole on No. 228 and recommended its referral to the Committee on Arrangement and Phraseology. This committee re-worked No. 228 and suggested its acceptance in the following form:

Every citizen of the United States who has attained the age of twenty-one years, and has resided within the state for six months, and within the county and voting precinct for the terms provided by law shall be an elector.

No. 228, as revised, was accepted and given second reading on February 12th. Third reading was accorded the amendment on March 23rd, and it was put upon its passage. The vote cast revealed ninety-three Ayes and one Nay. The amendment had been accepted and would appear on the ballot presented to the electorate on September 21st.\(^46\)

E. Proposed Amendment No. 18

It would be satisfying, in a dramatic sense, to close this brief survey of the struggle for woman suffrage in Nebraska with the tale of a savagely fought contest over the proposed suffrage amendment at the election held on September 21, 1920, but truth prevents it from being

\(^{45}\) Ibid., I, p. 300. (Both Proposed Amendments are quoted in full on this page.)

\(^{46}\) Ibid., I, p. XCII.
done. This final act of the suffrage play can only be described as being an anti-climax.

Election day, the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, 1919, dawned cold and clear across the state. Electors entering the polling places found themselves confronted by a lengthy ballot, to say the least. There were no fewer than forty-one proposed amendments to the state constitution placed before them. Our interest, naturally, centers upon Proposed Amendment No. 18, "To amend Section 1, Article VII—Provides for equal suffrage."47

It had been anticipated that a heavy vote would be cast, since the convention had granted women the right to vote on all issues in this election, but the prediction proved faulty. The turnout was anything but massive. As the World Herald reported next day:

The vote was extremely light yesterday. In Omaha, where 38,000 men and 17,000 women are registered, it is doubtful that more than 9,000 persons cast their votes. By noon, not a single vote had been cast in some precincts.48

The Lincoln papers reported the same phenomenon. The Evening State Journal pointed to "an unusually light vote," and noted that in Precinct C of the Ninth District in Lancaster County, only sixty-three voters out of 504 registered had taken the trouble to come to the polls.49

The Lincoln Star estimated that no more than one-third of the registered voters of that city cast ballots on the amendments.50

As for the fate of the amendments themselves, all passed. Only

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47 Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of the State of Nebraska, sample ballot, unpaged, attached.
49 Evening State Journal (Lincoln), Tuesday, Sept. 21, 1920, p. 6.
one proposed amendment, No. 6, which would allow an increase in the number of state senators from thirty-three to fifty, had any sort of real trouble at all. The remaining forty items were approved by an average of six or seven votes to one.\(^{51}\) As was expected, the women who took the trouble to vote cast their ballots, for the most part, in favor of Amendment No. 18. The few who voted against it stood out by contrast with the vast majority of ladies and deserved a special comment from the press. The *Evening State Journal* reported, in an amazed tone, that fifty-one Lancaster County women out of a total of 1,938 had chosen "to use the ballot in an attempt to deprive their sisters of the use of it."\(^{52}\)

The election returns trickled in slowly, as was usual in those days before the birth of the computer, but, when the figures were finally totalled, they revealed that Proposed Amendment No. 18 had passed handsomely. The official figures on this particular item are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOR</td>
<td>47,471</td>
<td>18,012</td>
<td>65,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGAINST</td>
<td>14,462</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>15,416</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having been approved by the electorate, the forty-one amendments to the state constitution went into effect on January 1, 1921. Mrs. Barkley's wish that the women of Nebraska might receive the right to vote from the hands of their own men had come true. With little fanfare,

\(^{52}\) Ibid., Saturday, Sept. 25, 1920, p. 15.
\(^{53}\) Nebraska, Office of the Secretary of State, *Official Report of the Nebraska State Canvassing Board, Special Election Held September 21, 1920*. (No publication data) p. 5.
and with hardly a parting shot from the opposition, the suffrage struggle had come to its conclusion. This long, weary campaign ended, if one may borrow T. S. Eliot's words, "not with a bang, but a whimper."
The sentimental person will hope that, somehow, Erasmus Correll, Mrs. Colby and their fellow workers were apprised of the final victory.
The author hopes so too.
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