

PLANTED IN THE SOIL

THE HOMESTEAD ACT, WOMEN
HOMESTEADERS, AND THE 19TH
AMENDMENT



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“Planted in the Soil”: The Homestead Act, Women Homesteaders, and the Nineteenth Amendment

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The important stories of women homesteaders and their crucial role in the suffrage movement have long been underrepresented in academic scholarship and National Park Service interpretation. Homestead National Historical Park is honored to share their important contributions to history.

Introduction

Many people know the key moments in the Women's Suffrage Movement in the United States. In 1848, the first women's rights convention took place in Seneca Falls, New York. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the American Equal Rights Association in 1866 to fight for universal suffrage. In 1869, Wyoming became the first territory to guarantee women the right to vote. Anti-alcohol activists founded the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in 1874, and it became a key partner in the struggle for suffrage under Frances Willard. The National American Woman Suffrage Association organized a major parade down Pennsylvania Avenue in 1913. In 1916 the Congressional Union (later the National Women's Party) formed, famously picketing at the White House in World War I, and were, as suffragist Doris Stevens put it, "jailed for freedom."¹ At last, ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment arrived in 1920. However, few people realize the role that the Homestead Act of 1862, and women homesteaders had in fighting for the vote for women across America.

Women who settled under the Homestead Act fought for the right to vote, leading homesteading states to suffrage victories well before the rest of the nation. Almost all the states that granted women full voting rights before the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment gave away land under the Homestead Act.² Some of the most heavily homesteaded states were among the earliest adopters of women's suffrage: Wyoming, Montana, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Colorado, South Dakota, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Nebraska, the most heavily homesteaded state by percentage of land area claimed, did not allow full voting rights but did permit women to vote for president before the Nineteenth Amendment.³

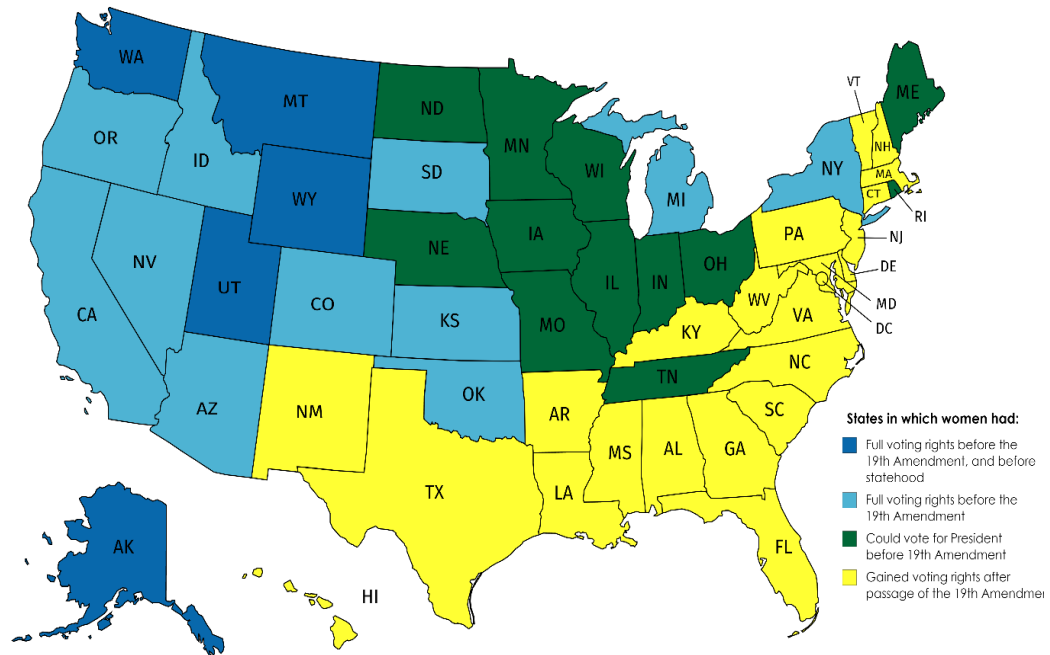
Fifteen of the sixteen homesteading states west of the Missouri River granted women at least limited suffrage.⁴ Every single one of the Great Plains and Midwest homesteading states passed at least limited or presidential suffrage prior to the Nineteenth Amendment. Historians have found that women represent around ten percent of all homestead claims, a number which significantly increases around the turn of the twentieth century. The efforts of these women fighting for their political rights across the Homestead Act states clearly illustrate a link between homesteading states (Map 2) and the women's suffrage movement (Map 1).

¹ Doris Stevens was a Nebraska-born suffragist who held leadership roles in the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Congressional Union, and National Woman's Party. She was one of the women arrested at Occoquan Workhouse, writing about the experience in her 1920 work *Jailed for Freedom*.

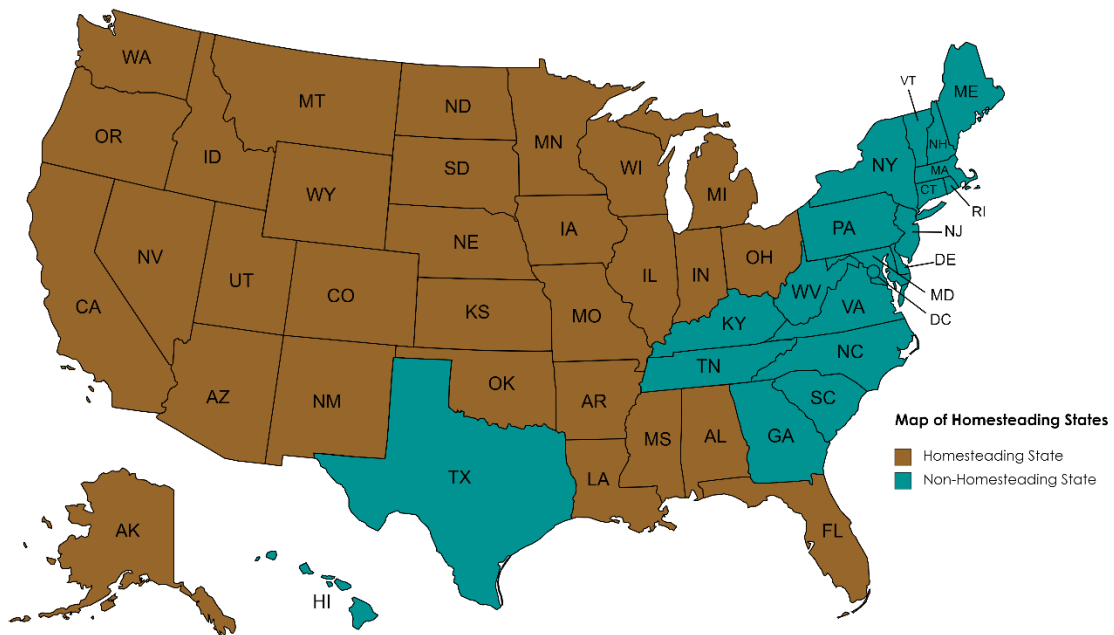
² New York was the only state outside of those under the Homestead Act (non-homesteading states) to guarantee full voting rights to women prior to the Nineteenth Amendment. The only other non-homesteading states to provide limited suffrage prior to the Nineteenth Amendment were Maine, Rhode Island, and Tennessee.

³ Though Montana had the highest absolute number of homesteaders at 151,600, it only had 34% of the total land area of the state claimed, compared to 45% of the land area of Nebraska claimed by a total of 104,260 homesteaders.

⁴ New Mexico was the only homesteading state west of the Missouri River that did not provide at least limited suffrage prior to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Several states under the Southern Homestead Act of 1866 also did not give women the vote before the Nineteenth Amendment: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.



Map 1 - Map of Suffrage in the United States. Map by author, template courtesy of MapChart.net



Map 2 - Map of Homesteading States. Map by author, template courtesy of MapChart.net

Women, Citizenship, Property Rights, and Homesteading:

American women in the mid-nineteenth century possessed few legal rights. Women did not have the right to vote and lost their legal independence after marriage. Until 1848, with the Married Woman's Property Act in New York, any property that a woman owned before her marriage became her spouse's property. Similar laws quickly followed at the state level. However, the Homestead Act was an almost unprecedented piece of legislation because of its democratic approach to land ownership at the federal level.

The Homestead Act was passed by the 37th Congress during the Civil War, and signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on May 20, 1862. It was designed to "secure homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain" – granting tracts of up to 160 acres of land to any eligible claimant who met the requirements to file a claim – "any person who is the head of the family, or who has arrived at the age of twenty-one years," including both U.S. citizens and immigrants who had declared their intention to become a citizen.⁵ Women were eligible to file a claim and receive land in their own name if they were single or widowed. The land itself was free, apart from a modest filing fee.

To successfully "prove up" land under the Homestead Act, the claimant had to remain on the property for five years, build a house, and cultivate crops or raise livestock. A series of documentation was submitted at the closest federal land office, collectively known as a land entry case file – application paperwork, affidavits, receipts, notations of immigration status, military records, legal disputes to the land, newspaper publications about the resident's intent to "prove up" a claim. The case file also included testimony by the claimant and their witnesses, revealing the time one settled on the land, detailed information about the buildings constructed, the crops planted, livestock raised on the farm, and any other improvements made. Finally, after going through this process and meeting each requirement, the homesteader earned the patent (deed) to the land. Alternatively, one could live on the claim for just over a year and then purchase it for the government minimum price for land, as low as \$1.25 per acre – this process was known as "commuting" a homestead.⁶

The law empowered traditionally marginalized groups, including women, Latinx people, African Americans, and foreign-born individuals, by increasing their political, social, and economic mobility through land ownership, thus providing enfranchisement and access to the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. All citizens, or those eligible to become citizens, were welcome to claim land under the act, regardless of gender. African Americans could claim homesteads in 1866, after the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment.

⁵ In some situations, claims were limited to 80 acres – generally when adjacent to railroad land grants. Later legislation amended the maximum homestead size to 320 acres (Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909) and then 640 acres (the Kinkaid Act of 1904 in the Sandhills of Nebraska, as well as the Stock-raising Homestead Act of 1916, which allowed for larger tracts for ranchers.) These land laws provided more land to settlers in places where 160 acres was not economically viable for agriculture and ranching purposes.

⁶ Sarah Carter, ed. *Montana Women Homesteaders: A Field of One's Own*. (Helena: Farcountry Press, 2009). Recent scholarship suggests that approximately twenty percent of successful homesteaders did choose to commute their homestead claim, 302,976 commutations out of 1,459,970 claims. Richard Edwards, "To Commute or Not Commute: The Homesteader's Dilemma," *Great Plains Quarterly*, Vol. 38 No. 2 (Spring 2018): 129-150.

Immigrant men and women could claim land while they met the residency requirement to become citizens and could then successfully “prove up” their claim. The residency requirement to homestead was the same length of time a prospective citizen had to reside in the country to naturalize.

With the Homestead Act, the United States government established legal property rights for women at the federal level. This gender neutrality was adopted by state and territorial legislation in the West because of the tremendous population increases driven by the flood of people seeking land under the Homestead Act.⁷ Further, it provided opportunity and access to land for a previously landless group, with far-reaching social and political impacts. The most significant of these impacts was suffrage, a foundational right of democracy.

Landowners had long held substantial political clout in the United States. This was no different in the developing West and Midwest. Abigail Adams famously told her husband, President John Adams, “remember all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation.” She referred to the English common law practice of coverture, which barred a married woman from owning property in her own name.⁸ She wrote the letter on March 31, 1776 – even before the Declaration of Independence. Abigail had a keen mind and was aware of the link between land ownership and political and civil rights, including suffrage.

In early America, the right to vote was primarily limited to landowning white males. The most common restriction for the right to vote in colonial and early America was owning either fifty acres of land or property worth £40. The ratification of the Constitution left the determination of who was eligible to vote up to individual states, with many continuing to restrict suffrage to white men with property into the nineteenth century. When accounting for the female and enslaved population who could not vote in 1790, at most, there were 800,000 people eligible to vote (free adult white males) out of 3,900,000 Americans. The number was much lower than that. Perhaps only 560,000 people, about 14% of the country, had the right of suffrage as landowning Americans.⁹

For the first time in American history, however, thanks to the Homestead Act, women were obtaining land and seeking an equal share in their political future on a large scale. The passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 significantly increased the ability of a woman to obtain real estate under her own name. Estimates suggest that approximately ten percent of all homesteaders were women. If millions filed claims, then hundreds of thousands of women

⁷ American Memory Project, “Married Women’s Property Laws,” *Library of Congress*, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awhhtml/awlaw3/property_law.html (accessed October 11, 2023).

⁸ Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31, 1776. The Adams Family Papers. Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁹ The 1790 Decennial Census enumerates an adult white male population of 807,094; 791,850 minor white males; 1,541,263 white females; 59,150 other free persons; and 694,280 enslaved persons. The number was much lower than that. Even with white male suffrage reforms in the early Republic, only 60-80% of white male adults could vote in the late nineteenth century, as per Donald Ratcliffe’s “The Right to Vote and the Rise of Democracy.” *Journal Of the Early Republic*, 33 (Summer 2013): 219-254. With that rough estimate, taking a relatively high assumption of 70% adult white males as eligible, only 560,000 Americans could vote – 14% of the 3,900,000 Americans in 1790.

sought land from the government, and more than one hundred thousand successfully “proved up” claims. As property and suffrage were historically linked, suffragists fought to have the right to vote extended to these newly landed women. Previous federal legislation failed to grant this fundamental right, and reform came from the state and local levels first.

Community Formation, Women Homesteaders, and Reform

Homesteading offered women the opportunity to create communities in a new image in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Women settling westward made a conscious effort to transform their surroundings, converting what they saw as a “virgin prairie” into a “civilized home.” The Homestead Act sought to use individuals to effect this transformation on a national scale, settling hundreds of millions of acres.

Dr. Sara Egge argued in her *Woman Suffrage and Citizenship in the Midwest, 1870 – 1920*, that “understanding the link between community and citizenship is critical to the study of woman suffrage in the Midwest.”¹⁰ That link is exemplified by community formation under the Homestead Act. Recent research by Dr. Jake Friefeld indicates that most new farms created in the Midwest between 1868 and 1900 – some 65% - were created by homesteaders.¹¹ For nearly fifty years, homesteaders acted as the prime driver of community formation in much of the United States – no small thing in a society built around the small family farm.

Whether they were women or men, whether they came from abroad or elsewhere in the United States, homesteaders cultivated farms, built homes, and created networks and communities wherever they settled. Community formation came through town building, the creation of transportation systems, and the establishment of financial, commercial, educational, and religious institutions. Women and their efforts were instrumental in forming a community that resembled the places they called home, but in which their participation and their rights were increased and upheld. Some homesteaders settled independently; many migrated and homesteaded in groups organized along either a religious basis (like Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon, Emmeline Wells, and Julia P.M. Farnsworth, all suffragists and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Utah, Chapter Two) or an ethnic basis (like Maggie Walz and her Scandinavian homesteader colony on Drummond Island, Michigan, Chapter Four).

Many groups formed homesteader communities based upon shared ethnic or religious bonds. Other groups which commonly homesteaded together included Czechoslovaks in Nebraska; Scandinavians in Minnesota and Dakota Territory; Finns in Michigan; Germans especially in Nebraska; Mormons, largely in Utah, Arizona, and Idaho; Syrians in the Dakota Territory and Oklahoma; Jewish homesteaders in North Dakota and Nebraska; Latinx homesteaders in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and California (though they had been in those

¹⁰ Sara Egge. *Woman Suffrage and Citizenship in the Midwest, 1870-1920*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018).

¹¹ The number varies widely from state to state – in some states, it was a single-digit percentage; in others, it was as high as 95%. Jake Friefeld. “Homesteading in the Making of the Midwest.” *The Making of the Midwest: Essays on the Formation of Midwestern Identity, 1787 – 1900*, ed. Jon K. Lauck.

places as landowners long before the Homestead Act); and African Americans in Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, and South Dakota, to name a few. Though immigrants from the British Isles homesteaded in large numbers, they often did not form colonies, but rather integrated into communities.¹²

After migrating and forming a community, faith and ethnicity often took on an even stronger meaning for an individual than previously. Homesteaders of many faiths clustered around central townsites where a dedicated place of worship met the religious and social needs of a community.¹³ Though men generally led these churches, women were responsible for planning recreational activities, organizing women's and youth groups, and raising money.¹⁴

While the Homestead Act itself was an act of imperialism that promoted Euro-American middle-class homes as the "pinnacle of civilization," these women reshaped and reconceptualized eastern values of feminism into something that better suited homesteader life.¹⁵ Homesteader women, whether as the head of their own household or as the spouse, partner, or family member on a homestead, engaged in a multitude of activities – agricultural labor, housework, childcare, reform, and political activism. Women homesteaders argued that their work, though crucial, was often economically invisible. Women in agriculture saw themselves as laborers whose value was tied to the land, yet married women were often not recognized as full and equal partners. They sought reform through property laws and through the right to vote.

Women homesteaders' experiences and talents in creating these community networks and organizations enabled them to coordinate, mobilize, participate in, and enact the local, state, and national suffrage and reform-based organizations. Through their leadership in these organizations, homesteader women challenged the status quo to uphold their rights, liberties, and freedoms. One of the most common organizations present in towns that developed alongside rural homesteading communities was the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which sought to push for legislative control and prohibition of the alcohol industry.¹⁶ Ruth Bordin noted that the WCTU was the largest organization of women at that point in American history. Under Frances Willard, second president of the WCTU, the organization reached its zenith, with well over 150,000 enrolled members.¹⁷ By comparison, the National American Woman Suffrage Association had approximately 13,000 enrolled members – though many local suffrage supporters were not card-carrying members and participated in more grassroots

¹² For more on this topic, see Frederick C. Luebke's "Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains." *Faculty Publications, Department of History*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1977, as well as Homestead National Historical Park's white paper, created by former park historian Blake Bell, "America's Invitation to the World."

¹³ David B. Danborn. *Sod Busting: How Families Made Farms on the Nineteenth Century Plains*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 76.

¹⁴ David B. Danborn. *Sod Busting: How Families Made Farms on the Nineteenth Century Plains*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 76.

¹⁵ Jane E. Simonsen. *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860-1919*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.)

¹⁶ Ruth Bordin. *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981). Bordin's work focuses primarily upon the WCTU under Frances Willard, and the peak of the organization.

¹⁷ Ian Tyrrell. "Temperance, Feminism, and the WCTU: New Interpretations and New Directions." *Australasian Journal of American Studies* Vol. 5, No. 2 (December 1986), 27.

fashions, as evidenced by the testimony of New Mexico homesteader Lillian Greer Bedicheck (Chapter Two), and Alaskan Lorena B. Wells (Chapter One).

Local chapters of the WCTU (“unions”) often served as gateways for women to go from the temperance cause to suffrage. Frances Willard’s motto, “Do Everything,” encouraged women not just to crusade against alcohol, but to accomplish a wide range of social uplift for women, including fighting for suffrage, which became a central goal of the WCTU during Willard’s presidency from 1879 to her passing in 1898. Frances often wrote about the importance of suffrage in her journal. One of the first entries she penned, on March 9, 1868, recalled a colleague asking her, “‘Have you not some brave possibility of work for woman’s suffrage, with your pen? It is to be the question of your prime, and mine.’ Perhaps I have – I feel so now more than before. We shall see.”¹⁸ Over the coming years, suffrage came to the forefront of her goals, reflected by her entry on March 28, 1869, when she learned of “a brave speech by Anna Dickinson on Women’s Suffrage – a question more interesting to me than any in America at present.”¹⁹

The “Do Everything” policy led many of the 150,000 plus WCTU members into diverse social reform efforts, including temperance, labor, children, prison, and suffrage. They attracted women from all walks of life, political ideals, goals, and motivations. As their number supplemented and amplified local, state, and national suffrage organizations, especially in smaller rural communities where the WCTU was often the most prominent woman’s organization around, they changed the trajectory of suffrage in America – though they often found themselves at odds with immigrant homesteaders who may have had different cultural values and perceptions on alcohol. There was a tension between immigrant homesteaders and many WCTU members, who warned that saloons and alcohol represented “the gates of hell.”²⁰ As millions of European immigrants came to the United States between 1880 to 1920, the peak of the homesteading era, many settled in the Great Plains, taking advantage of the opportunity to claim free land. Temperance women did “work among foreign speaking people” to “transform new arrivals into sober citizens” – farmers who would support prohibition and the right for women to vote.²¹

Structure and Chapter Summaries

When taking in the complex history of the Homestead Act – more than one hundred twenty years and thirty of the fifty states, it is difficult to profile a “typical” homesteader.

¹⁸ “March 28, 1869.” Frances Willard House Museum and WCTU Archives. Evanston, Illinois. Frances Willard kept a journal from the age of 16 to 31, and again from 54 to 57. The first entry to mention suffrage appears in 1860, concerning property ownership and the vote, and then features heavily in 1868-1869, as well as in the 1880s and 1890s, though some of the discussion focuses upon universal suffrage in France.

¹⁹ “March 28, 1869.” Frances Willard House and WCTU Archives.

²⁰ Wagner, Ella, “The Saloon Is Their Palace”: Race, Immigration, and Politics in the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, 1874-1933” (2022). *Dissertations*. 3956. https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/3956, 66. Accessed October 11, 2023.

²¹ Wagner, Ella, “The Saloon Is Their Palace”: Race, Immigration, and Politics in the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, 1874-1933” (2022). *Dissertations*. 3956. https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/3956, 67. Accessed October 11, 2023.

Approximately ten percent of those who successfully proved up claims were women (that number starts lower but grows in the early twentieth century). The women whose lives and stories appear in this work provide case studies of the diverse cast of those whose lives were impacted by the Homestead Act. Some were women whose families had been in America for generations; others were first-generation immigrants. Some were farmers and ranchers, from a long line of farming families; others were the spouses or daughters of homesteaders, growing up on the family farm, but moving off the land to pursue their goals. There were homesteaders from ethnicities and faiths worldwide receiving public domain land.

The study is divided into eight chapters – this introduction, chapters one through six, and an epilogue. Each chapter focuses on a different region of homesteading and the suffrage activity of homesteaders in that region. The only states not included are several Southern Homestead Act states, which were largely anti-suffrage, and several of the Great Lakes States, which had a minuscule number of homesteaders as nearly all the available public lands in those states were claimed prior to the passage of that law in 1862. Essentially, wherever the data was sufficient to track the story of homesteading suffragists, it is featured. The Appendix includes several maps illustrating the location of each county where these homesteaders settled, with an overall map and a map for each chapter.

The narrative begins with Chapter One: The West Came First, highlighting suffragist homesteaders in Wyoming, Oregon, Montana, Washington, Alaska, Colorado, and Idaho. The earliest successes in the movement came to the Wyoming Territory in 1869 (and as a state in 1890). Early settler and landowner Amalia B. Post fought for women's rights in Wyoming and nationwide as part of the National Woman's Suffrage Association. Shortly after Wyoming passed suffrage in 1890, Colorado followed suit in 1893. Ellis Meredith and Ina Sizer Cassidy, both daughters of early ranchers, were leaders in the movement.

Many women who came to the Pacific Northwest under the Oregon Trail in the 1850s claimed public lands after arriving. Oregon and Washington women like Abigail Scott Duniway and Mary Olney Brown led the initial suffrage movement in the region before passing the torch to Dr. Viola Boley Coe, Emma Smith DeVoe, and Dr. Cora Smith Eaton, as well as early LGBT leader Marie Equi. In nearby Idaho, there was a strong link between homesteaders and the state suffrage leadership – most of the leaders in Idaho were either homesteaders themselves or had close family ties to settlers, including Elizabeth and Durbin Badley. Montana also had powerful homesteader women, including Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to federal office in the United States. Finally, though homesteading came later to Alaska than any other state or territory, those settlers brought the suffrage movement with them. Ada Brownell was a member of the cause in Seward. Suffrage and women's rights work continued with Alaska homesteaders well into the twentieth century, exemplified by African American homesteader Mahala Ashley Dickerson, a childhood friend of Rosa Parks. Dickerson became the first black woman homesteader and lawyer in Alaska Territory, dedicating her life to civil rights cases.

Chapter Two: None of the Evils So Loudly Proclaimed focuses on suffrage in the homesteading southwest, including California, Arizona, Utah, Nevada, and New Mexico. California's attempts to pass a ballot in 1896 and 1911 relied upon support from rural farmers and homesteaders to out-vote the major urban areas which opposed suffrage. One of the champions of the cause was renowned author, homesteader, feminist, and activist, Mary Hunter Austin. In Arizona, Frances Willard Munds was a longtime leader of the Arizona WCTU and the

Arizona Equal Suffrage Association. Her support and leadership helped Arizona vote in favor of suffrage upon statehood in 1912, and Munds was elected as one of the first women state senators.

Utah holds a unique distinction – Utah women were the first to legally vote (Wyoming passed the legislation ahead of Utah, but Utah held an election before Wyoming did), but also revoked suffrage in 1887, due primarily to a debate over the Latter-Day Saints Church, plural marriage, and suffrage. Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon (first woman state senator), Emmeline Wells, and Julia P.M. Farnsworth were at the center of this historical moment.

Though Nevada was a challenging place to complete the requirements to receive land under the Homestead Act, more than 4,000 claimants successfully received 700,000 acres of land. Women there, like elsewhere throughout the nation, pursued social advancement through both landownership and women's suffrage. Felice Cohn was an influential Nevada lawyer and federal employee with the General Land Office and the Department of the Interior who promoted homesteading to women in Montana in the early 1900s. She was also a leader in the Nevada Equal Franchise Society.

New Mexico was the only homesteading state in the west that failed to pass a suffrage bill prior to 1920. However, it had an active movement, with leadership among Anglo-American and Latinx homesteader populations. Ada McPherson Morley was a rancher and suffragist leader (as was her daughter Agnes Morley Cleveland). Adelina "Nina" Otero-Warren was a member of a wealthy Hispano New Mexico family who engaged the Latinx population of the state with Spanish-language suffrage material and led the state's Congressional Union Chapter. She became the first Latina to run for Congress in 1921.

Chapter Three: Planted in the Soil explores the deeply interrelated link between homesteading and suffrage in the Great Plains – the initial core whose research spawned the entire project. Homesteading and Nebraska are nearly synonymous, so it is fitting that Nebraska had many women homesteaders who were suffragist and temperance leaders. Nebraska has the heaviest representation of all the states in this study. Mary E. Smith Hayward homesteaded near Chadron, where she went into business as a merchant. Her years of paying taxes despite having no representation led her to seek equal suffrage. Hayward was appointed president of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association and as a state representative of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Mamie Claflin, also a state leader, had homestead roots in Hall County. Women's Christian Temperance Union leader Frances Heald homesteaded in Polk County. Dr. Inez C. Philbrick, a suffrage leader out of Lincoln, had homestead roots in Louisiana.

The northern plains were a key hotspot of homesteading, represented in North Dakota by WCTU leader and suffragist Elizabeth Preston Anderson; farmer and governor Lynn J. Frazier; and National Woman's Party leader Alma Lutz. Like Nebraska, South Dakota had an exceptionally high representation of homesteading suffragists, featuring eight in this work. With the high number of homesteaders overall, and the six different efforts of bringing suffrage to the ballot box, perhaps that is no surprise. Among the homesteaders there involved in the cause were Alice and John Pickler. John introduced one of South Dakota's six suffrage bills in 1885. Oscar Micheaux, African American director and filmmaker, took his own homesteading experiences

and applied them to the Silver Screen. In his film *Within Our Gates*, he observes the challenge Black suffragists faced, introducing the character of Geraldine Stratton, a wealthy southern white woman who opposed woman suffrage because it would also enfranchise black women.

Kansas serves as a microcosm of American history – the Kansas-Nebraska Act leading to the Civil War, the dispossession of Native American land, populism, homesteading, and as an early leader in suffrage. Several Kansans feature prominently in the story of homesteading and suffrage, including Senator Samuel Pomeroy, who helped pass the Homestead Act and proposed an early suffrage bill; Populist farmer Mary Lease; America's first female mayor, Susanna Madora Salter, and National Woman's Party cartoonist Nina Allender. Just to the south, Oklahoma, with its land rushes, may be what most Americans envision when they think of homesteaders. Suffragists were as eager as anyone to join these rushes and work to secure the vote for women in Oklahoma. Kate Himrod Biggers, Julia Woodworth, and Kate Chapman Stafford joined the rush before fighting for suffrage in Oklahoma. Stafford was even one of the "Silent Sentinels" of the National Woman's Party, sentenced to jail for picketing at the White House.

Chapter Four: Sowing the Seeds shifts gears to suffrage and homesteading in the Midwest. Several of the homesteading states in the Midwest had very low numbers of homesteaders and acreage claimed under those laws, as most of the available public lands had already been claimed by the time the Homestead Act passed in 1862. Indiana had the absolute fewest number of homesteaders of any state – fewer than 50 people, who claimed less than 2,000 acres total, yet one of the state's most prominent suffragist leaders, Anna Carter Dunn, was also one of the few homesteaders. Indiana Congressional Representative George Washington Julian, as Chair of the Committee on Public Lands in the 1860s, attempted to pass a homestead bill to specifically provide land to African Americans, as well as proposing a constitutional amendment that would allow all citizens to vote regardless of race, color, or sex. His daughter, Grace Julian Clarke, served as president of the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs.

Minnesota had many Scandinavian immigrant farm families, including Julia Nelson and Hela Johannsen. Minnesota politician Ignatius Donnelly supported his constitutions by favoring the needs of homesteaders – including promoting immigration, expanding transportation networks, and backing suffrage.

One of the easternmost homesteading states, Michigan, was at something of a crossroads. Much of its homesteading activity came in the Upper Peninsula and northern Michigan and was tied to European immigration. Finnish immigrant Maggie Walz created a homesteader colony while promoting Finnish women's rights, including temperance and suffrage. Wisconsin was the childhood home of Frances Willard, who grew up on the family farm near Janesville. In Wisconsin land distribution and women's rights went hand-in-hand through Joseph and Isabella Irish – Joseph was a surveyor and government land office register responsible for administering homestead applications. Isabella was the Vice President of a state-level suffrage organization, and the two organized conventions and suffrage efforts on a regional level. Nearby, Laura, David, and Ada James were a suffragist family, active from the 1880s through the 1920s – coordinating early organized efforts, proposing a referendum in 1911, and physically bringing Wisconsin's copy of the ratified amendment for certification to Washington, D.C. in 1919.

Thanks to the Married Woman's Property Act, Iowa's farmers and landowners included Amelia Jenks Bloomer, who owned hundreds of acres of public lands in her name. Bloomer promoted land ownership as a critical tenet of women's rights, even offering to assist other women with acquiring land for themselves. Carrie Chapman Catt grew up on a farm in rural Iowa, which served as a formative moment for her entry into suffrage. She served as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified into law and founded the League of Woman Voters.

Chapter Five: Remember the Friend on the Homestead provides a deeper dive into suffrage and women homesteaders in Nebraska, as a case study of one of the most heavily homesteaded states and a place where suffrage was not passed until the movement specifically embraced rural, agrarian women. Women homesteaders in Nebraska closely and ardently aligned with the suffrage movement at local, statewide, and national levels, including women like Dr. Inez Philbrick, Viola Harrison, and Lucy Correll.

Chapter Six: "Harvest Season" focuses upon the years immediately leading up to the "race to ratification." By the 1910s, the suffrage movement in America had been active for eight decades. Many women in the first generation of the movement had given the cause their all for their entire lives – Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and countless others had planted the seeds of suffrage in the soil. In 1920, it was "harvest season" for the hundreds of thousands of women homesteaders across America. The combined efforts of decades of dedication had paid off.

The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in August of 1920 was not the end of the story. The Amendment stated that the right of citizens to vote "shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." However, that right only applied to citizens and did not necessarily apply to Native American women, who were not guaranteed citizenship until 1924, or to Asian American women, who were not considered citizens until the 1940s. Additionally, though African American women were citizens, in many parts of the country voter suppression tactics such as poll taxes and literacy tests prevented their ability to vote.

The epilogue, "Shall Not Be Denied," explores stories of women homesteaders continuing to fight for their right to vote over the ensuing decades, determined that their voices and their votes shall not be denied. Many of these black, indigenous, and other women of color participated in the suffrage movement or the civil rights movement, in addition to becoming landowners through various public land laws. Stories told in the epilogue include African American suffragists and civil rights leaders Blanche Armwood Beatty (Florida) and Mahala Ashley Dickerson (Alaska); Latinx suffragist Adelina Otero-Warren (New Mexico); LGBT suffragist Marie Equi (Oregon); Native American suffragist Zitkala-Sa (South Dakota); and Asian American suffragist Mabel Ping Hua Lee (New York).

The Territory of Wyoming first guaranteed suffrage to women in 1869, before being admitted to the Union as the first state to grant women the vote in 1890. It was followed by Colorado (1893), Idaho (1896), and Utah (1896) by the close of the nineteenth century.²² The influx of homesteaders seeking free land significantly boosted the populations in these new territories and states. Victories by the women's suffrage movement in these states bolstered the national suffrage movement, as leadership in the east looked on with rapt attention. Thirteen of the sixteen homesteading states west of the Missouri River had granted full suffrage to women prior to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Two of the remaining three allowed women to vote in presidential elections.

Homesteading offered women more than just the opportunity to own land; it was a powerful catalyst in the women's suffrage movement, especially in the twentieth century. By the early twentieth century, the wave of homesteading states which had enshrined women's rights to vote helped set in motion a national strategy to grant women the vote, led by women who either claimed land themselves, in their own names, were the family members of those who did so, or otherwise were influential in promoting homesteading as well as the vote. These homesteading women were trailblazers for the women's suffrage movement, leading the way to the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment. The suffragists in this study homesteaded and fought for the vote in twenty-four of the thirty homesteading states. They came from all walks of life, from a kaleidoscope of diverse backgrounds and experiences over the many decades and many states that the Homestead Act was in place. They claimed thousands upon thousands of acres of land, from the Florida Gulf Coast to Alaska and nearly everywhere in between. They ranged from leaders of national and state organizations, down to the foot soldiers. Every single one of the states in this study voted to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, in no small part due to homesteading women's efforts. For these women, suffrage was planted in the soil.

²² Several territories granted women full voting rights before statehood, including Wyoming (1869), Utah (1870), Washington (1883), Montana (1887), and Alaska (1913). Several of those territories went on to rescind suffrage, either as territories or when creating their state constitution upon being admitted as states.

Chapter One: The West Came First: Suffrage and the Homestead Act in the Western States

The early successes of the women's suffrage movement in the west have been well documented – each of the first six states to grant women the right to vote were in the west. Ten of the first eleven states to grant full suffrage were in the west – the sole exception being Kansas.²³ All these states, including Kansas, gave away land under the Homestead Act of 1862. Seventeen homesteading states granted women the vote before the first non-homestead states – New York and Rhode Island in 1917, nearly fifty years after Wyoming did so as a territory in 1869. However, while historians have noted that western states led the way to women's suffrage, there remains a myopia to rural and agrarian America's role in achieving the vote – including in the west. Until 1905, there had never been a national suffrage convention on the west coast – so why was the movement there so successful so early on?²⁴ In large part, the answer lies with rural, agrarian women and men who were more willing to embrace and adopt equal rights, in comparison to their city-dwelling compatriots.

Many of the women who led suffrage organizations at the local, state, and even national levels, had strong agricultural roots. Many of them grew up on farms and homesteads, public domain land acquired from the federal government through various laws designed to promote settlement and development of the land. They took the lessons they learned on the homestead about gender equality and the importance of the vote, or the lack thereof, to heart. Of the early generation of suffragists, those born between 1820 and 1840, approximately 90% of the total population of the United States was rural.²⁵ Even the generation that saw suffrage ratified in 1920 had heavily agricultural roots: as late as the 1870 census, nearly three-quarters of all Americans lived in rural areas.²⁶ That later generation of women took up homesteading the west in large numbers – an estimated ten percent of homesteads claimed after 1900 were proved up by women in their own names, and even more women were participating as partners, spouses, and as family members. As women settled the west under the Homestead Act, they pursued the vote, and laid the foundation for universal suffrage, starting at the state level.

²³ Five territories granted full voting rights prior to statehood: Wyoming (1869), Utah (1870), Washington (1883), Montana (1887), and Alaska (1913).

²⁴ Harper, Ida Husted. *The History of Woman Suffrage. Vol. V, 1900 – 1920*. (New York: J. J. Little & Ives Company, 1922), 117.

²⁵ United States Census. "Population: 1790 to 1990." [Historical Census Statistics on Population, 1790 to 1990](#) The 1820 Census records a rural population of 8.945 million, out of a total population of 9.638 million - 92.8% of all Americans were rural! In 1840, those numbers were only slightly on the decline, at 15.218 million out of 17.063 million – 89.2%. Accessed October 11, 2023.

²⁶ United States Census. "Population: 1790 to 1990 [Historical Census Statistics on Population, 1790 to 1990](#), In 1870, the numbers were at 28.656 million out of 38.558 million – 74.3%. It wasn't until the 1920 census that the majority of America was not rural – but only barely, at 51.2% to 48.8%. Accessed October 11, 2023.

Wyoming

Even amongst the states west of the Missouri River, Wyoming stands as a unique example of the link between homesteading and women's suffrage. Unlike in other states across the nation, when women in Wyoming gained the right to vote, there was no active suffrage association or organization in the Territory— though Anna E. Dickinson, an orator on abolition, women's rights, and temperance, gave a lecture on women's suffrage in June of that year, which Wyoming's first territorial Governor, John A. Campbell, attended.²⁷ When the Territorial legislature met in Cheyenne in October 1869, it proposed several progressive laws. Among these were laws guaranteeing that female teachers would be paid the same as male teachers, and that married women had property rights separately from their husbands – no small thing in a state with more than 18,000,000 acres of homesteaded land.²⁸

The Territory of Wyoming passed a full women's suffrage bill on December 10, 1869, the first territory or state to do so, when Governor Campbell signed the bill into law. Historian T.A. Larson observed that one factor driving the early suffrage victory in Wyoming Territory was the “scarcity of women. With only one woman in Wyoming over twenty-one for every six men... western territories were desperately eager for publicity which would attract population.”²⁹ After the passage of the suffrage act, the editor of the Cheyenne Leader wrote, “We now expect at once quite an immigration of ladies to Wyoming. We say to them, come on.”³⁰ Come on, they did – many under the Homestead Act of 1862. The first woman to successfully prove up a claim in Wyoming was Ellen D. W. Hatch, who received her patent for 40 acres on April 25, 1877 – she was the eighth homesteader to prove up across the entire state.³¹

Amalia B. Post and her husband, Morton Everel Post, were part of that initial wave of Wyoming homesteaders following the granting of woman suffrage in the territory. Before Amalia came to Wyoming, she spent several years just outside of Omaha, in Nebraska Territory, and Colorado Territory, after seeking a divorce from her first husband.³² She supported herself by raising chickens, loaning out the money she made at interest.³³ After entering the market economy in Denver, she formed business partnerships with men there. One business partner,

²⁷ “Anna Dickinson.” *The Wyoming Weekly Leader* (Cheyenne, Wyoming), June 19, 1869.

²⁸ Eighteen million acres represents approximately thirty percent of all land in the state of Wyoming. “State by State Numbers.” Homestead National Historical Park. National Park Service, Accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/statenumbers.htm>

²⁹ T.A. Larson. “Woman Suffrage in Wyoming.” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 2. (April 1965): 57-65, 57.

³⁰ “Wyoming Gave Women Rights 69 Years Ago, Leading Way to National Suffrage.” *Albuquerque Journal* (Albuquerque, New Mexico), December 11, 1938.

³¹ Ellen D. Hatch. Laramie County, Wyoming. Homestead Patent # 11. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

³² Jennifer Helton. “So Great an Innovation: Woman Suffrage in Wyoming.” *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains*, ed. Lori Ann Lahlum and Molly Rozum, 39. Amalia's first husband, Walker T. Nichols, received 160 acres of land in Elkhorn, Nebraska through the Scrip Warrant Act of 1855 in 1860. Walker T. Nichols. Douglas County, Nebraska. Scrip Warrant Patent #57699. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. ([Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#))

³³ Amalia B. Post. Platte County, Wyoming. Sale-Cash Entry Patent #384. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records ([Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#))

Morton E. Post, became a life partner – the two married in 1864. Amalia strove to ensure the partnership was equal, and retained her financial independence, continuing to own property in her own name, thanks to the liberal married women’s property laws enacted in the western states.

The pair claimed 160 acres in 1886 under the Timber Culture Act of 1873.³⁴ The patent to the family homestead was issued in 1892, in Morton’s name.³⁵ But Amalia owned land in her own right, and was issued a deed for 650 acres of land despite being married for more than 20 years. She acquired the land through the Desert Land Act of 1877, filing a claim on May 18, 1883, successfully proving it up and receiving the patent on September 23, 1890.³⁶



Figure 1 - Amalia B. Post. Image courtesy of Wyoming State Archives.

Though Wyoming was first to pass women’s suffrage, on multiple occasions it seemed possible that Wyoming would also voluntarily give up women’s suffrage. The state legislature attempted to repeal women’s suffrage in 1871, not long after Amelia and Morton arrived. The attack on women’s rights in the Territory prompted Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B Anthony to travel to Cheyenne to lecture on women’s suffrage and defend the institution’s continued existence. Amalia was an ardent defender of suffrage, one of Wyoming’s most

³⁴ “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955.” Database with images, FamilySearch. Wyoming, Volume 7, Image 48 of 272. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

³⁵ Morton E. Post. Laramie County, Wyoming. Sale-Cash Entry Patent #1949, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records ([Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)) Despite being listed as a Sale-Cash Entry, the Tract Book for Section 32, Township 15N 66W shows that Morton E. Post originally paid a \$10 filing fee for 160 acres under the Timber Culture Act on June 16, 1886. After five years, he decided to commute the claim to cash, buying out the 120-acre parcel credited to him in the GLO Records.

³⁶ Amalia B. Post. Platte County, Wyoming. Sale-Cash Entry Patent #384. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records ([Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)) “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955.” Database with images, FamilySearch. Wyoming, Volume 8, Image 151 of 263. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.; Karl S. Landstrom. “Reclamation Under the Desert-Land Act.” *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (August 1954): 500-508.

prominent champions of the movement. She was Wyoming's delegate to the 1871 National Woman Suffrage Association Convention, held in Chicago in January of that year.³⁷ She gave an account of the victory Wyoming had won, and spoke on her experience in casting a ballot – one of the first women in the nation to be able to do so.³⁸

She must have made quite an impression. The National Central Committee of the organization, named her a Vice-President – serving the Executive Committee alongside of Susan B. Anthony, Victoria Woodhull, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Olympia Brown.³⁹ Post hosted Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the summer of 1871. In her diary entry on June 21, 1871, Anthony wrote that she arrived in Cheyenne to engage a “packed house for audience” and that she stayed the night with the Posts.⁴⁰ She elaborated on her desire to meet with those “most active in the exercise of their rights of citizenship,” stating that “Mrs. M.B. Arnold had a large cattle-ranch, and Mrs. Post an equally large sheep-ranch a few miles outside of the city, which they superintended and from which each received an independent income. They had not only served as jurors, but acted as foremen...[we] heard from them of the wonderful changes wrought in the court-room and at the polls by the presence of enfranchised women.”⁴¹

An entry in Governor Campbell's diary from November 30, 1871, acknowledged the high stakes at play over the fight for the woman suffrage act - “Am offered \$2,000 and favorable report of committee if I will sign [the repeal of] Woman Suffrage Act.”⁴² Amalia Post lobbied Governor Campbell in defense of the law. Campbell proclaimed that “Women have voted in the Territory, served on juries, and held office. It is simple justice to say that the women, entering for the first time in the history of the country on these new and untried duties, have conducted themselves in every respect with as much tact, sound judgement, and good sense as men.”⁴³ Post's efforts helped convince Campbell to veto the legislation that threatened to repeal suffrage, upholding the right to vote.

Post continued her efforts to push for women's rights in Wyoming and across the United States, remaining in her post on the executive committee of the National Woman's Suffrage Association. There, she assisted with developing and implementing policies, programs, and goals of the organization on a national scale. In January of 1885, she participated in a special executive

³⁷ “National Central Committee.” *The Southern Home*. (Charlotte, North Carolina), January 31, 1871.

³⁸ “The Woman Suffrage Convention.” *The New York Daily Herald*. (New York, New York), January 14, 1871, 3. According to the 1870 U.S. Census, approximately 600 women in Wyoming were eligible to vote – 1,347 native born women enumerated, with 740 of them under the age of 21. “1870 Overview.” United States Census Bureau, accessed October 11, 2023, at https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/1870.html. *1870 Census: Volume 2. The Vital Statistics of the United States*. 1872. United State Census Bureau, accessed October 11, 2023, at <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1872/dec/1870b.html>.

³⁹ “National Central Committee.” *The Southern Home*. (Charlotte, North Carolina), January 31, 1871.

⁴⁰ Susan B. Anthony Papers, Daybook and Diaries, 1856-1906; 1871. Manuscript / Mixed Material. *Library of Congress*, accessed October 11, 2023, at <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss111049005/> ; T.A. Larson. *History of Wyoming*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1965).

⁴¹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage. *The History of Woman Suffrage*, Volume III. (New York: Susan B. Anthony, 1886), 748.

⁴² C-1049. Campbell Collection. Wyoming State Archives. Cheyenne, Wyoming.

⁴³ “Gov. Campbell, of Wyoming, on Woman Suffrage.” *The Baltimore Sun* (Baltimore, Maryland), November 20, 1871, 1.

session of NWSA's annual conference with a veritable who's who of suffrage leaders. The committee included Clara Bewick Colby of Nebraska, Margaret Bowen of Colorado, Laura Deforce Gordon of California, Dr. Alice B. Stockham of Illinois, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, with Susan B. Anthony presiding.⁴⁴

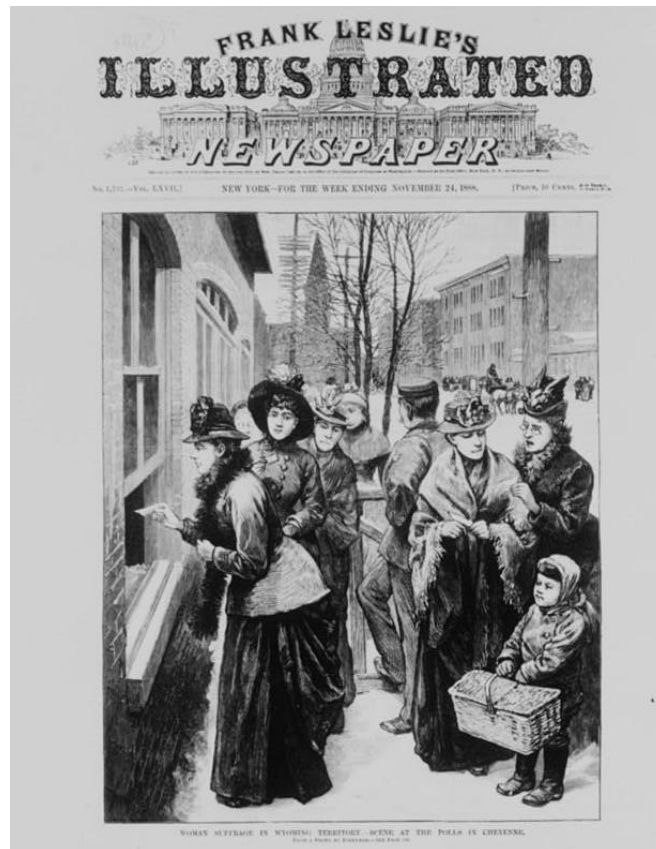


Figure 2 - Women Vote in Cheyenne, November 1888. Courtesy of Library of Congress

When delegates of Wyoming Territory gathered in Cheyenne to draft a state constitution in September 1889, the topic of women's suffrage came up once again. The *Laramie Daily Boomerang* reported that "It is not at all certain that Congress would approve a state constitution making provision for woman suffrage." Despite a sense of doubt, the convention voted by a margin of more than two to one to include suffrage in the new state constitution.⁴⁵ Even the threat of Congress refusing to admit Wyoming as a state left representatives and supporters of the cause undeterred. The legislature allegedly was led by a prominent homesteader and rancher turned politician by the name of Joseph M. Carey to send a telegram to Washington, D.C., declaring, "We will remain out of the Union one hundred years rather than come in without the women." It worked – the Wyoming Territorial Legislature successfully called Congress' bluff.

⁴⁴ "National Woman's Suffrage Association." *The Tennessean* (Nashville, Tennessee), January 21, 1885.

⁴⁵ "Women's Suffrage in the Wyoming Constitution." *Wyoming State Archives*. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/womens-suffrage-wyoming-constitution>

Though the vote was close, Wyoming became the first state in the Union to guarantee women's suffrage, 29 years before the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

After the victory, Carey went on supporting women homesteaders and suffragists, both at home in Wyoming, and nationwide. As he climbed the ranks of Wyoming politics, serving as U.S. Senator from 1890 to 1895, and Governor of Wyoming from 1911 to 1915, he remained attuned to the needs of his constituents – with so many prominent women homesteaders, Carey fought for women's rights and for legal reforms to enable more women to successfully claim and prove up land in the arid west.

Prominent figures in the movement such as Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt corresponded with both Joseph and his wife Louisa David Carey, requesting their presence and support. In 1893, after Colorado granted women the right to vote, Susan B. Anthony wrote to Joseph Carey about Catt's efforts in the campaign, and requested that Carey as "the father of Wyoming's freedom for women" make a speech welcoming Colorado to the fold at the 1894 NAWSA Convention in Washington, D.C.⁴⁶ He graciously accepted, and gave a speech lauding the efforts of suffragists nationwide, and commented that soon the homesteading west should follow: "Her action is sure to exert a marked influence on neighboring states and territories... the question must soon be considered in the states of Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas, and it is my deliberate opinion that it will not be many years before woman suffrage will be the rule and not the exception in all of the trans-Missouri country."⁴⁷

Both Joseph and Louisa David Carey continued to support the suffrage movement as the focus turned increasingly national as a proposed federal amendment grew closer in the years leading up to 1920. Louisa served on the National Advisory Council of the National Woman's Party just after its formation in 1917. She served with the NWP as it pushed for a federal amendment and national attention when Alice Paul sent out the call for activists to picket the White House on October 16, 1917.⁴⁸

One of Wyoming's most famous homesteaders, Elinore Pruitt Stewart, a laundress from a landless Denver family, promoted homesteading as a golden opportunity. She remarked in the early 1900s, "When I read of the hard times among the Denver poor, I feel like urging them every one to get out and file on land."⁴⁹ Stewart believed that "homesteading is the solution of all poverty's problems," and she was determined to prove up as independent woman homesteader.⁵⁰ She applied for a 147-acre homestead at the land office in Evanston, Wyoming, on April 23, 1909, under the name Elinore Pruitt Rupert.⁵¹ Stewart published her experiences homesteading

⁴⁶ Susan B. Anthony to Joseph M. Carey. December 2, 1893. Carey Family Papers, Collection No. 1212, Box 13, Folder 11, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁴⁷ "Noble Women Who Struggle to Possess the Right of Suffrage." *The Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), February 16, 1894.

⁴⁸ Alice Paul to Hazle B. Ewing. October 16, 1917. Hazle Buck Ewing Women's Suffrage Collection. Illinois State University Digital Collections. [National Woman's Party letter to Hazle Buck Ewing, October 16, 1917 - Hazle Buck Ewing Women's Suffrage Collection - \(illinoisstate.edu\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁴⁹ Elinore Pruitt Stewart, *Letters of a Woman Homesteader* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 214-215.

⁵⁰ Stewart, 215.

⁵¹ "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-1955." *FamilySearch*. Wyoming, Vol. 53, Image 9 of 255. Records Improvement, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

between 1909 and 1913 as a serial, “*Letters of a Woman Homesteader*,” in the magazine *Atlantic Monthly*. She filed as a single woman, but married Clyde Stewart before proving up the claim.

Single women and widows were eligible to file claims, as the head of a household. What of single women who filed, then married as they completed the requirements to receive their land? Writing to her friend “Mrs. Coney” on October 14, 1911, Elinore stated, “No, I shall not lose my land, although it will be over two years before I can get a deed to it. The five years in which I am required to ‘prove up’ will have passed by then. I couldn’t have held my homestead if Clyde had also been proving up, but he had accomplished that years ago and has his deed, so I am allowed my homestead.”⁵² Not only was she allowed that claim, but additional lands beyond, if she sought them: “I have not yet used my desert right, so I am still entitled to one hundred and sixty acres more. I shall file on that much some day when I have sufficient money of my own earning.”⁵³ She further noted that “I should not have married if Clyde had not promised I should meet all my land difficulties unaided. I wanted the fun and the experience. For that reason, I want to earn every cent that goes into my own land and improvements myself.”⁵⁴

Despite her talk, records from the land office tract book indicate that she officially relinquished her claim on March 3, 1913.⁵⁵ Though she never admits to the relinquishment in her serial, Elinore’s claim was transferred to her widowed mother-in-law, Ruth Stewart. Land laws at that time forbade a married couple from homesteading adjacent parcels of land while living at the same residence, so by relinquishing to Ruth Stewart, the land was kept in the family.⁵⁶ Ruth proved up the claim, which was adjacent to Clyde’s, in 1915, and later expanded her own holdings to 640 acres under the 1916 Stock-Raising Homestead Act.⁵⁷ Though she relinquished her homestead claim, Elinore Pruitt Stewart’s presentation of herself in *Letters of a Woman Homesteader* indicates the growing class of the feminist “New Woman” in the homesteading states. This American New Woman in the early twentieth century sought to use land laws, education, and politics to their advantage and betterment, embracing the Homestead Act as a route to suffrage and equal rights in ever-increasing numbers.⁵⁸

Cecilia Hennel Hendricks was another Wyoming “New Woman,” wielding the Homestead Act and land ownership as an avenue to suffrage and political success for women in the United States. A Midwestern native, Cecilia moved from Indiana to Wyoming with her

⁵² Stewart, 134.

⁵³ Stewart, 134. Married women were able to hold Desert Land claims in their own name as well – many of them women in this study claimed Desert Lands long after marrying.

⁵⁴ Stewart, 134.

⁵⁵ “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-1955”. *FamilySearch*. Wyoming, Vol. 53, Image 9 of 255. Records Improvement, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.; Sherry L. Smith, “Single Women Homesteaders: The Perplexing Case of Elinore Pruitt Stewart.” *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (May 1991): 163-181, 169.

⁵⁶ Garceau, Dee. “Single Women Homesteaders and the Meanings of Independence: Places on the Map, Places in the Mind.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* Vol. 15, no. 3 (1995): 1-26, 5.

⁵⁷ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Ruth C Stewart. August 26, 1915. Sweetwater County, Wyoming. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁸ Alicia Skipper, *Women Write the U.S. West: Epistolary Identity in the Homesteading Letters of Elinore Pruitt Stewart, Elizabeth Corey, and Cecilia Hennel Hendricks*. (Arizona State University, 2010), 54.

husband, John Hendricks, where they homesteaded 80 acres in Park County.⁵⁹ Like many homesteading women, whether single, married, or widowed, she actively participated in running the homestead as a business venture. “Honeyhill Farm,” as the Hendricks family referred to their homestead, grew sweet clover and raised bee colonies to produce honey. Cecilia managed the finances and bookkeeping of Honeyhill Farm, and her husband valued her as a business partner so much that they hired domestic laborers so Cecilia could assist with running the business.⁶⁰

While Wyoming passed suffrage decades before, Cecilia demonstrates that women in the state closely followed ongoing efforts throughout the nation. She wrote in November of 1914: “We have been celebrating over the fact that two more states – Montana and Nevada, have joined the suffrage ranks.” She also recounted her “first experience getting ready to vote... thought it would be a shame to lose my vote for lack of trying.”⁶¹ She wrote that she “...exercised [my] right of suffrage. People talk about objecting to women suffrage because it takes the woman out of their homes, where they belong. Why, voting here is a regular family affair where both men and women vote.”⁶² She also participated in the reelection campaign of Nellie Tayloe Ross, who was the first woman to become governor in the United States, just four years after the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Nellie became the Governor of Wyoming in 1924, winning a special election after her husband, Governor William B. Ross, died.⁶³

From the birth of suffrage in Wyoming in 1869 through the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, Wyoming women homesteaders played an important role. From Amalia Post, present at the very beginning, through Cecilia Hennel Hendricks and the election of Wyoming’s first woman Governor, these women participated in local, regional, and national suffrage campaigns and conventions, constantly reminding the nation of Wyoming’s place as the Equality State.

Oregon

Abigail Scott Duniway, like many of the earlier generation of suffragists, was born and raised on a family farm.⁶⁴ She was born on October 22, 1834, in Tazewell County, Illinois. In 1852, young Abigail and her family joined the Oregon Trail with a wagon party of 27 Oregon-

⁵⁹ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. John Hendricks. November 10, 1930. Park County, Wyoming. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁶⁰ Skipper, 186.

⁶¹ Cecilia Hennel Hendricks, *Letters from Honeyhill: A Woman’s View of Homesteading, 1914-1931*, 71.

⁶² Hendricks, 226.

⁶³ Though Nellie Tayloe Ross won a special election following the death of her husband in 1924, the 1926 reelection campaign in which Cecilia Hennel Hendricks participated was unsuccessful. Ross received votes at the 1928 Democratic National Convention for vice presidential candidate, and in 1933 became the first woman to serve as Director of the Mint, with a tenure from 1933 to 1953.

⁶⁴ Bob King, “Did You Know? The Story of Abigail Scott Duniway,” *Greetings from the Homestead*. Homestead National Historical Park, August 2020. Accessed October 11, 2023. <https://conta.cc/3iePtXj>

bound Illinois immigrants, including the Scott family, the Gowdy family, and the Caffé family.⁶⁵ She kept a journal of her journey as she and her family “bid farewell forever to... the home of [her] childhood.”⁶⁶



Figure 3 - Abigail Scott Duniway, ca. 1870 - 1890. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Abigail married Benjamin Charles Duniway on August 2, 1853. The couple claimed 320 acres of land under the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 and were issued a patent for that land on February 10, 1885.⁶⁷ The Donation Act was signed into law to promote homestead settlements in the Oregon Territory.⁶⁸ Single residents of the territory prior to 1850 could claim 320 acres of land, and married couples up to 640. For those who arrived after 1850, this was reduced to 160 and 320 acres, respectively. Just like the Homestead Act of 1862, “actual settlement and cultivation” were requirements to earn the deed to the land, though only four years of residency instead of five.⁶⁹ Women were welcome to claim land under their own name under the law, which was a part of the effort to establish property rights for women at the federal level. In her 1914 autobiography, *Pathbreaking*, Duniway reflected that as a young woman she

⁶⁵ Abigail Scott Duniway Papers. Collection 232B, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR

⁶⁶ Abigail Scott Duniway Papers. Collection 232B, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Oregon Libraries, Eugene, OR

⁶⁷ Benjamin C. Duniway. Clackamas County, Oregon. Oregon-Donation Act Patent #3562. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁶⁸ This law was enacted on September 27, 1850. It applied only to the Oregon Territory. Champ Clark Vaughn. *A History of the United States General Land Office in Oregon*. U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management, 2014, 11.

⁶⁹ Vaughn, 30.

was taught to believe that suffragists were “man-haters.” However, married life on the family farm “led her at last into the light:” when hard times came, crops failed, and the money she had made selling butter, eggs, and chickens went to pay off interests and taxes. When her husband accrued those debts, she was “silent partner – a legal nonentity – with no voice or power for self-protection... but when penalty accrued, I was his legal representative.”⁷⁰

Abigail Scott Duniway was a leader in the Oregon movement for suffrage and engaged directly with leaders of the national movement. Duniway’s involvement stretched from the very beginning of the movement in Oregon to her death in 1915. The year after the movement first organized in Oregon in 1870, Duniway hosted Susan B. Anthony on a speaking tour of the Pacific Northwest. In the Presidential election of 1872, she was one of several women in Oregon to cast a ballot in protest – the first women in Oregon to attempt to do so, after the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.⁷¹ The *Albany Democrat* reported that “Mrs. Duniway, Mrs. E.F. Handee, Mrs. A. Lambert, and Mrs. Beatty (colored) put in their ballots in Portland last Tuesday, but they were not counted. Of course these she-roosters all voted for the darling squaw-loving Ulysses.”⁷² These women, like homesteaders across the country, understood the importance of owning property. An 1878 Oregon law mandated that citizens who had property, were older than twenty-one, and paid taxes could vote in school elections, removing gender or marital status as a requirement: an early steppingstone to suffrage. That same year, Oregon passed a Married Woman’s Property Act, allowing married women to own property in their own name, as well as entering business arrangements without the permission of their husband.

In 1884 the Oregon State Woman Suffrage Association announced at their twelfth annual convention, held in Portland and Turn Halle, their goal to pass a constitutional amendment to guarantee women the right to vote.⁷³ The Oregon legislature placed a suffrage amendment before the voters for the first time, thanks to the efforts of suffragists like Duniway. Duniway, however, posed a vexing figure to many, both within and outside the movement. Even staunch suffragists like Clara Bewick Colby, of Beatrice, Nebraska, feuded endlessly with her over differing methods of pursuing the vote – Duniway felt that prohibition and WCTU efforts were harming the suffrage movement in Oregon, and WCTU membership far outweighed that of the AWSA or NWSA at this point. Opponents played off the discord, and the first ballot fell well short, with only 11,223 (28.49%) voting in favor, and an overwhelming 28,176 (71.51%) voting against.⁷⁴

After falling short, it took sixteen years for another proposed amendment to make it to the ballot box, in 1900. That effort was a near thing, with 26,255 (48%) in favor, and 28,402 (52%) opposed. Encouraged by the progress, and feeling that victory was assured, the early twentieth century was a succession of proposed suffrage amendments: it reached the ballot in 1900, 1906, 1908, 1910, and 1912. In a 1908 letter to Carrie Chapman Catt, Duniway wrote “we have a fair prospect for securing a Citizens’ Suffrage Bill, by enactment, before the Legislation in

⁷⁰ Abigail Scott Duniway. *Pathbreaking*. (Portland: James, Kerns and Abbot Company, 1914), 14.

⁷¹ When these women voted, they joined Susan B. Anthony and others across the nation who attempted to vote in the 1872 Presidential election. Ann D. Gordon. *The Trial of Susan B. Anthony*. Federal Judicial Center, Federal Judiciary History Office, 2005. Accessed October 11, 2023 at [The Trial of Susan B. Anthony \(fjc.gov\)](https://www.fjc.gov/history/research/trial/susan-b-anthony)

⁷² “Pacific Coasters,” *The Albany Democrat* (Albany, Oregon), November 8, 1872.

⁷³ “Twelfth Annual Convention,” *The Morning Astorian* (Astoria, Oregon), January 22, 1884.

⁷⁴ “Oregon Election History.” *Oregon Blue Book*. Oregon Secretary of State. Accessed October 11, 2023, at [State of Oregon: Blue Book - Oregon Election History](https://sos.oregon.gov/blue-book/Pages/election-history.aspx)

February”, and that conditions for full suffrage in 1910 seemed favorable.⁷⁵ She requested aid and assistance: “it would require a deposit of \$1,000 in cash to get 20,000 signatures inside of six weeks. A lesser number would only expose our weakness and spoil the effort of our work in hand. Respectfully, Yours for Liberty.”⁷⁶

Dr. Viola Boley Coe served the Oregon suffrage cause alongside Duniway. Like many American suffragists, Coe had a direct connection to the Homestead Act. She was the daughter and sister of homesteaders – her father, Elijah, and brother, Alphonse, claimed a quarter-section homestead in North Dakota in 1877.⁷⁷ Viola and her mother Sarah joined the Boley men on the homestead the following year. She left the homestead when she married Dr. Henry Waldo Coe in 1882, the same year her father “proved up.” After graduating from Woman’s Hospital Medical College in 1889 (likely the first woman of the Dakota Territory to become a medical doctor), Dr. Viola Boley Coe and Dr. Henry Waldo Coe moved to Oregon, where she became involved in the suffrage movement.

Dr. Viola Boley Coe organized the first national suffrage convention held on the Pacific Coast, the 1905 National American Woman Suffrage Convention. The National American Woman Suffrage Association was created in 1890, when the two main suffrage organizations in the United States, the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), merged. The NWSA had been led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, and the AWSA by Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and Julia Ward Howe – the two organizations had spent decades as rivals, after bitter disagreements over how best to pursue the vote in America, splitting in 1869 over the Fifteenth Amendment and whether to support the vote for black men as well as white women.

During the 1912 campaign, when Duniway was suffering from health issues, Dr. Viola Boley Coe was appointed as the Acting President of the Oregon State Equal Suffrage Association.⁷⁸ Of the 144,118 ballots cast, 61,265 (51.75% voted in favor, to 57,104 (48.24%) opposed.⁷⁹ Abigail Scott Duniway remarked after the victory, “I am serenely happy over the result... I feel well repaid for my fight which has covered a period of 42 years, and while it has kept me at the bottom of the ladder financially... I am glad to have aided the other women to the better support themselves.” Dr. Coe added, “We suffragists are very jubilant. We could hardly be

⁷⁵ Letter from Abigail Scott Duniway to Carrie Chapman Catt. Oregon State Equal Suffrage Association, December 9, 1908. University of Oregon Archives.

⁷⁶ Letter from Abigail Scott Duniway to Carrie Chapman Catt. Oregon State Equal Suffrage Association, December 9, 1908. University of Oregon Archives.

⁷⁷ Alphonso Boley. Burleigh and Morton Counties, North Dakota. Homestead Patent # 510. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search, digital images, General Land Office Records (https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=ND0080_.450&docClass=STA&sid=nk3xyxxt.4vj) and Elijah Boley. Burleigh and Morton Counties, North Dakota. Homestead Patent #64. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search, digital images, General Land Office Records (https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=ND0080_.040&docClass=STA&sid=nk3xyxxt.4vj)

⁷⁸ “Mrs. Coe Temporary Head.” *Oregonian* (Portland, Oregon), May 15, 1912.

⁷⁹ Abstract of Votes, Cast at General Election held in the State of Oregon on November 5, 1912. Ben W. Olcott, Secretary of State. Oregon Blue Book, Oregon State Archives.

expected to feel otherwise, for we have put up a hard fight and surely deserved to win.”⁸⁰ The movement in Oregon had repeatedly pushed suffrage to the ballot box after that first vote came in 1884. No state held more votes on suffrage than Oregon (South Dakota and Oregon tied for the lead at six ballots before finally passing suffrage). But finally, in November of 1912, suffragists in Oregon crossed the finish line.

Montana

The woman suffrage movement in Montana began in earnest during its territorial era, strengthening during the buildup to statehood – and corresponding with the increased boom of settlement as homesteading there reached its zenith in the early twentieth century. However, reform efforts came to Montana from a wide variety of people from all walks of life with many different goals. One of the earliest organized efforts to grant women the vote in Montana Territory came from the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Frances Willard, President of the WCTU, and Anna Gordon, who would herself go on to become President of the WCTU, visited Montana on a nationwide tour in 1883.⁸¹

By statehood in 1889, the WCTU had grown to thirteen local unions under the guidance of Montana WCTU President Laura E. Howey. Howey had served in that role since just after Willard and Gordon’s visit and was a close friend of Willard.⁸² While her primary mission was seeking legislative action to promote the prohibition of alcohol, following Willard’s “Do Everything” philosophy, the state union also prioritized equal suffrage and equal pay for women.⁸³ In addition to her responsibilities with the WCTU, Howey also lived another life. She was a farmer and homesteader who gave talks to bring more women into the fold, as she did when presenting on the art and science of poultry farming at a Farmer’s Convention in Bozeman in 1894.⁸⁴ She and her longtime husband proved up a homestead in Flathead county on August 26, 1904.⁸⁵ Howey also served as head librarian of the Historical and Miscellaneous Department of the Montana State Library from 1898 to 1907. She was forced out of her position in an attack on women’s rights by Montana Attorney General Albert J. Galen in 1907, when Galen ruled that public servants were required to be qualified voters. Howey passed away in 1911, passing the baton along for a new generation of Montana women to carry across the finish line.

⁸⁰ “The Significance of Equal Suffrage,” *The Oregon Daily Journal* (Portland, Oregon), November 8, 1912.

⁸¹ “Montana Women and the Battle for the Ballot.” T.A. Larson. *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, Vol. 23, No 1 (Winter, 1973): 24-41, 26.

⁸² Montana Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Records. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives, Helena, Montana.

⁸³ Montana Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Records. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives, Helena, Montana.

⁸⁴ “The Gallatin Farmers,” *The Anaconda Standard* (Anaconda, Montana), March 22, 1894.

⁸⁵ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Robert Howey. August 26, 1904. Flathead County, Montana. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – c. 1955,” database with images, FamilySearch. Montana, Vol. 204, Image 64. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C. [United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-c. 1955; https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89W3-MWKS?cc=2074276&wc=M7W4-HWG%3A356163901%2C356400501](https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89W3-MWKS?cc=2074276&wc=M7W4-HWG%3A356163901%2C356400501)

The first federally elected woman in the United States also had strong ties to homesteading and the suffrage movement in Montana. Jeannette Rankin was elected at thirty-six to the U.S. House of Representatives as one of two congressional representatives for Montana. Rankin was the daughter of Canadian immigrants who homesteaded in Missoula County, Montana, in the 1880s and 1890s.⁸⁶ She grew up on the family ranch, where like any child of homesteaders, she participated in the farm and household chores that required everyone to pitch in. Her experiences on the homestead led her to reflect on the fact that though women and men worked at the arduous tasks of “proving up” a homestead side by side as equals, they did not have equal access to the vote.⁸⁷

Rankin attended the University of Montana, earning a degree, then attended the New York School of Philanthropy, where she became active in social reform efforts. She took up charity work in Spokane, Washington, with the Washington Children’s Home Society, where Jeannette first became involved with the women’s suffrage movement.⁸⁸ The Washington Equal Franchise Society asked Rankin to campaign for the suffrage amendment in Pacific County, in southwestern Washington, where a newspaper reported that “The Washington Suffragettes can thank Miss Jeannette Rankin for their victory in Pacific County.”⁸⁹ Pacific County, and the entire state of Washington, voted in favor of women’s suffrage in 1910 – Jeannette Rankin’s first victory for the vote for women in America.⁹⁰

After assisting Washington to become the fifth state to grant women the vote, Rankin took a position with the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), campaigning around the country.⁹¹ In her home state of Montana, Rankin rallied the movement in 1911, speaking at the first suffrage meeting in the city of Missoula, where she was named the Vice President of the new Political Equality Club.⁹² She quickly became the unquestioned leader of suffrage efforts in Montana, as state president of the Montana Woman Suffrage Association and field secretary of NAWSA.⁹³ She addressed the Montana legislature, testifying on behalf of a proposed suffrage bill. Her appearance, by all accounts, was impressive, inspiring, and compelling, making national news. Her testimony convinced the legislature to recommend the bill, 38 in favor to 32 against.⁹⁴ Though the bill stalled out in 1911, the support in the House spurred a major campaign in the state. The legislature pushed through an equal suffrage bill

⁸⁶ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. John Rankin. June 30, 1892. Missoula County, Montana.

<https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=MTMTAA%20059405&docClass=SER&sid=snb0vhr.dse>

⁸⁷ “Jeannette Rankin.” National Park Service. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www.nps.gov/people/jeannette-rankin.htm>

⁸⁸ “Young Woman to Aid Poor of City.” *The Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, Washington), October 27, 1909.

⁸⁹ “Miss Rankin’s Success.” *The Missoulian* (Missoula, Montana), January 8, 1911.

⁹⁰ Pacific County had 360 votes cast in favor, and 282 against. The entire state of Washington went overwhelmingly in favor, with nearly 64% of votes supporting woman suffrage.

⁹¹ Roger D. Hardaway, “Jeannette Rankin: The Early Years,” *North Dakota Quarterly* Vol. 48, No. 1 (Winter 1980): 62-68, 65.

⁹² “Suffrage Meeting Tomorrow Evening,” *The Missoulian* (Missoula, Montana), January 10, 1911; “Garden City Suffragettes Organize Equality Club,” *The Butte Miner* (Butte, Montana), January 12, 1911.

⁹³ “From Missoula to Washington, D.C. To Aid Cause of Equal Suffrage,” *The Missoulian* (Missoula, Montana), August 10, 1913.

⁹⁴ “House is in Favor of Suffrage for Montana Women,” *Great Falls Tribune* (Great Falls, Montana), February 2, 1911.

easily in 1913, and Montana Equal Suffrage Association members traveled widely to promote the cause in preparation for the vote on November 3, 1914.

In November of 1914, women's suffrage passed in Montana, with 41,302 in favor and 37,588 opposed.⁹⁵ The suffrage amendment gained its most extensive support from the new homestead counties in the state's eastern portion.⁹⁶ The 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act (or Mondell Homestead Act), the reduced residency requirement in 1912, and the 1916 Stock-Raising Homestead Acts all contributed to significantly expanded numbers of homesteaders in the dry counties of eastern Montana. Previously limited to 160-acre claims proved up in five years; now, homesteaders could receive 320 or even 640 acres in as few as three years. These factors meant the rural population of eastern Montana boomed from 1900 to 1920. After the passage of the Enlarged Homestead Act in 1909, entries skyrocketed from 7,484 in 1909 to 21,982 in 1910.⁹⁷ In 1900, there were approximately 7,000 farms, about 72,000 rural residents, and a total population of 93,000 in the eastern portion of the state had. By 1920, those numbers had increased to 46,000 farms, 241,000 rural residents, and a total population of 314,000.⁹⁸ The majority of that growth came directly from homesteaders.

Montana had an exceptionally high number of women homesteaders, as its settlement coincided with increased numbers of women choosing to homestead in the twentieth century. The map below (Map 3) illustrates the correlation between homesteading and suffrage in the state. The most robust support was in the northwestern counties and in the eastern counties surrounding Yellowstone – up to 70% in favor of women's suffrage in these areas, which had the heaviest homesteading in the state. By contrast, the mining districts of Montana strongly opposed both women's suffrage and prohibition. Silver Bow and Lewis and Clark County, home to the largest cities of Butte and Helena, which were established early in the territorial mining rushes, both voted against suffrage and prohibition. They were two of only three counties across the state to oppose both measures.

Montana's population growth, largely thanks to homesteading, was explosive. In Yellowstone County, Montana, only 202 total patents were issued between 1881 and 1909. Then, 4,066 were issued in just that single county between 1909 and 1934. Of those 4,066 homestead patents, 746 were issued to women – a total of eighteen percent.⁹⁹ Agriculture rapidly surpassed mining as the state's most important industry after 1910.

⁹⁵ Montana Constitutional Amendments, 1889-1971. Art. IX, Sec. 2: Chap. 1, 1913, 1.

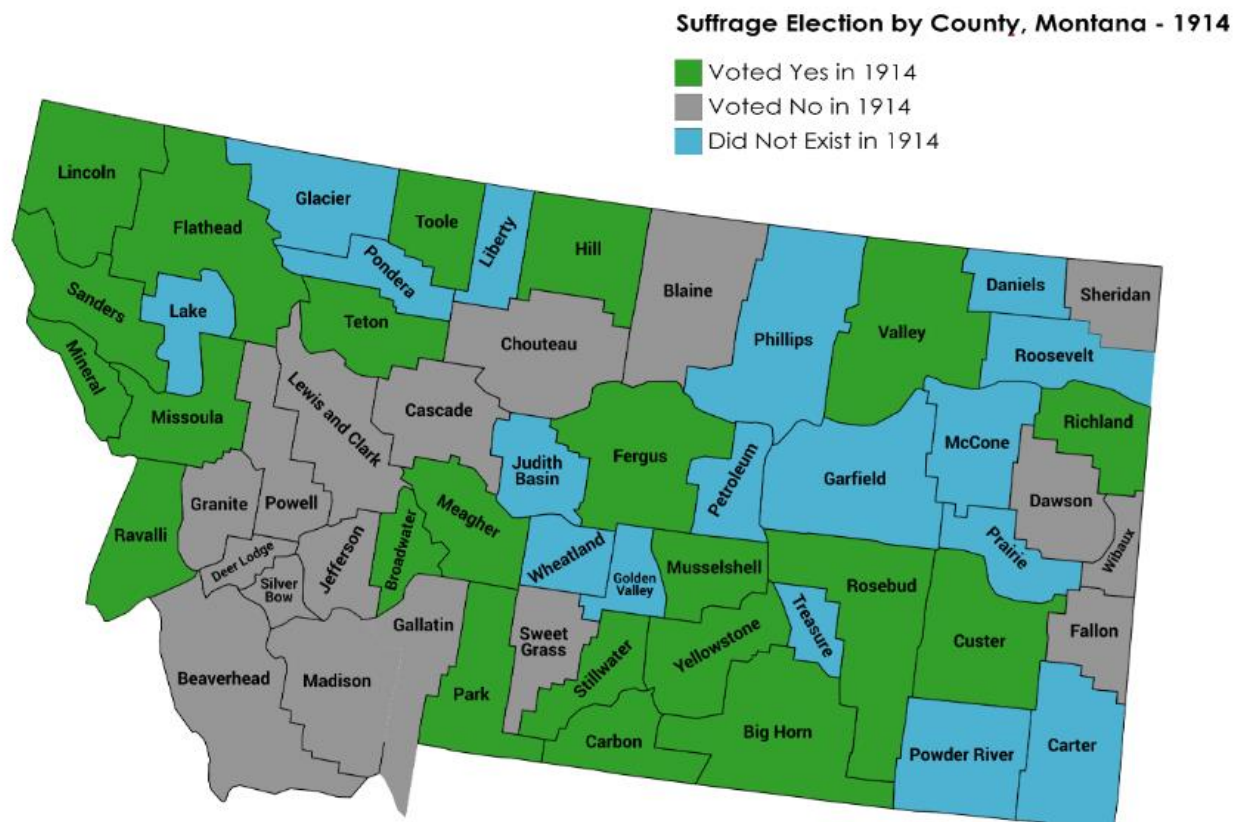
⁹⁶ Sunday Anne Walker-Kuntz, *Land, Life, and Feme Sole: Women Homesteaders in the Yellowstone River Valley, 1909-1934*, (Thesis, Bozeman: Montana State University, 2006), 48.

⁹⁷ Ralph Farmer, *Analytical Survey and Study of the Agricultural Conditions and the Mortgage Loan Experience of the Federal Land Bank of Spokane in the State of Montana, 1917-1927*. (Thesis, Moscow: University of Idaho), 6.

⁹⁸ Doris Buck Ward. *The Winning of Woman Suffrage in Montana*. (Thesis, Bozeman: Montana State University, 1974).

⁹⁹ Sunday Anne Walker-Kuntz, *Land, Life, and Feme Sole: Women Homesteaders in the Yellowstone River Valley, 1909-1934*, 47 and Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records

https://glorerecords.blm.gov/results/default.aspx?searchCriteria=type=patent|st=MT|cty=111|dt1_m=1|dt1_yr=1862|dt2_m=12|dt2_yr=1909|aut=251101|sp=true|sw=true|adv=false#resultsTabIndex=0&page=11&sortField=6&sortDir=0



Map 3 - Suffrage Election by County, Montana – 1914

In 1916, the first election year in which women in Montana could vote, ballots cast in that state doubled.¹⁰⁰ Jeannette Rankin, after years of campaigning on behalf of the vote for women all over America, threw her hat in the ring, running for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Homesteading suffragist women in Montana were thrilled and cast their votes in large numbers. Campaigning on a progressive reform-based platform, including suffrage and prohibition, and utilizing her years of experience organizing supporters, Rankin won Montana's second At-Large seat.¹⁰¹ Upon her election as the first woman in Congress, she remarked, "I knew the women would stand by me. The women worked splendidly, and I am sure they feel that the results have been worth the effort. I am deeply conscious of the responsibility, and it is wonderful to have the opportunity to be the first woman to sit in Congress. I will not only represent the women of Montana, but also the women of the country, and I have plenty of work cut out for me."¹⁰² Women across the state were ecstatic and contacted their congresswoman to make their voices heard.

¹⁰⁰ Mary Murphy, "When Jeannette Said No: Montana Women's Response to World War I," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* Vol. 65 No. 1 (Spring 2015): 3-23, 22.

¹⁰¹ Hardaway, 65.

¹⁰² Hardaway, 63.



Figure 4 - Jeannette Rankin. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

When Rankin cast her first vote, however, it was on a very different issue – on April 2, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson called a special joint session to propose declaring war on Germany. A devoted pacifist, she voted against the war.¹⁰³ The women who lived on the ranches and farms, her homesteader constituents, wrote to her. Leotha Scott of Chester, Montana, wrote of the frustration of calling men to join the military and its impact on the harvest. “Now, just before the time to harvest this crop, the government is coming and taking over half of these poor homesteaders and is going to... leave their crops to rot in the ground.”¹⁰⁴ Even for Montana’s single women homesteaders, the war meant a shortage of paid laborers to assist with harvests. Mobilization called millions to serve nationwide, prompting the founding and promotion of the Women’s Land Army, whose tens of thousands of “farmerettes” labored in 33 states to bring in harvests that the departing soldiers could not.

Rankin recommended homesteading to women as a method of financial and social independence. A Mrs. Jessie Nakken wrote to Congresswoman Rankin in 1917 seeking advice. She was being verbally, physically, and mentally abused by her husband, homesteader Herman

¹⁰³ Not only was Jeannette Rankin one of the six members of Congress to vote against declaring war on the German Empire in 1917, she was the only member of Congress to vote against declaring war against Japan following the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 – thus the only member of congress to vote against U.S. involvement in both World Wars. Though she understood the political ramifications, she stated, “As a woman, I can’t go to war, and I refuse to send anyone else.” Rankin, Jeannette [https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/R/RANKIN,-Jeannette-\(R000055\)/](https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/R/RANKIN,-Jeannette-(R000055)/) as in Nancy Unger, “RANKIN, Jeannette Pickering,” *American National Biography (ANB)* 18 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 142. Accessed October 11, 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Murphy, 16.

Nakken.¹⁰⁵ Jessie related that on the first day of their married life, he took her money out of her handbag “and said you won’t need that any more... a married woman has no business with a pocketbook.”¹⁰⁶ She worked the 320-acre homestead claim they had made under the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 in Daniels County, Montana, and sought a way out of her situation. Rankin replied with a suggestion for financial independence: “Were you thinking of filing on a homestead for yourself? [If you had a homestead], you could make a living raising chickens.”¹⁰⁷ Rankin, a suffragist and one of the most powerful women in America at the time, clearly understood the link between being a landowner and having political and personal rights. Acting on Rankin’s advice, Jessie did just that – she divorced her husband, living on her sister’s quarter-section near Tucson, Arizona, where the two sought financial and personal independence through the land.¹⁰⁸

Robert N. Sutherlin was an advocate of the Homestead Act of 1862, homesteading in Montana, and equal access to public land for both men and women – Montana had one of the highest rates of women homesteaders in the country. He considered the act the most optimal form of legislation for Americans to obtain public land in the West.¹⁰⁹ Sutherlin was born on a Missouri ranch to John and Araminta Sutherlin in 1844. The family ranch provided Robert with the foundations of agricultural knowledge and experience that became structured around his life. As a young adult, he traveled to Virginia City, Montana, seeking his fortune in the gold mining boom of the early 1860s after the discovery of gold at Alder Gulch in 1863. Sutherlin’s focus shifted to agricultural development as he noticed the hardship rural farmers were experiencing. Sutherlin himself was a homesteader, filing a claim in Meagher County, Montana in 1885.¹¹⁰ He commuted his claim to cash, purchasing it outright after several years, and received the patent to the land in 1892.¹¹¹ Sutherlin found the opportunities provided under the Homestead Act to be a boon, one he wanted to share with others in Montana. He created a newspaper dedicated to agriculture to spread the word.

In 1875, the *Rocky Mountain Husbandman* began to circulate in Diamond City, Montana. Robert, the founder and editor, published information on livestock, crop management, irrigation,

¹⁰⁵ Letter from Jessie Nakken to Jeannette Rankin, July 9, 1917, Murphy, 20. Her husband, Herman’s GLO paperwork: Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Herman Nakken. September 28, 1914. Daniels County, Montana.

<https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=433424&docClass=SER&sid=k1qs0gr5.t25>

¹⁰⁶ Murphy, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Murphy, 20.

¹⁰⁸ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Sarah E. Oliver. February 17, 1908. Pima County, Arizona. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

¹⁰⁹ Grant, Frank Reginald, “Embattled Voice for the Montana Farmers” Robert Sutherlin’s ‘Rocky Mountain Husbandman,’” (Dissertation, Missoula: University of Montana, 1984), ii.

¹¹⁰ Robert N. Sutherlin. Meagher County, Montana. Patent #4723. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records ([Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#))

¹¹¹ United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-1955. Database with images, FamilySearch. Montana, Vol. 24, Image 106. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

and cattle ranching.¹¹² He often promoted the Montana homestead and believed it was the duty of both sexes to manage it well. On countless occasions, he advocated for homesteaders by addressing recommended revisions to the Homestead Act. In 1884, he reported the length of time between the filing of the land proof and the issuing of the patent is insufficient to detect fraud. He said, "...the Secretary of the Interior... recommends that the proofs shall be made six months before the patent shall be issued... [but the extension] at one year... is a better guard against fraud...which is so greatly demanded."¹¹³

Along with legislative critiques, Robert addressed agricultural practices to improve crop production. He promoted irrigation farming because of the inadequate rainfall and reoccurrence of droughts throughout Montana in the late nineteenth century. Sutherlin supported the efforts of the National Irrigation Congress to allocate federal funds for irrigation advancements in arid lands.¹¹⁴ He argued that an irrigated farm was self-sufficient and provided security to the homesteader.¹¹⁵ He opposed and discouraged others from dry farming because it depleted soil fertility and caused long-term environmental destruction.¹¹⁶ For nearly five decades, Robert's purpose for irrigation promotion was centered around the agricultural growth of the West.

In the 1890s, the *Husbandman* sent two female journalists, Julia Anna Kline and Carolyn A. Murphy, on assignment. They campaigned throughout the state to provide economic security and prosperous futures to rural homesteaders from Robert's ideology of farm management. Kline said, "... non-irrigation has proved a detriment to the country...if those who raised twenty bushels of wheat to the acre could have irrigated, they would have reaped a harvest of two-thirds more."¹¹⁷ The women also reported and praised rural women who were active cultivators. Murphy recognized the capability of women homesteaders to manage the farm and home. She also praised parents that educated their daughters to be self-reliant, enabling and encouraging them to manage a farm.¹¹⁸

For over sixty-five years, the *Rocky Mountain Husbandman* was inclusive of every member on the farm. It was supported by homesteaders throughout Montana. Journalist Dan R. Conway said the newspaper was a leader in the development of agricultural resources and vigorously advocated for irrigational farming as it became the most widely circulated agricultural paper in Montana.¹¹⁹ Robert Sutherlin "...lived to see many of his dreams of arid land converted

¹¹² *Rocky Mountain Husbandman* (Diamond City, Montana), May 29, 1884. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025309/>

¹¹³ *Rocky Mountain Husbandman* (Diamond City, Mont.), 29 May 1884. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025309/1884-05-29/ed-1/seq-2/>

¹¹⁴ Frank Grant, "With No Companion but Her Horse: *The Rocky Mountain Husbandman's* Traveling Correspondents, Anna Kline and Carolyn A. Murphy, 1889-1904." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*. November 2013, 60-71, (67).

¹¹⁵ *Embattled Voice*, 169.

¹¹⁶ *Embattled Voice*, ii.

¹¹⁷ Grant, "With No Companion but Her Horse," 64.

¹¹⁸ Grant, 69.

¹¹⁹ *The Kevin Review* (Kevin, Montana), 15 April 1926. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85053343/1926-04-15/ed-1/seq-7/>

into prosperous farming centers fulfilled.”¹²⁰ His newspaper influenced the landscape of Montana in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, spurring more women and families to pursue homesteading.

One such family was Charles S. and Frances Corwin Haire. After marrying in Ohio in 1889, they came to Helena, Montana, where Charles served as an architect, before staking a claim to an 80-acre homestead a few miles north of town during the Montana homesteading boom of the 1910s. The claim was successfully proved up in Charles’ name, with a patent issued in November 1918.¹²¹ As the couple was proving up the claim, Frances engaged with the Montana state suffrage campaign, and especially with the Montana branch of the National Woman’s Party’s as part of national efforts towards a federal amendment. In 1916, she traveled to Colorado Springs to meet with an executive committee of NWP leaders from enfranchised states to organize and coordinate for the coming campaign. She met with leaders like Alice Paul, Anne Martin of Nevada, and Phoebe Hearst of California.¹²² After that conference, Haire travelled to Washington, D.C. as part of a Congressional Union delegation on a “10,000 mile, 38-day tour of the country” where she appealed to members of Congress seeking support for the Susan B. Anthony amendment.¹²³

Washington

The early history of the women’s suffrage movement in Washington Territory was linked to the Fourteenth Amendment and an 1867 territorial voting law which stated that all white citizens who were twenty-one or older were entitled to vote.¹²⁴ Mary Olney Brown attempted to test that seemingly inclusive language by casting a ballot in 1869 and again in 1870 – as did her sister, Charlotte Emily Olney French. While Abigail Scott Duniway’s role in the suffrage moment has been much lauded, her close contemporary, Mary Olney Brown, is lesser known. However, that was not always the case. Matilda Joslyn Gage wrote in the *History of Woman Suffrage* Vol. I that “In the Spring of 1852, when the great furor for going West was at its height, in the long trails of miners, merchants, and farmers wending their way in ox-carts and covered wagons over the vast plains, mountains, and rivers, two remarkable women, then in the flush of youth, might have been seen; one, Abigail Scott Duniway, destined to leave an indelible mark on

¹²⁰ *The Kevin Review* (Kevin, Montana), April 15, 1926. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85053343/1926-04-15/ed-1/seq-7/>

¹²¹ Charles S. Haire. “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955.” Database with images, *FamilySearch*. Montana, Volume 13, Image 177 of 262. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C. <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9WS-TJNL?cc=2074276&wc=M7WM-R38%3A356163901%2C356179601>; Charles S. Haire. Lewis and Clark County, Montana. Homestead Act of 1862 Patent #14346. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records, [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

¹²² “To Make an Earnest Fight to Extend the Suffrage.” *The Anaconda Standard* (Anaconda, Montana), July 30, 1916.

¹²³ “Prominent Helena Society Woman is Candidate for G.O.P. Delegate.” *The Montana Record-Herald* (Helena, Montana), April 17, 1920; “Suffragists End Tour at Washington.” *Great Falls Tribune* (Great Falls Montana), May 17, 1916.

¹²⁴ *Laws of Washington Territory*. Olympia: T.F. McElroy, 1867, 5.

the civilization of Oregon, and the other, Mary Olney Brown, on that of Washington Territory.”¹²⁵

The Olney sisters trekked westward from Iowa along the Oregon Trail to Washington Territory in 1852 with their spouses, Benjamin F. Brown and George Washington French.¹²⁶ Both families took advantage of several public land laws in the territory to establish homesteads. The Oregon Land Donation Act granted 640 acres to married couples who arrived before the end of 1850 and 320 acres to married couples who arrived after that deadline. Accordingly, Charlotte French and Mary Brown’s names are on the patents along with that of their husbands - the sisters had adjoining half-sections in Thurston County.¹²⁷ These patents were issued on the same day, March 6, 1866. Benjamin and Mary also went on to claim an additional 176 acres under the Homestead Act of 1862 in nearby King County, successfully proving up and receiving the land in January of 1875.¹²⁸ Charlotte and George French acquired 159 acres under the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act on the prairies of Grand Mound, also in Thurston County by redeeming scrip for the parcel.¹²⁹ They received the patent in 1872 – together the two sisters and their families controlled hundreds of acres of land in the area around Olympia.

When Brown, French, and several other women attempted to vote in 1869 and 1870, they cited the 1867 territorial law and the Fourteenth Amendment as granting them the right as adult citizens of the United States – the territorial law made no mention of gender. Brown wrote to Abigail Scott Duniway, her friend and close contemporary in the suffrage movement on the Pacific Coast, on the link between homesteading, citizenship, and voting.

“No one now, however ignorant in other respects, attempts to deny the citizenship of women, white and colored; and as the word citizen does not include sex... and become citizens of the United States, and have taken homesteads, and preemptions, are also citizens, and as such are entitled to vote at all elections in the States or Territories where they reside... as this act of Congress enforces our rights under heavy penalties, we shall go to the polls and vote; if we are denied, we will see what virtue there is in a law of Congress.”¹³⁰

Though they were rebuffed at the polls, they were undaunted. Together with Susan B. Anthony and Abigail Scott Duniway, the Olney sisters organized a convention of the Washington Territory Woman’s Suffrage Association (WTWSA) in Olympia in 1871.¹³¹ The organization proclaimed the enfranchisement of women and the realization of social and political

¹²⁵ Matilda Joslyn Gage, *The History of Woman Suffrage* Vol. I, 768.

¹²⁶ B.F. Brown Family Correspondence and Papers, 1861-1909. MS0071. Washington State Library Manuscripts Collection. Olympia, Washington.

¹²⁷ Charlotte E. French, George W. French. Thurston County, Washington. Oregon-Donation Act Patent #290. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records, [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and Mary Brown, Benjamin F. Brown. Thurston County, Washington. Oregon-Donation Act Patent #252. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records, [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

¹²⁸ Benjamin F. Brown. King County, Washington. Homestead Patent #400. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records, [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

¹²⁹ George W. French. Thurston County, Washington. Morrill Act Patent #948. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records, [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

¹³⁰ Mary Olney Brown. “The Right of Colored Women to Vote,” *New National Era*, October 24, 1872.

¹³¹ “Woman Suffrage Convention,” *The Washington Standard* (Olympia, Washington), November 11, 1871.

equality as its founding goals. Mary Olney Brown was named to the Executive Committee of the WTWSA.¹³² By 1874, she was elected President of the WTWSA, while her sister Charlotte served on the Executive Committee.¹³³ The WTWSA, along with the work of Susan B. Anthony and Abigail Scott Duniway, brought suffrage before the legislature multiple times in the 1870s and 1880s. An 1881 legislative sought to grant married women “the same right and liberty to acquire, hold, enjoy, and dispose of... property, and sue and be sued, as if... unmarried.”¹³⁴ The following legislative session brought victory in 1883, when the territorial House of Representatives approved the measure by a vote of 14-7, and the council followed suit 7-5.

On November 19, 1883, “the ringing of bells and firing of cannon proclaimed to all the people” that Washington Territory had ratified woman suffrage once Governor William Newell signed the bill. Suffragist homesteaders who lobbied fellow homesteaders and farmers played a substantial role in the victory - the thirteen farmers in the territorial legislature voted overwhelmingly in favor, 11 – 2.¹³⁵ By comparison, the non-farmers were split an even 10-10. Sadly, the victory would be short-lived, as it was repealed in 1889. With Brown’s passing in 1886, a new generation of suffragists would have to champion the cause.

Emma Smith DeVoe was one of the leaders in bringing suffrage back to Washington, and more broadly to the West, in the early twentieth century. Smith was born in Roseville, Illinois, in 1848 – the same year as the famous American women’s rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York. She was a prominent member of the battle for women’s suffrage in multiple homesteading states, helping bring the vote to women in both South Dakota and Washington, along with her husband John Henry DeVoe, a railroad agent whom Smith married in 1880. The couple staked a claim to a 160-acre homestead in Faulk County, South Dakota, and purchased a further 160 acres in Beadle County, South Dakota.¹³⁶ John Henry DeVoe chose to commute his homestead, allowing him to essentially buy out the remaining time on the claim to receive the land immediately.¹³⁷

Ordinarily, homesteaders would have to complete their residency requirement to receive their patent. That requirement was initially five years, later reduced to three years in 1912.

¹³² “Woman Suffrage Convention,” *The Washington Standard* (Olympia, Washington), November 11, 1871.

¹³³ “A Meeting,” *The Washington Standard* (Olympia, Washington), October 24, 1874.

¹³⁴ T.A. Larson, “The Woman Suffrage Movement in Washington,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* Vol. 67, No. 2 (1976): 49–62, 52. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40489770>.

¹³⁵ “Ratification Over the Passage of the Woman Suffrage Bill,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, Washington), November 21, 1883.; T.A. Larson, “The Woman Suffrage Movement in Washington,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* Vol. 67, No. 2 (1976): 49–62. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40489770>. Detailed profiles for each legislator appear in the October 12, 1883, issue of the *Washington Standard*, providing data on farming backgrounds of each man. Accessed October 11, 2023.

¹³⁶ John H. DeVoe. Faulk County, South Dakota. Commuted Homestead Patent #4648. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and John H. DeVoe, Beadle County, South Dakota. Land Act of 1820 Patent #664. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

¹³⁷ “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-1955,” database with images, FamilySearch. Dakota Territory, Volume 35. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.”

Veterans could reduce the length of the residency requirement, applying their time served in the military towards it.¹³⁸ However, a homesteader who had resided on the land for at least six months (soon altered to at least fourteen months) could choose to “commute” their claim, purchasing the land outright, generally for the minimum of \$1.25 per acre. Commutations were very common - approximately 20 percent of all final homestead entries were commuted.¹³⁹

Emma Smith DeVoe became an active supporter of the temperance movement and the suffrage movement from her Dakota Territory homestead. She organized an equal suffrage convention in her hometown of Huron, South Dakota, to drum up support for the impending vote on women’s suffrage in the fall of 1890.¹⁴⁰ On the ballot was a referendum to remove the word “male” from the eligibility requirement to vote in South Dakota. The campaign engaged national suffrage leaders, statewide leaders (including the Executive Committee of the South Dakota Equal Suffrage Association), and “prominent men and women who represent the leading enterprises and professions of our state [and] bring to the cause of equal suffrage very largely the backing of those enterprises and professions.”¹⁴¹ In South Dakota, as across the homesteading states of the country, this meant engaging with and earning the support of homesteaders, farmers, and ranchers. The Vice President of the South Dakota Equal Suffrage Association was the Honorable Alonzo Wardall, a veteran of the Civil War, a leader of the Farmer’s Alliance, and himself a homesteader in Grant County, South Dakota.¹⁴² Elizabeth Murray Wardall, Alonzo’s wife, was also active in the Farmer’s Alliance and served as the Superintendent of Press Work for the South Dakota Equal Suffrage Association.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ The Three-Year Homestead Act of 1912 allowed for the proving up of homesteads in three years of residence, rather than five. Several laws were passed aimed at providing benefits to veterans choosing to homestead, including reduced residency requirements. For more on this subject, see historian Robert Marcell’s white paper on World War I and Homesteading at [World War I and Homesteading \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/wwi/homesteading) Accessed October 11, 2023.

¹³⁹ General Land Office statistics note that 302,976 of 1,459,970 successful homesteads between 1881 and 1931 were commuted. Commutations prior to 1881 were not separately tracked. Richard Edwards, “To Commute or Not Commute, the Homesteader’s Dilemma.” *Great Plains Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 2, (Spring 2018):129-150, 130. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26535358>. Accessed October 11, 2023.

¹⁴⁰ “Equal Suffrage,” *Rapid City Journal* (Rapid City, South Dakota), May 23, 1890.

¹⁴¹ “Suffrage Executive Committee,” *The Daily Plainsman* (Huron, South Dakota), April 8, 1890.

¹⁴² Alonzo Wardall. Grant County, South Dakota. Homestead Patent #563. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](https://www.blm.gov/land-patent-search)

¹⁴³ South Dakota Equal Suffrage Association. Blackwell Family Papers: Lucy Stone Family Correspondence. MSS1288001777-15. *Library of Congress*. [By the People mss1288001777-15 \(The Blackwells: An Extraordinary Family: Lucy Stone: Family Correspondence\) \(loc.gov\)](https://www.loc.gov/ead/bsf/bsf1288001777-15.html) Accessed October 11, 2023.



Figure 5 - Emma Smith DeVoe, President of the National Council of Women Voters ca. 1915

By the time Emma Smith DeVoe and her husband relocated to Washington in 1905, many of the first generation of suffragist leaders there had either passed away or had lost much of their political clout. Abigail Scott Duniway had split from the WCTU and distanced herself from the NAWSA, as she felt its leaders were “outsiders,” “arch-pretenders,” and “interlopers” not well suited and experienced to campaign in the west – even women like Clara Bewick Colby, who had lived her adult life in the western U.S. It would be up to DeVoe and this new generation of women to bring the vote back to Washington.

Cora Smith, like Emma Smith DeVoe, grew up on a prairie homestead before moving further west. She was born to Colonel Eliphaz Smith and Sara Emma Barnes in Rockford, Illinois, in 1867. Eliphaz Smith served in the Union Army during the Civil War, rising to the rank of Colonel with the 56th New York Volunteers.¹⁴⁴ Cora’s brother, Lt. Col. Fred Eliphaz Smith, was born in Rockford in 1873. Both Cora and Fred attended the University of North Dakota. Fred became a soldier, serving in the Spanish-American War and World War I, and posthumously won a Medal of Honor as a member of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I.¹⁴⁵ The Smith family migrated from Illinois to the prairies of North Dakota in the late 1870s, and made claiming public domain land under the Homestead Act, and related laws, a family affair.

¹⁴⁴ “Body Will Be Cremated,” *The Saint Paul Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota), October 16, 1900.

¹⁴⁵ Civil War veteran Colonel Eliphaz Smith, his wife Sara Emma Barnes, and their son, the Medal of Honor decorated World War I veteran Lt. Col. Fred E. Smith were all laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

Eliphaz first filed for a homestead in Grand Forks County, Dakota Territory, on October 21, 1879, paying a \$10 filing fee. The tract book of the land office at Grand Forks notes that Eliphaz commuted his homestead claim under the Act of June 15, 1880, receiving the patent on November 19, 1880.¹⁴⁶ He subsequently relocated further west, receiving a further 160-acre parcel in Benson County, Dakota Territory in 1888. Cora filed a Timber Culture Claim in Benson County, successfully proving up in 1902. Fred E. Smith claimed a 120-acre homestead in neighboring Ramsey County.¹⁴⁷ Eliza Jane Barnes, Cora's maternal grandmother, also received 160 acres straddling the border between Benson and Ramsey county.¹⁴⁸ The family homesteads and timber culture claims were located in the area surrounding Devil's Lake, which from 1867 to 1890 had belonged to the Spirit Lake Dakota Tribe, a band of Dakota American Indians forcibly removed from Minnesota following the Dakota War of 1862.¹⁴⁹

Cora graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1889 as part of its first graduating class and entered medical school. She earned an M.D. in 1892 and practiced medicine as Dr. Cora Smith Eaton, the first woman licensed to practice medicine in the state. Her lifelong dedication to the movement began around the same time. She was the secretary of the Grand Forks Suffrage Club and set up an office in Bismarck during North Dakota's constitutional convention.¹⁵⁰ In 1901, she addressed the annual convention of the Equal Suffrage Association of North Dakota, held at Devil's Lake. That same year Smith was elected auditor of NAWSA.¹⁵¹

After moving to Washington in 1906, Cora Smith Eaton King continued her suffrage work there. During the build-up to the 1910 election, Cora Smith King, DeVoe, and the Washington Equal Suffrage Association (WESA) took advantage of the publicity surrounding the ongoing "Alaska-Yukon-Pacific" Exposition in Seattle. The organization hosted a suffrage exhibit at the fair, and sold "Votes for Women" pins, pennants, and cookbooks, as well as offering enrollment in clubs. Smith, who had taken up mountaineering after relocating to Washington, scaled the nearby Mount Rainier. She carried a "Votes for Women" pennant to the summit to show the world what women were capable of.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-1955." Database with images, FamilySearch, Dakota Territory, Volume 70. Bureau of Land Management. Washington, D.C.

¹⁴⁷ One of Cora and Fred's other brothers, William B. Smith appears to have also acquired land under the Homestead Act, as the assignee of Woodson Brown in 1909 – William B. Smith. Benson and Ramsey counties, North Dakota. Homestead Patent #35. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

¹⁴⁸ Eliza J. Barnes. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) Benson and Ramsey counties, North Dakota. Land Act of 1820 Patent #10713. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) Eliza J. Barnes is listed in the 1880 census as living with her children and grandchildren in Grand Forks, and it appears that when they moved near Devil's Lake to claim homesteads, Eliza joined them there, acquiring 160 acres of land herself.

¹⁴⁹ For more on homesteading and its impacts on Native American land, see *Homesteading the Plains: Toward a New History* by Rick Edwards, Jacob Friefeld, and Rebecca S. Wingo. For a more in-depth assessment of the impact of homesteaders on dispossession of land in the Devil's Lake area, see Karen V. Hansen's *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and the Dispossession of Dakota Indians, 1890-1930*.

¹⁵⁰ Barbara Handy-Marchello. "Quiet Voices in the Prairie Wind." *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains*. Lori Ann Lahlum and Molly P. Rozum, ed. (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2019), 77.

¹⁵¹ Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. VI, 501.

¹⁵² Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. VI, 678.

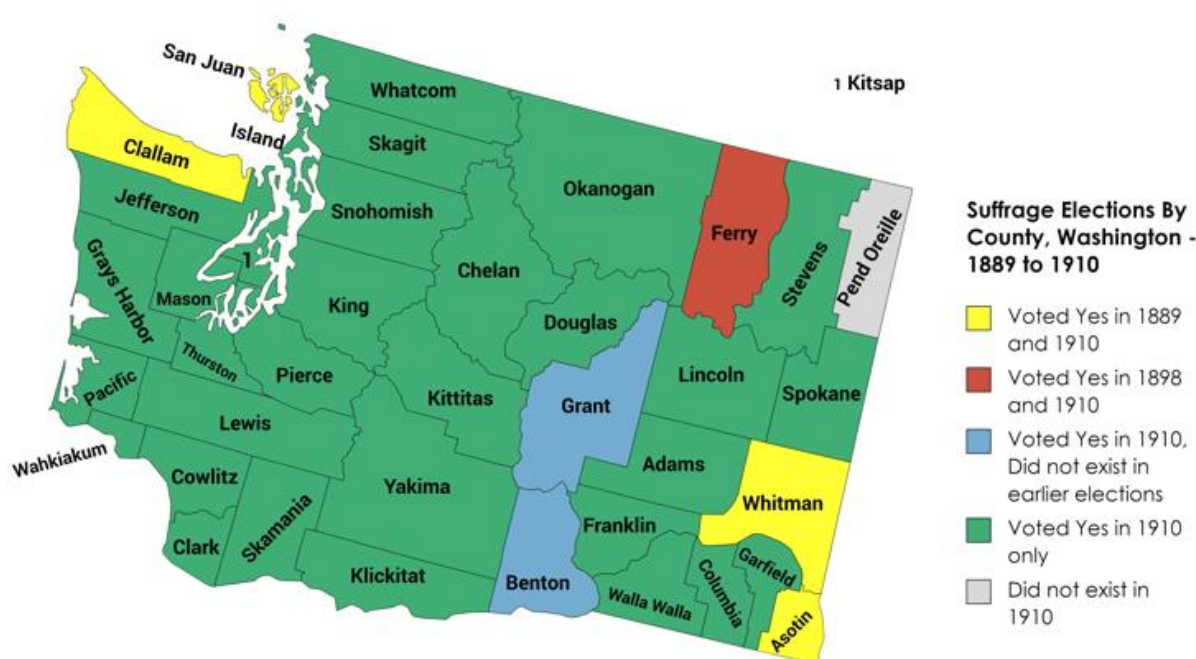


Figure 6 - Washington Suffragists Hang Posters During the 1910 Campaign. Image Courtesy of Washington Digital Archive

In addition to proselytizing to visitors from around the world, the WESA reached out to locals: laborers, farmers, and homesteaders in the area, including the Grange and the Farmers Union. Women pasted up posters and advertisements reminding residents to vote for suffrage. The leader of the Washington Grange, C.B. Kegley wrote, “The Grange, numbering 15,000, is strongly in favor of woman suffrage. In fact, every subordinate grange is an equal suffrage organization... we have raised a fund with which to push the work.”¹⁵³ That outreach paid dividends. On November 8, 1910, Washington men went to the polls to decide whether to add the words “There shall be no denial of the elective franchise at any election on account of sex.” to Article VI of the state constitution, regarding voter qualifications. Only five counties voted in favor in previous ballots. In 1910, every single county voted Yes – it was a landslide victory, with 52,229 Yes (63.80%) votes, to only 29,676 No (36.20%) votes.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. VI, 679.

¹⁵⁴ November 1910 General Election – Constitutional Amendment Article VI. Election Search Results, Washington Secretary of State. [Election Search Results - Elections & Voting - WA Secretary of State](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.



Map 4- Suffrage Elections by County, Washington - 1889 to 1910. Map by author, map template courtesy of MapChart.net

After the victory for suffrage was won in Washington, Cora Smith Eaton King relocated to Washington, D.C., serving as Treasurer for the National Council of Women Voters and on the Advisory Council the Congressional Union.¹⁵⁵ King corresponded extensively with fellow suffragist Ida Husted Harper, who served as secretary for the Indiana chapter of NAWSA, traveled on the lecture circuit for the movement, but today is most renowned for her work in editing Volume IV of the *History of Woman Suffrage*, and finishing the series with Volumes V and VI after the passing of Susan B. Anthony.¹⁵⁶ Cora contributed heavily to the Washington chapter of Volume VI, with Harper noting that she felt “indebted” to King for the content of the chapter. Despite submitting records, correspondence, and other material about the history of Washington’s suffrage movement, King remained modest about her own participation – her only appearance was in footnotes, edited in by Harper, lest King remain unheralded for her efforts.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Edmonston, W. Dr. Cora Smith King of Seattle, Washington. Ca. 1913-1914. Manuscript Division. Photograph. Records of the National Woman’s Party, Group 1, Container 1: 153. Folder: King, Cora Smith. Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000100/> Accessed October 11, 2023.

¹⁵⁶ The publication of the six-volume set sprawled from 1881 to 1922. Spanning nearly six thousand pages, it was penned and edited primarily by Susan B. Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, with Ida Husted Harper taking over the project in Volume IV, and finishing the series. While those four women were the primary contributors, suffragists from around the country contributed to ensure the story was told to its fullest extent.

¹⁵⁷ Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage* Vol. VI, 687.

Alaska

Homesteading came to Alaska later than any other state or territory in the United States. The homestead era in Alaska began in 1898 when President William McKinley signed legislation extending homestead laws to the District of Alaska on May 14, 1898. Relatively few claims were made initially, in part owing to the extreme conditions and remoteness. Between 1898 and 1912, when the Alaska Territory incorporated, fewer than 100 successful homestead patents were issued.¹⁵⁸ A revision to the law in 1903 changed the maximum size of an Alaskan claim from 80 acres to 320 acres, prompting Ada and Don Carlos Brownell, who were homesteaders in Alaska and took advantage of that revision, to claim a larger parcel of land, and helped fight for women's suffrage in the new territory.

Ada Mary Josephine Waite was born in Clintonville, Illinois, in September 1855 to Nelson Waite and Esther Ortentia Carr. Her father was a Canadian immigrant and farmer who pulled the family roots up again when Ada was just a young girl, moving the family to California. There, Ada met Don Carlos Brownell, whom she married in 1877. The couple joined the Klondike Gold Rush, establishing a shop in Skagway, Alaska, catering to miners looking to strike it rich. He advertised directly to prospectors his "Yukon Sleds Galore" – "a great quantity of the finest Yukon sleds and other supplies peculiar to the Alaska trade, which he will sell cheaper than you can buy in Seattle and ship north."¹⁵⁹

After the decline of the gold rush, Ada and Don Carlos Brownell moved on to Seward, Alaska, attracted by the boom surrounding the new town's status as the southern terminus of the Alaska Central Railroad.¹⁶⁰ The proximity of a railroad line often dictated a homestead community's success, and even in Alaska, that proved true. The Brownell family staked a claim to 310-acre homestead just outside of town, taking advantage of an increased maximum homestead size in Alaska. Homesteading in Alaska was a recent development, passed around the

¹⁵⁸ Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) and [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) – Alaska's entries are split between the Act of May 14, 1898, which authorized homesteads in Alaska, and appearing under the original Homestead Act of 1862.

¹⁵⁹ "Yukon Sleds Galore," *The Daily Morning Alaskan* (Skagway, Alaska), January 1, 1900.

¹⁶⁰ "Looks Good. Seward, on Resurrection Bay, is Booming," *The Daily Morning Alaskan* (Skagway, Alaska), October 30, 1903.

peak of the Klondike Gold Rush, and initially had very few. The couple successfully proved up, earning the patent to their land in 1914.¹⁶¹



Figure 7 - Brownell Homestead, Seward, Alaska. Image courtesy of the Seward Community Library Association.

Ada engaged with the Alaska Women's Christian Temperance Union, which Cornelia Templeton Jewett Hatcher led. Hatcher organized a chapter in Seward, near the Brownell homestead, and chapters in Skagway and Ketchikan. She served as the president of the Alaska WCTU from 1913 to 1924.¹⁶² Ada Brownell was one of 37 members of the Seward union in a town of around 500 – the furthest north and furthest west chapter of the organization at that point. The organization's numbers, reach, and influence on the suffrage movement cannot be overstated – it was numerically the largest women's organization for decades.

Local and state suffrage organizations in Alaska, just like homesteaders there, got off to something of a slow start. Lorena B. Wells wrote a letter to the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in 1911, contextualizing part of why that was the case, when explaining why she did not register for a membership card.

“There are times in one's existence when even so small a sum must be kept for such necessities as taxes, etc. You see here, we often have more time than money on our hands... in my seventeen years in Alaska, this has been positively

¹⁶¹ Don Carlos Brownell. Kenai Peninsula Census Area, Alaska. Homestead Patent #1228. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) Their claim dated to a brief window which allowed claims with a maximum size of 320 acres. From 1898 to 1903, claims in Alaska were capped at 80 acres, and from 1916 on, 160 acres.

¹⁶² Cornelia Templeton Jewett. “W.C.T.U. Work in Alaska.” *The Union Signal*. January 5, 1911, 5.

the worst weather this year, not cold, just snow, and drifting... so I have not made a very extensive canvas for material for a club... when a sufficient number of the proper personnel can be captured, will organize something.”¹⁶³

National suffrage organizations and leaders watched on, entering the fray to help push the territory over the finish line in granting women the vote. The National American Woman Suffrage Association sent out a flyer highlighting why the territorial legislature should grant women the vote, acknowledging the factors that led homesteaders and suffrage to entwine hand in hand: “Because woman suffrage offers the best kind of advertising for a new territory... because Alaska must offer some inducements if it is to attract not only women, but married men with families... to settle there.” The flyer went on to reflect on the fact that the experience of all homestead states has been “whenever have the vote it is easier to secure public support for measures looking towards the establishment of a settled, stable, and orderly state of society with schools, churches, public utilities, and all that characterizes a civilized, up-to-date community.” Homesteaders recognized women’s importance in creating thriving communities, by upholding their right to vote in many of the heaviest settled states – as had Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington, California, Kansas, Oregon, and Arizona when the flyer was published.¹⁶⁴

Mary Coffin Ware Dennett, on behalf of NAWSA, wrote to Governor Walter E. Clark of the “wide-spread delight in the United States over the suffrage progress in Alaska and special pleasure at the admirable position taken by the members of the legislature, and your own progressive action in signing the bill.”¹⁶⁵ Governor J.F.A. Strong wrote to Mary White of the Votes for Women campaign in August of 1915, noting that “woman suffrage in Alaska, though but two years old, is an unqualified success. The operation of the law has not besmirched the women of Alaska; it has not unsexed them nor caused them to take on ‘unwomanly attributes’ or unfitted them to become wives and mothers, or to attend to their domestic duties generally... as a matter of fact, in my opinion, there is not one logical argument against the enfranchisement of women.” Strong noted that these women were voting “just as intelligently as their fathers, husbands, or brothers,” and that to deny women the right to vote would be nothing but an act of prejudice. He went on to express his “hope that the great Empire State will speedily be added to the sisterhood of suffrage states.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Lorena B. Wells to Mary Dennett. February 21, 1911. National American Woman Suffrage Association. General Correspondence, 1839-1961. Alaska Suffrage Associations. Manuscript / Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss3413200011/>

¹⁶⁴ Five Good Reasons Why the Alaska Legislature Should Vote for Woman Suffrage. National American Woman Suffrage Association Records. National American Woman Suffrage Association Records: General Correspondence, 1839-1961. Alaska Suffrage Associations. Manuscript / Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss3413200011> Image 27. Accessed October 11, 2023.

¹⁶⁵ Mary Coffin Ware Dennett to Governor Walter E. Clark. April 2, 1913. National American Woman Suffrage Association. National American Woman Suffrage Association Records: General Correspondence. Alaska Suffrage Associations. Manuscript / Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/items/mss34132000011/> Image 12. Accessed October 11, 2023.

¹⁶⁶ Governor J.F.A. Strong to Mary White. August 12, 1915. National American Woman Suffrage Association Records: General Correspondence. Alaska Suffrage Associations. Manuscript / Mixed Material. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/ms998019.mss34132.00011> Image 16. Accessed October 11, 2023.

Though homesteading and its ties to the suffrage movement arrived later in Alaska than elsewhere, it also endured later in Alaska than anywhere else. Homesteaders continued arriving through the middle part of the twentieth century, and continued fighting for personal and civil rights, even after the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. One notable Alaskan woman homesteader was Mahala Ashley Dickerson. Dickerson was born in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1912 to John Augustine Ashley and Hattie Moss Ashley. She was a childhood friend and classmate of Rosa Parks, and the two grew up under Alabama's environment of racial violence and segregated Jim Crow laws.



Figure 8 - Mahala Ashley Dickerson - Courtesy of David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

Her experiences and desire for justice led her to Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., one of the nation's most prestigious black universities. In 1948, she was the first Black woman admitted to the Alabama state bar, and dedicated her life to civil rights cases, advocating for the poor and underprivileged, as well as taking on cases involving racial and gender discrimination. In 1958 Dickerson moved to Alaska, where she filed for a 160-acre homestead just north of Anchorage, days after arriving. She opened a practice in Anchorage in 1959 and was Alaska's first black female lawyer. She successfully proved up and received her patent to the land in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley in 1964.¹⁶⁷ In addition to being the first black female lawyer, Mahala Ashley Dickerson was Alaska's first black female homesteader. She was awarded the Margaret Brent Award in 1995 in honor of her legal career. The award, named in honor of America's first female lawyer, recognizes women who have achieved excellence in the field, influenced other women to pursue legal careers, and opened doors for women lawyers. Other recipients have included Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She continued the spirit of decades of women homesteaders challenging the status quo to ensure their rights, liberties, and freedoms were not violated. Dickerson passed away on her homestead in 2007.

¹⁶⁷ Mahala Ashley Dickerson. Matanuska / Susitna Census Area. Homestead Patent #44771. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

Colorado

When one thinks of Colorado, perhaps the first thing that comes to mind are the Rocky Mountains, the highest mountain range in North America. However, much of eastern Colorado is an extension of the Great Plains' prairies - prime homesteading areas. Even in the mountains, homesteaders staked claims. Colorado had the third-highest number of homesteaders, with 107,618 homesteads proved up on a total of 22 million acres – approximately one-third of the land area of the entire state.¹⁶⁸

Ellis Meredith, a leader in the Colorado suffrage movement, was born to early settlers and ranchers in Montana Territory in the 1860s, Emily Meredith and Frederick Meredith. Her parents crossed the Great Plains in a wagon train to seek a fortune mining in Montana. Emily wrote to her father about the gold rush and its speculative nature, sharing that mining claims which may have sold for \$100 - \$200 a year ago were now selling for \$1,500 to \$2,000, and some as high as \$7,000 – a mighty sum in 1863.¹⁶⁹ After realizing the intense competition and high risk, Frederick instead went into ranching, acquiring a parcel of land. Frederick “concluded the most profitable business he could follow this summer would be ranching,” acquiring nearly two hundred head of livestock in his first year. Emily found the community lacking in religion, and overly violent – she observed that she “should like to see a pagoda or mosque or anything to indicate that there is a religious principle in man. If ‘labor is worship’ this is a most worshipful community, but of any kind of worship there is no public manifestation whatsoever.”¹⁷⁰ These sentiments spurred her on the path to reform, and to suffrage – values she would instill in her daughter, Ellis, born in Montana Territory in 1865.

The Meredith family relocated to Denver, Colorado, where Ellis came of age as a young suffragist. She joined the Colorado Equal Suffrage Organization, and soon rose in the ranks to serve as Vice-President.¹⁷¹ Colorado had debated joining Wyoming in the 1870s, when Territorial Governor McCook addressed the legislature, stating, “It rests with you to say whether Colorado will accept [suffrage] as our sister territory of Wyoming has done... whether she will be a leader in the movement, or a follower; for the logic of a progressive civilization leads to the inevitable result of a universal suffrage.”¹⁷²

Colorado, like Wyoming, was an early leader in the women's suffrage movement – the second state in the country to grant women the vote in 1893, and the first to do so by popular vote. The Colorado suffrage victory was achieved through embracing politics in a broad, non-partisan fashion – gaining as ally's farmers and homesteaders, Populists, and those in favor of

¹⁶⁸ “Homesteading by the Numbers.” Homestead National Historical Park. Accessed October 11, 2023 at [Homesteading by the Numbers - Homestead National Historical Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/homesteading-by-the-numbers)

¹⁶⁹ Emily R. Meredith to her father, April 30, 1863. Emily R. Meredith Papers, 1862-1867. Montana Historical Society Research Center.

¹⁷⁰ Emily R. Meredith to her father, April 30, 1863. Emily R. Meredith Papers, 1862-1867. Montana Historical Society Research Center.

¹⁷¹ Also referred to as the Non-Partisan Equal Suffrage Association of Colorado.

¹⁷² Brown, J.G. Lucy Stone, and National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. *The History of Equal Suffrage in Colorado*. Denver: News Job Printing Co., 1898. <https://www.loc.gov/item/ca21000331/> Accessed October 11, 2023.

“free silver.”¹⁷³ Colorado also had the first women elected to a state legislative body, just after granting women the vote in 1893. The popular vote went strongly in favor of the proposed amendment, 35,698 For; 29,461 Against. Populists (both in the legislature and in counties which voted Populist in 1892) were strongly in support, Republicans mixed, and Democrats strongly opposed.¹⁷⁴ Not only was Colorado the second state nationwide to enfranchise women, but the first to do so via popular vote.

Ina Sizer Cassidy (born Perlina Sizer) was the daughter of an early Colorado homesteader and rancher. She was born in 1869 to Eber Rockwell Sizer and Mary Savager Sizer, who claimed 320 acres of land along the Purgatoire River in Bent County, in southeastern Colorado. Eber R. Sizer first redeemed an agricultural college scrip from the Morrill Land Grant Act. The Morrill Land Grant Act was passed at nearly the same time as the Homestead Act and funded state universities which would teach agriculture and mechanical arts, especially to the children of farmers and the working class – tied closely to the Lincoln administration’s efforts of promoting homesteading.¹⁷⁵ Sizer’s ranch was expanded to include a homestead in the 1870s, not far from the homestead of his brother, Warren Wells Sizer.¹⁷⁶ The *Grand Junction News* reported on the Sizer family homestead in 1884, stating that “for eleven years Doc Sizer dug away on a quarter section of land near West Las Animas, and watered by the Purgatoire. He set thousands of grapevines and fruit trees, leaving nothing untried that belongs to fruit culture. He did not forget to set out hundreds of cottonwoods for windbreaks as well as for shade and ornament. At the end of eleven years, he was reaping some reward of his labors.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Rebecca J. Mead, *How the Vote Was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States, 1868-1914*. (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 53.

¹⁷⁴ For comparison, Populists in the legislature voted 46-5 in support, Republicans 27-29 against, and Democrats 1-13 against. The Republican and Democratic counties gave a slim majority of 471 against, whereas Populist counties gave a majority of 6,818 in favor. Brown, J.G. Lucy Stone, and National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. *The History of Equal Suffrage in Colorado*. Denver: News Job Printing Co., 1898, 24. <https://www.loc.gov/item/ca21000331/> Accessed October 11, 2023.

¹⁷⁵ Colorado’s land-grant university is Colorado State University, though Morrill Land Grant Scrip (Agricultural College Scrip) did not necessarily have to be redeemed in the state for which college it went to fund. Sizer’s scrip was to help fund the University of Arkansas.

¹⁷⁶ Eber R. Sizer. Bent County, Colorado. Homestead Patent #543. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) Warren W. Sizer. Bent County, Colorado. Homestead Patent #1248. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) Warren and Eber R. Sizer claimed a total of 640 acres, for 320 acres each. Both brothers claimed one homestead, in addition to acquiring land from other public domain authorities.

¹⁷⁷ “Sizer’s Old Fruit Farm.” *Grand Junction News* (Grand Junction, Colorado), July 12, 1884.

Figure 9 - Ina Sizer Cassidy in Paris, 1926. Image courtesy of the Palace of the Governors Photo Archives (NMHM), 091561



Colorado passed a woman's suffrage bill in 1893, but it was no sure thing. A previous suffrage campaign organized to support a referendum in 1877, just after statehood. Perlina continued to fight for the right for women across America to vote. She headed to Michigan in the 1890s after marrying John B. Davis. Thanks to her passion and dedication to the cause, she rose through the ranks quickly. In 1897 Perlina Sizer-Davis was elected as the President of the Detroit Equal Suffrage Organization.¹⁷⁸ She was then elected as the Vice-President of the Michigan Equal Suffrage Association the following year.¹⁷⁹

After the death of her first husband in 1899, she returned to Colorado for a time before remarrying and moving to Santa Fe, New Mexico, with her second husband, Gerald Cassidy, in 1912. She remarked upon the injustice of having had the vote as a citizen of Colorado but losing it after moving to a state without suffrage. In an interview with NAWSA in 1917, Sizer stated that it turns "into a choice between husband and citizenship. No woman is going to give up her husband, in spite of what the Antis [anti-suffragists] say about the vote wrecking the home; so it means we Westerners must become outcasts and aliens because we are dutiful wives. It is absurd that my husband's right to vote is accorded him unquestionably... while I, who have compiled with exactly the same legal formalities, am refused that right."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ "Sayings and Doings." *Detroit Free Press*. (Detroit, Michigan), December 5, 1897.

¹⁷⁹ "Michigan News Summary." *Isabella County Enterprise*. (Mt. Pleasant, Michigan), Friday May 13, 1898.

¹⁸⁰ "Western Women in New York Resent Disenfranchisement." October 20, 1917. Minnie Fisher Cunningham Papers, Carey C. Shuart Women's Research Collections, 2006-010, Box 1, Folder 17, University of Houston Libraries Special Collections.

Ina Sizer-Cassidy founded the New Mexico chapter of the League of Women Voters in 1920, just after the state ratified the Nineteenth Amendment on February 21, 1920. She wrote in support of the organization, calling it “a power for good.” She elaborated that the League of Women Voters was “one of the most important of all the women’s organizations,” and that it was “a great privilege to see two thousand young, intelligent women... such splendid women, the flower of America’s womanhood” meeting to determine what should be done to shape the future of America’s political arena.¹⁸¹

Idaho

Idaho was admitted as a state in 1890, but suffragists traveled to the Idaho Territory even before statehood. Abigail Scott Duniway, explored above for her work with the movement in Oregon, was exceptionally active in Idaho between 1876 and 1895. She gave 140 public lectures, secured subscribers to her suffrage paper, the *New Northwest*, and traveled 12,000 miles by river, rail, stage, and buckboard.¹⁸² In 1887, Duniway addressed the Territorial legislature, attempting to promote a bill seeking to grant women the vote. During the 1889 constitutional convention, both local and national suffrage leaders lobbied the legislature to include women’s suffrage in the state’s constitution, to no avail.

In 1895, the Equal Suffrage Association of Idaho made another push to place suffrage on the ballot. Idaho leaders of this movement included Elizabeth Nancy Greer Badley and her husband Durbin L. Badley, Frances and James Heber Richards, Mary E. and James A. McGee, Rebecca Mitchell, “Mrs. W. W. Woods,” – Melvina Blanche Woods, daughter of the Utah suffragist Emmeline B. Wells, and Kate Green.¹⁸³ All of these women either homesteaded themselves or had family connections to the Homestead Act. They utilized their familial and political connections to network with the Democratic, Populist, and Republican Parties to secure the support of all three in favor of granting the vote to women. The proposed Senate Joint Resolution Number 2 sought to grant the vote to “every male or female citizen of the United States, so as “to extend to women the equal right of suffrage.” The resolution passed the Senate on January 11, 1895, and the House on January 17, 1895, sending it for a vote in the 1896 election.¹⁸⁴

Elizabeth Nancy Greer Badley and her husband Durbin L. Badley were instrumental in Idaho’s campaign for the vote for women, which received support from national organizations that sought to make Idaho just the fourth state to guarantee women the right to vote. Elizabeth was elected at a statewide convention held in Boise in July of 1896 to serve as Secretary for the upcoming efforts. Her husband was named a member of the advisory board as a local power in

¹⁸¹ “League of Women Voters a Power for Good in U.S.” Ina Sizer Cassidy. *The Santa Fe New Mexican* (Santa Fe, New Mexico), April 18, 1921.

¹⁸² Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper. *The History of Woman Suffrage, Vol IV.* (1883-1900). Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1902, 589.

¹⁸³ Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper. *The History of Woman Suffrage, Vol IV.* (1883-1900). Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1902, 590.

¹⁸⁴ “Proposed Constitutional Amendments.” *The Idaho Statesman* (Boise, Idaho), October 21, 1896, 4.

the Populist party, which was in favor of the suffrage resolution.¹⁸⁵ Working with the Idaho Equal Suffrage Association, the Badleys, the McGees, the Duntons, and the Woods organized an event with Carrie Chapman Catt, Chairman of the Organization Committee of NAWSA. Catt spoke to a packed house in Boise, that the press lauded as “logical, eloquent, finished and convincing” and “probably never before in the history of Boise” had an audience heard one as fine.¹⁸⁶

In addition to their reform work for women’s rights, Durbin and Elizabeth Badley had a “reclamation homestead” – under the Reclamation Act of 1902, often referred to as the Newlands Reclamation Act. This act provided for the construction of irrigation works in the west, funded by the sale of public lands. The project provided irrigation for millions of acres through damming waterways in homesteading areas throughout the western United States – Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming all had reclamation projects. The Homestead Act allowed farmers to claim land, but in many areas of those states it was the irrigation of the land under the Newlands Reclamation Act that allowed those farms to be successful.

Those entering onto reclamation lands were still required to comply with homestead laws, including residency requirements. Some of the largest reclamation projects were in Idaho, including the Boise River reclamation project, and the Minidoka Reclamation project.¹⁸⁷ The Badley homestead was located at Lake Lowell, a lake created by the Bureau of Reclamation in 1909, by damming the Boise River. They successfully proved up on a 40-acre homestead in 1918.¹⁸⁸

Rebecca Brown Mitchell was another key leader during the 1895-1896 campaign in Idaho. Mitchell was born on a farm in central Illinois in 1834. She married a local farmer, John Mitchell, but was widowed just a few years later, shortly after the passing of her father. Mitchell was assessed and taxed on the inherited property of her father and husband, an experience which in she called “unjust discrimination of the law against women” which “awakened [me to] the legal restrictions of my sex, which has been as a fire shut up in my bones, permeating my whole being, and making me what I am along the lines of independent thought, and willingness to endure hardness, that citizenship for women might be won.”¹⁸⁹

After her children were grown, she migrated to Idaho in 1882. She settled on a 160-acre parcel of land, claiming it under the Pre-Emption Act of 1841, and received the patent in her own

¹⁸⁵ Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper. *The History of Woman Suffrage, Vol IV*. (1883-1900). Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1902, 591. “Populist Convention.” *The Idaho Statesman* (Boise, Idaho), August 2, 1894, 3.

¹⁸⁶ “For Equal Suffrage.” *The Idaho Statesman* (Boise, Idaho), August 18, 1896, 4.

¹⁸⁷ For more on the Minidoka Project, see Eric A. Stene’s 1997 *Minidoka Project*, Bureau of Reclamation, 1997. Accessed October 11, 2023, at [Minidoka draft 2 \(usbr.gov\)](https://www.usbr.gov/minidoka/draft2)

¹⁸⁸ Durbin L. Badley. Canyon County, Idaho. Homestead Patent # 17011. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records ([Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#))

¹⁸⁹ *Glimpses from the Life of Rebecca Brown Mitchell*. Rebecca Brown Mitchell, 1903. Brigham Young University Idaho Special Collections and Archives, McKay Library. MS0054.

name.¹⁹⁰ She became involved with missionary work, and in 1886 was named president of the Eagle Rock union of the WCTU. By 1891, she had become the state organizer and president. She served as an Alternate Delegate to the 1892 Prohibitionist convention, lecturing and speaking on the temperance cause.¹⁹¹

In addition to her efforts on behalf of prohibition, Mitchell was responsible for organizing legislative outreach in seeking the franchise for women.¹⁹² She worked with Louis E. Workman to introduce a legislative bill asking for a constitutional amendment, which was narrowly defeated in the House of Representatives.¹⁹³ Mitchell also attended the 1896 Idaho Equal Suffrage Convention in Boise, as well as the 1896 WCTU National Convention in St. Louis, Missouri, where she was introduced by Frances Willard, who “called attention to the fact that Mrs. Mitchell wore the ‘goldie’ ribbon as well as white – the gold standing for equal suffrage.”¹⁹⁴

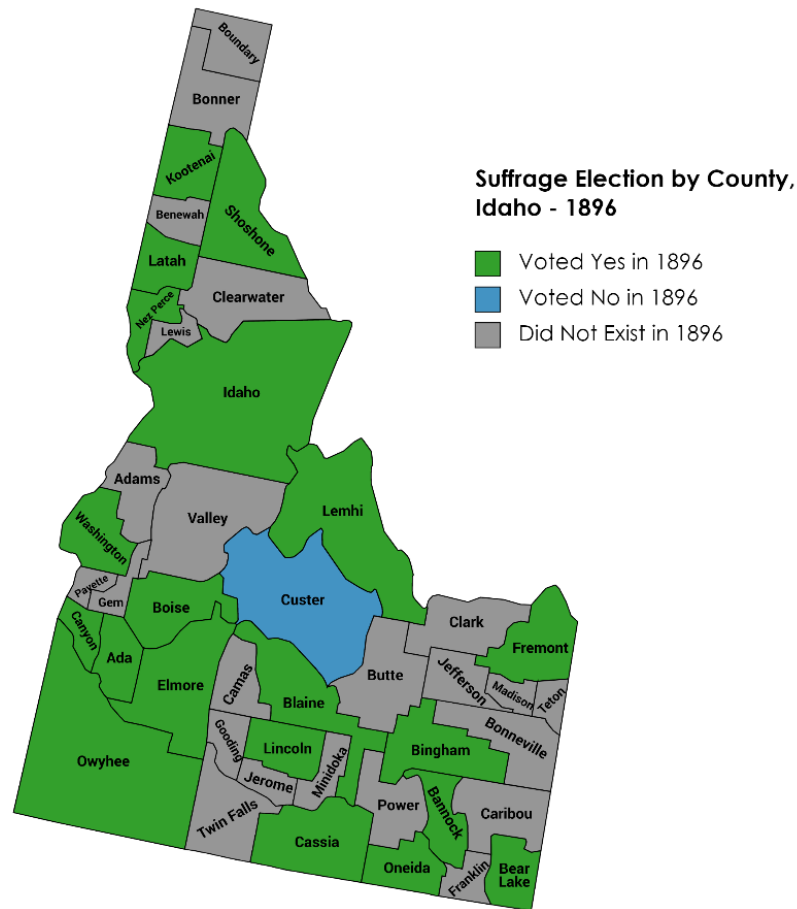
¹⁹⁰ Rebecca Mitchell. Fremont County, Idaho. Homestead Patent #945. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records ([Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#))

¹⁹¹ “The Prohibitionists.” *The Idaho Statesman* (Boise, Idaho), May 27, 1892, 1.

¹⁹² *Glimpses from the Life of Rebecca Brown Mitchell*. Rebecca Brown Mitchell, 1903. Brigham Young University Idaho Special Collections and Archives, McKay Library. MS0054.

¹⁹³ Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper. *The History of Woman Suffrage, Vol IV*. (1883-1900). Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1902, 589.

¹⁹⁴ “The National W.C.T.U. Convention.” *Blackfoot News* (Blackfoot, Idaho), November 21, 1896, 5.



Map 5 - Suffrage Election by County, Idaho - 1896. Map by author, map template courtesy of MapChart.net

On November 3, 1896, the campaign reached its culmination. Thanks to the efforts of Mitchell, Elizabeth and Durbin Badley, Frances and James Richards, Mary and James McGee, and Melvina Blanche Woods, Idaho voted overwhelmingly in favor – 12,126 For, and 6,282 Against suffrage.¹⁹⁵ Of the twenty-one counties then extant in the state, twenty of them voted in favor. Only in Custer County did the cause fail to win a majority.¹⁹⁶

Despite the victory, there were immediate legal challenges. The state board of canvassers proclaimed that a majority of those voting in the general election overall was necessary to pass the constitutional amendment, not just a majority of those voting on the state constitutional amendment. Homesteader Kate Green sued the state board of canvassers, with the case being

¹⁹⁵ “Idaho Constitutional Amendment History.” Idaho Secretary of State Election Division. Accessed October 11, 2023 at [Idaho Constitutional Amendment Historical 1892 through 1918](#)

¹⁹⁶ Custer County voted 151 for, 176 against. The statewide support level was a supermajority of 66%, with five counties being at least 75%. *Abstract of Votes Cast at the General Election, November 3, 1896*. Issued by George J. Lewis, Secretary of State. Idaho Secretary of State Election Division.

argued before the Idaho Supreme Court in December 1896.¹⁹⁷ The Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor, officially making Idaho only the fourth state to enfranchise its women – largely thanks to the support of homesteading suffragists.

Suffrage came to the homesteading west first in the Territory of Wyoming in 1869 – nearly fifty years before the first non-homesteading state, New York, in 1917. Every single one of the states in this chapter passed women’s suffrage prior to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, and every single one did so prior to New York. After Wyoming came Colorado in 1893, Idaho in 1896, Washington in 1910, Oregon in 1912, the territory of Alaska in 1913, and Montana in 1914. These states were also among the most heavily homesteaded across the country, with 35% of Montana claimed under the Homestead Act, 33% of Colorado, 29% of Wyoming, 20% of Washington, 18% of Idaho, and 17% of Oregon.¹⁹⁸ Many of those homesteaders were either women proving up in their own names, or women whose spouses or family members claimed land, and whose influence on the homestead and in their communities drove the west to adopt women’s suffrage long before the eastern states.

¹⁹⁷ Kate Green received land through the Desert Land Act of 1877, receiving her patent to 320 acres of land in Canyon County in 1898. Kate Green. Canyon County. Homestead Patent #349. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) ; “Our Women Can Vote!” *Lewiston Daily Teller* (Lewiston, Idaho), December 17, 1896, 5.

¹⁹⁸ For more on the numbers of homestead claims and total acreage successfully proved up in each state, see “Homesteading by the Numbers.” Homestead National Historical Park. Accessed October 11, 2023, at [Homesteading by the Numbers - Homestead National Historical Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#).

Chapter Two: None of the Evils So Loudly Proclaimed – Suffrage in the Homesteading Southwest

California

At first thought, California in the mid-nineteenth century recalls the famed Gold Rush, which brought hundreds of thousands from across the world to the new state in the 1840s and 1850s. However, it was a very different sort of extracting wealth from the earth which dominated the latter half of the century – California had more than 66,000 homesteads claiming more than ten million acres of land, establishing a strong agricultural legacy that persists to the present.¹⁹⁹

The transcontinental railroad spurred a land boom to California, with advertisements singing the praises of government lands and railroad lands both – land which would turn California into the “cornucopia of the world,” and in the eyes of potential settlers, was the perfect avenue to land acquisition and the wealth it could bring. Using the average California household size of 4.6 in 1910, approximately 307,000 people on homesteads in California – close to ten percent of the state population at that time.²⁰⁰ California, like the rest of the western homesteading states, passed full women’s voting rights prior to the national ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment – and homesteading women played a strong role in that movement.

Though San Francisco was the birthplace of one of the earliest organized women’s suffrage societies in California when the California State Woman Suffrage Educational Association incorporated there in 1873, the city (like major population centers across the country) resisted the adoption of suffrage.²⁰¹ Petitions circulated in the 1870s to strike the words “white male” from the constitution, but the language was only changed to “native male citizen.” California suffragist Ellen R. Van Valkenberg attempted to register to vote in Santa Cruz County, arguing that under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, she had the right to do so.²⁰² County Clerk Albert Brown refused to enter her name into the register, so Van Valkenburg took her case before the court. Judge Albert Hagan observed that Wyoming Territory had just granted women suffrage and that “he thought the Fourteenth and Fifteen Amendments granted [women] that right.”²⁰³ The Supreme Court of California ruled against Van Valkenburg in January of 1872, noting that though the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments prohibited voting

¹⁹⁹ “State by State Numbers.” Homestead National Historical Park. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/statenumbers.htm>

²⁰⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, Supplement for California. 1910. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-ca.pdf>

²⁰¹ California State Woman Suffrage Educational Association Articles of Incorporation, 1873, California State Archives.

²⁰² Section 1 of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments state, “All persons born or naturalized in the United States... are citizens...” and “the right... to vote shall not be denied... on account of race [or] color...”

²⁰³ “Right of Women to Elective Franchise.” *Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel* (Santa Cruz, California), August 26, 1871.

discrimination on account of race or color, it did not prohibit limiting the vote based upon gender.²⁰⁴

The movement in California experienced a renaissance in the 1890s, as new alliances made significant inroads. Beaumelle Sturtevant-Peet and Sarah M. Severance, leaders in California's WCTU union, spearheaded an effort to petition the legislature for full suffrage. Additionally, they sought and received endorsements of suffrage from the Grange and the Farmer's Alliance.²⁰⁵ The legislature approved a proposed amendment to remove "male" from the state's suffrage clause in 1895, sending the bill to the ballot box on November 3, 1896, prompting NAWSA leaders to supplement efforts by the California Woman Suffrage Association.²⁰⁶ Susan B. Anthony and Anna Howard Shaw joined California suffragists and WCTU leaders Sturtevant-Peet, Severance, Alice Moore McComas, and Ellen Sargent, whose husband U.S. Senator Aaron A. Sargent introduced a suffrage bill in Congress for the first time in 1878 – using language that would eventually become the Nineteenth Amendment, forty years later.²⁰⁷ Despite their formidable efforts, the effort fell just short. When male voters went to the ballot box on November 3, 1896, the proposed amendment was defeated, 137,099 against, to 110,355 for.²⁰⁸

Mary Hunter Austin was an author, activist, and feminist with deep connections to both the Homestead Act in California, and the suffrage movement. Though she never filed a claim in her own name, Austin was the daughter, sister, and wife, of homesteaders. Her extended family were homesteaders as well. In *Earth Horizon*, her 1932 autobiography, Austin writes of her aunt, Mary Peter, who had a homestead in Kansas. Austin recalled her time on the Peter homestead, "guarding the stock grazing on governmental land; watching the dark menacing wind of a small cyclone... watching at night the running prairie fires."²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ Opinion, *Van Valkenburg v. Brown*, January 1872, No. 3,091. Supreme Court of California. 43 Cal. 43 (Cal. 1872)

²⁰⁵ Donald G. Cooper. "The California Suffrage Campaign of 1896: Its Origin, Strategies, Defeat." *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Winter 1989): 311-325, 312.

²⁰⁶ Donald G. Cooper. "The California Suffrage Campaign of 1896: Its Origin, Strategies, Defeat." *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Winter 1989): 311-325, 314.

²⁰⁷ Donald G. Cooper. "The California Suffrage Campaign of 1896: Its Origin, Strategies, Defeat." *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Winter 1989): 311-325, 315.

²⁰⁸ L.H. Brown. *Statement of the Vote of California at the General Election, Held November 3, 1896*. Sacramento, 1896. Accessed October 11, 2023 at [Official returns of the vote for state officers of the State of California: California. Secretary of State](#)

²⁰⁹ Austin, 95-96.



Figure 10 - Mary Hunter Austin, author and member of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, ca. 1914-1916. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.

After Mary's father died, her mother, Susanna Savilla, moved the family to California, seeking to join the ongoing California land boom. Susanna and her son, Mary's brother, both claimed homesteads in the San Joaquin Valley. Though they had little farming experience, they successfully proved up and granted the family 320 acres of land in Kern County.²¹⁰ In 1891, Hunter married Stafford Wallace Austin. The couple claimed 160 acres in Inyo County, California, and successfully proved up in 1901.²¹¹ The Austin family, in addition to claiming land under the Homestead Act, were also a part of the institution of homesteading in another way. Stafford was appointed as Register of the U.S. Land Office at Independence, California, responsible for helping those seeking to claim land under the law. His nomination for the post was confirmed by the Senate on March 31, 1898.²¹²

Mary Hunter Austin's classic work, *The Land of Little Rain*, could describe the homesteads of countless women across the country. She writes about "the Country of Lost Borders," where she homesteaded in the Mojave Valley – although once again, that description could be anywhere in the hundreds of millions of acres of land where homesteaders called home,

²¹⁰ Mary's mother, Savilla's claim: Savilla S. Hunter. Kern County, California. Homestead Patent #1548. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#). Her brother, James' claim: James M. Hunter. Kern County, California. Homestead Patent #2018. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#).

²¹¹ Mary Hunter and Stafford W. Austin's homestead claim: Stafford W. Austin. Inyo County, California. Homestead Patent #474. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=CA0890_186&docClass=STA&sid=xpcuup10.et1

²¹² *Congressional Record: Containing the Proceedings and Debates of the Fifty-Fifth Congress, Second Session*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1898. Vol. 31 No. 4, 3456.

the seemingly endless expanse across the heart of the North American continent. Fellow homesteader-turned-author Willa Cather referred to the vast expanses of public lands opened to homesteaders “place where there was nothing but land: not a country at all, but the materials out of which countries were made.”²¹³

Austin wrote of the experience of homesteading fondly in *The Land of Little Rain*,

“If one is inclined to wonder at first how so many dwellers came to be in the loneliest land that ever came out of God’s hands, what they do there and why stay, one does not wonder so much after having lived there. None other than this long brown land lays such a hold on the affections. The rainbow hills, the tender blueish mists, the luminous radiance of the spring, have the lotus charm. They trick the sense of time, so that once inhabiting there you always mean to go away without quite realizing that you have not done it.”²¹⁴

Despite that sentiment, the call of activism pulled Austin away from the homestead to join the cause for women’s suffrage in 1911, amid a campaign for a proposed amendment to the Californian state constitution. On the ballot that year was Proposition 4, which sought to grant the vote to women. It was the second attempt to enfranchise women in the state, after the 1896 campaign fell short. The *San Francisco Examiner* reported on September 2, 1911, “Suffragette Cause Wins Mary Austin,” and quoted her as saying, “If you think woman suffrage just and according with our republican profession of equal privilege and representation, to neglect to vote for it is to deny that other great principle of human conduct that right doing can be trusted to come out rightly.”²¹⁵

Of the several proposed constitutional amendments on the ballot, none received more attention than the proposed Constitutional Amendment. When Proposition 4 went up on October 10, 1911, a clear pattern emerged - urban voters were against women’s suffrage. By far the largest city in California in 1910, with 416,912 residents, San Francisco voted a resounding no to suffrage.²¹⁶ The vote there was 21,919 in favor, to 35,635 against, or only 38% in support of suffrage.²¹⁷ Of note, this was, by percentage, the lowest support of suffrage across the state – and the only county in the state with zero homesteads claimed. Neighboring Alameda County, with a population of 246,131, fared little better – suffrage was voted down by more than 2,000 votes,

²¹³ The first two descriptions are from Mary Hunter Austin’s *The Land of Little Rain*, the second from Willa Cather’s *My Antonia* – both women capture the sheer expanse, and difficulties of successfully proving up in isolated parts of the country, while respecting the natural beauty and opportunities afforded by the Homestead Act. Of course, that sense of isolation came after the dispossession of that land from Native American inhabitants.

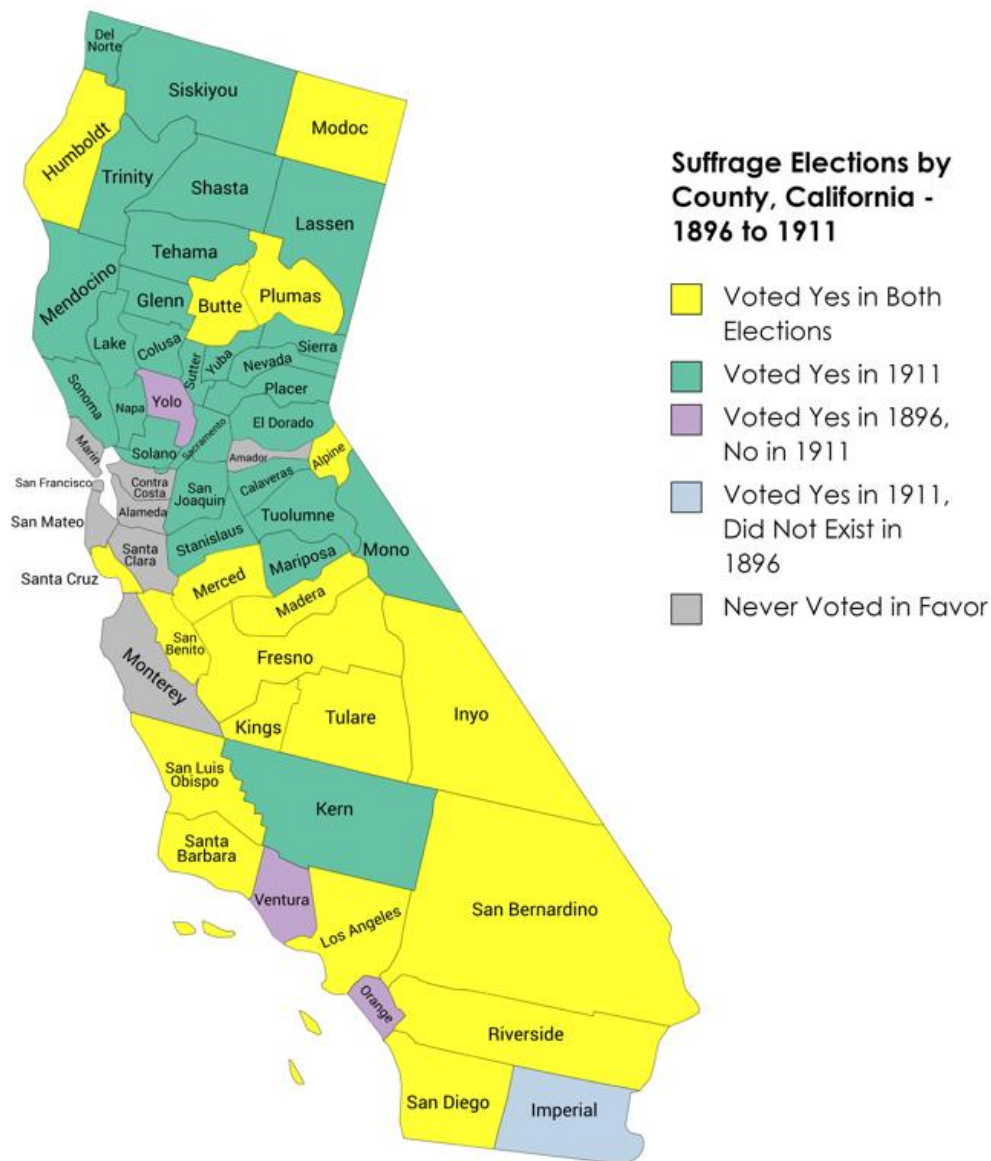
²¹⁴ Mary Hunter Austin, *The Land of Little Rain*.

²¹⁵ “Suffragette Cause Wins Mary Austin.” *The San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, California), September 2, 1911.

²¹⁶ 1910 Decennial Census - Supplement for California: Population, Agriculture, Manufactures, Mines and Quarries. <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-ca.pdf> , 579. Accessed October 11, 2023.

²¹⁷ Statement of the Vote, Special Election, October 10, 1911. Secretary of State Records, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

with only 45% of the ballots cast in favor.²¹⁸ Other Bay Area counties trended the same: Marin County at 42%, and San Mateo County at 45%.²¹⁹



Map 6 - Suffrage Elections, by County, California - 1896 to 1911. Courtesy of MapChart.net

As the votes streamed in from these urban centers, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area, it appeared as though the campaign was lost. However, a funny thing happened as returns

²¹⁸ 1910 Decennial Census, 574; Statement of the Vote, Special Election, October 10, 1911. Secretary of State Records, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

²¹⁹ Statement of the Vote, Special Election, October 10, 1911. Secretary of State Records, California State Archives, Sacramento, California.

came in from other counties. Though Los Angeles was the most populous county in the state, it had a substantial number of homesteaders – and did vote in favor of suffrage – a major victory for the cause. Even more significant, were the results from California’s rural and homesteading areas.

As Map 6 shows, most Californian counties voted in favor of suffrage in 1911 – all the counties in the yellow or green supported suffrage that year. A total of 47 of California’s 58 counties (81%) voted for suffrage. It was a very near thing, as the cities attempted to out-vote the homesteading hinterlands of the state. Inyo County, where Mary Hunter Austin and her husband homesteaded, voted for suffrage – both in 1896 and 1911. In fact, in the 1911 election, the margin of support in Inyo was nearly two to one, with an impressive 65% of the ballot.²²⁰

The greatest margin of support was in rural Modoc County, which supported women’s suffrage in both elections. In 1911, 71% of the ballots cast in Modoc sought the vote for women.²²¹ Modoc County in far northeastern California, was heavily settled by homesteaders, both under the original Homestead Act of 1862, and by the Forest Homestead Law of 1906.²²² By the 1896 election, there were 706 homesteads proved up, in a county of under 5,000 people.²²³ By the 1911 election, there were 984 homesteads, out of a population just over 6,000.²²⁴ Even with a conservative estimate of homesteading family sizes, it was at least a plurality-homesteader county, if not an outright majority.

Dr. Mary E. Ryerson Butin, like Mary Hunter Austin, was another California suffragist with homesteading ties. Ryerson was born on the family farm in rural Iowa in the 1850s. She pursued and earned a medical degree from Woman’s Medical College in Chicago, before moving to Nebraska in the early 1880s. She and her husband, John L. Butin, had homesteading family in south-central Nebraska, and moved to the area to be closer to them.²²⁵ Mary was the first woman member of the Nebraska State Medical Society, and was elected Vice-President.²²⁶ She also took “an active part in the in the campaign for woman’s suffrage... and for the WCTU on

²²⁰ Jordan, Frank C. *Statement of the Vote of California, at the Special Election Held October 10, 1911, of Constitutional Amendments*. Sacramento: California State Printing, 1911. Senate Constitutional Amendment No. 8, 4.

²²¹ Jordan, Frank C. *Statement of the Vote of California, at the Special Election Held October 10, 1911, of Constitutional Amendments*. Sacramento: California State Printing, 1911. Senate Constitutional Amendment No. 8

²²² “Land Claims, Forest Homesteads, and Special Uses.” United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/modoc/learning/history-culture/?cid=stelprdb5311936> Accessed October 11, 2023.

²²³ Modoc County, 1862-1901, California. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) The search period is extended five years out, to reflect homesteaders who had at least begun the process by 1896 but had not yet earned the patent and may have voted in the election that year.

²²⁴ Modoc County, 1862-1916, California. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

²²⁵ Butin’s older brother, Layton Butin, homesteaded near Minden, Nebraska, successfully proving up his claim in 1880. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

²²⁶ Butin, Mary E. Ryerson. National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. *Life’s Story* (1930), 3. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/93838428> Accessed October 11, 2023.

Scientific Temperance Instruction.”²²⁷ She worked with Ada M. Bittenbender and Clara Bewick Colby, editors of temperance and suffrage newspapers based out of southeast Nebraska.²²⁸

After several years in Nebraska, Dr. Butin and her husband headed west for California in 1891. They joined the John Brown Colony – an agricultural settlement 20 miles from Fresno.²²⁹ Butin continued to serve as a medical doctor in California, becoming one of the first women to serve as a county health director nationwide. She, like many rural homesteaders, also engaged in public activities like the ongoing California suffrage campaigns, noting that she

“Carried the county for it both times. The first one I financed myself, engaged speakers, and sent them over the county with team and driver appearing where dates had been made for them in schoolhouses and county stores... During the second campaign... we were favored by having speakers of national reputation, Susan B. Anthony, Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt... whom I had the pleasure of entertaining in my home. She afterward gave a very fine scholarly address, and I was glad to claim her as an Iowa woman.”²³⁰

As seen in Map 6, Butin’s home of Madera County was one of just nineteen counties that voted in favor of suffrage in both 1896 and 1911. After pushing first California, then the nation, to suffrage, Butin engaged in politics herself. She affiliated with the Democratic Party, serving on both the County and State committee, and at the 1919 National Democratic Convention in San Francisco was elected as an alternate delegate. She also assisted in both of Woodrow Wilson’s presidential campaigns, carrying the county.

The passage of Women’s Suffrage in California was a major victory for the movement – it was by far the most populous state grant women the right to vote up to that point. California’s 2,375,000 residents nearly outnumbered that of all the other suffrage states combined.²³¹ Thanks to the strong support of homesteaders and rural, agricultural counties in California, the state emerged as a major leader in the movement, granting legitimacy and spurring a wave of states successfully passing suffrage ballots over the next decade – leading to the nationwide push for a federal amendment.

Arizona

²²⁷ Butin, Mary E. Ryerson. National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. *Life’s Story* (1930), 5. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/93838428> Accessed October 11, 2023.

²²⁸ Ibid. For more on the history of the suffrage movement in rural Nebraska, see Chapter Five.

²²⁹ “John Brown Colony.” *The Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, California), November 11, 1891, 2.

²³⁰ Butin, Mary E. Ryerson. National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. *Life’s Story* (1930), 16. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/93838428> Carrie Chapman Catt, like Butin, grew up on a rural Iowa farm. Accessed October 11, 2023.

²³¹ According to the 1910 U.S. Census, the population of California was approximately 2,375,000. When adding together Wyoming (145,000), Colorado (800,000), Utah (375,000), Idaho (325,000), and Washington (1,100,000-), their combined population was roughly 2,750,000.

Arizona first became a Territory of the United States amid the Civil War. Initially, Arizona Territory was much more sparsely populated than New Mexico – 90,000 in New Mexico to just 9,000 in Arizona in the 1870 census.²³² Like much of the west, initial homesteading claims were low as well – until the 1890s, there were fewer than 500 successfully proved up homesteads in all of Arizona Territory, with the earliest not coming until 1878.²³³ By the end of the nineteenth century, however, women were homesteading and participating in the suffrage movement in Arizona in earnest, pushing for their right to own land, and for the right to the vote.

Temperance activist Frances Willard was a homesteader and suffragist leader in Arizona. No, not -that- Frances Willard, though the two are distant relatives. Frances Willard Munds was born Frances Lillian Willard in California in 1866. When she married, she changed her name to Frances Willard Munds, sharing a name with the famous WCTU leader, temperance crusader, and suffragist. Willard's parents moved from California to Arizona when she was a young woman. Though her father died when she was only 13, her mother, Mary Grace Vineyard Willard successfully proved up a homestead in Yavapai County, Arizona, in 1892.²³⁴ Mary's land entry casefile noted that the family homestead had two brick and one frame homes, a stable, a granary, an orchard, a well, a ditch, a chicken coop, and fencing on the 160-acre property, with 35 acres cultivated, and the land used for both farming and grazing, with livestock also grazing on the common domain. Willard estimated her homestead at a valuation of \$4,000.²³⁵ Several of Frances Willard Munds' siblings homesteaded in Yavapai as well, including her brothers and her brother-in-law.²³⁶

Frances Willard Munds, like her namesake, was an active member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. She joined the Arizona Women's Christian Temperance Union and quickly rose through the ranks to the position of corresponding secretary.²³⁷ She worked with Pauline O'Neill, Arizona WCTU President. O'Neill herself was a suffragist leader, and the two went on to campaign for both organizations together.

The Arizona suffrage campaign began in the 1880s when Murat Masterson, a Mormon member of the Territorial legislature from Prescott, introduced a suffrage bill that was voted down 7-3.²³⁸ Arizona suffragists, including Munds, would court Mormon women in the territory to gain their support, knowing that Utah, backed by the LDS Church, had been an early champion of women's suffrage. Munds was elected to the position of corresponding secretary of

²³² Resident Population and Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives, Arizona and New Mexico, 1870. U.S. Census Bureau [newmexico.PDF \(census.gov\)](#) [arizona.PDF \(census.gov\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

²³³ Arizona, 1863-1879 Homestead Patents. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

²³⁴ Mary Grace Willard. Yavapai County, Arizona. Homestead Patent # 283. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=AZAZAA%20014803&docClass=SER&sid=h4bp_hreo.mjg

²³⁵ Ancestry.com U.S. Homestead Records, 1863-1908. Land Entry Case Files: Homestead Final Certificates. Record Group 49: Records of the Bureau of Land Management. The National Archives, Washington D.C. Mary Grace Willard, Township 16 North, Range 3 East.

²³⁶ Willard and Munds. Yavapai County, Arizona. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) and [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

²³⁷ "Women's Christian Temperance Union." *The Weekly Journal Miner* (Prescott, Arizona), January 17, 1899.

²³⁸ Heidi J. Osselaer, *Winning Their Place: Arizona Women in Politics, 1883-1950*, 15.

the Arizona Suffrage Association in 1900, reflecting her experience in that role with the WCTU.²³⁹ Together Munds and O'Neill organized suffrage clubs in 12 of the 14 counties in Arizona, speaking at meetings and events to rally support for the cause amongst the territory's women.²⁴⁰ The campaign seemed poised for a quick victory when, in 1903, a suffrage bill passed both houses of the Territorial legislature with majority support. However, in an unexpected setback, the bill was vetoed by Governor Alexander Oswald Brodie.

In 1909, Munds was elected as the president of the Arizona Suffrage Association, which she renamed the Arizona Equal Suffrage Association.²⁴¹ When Arizona achieved statehood in 1912, Munds saw a unique opportunity. State and national suffrage organizations pushed to have women's suffrage placed immediately on the ballot that year. NAWSA assisted with funds and sent staff to canvass, with Munds contributing both her time and her funds heavily. A proposed amendment to the state constitution asked Arizona voters whether to amend Sections 2 and 15 of Article VII of the Constitution, granting citizens the vote and the right to hold office regardless of sex.²⁴² On November 5, the ballot was tallied – every single one of its counties voted in favor of woman suffrage. The vote was approximately two to one in favor, with 13,442 voting Yes (68.43%) and 6,202 voting No (31.57%).²⁴³ That impressive victory was marred by the passage of voter suppression laws like literacy tests, which prevented many of the Latinx and indigenous populations of Arizona from voting. Some white suffragists supported these literacy tests, just as suffragists in the Midwest sometimes aligned with anti-immigration Nativists, and southern white suffragists promoted the cause as a counterbalance to black voters.

Frances Willard Munds was rewarded for her dedication to the cause of women's suffrage. She was one of two women elected as an Arizona State Senator in November of 1914, one of the first to be elected nationwide. Munds was not one to rest on her laurels. After her victory she addressed the 46th Annual Meeting of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Nashville.²⁴⁴ She also continued in her efforts toward prohibition. On the ballot in November 1914, was the Arizona Prohibition Amendment, which asked voters to determine whether the manufacture, exchanging, bartering, or selling of spirits, ale, beer, wine, or intoxicating liquor should be prohibited. The voters gave a clear mandate – they favored women's suffrage, women's rights, and temperance. Munds was elected, and prohibition voted in. Munds gave an address at the 1915 annual convention of the Arizona Women's Christian Temperance Union as a member of the Arizona state legislature, speaking on the impact suffrage had on the movement since passing in Arizona.²⁴⁵

²³⁹ *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. VI, 10.

²⁴⁰ Osselaer, 21-22.

²⁴¹ Osselaer, 12.

²⁴² Sidney P. Osborn, *State of Arizona. A Pamphlet. Regular General Election*, November 5, 1912, 10. [1912 State of Arizona initiative and referendum publicity pamphlet, Supplemental pamphlet, general election | Arizona Memory Project \(azlibrary.gov\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

²⁴³ Osborn, 10.

²⁴⁴ "Woman Suffrage Association Convention." *Jackson Daily News* (Jackson, Mississippi), November 4, 1914.

²⁴⁵ "W.C.T.U. Puts in Busy Day." *Arizona Republican* (Phoenix, Arizona), April 30, 1915, 7.



Figure 11 - Frances Willard Munds\

Senator Munds commented on her electoral victory, becoming just the second woman state senator in the country.²⁴⁶ She stated, “We believe that we have proved ourselves worthy of the ballot. Women have been earnest in their endeavors to support the best candidate and to work by the right means for the right measures... [our opponents] will be shocked to think of a grandmother sitting in the state Senate.”²⁴⁷

Though Frances Willard Munds was the most prominent homesteading suffragist in the Arizona campaign, she was far from the only one. A substantial number of the Arizona Equal Suffrage Association (AESA) Central Committee, a statewide organization founded in 1912 after the new state’s constitution failed to enfranchise women, had close homesteading ties. Of the 30 members of the committee, at least 8 had direct homesteading ties, including Frances Munds, Angela Hammer, Mrs. E.J. Flannigan, Mrs. J.W. Aker, Victoria Garvin, Elizabeth Layton, Mary E. Farr, and Linda Scott.²⁴⁸ These women were closely bound by their kinship, homesteading, and suffrage networks with one another.

When the AESA sought to advance its arguments championing suffrage, it used newspapers as a central vector – courtesy of Angela Hutchison Hammer. Angela was born in Virginia City, Nevada, in 1870, and came to Arizona in the 1880s with her family.²⁴⁹ She began working as a typesetter and proofreader for the *Phoenix Gazette* and the *Arizona Republican* in the 1890s, before going into business for herself, owning, printing, and publishing the

²⁴⁶ Utah suffragist Martha Hughes Cannon was the first in 1896. Cannon was also a homesteader – it is no coincidence that women homesteaders were joining the suffrage movement and entering politics in the west decades before similar successes in the non-homesteading east.

²⁴⁷ Record Group 99, Arizona State Library, Subgroup 10 – Women’s Suffrage. Frances Willard Munds.

²⁴⁸ List of the committee members provided by “Arizona Equal Suffrage Committee Is Busy on Campaign Before First Legislature Meets.” *Tucson Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona), February 4, 1912, 2. Frances Willard Munds, Angela Hammer, and Victoria Garvin all proved up homesteads in their own name (Garvin listed alongside her husband on their Reclamation Homestead). The others had spouses or direct family members who proved up homesteads, and some had multiple connections. Linda Scott’s father had a Timber Culture claim, her mother purchased land outright, and her husband filed two separate homesteads. Grace Weidman Corl, Acting State Chairman of Arizona, homesteaded a Stock-Raising claim of 638 acres in Santa Cruz County with her husband, Henry L. Corl, successfully proving up in 1922.

²⁴⁹ Angela Hutchinson Hammer Papers (MS012). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries. Box 1, Folder 4, Childhood.

*Wickenburg Miner, Swansea Times, Wenden News, Casa Grande Bulletin and the Casa Grande Dispatch.*²⁵⁰

In addition to being a journalist, Hammer was an active supporter of the suffrage movement. She was a member of the AESA Central Committee, representing the community of Wickenburg, in addition to serving as president of a suffrage club in Wickenburg itself.²⁵¹ She printed pro-suffrage articles and information to promote the cause, and penned her own articles on its behalf, believing that “there can be no better light shining through the darkness than that education through the medium of the influential newspapers.” She corresponded with other local and state leaders, including Frances Willard Munds. Hammer wrote to Munds that “such women as myself... who are taxpayers, and identified with the business life of our commonwealth, have been denied the privilege of a voice in the affairs in which we are so deeply interested.” She requested that Munds send suffrage material to print in her papers.²⁵² In February 1912, an article she wrote entitled “Equal Suffrage and Justice” appeared in the *Tucson Citizen*. Hammer commented that as a citizen and taxpayer, denied the rights of citizenship yet not denied the right to pay taxes, she appreciated Arizona’s new campaign for equal suffrage.²⁵³

In the 1920s, Angela Hammer staked a claim to public land in Pinal County, Arizona. She initially filed for 160 acres under the original Homestead Act of 1862, before adding a quarter-section under the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, for a total of 321 acres.²⁵⁴ Her claim was just south of Casa Grande, filed at the land office in Phoenix. Ironically, her required posting of notice in a local newspaper was placed in the *Casa Grande Bulletin* – a rival paper.²⁵⁵ She successfully proved it up, receiving the patent to the land in July of 1927.²⁵⁶ She also served as a witness for other nearby homesteaders as they proved up.²⁵⁷

The suffrage movement in Arizona received political support at the highest levels, from women homesteaders, and from male allies. George W. P. Hunt was elected Governor of Arizona in the 1914 election that saw Frances Munds join the Arizona State Senate. He commented on the suffrage victory and its results in Arizona. - “Since the women of Arizona were enfranchised, in December 1912, their influence and activity have been potent factors in governmental affairs and in maintaining high standards of citizenship. None of the evils so loudly proclaimed by the opponents of equal suffrage during the campaign of 1912 have become

²⁵⁰ Angela Hutchinson Hammer Papers (MS012). Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries. Box 1, Folder 2, Newspaper Experience, General.

²⁵¹ “Arizona Equal Suffrage Committee Is Busy on Campaign Before First Legislature Meets.” *Tucson Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona), February 4, 1912, 2; “Suffrage Activity on the South Side.” *Arizona Republican* (Phoenix, Arizona), September 23, 1912, 16.

²⁵² Letter to Frances Munds from Angela H. Hammer, February 17, 1910. Record Group 99, Arizona State Library Archives and Public Records, Subgroup 10, Women’s Suffrage.

²⁵³ “Equal Suffrage and Justice: What Women Have Done at the Polls, and While Serving Their States as Jurors.” Angela H. Hammer. *Tucson Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona), February 11, 1912, 4.

²⁵⁴ “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – c. 1955,” Database with images, *FamilySearch*. Arizona, Volume 143, Image 81 of 275.

²⁵⁵ “Notice for Publication, Department of the Interior, United States Land Office.” *Casa Grande Bulletin* (Casa Grande, Arizona), May 14, 1927, 5.

²⁵⁶ Angela H. Hammer. Pinal County, Arizona. Homestead Patent #57119. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

²⁵⁷ “Notice for Publication, Department of the Interior, United States Land Office.” *Casa Grande Bulletin* (Casa Grande, Arizona), November 18, 1922, 2.

apparent since women acquired the right to vote.”²⁵⁸ In fact, Hunt went on to note that “not only have the women electors evinced an intelligent and praiseworthy interest in public affairs, but in at least five or six instances they have assisted in the election of members of their own sex to important public positions... Arizona’s experience with equal suffrage in practice is, most assuredly, vindication of woman’s struggle for enfranchisement.”²⁵⁹ Arizona’s women homesteaders continued to fight for the vote at the federal level, ratifying the 19th Amendment on February 12, 1920.

Utah

Utah holds a unique distinction – Utah women were the first to vote legally, the first to cast ballots in the United States since New Jersey repealed suffrage in 1807. Though it passed women’s suffrage after Wyoming, Utah held multiple elections before Wyoming. However, it was also the first state since New Jersey to revoke women’s suffrage, when it did so in 1887. Women’s suffrage in Utah was initially tied to the Mormon practice of plural marriages. In 1869, Indiana Congressman George Washington Julian introduced a bill “To discourage polygamy in Utah by granting the right of suffrage to the women of that Territory.”²⁶⁰ The bill did not pass, but it was followed by further legislation aimed at the suppression of polygamy - demonstrating that American politicians thought that providing women with increased political rights might lead to the end of polygamy.²⁶¹

Thousands of Utah women gathered throughout the territory to defend plural marriage and protest these “absurd documents, atrocious insults to the honorable Executive of the United States Government, and malicious attempts to subvert the rights of civil and religious liberty.”²⁶² The Utah Territorial legislature defended the practice of polygamy while attempting to navigate the political pressures, electing to legalize woman suffrage immediately. A.O. Smoot, George Q. Cannon, Willard Maughan, and Lorenzo Snow authored a bill, with George Cannon introducing it on February 9, 1870.²⁶³ The Acting Territorial Governor, Stephen A. Mann, signed it into law immediately.²⁶⁴

Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon was uniquely situated at the crossroads of this historical moment. Martha was the fourth wife of Angus Munn Cannon, a homesteader and prominent

²⁵⁸ Statement from Governor George W. P. Hunt, 1915. Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records Record Group 99, Subcollection 10 – Women’s Suffrage, Box 1, Folder 3.

²⁵⁹ Statement from Governor George W. P. Hunt, 1915. Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records Record Group 99, Subcollection 10 – Women’s Suffrage, Box 1, Folder 3.

²⁶⁰ United States; Congress, House. H.R. 64. Washington, D.C., 1869. Accessed October 11, 2023 at [A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875 \(loc.gov\)](#); George Washington Julian features in Chapter Four for the role he, his wife, and his daughter played in the suffrage movement there.

²⁶¹ *The New York Times*. (New York City, New York), Tuesday, February 8, 1870.

²⁶² *The New York Times*. (New York City, New York), Tuesday, February 8, 1870.

²⁶³ Susa Young Gates papers, circa 1870-1933; History of Women Files; Revised Chapters (Chapters 1-60); Chapter L: "Suffrage"; Church History Library, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/0647f059-4e82-4064-9ba4-9ec617fc2d53/0/13>, Accessed October 11, 2023), 13.

²⁶⁴ Susa Young Gates Papers; Chapter L, 13.

leader in the early Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who practiced plural marriage.²⁶⁵ Angus was the younger brother of George Q. Cannon, an LDS leader who introduced the bill for woman suffrage to the Utah state legislature in 1870.²⁶⁶

Martha also spent some time as a typesetter for the *Deseret News* and the *Woman's Exponent*, which was an LDS-supported newspaper published from 1872 to 1914.²⁶⁷ *The Woman's Exponent* was one of Martha's first introductions to women's suffrage, as it was for many women in Utah during the decades it was in print. After being attacked and slandered by the press in eastern states for their tacit support of plural marriages, Mormon women wondered: "Who are so well able to speak for the women of Utah as the women of Utah themselves? It is better to represent ourselves than to be misrepresented by others!"²⁶⁸ Suffragist leader Emmeline B. Wells (whose daughter, Melvina Woods, was active in the suffrage movement in Idaho) was its editor between 1877 and 1914. She prioritized articles about woman's suffrage, women's rights, and feminism in the publication. Emmeline must have taught her children well – her son, John K. Whitney, homesteaded in Utah, and her daughter continued suffrage work in Idaho.²⁶⁹

Martha Hughes attended the University of Deseret (now the University of Utah) as a young woman. She received a medical degree in 1880 and set up a private medical practice in Salt Lake City. In 1884, she married Angus Cannon, the fourth of his six plural wives. By that time, polygamy had been outlawed as a felony by the 1882 Edmunds Act. Called upon to testify against him in the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Cannon v. United States*, she instead self-exiled to Europe.²⁷⁰ During her exile, Congress passed the 1887 Edmunds-Tucker Act. In addition to being anti-polygamy, the law also repealed the vote for Utah women, on the assumption that most Utah women were Mormon, and thus likely to support polygamy.

²⁶⁵ Cannon acquired hundreds of acres of land in Utah under a variety of federal land laws, including 139 acres south of Salt Lake City under the Homestead Act. Cannon received the patent for the land in 1882. Angus M. Cannon. Salt Lake County, Utah. Homestead Patent #1652. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

²⁶⁶ Susa Young Gates papers, circa 1870-1933; History of Women Files; Revised Chapters (Chapters 1-60); Chapter L: "Suffrage"; Church History Library, <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/0647f059-4e82-4064-9ba4-9ec617fc2d53/0/13> Accessed October 11, 2023.

²⁶⁷ Bennion, Sherilyn Cox. "The Woman's Exponent: Forty-two Years of Speaking for Women." *Utah Historical Quarterly* 44 (Summer 1976): 222 – 239.

²⁶⁸ *Prospectus of Woman's Exponent: A Utah Ladies Journal*. Utah State University, Merrill-Cazier Library, Special Collections and Archives, Peter W. Maughan papers, ca. 1848-1892, MSS 037, Box 001, Folder 18

²⁶⁹ Emmeline's son (Melvina's brother) homesteaded 80 acres in Utah, proving up in 1887 - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

²⁷⁰ Constance Lieber, Ed. *Letters from Exile: The Correspondence of Martha Hughes Cannon and Angus M. Cannon, 1886-1888*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1989.

Figure 12 - Emmeline B. Wells, 1879. Image Courtesy of the Church of Latter-Day Saints.



Julia P.M. Farnsworth was another homesteader active in the Utah suffrage movement. She was born in Lehi, Utah, in 1852 to John Murdock and Almira Lott Murdock. Her father acquired hundreds of acres of land from the General Land Office through a variety of land laws, including the Desert Land Act, an amendment of the Homestead Act passed by Congress on March 3, 1877, which sought to encourage settlement and development of arid and semi-arid lands in the western U.S. in the late nineteenth century.²⁷¹ In total, Murdock acquired nearly 1,000 acres of land across several patents in Beaver County, Utah, which he farmed upon for the rest of his life –his daughter Julia would have been introduced to farm life from a young age.²⁷² She married Philo T. Farnsworth, Jr. in 1874, and the two claimed a homestead just southwest of Beaver.²⁷³

Beaver County was a hotbed of suffrage. The community organized a Woman Suffrage Association in the late 1880s, forming alongside the Utah Woman Suffrage Association to bring the vote back to Utah women. Julia P.M. Farnsworth was elected the first president of the Beaver County Woman Suffrage Association. She gave a speech to the meeting, noting that “woman’s

²⁷¹ An Act to Provide for the Sale of Desert Lands in Certain States and Territories. Forty-Fourth Congress, Sess. II, March 3, 1877, 377. [An act to provide for the sale of desert lands in certain States and Territories \(loc.gov\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

²⁷² John R. Murdock. Beaver County, Utah. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#); Murdock was listed in each decennial census from 1860 to 1910 as a farmer.

²⁷³ Philo T. Farnsworth, Jr. is the namesake and uncle of Philo T. Farnsworth, inventor of the electronic television.

suffrage is nothing new in the world... yet its growth has been slow, battling with bigotry and conservatism every step of the way; its travels have been long, tedious, and not always victorious, yet its defeats have all left their effects.”²⁷⁴

At the 1893 Utah NAWSA convention in Salt Lake City, Julia was elected as the Second Vice President of the state chapter, with Emmeline Wells as President and Emily S. Richards as First Vice President. Dr. Martha Cannon served on the executive board.²⁷⁵ Farnsworth presented a paper at the convention entitled “Reasons for Equal Suffrage.” Like Martha Hughes Cannon, Farnsworth also wrote in the *Woman’s Exponent*. In an 1893 article, she addressed anti-suffrage concerns about the “sphere” of a woman, answering those who wondered how mothers could “study politics,” noting “God in giving us our position placed us neither at the head or foot of man, but by his side as companion and wife... though our spheres in life are different, they are none the less important.” She argued that daughters as well as sons needed to be competent, intelligent, and capable – something that returning the equal franchise to Utah would help accomplish.²⁷⁶

Upon her return to Utah after her self-imposed exile following Angus Cannon’s imprisonment in violation of the Edmunds Act, Dr. Martha Cannon fought to regain the vote. She submitted articles to Emmeline Wells’ *Woman’s Exponent*, spoke in public, and participated in local, state, and national suffrage conventions to fight against the injustice against the women of Utah, who exercised the privilege [of the vote] for seventeen years before having it taken away.²⁷⁷ In May of 1893, Dr. Cannon traveled with Emmeline B. Wells, Zina Young, and other LDS Suffragist leaders to the vaunted World’s Columbian Exposition, ongoing in Chicago.²⁷⁸ Cannon had the opportunity to speak on behalf of enfranchising Utah’s women, as well as meeting and networking with other leaders from around the country.

Inspired by the outing, Cannon noted after returning home that “in the enrollment of members in the suffrage cause Utah stands second in the United States [only to] New York...,” and that it was time to “ring the bells, and fire the guns and fling our starry banners out, call *freedom!*” as the statehood campaign gave Utah women the chance to gain back the vote.²⁷⁹ As part of the territorial association of woman suffragists, she met in March of 1895 on behalf of the “thousands of women in Utah who are propertyholders [sic] and taxpayers in their own right,” noting of the many homesteaders that “probably no other state furnishes as large a roll of taxpaying women.”²⁸⁰ The familiar cry of “taxation without representation is tyranny” rang out, reminding the electorate that the women must be “of the people, for the people, and by the people.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁴ Woman Suffrage Association.” *The Woman’s Exponent*. (Salt Lake City, Utah), March 1, 1889, Vol 17. No 19.

²⁷⁵ *The Salt Lake Herald*. “For Equal Suffrage.” Salt Lake City, Utah. October 6, 1893, 2.

²⁷⁶ *Woman’s Exponent*. Salt Lake City, Utah, September 1, 1893, 31.

²⁷⁷ Martha Hughes Cannon. “A Woman’s Assembly.” *Woman’s Exponent*, Vol. 22, No. 15 (April 1894), 114.

²⁷⁸ Emmeline B. Wells Diary, vol. 16; MSS510; Emmeline B. Wells Diaries, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

²⁷⁹ Martha Hughes Cannon. “A Woman’s Assembly.” *Woman’s Exponent*, Vol. 22, No. 15 (April 1894), p114.

²⁸⁰ “Woman Suffragists.” *The Salt Lake Herald* (Salt Lake City, Utah), March 19, 1895, 3.

²⁸¹ “Woman Suffragists.” *The Salt Lake Herald* (Salt Lake City, Utah), March 19, 1895, 3.



Figure 13 - Dr. Martha Hughes Cannon ca. 1887. Image courtesy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Section I, Article IV of the proposed state constitution stated that “The Rights of Citizens of the State of Utah to vote and hold office shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex. Both male and female citizens of this State shall enjoy equally all civil, political, and religious rights and privileges.”²⁸² The constitution was overwhelmingly supported, with 31,305 votes in favor (80.5%) to 7,607 (19.5%) against.²⁸³ When President Grover Cleveland admitted Utah as the 45th state on January 4, 1896, women there regained the vote – and Martha wasted no time putting her enfranchisement to good use.

Martha Hughes Cannon campaigned for a seat in the Utah State Senate in 1896 – running against her own husband, Angus.²⁸⁴ Martha received the Democratic nomination for state senate, and Angus received the Republican nomination. Martha easily defeated her husband, in part because of the influx of support from Utah’s well-developed suffragist network, and in part because of Utah’s strong support of the Democratic presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan, and his Free Silver platform in the 1896 Presidential Election.²⁸⁵ In November 1896, Martha Hughes Cannon became the first woman ever elected as a state senator in the United States – women’s suffrage was back in Utah, for good this time, and winning victories that no other state ever had.

²⁸² Utah Const., Art. IV, S. 1.

²⁸³ Utah Manuscripts Committee and the Utah Statehood Centennial Commission. *Utah’s Road to Statehood*. 1995. [Utah State Constitution](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

²⁸⁴ “Women in Politics.” *The Saint Paul Globe* (Saint Paul, Minnesota) October 25, 1896.

²⁸⁵ “Woman’s Work and Duty.” *The Woman’s Exponent* (Salt Lake City, Utah). November 1, 1896.

Nevada

The Homestead Act of 1862 required cultivating crops or raising livestock for five years before a claimant received the patent, or deed, to their land. It was a difficult task in the best of times and richest of lands – the overall failure rate was almost fifty percent. Completing the requirements to cultivate crops or raise livestock in Nevada’s extreme climate and arid desert landscape for five consecutive years must have been daunting. Like elsewhere in the west, though, the opportunities afforded by the Homestead Act proved enough to entice thousands. Across the state, 4,370 homesteaders successfully proved up 704,100 acres of land – numbers not far off from the much more agriculturally rich state of Iowa (903,000 acres claimed). Like elsewhere throughout the nation, women in Nevada pursued social advancement through landownership and suffrage.

Felice Cohn was an influential lawyer who advocated for the welfare of women. She was born in Carson City, Nevada, in 1878. Her parents were Jewish immigrants, Morris Cohn and Pauline Sheyer Cohn. Morris was a merchant, miner, and rancher.²⁸⁶ An 1886 article in the *Carson City Daily Appeal* mentions Cohn’s ranch in Douglas County, with “4,000 acres of splendid land mostly under cultivation... [a] grist mill in splendid working condition...” with a capacity for 10 tons per day, a dairy station that manufactured “400 pounds of butter every week.” The ranch also had grain fields, hogs, cattle, and horses, with the newspaper noting that the ranch showed what well-managed public lands in Nevada were capable of.²⁸⁷

She began diligently studying to become a legal professional. Cohn was admitted to the Nevada bar, one of the first Jewish women to practice law.²⁸⁸ She understood the importance of land ownership from a young age thanks to her formative years on her father’s ranch. Between the lessons she learned at the family ranch and the influences of the silver mining rush of the Comstock Lode in nearby Gold Hill and Virginia City, her early cases were focused on land and mining claims as an attorney for a local law firm. Cohn worked for U.S. Attorney Sam Platt in 1911.²⁸⁹

Cohn helped establish the Nevada Equal Franchise Society in 1911, serving as “third vice-president” that year.²⁹⁰ She also drafted the text that would become Nevada’s women’s suffrage resolution. The *Carson City Daily Appeal* reported, “by reason of her knowledge of the law...Miss Cohn declared that [women] are greatly handicapped by statutes made for men.”²⁹¹ Cohn sought to promote women’s rights and equality, starting with the right to vote. Cohn also advocated for women to acquire public lands to achieve financial stability and political equality.

²⁸⁶ Advertisements for Morris Cohn’s store appeared in Nevada newspapers *The Pioche Record* and the *Gold Hill Daily News* regularly in 1872 and 1873.

²⁸⁷ “Cohn’s Ranch.” *The Daily Appeal* (Carson City, Nevada), June 25, 1886.

²⁸⁸ White, Janet and Janet Wright, *Featured Historic Nevada Woman: Felice Cohn*, Nevada Women’s History Project News, Volume 11 No. 2, May 2006, 8.

²⁸⁹ White, Janet and Janet Wright, *Featured Historic Nevada Woman: Felice Cohn*, Nevada Women’s History Project News, Volume 11 No. 2, May 2006, 8.

²⁹⁰ “Official Explanation of Steamroller Tactics.” *Reno Gazette-Journal* (Reno, Nevada), March 11, 1913.

²⁹¹ *Carson City Daily Appeal*. (Carson City, Nevada), January 31, 1911. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86076241/1911-01-31/ed-1/seq-1/>

In 1913, Cohn served as the chairwoman of the legislative committee for the Nevada Equal Franchise Society, pushing the suffrage resolution she drafted before the Nevada legislature. Her tenacity and skill ensured that the proposed suffrage resolution passed the House and the Senate near unanimously.²⁹² The resolution was placed on the ballot on November 3, 1914, but not all Nevada homesteading women were in support.

Emma L. Adams organized the Nevada Association of Women Opposed to Equal Suffrage in May of 1914, attempting to quash the efforts of the Nevada Equal Franchise Society.²⁹³ Adams, the wife of former Nevada governor Jewett William Adams, was elected president of the anti-suffrage organization. She pledged to organize Carson City and Reno in “self-defense [against] having the ballot forced upon them” by “their publicity-seeking sisters.”²⁹⁴ Adams aligned with the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) and coordinated to bring leaders of the national organization to stump on behalf of Nevada’s anti-suffrage campaign.

Minnie Bronson, General Secretary for NAOWS, arrived in Reno from Montana to assist in developing the Nevada “anti” campaign in May, and immediately set to work. Bronson took charge of campaigns in Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana, and Nevada, as a wave of suffrage campaigns swept the Great Plains and Western states that year. She predicted that all seven states would go against guaranteeing women the right to vote.²⁹⁵ Emma Adams organized a speaking engagement where Bronson addressed a packed theater in Tonopah in October, just ahead of the election. Interest levels and passions were both high. The *Tonopah Daily Bonanza* reported that “not only was every seat taken, but every available foot of standing room in the rear of the parquet and balcony was occupied.” The *Bonanza* also noted an “altercation” with a group of “socialists” following the engagement. Shortly after the theater closed that evening, the building and several surrounding it went up in flames.²⁹⁶

Somehow while organizing and running this campaign, Adams and her husband found time to pursue homesteading. Jewett Adams received the patent for a 40-acre homestead claim on July 10, 1914. Shortly afterward, Emma filed for a 200-acre claim under the Desert Land Act in Nye County, where her husband held a considerable amount of ranchland.²⁹⁷ She would go on to successfully prove it up in March of 1918.²⁹⁸

As in homesteading states across the country, the vote seemed to come down to whether the rural districts, where Anne Martin, Mae Caine, and the suffragists campaigned, could outvote the

²⁹² *Out West*. The Clash in Nevada: A History of Woman’s Fight for Enfranchisement, August 1914. *Reno-Gazette Journal*, March 11, 1913, 10. The vote passed the House 49-3 and the Senate 19-3.

²⁹³ “They Organize Against Equal Suffrage Plan.” *Reno Gazette-Journal* (Reno, Nevada), May 28, 1914, 5.

²⁹⁴ “Home-Loving Women Forced into Politics.” *Reno Gazette-Journal* (Reno, Nevada), October 17, 1914, 6.

²⁹⁵ In addition to Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana, and Nevada, Missouri and Ohio also had ballot initiatives. Only Montana and Nevada successfully voted in favor, though all those states would provide at least presidential suffrage by 1919. “People Will Vote It Down.” *Reno Gazette-Journal* (Reno, Nevada), September 18, 1914.

²⁹⁶ “Crowded House Applauds Woman Anti-Suffragist.” *Tonopah Daily Bonanza* (Tonopah, Nevada), October 30, 1914, 1.

²⁹⁷ Jewett W. Adams. White Pine County, Nevada. Homestead Patent #578. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and [United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-c. 1955; https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99W3-SYSV?cc=2074276&wc=M7W7-KM9%3A356164201%2C356168901](#)

²⁹⁸ Emma L. Adams. Nye County, Nevada. Desert Land Patent #8962. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

more heavily populated counties where Adams and her “antis” focused their efforts. Washoe County alone cast nearly a third of all the “No” votes in the state. The final tally came out to 10,936 in favor and 7,258 opposed. Nevada joined the tide of homesteading states supporting the vote for women in 1914.

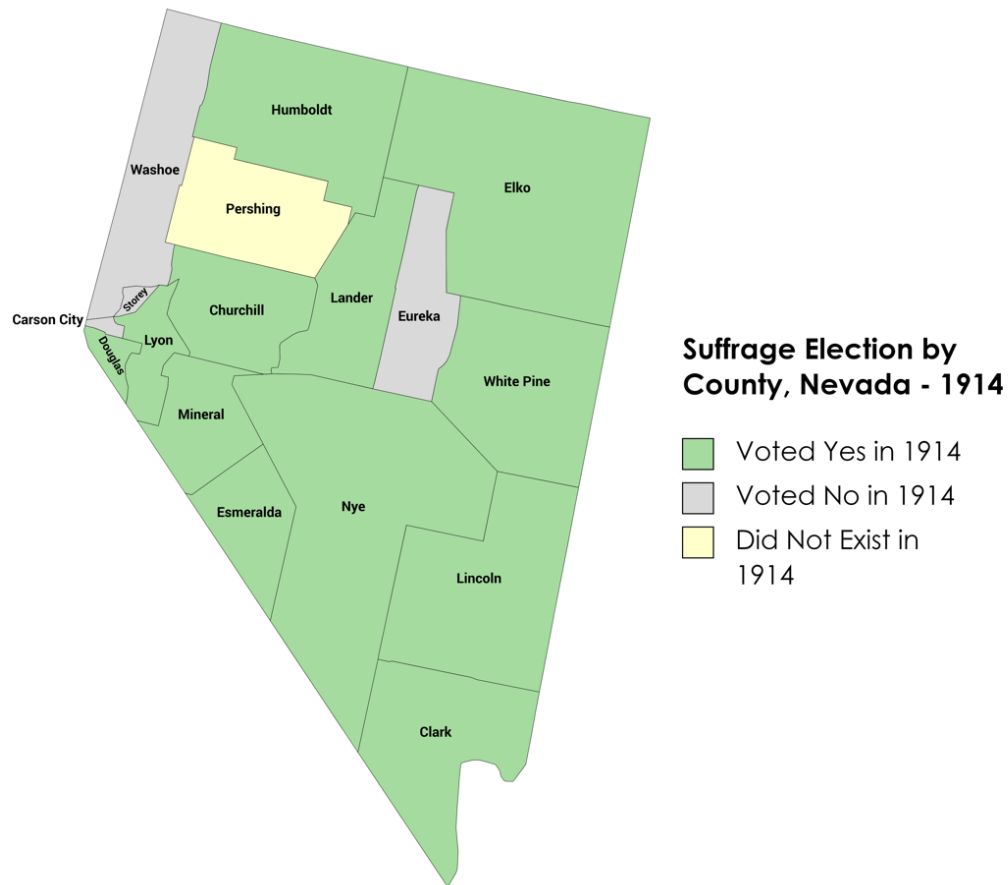
Following this victory, Cohn continued to promote women’s suffrage and women’s rights on a national scale, both as the President of the Nevada Equal Franchise Society and in her capacity as a lawyer.²⁹⁹ Felice Cohn campaigned for the Nevada Senate election of Key Pittman, following his support of equal suffrage (and membership in the Nevada Equal Franchise Society).³⁰⁰ The *Yerington Times* reported she was an active and successful component in his nomination to office.³⁰¹ Pittman endorsed the suffrage movement on a national scale at the 1916 Democratic National Convention in St. Louis, where he gave a speech in favor of adding support for suffrage to the party platform. Pittman proclaimed, “Are you men who are willing to hear women denounced and are afraid to hear a man say something [on] their behalf? I want to appeal to you to give your sisters and daughters and mothers the right to vote.” The convention met his words with “jeers and hisses” and voted against adding it to the platform, 181 ½ to 888 ½.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ National American Woman Suffrage Association Collection. *The Woman Suffrage Year Book*, ed. Martha G. Stapler. New York: National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, 1917. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbnawsa.n7468/?sp=70&q=felice+cohn>

³⁰⁰ “Newlands and Pittman for Suffrage.” *Reno-Gazette Daily* (Reno, Nevada), July 1, 1913.

³⁰¹ *Carson City Daily* (Carson City, Nevada) *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*, Library of Congress, Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86076241/1916-06-27/ed-1/seq-4/>

³⁰² “Convention Harmony Is Upset by Clash Over Suffrage Plank.” *The Washington Post*, Washington., D.C. June 17, 1916.



Map 7 - Suffrage Election by County, Nevada – 1914. Template courtesy of MapChart.net, map by author.

Undeterred by the hostility, Cohn and Pittman continued to work together on their shared goals. In November of 1916, she led a political debate defending the Pittman Underground Water Act at the Rink Theatre in Yerington, Nevada to a “fair crowd”.³⁰³ This bill was tremendously significant for homesteaders in the Southwest as it was designed for “turning 18 million non-productive acres... into fertile [soil].”³⁰⁴ Many of the millions of acres open to homesteading in the Southwest were dry and arid, and without access to water and irrigation would have been difficult to farm successfully. These public domain lands often did not have stable and reliable water sources. The introduction of Pittman’s bill sought to help with this major homesteading dilemma and passed in 1919. The *Eureka Sentinel* reported that all land which contained any form of irrigation had already been occupied by desert entries or homesteaders.³⁰⁵ The act

³⁰³ *Yerington Times*. (Yerington, Nevada.), November 11, 1916. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. Accessed October 11, 2023, at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86076216/1916-11-11/ed-1/seq-5/>

³⁰⁴ *Carson City Daily Appeal*. (Carson City, Nevada), October 31, 1919. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. Accessed October 11, 2023, at <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86076241/1919-10-31/ed-1/seq-2/>

³⁰⁵ *The Eureka Sentinel*. (Eureka, Nevada), May 10, 1919. Accessed October 11, 2023 at *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86076201/1919-05-10/ed-1/seq-1/>

authorized the Secretary of the Interior to issue special land permits for “exclusive rights to drill for subsurface water on the tract” to further promote homesteading in Nevada.³⁰⁶

Cohn had a strong relationship with the General Land Office and the Department of the Interior. She promoted and assisted in the distribution of lands throughout the west, which at times meant her work involved the dispossession of Indian lands in favor of homesteading settlement. In 1917 Felice served as an assistant superintendent of public sales of Indian lands. During her time in Montana that year, she stated, “I have met women all over Montana who are doing the work of men and doing it well... my work takes me to many of the land offices of the state. You would be surprised to know how many young women are proving up on homesteads and are making over raw lands into good producing farms. And this is a matter of federal record.”³⁰⁷

Even in the heat of Nevada, those young women set to work proving up on homesteads to create good producing farms. Mae Caine (Mary E. Griffin) was born in Elko County, Nevada, in the 1870s to James and Maria Griffin. Mae married her husband Edwin E. Caine in Utah in the 1890s, before homesteading on the Nevada-Utah border. They successfully proved up two claims, one in 1914 for 73 acres, and one in 1921 for 80 acres.³⁰⁸

Mae was active in the suffrage movement in Nevada – she was nominated for President of the Elko County Suffrage Society in May of 1912, resulting in her “unanimous election.”³⁰⁹ Having homesteaders in the movement in Nevada was critical – in 1910, the statewide population of only 82,000 was spread out over an area roughly the size of New England, so rural farmers were key to promoting the cause outside of cities and towns. She also served as a vice-president of the Nevada Equal Suffrage Franchise Society, attending the state conventions in preparation for the 1914 campaign to grant Nevada women the right to vote.³¹⁰ There she met members of the National American Woman Suffrage Association visiting from New York. Caine participated in the annual NAWSA convention held from November 29 to December 5, 1914, in Washington, D.C. She was one of six delegates representing Nevada to bring the state into the fold as one of the last remaining states in the far west.³¹¹ At the previous annual meeting, suffragists observed that Nevada, as a state with no voting rights for women, appeared on maps in black, surrounded by states in white that had granted women the vote. Mae Caine sought to erase this “black spot on the map.”³¹²

³⁰⁶ “History of Water Development in the Amargos Desert Area: A Literature Review.” *NUREG-1710*, Vol. 1 (February 2005). U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste. Washington, D.C. <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML0511/ML051110144.pdf>, 36. Accessed October 11, 2023.

³⁰⁷ “Montana Indian Land Sales Superintended by a Woman.” *The Conrad Independent* (Conrad, Montana), December 20, 1917.

³⁰⁸ Both patents were issued to Caine as the assignee on behalf of others; James G.B. Van Brunt; and Bird Baxter and Boston Jones (alias Meeks), respectively. Edwin E. Caine. Elko County, Nevada. Homestead Patent #901 and #3850. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

³⁰⁹ “Equal Suffrage Meeting.” *Daily Independent* (Elko, Nevada), May 17, 1912.

³¹⁰ “Equal Franchise Progress.” *Yerington Times* (Yerington, Nevada), March 14, 1914; *The History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. VI, 387.

³¹¹ “Pioche Lady Honored.” *The Pioche Record* (Pioche, Nevada), November 29, 1913.

³¹² *The History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. VI, 387.



Figure 14 - National American Woman Suffrage Association Records, Courtesy LOC

Thanks to the efforts of women like Felice Cohn, the daughter of Jewish-American immigrants, and the hard work of women homesteaders like Nevada homesteader Mae Caine proving up on lands Cohn helped make available, Nevada successfully passed women's suffrage in 1914. Not satisfied with uplifting just her little corner of the world, Felice continued to strive for women's rights, including the vote, and property ownership, through her work with the General Land Office and the Department of the Interior.

New Mexico

Only one homesteading state west of the Missouri River did not pass women's suffrage prior to ratifying the Nineteenth Amendment – New Mexico. That is not to say that there was not an active suffrage movement there, just that the social and cultural intricacies of New Mexico in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were very different from most of the rest of the United States. Following the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the US-Mexican War, Mexico ceded territory in California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico to the United States. Most of the population in those annexed areas elected to remain in the newly created American territories and receive American citizenship. However, the cultural and ethnic differences between the Indigenous, Hispanic, and Anglo-American residents of the Territory of New Mexico, as well as geographic isolation, led to delays in statehood – multiple proposals failed, and Progressive Era reform efforts that may have otherwise been directed at the suffrage

movement remained dedicated to statehood for longer than elsewhere in the West.³¹³ Even so, there was an active local suffrage movement, with both local grassroots and national elements, including Latinx leaders and Anglo-Americans who had moved to the New Mexico Territory after the US-Mexican War.

Ada McPherson Morley was one such Anglo-American suffragist in the New Mexico Territory, arriving in the 1870s. She was born in Winterset, Iowa, in 1852 to Marcus McPherson and Mary Elizabeth Tibbles.³¹⁴ Marcus purchased 320 acres of land in nearby Cass County in 1858 before relocating the family to Council Bluffs by 1870.³¹⁵ Ada attended Iowa State University as one of the first women to attend the new university. Iowa State University was established by the Morrill-Land Grant Act of 1862, which created institutions across the country to provide instruction in agricultural and mechanical arts. The Morrill Act was part of the Lincoln Administration's efforts in encouraging rural settlement and development.³¹⁶ Ada met Ray Morley during her time at Iowa State, an engineer and surveyor who worked for the Kansas Pacific Railway as it expanded rail lines through Colorado before going north to Wyoming and south to New Mexico.³¹⁷ Ada and Ray married, relocating to a ranch in New Mexico in the early 1870s. They had three children, Agnes Morley Cleveland (who herself became a rancher, suffragist leader, and author), William, Jr., and Ada.

The Morley family moved to Cimarron, New Mexico, amid the so-called "Colfax County War," one of the many "Range Wars" in the American West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These range wars were conflicts between homesteaders, ranchers, railroad, logging, mining interests, and prior Latinx and indigenous claims to the land. Disputes over rights to public domain lands, water rights, and grazing rights often turned violent. William's work with the railroads dragged him into the conflict - William Morley was shot in the head and killed in 1883.³¹⁸

³¹³ For more on the early history of the New Mexico Territory, see Marta Weigle, ed. *Telling New Mexico: A New History*. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2009; or Warren Beck's *New Mexico: A History of Four Centuries*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962.

³¹⁴ 1860 U.S. Census, Winterset County, Iowa.

³¹⁵ Marcus McPherson. Cass County, Iowa. Cash Sale Patent #9674. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) and 1870 U.S. Census, Pottawatomie County, Iowa.

³¹⁶ Miller, Darlis A. *Open Range: The Life of Agnes Morley Cleaveland*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010, 4.

³¹⁷ Miller, 5.

³¹⁸ "William R. Morley in Memoriam." *The Las Vegas Gazette* (Las Vegas, New Mexico). January 7, 1883.



Figure 15 - Ada McPherson Morley. Image courtesy of Palace of the Governors.

Upon William's death, Ada took over management of the family ranch in Datil, on the Catron-Socorro County line.³¹⁹ She extended the ranch through the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, adding 320 acres, issued in her name.³²⁰ Despite doubtlessly staying busy with the hard work a ranch required, Ada found time to participate in the temperance and suffrage movements. In March of 1888, Ada Morley Jarrett made the trek to Washington, D.C., to represent the Territory of New Mexico in the inaugural meeting of the International Council of Women (ICW).³²¹ The ICW met from March 25 to April 1, 1888, and was organized by Susan B. Anthony, Frances Willard, and temperance and suffrage leaders from across the world. She worked to aid Socorro County "to hasten the day when saloons will be a thing of the past, conscientiously believing that abolition of the rum shops will do more for the redemption of men and women than any other one missionary effort."³²²

Ada also appeared before the territorial legislature to secure appropriations for public education in New Mexico. After succeeding in that task, she addressed the dedication of the first public school in Santa Fe in 1891. Ada Morley Jarrett spoke in support of the vote for women.³²³

³¹⁹ Ada M. Morley. Catron County, New Mexico. Enlarged Homestead Patent #1015542. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

³²⁰ The patent was issued posthumously – the land was awarded "to the heirs of Ada M. Morley" in 1928, years after her death.

³²¹ "The Southwest." *Albuquerque Journal* (Albuquerque, New Mexico), March 30, 1888.

³²² Ada Morley-Jarret. "The Temperance Cause." *Albuquerque Journal* (Albuquerque, New Mexico), March 6, 1889.

³²³ "How the Wind Blows." *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), September 20, 1891.

She was appointed as a superintendent of the New Mexico franchise of the WCTU in 1891, as the WCTU moved more in line with the goals of suffrage in the late nineteenth century.³²⁴

As they grew up, Ada's children assisted her with the tasks of proving up a homestead and running the ranch successfully. Her daughter Agnes Morley Cleveland followed her mother's lead, both in ranching and in participating in the suffrage campaign in California and New Mexico. Agnes attended Stanford University, where she took part in the first ever intercollegiate women's basketball game on April 4, 1896. The team captain, Stella McCray noted of the moment "We shall take great satisfaction in having introduced the game and made women's athletics recognized."³²⁵ Agnes served as the Treasurer for the Woman's Athletic Association, launching her into leadership roles for the women's rights movement in California, just ahead of the first ballot for suffrage there.³²⁶ During the 1911 California campaign, Morley worked as an Associate Editor for the *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, which advocated on behalf of the proposed equal suffrage amendment as "The Gazette for Equal Suffrage."³²⁷

By the early 1900s, the discourse of woman's suffrage had spread throughout the nation. Previous generations of suffragists were often seen as "radical" by those not in support – many women were outright anti-suffragists. However, following the turn of the century, more and more Americans supported the cause. *Holland's Magazine*, a general women's magazine published between 1876 and 1953, sponsored an essay contest in May 1913 on the topic. Holland's had a long tradition of supporting social change and reform causes, and had a sister publication, *Farm and Ranch*, specifically geared towards agriculture.

A "Mrs. R. Bedichek" responded to the essay contest: "I am a plain country woman, once a schoolteacher, just now a wife and mother and homesteader in a pleasant little valley in New Mexico. I never in my life was a member of a woman's club nor am I well known as a suffragette or in any other way. I am just a plain woman – but I want to vote."³²⁸ That Mrs. R. Bedichek was Lillian Greer Bedichek, wife of Roy Bedichek.

In a letter Roy wrote to Lillian when they were still courting, he described the homestead – "there is a tremendous underflow of water here which can be pumped profitably. In time [the] land will be worth money... I went out eight miles into the aforesaid sage brush and mesquite and filed a homestead and desert claim (320 acres). I had six months in which to get on this land."³²⁹ He borrowed money to dig a well and put up a twelve foot by fourteen foot shack before proposing to Lillian, beseeching his future mother-in-law that his lands in Luna County would subsist the family, but confided in Lillian, "I couldn't afford to keep a pony, so I sold him, and I walk eight miles night and morning to my [homestead]. There are cracks in my shack that

³²⁴ *Minutes of the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union at the Eighteenth Annual Meeting*, Volume 18. Chicago: Woman's Temperance Publishing Association, 1891. 222.

³²⁵ Captain M'Cray's Views. *The San Francisco Examiner* (San Francisco, California), April 4, 1896.

³²⁶ Women Athletes. *The Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, California), September 30, 1896.

³²⁷ "The Gazette for Equal Suffrage." *The Berkeley Daily Gazette* (Berkeley, California), October 7, 1911.

³²⁸ *Holland's Magazine* (Dallas, Texas) May 1913.

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/suffrage/comesofage/hollands-essays.html> Accessed October 11, 2023.

³²⁹ Bedichek, Jane Gracy and Roy Bedichek. *The Roy Bedichek Family Letters*. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 50.

you can throw a cat through.³³⁰ Despite that glowing review, Lillian and Roy married in 1910. Though they ended up relinquishing the Desert Land Act claim, they acquired the patent to their homestead entry in 1913.³³¹ Lillian and Roy were second-generation homesteaders. Roy's parents, James and Lucretia Bedichek, settled in Luna County, New Mexico, as did Roy's sister Una.³³²

The couple was interested in social reform, including women's suffrage, and both engaged in educational efforts and articles to help champion those causes. Lillian wrote a piece on the injustice of sharecropping and its use in economic oppression, especially of poor Black and Latinx farmers in her home state of Texas. She remarked, "the man or woman who doesn't own land stands a good chance of being the slave of the man who does... when we got our homestead patented, we could sit down on it and live, and snap our fingers at the big interests. We could do without most of the things we could not produce ourselves or barter from our neighbors."³³³ Lillian Bedichek, that "plain country woman," understood that land ownership was vital to economic independence.

Latina suffragist Adelina "Nina" Otero-Warren also homesteaded in New Mexico. Otero-Warren spent her life negotiating between Hispano, Anglo, and American Indian worlds. Born to a wealthy Hispano family in New Mexico in 1881, Nina's father, Manuel B. Otero, was shot and killed by an Anglo squatter who moved onto her family's land when she was a young girl.³³⁴ Her family then moved off into Santa Fe but engaged in a protracted legal battle over the land, led by her mother Eloisa Luna, and her uncles and cousins. In 1907, Adelina took homesteader James Carlisle to court, contesting his claim. Her own previous family claim dated to a land grant from King Charles IV of Spain, during the Spanish colonial period, for more than a million acres.³³⁵ Nina herself experienced legal battles with Anglo-Americans over a land ownership. She filed for 159.44 acres of land in Torrance County, New Mexico under the Authority of March 3, 1891 – Small Holding Claims (26 Stat. 1095).³³⁶ In 1907, Adelina took homesteader James Carlisle to court, contesting his claim.

One of Adelina's cousins, Manuel R. Otero, served as the register of the U.S. Land Office at Santa Fe, New Mexico – perhaps a position he sought after the frustration and pain of his family experiences with land disputes, and wanting to see justice done in the distribution of lands to others. Manuel Otero served as the register of the land office from 1897 to 1912, where he

³³⁰ Bedichek, 43.

³³¹ Roy Bedichek. Luna County, New Mexico. Homestead Patent #347025. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955." Database with images, FamilySearch. New Mexico, Volume 173, Image 156 of 226, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

³³² Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. James and Lucretia Bedichek. October 17, 1917. Luna County, New Mexico. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

³³³ Lillian Bedichek. "Editorials." *The Twentieth Century Magazine*, Vol. 7, October 1912, 73.

³³⁴ National Park Service. "Nina Otero-Warren." Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www.nps.gov/people/nina-otero-warren.htm>; Whaley, Charlotte. *Nina Otero-Warren of Santa Fe*. Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2007, 183.

³³⁵ "Local Gossip." *The Estancia News* (Estancia, New Mexico), May 24, 1907.

³³⁶ Nina Otero. Torrance County, New Mexico. Small Tract Patent #221646. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

oversaw the proving up of thousands of homestead claims and other land transfers.³³⁷ One of the patents his land office issued during his tenure was Adelina's small holding claim of 160 acres, granted in 1911, following a resolution to the lengthy legal battles. Several of her relatives received claims as well, but they remained a far cry from the massive holdings the family once possessed.³³⁸ The experiences of Nina and her family led the Oteros to understand the importance of social and political power in relation to personal and political rights, spurring Nina into politics and in the suffrage movement.

Shortly after, Nina became active in politics and the suffrage movement. A group of New Mexico women organized a state chapter of the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage in October of 1915, to work towards the Susan B. Anthony amendment.³³⁹ Otero-Warren was appointed to the executive committee of the new chapter, and she set to the task with gusto. She traveled to Albuquerque with E. St. Clair Thompson to assist with efforts in preparing for the state suffrage convention, and the upcoming Congressional Union "Suffrage Special" – a cross-country train tour across the Homestead states to rouse the cause.³⁴⁰

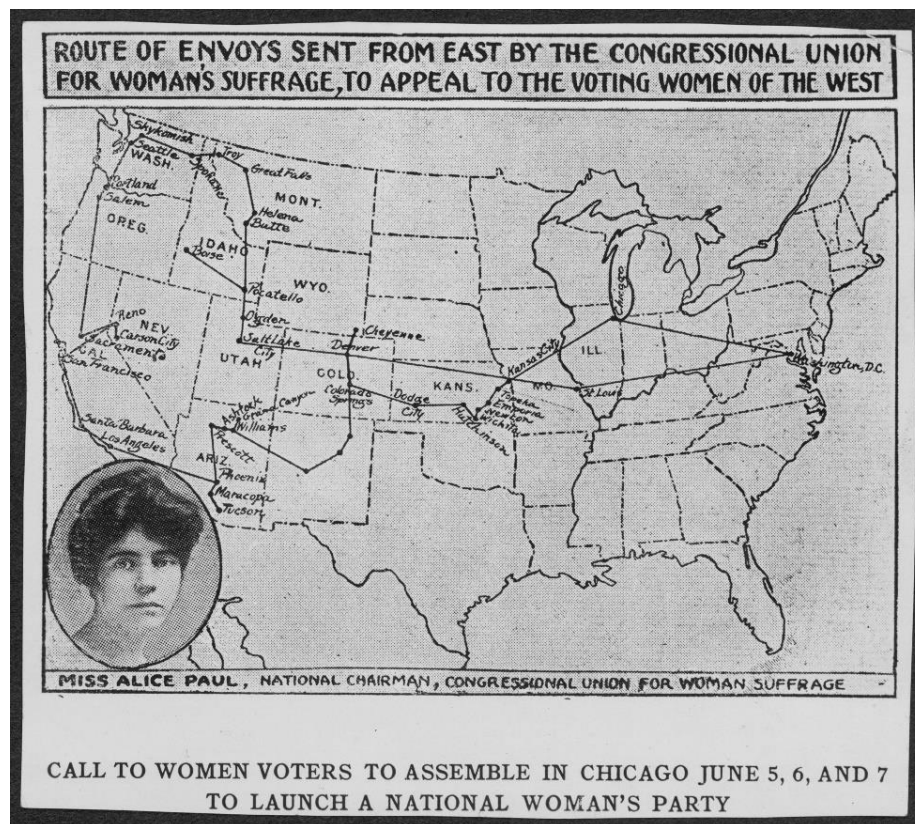


Figure 16 - Congressional Union "Suffrage Special." 1916. Courtesy of Library of Congress

³³⁷ Antonio Lucero. *The New Mexico Blue Book*. Santa Fe: New Mexico Secretary of State, 1915, 15

³³⁸ Both Nina and Edward Otero were awarded 160-acre small holding claims. Homesteader James Carlisle did successfully prove up on an adjacent 48-acre tract. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

³³⁹ "A Local Branch of the Woman Suffrage Union is Organized." *The Santa Fe New Mexican* (Santa Fe, New Mexico), October 19, 1915.

³⁴⁰ "Personals." *The Santa Fe New Mexican* (Santa Fe, New Mexico), February 16, 1916.

Her efforts caught the attention of Alice Paul, who had just founded the Congressional Union in 1913 with Lucy Burns.³⁴¹ Paul and other leading suffragists knew of the importance of Hispanos in winning suffrage in New Mexico. Paul felt that Nina made an ideal leader, chose her to lead the New Mexico Congressional Union chapter. Otero-Warren had all suffrage material published in both English and Spanish. She supported Carrie Chapman Catt's concept of the "Winning Plan" to secure suffrage through a federal amendment, stating, "If we are going to get suffrage, it seems to me that it will be by a federal amendment. I favor the Susan B. Anthony amendment, and I think the present legislature can help the suffrage cause best by passing a resolution calling on New Mexico's members of congress to vote for the amendment."³⁴² Senator Andrieus A. Jones was elected as one of New Mexico's senators in 1916 and was named as chair of the Committee on Woman Suffrage. He scheduled votes on the Susan B. Anthony Amendment to the Constitution, and on June 4, 1919, the amendment passed the Senate 56 to 25, with Jones casting a vote in favor – beginning the race to ratification.

Though New Mexico did not pass a state suffrage bill, it did ratify the Nineteenth Amendment on February 21, 1920 – several months ahead of its nationwide adoption. When the New Mexico Republican legislative caucus met in 1920, Nina set a precedent for the state in recognizing women in politics – she participated in the caucus as the state chair of Republican women.³⁴³ After the suffrage victory, and several years of serving in public office at the county level, she pursued a higher political office. In 1921, she campaigned for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming the first Latina to run for Congress.³⁴⁴ Though she won the Republican nomination in the primary election, she was defeated by Democrat John Morrow, falling short by fewer than 10,000 votes.

In the early 1930s, Nina turned once again to a family member serving as the register of the Santa Fe land office – her widowed mother's new husband, Alfred M. Bergere. Bergere found adjacent sections of land for Adelina and her longtime friend and business partner Mamie Meadors, homesteaded, both establishing a ranch under the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916 a few miles outside of Santa Fe.³⁴⁵ Each claimed just short of 640 acres of land for their homestead, just outside of the Pueblo of Tesuque tribal lands. The ranches, which bordered each other, were affectionately named "Las Dos" (The Two Women). They settled as part of a group of friends and associates which called themselves "los Pobladores" (The Settlers). Los Pobladores claimed nearly 9,000 acres of public domain land, and Adelina and Mamie

³⁴¹ National Park Service. "Dr. Alice Paul." Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www.nps.gov/people/alice-paul.htm>

³⁴² "Leading Women of Cause Give Opinions About Ways and Means," *The Santa Fe New Mexican* (Santa Fe, New Mexico), January 17, 1917, 3.

³⁴³ "Society Divided Between Advent of Suffrage and Lent." *Albuquerque Morning Journal* (Albuquerque, New Mexico), February 22, 1920.

³⁴⁴ National Park Service. "Nina Otero-Warren." Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www.nps.gov/people/nina-otero-warren.htm>

³⁴⁵ Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. Adelina Otero Warren. September 6, 1935. Santa Fe County, New Mexico. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

successfully proved up in September of 1935.³⁴⁶ Nina spent much of her life battling for her rights – standing up to injustices perpetrated against her family in a land dispute and standing up to the injustice of women not having an equal say in American democracy.



Figure 17 - Adelina (Nina) Otero-Warren. Courtesy of Library of Congress

³⁴⁶ “Santa Feans Take Up Claims.” *Las Vegas Daily Optic* (East Las Vegas, New Mexico), March 25, 1930.

Chapter Three: Planted in the Soil: Homesteading and Suffrage Across the Great Plains:

Nine of the thirty homesteading states (30%) had at least a quarter of their total land area claimed by homesteaders. These nine states make up most of the Great Plains: Nebraska (45% of the state's total acreage, 104,260 total homesteads), North Dakota (39%, 118,472), Montana (34%, 151,600), Oklahoma (34%, 99,557), Colorado (34%, 107,618), South Dakota (32%, 97,197), Wyoming (29%, 67,315), Kansas (25%, 89,945), and New Mexico (25%, 87,312).³⁴⁷ These nine states are all west of the Missouri River, where most states passed at least Presidential suffrage prior to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Of the Great Plains states, only New Mexico did not pass a suffrage bill. It is no coincidence that the states most heavily homesteaded were also the states leading the way to women's suffrage in the United States.

While married women often are not always reflected in the records of married men's homesteading paperwork filed at the local land office in the land records and case files, wives played a critical role in the success of homesteads. "Proving up" a homestead over five years was difficult for any individual, and the extra labor a partner could provide was invaluable. Their work included "domestic tasks": food preparation, gardening, tending to clothing needs, providing medical care, and raising a family.³⁴⁸ Mari Sandoz, daughter of the notorious Nebraska Sand Hills homesteader "Old Jules" Sandoz, noted the importance of a wife on a homestead: "Nothing happened after she arrived that did not vitally touch her. Particularly important was her place in accident or sickness, with doctors so few and far between... when drought and hail and wind came, it was the housewife who set as good a table as possible from what remained and sustained the morale of her family."³⁴⁹

However, women were not just homesteading "behind-the-scenes" as partners and spouses. The Homestead Act of 1862 was a gender-neutral piece of legislation tied to the growing women's rights movement. That movement pushed for increased recognition and acceptance of a wide range of rights for women, including the right to own land. Many women saw the Homestead Act as the ideal way to acquire property.

The Homestead Act recognized women's property rights, opening settlement to any head of household over twenty-one. Women homesteaders were an emblem of the suffrage movement's goals embodied. Historians have found that women represent around ten percent of all homestead claims, significantly increasing around the turn of the twentieth century. A recent study by Richard Edwards, Jacob Friefeld, and Rebecca Wingo on homesteading women in Nebraska found that forty percent filed, completed their requirements, and proved up entirely on

³⁴⁷ "State by State Numbers." Homestead National Monument of America. Accessed October 11, 2023 at <https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/statenumbers.htm> With the exception of Texas and the Canadian prairies in Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, the entirety of the Great Plains fell under the Homestead Act of 1862 – and were heavily settled under that law.

³⁴⁸ Richard Edwards, Jacob K. Friefeld, and Rebecca S. Wingo. *Homesteading the Plains: Toward a New History*, 130.

³⁴⁹ *Homesteading the Plains*, 130.

their own, either as single or widowed women. Another twenty-five percent of women proved up after becoming widowed.³⁵⁰ Both single women and widowed women took advantage of this new opportunity for property ownership, in Nebraska and across the United States. These women homesteaders sought to pursue the benefits and rights long associated with property-owning citizens in the United States – including the vote.

Nebraska

Nebraska and homesteading were nearly synonymous. The first individual to claim a homestead anywhere in the country was Daniel Freeman, when he claimed 160 acres of land in Gage County, Nebraska, on January 1, 1863 – the first day the law took effect.³⁵¹ Nearly half of the state was claimed and settled by homesteaders, the highest percentage total of any state.³⁵² Mary Myer, a neighbor of “First Homesteader” Daniel Freeman, had an important first of her own – the first woman across the country to claim land under the Homestead Act, on January 20, 1863.³⁵³ She was an immigrant from Baden, Germany, with her husband Philip. They settled briefly in Wisconsin, before relocating to the Nebraska Territory by 1860. When Philip’s untimely passing left Mary a widow, and the legal head of household, she took advantage of the newly passed Homestead Act to claim the land they had been “squatting on” in her own name. Her daughter Theresa, and her son-in-law Joseph Graff settled on an adjoining parcel. Freeman served as a witness to Myer’s claim, the first homesteader assisting the first woman homesteader to prove up. She did so on September 1, 1869.

Myer’s homestead land entry case file notes that she built a 16 by 16-foot one story house with a shingle roof and board floors, as well as a corral, a corn crib, chicken coop, dug a well, cultivated 35 acres of land, and planted fruit trees and grape vines.³⁵⁴ Homesteading as a single individual was difficult and labor intensive for anyone, regardless of gender – kinship ties and neighbors were tremendously important in aiding in proving up a claim. Myer’s son-in-law assisted her with some of the manual labor of building the house and outbuildings, planting and harvesting, and proving up the claim, and the 1870 census reflects that she paid \$150 in wages that year to agricultural laborers on the farm. That year, her farm was valued at more than \$3,500 – a substantial sum at the time. Her farm also had seven milk cows, eight pigs, and other livestock valued at more than \$500, and she grew several hundred bushels of wheat and corn – all in all she was a prosperous farmer, and doubtless one of the most successful, if not the most successful woman farmer in Gage County in 1870.³⁵⁵ Though others in Nebraska received homestead deeds on that same day, not a single person received a patent earlier than September 1. In a sense, she was not only the first woman homesteader nationwide to claim land but tied for

³⁵⁰ *Homesteading the Plains*, 138.

³⁵¹ Homestead National Historical Park is located on the site of Daniel Freeman’s “First Homestead” claim.

³⁵² Approximately 102,600 homesteaders were successfully proved up in Nebraska, for 22,000,000 acres – 45% of the total land available in the state.

³⁵³ In total, Mary Myer received 240 acres of public domain land: 160 acres from the Homestead Act of 1862 (issued on September 1, 1869) and 80 acres purchased in 1866. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Mary Myer. September 1, 1869. Gage County, Nebraska. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

³⁵⁴ Mary Myer. U.S. Homestead Records, 1863-1908. Land Entry Case Files: Homestead Final Certificates. Record Group 49: Records of the Bureau of Land Management. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³⁵⁵ 1870 U.S. Census. National Archives and Records Administration Microfilm T132. Washington, D.C.

the first to “prove up” as well, all in her own name. It is only fitting that Nebraska, home of the first homesteader, and first woman homesteader, had many women homesteaders – many of whom were also leaders in the suffragist and temperance movements, and played a crucial role in the passage of suffrage in the state.

One of the most prominent leaders of the suffragist movement in Nebraska was Mary E. Smith Hayward, who lived near Chadron, in Dawes County. Chadron is in the far western portion of the state, an area referred to as the Nebraska Panhandle. Western Nebraska was heavily settled under the Homestead Act, as well as the Nebraska-specific Kinkaid Act of 1904.³⁵⁶ The town of Chadron evolved as a commercial hub for homesteaders and ranchers, especially after the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad went through the town. Born in Pennsylvania in 1842, Mary struck off for Nebraska on her own, and arrived in Chadron in the 1880s. She claimed 160 acres of land, taking advantage of the Homestead Act to claim the land as a pre-emption. She initially filed her claim in 1886 before buying it out and receiving the patent to the land in 1890.³⁵⁷ Perhaps she chose to buy out her claim when she married William F. Hayward of Chadron. Both had pending claims, which they both successfully finished in their own names. However, the laws surrounding married homesteaders receiving multiple independent parcels, one for each spouse, changed over time. By purchasing their existing claims, William and Mary ensured that each would receive their land instead of having to forfeit one of the two claims.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ The Kinkaid Act of 1904 was named for its sponsor, Nebraska’s congressional representative Moses Kinkaid. The law allowed prospective homesteaders in the arid lands of the Nebraska Sandhills and surrounding areas to claim 640 acres of public domain land, rather than the previous limit of 160 acres under the original Homestead Act of 1862.

³⁵⁷ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Mary E. Smith. January 16, 1890. Chadron County, Nebraska. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) ; “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – c. 1955,” database with images, FamilySearch. Nebraska, Volume 60, Image 68 of 275. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C. <https://familysearch.com/ark:/61903/3:1:3QST-89WE-9RMX?cc=2074276&wc=M&WQ-VMQ%3A356162701%2C356193601>

³⁵⁸ Dawes County, Nebraska Marriage Records. Series 3, Vol. A, 1886 – 1890, 140.



Figure 18 - Mary E. Smith Hayward, Nebraska Homesteader and Suffragist Leader. Image courtesy of A Woman of the Century.

Mary Smith Hayward owned land and went into business for herself, as the owner and operator of a dry goods store, the M.E. Smith & Co. Building, constructed in Chadron in 1890.³⁵⁹ Her years as a landowner and businesswoman influenced her to join the suffrage cause, both in Nebraska and nationwide. Hayward was aware of the common suffragist rallying cry protesting “taxation without representation.” Property taxes in Nebraska were instituted by the territorial legislature even prior to statehood. In 1895, she refused to pay her taxes in protest of women being unable to vote, reasoning that if she had no representation, then surely, she owed no taxes. Her efforts were reported in the *Women’s Journal*, founded by Lucy Stone, and edited by Alice Stone Blackwell and H.B. Blackwell: “Mary Smith Hayward, of Chadron... one of the leading merchants west of Omaha, made a spirited protest this year against paying her taxes.”³⁶⁰

She served as president of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, and as a state member of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Hayward addressed the 32nd Annual NAWSA convention, held in February of 1900 in Washington, D.C.³⁶¹ Other Nebraska

³⁵⁹ United States Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places. Nebraska SP Chadron Commercial Historic District, October 5, 2006. Record Group 79: Records of the National Park Service, 1785-2006. Accessed October 11, 2023 at [Nebraska SP Chadron Commercial Historic District \(archives.gov\)](https://www.archives.gov/landmarks/nebraska-sp-chadron-commercial-historic-district)

³⁶⁰ *The Woman’s Journal* (Boston, Massachusetts), April 6, 1895.

³⁶¹ National American Woman Suffrage Association. 1900. *Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the National Woman Suffrage Association at the Church of Our Father, Washington, D.C.* February 8-14, 1900. Retrieved from the Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbcmiller001364/> Accessed October 11, 2023.

women spoke fondly of the impact that Mary Smith Hayward had on the movement in the state, nothing that she “furnished more to the cause of equal suffrage than any other Nebraskan,” and that “any time Chadron was asked by the association to do anything, Chadron did it – because of the influence of Mrs. Hayward.”³⁶²

Mary participated as one of the Nebraska delegates in the famous 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, D.C. She carried the suffrage banner with Mamie Mildred Claflin, president of the Nebraska WCTU chapter.³⁶³ Scheduled for the day before President Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration, thousands upon thousands of suffragists gathered to march down Pennsylvania Avenue, in a procession organized by the National American Woman Suffrage Association and Alice Paul.³⁶⁴



Figure 19 - Official Program, Woman Suffrage Procession, Washington, D.C. March 3, 1913 / Dale. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.

³⁶² “Lincoln Pioneers in Suffrage Field Recall Seventy Years Struggle in Nebraska for Equal Rights of Sex,” *The Lincoln Star* (Lincoln, Nebraska), July 27, 1919.

³⁶³ “Today’s Events,” *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), March 13, 1913.

³⁶⁴ To read more on the 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession see [1913 Woman Suffrage Procession \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/1913-woman-suffrage-procession) Accessed October 11, 2023.

The parade aimed to bring attention to the proposed Susan B. Anthony amendment, or a federal amendment to grant suffrage to all women across the country. The demonstration was incredibly well attended, with an estimated crowd of at least 250,000 people along the route.³⁶⁵ It marked the endgame of the movement, as homesteading states, and women homesteaders such as Mary E. Smith helped push suffrage into the mainstream, with a renewed focus on a federal approach now that the western, Great Plains, and midwestern states had nearly universally adopted votes for women.

Mary Smith Hayward may have been one of the most prominent Nebraska woman homesteaders in the suffrage movement, but she was far from the only one. Mamie Claflin, who joined Hayward at the 1913 parade to carry the Nebraska banner, was also a suffragist tied to the Homestead Act. Mary M. Perkins was born to Richard and Jennie Perkins in Kentucky in 1867. The family migrated from Kentucky to Hall County, Nebraska to claim a 160-acre homestead in the spring of 1873, when Mary was just a young girl.³⁶⁶ Her father had volunteered to fight for the Union Army in the Civil War, where he served in the 23rd Kentucky Infantry, and claimed land under the 1872 Soldiers and Sailors Homestead Act, which provided homesteads to soldiers and sailors, as well as their widows or orphaned children.³⁶⁷ The homestead Mary grew up on had a modest fourteen by twenty-four foot sod house, shared by her parents and her three other siblings.³⁶⁸

Mary (Mamie Claflin, after her 1886 marriage to Jason L. Claflin) was active in the temperance movement in Nebraska. The 1910 Census listed her occupation as “Editor – Temperance Paper.” Claflin edited the *Union Worker*, the state temperance paper, from 1898 until 1912 before being elected as President of the Nebraska WCTU chapter in 1912, a position she held until 1918.³⁶⁹

Other Nebraska suffragist homesteaders include Frances B. Heald. Frances married homesteader John P. Heald, who homesteaded 82.96 acres near Osceola, in Polk County, Nebraska.³⁷⁰ She was politically very active, at both the local and the national level. Frances was the President of the Nebraska Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and in 1915 was elected to be a member of the national committee. Like many women in Progressive America, she made the transition from prohibition of alcohol into supporting Women’s Suffrage. She also appears on the NWSA’s roster as presiding over the Osceola chapter in the early twentieth century – both suffragists and the WCTU found the liquor industry as enemies in their shared causes of

³⁶⁵ “1913 Woman Suffrage Procession,” Belmont-Paul Women’s Equality National Monument, [1913 Woman Suffrage Procession \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/1913woman/) Accessed October 11, 2023.

³⁶⁶ “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books. 1800-1955.” Database with images, *FamilySearch*. Nebraska, Vol. 13, Image 67 of 251. Records Improvement. Bureau of Land Management. Washington, D.C.

³⁶⁷ Ancestry.com U.S. Homestead Records, 1863-1908. Provo, UT. Washington, D.C. The National Archives at Washington, D.C. Homestead Final Certificates, 1869-1893; *Records of the Bureau of Land Management*, RG49.

³⁶⁸ Ancestry.com U.S. Homestead Records, 1863-1908. Provo, UT. Washington, D.C. The National Archives at Washington, D.C. Homestead Final Certificates, 1869-1893; *Records of the Bureau of Land Management*, RG49.

³⁶⁹ “Prominent W.C.T.U. Leader Dies Sunday,” *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), December 2, 1929.

³⁷⁰ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. John Heald. April 5, 1877. Polk County, Nebraska. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](https://www.blm.gov/land-patent-search/)

progress. Heald continued that legacy. *The Lincoln Daily Star* reported on March 2, 1911, that “[Mrs. Frances B. Heald] said that the government of her hometown, Osceola, showed a lack of power that might be wielded by women. She read a set of resolutions, condemning the legislators and others who have said that the women of this state are not interested in and working for equal suffrage. The resolutions were referred to the resolutions committee,” helping make Nebraska one of the states to pass women’s suffrage prior to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.³⁷¹ Indeed, Polk County was at the vanguard of homesteading suffrage in Nebraska, as we will see further in Chapter Five.

The WCTU had been firmly entrenched in Nebraska politics for decades at this point, including in rural, heavily homesteaded areas throughout the state. Frances, in Polk County, was the president of the state chapter, but members fought for the cause all over Nebraska. Blaine County is in the Nebraska Sandhills, a region which stretches over nearly 20,000 square miles. It is the largest sand dune formation in the Americas, and an area in which the acreage provided under the original Homestead Act of 1862 was inadequate to successfully prove up homesteads. The Kinkaid Act of 1904 allowed homesteaders to claim up to 640 acres instead – a full square mile. The region remains sparsely populated: Blaine County today is the sixth least populous county in the nation. Still, the region had a strong WCTU and suffrage representation. The WCTU published a poem in 1888 in language that women homesteaders and the wives of male homesteaders would well understand:³⁷²

Sowing, Reaping.

I know my hand may never reap its sowing,
And yet some others may,
And I may never even see it growing,
So short my little day.
Still must I sow, though I go forth weeping
I cannot, dare not stay.
God grant a harvest though I may be sleeping
Under the shadows gray.

With people so few and far between on the ground, having the support of women homesteaders was critical to the success of the community. Members of the WCTU in Brewster in Blaine County circulated a petition which received 27 signatures – more than 10% of the

³⁷¹ “Mrs. Heald Speaks.” *The Lincoln Star* (Lincoln, Nebraska), March 2, 1911.

³⁷² “Sowing, Reaping.” *Fremont Tribune* (Fremont, Nebraska), May 9, 1888.

entire precinct.³⁷³ The entire population of Blaine County in 1890 was only 1,146 – with more than 900 homestead entries filed in the county.³⁷⁴ Signatories on this WCTU petition included Elizabeth S. Brewster (née Barton), her husband, George W. Brewster, and their three children: daughter Mollie L. Brewster, and sons William F. Brewster and Benjamin A. Brewster. Brewster, seat of Blaine County, was named in honor of George W. Brewster as the “first homesteader” in the county. George and his family were homesteaders and active participants in the suffrage movement, as this petition illustrates. While Blaine County did not exist during the 1871 and 1882 statewide votes on suffrage, in the 1914 vote Blaine said “Yes” on giving Nebraska women the vote, 196 to 144.³⁷⁵ Likewise, Polk County said “Yes” on women’s suffrage in 1882, one of only a handful of counties to do so. It went in favor again in 1914 – the central and western homesteading counties of Nebraska showed a strong support of women’s suffrage, as will be explored further in Chapter 5.

While the homesteading vanguard in Nebraska, increasingly trending westward, based on the pattern of settlement there, suffragists in Nebraska had homesteading ties nationwide. Dr. Inez C. Philbrick was an active member of the Nebraska suffrage movement, and a daughter of Civil War veteran and homesteader Philetus H. Philbrick and Malah Brackett, born in 1866.³⁷⁶ Her family moved often in her younger years – her father was a professor of engineering at Iowa State University before taking a position as a railroad surveyor with the Watkins, Kansas City, and Gulf Railroad in Kinder, Louisiana.³⁷⁷ Philetus claimed a homestead near Kinder, successfully proving it up and receiving the patent for 167 acres of land on August 8, 1892.³⁷⁸ The family returned to Lincoln, Nebraska, where Dr. Inez Philbrick started practicing medicine and became active in the suffrage movement.

Philbrick first got involved with the Nebraska suffrage movement in the 1890s, addressing the state’s annual suffrage convention in 1897, where she was named the

³⁷³ History Nebraska. MS1072 Nebraska Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Petition for Municipal Suffrage for Women. January 15, 1889. “Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910. Statistics for Nebraska.” Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913, 574. Accessed October 11, 2023. <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-ne.pdf>

³⁷⁴ General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management - <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/results/default.aspx?searchCriteria=type=patent|st=NE|cty=009|aut=251101|sp=true|sw=true|adv=false#resultsTabIndex=0&page=1&sortField=6&sortDir=0> The wave of homesteaders proving up in 1890 reflects the creation of the county in 1885. Many claimants had two claims of approximately 160 acres each, as the Enlarged Homestead Act allowed up to 320 total acres to be claimed – those who only had 160 could make another claim to reach the full amount allowed under the new law, passed in 1909.

³⁷⁵ Vote By Years on Constitutional Amendment for Extension of Suffrage, Lists. MS1073 Series 3, Box 1, Folder 3 – Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association - History Nebraska. Lincoln, Nebraska.

³⁷⁶ Publications relating to Women’s Suffrage; Broad sides, pamphlets, and memorabilia relating to women’s suffrage. Series 2, Box 1, Folders 5 and 6, RG1058.AM Inez Celia Philbrick. History Nebraska. Lincoln, Nebraska.

³⁷⁷ “Soldier’s Land Grant Leads to Kinder’s Creation,” *The Kinder Courier News* (Kinder, Louisiana), January 27, 2000. Accessed October 11, 2023.

³⁷⁸ Philetus Philbrick homesteaded 167 acres in Kinder, Louisiana. He also acquired many other tracts of land in the area – more than two dozen purchases of federal public lands, mostly on July 3, 1890. As a railroad surveyor, he stood to profit off purchasing the land at the government minimum rate before selling it. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Philetus H. Philbrick. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955.” Database with images. *FamilySearch*.

Superintendent of Domestic Science for the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association.³⁷⁹ Her role allowed her to reach a wide number of would-be suffragists - She worked to organize events, annual conferences, and campaigns over the next several years, before becoming the President of the Lincoln Equal Suffrage Association, the Nebraska Equal Suffrage Association, and the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association in the early 1900s.³⁸⁰

South Dakota

The state of South Dakota, like Nebraska and so many of its neighbors, had a long history of women's suffrage being brought to vote. Suffrage amendments appeared on the ballot six times in South Dakota, starting in 1890, before finally being approved in 1918.³⁸¹ South Dakota was one of the most heavily homesteaded states, with a total of 97,197 homesteads proved up on 15,660,000 acres of land – approximately one third of the entire state.³⁸² Many of those homesteaders were women tied to the suffrage movement: women who homesteaded in their own name (Elizabeth Corey), women who came to the Territory with their families to settle (like Matilda Joslyn Gage or Alice Pickler), or women who either homesteaded themselves, or grew up on a homestead, before participating in the suffrage movement (Dr. Cora Smith Eaton and Emma Smith DeVoe).

Alice M. Alt was born on November 17, 1848 near Iowa City, Iowa to Joseph and Elizabeth Alt, who had purchased a 78-acre of government land from the General Land Office to start a family farm that same year.³⁸³ Alice attended Iowa State University as a young woman, where she met Civil War veteran Major John Pickler. The two married on November 16, 1870, bouncing around the Midwest for several years before joining a rush of homesteaders to the Dakota Territory in the early 1880s.³⁸⁴ The couple filed on a 160-acre homestead claim just west of Faulkton, in Faulk County, successfully proving it up and receiving the patent on December 15, 1888.³⁸⁵ The Picklers also purchased a quarter section and filed a Timber Culture Claim, a public land law similar to the Homestead Act, but dedicated to planting trees across the Great

³⁷⁹ "Women in the Conference." *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), October 2, 1897.

³⁸⁰ "Mere Mention." *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), November 22, 1899, 6; "Today's Events." *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), October 17, 1904, 6.

³⁸¹ South Dakota voted on woman's suffrage in 1890, 1898, 1910, 1914, 1916, and finally in 1918 it was passed by a vote of 49,318 to 28,934. It's six appearances on the ballot tie with Oregon for the most votes on woman's suffrage prior to being approved by the electorate. Accessed October 11, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140516220654/http://sdsos.gov/elections-voting/assets/BallotQuestions1890-2010.pdf>

³⁸² "Homesteading in South Dakota." *Homestead National Historical Park*. [Homesteading in South Dakota - Homestead National Historical Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/hnhp/) Accessed October 11, 2023.

³⁸³ Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. Joseph Alt. March 1, 1848. Johnson County, Iowa. https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=IA1100_364&docClass=STA&sid=ihxjub3g.z4m

³⁸⁴ Doane Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, Vol. II (1904), 1618.

³⁸⁵ Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. John A. Pickler. December 15, 1888. Faulk County, South Dakota. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=IA1100_364&docClass=STA&sid=ihxjub3g.z4m)

Plains. Through their various claims, they quickly amassed around 500 acres of land, all while participating in creating a vibrant community in Faulkton, which was not even platted until after they arrived.³⁸⁶

Alice and John were integral to the early women's suffrage movement in South Dakota. John Pickler was elected to the territorial legislature, where in 1885 he introduced a bill which would grant full suffrage to the women of Dakota Territory. It passed the House by a vote of 29 to 19 but was vetoed by Governor Gilbert A. Pierce. Later that same year both attended the annual convention of the American Woman Suffrage Association held in Minneapolis, to share their efforts. The convention reaffirmed its dedication to the notion that "taxation without representation is tyranny," acknowledging the increasing number of women homesteaders, and resolving to promote a statute to Congress guaranteeing women's suffrage in territories.³⁸⁷

Major Pickler, in addition to being a homesteader and supporter of the suffrage movement along with Alice, has a further unique connection to the homesteading story – and it seems he took the call to promoting women's suffrage in the territories very seriously. Just three years after the conference in Minneapolis, John Pickler traveled to Indian Territory by the order of the Secretary of the Interior, John Willock Noble, as a special inspector.³⁸⁸ Pickler was to oversee the opening of the territory to homesteaders on April 22, 1889 – what has since become known as the first of the Oklahoma "Land Runs" and ensure that participants obeyed the law, waiting to settle until the territory was officially opened.³⁸⁹ John Pickler also ran a local land office back in South Dakota.

Elizabeth Corey, a twenty-one-year-old, single woman from Marne, Iowa, moved to Stanley County, South Dakota in July 1909. Seeking the benefits of homesteading, she applied as soon as she was legally able to. Even though proving up a homestead was difficult for any single individual, "Bachelor Bess" never married. She endured the same hardships most homesteaders faced, especially financial ones. She wrote back hundreds of letters to her family, chronicling her experiences, including her financial independence, property ownership, and observations and goals regarding the vote. She must have been quite in earnest - her letters convinced her brother, Henry Fuller Corey, to file a homestead adjacent to hers the following year.³⁹⁰

She had to maintain a job as a teacher, "working out" off the homestead to bring in extra money, delaying her proving up by more than two years. She acknowledged the difficulty, writing in 1911: "My how I wish I could stay out on the claim this summer – this working out feeling the way I do is like sandpapering one's fingers clear to the bone."³⁹¹ In 1913 "Bachelor

³⁸⁶ The earliest patents for Faulk County were issued in November of 1884 as cash sales. The first homestead patents were issued two years later. A total of 1,150 homestead patents were issued in Faulk County from 1886 to 1917. Given that the county population in 1920 was around 6,500 people, a sizable percentage of Faulk County residents were either homesteaders or the family members of homesteaders.

³⁸⁷ "National Suffragists," *The Saint Paul Globe* (Saint Paul Minnesota), October 15, 1885.

³⁸⁸ Noble and Pickler had served together in the Civil War, in the 3rd Iowa Cavalry.

³⁸⁹ "Letter Written by General Noble Tells of Opening," *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), April 18, 1915.

³⁹⁰ "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955," Database with images, FamilySearch. Dakota Territory, Volume 167, Image 123 of 149, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

³⁹¹ Letter to Margaret Corey, May 14, 1911, 142, as in Alicia Skipper, *Women Write the U.S. West: Epistolary Identity in the Homesteading Letters of Elinore Pruitt Stewart, Elizabeth Corey, and Cecilia Hennel Hendricks*. (Arizona State University, 2010), 146.

Bess” lamented that she would “have to teach next year or get married.”³⁹² Despite the difficulty, Corey found homesteading to be fulfilling and rewarding. She filed a second claim in 1915, after the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 increased the total acreage available to claim up to 320 acres.³⁹³

Like many homesteading women, Bess became concerned with suffrage after joining the ranks of propertied Americans – perhaps upon realizing she was unable to vote on crucial financial issues like property taxes.³⁹⁴ In a November 1912 letter to her mother (Margaret M. Corey), young Elizabeth writes “Say, I’ve changed my politics. I’m going to work for ‘Woman’s Suffrage’ tooth and nail and then I’m going to have ‘em make a law.”³⁹⁵ She even wrote attempting to recruit other women to the cause: “Say ma, you know there is eighty acres east of me and a hundred twenty east of Fuller. Do you suppose Aunt Hat and Aunt Rae would care to file?”³⁹⁶ Elizabeth Corey persisted independently, never married, and successfully proved up her first claim in December of 1916, and her second claim in August of 1919, joining the ranks of landed homesteader women engaging in the suffrage movement.³⁹⁷

In 1916, the “Citizens of Lawrence County” sent a petition to Congress calling for a “bill to submit an amendment to the federal constitution granting to women the right of suffrage.”³⁹⁸ Nellie Spindler (nee Farnham) was one of the signatories to that petition. Nellie and her husband Willis C. Spindler were both from Edgerton, Ohio, where their parents were farmers. They continued the family agricultural legacy, striking off to South Dakota to homestead in the Black Hills. They received their patent to 37.43 acres in 1909. Nellie’s eighteen-year-old daughter Wanda was also a signatory to the petition – these women demonstrated the powerful link between homesteading and suffrage. Nellie took an increased role in managing the family ranch and finances after a 1912 episode in which two con men in Denver waylaid him and defrauded him of \$1,100.³⁹⁹ Nellie had “gone to his rescue,” and prevented the gang from taking even more of the family’s money. Willis was “anxious” over the affair for years afterwards. That anxiety

³⁹² Letter to Margaret Corey, March 4, 1913, 217, as in Alicia Skipper, *Women Write the U.S. West: Epistolary Identity in the Homesteading Letters of Elinore Pruitt Stewart, Elizabeth Corey, and Cecilia Hennel Hendricks*. (Dissertation. Tempe: Arizona State University, 2010), 146.

³⁹³ “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955,” Database with images, FamilySearch. Dakota Territory, Volume 167, Image 123 of 149, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

³⁹⁴ Alicia Skipper, *Women Write the U.S. West: Epistolary Identity in the Homesteading Letters of Elinore Pruitt Stewart, Elizabeth Corey, and Cecilia Hennel Hendricks*. (Arizona State University, 2010), 146.

³⁹⁵ *Bachelor Bess*, Letter from Elizabeth Corey to Margaret Corey, November 10, 1912, 205.

³⁹⁶ *Bachelor Bess*, Letter from Elizabeth Corey to Margaret Corey, January 28, 1912, 174.

³⁹⁷ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Elizabeth Corey, Stanley County, South Dakota.

(<https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=556720&docClass=SER&sid=mpbj1rff.i0d>)

³⁹⁸ The petition had one other grievance, calling for “federal censorship of motion picture films, to prevent the use of immoral pictures.” Petition to Congress from the Citizens of Lawrence County, South Dakota; 1916; Petitions and Memorials, Resolutions of State Legislatures, and Related Documents which were Presented, Read, or Tabled during the 65th Congress; (SEN64A-K9); Petitions and Related Documents That Were Presented, Read, or Tabled, 1789 - 1966; Records of the U.S. Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives Building, Washington, DC. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/lawrence-south-dakota>, October 11, 2023].

³⁹⁹ “Spindler May Be in Trouble,” *The Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times* (Deadwood, South Dakota), March 2, 1912.

manifested itself most severely in 1919, when he feared being taxed off his farm. He attempted to take his own life and was declared insane, leaving Nellie to manage the ranch.⁴⁰⁰

Oscar Micheaux was an African American homesteader. Like many Black homesteaders, his parents Calvin and Belle Michaux were born enslaved, in Kentucky. They moved across the Ohio River to Illinois, where Oscar was born in 1884. His family grew wheat and corn, increasing their holdings from 40 acres to 80.⁴⁰¹ Micheaux worked odd jobs in and around Chicago, including as a Pullman porter, allowing him to travel the country. As he traveled the nation on a Pullman, he felt his family's farm roots drawing him back – the prairie called to him.

Black Homesteaders understood better than anyone the implications of landownership and political and social freedoms and rights. The Emancipation Proclamation, which like the Homestead Act was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln, declared “that all persons held as slaves.... Are, and henceforward shall be free.” The proclamation established the total abolition of slavery as a Union war goal and put African Americans on the road to citizenship. The Thirteenth Amendment, ratified in 1865, officially abolished slavery in the United States. The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, provided that all persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens of the United States – providing citizenship to African Americans. The Fifteenth Amendment gave the vote to African American men (but not women).⁴⁰² After the Civil War and Emancipation Blacks sought to build new lives, provide for their families, educate their children. They especially sought to own their own land and realize their long-denied dreams of working their own farm. They knew how to farm and saw the land as their way to support themselves and their families. Most importantly, they saw land ownership as central to their freedom and equality in the United States. Black Homesteaders were pulled by the promise of land. But they were also pushed by the bitter agony of the suffering of slavery.

Oscar Micheaux traveled to South Dakota in 1904 to participate in a lottery run by the General Land Office to distribute homesteading lands on the Rosebud Reservation.⁴⁰³ However, with more than 100,000 claimants for only 2,400 parcels of land, he was not able to obtain one directly in the lottery drawing. Micheaux hired a land locator for \$80 and purchased a relinquished homestead in Gregory County for \$375 – nearly a year's salary as a porter.⁴⁰⁴ Micheaux's experiences as a homesteader are recorded for posterity by his own hand. He wrote two novels about his experiences: *The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer* (1913) and *The Homesteader: A Novel* (1917). In 1919, he adapted these novels into a film, becoming the first

⁴⁰⁰ “Attempts Suicide. Income Tax Statement Drives Willis Spindler to Mental Imbalance,” *The Lead Daily Call* (Lead, South Dakota), March 18, 1919.

⁴⁰¹ *Black Homesteaders in the Great Plains*, 42.

⁴⁰² Many white women suffragists were deeply upset when the Fifteenth Amendment failed to provide the vote for women along with African American men. It led to a split in the major suffrage organizations. Many white female suffragists, especially in southern states, would later use race and race relations as a reason to grant white women the vote as a “counterbalance” to Black voters.

⁴⁰³ *Black Homesteaders in the Great Plains*, 42.

⁴⁰⁴ *Black Homesteaders in the Great Plains*, 43. Oscar Michaux. Gregory County, South Dakota. Cash Sale Patent #681. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

known African American filmmaker and director. Though *The Homesteader* (1919) is considered today to be a “lost film”, it launched Micheaux’s career: over 30 years he made more than 40 films, and his work has been preserved by the Library of Congress and the National Film Registry as “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant.”

In his 1921 film *Within Our Gates* Micheaux observed the challenges that African American suffragists faced – rejection and often hostility from white suffragists on the grounds of race. He introduced the character Geraldine Stratton, a wealthy southern white woman who opposed granting women the vote on the grounds that women suffrage would also enfranchise black women. This attitude was no Hollywood invention – many suffrage activists embraced tenets of racism and nativism: male and female, northern and southern.

Though the suffrage and temperance movements had initially grown out of the same transatlantic discourses of abolitionism, American suffragists in the mid-nineteenth century were divided following the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. The American Equal Rights Association, led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Frederick Douglass, and Henry Blackwell, amongst others, was formed to “secure Equal Rights to all American citizens, especially the right of suffrage, irrespective of race, color, or sex.” Adherents of that movement, such as George Washington Julian, utilized the language of universal rights (his Resolution for Equal Voting Rights, was a proposed 1868 constitutional amendment that would allow “all citizens of the United States, whether native or naturalized” to vote “without any distinction or discrimination whatever founded on race, color, or sex.”).⁴⁰⁵ Yet when the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed African American men the right to vote, while denying suffrage to all women, many women felt betrayed. The AERA dissolved in 1869, with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton creating the National Woman Suffrage Association, and Lucy Stone organizing the American Woman Suffrage Association. They sought whatever political choices might lead to women’s suffrage, even if it meant abandoning coalitions and alliances built over years.

Frederick Douglass responded to this sense of outrage, declaring that for Black Americans the vote “is a matter of life and death... when women, because they are women, are hunted down... when they are dragged from their houses and hung upon lamp-posts; when their children are torn from their arms... when they are the objects of insult and outrage at every turn; when they are in danger of having their homes burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot equal to our own.”⁴⁰⁶ Oscar Micheaux’s films captured some of that sense of urgency, illustrating the challenges that Black Americans and homesteaders, including suffragists, experienced in Jim Crow America in the early twentieth century.

⁴⁰⁵ *History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives*, “Resolution for Equal Voting Rights,” 40th Congress, December 8, 1868. https://history.house.gov/Records-and-Research/Listing/lfp_045/ (Accessed October 11, 2023.)

⁴⁰⁶ Frederick Douglass, “We Welcome the Fifteenth Amendment.” American Equal Rights Association Annual Conference, New York, New York, May 12, 1869.



Figure 20 - Oscar Micheaux (Center), Homesteader, Suffrage Supporter, and First Black Director. Image Courtesy of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

North Dakota

North Dakota very nearly granted suffrage while still a territory. In 1872, the Dakota Territorial Legislature came within a single vote of enfranchising women. The increased era of suffrage activity coincided strongly with the period of homesteading settlement in the state – the “Great Dakota Boom” began in 1878, as homesteaders began flooding into the territory, and lasted until approximately 1887. High levels of homesteading continued through the early twentieth century. Though the state only ever had one ballot on whether to grant women the vote, in 1914, the suffrage movement was heavily active from the early 1880s through the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Matilda Joslyn Gage was, in her time, one of the most prominent abolitionists and suffragists in America. She was born in Cicero, New York in 1826 to abolitionist parents Hezekiah and Helen Joslyn, whose home was a stop on the Underground Railroad.⁴⁰⁷ She

⁴⁰⁷ Angelica Shirley Carpenter. *Born Criminal: Matilda Joslyn Gage, Radical Suffragist*. (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2018), 12.

attended the 1852 National Women's Rights Convention in nearby Syracuse, giving a speech to the assembled audience. From that moment, she began her rise in the suffrage movement, cofounding the National Woman Suffrage Association with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1869. Along with those two women she also co-authored the first three volumes of the *History of Woman Suffrage*, a massive undertaking chronicling the history of the movement throughout the United States, spanning thousands of pages. Gage's efforts to promote and publicize the feminist movement in America also spread to journalism. She was also the owner and primary editor of *The National Citizen* (formerly) *The Ballot Box*, a monthly suffrage journal which circulated from 1876 to 1881.⁴⁰⁸

In the 1880s, Matilda Gage relocated with her adult children to the prairies of North Dakota – her daughter Julia gave homesteading a go with her spouse, James D. Carpenter, and her other daughter Maud married a young man named L. Frank Baum, who would go on to write a book influenced by the radical feminism of his mother-in-law: *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.⁴⁰⁹

The Dakota Territory immediately after Matilda's arrival was embroiled in a heated debate over women's rights under the new constitution – whether to include the word “male” or not. Gage penned an open letter to the Women of the Dakota Territory addressing gender, women's rights, and homesteading in Dakota Territory, noting the high number of single or widowed women homesteaders, stating that “many women are settling in Dakota. Unmarried women and widows in large numbers are taking up claims here, and their property is taxed to help support the government and the men who make these iniquitous laws.”⁴¹⁰ Gage railed against that taxation without representation for the women of Dakota acquiring property under their own names, yet without the vote to have a say in how they were spent.

Gage further attacked the system which forbade married women from entering a homestead claim and kept women from having a legal right to the land except in the event of her husband's passing. Gage wrote,

“By the United States law, only “the head of the family” is allowed to enter lands – either a preemption, homestead, or tree claim. In unison with the United States, the law of Dakota recognizes the husband as the head of the family... neither has she any claim upon any portion of this land the husband, as head of the family, may take, except the homestead, in which she is recognized as joint owner... Upon proving, her husband may at once sell, or deed it away as a gift, and she has no redress. It was not hers. The law so declares, but she is her husband's, to the extent that she can be thus used to secure 160 acres of land for him, over which she has no right, title, claim, or interest... Every woman in Dakota should be

⁴⁰⁸ The Ballot Box Collection (1876-1881). 1876.002.001. *The National Woman's Party*. [The Ballot Box \(name changed to the national Citizen in 1878\) - 1876.002.001 \(pastperfectonline.com\)](#)

⁴⁰⁹ James D. Carpenter successfully proved up a Timber Culture claim in Lamoure County, North Dakota in 1895. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. James D. Carpenter. January 2, 1895. LaMoure County, North Dakota. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴¹⁰ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, and Matilda Joselyn Gage. *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. III. (Rochester: Charles Mann Printing Company, 1886), 664.

immediately at work... it should be the effort of the women of Dakota to prevent the introduction of the restrictive word “male” [in the proposed constitution.]”⁴¹¹

Her address to the leaders of the Territory brought Dakota women to the verge of victory – in 1885, Major John Pickler introduced a suffrage bill which passed the House and the Council before being vetoed by the Governor. Matilda Joslyn Gage strongly opposed the unification of the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association in 1890 to create the National American Woman Suffrage Association. After the merger Gage resigned her position in protest. Gage passed away in 1898, with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who both outlived her, seemingly having taken steps to erase Gage’s legacy.⁴¹² But though Gage passed prior to either her birthplace of New York, or North and South Dakota passing women suffrage, her legacy lived on in the minds of women homesteaders in Dakota who she inspired, in the well-researched pages of the *History of Woman Suffrage*, and as a major inspiration and influence in L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*.

Kate Selby Wilder was a suffragist and temperance supporter in North Dakota. Kate was born on January 23, 1876, in Pennsylvania. When she was just a child, her parents, William A. and Adelia Watson Selby, joined the Great Dakota Boom by staking a homestead claim in Traill County.⁴¹³ William filed his claim under the Soldiers and Sailors Homestead Act, by virtue of his service during the Civil War, and received the patent on August 3, 1882.⁴¹⁴ Shortly after proving up the land, the family moved into Grand Forks, a major hotbed of social reform movements in North Dakota. Adelia Selby was a member of the WCTU there, which doubtlessly introduced young Kate to both temperance and suffrage issues. She also gained an appreciation of land ownership, as she worked in the office of the register of deeds in Grand Forks, eventually rising to the rank of chief clerk.⁴¹⁵

By the early twentieth century, Kate Selby Wilder had joined various women’s clubs, networking and building connections amongst like-minded women. During her time as President of the Young Woman’s Club of Fargo, she recruited other young women into the WCTU, and facilitated rail travel to a WCTU convention in Portland, Oregon.⁴¹⁶ In 1912, North Dakota suffragists urged the organization of a campaign in favor of a suffrage bill for the next legislative session. Wilder was elected to serve as Recording Secretary of the North Dakota Votes for

⁴¹¹ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage. *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. III. (Rochester: Charles Mann Printing Company, 1886), 664.

⁴¹² Carpenter, 207.

⁴¹³ Ann W. Braaten, “Kate Selby Wilder: Clubwoman, Suffragist, Temperance Activist, and City Commissioner.” *Equality At the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains*. Lori Ann Lahlum and Molly P. Rozum, ed. (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2019), 370.

⁴¹⁴ William A. Selby. Traill County, North Dakota. Homestead Patent #937. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records (P). [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴¹⁵ Braaten, 372.

⁴¹⁶ Braaten, 373.

Women League, as well as the President of her local WCTU union.⁴¹⁷ She traveled the state in 1914, giving lectures and speeches on behalf of the campaign.⁴¹⁸

As women mobilized in support of suffrage for the 1914 effort, so too did women organize to oppose it. A Mrs. N.C. Young (Ida C. Clarke Young) created the North Dakota Association of Women Opposed to Woman Suffrage, serving as its president. Ida identified herself as a dedicated wife and mother.⁴¹⁹ She argued that rural women and homesteaders had no desire or time for the vote. She noted that the vast majority, some seventy-two percent of North Dakota women, resided on farms. Only one woman in six lived in a town of over 1,000 people. Her organization printed a rebuttal to pro-suffragists in the *Fargo Forum and Daily Republican* on October 12, 1914:

“the demand for the ballot is coming not from the woman on the farms but from a small percent of the women living in towns. Because of economic and home reasons, farmers wives are not interested. They are too busy with their families and their work. If the ballot is given to these women, they cannot and will not use it. They have their children to look after, and the voting will be done by the women of the cities and villages. These can hardly be said in any way to represent the farm women.”⁴²⁰

The long-awaited day arrived on November 4, 1914. It was a very near thing – multiple counties were decided by single-digit votes. Despite Young’s assertions, many small, rural homesteading communities voted in support, especially in the northern and western parts of the state. The effort fell short, with approximately 45% of the overall vote – 40,200 in favor to 49,300 against.⁴²¹ However, North Dakota women weren’t finished yet. Temperance groups, suffrage organizations, and homesteaders there would fight on.

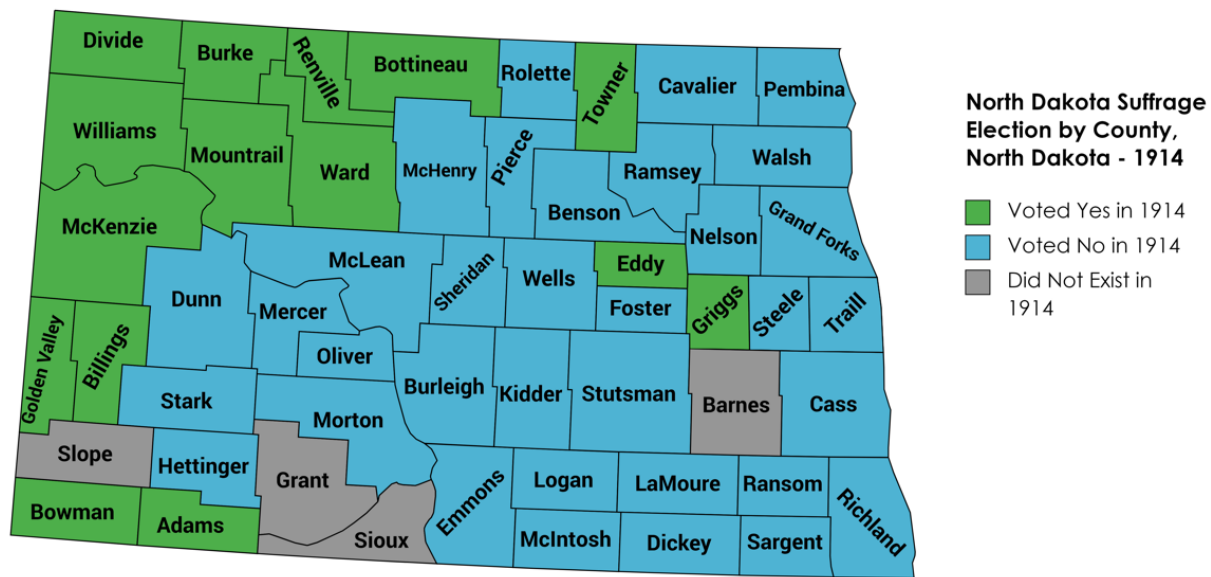
⁴¹⁷ “Votes for Women Urged in N. Dak,” *Jamestown Weekly Alert* (Jamestown, North Dakota), June 20, 1912.

⁴¹⁸ “Suffrage Notes,” *The Bismarck Tribune* (Bismarck, North Dakota), June 11, 1914.

⁴¹⁹ She was also a delegate to the First International Congress of the National Congress of Mothers, representing the state of North Dakota. *First International Congress in America on the Welfare of the Child Under the Auspices of the National Congress of Mothers*. The National Congress of Mothers: Washington, D.C, 1908.; Ida’s husband, Newton Clark Young, was a homesteader in North Dakota, successfully proving up a Timber Culture claim in Cavalier County. Newton C. Young. Cavalier County, North Dakota. Timber Culture Patent #1106. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴²⁰ “Women and the Ballot,” *The Fargo Forum and Daily Republican* (Fargo, North Dakota), October 12, 1914.

⁴²¹ Random County went anti-suffrage by a mere six votes (897-903), and Nelson by only 3 (796-799). *State of North Dakota 1919 Legislative Manual*. (Bismarck: Bismarck Tribune Company, 1919). State Historical Society of North Dakota Ref 353 N811 1919, Bismarck, North Dakota.



Map 8 - North Dakota Suffrage Election by County, North Dakota - 1914. Map by author, template courtesy of MapChart.net

Elizabeth Preston Anderson, North Dakota's most prominent WCTU leader, would play a prominent role in the next chapter of suffrage in the state after the 1914 campaign fell just short. Elizabeth was a young woman when her family moved from Indiana to North Dakota to homestead. Her father, Elam S. Preston, proved up a homestead claim in rural Cass County, about fifty miles west of Fargo, in the 1880s.⁴²² She worked as a teacher in rural North Dakota, and joined the Women's Christian Temperance Union, serving as the assistant organizer at the 1889 convention.⁴²³ She quickly rose as a result of her dedication and hard work – soon she was serving in the suffrage department of the organization at both the state and national levels. In 1893, Elizabeth became state president of the North Dakota chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a position she would hold until her retirement in 1932.⁴²⁴ As seen time and time again, the efforts of the WCTU in North Dakota under Anderson's leadership towards prohibition went hand in hand with the efforts towards women's suffrage.

Anderson participated in the 1914 campaign with the same vigor and sense of purpose that Kate Wilder did, participating in local, state, and national WCTU conventions, and giving

⁴²² Like many homesteaders, Elam Preston took advantage of multiple different opportunities to claim land – he had both a successful homestead claim (proved up in 1888), and a successful timber culture claim (proved up in 1893). Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. Elam Preston, Cass County, North Dakota. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴²³ Barbara Handy-Marchello. "Quiet Voices in the Prairie Wind: The Politics of Woman Suffrage in North Dakota, 1868-1920." *Equality at the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains*. Lori Ann Lahlum and Molly P. Rozum, ed., 81.

⁴²⁴ "Amounts to the Same," *Jamestown Weekly Alert* (Jamestown, North Dakota), March 8, 1900.

addresses on behalf of suffrage. While the close defeat in North Dakota was a bitter pill to swallow, she remained optimistic and dedicated to the cause. At the 1914 national convention in Atlanta, she celebrated the two new suffrage states (Montana and Nevada) and the five new prohibition states (Washington, Colorado, Oregon, Arizona, and Virginia).⁴²⁵

At the annual WCTU convention in Fargo in 1916, Elizabeth Preston Anderson gave a speech after being re-elected as President. She declared that nearly all the men elected to the North Dakota legislature that year declared themselves in favor of a proposed constitutional amendment. She went on to state that “the failure of our great and powerful nation...is that the women, the mothers, the child bearers, are not represented in government, are not given power and authority to protect virtue, honor, health, and life itself.” It was “a critical time... in both the prohibition and suffrage movements; the goal is in sight, but a mighty effort is still needed to reach it.”⁴²⁶ In North Dakota, as across the Great Plains, there was a tension between immigrant homesteaders and many WCTU members, who warned immigrants that saloons and alcohol represented “the gates of hell.”⁴²⁷ As millions of European immigrants came to the United States between 1880 to 1920, the peak of the homesteading era, many settled in the Great Plains, taking advantage of the opportunity to claim free land. Temperance women did “work among foreign speaking people” to “transform new arrivals into sober citizens” – farmers who would support prohibition and the right for women to vote.⁴²⁸

In 1919, the Nonpartisan League (NPL) took power in the state. The Nonpartisan League was newly formed left-wing populist political party in North Dakota created by A.C. Townley in 1915. It was an offshoot of the Republican Party. The NPL was a farmer protest organization in the spirit of the Grange, Farmers Alliance, and Populist movements of the late nineteenth century.⁴²⁹ With grievances common to homesteaders and farmers across the Midwest, the organization exploded in power and popularity overnight. It sought better prices and more control over agricultural commodities, after perceived abuses by the railroads and captains of industry. The Nonpartisan League also supported the equality of women in farm families. The NPL argued that women who could vote would be better mothers and partners for farm families.

Lynn J. Frazier, the North Dakota Nonpartisan League gubernatorial candidate in 1916 had a good reason for having strong ties to farmers and supporting suffrage. Lynn grew up on the family homestead in northern North Dakota. Thomas Frazier, Lynn’s father, claimed and proved up the homestead in Pembina County with his wife and children in the 1880s, and his eldest son Fred claimed the adjacent parcel.⁴³⁰ Following the untimely death of his father and older

⁴²⁵ “Returned from Atlanta,” *Jamestown Weekly Alert* (Jamestown, North Dakota), December 10, 1914.

⁴²⁶ “Mrs. Anderson Was Re-Elected.” *Jamestown Weekly Alert*. (Jamestown, North Dakota), October 26, 1916.

⁴²⁷ Wagner, Ella, “The Saloon Is Their Palace”: Race, Immigration, and Politics in the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, 1874-1933” (2022). *Dissertations*. 3956. https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/3956, 66. Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁴²⁸ Wagner, Ella, “The Saloon Is Their Palace”: Race, Immigration, and Politics in the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union, 1874-1933” (2022). *Dissertations*. 3956. https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/3956, 67. Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁴²⁹ For more about rural agrarian protest movements and political organization amongst American farmers in the late 1800s, see R. Alton Lee and Steven Cox’s *When Sunflowers Bloomed Red: Kansas and the Rise of Socialism in America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020).

⁴³⁰ Bureau of Land Management: General Land Office Records. Thomas Frazier. Pembina County, North Dakota. Homestead Entry Original, June 1, 1888. https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=ND1020_.453&docClass=STA&sid=trer1pxd.f2l

brother, Lynn inherited the family farms. Other than his time in politics, Lynn lived on and farmed that family homestead his entire life. The *Jamestown Weekly Alert*, reporting on the candidates, exclaimed “Get that – a farmer! Not an imitation farmer nor a town farmer, either, but a real farmer, who has been tilling his section of land in Pembina County for many years... He is now farming the same homestead on which his father settled in 1881.”⁴³¹

His background as a farmer was a strong part of the reason the NPL selected Frazier – they sought a candidate to represent the people. North Dakota, out of all thirty homestead states, had the second highest number of homesteads at 118,472 proved up, and the second highest percentage of land area claimed by homesteaders at 39%.⁴³² The Nonpartisan League was convinced that Lynn Joseph Frazier represented the will of the people far better than any career politician or lawyer ever could.

The suffrage movement in North Dakota, with homesteading leadership at the very top in the form of WCTU President Elizabeth Preston Anderson and Governor Lynn Frazier, put in that mighty effort Anderson called for in 1916, and reached the goal. Frazier won the general election on November 7, 1916, with a resounding 79% of the popular vote.⁴³³ The League took the state House of Representatives, and nearly the Senate as well.



Figure 21 - Elizabeth Preston Anderson, first on left from Governor Frazier Signing Woman's Suffrage Bill, North Dakota, 1917. Image courtesy of North Dakota State University Archives.

⁴³¹ “Lynn J. Frazier for Governor – Candidate Chosen by the Farmers,” *Jamestown Weekly Alert*, (Jamestown, North Dakota), April 13, 1916.

⁴³² “State by State Numbers,” National Park Service. Homestead National Historical Park. Accessed October 11, 2023. <https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/statenumbers.htm>

⁴³³ Frazier received 87,665 votes, to D.H. McArthur's 20,531 and Oscar A. Johnson's 2,615. “Party Votes, General Election, November 7, 1916.” North Dakota Secretary of State. Accessed October 11, 2023. <https://vip.sos.nd.gov/PortalListDetails.aspx?ptlPKID=63&ptlPKID=4>

They are pictured together here, Anderson standing at Governor Frazier's right hand as he signs a bill for women's suffrage in the state in 1917. Anderson served more than forty years in the WCTU in North Dakota and was instrumental in earning women in that state the vote in 1917 – it is no coincidence that she is placed in a position of honor at Frazier's right in the photograph celebrating the culmination of decades of effort. Frazier and Anderson, who grew up on homesteads in North Dakota, saw the movement emerge victorious, earning the vote for women of their state ahead of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.

That victory turned the page on one chapter of suffrage in North Dakota, but the story for women's rights in the state doesn't end there. The 1917 victory inspired women all over the state, including Alma Lutz. Alma Lutz was the daughter of German immigrant George F. Lutz and German American Matilda Bauer Lutz. George and Matilda were married in Jamestown, North Dakota in 1887, where George filed a homestead claim for 160 acres in Stutsman County, paying a \$10 filing fee in August of 1883 before establishing residency on the claim.⁴³⁴ His initial homestead claim was cancelled and relinquished in 1888, and he instead purchased 160 acres as a preemption for \$2.50 per acre.

Alma Lutz was born in 1890. Like her mother before her, she attended Vassar College. During her time there from 1908 to 1912, she became active in the woman's suffrage and women's rights movements.⁴³⁵ She gave an address at a Suffrage Tea in 1914, stating "most of us, I am sure, do not need to be persuaded that we want the ballot. We are very certain we want to vote – it is only fair and just that we should." She countered the anti-suffragist argument that 'woman's place is in the home' by asking why there were 8,000,000 American women out of the home and noting that the few minutes that voting took would not seriously interfere with woman's business.⁴³⁶

Later in 1914, Alma was elected as Secretary-Treasurer of the Jamestown chapter of the Votes for Women League. With the statewide suffrage victory in 1917, Lutz held the annual meeting of the Votes for Women League at her home to transition from fighting for the vote to providing education on municipal and governmental questions, with a focus on local issues. Lutz moved to Boston in 1918, where she joined the National Woman's Party. In Boston (and New York), Lutz shared a home with Marguerite Smith from 1918 until Smith passed away in 1959.⁴³⁷

Alma Lutz served as author and historian for the NWP, writing biographies on Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and more generally on the abolition and suffrage movements. Lutz continued fighting for women's rights well into the twentieth century, championing the Equal Rights for Women Amendment into the 1960s, linking the fight for the Nineteenth Amendment and the vote directly to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. In a letter to African American Civil Rights activist Dr. Pauli Murray in 1965, Lutz wrote "to me it seems so important for women's protection from discrimination to have equal legal rights for women

⁴³⁴ "Married," *Jamestown Weekly Alert* (Jamestown, North Dakota), September 8, 1887.: "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955." Database with images, *FamilySearch*. Dakota Territory, Vol. 63, Image 149 of 243. Records Improvement, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

⁴³⁵ Alma Lutz Papers, 1912-1971. Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College.

⁴³⁶ "Miss Lutz Address." *Jamestown Weekly Alert* (Jamestown, North Dakota), April 9, 1914.

⁴³⁷ Leila J. Rupp. "'Imagine My Surprise': Women's Relationships in Historical Perspective." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* Vol. 5, No. 3 (Autumn, 1980), 61-70, 64.

written into the constitution.”⁴³⁸ She elaborated in a later letter to Dr. Murray that “to me there is but one adequate solution for women’s unjust, insecure legal status, and that is the Equal Rights for Woman Amendment... [with your support] it would pass within the year... your position today reminds me of what went on during the suffrage campaigns when the Woman Suffrage Amendment was opposed by those who insisted on State action as much more practical and possible of achievement... I know you stand basically for equal legal rights for women, but if we choose different roads to achieve it, we can do so with good will toward each other.”⁴³⁹



Figure 22 - Alma Lutz, seated front middle, and Dr. Pauli Murray standing directly behind her.

Kansas

The state of Kansas is oft-noted by historians as American history in microcosm for its roles in events with the Kansas-Nebraska Act leading up to the Civil War, the dispossession of Native American land, populism, homesteading – and as an early leader in the women’s suffrage movement. Several Kansans are intricately woven into the story of suffrage and homesteading, espousing all these aspects of Kansas’ rich history, including abolitionist Clarina Nichols, Senator Samuel Pomeroy, Populist Mary Lease, America’s first female mayor, Susanna Madora Salter, and cartoonist Nina Allender. Together these Kansans fought for civil rights for all Americans, including the right to women’s suffrage, from the mid-nineteenth century, to the mid-twentieth.

⁴³⁸ Alma Lutz to Pauli Murray. November 22, 1965. Pauli Murray Papers, Series II, 1935-1984. Box 97, Folder 1730, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.

⁴³⁹ Alma Lutz to Pauli Murray. April 21, 1966. Pauli Murray Papers, Series II, 1935-1984. Box 97, Folder 1730, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.

Samuel Clarke Pomeroy was a United States Senator from Kansas, elected upon Kansas joining the Union in 1861. He was elected to the 37th Congress, and on February 28, 1862, voted “Yes” on the Homestead Act, becoming one of its staunchest supporters.⁴⁴⁰ He gave a speech in its defense, addressing President Lincoln:

“...taking a homestead without expense or benefit to the Government, will produce more revenue to the country, and vastly more increase its wealth and productiveness, than any present or prospective sale... Sir, freedom was secured to Kansas by being planted in the soil, set to growing upon each quarter section of land that we are able to hold, and made as permanent as the homesteads that were secured. Hence it is that I said that I would rather have the “free homestead bill” as a measure to secure freedom to the territories.”⁴⁴¹

Senator Pomeroy, who was rewarded for his strong defense of the Homestead Act by being appointed Chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, also advocated strongly for universal suffrage – guaranteeing the vote to both women and African Americans. As a Radical Republican, he sought universal suffrage decades before the concept enjoyed widespread popularity. He was a member of the Equal Rights Association in the 1860s – as were Susan B. Anthony, Henry Blackwell, Amelia Bloomer, William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and Sojourner Truth, to name a few.⁴⁴²

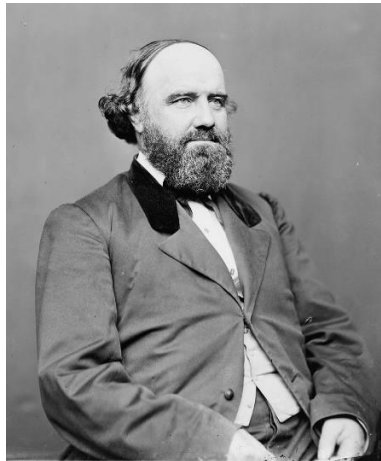


Figure 23 - Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

⁴⁴⁰ “A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1865.” *Congressional Globe*, House of Representatives, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, 1035. <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llcg&fileName=059/llcg059.db&recNum=76> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁴⁴¹ “Speech of Senator Pomeroy on the Homestead Bill.” *The Smoky Hill and Republican Union* (Junction City, Kansas), May 29, 1862.

⁴⁴² Membership of the American Equal Rights Association, Appendix, 198, in *The American Equal Rights Association, 1866-1870: Gender, Race, and Universal Suffrage*. Stuart Galloway. (Dissertation. Leicester: University of Leicester., 2014). [The American Equal Rights Association, 1866-1870: gender, race, and universal suffrage \(figshare.com\)](https://figshare.com) Accessed October 11, 2023.

Locally, Pomeroy presided over the Atchison County Suffrage Association, which sought to strike both the words “male” and “white” from the state constitution, enfranchising all regardless of color, nationality, or sex.⁴⁴³ Pomeroy gave a speech noting that “[everyone] with an American heart is an American citizen, without distinction of birth or color... the enfranchisement of women was involved in the principles which our founding fathers laid down in establishing the foundation of our government.” He went on to say that “to give women the ballot was to be the consummation of the principle that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed... the vital principle of Democratic government.” He hoped to make Kansas the first state to give women the vote in 1867.⁴⁴⁴

Pomeroy’s aspirations grew even larger the following year, when he proposed an amendment to the U.S. Constitution (S. R. No. 180, 1868): “Art. 15. The basis of suffrage in the United States shall be that of citizenship, and all native or naturalized citizens shall enjoy the same rights and privileges of the elective franchise.” A report from Memphis commented that “Senator Pomeroy’s amendment proposing universal suffrage in the true sense of the word, including as it does, all the women, will not secure more than a semi-humorous debate.”

Though Pomeroy was defeated in his reelection campaign in 1872, some of his ideas and ideals were taking root in rural Kansas, and throughout the Great Plains, in the 1870s and 1880s. Homesteaders and farmers were increasingly frustrated with the status quo. Droughts, crop failures, locusts, and other difficulties left many farmers deep in debt. Homesteaders who had not yet proved up often abandoned claims in the face of such difficulties. Those who had successfully received the deed to the land were subject to foreclosure. Mary Elizabeth Lease and her husband Charles L. Lease purchased 160 acres of land in Kingman County, Kansas in 1888.⁴⁴⁵ In part due to high mortgage rates and high costs to transport farm goods to markets via railroads, their farm, like many, went under. Mary took on a leading role in the new Populist Party, promoting social and economic reform in America, in addition to championing the vote for women.

Anti-Suffragists were critical, perhaps fearful of the power that Populists, the Farmer’s Alliance, homesteaders, and suffragists across the country could bring to bear. One paper reported that “Mrs. Mary Lease wanted suffrage for all women when she was poor, but it noticeable that now she has a bank account, she says and cares little about it.”⁴⁴⁶ She was mocked in minstrel shows, Mary Ellen Lease becoming “Yellin’ Mary Lease.” *The Times-Picayune* of New Orleans called her “the Unlovely Mrs. Lease... the most aggressive woman in public life,” who harangued and hollered.⁴⁴⁷ Mary probably would have taken that last one as a compliment. She was not afraid to respond to critics and opponents. A Populist battle cry was widely attributed to her in the media, with the *Emporia Daily Republican* reporting on “one of Mrs. Lease’s ‘hell-raising’ sort of reformers. [Lease] urged the Kansas farmers to less ‘corn and

⁴⁴³ *The Atchison Free Press* (Atchison, Kansas), September 7, 1867.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Atchison Free Press* (Atchison, Kansas), September 7, 1867.

⁴⁴⁵ Charles L. Lease. Kingman County, Kansas. Cash Sale Patent. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴⁴⁶ *The Atchison Daily Globe* (Atchison, Kansas), Tuesday, July 24, 1894.

⁴⁴⁷ “Unlovely Mrs. Lease and Unreconstructed Lucy Stone,” *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, Louisiana), March 8, 1891.

more hell””.⁴⁴⁸ Lease refuted the common anti-suffragist refrain that giving women the vote would negatively impact American men’s rights, calling that attitude “rubbish.”⁴⁴⁹

Kate Richards O’Hare was cut from the same cloth as Lease. She was born to Kansas homesteaders Andrew and Lucy Richards in Ottawa County in 1876.⁴⁵⁰ She spent her childhood on the family homestead, her earliest memories of the cattle ranch, herds roaming the prairies. That agrarian setting influenced her deeply, though difficulties dryland farming on the western prairies led the family to move to Kansas City – “drought, followed by one of the periodical panics which sweep over our country” – an experience all homesteaders feared as the potential end to their farm. She felt a sense of family loss when her father, “who had always been master of his own domain, who had hewn his destiny barehanded from the virgin soil, forced to go out and beg some other man for a chance to labor.”⁴⁵¹

As a young working woman, Kate happened to hear a speech by “Mother Jones” that inspired her to join the Socialist Party in 1901.⁴⁵² “Dear old Mother! That is one of the mileposts in my life that I can easily locate... I hastily sought out ‘Mother’ and asked her to tell me what Socialism was,” she recalled.⁴⁵³ She met and married Frank O’Hare, another dedicated adherent to the cause, the following year. They took “an odd wedding tour:” their “honeymoon” was a trip lecturing on behalf of their shared socialist ideals. Frank noted “we have devoted our lives to the work of preparing people for the industrial revolution which is bound to come, and thought we could not do better than begin our married life with a proselytizing tour.”⁴⁵⁴

Richards-O’Hare served as an activist and orator for several years and travelled around the country crusading on behalf of the many different hats she wore: WCTU member, suffragist, homesteader, and socialist agitator.⁴⁵⁵ She fought liquor traffic in Kansas and Missouri, arguing that drunkenness and vice caused poverty. She gave speeches and addresses on women’s

⁴⁴⁸ *The Emporia Daily Republican* attributed an incident in New York City in December of 1891 to “one of Mrs. Lease’s ‘hell-raising’ sort of reformers” when Henry Norcross blew a stick of dynamite up in the office of millionaire tycoon Russel Sage, after being denied a ransom of \$1,200,000. There is no evidence that Norcross aligned with Lease or the suffrage movement at all, nor was his attack motivated by anything beyond extortion and robbery. Still, the libel indicates what the press and her opponents felt of Lease. *Emporia Daily Republican* (Emporia Kansas), December 8, 1891.; A quote appears in the *Dakota Farmers’ Leader* (Canton, South Dakota, December 12, 1890) written by Ralph Beaumont of Elmira Telegram in 1890, without an attribution to any specific speaker, merely stating that “agricultural laborers” have come to that conclusion. For more on the rise of the People’s Party in Kansas, see R. Alton Lee and Steven Cox’s *When Sunflowers Bloomed Red: Kansas and the Rise of Socialism in America*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020).

⁴⁴⁹ “Rubbish, Says Mrs. Mary Lease,” *The Topeka Daily Capital* (Topeka, Kansas), July 27, 1911.

⁴⁵⁰ The Richards family had an extensive series of claims: three under the Timber Culture Act, three under the Homestead Act, and two cash sales, all in Ottawa County, Kansas, between 1872 and 1895. Andrew Richards. Ottawa County, Kansas. Timber Culture Patent #540. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴⁵¹ Kate Richards O’Hare, “How I Became a Socialist Agitator.” *The Socialist Woman*, October 1908, 4-5, 4.

⁴⁵² Kate Richards O’Hare’s politics surely were also influenced by her parents, who were anti-slavery Jayhawkers who supported Populism, Socialism, and suffrage. She met Eugene Debs after her father hosted Debs at the family home. Sally M. Miller. *From Prairie to Prison: The Life of Socialist Activist Kate Richards O’Hare*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993, 17.

⁴⁵³ Kate Richards O’Hare, “How I Became a Socialist Agitator,” 4.

⁴⁵⁴ “An Odd Wedding Tour.” *The Girard Press* (Girard, Kansas), January 16, 1902.

⁴⁵⁵ In addition to being the daughter of a homesteader, Kate and her husband joined the land rush in Oklahoma after the territory was opened, though they stayed only a few years, and failed to prove up a claim.

suffrage, and participated in the March 1913 parade in Washington, D.C. as a “grand marshal of one of the pageant divisions.”⁴⁵⁶ Richards O’Hare pondered who ‘we the people’ really were and mused on property ownership and the right to vote. “The new constitution was for the good of the people, but they fail to recognize that working men and women are people. At a time when only property owners could vote, a worker who had been given an old mule took the mule to the polls to prove his right to vote. The question was raised as to whether it was the man or the mule who voted.”⁴⁵⁷

Kate ran for a seat in the House of Representatives in 1910, seeking to serve Kansas in Congress as part of the Socialist Party platform. One of her major campaign issues touched on a topic near and dear to her rural homesteading roots – land ownership and farming. In a speech given in Ottawa, Kansas, Kate noted that most farmers in America were tenant farmers or lived on mortgaged farms, with only about one farm in five owned “free from incumbrance.”⁴⁵⁸ Her campaign was well received, and though she fell short of winning the election, came in well ahead of the Prohibitionist Party Candidate, settling in third overall ballots in the Second Congressional District.⁴⁵⁹ In 1916, she was nominated as the Socialist candidate for U.S. Senate in Missouri.

In the summer of 1917, O’Hare was on the lecture circuit on behalf of the Socialist Party, which had publicly and vehemently opposed all war. By the time she arrived in the rural community of Bowman, North Dakota, she had given her “Socialism and the World War” speech seventy-five times.⁴⁶⁰ O’Hare was immensely popular with farmers and homesteaders, as her background meant she could “talk the talk.” Theoretically, North Dakota should have been just another stop for her – the state had strong support of Socialist politics, electing Nonpartisan League Governor Lynn Frazier in 1916.

However, a Navy sailor on recruiting duty sent a telegram remarking on O’Hare’s “highly unpatriotic” speech, which triggered a strong federal response - she was indicted as a test case under the Espionage Act of 1917, one of the first of several prominent Socialist leaders (including her counterpart and colleague, Eugene V. Debs).⁴⁶¹ In the case of *the United States of America v. Kate Richards O’Hare*, she was charged with violating the Espionage Act by

⁴⁵⁶ “Attacked Helen Taft.” *The Champaign Daily Gazette* (Champaign, Illinois), March 11, 1913.

⁴⁵⁷ “Kate Richards O’Hare Makes Popular Address in Kansas City.” *The Weekly People’s Forum* (Lawrence, Kansas), March 13, 1919.

⁴⁵⁸ “A Woman Candidate Speaks.” *The Ottawa Herald* (Ottawa, Kansas), October 20, 1910.

⁴⁵⁹ The ballot totals for the Second Congressional District were fairly aligned with the gubernatorial ballots cast, with Republican candidate Walter Stubbs winning reelection with just under fifty percent of the vote, Democrat George Hodges at forty-five percent, Socialist candidate S.M. Stallard at five percent, and Prohibition candidate William Cady at under one percent. “Unofficial Count, General Election, November 8, 1910.” *The Iola Register* (Iola, Kansas), November 10, 1910.

⁴⁶⁰ Erling N. Sannes. “‘Queen of the Lecture Platform’: Kate Richards O’Hare and North Dakota Politics, 1917-1921.” *North Dakota History* Vol. 58, No. 4 (Fall 1991): 2-19, 4.

⁴⁶¹ *The National Rip-Saw*, a St. Louis based socialist publication with strong ties to Kate and Frank O’Hare, as well as Eugene V. Debs, was also targeted during World War I. The federal government banned it from being circulated through the mail in 1918. Kathleen Kennedy. “Casting an Evil Eye on the Youth of the Nation: Motherhood and Political Subversion in the Wartime Prosecution of Kate Richards O’Hare, 1917-1924.” *American Studies* Vol. 39, No. 3 (Fall 1998): 105-129, 106.; J.E. James. *United States of America v. Kate Richards O’Hare*. Criminal Case Files, 1890-1957. Record Group 21: Records of District Courts of the United States, National Archives, Washington, D.C. [United States of America v. Kate Richards O’Hare \(archives.gov\)](https://www.archives.gov) Accessed October 11, 2023.

“willfully obstructing the enlistment service of the United States to the injury of the service of the United States.”⁴⁶² A witness testified that Kate argued against the war by stating “if mothers became pregnant for the purpose of bringing sons into this world for cannon fodder they were no better than farmers’ sows.”⁴⁶³

As Kate came under attack for her Socialist politics during the first “Red Scare,” she cited her father’s military service in the Civil War, highlighting the hypocrisy of her opponents. “A young boy walked many miles to enlist and help free the slaves. Being rejected as too young he became bugler. In the battle of Mission Ridge, the standard fell, and that bugler led the charge to the top of the hill. That man was Andrew Richards, and Andrew Richards was my father – yet [they] say I am un-American.”⁴⁶⁴ O’Hare found herself in the predicament many American suffragists did during World War I: labeled Anti-American for continuing agitating for reform. She lamented that, “As long as the capitalists can keep us divided, we will be helpless. They try to get us to discuss demos that won’t dem and reps that won’t rep and arguing about baptism and other isms while they reap the product of our toil.” Like the Silent Sentinels at Occoquan, Richards O’Hare was jailed for freedom, sentenced to five years for standing up for her beliefs.

Clarina Irene Howard Nichols was an early reformer, fighting for the abolition of slavery and rights for women. Her convictions took her to Kansas in the 1850s, migrating to settle in a state where she felt she could best advocate for and achieve her goals. Her efforts at the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention of 1859 secured liberal property rights for Kansas women, guardianship of children, and the right to vote on school questions, paving the way for Susanna Madora Salter a generation later.⁴⁶⁵ Nichols spoke on homesteads, property ownership, and women’s rights in Kansas. She wrote to the editor of the *Kansas Daily Commonwealth* in 1869: “To return to our present subject – woman’s property rights – let us examine first, our splendid homestead law. One hundred and sixty acres of farming land... who will not say, in view of such a homestead law, that home is peculiar to man’s sphere?” She concluded her letter by proposing to submit a future article reviewing laws which affect the interests of women, “hoping thereby to show the benefit of her speedy enfranchisement.”⁴⁶⁶ In 1871, Nichols migrated further west to be with her adult children in California, where her son, Aurelius O. Carpenter, claimed a homestead in Mendocino County.

⁴⁶² *United States of America v. Kate Richards O’Hare*. Criminal Case Files, 1890-1957. Record Group 21: Records of District Courts of the United States, National Archives, Washington, D.C. [United States of America v. Kate Richards O’Hare \(archives.gov\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁴⁶³ The charge was also brought for a remark that soldiers forced to fight in the war would end up as “fertilizer” after falling on foreign soils. J.E. James. *United States of America v. Kate Richards O’Hare*. Criminal Case Files, 1890-1957. Record Group 21: Records of District Courts of the United States, National Archives, Washington, D.C. [United States of America v. Kate Richards O’Hare \(archives.gov\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁴⁶⁴ “Kate Richards O’Hare Makes Popular Address in Kansas City.” *The Weekly People’s Forum* (Lawrence, Kansas), March 13, 1919.

⁴⁶⁵ “Clarina Irene Howard Nichols.” Kansas Historical Society. <https://www.kansasmemory.org/item/7787> , Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁴⁶⁶ Clarina Irene Howard Nichols to the editors of the *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*. May 31, 1869. “The Forgotten Feminist of Kansas: The Papers of Clarina I. H. Nichols, 1854-1885. Ed. Joseph G. Gambone. Spring 1974 (Vol. 40, No. 1), 72-135.

Susanna Madora Salter, a homesteading woman and member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, was the first woman to be elected Mayor in the United States, building upon the strong legacy of women's rights and suffrage started by an earlier generation of Kansas women, including Clarina Irene Howard Nichols. Susanna and her husband Lewis moved to Argonia, Kansas in 1882. After the incorporation of Argonia in 1885, her father was elected Mayor. Two years later, Kansas gave women the right to vote in local elections. That same year, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union campaigned on a platform of state prohibition, nominating sympathetic candidates for local office.⁴⁶⁷ A group of men seeking to discredit the WCTU nominated an identical set of candidates, but placed the unknowing Susanna Salter as the potential candidate for mayor as a prank.



Figure 24 - Susanna Madora Salter, Mayor of Argonia, 1882. Courtesy of Kansas Historical Society.

The Republican Party rallied around her nomination, and she was elected Mayor, attracting the attention of suffragists around the country. Laura Johns, president of the Kansas Equal Suffrage Association, remarked: "[Argonia] has attracted the attention of suffragists by electing a lady to the mayoralty. This is the first time a woman has held that office... she is an officer in the Argonia WCTU, much interested in the enforcement of the prohibitory law."⁴⁶⁸ She went on to contact Salter, seeking to coordinate an Equal Suffrage organization in Argonia, as well as inviting her to speak at the Kansas Women's Equal Suffrage Association convention in the fall of 1887, where she met Susan B. Anthony and Henry Blackwell.

⁴⁶⁷ Monroe Billington, "Susanna Madora Salter First Woman Mayor." *Kansas Historical Society*, Autumn 1954 (Vol. 21, No 3), 174.

⁴⁶⁸ Monroe Billington, "Susanna Madora Salter First Woman Mayor." *Kansas Historical Society*, Autumn 1954 (Vol. 21, No 3), 179.

Susanna and her husband took part in the Oklahoma Land Rush of 1893. That land run took opened the Cherokee Strip, just to the south of Argonia, Kansas, to homestead settlement. This land rush was the fourth in Oklahoma following the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887, and the Indian Appropriations Act of 1889, which were passed to force tribes to accept individual allotments of land rather than communal ownership, and sell the “Unassigned Lands” to the United States for distribution to settlers. An estimated 100,000 individuals participated in the largest land run in U.S. History, with four separate land offices opening to handle the tide of homesteaders seeking their 160-acre share of the land ceded by the Cherokee Nation. The Land Run began at noon on September 16, 1893. Lewis and Susanna claimed 160 acres almost immediately afterwards. Their claim was filed just south of the newly opened land office at Alva on September 19, 1893. The couple successfully proved up, receiving the patent to the land in July 1901.⁴⁶⁹

One of the most enduring icons of the suffrage movement in the early twentieth century are the depictions and cartoons of “the suffrage girl,” which helped show a different image of suffragists and feminists to millions of Americans, helping push the cause to victory. From 1914 to 1927, artist, suffragist, and feminist Nina Evans Allender contributed more than 150 political cartoons supporting the suffrage movement.



Figure 25 - Nina E. Allender, Cartoonist, National Woman's Party. Ca. 1915-1916. Image courtesy Library of Congress.

⁴⁶⁹ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. Salter, Lewis A. July 9, 1901. Woods County, Oklahoma. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

Allender was born in Shawnee County, Kansas, in 1872. Her mother, Eva S. Evans was one of the first women to work for the Department of the Interior. She was hired by the General Land Office in the early 1880s, assisting other homesteaders in acquiring public domain lands.⁴⁷⁰ Evans worked for the General Land Office for nearly 40 years, relocating to D.C. in the 1890s, and remaining in that position until the 1920s. Nina joined her mother in Washington, D.C. She too took a civil service position, with the Treasury Department, to support herself after divorcing her husband.



Figure 26 - Election Day! Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Allender became active in the suffrage movement in the early twentieth century in D.C., where she was president of the Stanton Equal Suffrage Club.⁴⁷¹ She also joined the Ohio state suffrage campaign in 1912, lending her abilities and talents to the cause. She created an artistic poster entitled “Women Saving the Children” for the campaign.⁴⁷² Her work drew the attention of Alice Paul, whom Allender served on the committee to plan the famous March 1913 Washington, D.C. suffrage parade.⁴⁷³ When Alice Paul formed the Congressional Union and the National Woman’s Party, she sought Allender’s artistic ability as the official cartoonist of the National Woman’s Party and its new monthly publication, *The Suffragist*.

⁴⁷⁰ United States Civil Service Commission. *Official Register of the United States*, Vol. 1. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1905.; *Evening Star*. “Interior Department Changes – Promotions and Transfers of Clerks.” Washington, D.C., October 11, 1884, 5.

⁴⁷¹ “Mrs. Allender Speaks,” *The Washington Herald* (Washington, D.C.), February 11, 1913.

⁴⁷² “Suffrage Posters,” *The Cincinnati Enquirer* (Cincinnati, Ohio), June 26, 1912.

⁴⁷³ “Suffrage Parade Plans,” *The Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), December 28, 1912.

Allender's work combatted the stereotypes depicted in anti-suffragist propaganda, images which showed women as abandoning family and domestic life or mocked and debased their ideas and appearances. Figure 26, *Election Day!*, is a 1909 cartoon that depicts an anti-suffragist cartoon of a woman with a stern face abandoning her husband and two crying babies as the dishes pile up. The ballot in the corner of the image shows "Mrs. Henry Peck" (henpeck) for President, Mrs. Nagg for Vice President, and Mrs. Thos. Katt (Carrie Chapman Catt) for Governor.⁴⁷⁴ By contrast, Allender's pro-suffragist cartoons depicted these women as politically savvy, intelligent, and bold. Her design, "The Allender Girl," embodied the NWP, especially during the White House Protests of 1917. Allender Girls held the suffrage banner proudly and resolutely even in the face of criticism. When Alice Paul and the Silent Sentinels were imprisoned in Occoquan Workhouse for their protests, Allender designed the now famous "Jailed for Freedom" pin to wear as a badge of honor.

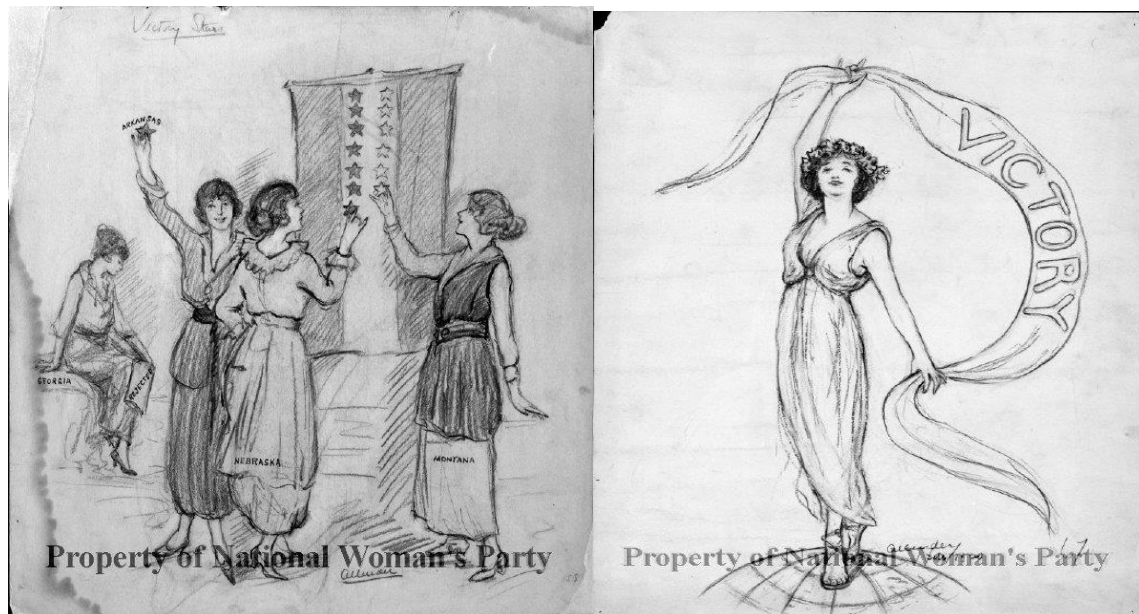


Figure 27 - Allender Girls from *The Suffragist*, 1920. Courtesy of the National Woman's Party.

Her cartoons often highlighted the fact that the western homesteading states granted women the vote, while eastern suffragists were unable to do so. Despite that nod, and her own roots from the prairies of Kansas, her Allender girls were often depicted as young, white, and privileged – even though homesteading suffragists came from a wide variety of backgrounds. The erasure of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian suffragists from her drawings is an unfortunate omission. After the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, Allender and the NWP celebrated their victory, but refused to rest on their laurels. When the National Woman's Party transitioned to the League of Voters, Allender continued to cartoon in support of a broad range of women's rights.

⁴⁷⁴ Gustin, E.W. *Election Day!* Jan 21, 1909. Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/97500226/>. Accessed October 11, 2023.

Oklahoma

Perhaps more than any other state, Oklahoma is tied intricately to homesteading in American public consciousness. When one thinks of homesteading, they often imagine a land rush in Oklahoma: thousands of people lined up, just awaiting the signal to charge in on horseback, covered wagon, or by train, to claim their quarter-section. As already seen by the example of Susanna Salter participating in the rush from Kansas, suffragist homesteaders were just as eager as anyone else to join the rush – and to continue their efforts to secure the vote for women.

During the height of the Oklahoma rushes, the *Daily Oklahoman* published a series of land decisions determined on women's rights to homestead, ensuring that women homesteaders were well aware of their rights to file entries and become landowners.⁴⁷⁵ Among these decisions were that: "a married woman who is actually deserted by her husband is entitled as the head of a family to make homestead entry," "a divorced wife who remains on land covered by the homestead entry of her husband..." is entitled to a judgement of cancellation with a preferred right of entry, "in the case of a deserted wife who had made homestead entry and the husband returned... as the head of family she was a legal homesteader and should be allowed to perfect title to her land", and that "an application to make homestead entry, by a single woman, duly qualified under the homestead law, and erroneously rejected, may be thereafter allowed."⁴⁷⁶



Figure 28 - "She Held It Down": A woman homesteader during the 1889 Land Rush, Guthrie, OK. Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma History Center

⁴⁷⁵ "Land Decisions." *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), May 5, 1894.

⁴⁷⁶ "Land Decisions." *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), May 5, 1894.

Kate H. Himrod Biggers served as the president of the Oklahoma Woman's Suffrage Association from 1904 to 1911. Kate's family relocated from Pennsylvania to farm in southeast Kansas. Her brothers, Patten and Bernard Himrod, each purchased 160 acres of land from the Osage Diminished Reserve.⁴⁷⁷ After the Civil War, many Union veterans sought land in Kansas, increasing pressures of removal on the Osage of southern Kansas. In 1865, the federal government coerced the Osage to sell their remaining lands in Kansas, and remove to Indian Territory, to open southern Kansas lands to American settlement.⁴⁷⁸ After arriving in Kansas, Kate married Civil War veteran Major Thomas Benton Biggers. Together they farmed near Longton, Kansas, where Kate – not Thomas - advertised chickens and eggs for sale, in *The Longton Gleaner*.⁴⁷⁹ She maintained three yards, selling eggs from prize-winning Plymouth Rocks bred by Sid Conger, President of the American Poultry Association – she sold her eggs at \$3 per 13 eggs. Conger's poultry was held in particularly high regard in the 1880s and 1890s. After he took home the Grand Prize at the New Orleans World's Fair of 1884, he sold a single chicken for \$150, or a pen of six hens and a rooster for \$500.⁴⁸⁰ They also shipped livestock as "Biggers & Himrod."⁴⁸¹ The newspaper also provides a glimpse into her early days in reform politics. Kate was a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Kansas by the 1880s. She was an elected officer of the Kansas WCTU, and participated in conventions, addressing the organization.⁴⁸²

The couple moved to Indian Territory before the turn of the century, where Kate continued her activism and rose to new heights. She became the first President of the Oklahoma and Indian Territory Woman Suffrage Association when the campaign for suffrage in Oklahoma heated up in conjunction with the campaign for statehood in 1904.⁴⁸³ At an annual convention in 1905, she gave an address leaning on her own experiences as a "pioneer" wife: "As [women] shared the hardships of pioneer life, attended to their duties as wives and mothers, and many times successfully attended to business affairs, as they shared the burdens with husband and fathers, let them share the ballot."⁴⁸⁴

Kate and Thomas Biggers, who shared those pioneer hardships and business affairs in Kansas and Oklahoma, applied for 160-acre homestead claim near Marlow, Oklahoma. Though she stepped down as President of the Oklahoma Woman's Suffrage Association, she continued to send editorials and articles to Oklahoma newspapers and was Vice President of the Marlow

⁴⁷⁷ "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955." Database with images. FamilySearch. Kansas, Volume 35, Image 244 of 249. Records Improvement, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁷⁸ Berlin B Chapman. "Removal of the Osages from Kansas." *Kansas Historical Quarterly* (August 1938, Vol. 7, No 3): 287-305, 287.

⁴⁷⁹ *The Longton Gleaner*, (Longton, Kansas) June 4, 1886, and "For Sale." *The Longton Gleaner*, (Longton, Kansas), September 3, 1886.

⁴⁸⁰ Conger's poultry were premium breeds, in great demand after he took home the grand prize at the 1884 New Orleans World's Fair. Edward H. Chadwick. *Chadwick's History of Shelby County*, 256.

⁴⁸¹ *The Longton Gleaner* (Longton, Kansas), June 29, 1883.

⁴⁸² *The Citizen* (Howard, Kansas), February 27, 1889.

⁴⁸³ *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 6, 521.

⁴⁸⁴ "Women in Convention." *The Chickasha Star and Telegram*, (Chickasha, Indian Territory), October 27, 1905.

Suffrage Club. The couple successfully proved up their homestead claim in August 1919, shortly before Thomas Benton Biggers passed away in October of that same year.⁴⁸⁵

Many homesteading women in Oklahoma were members of multi-generational homesteader and agricultural families. Julia Lovelace Woodward was born to Pennsylvania farmers Harmon and Margaret Lovelace in 1852. The Lovelace family, like hundreds of thousands of others, joined the post-Civil War westward migration under the Homestead Act. Harmon Lovelace claimed an 80-acre farm in Lyon County, Minnesota, in October of 1872. Harmon's oldest son, William Lovelace (Julia's older brother), also staked a claim the following spring for a further 160 acres. The two testified to prove up their claims on the same day, November 9, 1878, before receiving the patents to the land in 1881.⁴⁸⁶ Once her younger brother, Charles, was old enough to stake a claim, he did so as well, successfully proving up in 1890. Julia and her husband Lewis E. Woodworth joined the Oklahoma land run, entering into a 160-acre homestead in Roger Mills county on June 11, 1900.⁴⁸⁷ Her husband passed away, leaving her a widow, and her son Bruce filed notice of his intention to make final proof on the claim at the Lawton Land Office on June 25, 1906, before receiving the patent the following year.⁴⁸⁸

When the National American Woman Suffrage Association sent representatives to Oklahoma and Indian Territory in 1904, Julia Woodworth and Kate Biggers answered the call. They organized a territorial convention for the Equal Suffragists of Oklahoma, a NAWSA affiliate convention held December 15 and 16, 1904, in Oklahoma City. Anna Howard Shaw, NAWSA President, and Laura Gregg, NAWSA organizer in Nebraska as well as the daughter of a Kansas farmer, provided the keynote address and lectures on the organization's efforts. In recognition of their efforts, Woodworth was elected as first vice-president of Oklahoma's Equal Suffrage Association under President Kate Biggers, just two of several homesteaders who made up the early leadership of Oklahoma Territory's suffragists – no surprise given the importance of the Homestead Act in the several land rushes in the territory displacing Native Americans in the former Indian Territory.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁵ Tally D. Fugate, "Biggers, Kate H. Himrod," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=BI006>. Accessed October 11, 2023.; Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. Thomas Benton Biggers. August 8, 1919. Stephens County, Oklahoma. <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=702225&docClass=SER&sid=sbekkedm.iyv#patentDetailsTabIndex=0>

⁴⁸⁶ Lovelace. Lyon County. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) and "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – c. 1955." Database with images, FamilySearch. *Minnesota*, Volume 108, Image 201 of 253. Records Improvement, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁸⁷ "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – c. 1955." Database with images, *FamilySearch*. Oklahoma, Volume 28, Image 224 of 256. Records Improvement, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁸⁸ "Notice for Publication." *The Cheyenne Star* (Cheyenne, Oklahoma), July 19, 1906. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴⁸⁹ *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 6, 521. "Woman's Noble Plea for Equal Suffrage." *Oklahoma State Register* (Guthrie, Oklahoma), December 22, 1904. Anna Laskey, Treasurer of the Equal Suffrage Association, was the wife of homesteader Eugene Laskey. *The Industrial Democrat* described her thusly: "The business qualifications of Mrs. Anna Laskey have been directed with excellent effect, on behalf of the woman suffrage. It has been largely through her initiative that the interest of the suffrage association has never flagged. Her early years have been spent in

At the constitutional convention in 1907, the topic of women's suffrage was a furious debate. Territorial and national suffragists hoped that Oklahoma women would be guaranteed the right to vote upon the territory achieving statehood. A proposed amendment to strike the word "male" from voting requirements was voted down, as was an initial proposal to send a referendum to the voters. Though the constitution took effect without women's suffrage, Kate Biggers championed a petition with the assistance of the NAWSA, as well as the support of Woodworth – the petition received 38,600 votes, enough to send it to the ballot box as Oklahoma State Question 8, the Women's Suffrage Amendment, in 1910.⁴⁹⁰ Though in many homesteading counties and areas of the state the vote was close, the vote fell well short, with approximately 89,000 ballots in favor, and 128,000 against (41% in favor). Only Dewey County, Ellis County, and Major County, all in the Cherokee Outlet homesteading area, voted in favor. After the tough defeat, Kate Biggers declined to run for the presidency once more, allowing a new generation of suffragists, with new ideas, to attempt to push the movement across the finish line.

Kate Chapman Stafford, like Kate Biggers and Susanna Salter, was another suffragist with Kansas roots who joined the homesteading land rush into Oklahoma. She and husband Irvin H. Stafford homesteaded during the 1893 Cherokee Strip Land Run, successfully proving up a 160 acre claim in Garfield County.⁴⁹¹ They received the patent in June of 1902. After a divorce in which Kate received half of the family property to maintain her financial independence, she increasingly participated in Progressive reform organizations. First, she joined the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. In 1914, she joined the Oklahoma Women's Suffrage Association, attending local and state meetings.

Stafford quickly dove in headfirst, and became a militant, ardent defender of women's rights. She joined the National Woman's Party shortly after its founding in 1916 and was one of the "Silent Sentinels." The Silent Sentinels were members of the National Woman's Party that picketed in front of the White House for months in 1917, protesting the perceived injustice of President Wilson joining World War I to "make the world safe for democracy," while not committing to the vote for American women.

farming communities and she properly takes her stand as one of the pioneer women of Oklahoma; one of the persistent, energetic women who have helped to lay the foundations of the lusty new state. "Vanguard of Liberty." *The Industrial Democrat* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), February 26, 1910. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴⁹⁰ *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 6, 525.

⁴⁹¹ Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. Irvin Stafford. June 9, 1902. Garfield County, Oklahoma.

https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=OK0730_.121&docClass=STA&sid=3viaqcx.jm5



Figure 29 - Occoquan "Night of Terror" Suffragists of the NWP. Stafford 6th from left. Image courtesy of the NWP.

Stafford was one of many Silent Sentinels who protested after NWP leader Alice Paul was arrested and sentenced to seven months in Occoquan Workhouse for her picketing, joining the dozens of women in Occoquan.⁴⁹² *The Daily Ardmoreite* front page reported "Mrs. Kate Stafford of Oklahoma and Forty Others Arrested for Picketing at White House" on November 10, 1917.⁴⁹³ These women endured abuse from the guards at Occoquan Workhouse, prompting President Wilson to release them. Stafford was named the secretary of the Oklahoma chapter of the National Woman's Party that same year and began her tenure serving time in jail after picketing the White House for the cause of women's suffrage!⁴⁹⁴

While Kate Stafford, Alice Paul, and the National Woman's Party found these tactics an effective way to promote the cause of women's suffrage, not all suffragists did. Oklahoma homesteading suffragist Julia Woodworth, whose efforts were highlighted earlier in this section, published a response in her official capacity as the Corresponding Secretary of the Oklahoma Woman Suffrage Association in the *Tulsa Democrat*. She praised the non-militant approach of the NAWSA and repudiated the Congressional Union and National Woman's Party as composed of "a few women... with the mistaken idea that they would get the ballot sooner if they fought the party in power... calling the president unpleasant names, and doing whatever they think will harass the government officials, with the foolish idea that they can force congress to do what

⁴⁹² "Detailed Chronology – National Woman's Party." Library of Congress.

<https://www.loc.gov/static/collections/women-of-protest/images/detchron.pdf> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁴⁹³ "Mrs. Kate Stafford of Oklahoma and Forty Others Arrested for Picketing at White House," *The Daily Ardmoreite* (Ardmore, Oklahoma), November 11, 1917.

⁴⁹⁴ Mabel Vernon, "War or No War, We Want Ballot," *The Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), November 19, 1917.

they ask. They have been called traitors.”⁴⁹⁵ Woodworth went on to state that “the women of Oklahoma deplore the actions of this small body of suffragists ... we cannot understand how women who are intelligent and educated can be so lacking in common sense and patriotism that they hinder instead of help in this hour of grief and anxiety and horror for the whole world.”⁴⁹⁶ Yet as Alice Paul, Kate Stafford and the estimated 25-30 other Oklahoma women who joined the Congressional Union and National Woman’s Party would attest, it was precisely the attention to their efforts that helped propel the cause, with an election called to determine the future of suffrage in Oklahoma in November 1918.

Oklahoma Suffragists Repudiate 'Picketing' Party

Three Leading Officials of State Suffrage Association Write Special Articles for the Sunday Democrat, Giving Arguments Favoring an Amendment to the Constitution to Be Voted Upon at 1918 Election—Mrs. Adelia G. Stephens, President, Cites Heroic Fighting of Russian "Battalion of Death" as Answer to "Ballot and Bullet" Argument.

OKLAHOMA woman suffragists are confident that the constitutional amendment submitting the question of votes for women to the voters at the regular state election next year will be carried. At the last session of the legislature the submission bill was passed almost unanimously. This victory the women won by earnest effort after twenty-five years of work, beginning far back in territorial days.

The suffragists in this state are not carrying on at present a very active campaign for the amendment. They feel that their activities should be "turned on war service, and in that work they are accomplishing much for the cause of universal democracy. Before election time in 1918, however, the Oklahoma Woman Suffrage association, which has headquarters in Oklahoma City, will inaugurate and carry forward an energetic campaign, to make sure of triumph.

The Oklahoma suffragists are standing loyally by President Wilson and the country. They conceive it to be their present duty to help make the world safe for democracy. They are outspoken in their repudiation of the picketing methods of Washington which have so injured women to fail.

Left to Right—Mrs. Adelia C. Stephens, President Oklahoma State Woman Suffrage Association; Mrs. Frank B. Lucas, Corresponding Secretary; Mrs. Julia L. Woodworth, Chairman Finance Committee.

Mrs. Julia L. Woodworth Draws Sharp Distinction Between National American Woman Suffrage Association and National Woman's Party—Latter Body Insulting President Wilson—Oklahoma Suffragists Deplore Procedure of White House Naggers—Doing Effective Work in War Service and Thereby Earning Right to Share Ballot With Men.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF OKLAHOMA

By MRS. CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT,
President, National American Woman Suffrage Association.

THE National American Woman Suffrage association, composed of at least 98 per cent of the organized suffragists of the United States, is officially on record as disapproving absolutely the picketing tactics of the Woman's Party. It regards these tactics as an error of judgment, and has said so clearly and emphatically, both in its capacity as a national organization and through its various state affiliations.

It now urges the press and public to disregard the tactics imported from England of a small minority and to give thoughtful, serious con-

Figure 30 - Tulsa Democrat, 1917. Julia Woodworth at right.

As suffrage made it onto the ballot in Oklahoma once more, those opposed to women’s suffrage, or “antis,” mobilized. The Oklahoma Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage formed in 1918, seeking to “defeat woman suffrage, feminism, and socialism at the polls.”⁴⁹⁷ Amongst the leaders and officers of the organization included Maybelle Stuard, daughter of Oklahoma homesteader John P. Stuard.⁴⁹⁸ Maybelle served as Field Secretary, Press Secretary, and campaign manager for the Oklahoma antis, focusing heavily upon the cities. *The Enid Daily Eagle* reported in April 1918 that Stuard and Mrs. H.P. White of Boston canvassed Oklahoma City, gauging interest, and recruiting for the movement there.⁴⁹⁹ *Harlow’s Weekly* noted that Stuard then brought the campaign to Tulsa with a national NAOWS organizer from Washington,

⁴⁹⁵ “Oklahoma Suffragists Repudiate ‘Picketing Party,’” *The Tulsa Democrat* (Tulsa, Oklahoma), September 9, 1917.

⁴⁹⁶ “Oklahoma Suffragists Repudiate ‘Picketing Party,’” *The Tulsa Democrat* (Tulsa, Oklahoma), September 9, 1917.

⁴⁹⁷ “Oklahoma ‘Antis’ Start Campaign.” *The Democrat-Record* (Idabel, Oklahoma), August 8, 1918.

⁴⁹⁸ The Stuards joined the land rush for Oklahoma from Missouri, successfully proving up a 160-acre claim near Kremlin, Garfield County. John P. Stuard received a patent in June of 1905. John P Stuard. Garfield County, Oklahoma. Homestead Patent #9256. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁴⁹⁹ “Anti-Suffs Here.” *The Enid Daily Eagle* (Enid, Oklahoma), April 24, 1918, 1; “Anti-Suffs Complete Working Organization.” *The Enid Daily Eagle* (Enid, Oklahoma), June 13, 1918, 3.

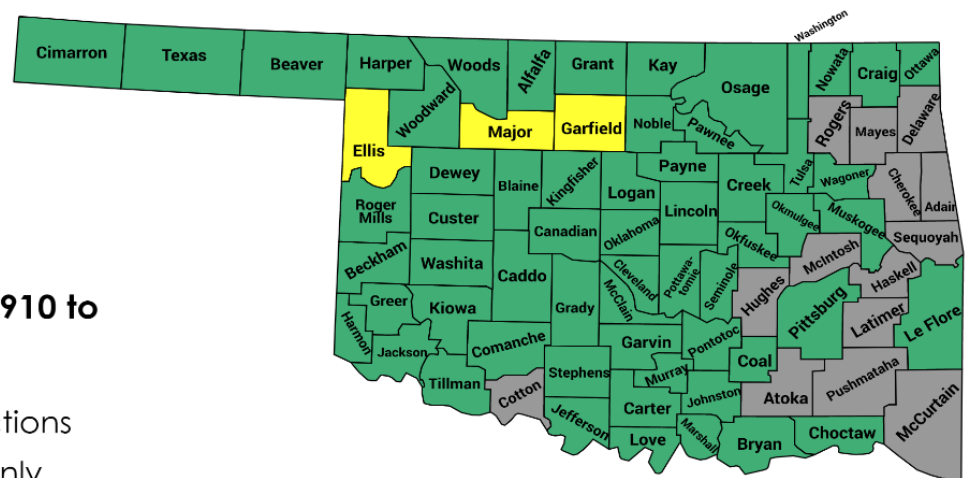
D.C., Charlotte Rowe. Though some in Oklahoma City and Tulsa were receptive to their message, “efforts to bring the [anti-suffrage] question to the fore in western Oklahoma... proved unavailing,” as homesteaders tended to be more willing to support suffrage.⁵⁰⁰

In 1910, only three counties across the entire state voted in favor, with about forty percent of the vote supporting granting women’s suffrage. In 1918, only a handful of counties voted -against- suffrage. The overall statewide vote was 57% in favor of granting women the vote, with many homesteading areas soaring well above that. Counties in the Cherokee Outlet and the Neutral Strip, which was the site of the largest of the land runs in American history in 1893, voted overwhelmingly in favor – Cimarron County at 77%, Tillman County at 72%, Beaver County at 71%, Dewey County at 70%, and Harper County at 70% in favor. These numbers led the entire state, and stood apart from the results in eastern Oklahoma, where the state remained staunchly against suffrage.

Map 9 - Suffrage Elections by County, Oklahoma. Map by author, template courtesy of MapChart.net

Suffrage Elections by County, Oklahoma - 1910 to 1918

- Voted Yes in All Elections
- Voted Yes in 1918 Only
- Never Voted in Favor



While support from women homesteaders drove the grassroots efforts for suffrage in Oklahoma, they had like-minded allies in positions of power, like Democratic Senator Robert L. Owen. A member of the Cherokee Nation, Owen had a direct connection to the legacies of the Homestead Act and the Dawes Act and their role in the dispossession of Native American lands. When he ran for the U.S. Senate in 1907, he sought to remove restrictions on the sale of Dawes Act allotments.⁵⁰¹ Owen, who received approximately 320 acres of public domain lands in Tillman County, Oklahoma, was an earnest supporter of Women’s Suffrage (and other

⁵⁰⁰ “Women Are Having Debate.” *Harlow’s Weekly* (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma), June 12, 1918, 12.

⁵⁰¹ Kenny L. Brown, “Owen, Robert Latham,” *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, Oklahoma Historical Society. <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry-OW003> Accessed October 11, 2023.

Progressive era reforms, such as the eight hour workday) from the beginning of his political career.⁵⁰² In a 1908 speech to a Senate Committee on Judiciary, he said that the nation owed suffrage to women, and noted that opponents of prohibition threatened the prospect of suffrage in Oklahoma, and proposed giving the vote to immigrant women to “counteract” the [saloon and brothel influences.]⁵⁰³ By 1917, Owen was a member of the Woman Suffrage Committee in the Senate.⁵⁰⁴ Along with Senator Andrieus Jones of New Mexico, he introduced a suffrage resolution conferring upon women the right of suffrage. The Resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives by six members, multiple of whom themselves had homesteading connections, including Jeannette Rankin of Montana,

⁵⁰² Robert L. Owen to Anne Fitzhugh Miller. April 2, 1908. Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897-1911. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbcmiller001164/> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁵⁰³ “Women Seek Suffrage.” *Washington Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), March 3, 1908. Manuscript / Mixed Material. Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897-1911. [Suffrage Speeches Made to U. S. Senate | Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](https://www.loc.gov/item/mss3413201447/) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁵⁰⁴ Senator Knute Nelson, of Minnesota, was also a member of the Senate Woman Suffrage Committee, and a fellow homesteader. See Chapter Four for more on Nelson’s connections with the suffrage movement and his homesteading ties. National American Woman Suffrage Association. National American Woman Suffrage Association Records: Subject File 1851 to 1935; Congressional Committees; 4 of 13. Manuscript / Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss3413201447/> Accessed October 11, 2023.; Robert L. Owen. Tillman County, Oklahoma. Sale-Cash Entry Patent #8313. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and Robert L. Owen. Tillman County, Oklahoma. Sale-Cash Entry Patent #8314. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

Chapter Four: Sowing the Seeds – Suffrage in the Midwest

The Midwest was the birthplace of homesteading, and a major locus of the suffragist movement as Americans looked increasingly westward in the nineteenth century. While several states in the Midwest had comparatively low numbers of homesteaders, as the land in those states was settled prior to the 1860s (especially Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois), women in Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, and Missouri were at a crossroads where the socially conservative values of east coast bumped into the pragmatism of the prairies. Women in these states were on the “front lines” of suffrage, reshaping contemporary feminism. As laborers and partners on farms, they sought reform through property laws, and through the right to vote – two values which coalesced through the Homestead Act, as more and more women became landowners for the first time.

Michigan

The easternmost homesteading state to pass full voting rights before the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, Michigan stands at a crossroads of suffrage. In contrast with many other homesteading states, by 1920 Michigan had large, urbanized centers of development. Detroit, with nearly a million residents, was the fourth largest city in the United States (and Michigan the seventh most populous state, with 3,600,000 residents). Industry and the adoption of modern technology drove the economy: the auto industry was booming in Detroit, Flint, and Lansing – three of the largest cities in the state. Extraction of natural resources spurred rapid population growth in the Upper Peninsula, especially in the copper mines of the Keweenaw Peninsula, the mines of Marquette, Gogebic, and Menominee iron ranges, and pine logging throughout the region.

There was a parallel Michigan, which saw nearly 20,000 homesteaders claiming more than two million acres of land from 1869 through 1946.⁵⁰⁵ In rural Michigan, homesteaders led the way to woman’s suffrage. The Committee on Woman Suffrage wrote in 1914 that “It is interesting to note that the majority of those counties which voted in favor of woman suffrage are small, sparsely populated counties, situated either in the Upper Peninsula, as is the case with Baraga, Chippewa, Gogebic, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Marquette, Ontonagon, and Schoolcraft, or in the pine barrens of the back-woods district of the Lower Peninsula, as is the case with Alcona, Antrim, Benzie, Montmorency, and Roscommon.”⁵⁰⁶

The state of Michigan became a major focus of the suffrage movement in 1874. The Michigan State Woman’s Suffrage Association advocated for the circulation of petitions in favor of suffrage to be presented to the legislature, prompting Governor John J. Bagley to call an extra

⁵⁰⁵ “Homesteading in Michigan.” [Homesteading in Michigan - Homestead National Historical Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/learn/visit/visit-details.php?unit=1&unitcode=1&unitname=Homesteading+in+Michigan) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁵⁰⁶ United States Congress. House of Representatives. Committee on Woman Suffrage. Hearing Before the Committee on Rules. 63rd Congress, 2nd Session. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914.

session of the legislature to submit the newly proposed constitutional amendment to a popular vote in November 1874.⁵⁰⁷ The amendment was introduced by the state legislature, and approved by a vote of 67-27 in the House of Representatives, and 26-4 in the Senate. The Michigan State Woman's Suffrage Association was spurred into action.⁵⁰⁸

Though the territories of Wyoming and Utah had granted suffrage, many on the national stage looked to Michigan and its substantial population to be the first *state* to join the cause. The New England Woman-Suffrage Association provided financial assistance for Mary Eastman to go on the lecture circuit in Michigan. Henry B. Blackwell donated 10,000 "documents", and Elizabeth Cady Stanton also joined the cause as a speaker.⁵⁰⁹ Despite the effort and national support of the state suffrage organization, the amendment suffered a crushing defeat at the ballot box: 40,187 in favor and 125,857 against. Fewer than 25% of voters supported guaranteeing the right to vote to women, and only one county voted yes.⁵¹⁰

Decades passed before Michigan voters had another opportunity to cast their ballots on suffrage on November 5, 1912. Several factors coalesced with political fervor surrounding the Presidential election 1912, including the advancement of Progressive reform issues, as well as an increasing push for women's rights. Though there was no referendum vote for decades, women's rights continued to steadily gain ground as time passed. In 1893, municipal suffrage was granted for literate women in the state. In 1905, an effort to strike the word "male" out of the requirements for voting in the state constitution narrowly failed. In 1909, women who owned property – such as homesteaders – could vote on financial expenditures and bond issues. This tide could not be held back forever, and 1912 nearly proved a watershed moment in Michigan suffrage.

Maggie Walz (born Margareeta Johanna Konttra Niiranen) was a remarkable woman from the Tornio Valley in Finland who migrated to the United States as a young woman in 1881. Walz, like countless immigrants across the nation, found community and identity to be very powerful aspects of migration, homesteading, and settlement. With other Finns, she settled in Michigan's "Copper Country," near Houghton on the Keweenaw Peninsula. Like many other immigrant homesteaders, she emigrated to the United States in her youth with almost nothing: "a mere girl of 16 she arrived, a stranger among strangers, in this cosmopolitan settlement with only \$7 in her pocket."⁵¹¹

Walz was a homesteader, and so much more. Throughout her life, she promoted Finnish life in America. Shortly after arriving, she began working as a correspondent for Finnish language papers and served as an interpreter for her fellow immigrants. In 1887, she returned to Europe, to bring back 14 Finnish women, for whom she obtained work. By 1905, she had come

⁵⁰⁷ "Woman Suffrage," *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago, Illinois), May 8, 1874.

⁵⁰⁸ Lawrence E. Ziewacz. "Thomas W. Palmer: A Michigan Senator's Masterly Argument for Women's Suffrage." *Michigan Historical Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring, 2000), pp. 30-43, 33. This was just one of many attempts by the state of Michigan to pass women's suffrage – a bill came before the legislature and was defeated in 1866, and a Senate committee proposed.

⁵⁰⁹ "Michigan," *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago, Illinois), October 15, 1874.

⁵¹⁰ James W. King. *Manual for the Use of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1875-1876*. Lansing: W.S. George & Co., 1875. Only Emmet County voted yes in the 1874 election with a total of 55% of the ballots cast in favor, although Chippewa county only lost by nine votes.

⁵¹¹ "Finnish Girl Has Made Her Way in the World." *Detroit Free Press* (Detroit, Michigan), December 30, 1905.

to be referred to as “Leader of Her People in the West.”⁵¹² She became a federal land agent, filed a claim under the Homestead Act for 160 acres of land on Drummond Island in Lake Huron, and established a Finnish homesteader colony on the island.⁵¹³

Walz had a background in dealing in real estate and farming lands, but the task of forming a homesteader colony was never an easy one. During the first year of settlement in 1904, her colonists were dissatisfied with a “lack of homes and other conveniences.” When the children complained that there were no candies or toys, she made gum from the rosin of trees, and formed marbles out of clay.⁵¹⁴

Walz was an active leader in the Women’s Rights movement and founded the Calumet Suomen Nais-Yhdistys (Calumet Finnish Woman’s Society), dedicated to the advancement of women. Walz was responsible for the publication of the society’s newspaper, the *Naisten Lehti* (Women’s Paper), which was distributed nationally.⁵¹⁵ She subscribed to *The Woman’s Journal*, a Boston and Chicago based weekly newspaper dedicated to “the interests of Woman, to her educational, industrial, legal and political Equality, and especially to her right of Suffrage.”⁵¹⁶

⁵¹² “Colony to Have an Island Home.” *The Minneapolis Journal* (Minneapolis, Minnesota), May 16, 1905. By “the West,” the article is referring to Michigan and the Northwest Territory as historically being the “old” west.

⁵¹³ The formation of homesteader communities based along shared ethnic or religious was by no means unique to the Finns. Other groups which commonly homesteaded in close proximity to one another included Czechoslovaks in Nebraska; Norwegians in Minnesota and Dakota Territory; Swedes in Kansas and Dakota Territory; Germans especially in Nebraska; Mormons, largely in Utah, Arizona, and Idaho; Syrians in the Dakota Territory and Oklahoma; Jewish homesteaders in North Dakota and Nebraska; Latinx homesteaders in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and California (though they had been in those places as landowners long before the Homestead Act); and African Americans in Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, and South Dakota. Though immigrants from the British Isles homesteaded in large numbers, they often did not form colonies, but rather integrated into communities. For more on this topic, see Frederick C. Luebke’s “Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains.” *Faculty Publications, Department of History*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1977), as well as Homestead National Historical Park’s white paper, created by former park historian Blake Bell, “America’s Invitation to the World.”; Maggie Walz. Chippewa County, Michigan. Homestead Patent #1183. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵¹⁴ “Finnish Colony on Drummond Island Is Now a Success.” *Detroit Free Press* (Detroit, Michigan) Sunday November 5, 1911.

⁵¹⁵ National Park Service – “Maggie Walz” <https://www.nps.gov/people/maggie-walz.htm> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁵¹⁶ *National American Woman Suffrage Association Records. The Woman’s Journal; Subscription List. July 27, 1895. Page 84. Manuscript / Mixed Material.* [By the People mss3413201998-2 \(Organizing for Women’s Suffrage: The NAWSA Records: Subject File: N-Z\) \(loc.gov\)](#)



Figure 31- Studio Portrait of Maggie Walz, ca. 1900. Image courtesy of Keweenaw National Historical Park

The Escanaba Morning Press observed that Maggie Walz was among the first women to apply independently for citizenship in Houghton County. The “noted Finish editor, suffragist, colonizer, and uplift promoter” was only the second woman to apply for individual citizenship in the county. It was crucial for any immigrant who sought suffrage or a homestead to become a naturalized citizen. Immigrants were welcome to claim land under the Homestead Act of 1862, but were required to declare their intent to become citizens, and be naturalized before “proving up.”

The Morning Press, in reporting on a Miss Beatrice M. Taylor of Calumet, who had migrated from Canada in 1892, made the link between homesteading, citizenship, and suffrage clear: “... application [for citizenship] does not as a matter of course, stamp her as an equal suffragist; that is to say, it is not prima facie evidence that she considers she is to have the ballot about the time she becomes a citizeness... it may mean only that she wants to vote in school elections or wants to take out a homestead.”⁵¹⁷ Women were thinking about citizenship as being linked to the vote, as well as to property ownership, potentially gained through the Homestead Act.

Maggie’s Drummond Island colony was a stunning success. The Detroit Free Press reported that as of November 1911, there were “five settlements, with a combined population of probably a thousand.”⁵¹⁸ The primary settlement on the island was Kreetan, a Finnish name for Maggie – named after Walz. By 1911, first fourteen colonists had successfully proven up, and more would follow shortly.⁵¹⁹ As studied by the Center for Great Plains Studies in their recently produced Historic Resource Study, *Black Homesteaders in the Great Plains*, education and the creation of community were highly prized and prioritized in homesteader colonies – Kreetan had

⁵¹⁷ “Woman Applies for Citizenship,” *Escanaba Morning Press* (Escanaba, Michigan), February 4, 1915.

⁵¹⁸ “Finnish Colony on Drummond Island Is Now a Success,” *Detroit Free Press* (Detroit, Michigan), Sunday November 5, 1911.

⁵¹⁹ “Finnish Colony on Drummond Island Is Now a Success,” *Detroit Free Press* (Detroit, Michigan), Sunday November 5, 1911.

five stores, a hotel, and the only known school in the nation attended exclusively by Finnish children.⁵²⁰ There were a total of five schools across the island, as well as a permanent sawmill to take advantage of the abundant timber resources on Drummond.⁵²¹

Other woman homesteaders in the colony who successfully proved up in their own name included Olga Kristina Andrejen (Nikkila) and Signe Maria Danielson (Nikkila).⁵²² Olga and Signe were sisters, whose father Pekka and brother Matti also homesteaded on Drummond Island.⁵²³ In fact, the 1910 census report for Drummond Island, taken just before the settlement was in its prime, reveals just how important the Finnish homesteader colony was to the area.⁵²⁴ Of the 123 households appearing in the township, just over 50 of them were either Finnish immigrants, or second-generation Finns. Nearly ninety percent of all Finns on the island were part of a family who claimed land under the Homestead Act, thanks to Walz' organization and promotion of the settlement on behalf of her people.⁵²⁵

Walz attended the International Women's Christian Temperance Union Congress in Scotland in 1910, and was the representative of Finnish Temperance organizations for the 42nd annual National American Woman Suffrage Association Convention held in Washington, D.C. in April of 1910.⁵²⁶ The Calumet Finnish Ladies Society worked hand-in-hand with suffragists and temperance workers to promote both causes, presenting a petition of 20,000 signatures at the convention in D.C. - calling for the vote for women.⁵²⁷

Chippewa County, where Maggie Walz's Drummond Island homesteader colony was located, experienced a significant influx of homesteaders – and with them, a significant uptick in support for suffrage. The earliest homesteaders in Chippewa County arrived in the 1860s and proved up in 1870. Approximately 50 had settled in the county by the time of the 1874 vote on women's suffrage.⁵²⁸ The majority of settlement in the region came after that vote: 90% of Chippewa County's nearly 1,100 successful homesteaders proved up between 1880 and 1925.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁰ Rick Edwards, Jake Friefeld, and Mikal Eckstrom. *Black Homesteaders in the Great Plains*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020).

⁵²¹ "Finnish Colony on Drummond Island Is Now a Success." *Detroit Free Press* (Detroit, Michigan), Sunday November 5, 1911.

⁵²² Nikkila. Chippewa County, Michigan. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵²³ Drummond Township, Chippewa County, Michigan. Department of Commerce and Labor – Bureau of the Census. Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 – Population.

⁵²⁴ That homesteaders were specifically enumerated on the census not just as farmers, but as homesteaders, is unique – probably because the enumerator of Drummond Township, John Wells Church, was a homesteader in the area as well. Church had five claims on Drummond Island, all predating the Finnish colony there. J.W. Church. Chippewa County, Michigan. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#).

⁵²⁵ Drummond Township, Chippewa County, Michigan. Department of Commerce and Labor – Bureau of the Census. Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 – Population.

⁵²⁶ Ida Husted Harper. *The History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. V, 1900-1920*. New York: National American Woman Suffrage Association, J. J. Little & Ives, 1922, 288.

⁵²⁷ "Finnish Ladies' Society Holds Annual Election." *The Calumet News* (Calumet, Michigan), January 30, 1911.

⁵²⁸ A total of 49 homesteads were proved up by November 1879. Chippewa County, Michigan. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵²⁹ Chippewa County, Michigan. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

The county grew by 77.5% between 1890 and 1900 – one of the fastest growth rates across the state in that period. During that decade, 522 homesteads were proved up in the county. This homesteader boom came just in time to propel Chippewa County to be one of the handful of counties across the state that voted in favor of suffrage in 1912, 1913, and 1918.⁵³⁰

In fact, the counties that voted in support of those elections during the 1910s were heavily homesteaded, and almost entirely in the Upper Peninsula or the northern portion of the Lower Peninsula. Fifteen of the seventeen counties that voted in favor of suffrage in those three elections were in Northern Michigan or the Upper Peninsula. As seen in Map 10, those counties include Baraga, Iron, and Luce, all located in the Upper Peninsula – the only three counties across the state not to vote “No” in a single election (they were not yet organized in 1874). Suffrage organizers in Michigan were aware of these correlations, noting that “The farmers... will be with us, especially where Grange confidence has been at work. The Grange declared for woman’s suffrage, and its women with it, but where there are no Grangers the women seem to consider the ballot something they should have nothing to do with.”⁵³¹

Emmet and Cheboygan counties, at the very northern tip of the Lower Peninsula, both had substantial numbers of homesteaders and suffrage support. Emmet County had just over a thousand claims successfully proved up under the Homestead Act, predominantly between 1875 and 1900. With only 360 direct sales under the Land Act of 1820, far more people in Emmet County acquired homestead land than purchased it outright from the government. Cheboygan, by contrast, was more heavily settled by direct sale than by homesteaders (approximately 675 to 500, respectively).⁵³² Correspondingly, Emmet and its larger number of homesteaders voted strongly in favor of suffrage in 1912, 1913, and 1918, while Cheboygan only voted in favor in 1918.⁵³³ During the 1918 effort to rally support for the ballot campaign that year, the Michigan Equal Suffrage Association held a state conference in Petoskey, Emmet County in May 1918. The National American Woman Suffrage Association sent Nettie Rogers Shuler, Corresponding Secretary and campaigner for NAWSA, to serve as the keynote speaker.⁵³⁴ State and local women took part in the conference as well, including Agnes Schenk Dietz, daughter of German immigrants and homesteaders Carl Schenk and Sophie Kaseberg, who received 80 acres in Cheboygan in 1884.⁵³⁵

Though Michigan was rapidly urbanizing in the early twentieth century, going from more than 60% rural to less than 40% rural in that timeframe, there were still nearly 1.5 million rural

⁵³⁰ See map 10.

⁵³¹ “Enthusiasm Marks Meeting of Women’s Clubs of Michigan.” *Detroit Free Press* (Detroit, Michigan), October 16, 1912.

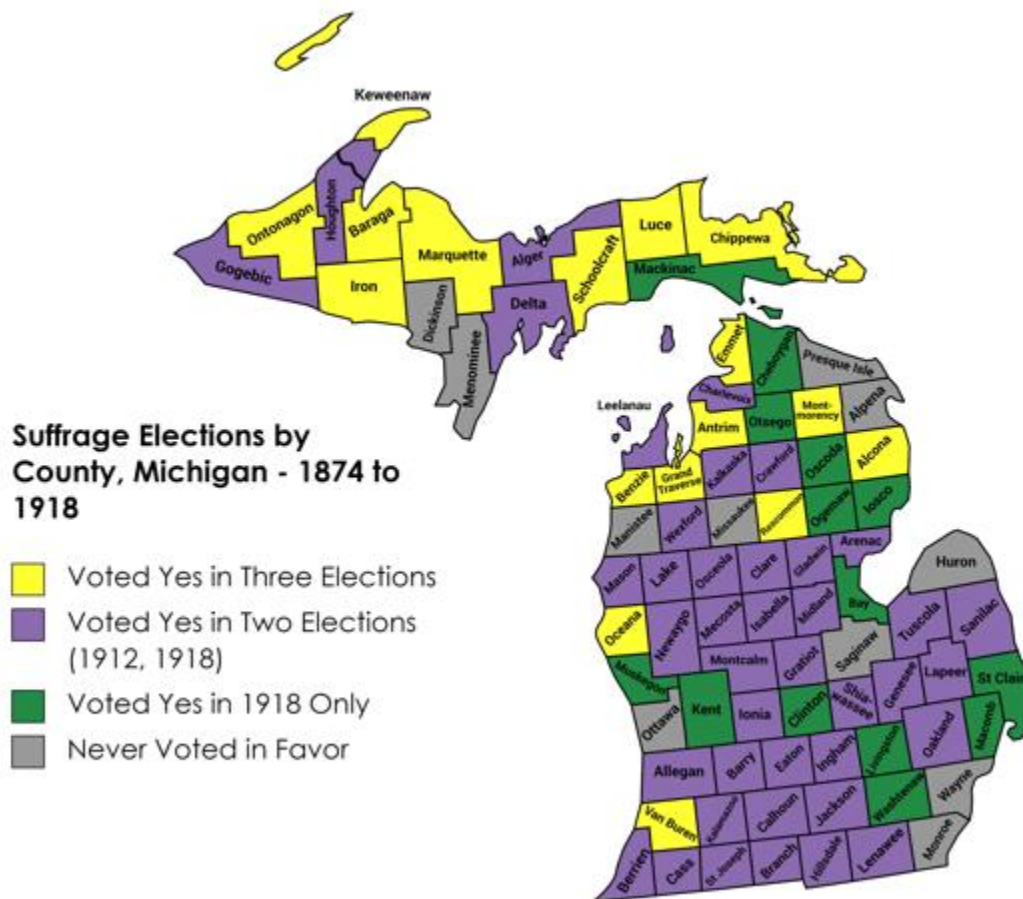
⁵³² Cheboygan County, Michigan and Emmet County, Michigan. Homestead Patents. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) and [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵³³ See Map on following page.

⁵³⁴ League of Women Voters, U.S. Records, Mrs. Frank J. Shuler, Corresponding Secretary, National American Woman Suffrage Association, half-length portrait, facing slightly left. United States Library of Congress. Photograph, Prints and Photographs Division, LOT 5543, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2003668341/>. Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁵³⁵ Carl Schenk. Cheboygan County, Michigan. Homestead Patent #5690. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) ; *Potesky Evening News*. (Potesky, Michigan), May 16, 1918.

Michiganders in the 1920 census, many of whom were homesteaders or their descendants.⁵³⁶ The major urban centers of the state were undergoing massive growth, but so were the rural populations of Luce, Baraga, Iron, Ontonagon, and Gogebic counties – thanks to the Homestead Act. The population of Iron increased from 8,900 in 1900 to more than 22,000 in 1920. Baraga grew from 4,230 to 7,662. Luce went from 2,983 to 6,149. It's no coincidence that these counties were some of the staunchest supporters of women's suffrage, as many women were proving up in their own name and becoming landowners, and others were participating in the labor, as partners, spouses, and children who would one day inherit the family farm.



Map 10 - Suffrage Elections by County, Michigan - 1874 to 1918

⁵³⁶ Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920.
<http://ftp.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1920/bulletins/demographics/population-mi-number-of-inhabitants.pdf>

Wisconsin

The birth of the Woman Suffrage movement in Wisconsin followed closely behind the first wave of homesteaders in the state. The Woman Suffrage Association of the State of Wisconsin organized in March 1868, and the first convention was held in Milwaukee in 1869, with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and others in attendance. Both Frances Willard and Carrie Chapman Catt called Wisconsin home in the mid-nineteenth century, and Willard organized the first chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Wisconsin. Her father, Josiah F. Willard settled and farmed on 160 acres near Janesville, in Rock County, Wisconsin.⁵³⁷ He organized the "Agricultural Society and Mechanics Institute" there and served as its President.⁵³⁸ Frances, like many homesteader children, attended a one-room schoolhouse – built on her father's land. Though Wisconsin had a substantial number of homesteaders, and many of its suffragist leaders grew up on rural farms, Wisconsin settlement follows a different pattern than other homesteading states further west, with much settlement predating the passage of that 1862 law. Early settlers debated women's rights and property ownership from the very beginning - the first state constitution drafted was rejected by the voters owing to the proposal on property ownership and the vote for women.⁵³⁹ (Although the legislature passed a provision for married women's property ownership in 1850).

Joseph E. Irish and his wife Isabella H. Cobban Irish were both members of the Wisconsin suffrage movement. Joseph was a part and parcel of the institution through which the federal government distributed land under the Homestead Act of 1862. After moving to Richland County, Wisconsin, he was elected County Surveyor, and "many of the roads and villages in that part of the state were surveyed by him, and he was connected with the survey of the railroad between Madison and Prairie du Chien."⁵⁴⁰ He was appointed and confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the Register at the United States Land Office of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, from 1873 through 1875, after serving a term in the state Senate in 1872-73.⁵⁴¹

The Register of the land office was a homesteaders' direct contact through the process of filing a claim under the Homestead Act of 1862. The register of the land office received the application, took an affidavit that the claimant was the head of the household; and made an initial payment to process their paperwork before being permitted to enter their land. As the register of the land office, Joseph recorded all applications on tract books and plats of his office, and he was responsible for determining whether a claim was fraudulent.⁵⁴² Though Joseph and Isabella were not homesteaders themselves, Joseph's work in the state legislature, his tenure in the land office,

⁵³⁷ Josiah Willard. Rock County, Wisconsin. Cash Sale Patent #8483 and #8484. March 3, 1843. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵³⁸ *The History of Rock County, Wisconsin*. (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879), 441.

⁵³⁹ Theodora W. Youmans, "How Wisconsin Women Won the Ballot." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*. (Vol. 5 No 1, Sept 1921): 3-32.

⁵⁴⁰ *History of Dane County, Wisconsin*. Ed. Consul Willshire Butterfield. (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880), 1003.

⁵⁴¹ Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate of the United States of America, From March 4, 1873, to March 3, 1875, Inclusive. Vol XIX. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901).

⁵⁴² The text of the Homestead Act clearly lays out these responsibilities in Sections 2, 3, 5, and 6.

and their combined efforts for suffrage directly reached and influenced homesteaders throughout the area.

Between 1873 and 1875, the years Joseph served as an agent for the land office, 163 homesteaders “proved up” claims in the county. At least eight of those claims were proved up by women in their own name, not including the women who were homesteading as wives, partners, and family members.⁵⁴³ While lower than the overall national average of around ten percent, given that most women who proved up homesteads did so after 1900, the women homesteader rate of about five percent demonstrates that women were already looking to the Homestead Act to acquire property early in the law’s tenure. In fact, the very first woman homesteader in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, proved up on September 1, 1869 – making her among the very first homesteaders nationwide to receive her land. Fewer than 400 individuals across the United States received patents prior to this date, the vast majority in Kansas or California.⁵⁴⁴ In the course of performing his duties as register, Irish would have been familiar with these homesteaders, and as a supporter of the suffrage movement, was the instrument through which these women were joining the historically franchised class of propertied Americans.

Isabella H. Cobban married Irish in January of 1874 – during his tenure as the land office Register. Her strong temperance and suffrage views surely influenced his own. Isabella was elected as the Vice President of the Women’s Equal Suffrage Association of Wisconsin in 1881, at its inaugural meeting in order to reform a state suffrage association.⁵⁴⁵ Along with President Emma Bascom, Isabella worked to “make a vigorous campaign on behalf of female suffrage in the coming elections,” with the Woman’s Equal Suffrage Association of Wisconsin formed as the “head of the movement in the state”.⁵⁴⁶

In 1882 Joseph and Isabella signed a call for an equal suffrage convention to be held in Madison in September of that year, including suffrage leaders Emma Bascom, Lucy Stone, Henry B. Blackwell, and the state governor, Lucius Fairchild.⁵⁴⁷ Later that year, Bascom and Irish attended the state WCTU conference, in order to organize a “citizens league” to promote their cause.⁵⁴⁸ Isabella referred to the Woman’s Suffrage movement as “the babe in swaddling clothes, destined to become the equalizer of human rights.”⁵⁴⁹ Thanks to her efforts, and those of her husband as Register of the Land Office, they promoted women’s suffrage to a generation of homesteaders in Wisconsin, and across the country – between Joseph’s time as a chaplain in the military across the plains, and Isabella’s speaking engagements, they spread the word throughout

⁵⁴³ List of homesteaders in Eau Claire who proved up from 1873 to 1875: [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) These homesteaders, and others who received their lands as late as 1877, would have interacted with the Eau Claire, Wisconsin, Land Office during Irish’s tenure.

⁵⁴⁴ The General Land Office Records note that fewer than 400 individuals received patents dated prior to September 1, 1869 – between the five year “proving up” period and delays with issuing paperwork, often dated in large batches on a single day, September 1·1869 is a day shared by many early homesteaders to prove up. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁴⁵ “Woman Suffrage Movement.” *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago, Illinois) Friday, April 8, 1881.

⁵⁴⁶ “Woman Suffrage Movement.” *The Inter Ocean* (Chicago, Illinois) Friday, April 8, 1881.

⁵⁴⁷ “Equal Suffrage Convention.” *The Superior Times* (Superior, Wisconsin), September 2, 1882.

⁵⁴⁸ “Personal.” *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, Wisconsin), October 19, 1882.

⁵⁴⁹ “Notes of Local Interest.” *Portage Daily Register* (Portage, Wisconsin), September 20, 1888.

the Midwestern and Great Plains states, including to Wisconsin, the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Illinois.⁵⁵⁰

Richland County was a major center of suffrage activity in the state – in addition to the Irish family proselytizing to prospective homesteaders, another one of Wisconsin's most prominent suffragist families called Richland home as well.⁵⁵¹ David G. James, a Civil War veteran and politician, grew up on the family farm in Richland Center.⁵⁵² His father, George H. James, acquired 80 acres just outside of town under the Land Act of 1820, with several scattered holdings elsewhere nearby. David married Laura Briggs, whose family acquired land in the neighboring county of Sauk, in 1872.⁵⁵³ Laura dove headfirst into the cause, advocating for suffrage and women's uplift. She organized the Richland Center Woman's Club in 1882, assisting with the statewide suffrage convention that same summer in Madison.⁵⁵⁴ She served as Recording Secretary of the Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage Association (WWSA) in the 1880s, going on to become a Vice President with the WWSA, under longtime President Olympia Brown, herself a daughter of pioneer farmers from Michigan.⁵⁵⁵

Laura and David's daughter, Ada James, followed the family into social reform and the women's rights movements, especially after the death of her mother in 1905. Ada was elected president of the Wisconsin Political Equality League in 1911, an organization which sprung off from the older Wisconsin Woman's Suffrage Association, still led by Olympia Brown.⁵⁵⁶ David James, serving in the state legislature, proposed a suffrage measure in 1911 which became Wisconsin Question 4, a referendum on women's suffrage.⁵⁵⁷ Ada mobilized the Political Equality League (PEL) to campaign on its behalf; holding rallies, organizing fundraising events, hosting keynote speakers, and printing suffrage literature in English, German, Norwegian, Yiddish, and Polish.⁵⁵⁸

When the dust settled after the polls closed on November 5, 1912, the measure fell by a tally of 227,024 against and 135,545 in favor. When Ada reached out to Olympia Brown to coordinate the PEL and the WWSA efforts for the next battle, Brown was demoralized, responding "suggestions for a union of the workers in the suffrage cause...would complicate

⁵⁵⁰ "The Local News – Friday." *Portage Weekly Democrat* (Portage, Wisconsin), August 12, 1892.; "Conference Program." *The Black Hills Weekly Journal* (Rapid City, South Dakota), June 22, 1894.

⁵⁵¹ Theodora W. Youmans. "How Wisconsin Women Won the Ballot." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (Sept. 1921): 3-32, 15.

⁵⁵² James' father, George H. James, acquired hundreds acres of land in and around Richland Center under the Land Act of 1820 and the Scrip Warrant Act of 1855: [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁵³ Briggs. Sauk County, Wisconsin. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁵⁴ P.L. Lincoln. "Richland Center Club is Probably Oldest in State; Organized 1882." *The Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison, Wisconsin), May 6, 1928.

⁵⁵⁵ "Wisconsin Brieflets." *Darlington Democrat* (Darlington, Wisconsin), October 25, 1889. "Women Are Indignant." *The Oshkosh Northwestern* (Oshkosh, Wisconsin), November 17, 1904. Olympia Brown was born in St. Joseph County, Michigan in 1835, to farmers Asa and Lephia Brown, who purchased 390 acres of land in St. Joseph County in 1833. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁵⁶ Marilyn Grant. "The 1912 Suffrage Referendum: An Exercise in Political Action." *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (Winter, 1980-1981): 107-118, 109.

⁵⁵⁷ "Why We Lost in Wisconsin." Ada James Papers, Correspondence, 1912, Nov. 8 – Dec. 23. Wisconsin MSS OP, Box 17, Folder 3.

⁵⁵⁸ Grant, 114.

matters very much. Therefore, you will pardon me if the circumstances should be that your communication should seem unnecessary and therefore should not be presented.”⁵⁵⁹ The following week, after decades of dedicated service to the cause, Brown resigned as President. Ada herself joined the National Woman’s Party, serving on the National Committee of State Chairmen as the representative for Wisconsin. The Political Equality League and the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association immediately began circulating post-election surveys and planning for the next campaign. Though the movement fell short in Wisconsin in 1912, the seeds were sown. Wisconsin – and the James family – had a prominent role yet to play in the Race to Ratification in 1919.

Minnesota

Minnesota’s settlement patterns do not fit neatly within the Old Midwest patterns of Ohio, Iowa, and Indiana, nor with the broader Great Plains pattern – it exhibits elements of both. Like Wisconsin, Minnesota’s earliest wave of settlement came in the 1850s, with many settling under military bounty land warrants. The 1862 Dakota War linked early homesteading in the state with Indian land dispossession, as Congress abrogated and annulled all treaties with the Dakota people and forcefully removed them from their ancestral homelands for the benefit of homesteading settlement on potential agricultural lands, spurring a wave of speculators to pounce on a perceived opportunity for an incoming swarm of land seekers. Many of the early settlers to Minnesota were Scandinavian immigrant homesteaders. The success of the suffrage movement in Minnesota largely depended on getting support from both political leaders and at Scandinavian immigrants at the grassroots level.

Ignatius Donnelly, politician and early settler, was something of a nineteenth-century Minnesota Renaissance man. A colorful character, he was tied to farming and town building, acquiring land through a closely related law to the Homestead Act through the Timber Culture Act of 1873. His political career spanned from being a Radical Republican, a Democrat, and a Populist. He first moved to Minnesota in 1856, where he helped establish a townsite and community at Nininger with his business partner John Nininger.⁵⁶⁰ Donnelly actively promoted the new town on the Mississippi as the prime place to settle in the Northwest, using his role as the Chief Editor of the *Emigrant Aid Journal*.

Advertisements circled widely across America, and as far away as Scotland, beseeching “all who are tired of the poverty, competition, and jealousy of the crowded East” to come to Nininger, with its “most salubrious climate, perfectly free from the fever and ague, [with] immense forests, furnishing an almost inexhaustible supply of wood... in the greatest and most fertile valley in the world.”⁵⁶¹ Though the town boomed quickly, attracting hundreds of settlers and immigrants, it was not to be. The Panic of 1857 stymied the flow of capital into the nascent town. Rampant land speculation occurred as individuals sought to buy up public lands

⁵⁵⁹ Letter from Olympia Brown to Miss A. L. James. Racine, Wisconsin, November 8, 1912. Ada James papers, correspondence, 1912, November 8 – December 23. Wis MSS OP, Box 17, Folder 3.

⁵⁶⁰ Ignatius Donnelly Papers. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1968) Accessed October 11, 2023. <http://www2.mnhs.org/library/findaids/m0138.pdf>

⁵⁶¹ “A New City in the Far West.” *The Caledonian Mercury* (Edinburgh, Scotland), Monday April 13, 1857.

nationwide. These speculators snapped up lands where a railroad might soon run through, to purchase the land at the federal minimum price of \$1.25 per acre, before reselling for considerable profit.⁵⁶² After years of speculators overextending and taking on risky investments, the bubble burst, leaving Nininger's prospects dim. The nascent town disappeared almost as fast as it grew (though Donnelly successfully proved up his 160-acre timber claim after the decline of Nininger).⁵⁶³

Ignatius Donnelly, not one to let a setback stop him, was at the beginning of a meteoric rise in power in the young state of Minnesota. He was nominated and elected as the Lieutenant Governor from 1860-1863 for his efforts in campaigning for the Republican Party in the state, where he sought relief measures for farmers still suffering from the Panic of 1857.⁵⁶⁴ He went on to be elected to the United States House of Representatives as a Radical Republican where he served in the 38th, 39th, and 40th Congress (1863-1869), as well as multiple stints as both a state senator and congressman. Known for his policies favoring progressive reform (he supported efforts to expand transportation networks, promote immigration, and was a member of the Grange), the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association courted Donnelly's support as an influential power, as did Frances Willard, who wrote in a journal entry, "I sat up all night with the Committee on Resolutions to get prohibition and suffrage in, Ignatius Donnelly of Shakespeare-Bacon fame being chairman. They voted suffrage in and put it out the minute we had gone – 7 in the a.m."⁵⁶⁵

The suffrage movement in Minnesota took off when a group of women founded the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association in Hastings, Minnesota in 1881. Those women included Sarah Burger Stearns, Harriet Bishop, and Julia B. Nelson.⁵⁶⁶ The Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association quickly caught national attention, with the city of Minneapolis hosting the American Women's Suffrage Association annual convention from October 13 to October 15, 1885. Speakers at the convention included Julia Ward Howe, Lucy Stone, Henry B. Blackwell, and other prominent members from across the country.⁵⁶⁷ After years of slow progress amongst certain groups in the state, the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association (MWSA) leaders realized the importance of branching out to rural Minnesotans, as well as to immigrant groups, especially the large number of Scandinavian immigrants in the state. While suffragists and temperance workers were at times ambivalent about engaging with immigrant populations who they felt were opposed to the goals of prohibition and the right to for women to vote, in areas with large immigrant populations, doing "work among foreign speaking people" was an

⁵⁶² Calomiris, Charles W., and Larry Schweikart. "The Panic of 1857: Origins, Transmission, and Containment." *The Journal of Economic History* 51, no. 4 (1991): 807-834, 831.

⁵⁶³ Ignatius Donnelly. Stevens County, Minnesota. Timber Culture Patent #63. February 7, 1893. Bureau of Land Management. "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁶⁴ John D. Hicks. "The Political Career of Ignatius Donnelly." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*. Vol. 8, No 1 / 2 (June – September 1921): 80-132, 83.

⁵⁶⁵ *March 22, 1896*. Frances Willard Digital Journal Project. Frances Willard House Museum and WCTU Archives. Evanston, IL.

⁵⁶⁶ Barbara Stuehler. "Organizing for the Vote: Leaders of Minnesota's Woman Suffrage Movement." *Minnesota History*, vol. 54, no. 7 (Fall 1995): 290-303, 294.

⁵⁶⁷ "The Suffragists." *Star Tribune*, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Sunday, October 11, 1885, 4, Accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/178989440>

invaluable way to increase support.⁵⁶⁸ As Norwegian immigrants in both Minnesota and the Dakotas established an ethnic identity based on a sense of progressiveness, strategically supporting women's rights – as illustrated by Julia Nelson, Nanny Jaeger Mattson, and Helga Estby – they made a natural ally in the cause.⁵⁶⁹

Nanny Mattson Jaeger was emblematic of the Scandinavian homesteader experience in Minnesota, thanks to the influences of her immigrant homesteader parents. She was born in Goodhue County near Red Wing, Minnesota, to first-generation Swedish immigrant parents Hans Mattson and Cherstin Peterson in 1859, amidst the earliest wave of Scandinavian immigration to the region. Her parents helped establish a Swedish colony in Goodhue County, where they claimed 160 acres of federal public domain land not far from Red Wing.⁵⁷⁰ Hans Mattson fought in the Civil War as part of the Third Minnesota Regiment, a unit of Swedes and Norwegians. Following the war, he promoted homesteading to Scandinavian immigrants, both for the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad Company, and the Minnesota State Board of Immigration. Swedish and Norwegian language newspapers and broadsides promoted the Homestead law to immigrants and potential settlers, such as the Minneapolis-based *Skaffaren Och Minnesota Stats Tidning* (founded by Mattson), in a March 20, 1879 issue which comprehensively listed the prospective information that a would-be homesteader would need to know in order to prove up a claim successfully.⁵⁷¹ The Mattsons took an assimilationist view of immigration, celebrating their cultural heritage while wielding it to “fit in for American citizenship.”⁵⁷²

As Nanny Mattson came of age in a household that prized and cherished its Swedish roots and actively promoted homesteading and ethnic settlement, it is no surprise that she turned to her ethnic identity and values as a young woman seeking to advance the cause of the woman's suffrage movement in the United States. After becoming one of the first women of Scandinavian descent to graduate from the University of Minnesota, she noted that “it was my privilege to take an active part in the struggle for woman suffrage, which has always seemed to me the most important and constructive work of my generation.”⁵⁷³ She was an influential leader of the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association, founded in Minnesota in 1907. She served as the organization's second president, succeeding Norwegian founder Jenova Martin.

Minnesota suffragist Julia Nelson married a Scandinavian immigrant and farmer and wrote a poem satirizing conservative viewpoints on gender equality on the farm titled “Hans Dunderkopf's Views on Equality.”⁵⁷⁴ “Dunderkopf” (‘idiot’ or ‘stupidhead’) is greeted by an

⁵⁶⁸ Wagner, Ella. “The Saloon Is Their Palace”: Race, Immigration, and Politics in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1874-1933 (2022). *Dissertations*. 3956. https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_diss/3956, 67. Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁵⁶⁹ Anna Peterson. “Making Women's Suffrage Support an Ethnic Duty: Norwegian American Identity Constructions and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1880-1925”. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Summer 2011), 5-23, 6.

⁵⁷⁰ Hans Mattson. Goodhue County, Minnesota. Military Bounty Patent #14068. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁷¹ *Skaffaren och Minnesota Stats Tidning* (Minneapolis, Minnesota), March 20, 1879.

⁵⁷² “Journalistic Ambitions of Minneapolis Woman Thwarted by Editor Father, Reminisces Show.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minnesota), January 8, 1922.

⁵⁷³ “Journalistic Ambitions of Minneapolis Woman Thwarted by Editor Father, Reminisces Show.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minnesota), January 8, 1922.

⁵⁷⁴ Nelson, Julia B. *Hans Dunderkopf's Views on Equality*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897-1911. Rare Book and Special Collections Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbcmiller001474>

equal rights advocate with a petition for women's suffrage, and the farmer replies that "Mein frau got right yet on [the] farm to [w]ork as much as me. It likes me not to plow alone, I quicker wheat can sow when mein frau undt mein pig girl to help me both shall go." But when the suffragist clarifies he means that women are taxed and must obey the law, but cannot vote, Dunderkopf claims that voting is only for men, and tells his wife to get back to work pitching the hay.⁵⁷⁵

Nelson wasn't spouting empty rhetoric, either. After her husband passed away at a young age, she took over running the family farm near Red Wing, Minnesota. An article in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* wrote about Julia, this "lady farmer" and "warm advocate of woman's suffrage," noting that she brought skill and energy to running her 240-acre farm, buying agricultural implements and stock, and kept the farm running well.⁵⁷⁶ Though she grew wheat and potatoes, she refused to grow barley: she was a dedicated WCTU member who refused to raise crops dedicated to brewing beer.

The author of the article, "Aurora," went on to muse about other lady farmers and the land available to them under the Homestead Act. She asked: "Why are not more women farmers? ... There is room for all on the broad prairies. Uncle Sam will give a woman a chance for the asking. They do not need to sit with folded hands and complain of 'unequal rights.' No one is going to deny them the privilege of carrying on as large a farm as any man, with as large profits."⁵⁷⁷ Minnesota women knew that the Homestead Act offered opportunities to women to own substantial amounts of land in their own name, working and using that land to establish economic, social, and political equality. They took steps to promote participation in Minnesota, but also reaching out to those elsewhere on behalf of the cause.

In 1890, Nelson worked with South Dakota suffragists to reach out to Norwegian homesteaders in the state who had limited English. The campaign requested written propaganda from NAWSA, though Carrie Chapman Catt wrote back that NAWSA had no literature available in "foreign languages," illustrating that the national-level organizations were not adequately prepared to engage fully with ethnic immigrant homesteaders, and so the burden fell to groups like the Scandinavian Woman Suffrage Association, to organize, translate, print, and promote materials on their own.⁵⁷⁸

While many immigrant homesteaders felt the need to take up the suffrage cause as part of organized groups like the SWSA, others acted independently. Helga Johannsen was born in Oslo, Norway in 1860. As a young girl, her family emigrated to the United States, arriving in Manistee County, Michigan in 1871. Not long after she arrived, the state of Michigan held a referendum on women's suffrage. Though the referendum was voted down, Manistee County, like many rural and homesteading areas, voted much more heavily in support than urban areas. It is likely

⁵⁷⁵ Nelson, Julia B. *Hans Dunderkopf's Views on Equality*. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897-1911. Rare Book and Special Collections Division. <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbcmiller001474> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁵⁷⁶ "A Lady Farmer." *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minnesota), June 10, 1882.

⁵⁷⁷ "A Lady Farmer." *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis, Minnesota), June 10, 1882.

⁵⁷⁸ Carrie Chapman Catt to Clara Williams, July 26, 1898, Folder 26, Box 6676, Pickler Family Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society.

that Helga's first widespread exposure to suffrage came during the 1874 Michigan suffrage campaign.

Helga Johannsen married Ole Estby in 1876, and soon after they headed west to Yellow Medicine County, Minnesota, where they staked a claim to a prairie homestead, building a sod house.⁵⁷⁹ The couple were amongst the earliest homesteaders in the area – a wave of Norwegians began proving up near Canby, Minnesota around 1873. This wave was part of the larger Scandinavian migration to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries across the newly opened lands of homesteading states – especially Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and the Dakotas. Norwegian immigration exploded following the Civil War, and most heavily in Minnesota. O.E. Rolvaag, who emigrated from Norway to South Dakota in the 1890s, explores Norwegian homesteaders on the Great Plains in his famous *Giants in the Earth* series (*Giants in the Earth*, 1927; *Peder Victorious*, 1928; and *Their Father's God*, 1931).⁵⁸⁰ He dedicated *Giants in the Earth* “to those of my people who took part in the Great Settling.”

Though they faced difficulties, such as a devastating winter, a prairie fire, and isolation, the Estby family successfully proved up on the claim, receiving the patent to the land on April 28, 1888.⁵⁸¹ Though surely feeling a sense of accomplishment at their achievement, the couple decided to pull up their roots once again, leaving the prairie behind and moving to Washington, where they purchased a 160-acre farm for \$600 in 1892.⁵⁸² In the aftermath of the Panic of 1893, their creditors threatened to seize the family farm to satisfy the Estby's debts. Helga saw an opportunity to raise money, both for the farm, and to promote women's suffrage. An unnamed sponsor, affiliated with the suffrage movement, wanted to demonstrate that “women are not incapable of great deeds,” and offered a reward of \$10,000 if they could successfully walk across the continent to New York.⁵⁸³ The sponsor felt that success would show that the progressive “new woman” could show the endurance of women to the world.⁵⁸⁴ Helga and her teenage daughter Clara departed Spokane on May 5, 1896 on a grand overland expedition – Spokane to Walla Walla, to Boise, Salt Lake, Cheyenne, Denver, Lincoln, Chicago, Buffalo, finally to New York City.⁵⁸⁵

Though a difficult and daunting journey, filled with challenges, travelling across the country in 1896 was a unique experience for the mother-daughter pair. Once they reached Salt Lake City, Helga and Clara began wearing the bicycle skirts their sponsor requested they wear.⁵⁸⁶ Hunt asserts that “sometime during the walk, her interest in politics awakened, perhaps from earlier memories of the suffrage movement in Manistee during her childhood. It is possible

⁵⁷⁹ Linda Lawrence Hunt. *Bold Spirit*, 22.

⁵⁸⁰ Kristoffer F. Paulson. “Berdahl Family History and Rolvaag's Immigrant Trilogy.” *Norwegian-American Studies* 27 (1977), 55-87. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45221334>. Accessed October 11, 2023,

⁵⁸¹ Ole Estby. Yellow Medicine County, Minnesota. Homestead Patent #3533. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁸² Hunt, 62.

⁵⁸³ “Walked Many Miles.” *Portage Daily Democrat* (Portage, Wisconsin), May 15, 1897.

⁵⁸⁴ Hunt, 86.

⁵⁸⁵ “A Walk to New York.” *The Silver Blade* (Rathdrum, Idaho), May 9, 1896.

⁵⁸⁶ Hunt, 119.

that in Wyoming, the Equality State, Helga began to wonder, “Should such rights be given to Washington women too?”⁵⁸⁷

In 1910, Estby helped push Washington to become just the fifth state across the country to grant women full voting rights, when the state placed a Women’s Suffrage Amendment on the ballot on November 8, 1910. The election was a resounding victory – a nearly two to one margin, with 64% of the electorate in favor.⁵⁸⁸ It was a much-needed victory for the cause, not just in Washington, but across the country – it had been nearly fifteen years since any other state had granted women the right to vote.

Minnesota homesteaders and farmers like Nanny Mattson Jaeger, Julia Nelson, and Helga Estby knew that once you put your hand to the plow, you can’t put it down until you get to the end of the row – it was time to finish planting the seeds of suffrage. Suffragist leaders in the state reached out to Knute Nelson, Norwegian immigrant, Civil War veteran, homesteader, former governor of Minnesota, and longtime U.S. Senator, who chaired the committee on Public Lands. Knute Nelson, as a longtime power in the land, would be a powerful ally in the cause.

Indiana

Indiana, as one of the states which formed “the nucleus of the public domain” following the American Revolutionary War, had a substantial amount of that nucleus claimed in the early nineteenth century.⁵⁸⁹ The earliest claim in Indiana was in 1802, and by the 1820s there were thousands of claims and purchases per year. By the 1840s and 1850s when the Homestead Act was first being debated in Congress, the state of Indiana had been heavily settled. By 1860, Indiana’s population of 1,350,000 meant that only five U.S. states – New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Virginia - were more populous at that point in American history.⁵⁹⁰ Like Ohio and Illinois, its well-settled midwestern homesteading neighbors, most available public domain land in Indiana had been claimed years before. Though there were fewer than 50 homesteads in Indiana, claiming less than 2,000 acres, one of the state’s most prominent suffragist leaders, Anna Carter Dunn, was also one of Indiana’s few homesteaders.

Anna Carter Dunn was the daughter of Sarah and Matthew Dunn, born in Indiana in 1864. She grew up in Logansport and married Dr. James F. Noland. The two married in 1883 and filed a homestead claim in Starke County, Indiana in 1893. Their land entry case file reflects that they built a one and a half story frame house, a chicken house, a barn, fenced the property, and cultivated crops on the land, meeting all the requirements of the law. They successfully proved up their patent in 1900.⁵⁹¹ That Dunn and Noland were homesteaders in Indiana at all is

⁵⁸⁷ Hunt, 130.

⁵⁸⁸ Washington Secretary of State Election Search Results – 1910 General. Constitutional Amendment Article VI. [Election Search Results - Elections & Voting - WA Secretary of State](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁵⁸⁹ Benjamin T. Arrington. “Free Homes for Free Men:” A Political History of the Homestead Act, 1774-1863. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2012.

⁵⁹⁰ 1860 Decennial Census – Population of the United States in 1860.

⁵⁹¹ Land Entry Case Files: Homestead Final Certificates. Record Group 49: Records of the Bureau of Land Management. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; James F. Noland. Starke County,

fairly exceptional – fewer than fifty patents for land were issued in Indiana under the Homestead Act, as most available land in the state had been claimed prior to the passage of the law in 1862.⁵⁹² Proving up in Indiana in 1900, Dunn and Noland had one of the last claims in the state – only 13 patents were issued later than theirs.

After receiving the patent to the land, like many homesteaders, they used their newfound status as landowners to advance their lives. Instead of remaining on the farm, they sold it to raise \$1,000 to purchase a home and a lot in Anna's hometown of Logansport. Through Noland's practice and their investments, they were quite comfortable, enabling Dunn to turn to activism.⁵⁹³ After returning to Logansport, she became an active member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union as well as a major suffragist leader.

Indiana's first suffrage organization was created in part thanks to the efforts of Amanda M. Way. Amanda served as Vice President and gave the opening address of the Woman's Rights Convention in October of 1851, and the group met annually through the 1850s.⁵⁹⁴ Like many suffragists and women's rights reformers, she was also active in the temperance movement. Way served in the Civil War as a nurse, before heading westwards, first to Kansas, later to Idaho and California. She was active in the temperance movement, listing her occupation in the 1880 census as "temperance lecturer,"

In 1906 Noland was elected as the second vice-president of the Indiana Woman Suffrage Association, though the organization had largely been inactive for some time, after Amanda Way's crusade for the vote brought her out west.⁵⁹⁵ In 1908, Noland went above and beyond the call of duty to revive the moribund chapter. "Acting as president, secretary, and treasurer, and supplying the funds from her own purse, Mrs. Noland sent hundreds of letters over the State asking for names of people interested in suffrage and from the names she formed committees... her only assistant was her husband, Dr. J.F. Noland."⁵⁹⁶

A convention met in her hometown of Logansport, Indiana March 16 and 17, 1909, reported as the largest attendance in its history.⁵⁹⁷ She was rewarded for her tenacity and dedication, when she was elected President of the newly resurgent Indiana chapter of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). She also served on the Board of Directors of Indiana's Woman's Franchise League.⁵⁹⁸ Logansport became the de facto suffrage

Indiana. Homestead Patent #30. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁹² Indiana. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁵⁹³ "Beaumont Building Bought by Dr. James Noland for \$28,000." *Logansport Pharos-Tribune* (Logansport, Indiana). November 2, 1916.

⁵⁹⁴ "Women's Rights Convention," *Indiana True Democrat*, September 25, 1851; "Woman's Rights Convention," *Indiana True Democrat*, October 30, 1851; "Women's Convention in Indiana," *Liberator*, November 7, 1851, p. 3; *Indiana Woman's Suffrage Association Record Book, 1851-1886*, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, SC 1792, Department of Manuscripts and Archives, October 14-15, 1851.

⁵⁹⁵ *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 6, 166.

⁵⁹⁶ *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 6, 166.

⁵⁹⁷ "Women Petition President." *The Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles California). March 17, 1909.

⁵⁹⁸ Grace Julian Clarke Papers. MSS I ISLI L033. Rare Books and Manuscripts, Women in Hoosier History. Indiana State Library. <https://archives.isl.lib.in.us/repositories/2/resources/127> Accessed October 11, 2023.

capital of Indiana thanks to Noland, with five of the Indiana ESA's eleven officers residing there.⁵⁹⁹

At the 1912 state convention in Logansport, Noland's message took to the skies, courtesy of a collaborative effort with Dr. Hannah Graham and Kansas suffragist Elizabeth N. Barr.⁶⁰⁰ Barr distributed leaflets from a hot air balloon announcing the convention: "To the Progressive Women of Indiana, Greetings: On June 28 and 29, 1912, the equal suffragists of Indiana will assemble in state convention at Logansport, Indiana to report the progress of the woman suffrage and to confer upon existing conditions and the best methods of work in the state... Women of Indiana, this is your organization and this is your work. Come and show that you are no longer satisfied to be ignored and that you insist on having a voice in this government."⁶⁰¹ The novel form of advertising and publicity from the skies was a tremendous hit.

Several other Indiana suffragists deserve special mention for their ties to the Homestead Act. George Washington Julian was a Republican Congressman who vehemently opposed slavery and advocated broadly for the Homestead Act to "give homes to the millions who need them, and... to coin their labor into national wealth by marrying it to the virgin soil which woos the cultivator."⁶⁰² In 1863, he was appointed as chair of the House Committee on Public Lands, and proposed to settle Freedpersons on homesteads, stating "[the government] should digest an equitable homestead policy, parceling out the plantations of rebels in small farms for the enjoyment of the freed-men, who have earned their right to the soil by generations of oppression, instead of selling it in large tracts to speculators."⁶⁰³ His bill passed the House of Representatives, but not the Senate, though it could be the spiritual predecessor to the Southern Homestead Act of 1866, which aimed to distribute 80 million acres of public domain land to African Americans in the South.⁶⁰⁴ On December 8, 1868, Clarke introduced A Resolution for Equal Voting Rights, a proposed constitutional amendment that would allow "all citizens of the United States, whether native or naturalized" to vote "without any distinction or discrimination whatever founded on race, color, or sex." House Resolution 371, though defeated, showed his commitment to gender and racial equality, in addition to equal access to land ownership through the Homestead Act.⁶⁰⁵

⁵⁹⁹ *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 6, 168.

⁶⁰⁰ "Suffragist Up in the Air." *Indianapolis News* (Indianapolis, Indiana), May 11, 1912. "Suffragist to Take Balloon Jaunt Here." *Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), May 11, 1912.

⁶⁰¹ "Suffrage Up in the Air:" The Equal Suffrage Association's 1912 Publicity Campaign. Jill Weiss Simins. *Indiana Historical Bureau of the Indiana State Library*. "[Suffrage Up in The Air: The Equal Suffrage Association's 1912 Publicity Campaign – The Indiana History Blog](#)" "Suffragets Held Meeting." *The Call-Leader* (Elmwood, Indiana), June 25, 1912. This aerial advertising took place years before the famous Goodyear Blimp, although one of the first airships to fly in Great Britain (1902) carried an advertisement for "Mellins Food." Suffragists on both sides of the Atlantic began using balloons and blimps in their advertising. For more, see Simins' article. Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶⁰² Patrick W. Riddleberger. "George W. Julian: Abolitionist Land Reformer." *Agricultural History* Vol. 29, No 3 (Jul. 1955): 108-115, 109.

⁶⁰³ Patrick W. Riddleberger. "George W. Julian: Abolitionist Land Reformer." *Agricultural History* Vol. 29, No 3 (Jul. 1955): 108-115, 109.

⁶⁰⁴ See 'African Americans Suffragists Shall Not Be Denied' in the Epilogue for more on the Southern Homestead Act of 1866 and African American homesteading.

⁶⁰⁵ *History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives*, "Resolution for Equal Voting Rights," https://history.house.gov/Records-and-Research/Listing/lfp_045/ Accessed October 11, 2023.

Grace Julian Clarke, Congressman Julian's daughter, continued the family fight for equality and women's suffrage. Clarke was President of the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs as well as the Legislative Council of Indiana Women (an alliance between the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs, the WCTU of Indiana, the Indiana Mothers Congress, the Franchise League of Indiana, amongst other suffrage, temperance, and women's reform groups).⁶⁰⁶ In her official capacity she oversaw and directed the efforts of large numbers of Indiana women, and directed her influence to prioritizing the vote for women.⁶⁰⁷

The growing momentum of the movement in Indiana in the early twentieth century saw the passage of the Maston-McKinley Partial Suffrage Act in 1917, granting women the right to vote in municipal, school, and special elections. After Indiana passed its limited suffrage in 1917, Clarke wrote that "it goes without saying that there was a great deal of jubilation over the numerous recent suffrage victories. The note of triumph was far more pronounced and clearer than at any previous gathering of suffragists, for within the last few months seven states have given to women a considerable share of the voting power."⁶⁰⁸



Figure 32 - Grace Julian Clarke, 1909. Image courtesy of the Indiana State Library, Women in Hoosier History Collection.

However, the constitutionality of the law was challenged by Henry Bennett, and then by William Knight, who argued that Indiana taxpayers should not be responsible for increased costs to operate polling stations and separate ballot boxes for women.⁶⁰⁹ The Supreme Court ruled that the law was unconstitutional on October 26, 1917.

⁶⁰⁶ Grace Julian Clarke Papers. Rare Books and Manuscripts, Indiana State Library. MSS I ISLI L033.

⁶⁰⁷ "Club Women Here in Annual Meeting." *The South Bend Tribune* (South Bend, Indiana), March 4, 1911.

⁶⁰⁸ Grace Julian Clarke. "Women's Clubs." *The Indianapolis Star* (Indianapolis, Indiana), May 20, 1917.

⁶⁰⁹ Jennifer M. Kalvaitis. *Indianapolis Women Working for the Right to Vote: The Forgotten Drama of 1917*. Thesis, Indiana University, May 2013.

The *Hoosier Suffragist*, an Indiana based suffrage newspaper, reported “Are we downhearted? No! Not defeated; only delayed.”⁶¹⁰

The efforts of the Equal Suffrage Association turned from state suffrage instead to a federal amendment, which the National Woman’s Party promoted as the fastest path to the vote for women not just in Indiana, but across the nation. With the transition to supporting a federal suffrage amendment in 1917, the efforts of suffragists like Anna Noland and Grace Clarke were rewarded. Just two years later, Congress sent a federal amendment to the states for ratification. On January 16, 1920, Indiana voted to ratify. Grace Clarke continued her work, as the Women’s Franchise League of Indiana reorganized into the League of Women Voters of Indiana, continuing to support and educate the newly enfranchised women of the state.

Iowa

Iowa deserves an honorable mention for its role in women’s suffrage “planted in the soil.” Like the other eastern homesteading states, especially Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio, much of Iowa’s available public land was claimed prior to 1862. By the time the Homestead Act was passed, there was not as much land left to homesteaders for “actual settlement” as there was in states west of the Missouri river. In fact, of those four states, only Iowa had a significant homesteader population, with approximately 903,000 acres claimed by 8,851 homesteaders.⁶¹¹ Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio combined had fewer than 300 homesteader families, claiming approximately 15,000 acres. Those states had similar settlement patterns and reasons for limited public lands as Iowa, but even more extreme examples. Most of Iowa’s available public lands had been snapped up by investors and speculators in the 1850s.⁶¹² However, in all these states, were significant rural agrarian populations who were part of the growing suffrage movement – from members involved in grassroots organizations seeking national change, to leaders of the movement.

Suffrage in the Midwestern and Western states often predated their statehood, and suffragists were actively promoting the cause across the continent, far from the spotlight in the East. Amelia Jenks Bloomer addressed the Nebraska territorial legislature in 1856, well before its admittance to the Union as a state in 1867. Bloomer was aware of the blossoming women’s rights movement. After marrying David Bloomer, she moved to Seneca Falls with him, where she engaged in social reform movements there, including the Seneca Falls Ladies Temperance Society.⁶¹³ She attended the Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention, held on July 19 and 20, 1848. This convention was a veritable “Who’s Who” of figures in the movement, including Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Frederick Douglass. At this point, Bloomer was focused solely on the temperance cause, and had not yet adopted the issue of women’s rights

⁶¹⁰ “Are We Downhearted? No! Not Defeated; Only Delayed.” *The Hoosier Suffragist* (Indianapolis, Indiana), October 26, 1917. Indiana State Library Digital Collections. Women in Hoosier History Collection.

⁶¹¹ “State by State Numbers.” Homestead National Monument of America.

<https://www.nps.gov/home/learn/historyculture/statenumbers.htm>, Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶¹² Dr. Paul W. Gates notes that approximately a twelfth of the state was available for homesteading. *The Homestead Law in Iowa. Agricultural History*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (April 1964), 67 – 78, 72.

⁶¹³ National Park Service. “Amelia Bloomer.” <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/amelia-bloomer.htm> Accessed October 11, 2023.

(she was not among those at the convention who signed the Declaration of Sentiments).⁶¹⁴ However, the conference inspired her – shortly afterwards, she began publishing the first newspaper for women, *The Lily*.⁶¹⁵

Bloomer moved from the “birthplace” of Women’s Suffrage in Seneca Falls to Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1855, and brought her ideas and ideals with her. There she served as the president of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Society. Council Bluffs at that point was very much an American “frontier” town. It was a launching point of migrations and wagon trains full of settlers bound for westward trails. These same paths also served as a vector for new ideas to spread.

Thanks to the recently passed Married Woman’s Property Act, by the 1850s married women were eligible to own land and property in their own name. New York passed the first such act in 1848, and states around the nation quickly followed suit.⁶¹⁶ In Iowa’s first legal code, married women were enabled to own property in their own name, though it had to be registered in their own name, not the husband’s name, to be considered legally the wife’s property. Amelia Bloomer acquired several patents to public domain land through the General Land Office – between 1857 and 1859, she acquired four tracts under the Scrip Warrant Act of 1855, and a further five through cash sales.⁶¹⁷ Across the nine land patents, Bloomer attained a total of 520 acres in Pottawattamie and Taylor Counties, in southwest Iowa, not far from the Missouri River and Council Bluffs.⁶¹⁸ The 1860 Iowa census notes that her real estate was worth \$5,000.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁴ Virginia Commonwealth University. “Amelia Bloomer – Publisher and Advocate for Woman’s Rights.” <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/woman-suffrage/bloomer-amelia/> Accessed October 11, 2023. Many women who would later crusade for women’s suffrage started off in temperance movements, especially the Women’s Christian Temperance Union.

⁶¹⁵ Issued from 1849 to 1853, *The Lily* began life as a temperance journal for the Seneca Falls Ladies Temperance Society but became increasingly influenced by Elizabeth Cady Stanton in focusing on the cause of women’s rights Virginia Commonwealth University. “Amelia Bloomer – Publisher and Advocate for Woman’s Rights.” <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/woman-suffrage/bloomer-amelia/> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶¹⁶ “An Act for the more effectual protection of the property of married women.” Passed in New York, April 7, 1848, stated that “The real and personal property, and the rents issues and profits thereof of any female now married shall not be subject to the disposal of her husband; but shall be her sole and separate property as if she were a single female...”

⁶¹⁷ Amelia Bloomer. Pottawattamie and Taylor Counties. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁶¹⁸ These patents all predate the Homestead Act and ranged from 40 to 80-acre parcels each, including patents purchased directly under the Land Act of 1820, and under the Scrip Warrant Acts – which provided land to veterans of U.S. wars, but were transferrable to other parties.

⁶¹⁹ 1860 Iowa Census, Pottawattamie County. Louise Noun, “Amelia Bloomer, A Biography.” *The Annals of Iowa* 47 (1985), 579.



Figure 33 - Amelia Jenks Bloomer. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Amelia wrote in *The Lily*, promoting Iowa as a place where women could acquire land, and urged those who could afford to invest in property of their own in Iowa to do so. Her husband, Dexter Bloomer, was appointed as the receiver of public lands from 1861 to 1873, a period in which the Council Bluffs Land Office distributed over a thousand patents, and hundreds of homesteads were either started or proved up during his tenure.⁶²⁰ Amelia even offered to assist other women with acquiring land for themselves, writing “Send here your money and your land warrants, and secure a part in these rich prairie lands... and you will secure for yourselves and your families a patrimony at once ample and abundant for all your and their wants.”⁶²¹

Bloomer was instrumental in the creation of state and regional suffrage organizations in Iowa.⁶²² She gave an address at a suffrage convention in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa in June of 1870, where she was named Vice President of the newly created Iowa Woman Suffrage Society.⁶²³ In 1878, Amelia submitted a petition to the Senate and House of Representatives “for relief from taxation on political disabilities.”⁶²⁴ As the owner of substantial real estate in Iowa “amounting to several thousand dollars, on which she is taxed without representation,” Bloomer petitioned for “relief from this burden of taxation – or for the removal of her political disabilities, and that she may be declared invested with full power to exercise her right of self-government at the ballot box.”⁶²⁵

⁶²⁰ Council Bluffs Land Office, January 1, 1861, to December 31, 1873. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) ; Noun, 580.

⁶²¹ Noun, 580.

⁶²² Amelia Bloomer was also active in the early suffrage movement in neighboring Nebraska, as the next chapter will cover.

⁶²³ “Iowa Woman Suffrage Convention.” *The Bulletin-Journal* (Independence, Iowa), June 24, 1870, 2.

⁶²⁴ Petition from Mrs. Amelia Bloomer of Council Bluffs, Iowa, Regarding Suffrage in the West, 1878. National Archives and Records Administration. Records of the United States House of Representatives, Record Group 233.

⁶²⁵ Petition from Mrs. Amelia Bloomer of Council Bluffs, Iowa, Regarding Suffrage in the West, 1878. National Archives and Records Administration. Records of the United States House of Representatives, Record Group 233.

Just across the Missouri River from Council Bluffs was the new town of Omaha in Nebraska Territory. In January 1856, when Omaha was just a year old, Bloomer was invited to address the Nebraska territorial legislature on Woman's Rights, following an earlier presentation of hers in Omaha on July 4 of the previous year.⁶²⁶ From the very beginning, Nebraska, like much of the Midwest and West, took careful note of women's suffrage. As the legislature was adopting laws to govern the territory, Bloomer stressed "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 woman by the laws of our country in relation to the property rights of married women."⁶²⁷

Her address was well received, with newspapers around the country reporting on her persuasive demeanor. The *New York Daily Herald* reported that "The hall of Representatives, in which she spoke, was crowded to overflowing. The lady was listened to with marked interest and attention. We think all persons of candor, whatever their opinions may be in relation to the views of Mrs. Bloomer, will at least acknowledge that she is certainly a most pleasing and logical speaker, and that she handled her subject with great ability."⁶²⁸ Thanks in no small part to her speech, the legislature considered a bill for woman's suffrage. If approved, Nebraska would have been the first in the nation to ensure women's right to full enfranchisement. However, as the potential bill was placed on the last day of the session, it died without a vote. Wyoming, instead, would become the first territory or state in the country to pass a full woman's suffrage a full fourteen years later, and more than a half-century before the eventual ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.

While predating the passage of the Homestead Act by six years, Bloomer sowed the seeds of women's rights in the minds of many Midwestern women and men who would continue to take up the cause as they spread across the homesteading states on those trails, and on the rails after Council Bluffs and Omaha became the eastern terminus of the Transcontinental Railroad in the 1860s. While the failure of the territorial legislature to adopt women's suffrage in 1856 was the first time the subject was brought to a vote in Nebraska, it was far from the last, and its proponents continued to fight on earnestly.

One of America's most prominent suffragists, Carrie Chapman Catt, grew up on a farm in rural Iowa. Her experiences growing up there mirrored her homesteading suffragist sisters throughout the nation.⁶²⁹ The family farmhouse in Iowa served as a formative moment for Carrie's entry into suffrage and the women's rights movement, at the age of thirteen, during the election of 1872. She recalled, "My life was decided for me by a presidential election long, long ago... On election day, my father drove away in a three-seated buggy, carrying with him all the 'hired men', as they were called on Western farms. I was astonished that my mother did not go to

⁶²⁶ Bloomer, Amelia. "First Female Suffragist Movement in Nebraska," *Transactions and Reports of the Nebraska State Historical Society*, Volume I (Lincoln, Nebraska 1885), 58.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=nebhisttrans> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶²⁷ Bloomer, Amelia. "First Female Suffragist Movement in Nebraska," *Transactions and Reports of the Nebraska State Historical Society*, Volume I (Lincoln, Nebraska 1885), 59.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=nebhisttrans> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶²⁸ "Mrs. Bloomer in Nebraska." *New York Daily Herald* (New York, New York), January 29, 1856, 4.

⁶²⁹ The Lucius and Maria Clinton Lane house is on the National Register of Historic Places - https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/95000384_text Accessed October 11, 2023.

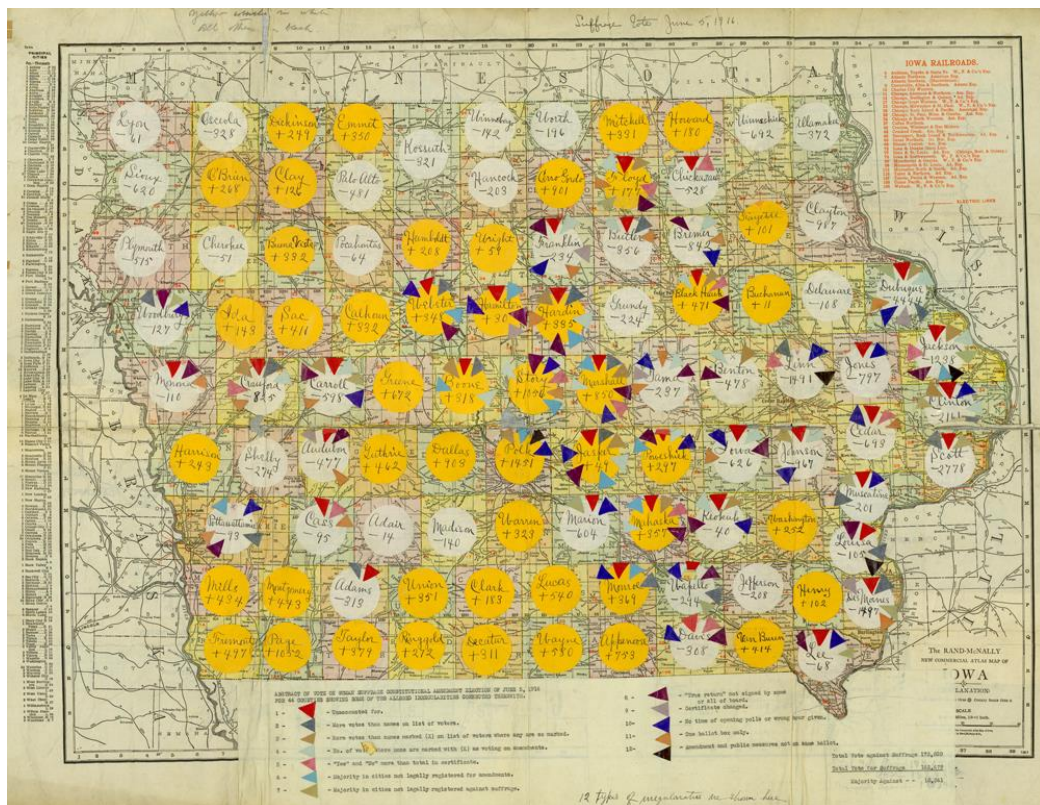
vote and shocked when she told me she had no legal right to do so.”⁶³⁰ Catt said that no experience influenced her life more than this moment, leading her down the path to suffrage.⁶³¹



Figure 34 - Carrie Chapman Catt, daughter of Iowa farmers, national suffrage leader. Image courtesy of LOC.

⁶³⁰ The Lucius and Maria Clinton Lane house, National Register of Historic Places - https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/95000384_text Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶³¹ Robert Booth Fowler, *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician*. Boston: North Eastern University Press, 1986, 6.



Catt knew the importance of connecting with women homesteaders and with the wives and family members of male homesteaders, getting the message out to as wide an audience as possible. She spoke of the importance of rural, agrarian women in the future of the movement, recalling her efforts during the 1890 suffrage campaign: “[some] of the pleasantest and best work I did was in the country and away from the railroad, and I believe our best hope lies with those people in all states.”⁶³² As efforts proceeded toward nationwide acceptance, it was crucial to reach out to these more remote homesteads, and to increase efforts to get immigrant groups in support.

Figure 35 - Vote for Woman Suffrage Constitutional Amendment in Iowa, 1916. Map from Carrie Chapman Catt's scrapbook after a failed vote in 1916. Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa.

President Abraham Lincoln sought to establish a “system for the encouragement of immigration” during his administration.⁶³³ The Union, desperate for labor during the Civil War, advertised widely about the new Homestead Act and the availability of free land in the United States. Congressman William Vandever of Iowa agreed that populating the public lands would increase the wealth and security of the United States, and that immigrants were crucial to ensure

⁶³² Carrie Chapman Catt to Clara Williams, August 29, 1898, Folder 23, Box 6676, Pickler Family Papers, South Dakota State Historical Society.

⁶³³ Zolberg, Aristide R. *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America*, 166.

the success of settlement. He endorsed the Homestead Act, stating that by opening public lands to settlers meant that “a tide of immigration will pour in upon them, and the settlement and occupation of them will increase immeasurably the basis of credit of the government.”⁶³⁴

Annie Nowlin Savery was one of those immigrants – her family emigrated from England to the United States when she was a young girl. She grew up in New York, and moved westward to Iowa, where she became active in the woman suffrage movement. Savery was named the Recording Secretary of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Society in 1870, when the organization was founded.⁶³⁵ She began giving lectures and speeches in Council Bluffs, and in 1871 “pleaded for the ballot not merely for the women of education and refinement, but more especially as the means of protecting and elevating the more numerous class [of women] who toil in poverty...”⁶³⁶ She helped organize a state suffrage convention in her hometown of Des Moines, and served on the executive committee of the National Woman Suffrage Association in the 1870s.

Savery, as an Iowa suffragist, balanced the social conservatism common in rural Iowa, with the economic pragmatism and flexibility needed to be successful on the homesteading frontier. She was quoted in newspapers around the country as saying that “the woman’s suffrage party is made up of mothers, wives, and daughters, who believe that the marriage bond is to the social what the constitution is to the political union. The other kind consists of a small minority, whose nasty ideas will block the wheels of progress for many years.”⁶³⁷ Savery, like many white homesteader women, located themselves within the homestead in the gendered and racial order of nineteenth century America, while simultaneously asserting the value of their domestic work and farm labor, seeking for political and legal equality and the right to vote.⁶³⁸ Indeed, though married, Savery incorporated into a business partnership with Ellen S. Tupper (also married), owning and operating the Iowa Italian Bee Company. She advocated for property ownership as a viable method towards equality, speaking to a beekeeping convention: “As society is now organized, there is nothing for girls outside of marriage... nothing will contribute so much, and develop into such a woman... as engaging in an employment which will make her [man’s] equal.”⁶³⁹

Annie Savery’s husband, James C. Savery, was a leader of the American Emigration Company (AEC), which promoted European immigration to the United States. The AEC and other similar advertising campaigns and efforts were responsible for a stream of migrants settling in Iowa and across the American west, many of whom claimed land under the Homestead Act to pursue a better life than they had known in their home countries.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁴ Congressional Globe, 37th Congress, 2d Session, 136. William Vandever also helped establish an organization to provide assistance to Civil War veterans seeking homesteads under the Soldiers and Sailors Homestead Act of 1872.

⁶³⁵ “Iowa Woman Suffrage Convention.” *The Bulletin-Journal* (Independence, Iowa) June 24, 1870, 2.

⁶³⁶ “Mrs. Savery at Muscatine.” *The Des Moines Register* (Des Moines, Iowa) February 22, 1871, 4.

⁶³⁷ *The New Orleans Republican* (New Orleans, Louisiana), January 5, 1872, 4.

⁶³⁸ For more on the effort of doing and rewriting women’s work in nineteenth century Iowa, see Jane E. Simonsen’s *Making Home Work: Domesticity and Native American Assimilation in the American West, 1860-1919*.

⁶³⁹ Peter L. Borst, “Beekeeping in the United States – Ellen Tupper, the Iowa Bee Queen.” *American Bee Journal* Vol. 160, No. 12, December 2020, 1363-1367, 1365.

⁶⁴⁰ James and Annie Savery received several public land patents in Deer Lodge County, Montana in the 1880s and 1890s. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” James C. Savery, Deer Lodge County, Montana. [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

For many of these immigrants, the opportunity to claim hundreds of acres of land for free would have been almost unthinkable in their countries of origin. Many of those immigrant landowners and were women – the homesteaders and suffragists there helped pave the way for women from across the world to have the ability to become landowners and businesswomen with the right to vote.

Missouri

Nineteenth-century Missouri existed at a geographic and cultural crossroads – betwixt and between the South and the Midwest. When the Homestead Act of 1862 was signed into law, the Civil War was raging – and Missouri was deeply divided. It was the only state to remain in the Union and give away land under the Homestead Act, but also legally permit the enslavement of African Americans. Just as Missouri differed from the Southern Homestead Act states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida in remaining with the Union, it also diverged on the topic of suffrage. None of the Southern Homestead Act states permitted women to vote prior to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.⁶⁴¹ On April 5, 1919, Missouri Governor Frederick D. Gardner signed a presidential suffrage bill, granting women the right to vote in presidential elections.⁶⁴²

Thanks to the famous series of children's books *Little House on the Prairie*, as well as the 1970s television show, Laura Ingalls Wilder remains one of the most well-known homesteader women. She was born on February 7, 1867, in Pepin, Wisconsin. Her family bounced around the country in the late nineteenth century, living in a handful of homesteading states. The book series chronicles her own experiences growing up across several of these states, from Wisconsin, to Kansas, Minnesota, and finally to De Smet, South Dakota.⁶⁴³ Charles Ingalls, Laura's father, claimed a homestead in De Smet in the 1880s.⁶⁴⁴ Like many homesteaders, the lessons Laura learned as a young woman on the farm established her core values. As a young woman, Laura met Almanzo Wilder, a bachelor homesteader who lived just a couple miles away

⁶⁴¹ Though there were notable exceptions, such as African American clubwoman and reformer Blanche Armwood Beatty in Florida, the Southern Homestead Act states tended to lean more anti-suffrage than any region. Many white women took anti-suffragist stances, opposed to granting the vote and civil rights to African Americans in the south. Some white women did support suffrage, such as Kate M. Gordon in Louisiana, but sought the vote for white women only, seeking a state constitutional amendment instead of a federal amendment which would guarantee the right of black women to vote.

⁶⁴² National Park Service. "Missouri and the 19th Amendment." [Missouri and the 19th Amendment \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶⁴³ Thomas Dumm. *Loss and Retrieval*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019, 157

⁶⁴⁴ Bureau of Land Management, Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Records, Charles P. Ingalls, Kingsbury County, South Dakota, [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

from her family farm. Shortly after their wedding in 1885, the couple successfully proved up on their claim together, receiving the patent in June of 1887.⁶⁴⁵

They faced challenges just like any other homesteader, the same challenges that lead to a nearly fifty percent failure rate when attempting to “prove up” the land. After a series of tragic difficulties (including diphtheria, the death of their son, and a fire) Laura and Almanzo moved away from their South Dakota homestead.⁶⁴¹ She noted that “those [South Dakota] prairies had robbed me of my health, and I was glad to leave them for they had also robbed me of nearly everything I owned, by continual crop failures.”⁶⁴⁶ Even though the couple was ready to move off the homestead, they remained deeply connected to their agricultural roots, relocating to a farm in Missouri.

It was not until after Laura and her family moved to Mansfield, Missouri, in 1894, that she began her writing career.⁶⁴⁷ Laura, like many rural women in the early twentieth century, wrote articles in a farm journal. In 1911, she became a journalist for the *Missouri Ruralist* under the name Mrs. A. J. Wilder. She discussed a diverse scope of subjects from agriculture to songs that she wrote. Her April 1916 article, “Looking for Fairies Now: The ‘Little People’ Still Appear to Those with Seeing Eyes” she wrote that the “ballot is incidental” compared to the magnitude of “work” that is ahead of women in politics in order to “[finish] the job” of men.⁶⁴⁸ In the Spring of 1919, just before the “Race to Ratification” started in earnest, she exclaimed that it is a women’s duty to attend the polls. In the article, “Women’s Duty at the Polls,” just a few weeks after the state of Missouri granted presidential suffrage to women, she stated,

“...voting has now become for the better class of women, a duty to be bravely and conscientiously done...It is ‘up to them’ to see to it that their power of their ballot is behind their influence for good clean government: for an honest administration of public affairs: for justice for all and special privileges for none.”⁶⁴⁹

Laura’s articles actively encouraged women empowerment and spoke to homesteaders and other women on the farm. In a contribution entitled “Who’ll Do the Women’s Work” from April 5, 1919, she wrote on the distinction between farm women and city women.⁶⁵⁰

“Women in towns and villages have an advantage over farm women in being able to cooperate more easily... We farm women, at least farm mothers, have stayed on the job, our own job, during all the excitement. We could not be spared from it as we realized, so there is no question of our going back or not going back. We are still doing business at the old place, in kitchen and garden and poultry yard and no one seems to be trying to take our job from us. But we do not

⁶⁴⁵ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search”, digital images, General Land Records, Almanzo J. Wilder, Kingsbury County, South Dakota, [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁶⁴⁶ *Missouri Ruralist*, Kansas City, Missouri, July 22, 1911. Vol IX, No. 458, 1.

⁶⁴⁷ “Laura Ingalls Wilder (1867-1957)”, The State Historical Society of Missouri: Historic Missourians, Accessed October 11, 2023. <https://historicmissourians.shsmo.org/historicmissourians/name/w/wilder/>

⁶⁴⁸ Wilder, A. J., “Look for Fairies Now: The ‘Little People’ Still Appear to Those with Seeing Eyes,” *Missouri Ruralist*, April 5, 1916, http://www.pioneergirl.com/ruralist_04_05_1916.jpg Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶⁴⁹ Wilder, A. J., “Look for Fairies Now: The ‘Little People’ Still Appear to Those with Seeing Eyes,” *Missouri Ruralist*, April 5, 1916, http://www.pioneergirl.com/ruralist_04_05_1916.jpg Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁶⁵⁰ Wilder, A.J. “Who’ll Do the Women’s Work?” *Missouri Ruralist*, April 5, 1919.

wish to be left too far behind our sisters in towns and cities. We are interested in social and world betterment; in religion and politics: we might even be glad to do some work as a sideline that would give us a change from the old routine. We would like to keep up, if anyone can keep up with these whirling times.”

In “And a Woman Did It”, Laura discussed one of Missouri’s most successful farms. The farm was owned by the Wilson family but was under the direct management of Mrs. Wilson.⁶⁵¹ She specifically highlighted Mrs. Wilson to show the duties of the farm were not defined by gender, and that women in agriculture were equally capable of success as their male counterparts. Competence in farm management was the staple of a homesteader’s livelihood, a necessary skill to successfully prove up the land and receive a patent, especially in many of the dryland farming areas increasingly making up homestead sites in the early twentieth century. Not only did many women homesteaders possess these skill sets, knowledge, and abilities, but that the same organizational skills required to manage a viable farm or ranch transitioned into political and community affairs and leadership roles for women. The Midwest, all homesteading states, followed behind the suffrage progress of the West and Great Plains. By 1919, every midwestern state had granted at least presidential suffrage – Illinois in 1913, Ohio and Indiana in 1917, and Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin in 1919. By 1919, the seeds of suffrage were sown across the entirety of homesteading states. It was time to harvest.

⁶⁵¹ Wilder, A. J., “And a Woman Did it,” *Missouri Ruralist*, July 20, 1917, http://www.pioneergirl.com/ruralist_07_20_1917b.jpg Accessed October 11, 2023.

Chapter Five: Remember the Friend on the Homestead: Suffrage in Nebraska

As mentioned in Chapter Three, Nebraska was, at least symbolically, the birthplace of homesteading in the United States. Homestead National Historical Park is located at “first homesteader” Daniel Freeman’s homestead site in Gage County, Nebraska. But in the adjoining section of land was the nation’s first woman homesteader, Mary Myer – claiming land just weeks later, and successfully proving up on the first day that any homesteader received their patents on September 1, 1869. Women homesteaders throughout Nebraska were closely and strongly aligned with the suffrage movement at local, statewide, and national levels. In this chapter, that correlation receives an in-depth analysis.

Statehood: Early National and Local Suffrage Efforts

In the late 1860s, several of the leading national suffrage figures, including Amelia Bloomer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony, arrived in Omaha to campaign and assist in the development of state and grassroots suffrage groups. Early results were promising, when the Nebraska Legislature passed school suffrage for women on July 24, 1867. *The Omaha Republican* heralded the event by stating that “the entire wedge is thus driven for universal suffrage in Nebraska.” *The Nebraska Advertiser* called for further action: “Lucy Stone and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had better look to it.”⁶⁵² Shortly thereafter, suffragist efforts lead to a petition seeking the vote after the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, which extended the vote to all male citizens over the age of twenty-one. The topic was one of bittersweet frustration for many suffragists – glad that their decades-long crusades for social reform had achieved results, but not for themselves.

This petition sent to the State legislature for Nebraska’s state constitutional convention sought “to omit the word “male” from the constitution’s clause on suffrage. The petition was signed by about 1,000 women and received “respectful attention from the legislature.”⁶⁵³ *The Nebraska State Journal* reported on February 8, 1871, that “the popular branch of the Nebraska Legislature is fully committed to the great reform. We congratulate the ladies of Nebraska upon this step in advance.”⁶⁵⁴ Buoyed by this strong show of support, Nebraska’s constitutional convention in 1871 considered resolutions on suffrage and married women’s property rights. A Mr. Strickland introduced a resolution before the Committee on Suffrage to “prepare an article conferring upon females the right to voting in all general or special elections...and that if a majority of both male and female voters sustain it, to be incorporated into the constitution.”⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵² *The Nebraska Advertiser* (Brownville, Nebraska) September 26, 1867, 3.

⁶⁵³ Clara Bewick Colby, “Nebraska, Chapter XLIX,” *History of Women Suffrage*, Vol. III. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds. (Rochester: New York: 1886), 676.

⁶⁵⁴ *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), February 8, 1871, 2.

⁶⁵⁵ “Constitutional Convention.” *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), June 21, 1871, 2.

Governor David Butler, in a message to the legislature, advocated in favor of granting female suffrage.⁶⁵⁶

Male voters resoundingly voted down the proposed legislation, 12,668 against and 3,502 in favor – only 21% voted in favor.⁶⁵⁷ In fact, only two Nebraska counties voted in favor of women's suffrage in that election – Dawson, with 4 votes for and none against, and Fillmore, with 34 votes for and 8 against.⁶⁵⁸ Both counties were small and sparsely settled in 1871, but a rushing tide of homesteaders would change that. Dawson's population grew from 103 to 16,000 between 1870 and 1920.⁶⁵⁹ While the 1871 campaign fell far short of the mark, this second effort demonstrated a continued commitment and effort in Nebraska to secure the vote for women.

After the national campaign failed early in the 1870s, a local grassroots movement sprung up in Nebraska. While population centers like Lincoln and Omaha contained many suffragists, the most influential leaders of the movement in the 1870s lived in Thayer and Gage counties. These counties had a core of young, progressive women seeking reform, but in a distinctly different way from their sisters in the cause farther east. The “new Midwest” of Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas was settled largely through the Homestead Act of 1862, and the power that act afforded to Midwestern and Western women forever linked suffrage and homesteading.⁶⁶⁰ With almost half of the total land area of Nebraska claimed and settled under the Homestead Act, its impact on social and political identity in the state between 1867 and 1920 afforded women new, powerful opportunities. These women included Ada Bittenbender, Harriet Brooks, Clara Bewick Colby, and Lucy Correll. They continued working to advance the cause, both with national leaders, and on their own terms.

Ada M. Bittenbender understood the importance of extending the suffrage movement to rural Nebraskans. Ada and Henry Bittenbender were lawyers, as well editors of the *Osceola Record* – the ability of newspapers and farm journals to mobilize a core group of suffragists in the Midwest was demonstrated time and time again. Bittenbender also established the Polk County Agricultural Association and edited the first Farmers' Alliance newspaper in the state of Nebraska.⁶⁶¹

Clara Bewick Colby, a British-American migrant, came of age in the homesteading frontier of Wisconsin in the 1860s. She was a college educated woman who moved to Beatrice, Nebraska with her husband, Leonard Wright Colby, a former Civil War general. Historians of Nebraska suffrage efforts noted that “the success of the suffrage measure was very largely due to the efforts of ... Mrs. Clara B. Colby... and other ladies. The first mentioned ladies worked

⁶⁵⁶ “Lancaster County.” *Nebraska Advertiser*. (Brownville, Nebraska) February 9, 1871, 2.

⁶⁵⁷ Kristin Mapel Bloomberg, “Striving for Equal Rights for All: Woman Suffrage in Nebraska, 1855-1882,” *Nebraska History* 90 (2009): 84-103, 87.

⁶⁵⁸ *The Nebraska Blue Book*, 1922. (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1922), 420.

⁶⁵⁹ Dawson County, Nebraska, is noteworthy for being the only county to vote in favor in all three campaigns (several counties weren't in existence in 1871 and voted in favor twice.)

⁶⁶⁰ For more on this “new Midwest” and its impact on settlement patterns, see Jacob K. Friefeld, “Homesteading and the Making of the Midwest,” in *The Making of the Midwest: Essays on the Formation of Midwestern Identity, 1787-1900*, edited by Jon Lauck (Hastings: Hastings College Press, 2020).

⁶⁶¹ Kristin Mapel Bloomberg, ““Striving for Equal Rights for All”: Woman Suffrage in Nebraska, 1855- 1882,” *Nebraska History* 90 (2009): 84-103, 88.

almost incessantly to obtain favorable vote, and too much praise cannot be given for their tact, perseverance, and ability.”⁶⁶² Her contemporaries in the movement wrote to Dr. Inez Philbrick, the President of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, that “[Colby] was ablest and best equipped of the state leaders in that campaign,” citing her efforts in founding and editing the *Woman’s Tribune*, a newspaper focused on bringing feminism to the rural women of America between 1883 and 1909.⁶⁶³

She, like the other Nebraska women of the movement, was a college-educated, “middle-class” woman who had ties to national progressive women’s networks - in Colby’s case, the Association for the Advancement of Women.⁶⁶⁴ Colby contacted Susan B. Anthony to speak in Beatrice in 1877. Anthony’s lecture was a success, and she implored Clara Bewick Colby to continue her feminist activism, writing “Such women as you... have individual work to do – to lift the world into better conditions - & I hope you will not allow anything to stop you from doing what seems to be your duty – I long to see women be themselves – not the mere echoes of men.”⁶⁶⁵



Figure 36 - Clara Bewick Colby. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Nebraska men were active in the movement, too. Erasmus Correll, a journalist, edited and published the *Hebron Journal* as well as the *Western Woman’s Journal*, the first woman suffrage

⁶⁶² History Nebraska MS572, Box 1, Folder 5, Erasmus Correll, “Nebraska Legislation for Women.”

⁶⁶³ History Nebraska MS1073 Series 3, Box 1, Folder 3 Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, Lists – 1882 Letter to Dr. Inez Philbrick. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, International Council of Women, and National American Woman Suffrage Association. The Woman’s Tribune [Beatrice, Nebraska: Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association]

⁶⁶⁴ Kristin Mapel Bloomberg, “‘Striving for Equal Rights for All’: Woman Suffrage in Nebraska, 1855- 1882,” *Nebraska History* 90, 89.

⁶⁶⁵ November 2, 1877. Clara Bewick Colby papers, MSS M92-172. Wisconsin Historical Society; Bloomberg, 89.

paper in Nebraska. His family bounced back and forth between California and Illinois when he was a young man – he attended colleges in both states, studying civil engineering and surveying. He arrived in Thayer County, Nebraska in 1869, where he worked as a surveyor. His experiences surveying the land led him to file a homestead claim on May 7, 1869, which he commuted two years later, essentially buying out his homestead under the Pre-Emption Act of 1841.⁶⁶⁶

In 1879, he invited Elizabeth Cady Stanton to lecture in Hebron – a lecture which led to the birth of the Thayer County Woman’s Suffrage Association, the first permanent woman suffrage association in the state.⁶⁶⁷ After being elected to the Nebraska House of Representatives in 1880, he introduced a bill for woman suffrage that was the focus of a major campaign by suffragists. That bill, as well as Nebraska’s links to these national women’s networks soon brought Nebraska to the forefront of the next generation of suffragists as the battlefield squared up again for another statewide vote on a constitutional amendment. In support and recognition of his work bringing suffrage to the ballot box, he was elected President of the American Woman Suffrage Association in October 1881.⁶⁶⁸ In September 1882, during the midst of the statewide campaign in support of suffrage, Omaha hosted the American Woman Suffrage Association, and the National Woman Suffrage Association for their annual conferences. Both organizations collaborated with the Nebraska Women Suffrage Association, which had been founded just the previous year, to arrange speakers and meetings.⁶⁶⁹

Both the AWSA and the NWSA held their annual conventions in Omaha, in another serious attempt to make Nebraska the first state to allow women to vote.⁶⁷⁰ The American Woman Suffrage Association conference included, amongst its many dignitaries from across the country, Lucy Stone, Henry B. Blackwell, and the Governor of Wyoming Territory, J.W. Hoyt. Erasmus Correll and Mrs. A.M. Bittenbender represented the local chapter.⁶⁷¹ The National Woman Suffrage Association convention was held from September 26 through September 28, 1882. Susan B. Anthony, Olympia Brown, Virginia Minor, and Clara Bewick Colby were among the representatives of the National Woman Suffrage Association in attendance. Anthony remarked, “when I came here three months ago, I found the women more awake to the importance of the movement than in any other state I have visited.”⁶⁷²

Though the *Omaha Daily Bee* described it as “the liveliest campaign ever known,” the time was not yet ripe.⁶⁷³ The *Nebraska State Journal* reported on the election November 8, 1882, that “Female Suffrage [was] Buried Under an Avalanche... Probably 25,000 Majority Against

⁶⁶⁶ Erasmus M. Correll. Thayer County, Nebraska. Sale-Cash Entry Patent #3957. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records ([Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#))

⁶⁶⁷ Bloomberg, 91.

⁶⁶⁸ “The Woman Suffrage Association,” *The Black Hills Daily Times* (Deadwood City, Dakota Territory), October 28, 1881.

⁶⁶⁹ Carmen Heider, “Adversaries and Allies: Rival National Suffrage Groups and the 1882 Nebraska Woman Suffrage Campaign,” *Great Plains Quarterly* 25 (Spring 2005): 87-103, 87.

⁶⁷⁰ While the territories of Wyoming and Utah had granted suffrage to women, they would not be admitted states until 1890 and 1896, respectively. Nebraska had multiple serious opportunities to be the first state to guarantee women’s suffrage, in 1871 and 1882.

⁶⁷¹ “The American Woman Suffrage Association.” *The Columbus Journal* (Columbus, Nebraska), September 20, 1882.

⁶⁷² “Suffrage. Seeking the Ballot.” *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), October 6, 1882.

⁶⁷³ “Nebraska.” *The Omaha Daily Bee* (Omaha, Nebraska), November 8, 1882.

It.”⁶⁷⁴ The final vote was 25,756 in favor, and 50,693 against. Still, that was progress – nearly ten times as many votes overall voted in favor of women’s suffrage in 1882 than in 1871, increasing to about 36% of the vote. Much of this increase can be attributed to the rapidly increasing number of homesteading families in Nebraska, as will be demonstrated later.

Third Time’s the Charm?

The early twentieth century saw a massive surge of not only homesteading, but also suffrage activity, with unprecedented success across many of the homesteading states. Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, and Utah all guaranteed women’s suffrage before 1900. Washington, California, Oregon, Arizona, Kansas, and Montana followed between 1910 and 1914. A massive uptick in efforts towards suffrage brought forth a tidal wave of success. Nebraska women mobilized for a concerted campaign once more.



Figure 37 - *The Awakening* by Henry Mayer. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) voted unanimously at its 1912 convention to begin work on a petition for an amendment to the Nebraska state constitution. According to Mary H. Williams, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union agreed “drop all other work and help, letting the prohibition campaign rest until the campaign for suffrage is

⁶⁷⁴ “Nebraska Election.” *The Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln, Nebraska), November 8, 1882.

over.”⁶⁷⁵ To campaign on the issue of suffrage, NWSA sought to connect with successful campaigners in their neighboring states which had already passed women’s suffrage. NWSA President Mrs. Draper Smith wrote the organization’s Executive Secretary, Viola Harrison in December of 1913, “Have you asked any of the Kansas women [during the campaign] to come over and help? I am tremendously eager to have you get the full number of petition signatures very soon, so that Nebraska will be a genuine campaign state, for then we can include Nebraska as one of the beneficiaries of a series of campaign state mass rallies, which we are planning to hold in the various big centers of the country...”⁶⁷⁶

Viola, who was the daughter of a Canadian immigrant homesteader James Coard, then tapped into the nationwide suffrage network in New York City. She wrote Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett, Corresponding Secretary of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, to report that by December 17 of that same year, half of the required 40,000 voters for the petition had been secured.⁶⁷⁷ Viola Harrison sought additional assistance, but from women familiar with the conditions on the ground.

Viola was born on the family homestead in Pawnee City, Nebraska in January of 1866. She reflected upon the different conditions of suffrage and suffragists in New York City and in Nebraska. She commented that “women who know only the East, and cities, would of course do us little good. While by no means so rural as so many people east of Chicago look upon us, Nebraska is an agricultural state, and naturally has fewer city and factory problems.”⁶⁷⁸ This mindset would be a sign of things to come.

Their hard work in organizing and mobilizing paid off. A proposed suffrage amendment went on the ballots in Nebraska once more in November of 1914. That proposal was Initiative Petition No 3: Woman’s Suffrage, which would have granted the vote to “Every person of the age of twenty-one years or upwards... who shall have resided in the state six months... citizens of the United States [...and] persons of foreign birth who shall have declared their intention to become citizens]” – almost the exact same wording as in the Homestead Act of 1862.⁶⁷⁹ Women were optimistic about their chances this time for the third appearance of the suffrage issue on the ballot.

⁶⁷⁵ History Nebraska, MS1073 Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association.

⁶⁷⁶ History Nebraska, MS1073 Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association. Mrs. Draper Smith to Viola Harrison, December 1913.

⁶⁷⁷ James Coard. Pawnee County, Nebraska. Homestead Patent #249. Bureau of Land Management. “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) James Coard successfully proved up his 160-acre homestead just east of Pawnee City in 1871.

⁶⁷⁸ History Nebraska, MS1073 Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association. Viola Harrison to Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett, December 17, 1913.

⁶⁷⁹ “Suffrage Amendment.” *The Alliance Herald*. (Alliance, Box Butte County, Nebraska). October 29, 1914. University of Nebraska: Lincoln. Nebraska Newspapers. <https://nebnewspapers.unl.edu/lccn/2010270501/1914-10-29/ed-1/seq-5/#date1=10%2F01%2F1914&index=0&date2=11%2F15%2F1914&searchType=advanced&language=&sequence=0&rows=20&ortext=&words=Initiative+Petition&phrasetext=initiative+petition&andtext=&dateFilterType=yearRange&page=1> Accessed October 11, 2023. The Homestead Act of 1862 likewise mentions an age requirement of twenty-one, a residency requirement, and a citizen or naturalized citizenship requirement upon proving up.

However, after the ballots were tallied, that optimism turned to shock – the amendment was defeated, 90,738 in favor, and 100,842 against.⁶⁸⁰ More than 47% of the total 191,580 votes cast were in favor – a very near miss. In a generation, suffragists went from being outvoted 4 to 1, to an almost dead heat. Even more than the 1882 ballot, suffragists had increasingly won over the hearts and minds of Nebraskan men and women, including the surging population of homesteaders and their families. But that progress wasn't enough for the dedicated adherents of the cause. While the vote was much closer, why had the 1914 effort, just like those in 1871 and 1882, fallen short?

Remember the Friend on the Homestead

Mrs. Draper Smith sent out a memorandum to all the officers and organizers of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association following the failed 1914 vote. She called for an immediate convention the following month, saying “We must have a report from each county. If your county chairman cannot come, be sure that her representative is there... First: If you carried your county, what contributed most to that end? If you did not carry it, can you locate the trouble? Second: What method of campaigning was most effective in your county? Third: What are your suggestions for the next campaign?”⁶⁸¹ There was no quit in the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association – they were eager to get back to campaigning immediately.

After urban-based suffrage organizations in Nebraska suffered defeat after defeat from 1856 to 1914, the movement took on a different approach – it reached out to rural Nebraskan women. Suffragists wrote articles and publications, organized grassroots campaigns, and targeted homesteading women and the wives of male homesteaders. Record numbers of women in 1914 had joined the suffrage cause – but they had neglected to reach out fully to their “more numerous, widely scattered sisters” across Nebraska.

⁶⁸⁰ Carmen Heider, “Farm Women, Solidarity, and the Suffrage Messenger – Nebraska Suffrage Activism on the Plains, 1915-1917”. *Great Plains Quarterly* 32, (Spring 2012): 113-130, 113.

⁶⁸¹ History Nebraska, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association. Mrs. Draper Smith, November 17, 1914.

These sisters, of course, were the homesteader women, wives of farmers, and the hundreds of thousands of rural Nebraskans whose voices and votes would be needed to effect change. *The Suffrage Messenger*, a Nebraska suffrage newspaper which played a significant role in the last years of the movement, recognized how important these women could be.⁶⁸² The *Suffrage Messenger* was attributed to and edited by “Mrs. F.A. Harrison” – the very same Viola Harrison who was the Executive Secretary of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, married to one Frank A. Harrison. The *Columbus Telegram* of October 8, 1915, reported “To Mrs. Viola M. Harrison, wife of Frank A. Harrison, the pioneer newspaper man, must be accorded full credit for originating the *Suffrage Messenger*, the official organ of Nebraska

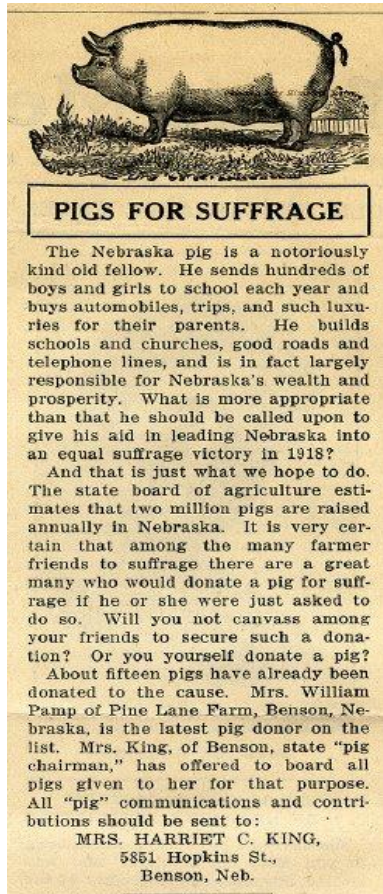


Figure 38 - Pigs for Suffrage. Courtesy of History Nebraska.

suffragists, published in Lincoln. This publication is of great value in promoting the cause of ‘votes for women.’”⁶⁸³

Viola Harrison, daughter of homesteaders and the editor of *The Suffrage Messenger*, declared: “You can afford to remember the friend on the homestead, and help her to keep up on suffrage news and in time gather her neighbors into a suffrage club.”⁶⁸⁴ After all, Harrison wrote of these homesteading women, “Women who own property are fairly in accord with the well-known American principle, ‘Taxation without representation is tyranny.’”⁶⁸⁵

This campaign sought to bring in the entire state, and every precinct – including, like never before, the rural and isolated areas of the state – especially those who lived on remote homesteads.⁶⁸⁶ An advertisement for the fundraising effort for the planned 1918 campaign appeared in the *Suffrage Messenger*, calling for PIGS FOR SUFFRAGE. The campaign noted that “The Nebraska pig is a notoriously kind old fellow. He sends hundreds of boys and girls to school... build schools and churches, good roads and telephone lines, and is fact largely responsible for Nebraska’s wealth and prosperity. What is more appropriate than that he should be called upon to give his aid in leading Nebraska into an equal suffrage victory in 1918?”

Finally, the suffragists of Nebraska were looking to the friend on the Homestead – to ally with their economic and political clout in the state. Harrison was no stranger to the importance agriculture and homesteading had on Nebraska life

and sought to connect what had largely been an urban movement with the immense rural population of the state. Women homesteaders all over the country, whether single or married,

⁶⁸² *The Suffrage Messenger* was published between 1915 and 1917, following the failure of the amendment to pass on November 3, 1914 – it was clear that a change in strategy was required, directly engaging with rural Nebraskans.

⁶⁸³ “Women of State Prominence Will Attend Annual Suffrage Convention in Columbus.” *The Columbus Telegram* (Columbus, Nebraska), October 8, 1915.

⁶⁸⁴ *The Suffrage Messenger*, February 1915, 2.

⁶⁸⁵ “The Ballot for Nebraska Farm Women.” *The Suffrage Messenger*, June 1916, 4.

⁶⁸⁶ Heider, 118.

often generated extra funds raising poultry and selling eggs and other farm produce. For these women, perhaps donating \$50 or \$100 was out of the question, but they wanted to support the cause in some other way. The “pig plan” allowed homesteaders and farmers who may not have been able to donate much money to the cause to contribute financially, by donating a pig or other livestock instead.⁶⁸⁷ Women were also encouraged to create a “corn wagon,” decorated with suffrage banners, and ask farmers for donations of corn, grain, or small livestock for the cause.

Quite a few women with homesteading roots in Nebraska were involved in the cause at the local, state, and national levels, beyond the women mentioned in both this chapter, and in chapter three. Anna Ruth Clema Kovanda was born in Pawnee County, Nebraska on February 28, 1873. Her parents, Jan and Mary Clema were Bohemian immigrants from what is now the Czech Republic, who were part of a cluster of Bohemian immigrant homesteaders in southeast Nebraska – the state most heavily settled by Czechs.⁶⁸⁸ Anna was born in a fourteen by twenty-foot log cabin on the 160-acre family farm in Steinaeur, just west of Table Rock.⁶⁸⁹

By 1901, Anna Kovanda was engaged with the suffrage movement in Nebraska. The *Table Rock Argus* reported that the annual meeting of the Table Rock Woman Suffrage Association was held at her residence, where she was elected President. It was no ceremonial position, either – the organization held 32 meetings the previous year, throwing multiple public events, including socials, a celebration of Susan B. Anthony’s birthday, a symposium featuring lecturers and scholars, and sent members to both the state and national conventions.⁶⁹⁰

Kovanda continued serving in her local suffrage organizations (Table Rock and Pawnee City) in various capacities – Auditor, Vice President, and President. She continued to rise in Nebraska suffrage prominence, aligning with WCTU chapters to broadcast the message to an even wider audience. In 1909, Kovanda was appointed as the Chairman of the Committee of Finance for Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association. It was a star-studded cast of homesteading suffragists, as at least six of the thirteen officers leading the state suffrage organization had direct connections to homesteaders, including the highest-ranking members. Their number included President Dr. Inez Philbrick (Lincoln, Lancaster County), Vice President Amanda J. Linn Marble (Table Rock, Pawnee County), Treasurer Emma W. Demaree (Roca, Lancaster County), Chairman of the Press, Nellie Taylor (Broken Bow, Custer County), Chairman of the Library, Lillian U. Stoner (Peru, Nemaha County), and Chairman of Finance Anna Kovanda (Table Rock, Pawnee County).⁶⁹¹ As the leadership increasingly pursued an aggressive stand in supporting an initiative and referendum campaign to place suffrage on the ballot in Nebraska, Kovanda was promoted yet again, elected as the Vice President of the Nebraska WSA in 1911.⁶⁹²

With leadership in Nebraska being increasingly represented by women with homesteading connections, their efforts to engage rural suffragists is no surprise. An article in the

⁶⁸⁷ Heider, 120.

⁶⁸⁸ Luebke, “Ethnic Group Settlement on the Great Plains,” 418. Luebke notes that “more Czechs settled in Nebraska than in all of the other states of the Great Plains combined. The majority... settled in five counties (Douglas, Saunders, Butler, Colfax, and Saline).”

⁶⁸⁹ Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search”, digital images, General Land Office Records. John Clema. August 1, 1874. Pawnee County, Nebraska. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and Homestead Final Certificates, 1863-1887; Record Group 49: Records of the Bureau of Land Management. Washington, D.C.; The National Archives at Washington, D.C.

⁶⁹⁰ *Table Rock Argus* (Table Rock, Nebraska), October 17, 1901.

⁶⁹¹ “Aggressive.” *The Lincoln Star* (Lincoln, Nebraska). November 20, 1909.

⁶⁹² “Dr. Inez Philbrick Elected President.” *The Lincoln Star* (Lincoln, Nebraska) March 3, 1911.

July 1916 edition of the *Suffrage Messenger* by an anonymous woman continued the effort of reaching out to homesteading women, noting that “The woman farm owner is considered a citizen only when the taxes fall due, but on election day she may not say how these taxes are spent.” – a sentiment echoed by the ever-growing number of women homesteaders proving up in their own name, but without a legal voice.⁶⁹³

Dawson County, in south-central Nebraska became a county in 1871, just in time for the first statewide vote on suffrage. It holds the unique distinction of being the only county in the entire state to vote in favor of suffrage in all three elections (1871, 1882, and 1914). Like much of the state, it was heavily settled by homesteaders – there are a total of 1,975 patents for the county listed in the General Land Office Records, and more than 1,370 of those are Homestead entries. The earliest homesteaders arrived in the late 1860s – the first to “prove up” was John S. Wilson in October 1873.⁶⁹⁴ At that first 1871 vote, the population of the county was miniscule – only 103. Only four ballots were cast, all in favor of women’s suffrage.⁶⁹⁵

However, in a pattern exhibited across the state, homesteaders swarmed in increasing numbers in the late nineteenth century. Dawson’s population exploded from 103 in 1870 to 12,264 in 1900. During that same period, a total of 1,303 homesteads were proved up in the county.⁶⁹⁶ Of the homesteads claimed in Dawson, approximately 100 of them were proved up by women – around 8% of the county. Though a little lower than the national average of 10%, Dawson was also settled well before Montana’s large rush of homesteading women in the early twentieth century. Using national averages, for a conservative estimate the average household size in 1900 was around 4.75, then homesteaders should account for approximately 6,200 residents of the county – just over half the population.⁶⁹⁷ The number was probably even higher. Deborah Fink of the University of Iowa and Alicia Carriquiry of Iowa State University found that children were a boon on Nebraska homesteads: they eased the loneliness many felt, and they provided invaluable labor for the never-ending farm work.⁶⁹⁸ By their calculation the average Nebraska nuclear farm family in 1900 was 5.59 people.⁶⁹⁹ With that figure, we get approximately 7,300.

While Dawson County, Nebraska is an exceptional example in that it voted Yes on all three attempts, it represents the broader trend of the homesteading areas of Nebraska adopting the call of women’s suffrage. Map Eleven illustrates the three elections putting suffrage to the vote in Nebraska between 1871 and 1914. The counties in gray never voted in favor for women’s

⁶⁹³ *Suffrage Messenger*. July 1916, 4.

⁶⁹⁴ “General Land Office Records.” – Dawson County, Homestead Entry Original. Wilson, John S. https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=NE0890_.145&docClass=STA&sid=2omf4aim.qfk

⁶⁹⁵ *The Nebraska Blue Book*, 1922. (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1922), 420.

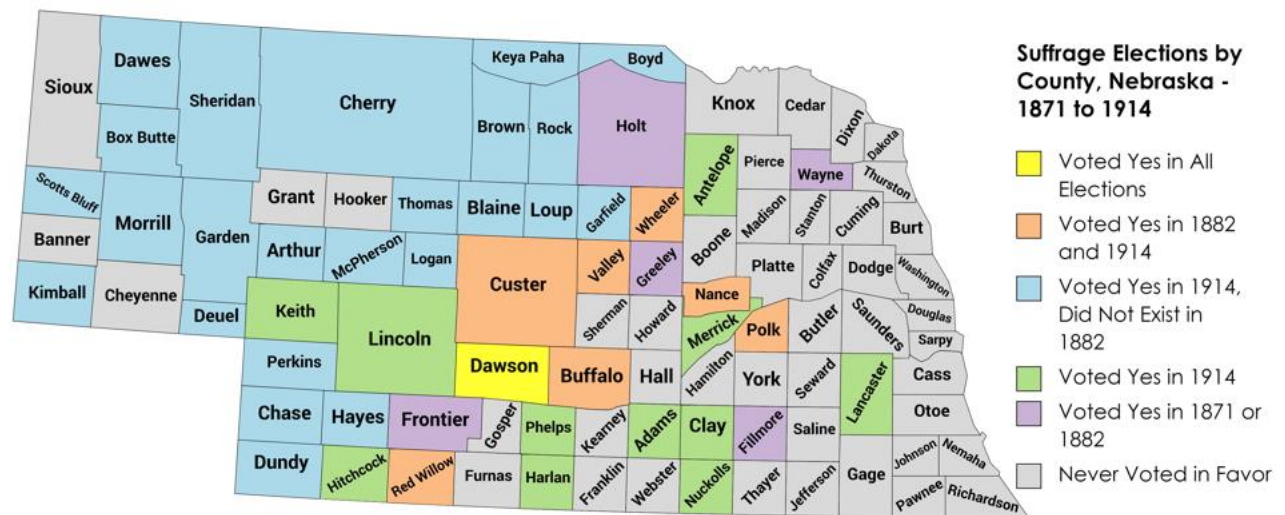
⁶⁹⁶ “General Land Office Records.” – Dawson County, Homestead Entry Original, 1870-1900. https://glorerecords.blm.gov/results/default.aspx?searchCriteria=type=patent|st=NE|cty=047|dt1_m=1|dt1_yr=1870|dt2_m=12|dt2_yr=1900|aut=251101|sp=true|sw=true|sadv=false#resultsTabIndex=0&page=1&sortField=6&sortDir=0

⁶⁹⁷ This estimate is conservative – that household size considers both urban and rural areas. Rural households are on average significantly larger than urban ones. For more on this subject, see *Patterns of Urban and Rural Population Growth*. Population Studies, New York: United Nations Publications, 1980.

⁶⁹⁸ Deborah Fink and Alicia Carriquiry. “Having Babies or Not: Household Composition and Fertility in Rural Iowa and Nebraska, 1900, 1910.” *Great Plains Quarterly* 12, (Summer 1992): 157-168, 163.

⁶⁹⁹ Fink and Carriquiry, 163.

suffrage. The counties in purple voted “Yes” in 1871 or 1882.⁷⁰⁰ Most significant, however, are the counties in red, blue, and green. Seven counties voted “Yes” in both 1882 and 1914, but not 1871 (RED): Buffalo, Custer, Nance, Polk, Red Willow, Valley, and Wheeler. Eleven more voted “Yes” in 1914 only (GREEN): Adams, Antelope, Clay, Keith, Harlan, Hitchcock, Lancaster, Lincoln, Merrick, Nuckolls, and Phelps. Finally, the 24 counties illustrated in blue voted in 1914, but did not exist for either of the other votes.



Map 11 - Suffrage Elections by County, Nebraska – 1871 to 1914. Map template courtesy of MapChart.net

It is no coincidence that most of the state west of Polk County voted “Yes”, while the earlier settled eastern counties overwhelmingly did not – only in Lancaster, home of the state capital of Lincoln, did an eastern county vote for Suffrage in 1914.⁷⁰¹

The 1871 vote, for the most part, came too early to have returns from many homesteaders. Though the Homestead Act was passed in 1862 and enacted the following year, the earliest individuals would not have received their patents for another five years – and comparatively few settled so early on under the Homestead Act. None of the original nine counties of Nebraska ever voted in favor of women’s suffrage, and only 25% (11 of 44) counties that existed in 1871 or earlier voted in favor in at least one election.

However, by 1882, the rush was on. Settlers increasingly filed in, filling county after county, in a westward moving tide. Of the 93 counties in Nebraska, 39 were created after the

⁷⁰⁰ Only two counties voted “Yes” on women’s suffrage in 1871 – Dawson, which as previously mentioned voted “Yes” in all three elections, and Fillmore, which never again voted yes.

⁷⁰¹ *The Nebraska Blue Book*, 1922. (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1922), 420.

1871 election, counties which came of age with this homesteader population boom.⁷⁰² An impressive 82% (32 of 39) of those counties voted in favor of women's suffrage. Homesteading in Nebraska occurred in two waves, the first between 1863 – 1894 (with two peaks, one in the 1870s and one in the 1880s) in the eastern and central counties, and then a second in the northern and western counties between 1905 and 1917.⁷⁰³

The eastern third of the state was heavily settled by other public land laws (agricultural college scrip, military warrants, cash sales, and purchases of Indian allotments), and largely locked up before the flood of homesteaders entered the state in the 1870s.⁷⁰⁴ But for those counties in central and western Nebraska, homesteading dominated – and they brought with them an increased willingness to vote for women's suffrage, in no small part because of the importance and influence of women homesteaders. Women homesteaded in their own names in large numbers in the west. Even when they were not homesteading in their own names, they had considerable support in the inherently family run businesses of agriculture. Many argued that suffrage should be supported in language of supporting the family – these homesteading women contributed to the family farm, worked hard day in and day out. Voting patterns in heavily homesteaded areas, including Nebraska, suggest that homesteading men noticed – and agreed.

1917: Immigration, Prohibition, and Suffrage

Between 1860, just before the passage of the Homestead Act, and 1910, the population of Nebraska exploded. It grew over 4,000% - from 28,841 to 1,192,214.⁷⁰⁵ As might be expected from the state with the highest percentage of land area claimed by homesteaders, Nebraska at this time was heavily rural – 73.9% of the state. With 104,260 homesteads claimed in Nebraska spanning 22,000,000 acres, homesteaders represented a large percentage of Nebraskans during this era. Using the same conservative estimate as before, with an average household at 4.75, those homesteads represent 495,235 people. If applying the larger household sizes on homesteads at Fink and Carriquiry's 5.59 figure, that number jumps to 582,813 – 49% of the population of the state, for just the first generation of homestead households, without accounting for their descendants.

The states of the Midwest and the West were heavily populated by immigrants, as the Homestead Act served in many ways as an accommodating piece of immigration legislation. Many residents of Nebraska were immigrants – approximately 20 percent of the population. Even more were the children of immigrants.⁷⁰⁶ The three highest foreign populations were

⁷⁰² Of note – several counties that are listed in blue were created prior to, but did not actually organize until after, the 1882 vote.

⁷⁰³ *Homesteading the Plains*, 96. “The Nebraska Pattern”

⁷⁰⁴ *Homesteading the Plains*, 102.

⁷⁰⁵ “Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910. Statistics for Nebraska.” Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913.
<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-ne.pdf> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁰⁶ “Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910. Statistics for Nebraska.” Washington: Government Printing Office,

German at 37.5 percent of all immigrants, Austrian with 11.7%, and Swedish with 10.9%.⁷⁰⁷ A recent study of 621 homestead claimants in central and western Nebraska noted 325 that had previously lived in the Midwest, 109 migrated from Europe, 87 came from the U.S. Northeast, 30 from the U.S. South, and two from Canada.⁷⁰⁸ Thus, 52% of claimants were Midwesterners and 17.6% were European. With this rapid influx of population growth, there were many different cultures, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds contributing to the rich political discourse in this era. The regional complexity of the debates over suffrage played out against that multicultural, multiethnic background in the Midwest – broader debates about immigration and an individual’s “fitness” to vote.⁷⁰⁹ Across the small towns that made up so much of the midwestern homesteading states, these diverse ethnic, religious, and political differences meant that though the national suffrage leadership sought to have a single-issue campaign, the reality on the ground was more complicated.⁷¹⁰

Many German immigrants saw the women’s suffrage movement as a threat to “traditional family dynamics” and to their culture. The German American Alliance campaigned both in Nebraska, and nationwide, against both women’s suffrage, and prohibition – members of one movement were often involved in the other. In Columbus, Nebraska, a pro-German, anti-prohibition, anti-suffrage group of Germans in 1914 noted “we consider the proposed amendment to the constitution granting the right of suffrage to women as the most important [question.] Our state alliance took a most decided stand against woman suffrage at its annual convention held in Columbus. Our German women do not want the right to vote, and since our opponents desire the right of suffrage mainly for the purpose of saddling the yoke of prohibition on our necks, we should oppose it with all our might.”⁷¹¹

The 1910s and 1920s were a particularly intense battleground over the question of immigration, with many taking anti-immigrant, or “Nativist”, stances. The eruption of World War I heightened feelings of suspicion, mistrust, and prejudice. “Native-born” Americans begin to see the large German immigrant population in a whole new light. Indeed, that letter from Germans in Columbus went on to say “In these times, when on account of the European war the English-American press has stirred unpopular sentiment against Germany and Germanism, it behooves us to stand together and to demonstrate to our many envious enemies our political power by giving to those candidates who are German descent our full support.”⁷¹² An E.G. McGilton addressed the Omaha Concord Club, where he called for students to be instructed in English, noting, “we should respect the foreigners who come into this country, but we should see

1913. <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-ne.pdf> and *Homesteading the Plains*, 171. Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁰⁷ “Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910. Statistics for Nebraska.” Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913.

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/abstract/supplement-ne.pdf> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁰⁸ Jacob K. Friefeld, “Homesteading and the Making of the Midwest,” in *The Making of the Midwest: Essays on the Formation of Midwestern Identity, 1787-1900*, edited by Jon Lauck (Hastings: Hastings College Press, 2020), 5.

⁷⁰⁹ For more on this topic, see Sara Egge’s *Woman Suffrage and Citizenship in the Midwest, 1870-1920*.

⁷¹⁰ Egge, *Woman Suffrage and Citizenship in the Midwest, 1870-1920*, 2.

⁷¹¹ “Appeal to the Members of the Local Alliance of Columbus and Surroundings.” *The Alliance Herald* (Alliance, Nebraska), June 28, 1917.

⁷¹² “Appeal to the Members of the Local Alliance of Columbus and Surroundings.” *The Alliance Herald* (Alliance, Nebraska), June 28, 1917.

that they do not keep alive their traditions of their native countries.”⁷¹³ The Concord Club erupted with applause and the waving of flags – the spirit of nationalism and patriotism in the face of war swept the country.

Suffragists often latched on to the fears and hysterias of anti-German sentiment. The nationally renowned suffragist and president of the National Woman Suffrage Association President Anna Howard Shaw, who was promoting the cause in the Midwest during the war years, claimed that foreign-born men were taking advantage of naturalization and undermining the United States. In a speech, Shaw observed that “all over the country today on account of the war in Europe... [foreigners are] very anxious to take out their first papers of citizenship.”⁷¹⁴ Many suffragists blamed foreigners after the failures on the ballot in 1914 – that Germans had “masterminded the defeat of woman suffrage.”⁷¹⁵

The temperance movement continued to be a major factor in the women’s suffrage movement into the twentieth century. Just like Amelia Bloomer decades before, activists from one movement often joined and campaigned for the other – “Midwestern suffrage groups focused on morality, piety, and domesticity – the values women promised to bring to the political arena.”⁷¹⁶ The temperance crusade also blended into the debates over nativism and immigration – many prohibitionists and suffragists were Protestant Anglo-Americans, especially Methodists and Presbyterians who associated alcohol with immorality. Immigrant German Lutherans and Catholics feared prohibition and suffrage, viewing them as potential assaults on their culture. Anti-suffragists organized at the national and state levels, warning that if women were to enter the political realm, it could lead to a collapse of their traditional gender roles. Mamie Claflin, homesteader, temperance leader, and suffragist introduced in Chapter 3 was involved in a tempestuous legal battle over suffrage, tied to temperance.

Limited Suffrage and Continued Legal Battles

Senator John N. Norton introduced House Roll No. 222 before the Nebraska state legislature in 1917. This law called for guaranteeing the right for women to vote in any election except for United States congressional representatives – a limited suffrage bill. The bill passed on April 21, 1917, at almost the same time as a law prohibiting the sale of alcohol in Nebraska – which had received the full support of the Nebraska Women Suffrage Association, continuing a long alliance with the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Under Claflin, the Nebraska WCTU issued a statement: “You are now doubt aware that the anti-suffrage forces are circulating petitions to invoke the referendum upon the limited equal suffrage bill recently

⁷¹³ E.G. McGilton to the Omaha Concord Club in “Keeping Patriotism Alive in Schools” *The Omaha Daily Bee* (Omaha, Nebraska), March 30, 1917.

⁷¹⁴ Sara Egge, “How Midwestern Suffragists Won the Vote by Attacking Immigrants.” September 17, 2018. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-midwestern-suffragists-won-vote-by-attacking-immigrants-180970298/#Rwqfd7Hi7760goxk.99> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷¹⁵ Sara Egge, “How Midwestern Suffragists Won the Vote by Attacking Immigrants.” September 17, 2018. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-midwestern-suffragists-won-vote-by-attacking-immigrants-180970298/#Rwqfd7Hi7760goxk.99> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷¹⁶ Sara Egge, “When We Get to Voting”: Rural Women, Community, Gender, and Woman Suffrage in the Midwest (Ph.D. Diss., University of Iowa, 2012), as in *Woman Suffrage in the Midwest* by Elyssa Ford <https://www.nps.gov/articles/woman-suffrage-in-the-midwest.htm> Accessed October 11, 2023.

passed by the legislature. This attempt is being made mainly to prevent women from voting... and deprive them of a right given by the legislature.”⁷¹⁷

The Nebraska Association Opposed to Women’s Suffrage (NAOWS) petitioned Nebraska Secretary of State Charles W. Pool to have the law instead placed on the 1918 ballot, feeling they could defeat suffrage at the ballot box.⁷¹⁸ This organization, with female leadership and a large majority of female members, demonstrates the complexity of the battle for suffrage – many women felt that a woman’s place was in the domestic realm, seeing suffrage as “anti-female, anti-family, and anti-American.”⁷¹⁹ NAOWS claimed to collect well in excess of the required percentage of the state population (Nebraska requires that 10% of registered voters must sign for a constitutional amendment or referendum to suspend a law to take effect, and 5% of the registered voters in 38 of 93 counties). NAOWS canvassed especially hard in Nebraska’s largest city, Omaha. If suffrage had finally been carried through, in part, on the virtue of rural homesteader women joining the fray, anti-suffragists were seeking to push back in the urban hubs.

Edna Barkley, president of the Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association, questioned the legitimacy of the petition, doubting that NAOWS had received the 30,000 signatures it claimed. Barkley filed a lawsuit against Pool, alleging that 21,460 signatures were fraudulent, with some signatures forged, addresses incorrect or made up, some signatories were not legal voters, and some signatories were misled about the petition.⁷²⁰ According to the suit, the petition thus failed to meet the minimum of ten percent of the state’s electorate for a referendum. During the ensuing court case, many took the stand to testify that they had signed under false pretenses. Often signatories were paid, and others were told that the petition was in favor of women’s suffrage, or that it was to end prohibition.⁷²¹

The Nebraska Association Opposed to Women’s Suffrage knew some Nebraskans were more upset about prohibition than the possibility of women’s suffrage. When individuals “hired to get signatures found it hard to get signers... some, accordingly, secured signatures by representing it as a pro-suffrage petition. Others took a short cut and signed up the petitions themselves, using city directories or telephone directories as a source of names.”⁷²² Romanian immigrant Sam Popos fraudulently signed for his entire family after being told that the petition aimed to “bring the wet back.”⁷²³ Other testimony mirrored this sentiment. When Bucur Mein testified before the court, he related that he was told the petition was to “bring the beer and wine back”. He added that he was in favor of women’s suffrage and would never have signed the

⁷¹⁷ “Referring to the Suffrage Referendum Petition.” *The Alliance Herald* (Alliance, Nebraska), June 28, 1917.

⁷¹⁸ History Nebraska MS1073 Series Five, Box Three and Four. Barkley v. Pool, Lancaster County District Court.

⁷¹⁹ Laura McKee Hickman, “Thou Shalt Not Vote: Anti-Suffrage in Nebraska, 1914-1920,” *Nebraska History* 80 (1999): 55-65.

⁷²⁰ History Nebraska, MS1073 Series 1, Box 1, Folder 1. Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association. June 1918 – Woman Suffrage Referendum Case.

⁷²¹ History Nebraska, MS1073, *Barkley v. Pool*, testimony, 5551, Nebraska Suffrage Papers.

⁷²² “The Suffrage Suit.” *The State Journal*. January 26, 1919.

⁷²³ History Nebraska, MS1073, *Barkley v. Pool*, testimony, *Barkley v. Pool*.

referendum if he had known the truth.⁷²⁴ To this, the lawyer from the NAOWS responded, “Well, how are you going to get this beer and wine if women vote?”⁷²⁵

Despite the power of the Anti-Suffragists, the Anti-Prohibitionists, and Germans who fought to suppress the reform-minded movements of the Progressive Era, the investigation uncovered extensive fraud. The Nebraska Supreme Court nullified the petition in 1919, guaranteeing limited suffrage until the passage and ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment nationwide the following year.

⁷²⁴ History Nebraska, MS1073, Barkley v. Pool, testimony, *Barkley v. Pool*.

⁷²⁵ History Nebraska, MS1073, Barkley v. Pool, testimony, *Barkley v. Pool*.

Chapter Six: “Harvest Season”: Ratification

By 1919, the suffrage movement in the United States had been going strong for more than seventy years. Seventy years – an entire lifetime. Indeed, many women in the first generation of the movement had given the cause their all for their entire lives – Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, and countless others had planted the seeds of suffrage in the soil. But in 1920 it was “harvest season” for the hundreds of thousands of women homesteaders across America. The combined efforts of decades of dedication to suffrage had paid off.

“Race to Ratification” –

On May 21, 1919, the United States House of Representatives passed the language that would become the Nineteenth Amendment. Shortly thereafter, on June 4, the Senate followed suit. The amendment went to the states, as the “Race to Ratification” began! A constitutional amendment requires a three-fourths majority, which in 1919 meant that 36 of the then 48 states would have to ratify the proposed amendment for it to become law. Immediately, pro- and anti-suffrage forces mobilized to campaign in favor or against, trying to win states over to their cause.



Figure 39 - National Woman's Party activists watch Alice Paul sew a star onto the NWP Ratification Flag, representing another state's ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Some states burst out of the gates in favor of suffrage. On June 10, 1919, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin became the first three states to ratify the proposed Nineteenth Amendment. It became something of a competition to be the first, and Wisconsin pushed hard to cross the finish line. Wisconsin's official ratification arrived in Washington, D.C. first, when Wisconsin state senator David G. James, husband and father to Wisconsin suffragists Laura James and Ada James, raced across the country by train to deliver the document to the capital. Later that same week, on June 16, Kansas, Ohio, and New York joined the fold – five of the first

six states to ratify the amendment were states with land given away under the Homestead Act, and the sixth was the birthplace of the women's suffrage movement in the United States.⁷²⁶

By the end of August, more than one-third of states needed to ratify had done so – the race to ratification was on. Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Texas joined the fray as non-homesteading states, along with New York – though Georgia became the first state to vote against the proposed suffrage amendment. Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Montana, and Nebraska joined in with the earliest adopting homesteading states from June: ten of the fourteen states to ratify at that point were homesteading states. Throughout the year, states began to stream in – by the end of 1919, twenty-two states had ratified, including sixteen homesteading states.

“Harvest Season”

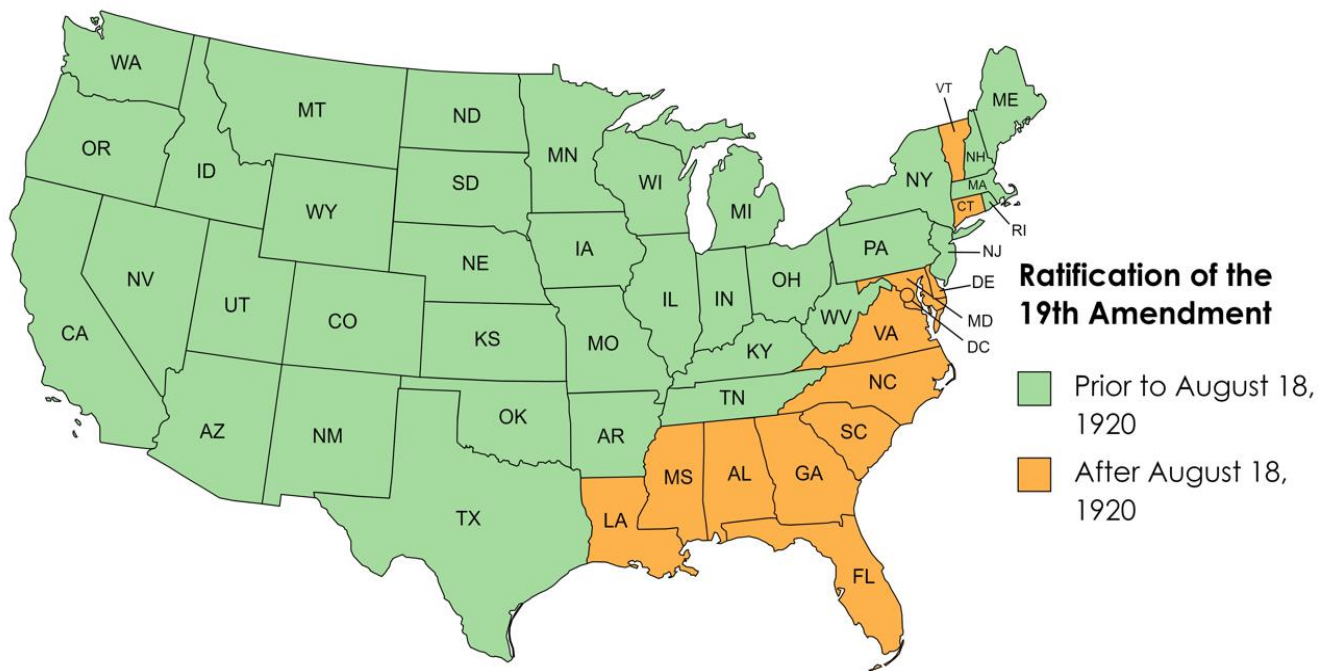
By the Spring of 1920, it was “harvest season” for the seeds of suffrage, which had been long since planted in the soil. On March 23, 1920, the *Gaffney Ledger* reported that “nine states remain, from which suffrage must harvest a single vote.”⁷²⁷ The stage was set – following the ratification of the proposed amendment by Washington on March 22, 1920, thirty-five states across the country had voted to ratify. Only one more state was required to reach the three-quarters majority required to ratify a constitutional amendment – 36 of the 48 states. Of the 35 states to ratify, every single homesteading state west of the Missouri river had ratified already – only several of the states originally under the Southern Homestead Act had failed to do so (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi).⁷²⁸

The hunt for the last state began in March. On March 31, Mississippi came close – the Senate vote ended in a tie, with the Lieutenant Governor breaking the tie in favor of suffrage. However, the House of Representatives voted it down. Mississippi did not officially ratify the Nineteenth Amendment until 1984 – the last state in America to do so. Suffrage leaders were optimistic for their chances in the state of Delaware in June, confident that their victory would come there, as most of the remaining states were hostile to the movement. However, Delaware delivered a tough defeat when it voted against the Nineteenth Amendment. At that point, 35 states had voted in favor, 8 against, and 3 refused to consider the issue with special legislative sessions. Only two states were left to vote, Tennessee and North Carolina, leaving them as the movement's last hope.

⁷²⁶ New York was the only one of the first six states to ratify the amendment which did not give away land under the Homestead Act of 1862, and of course was the birthplace of the women's suffrage movement at Seneca Falls back in 1848.

⁷²⁷ “Suffrage Near the Goal.” *The Gaffney Ledger* (Gaffney, South Carolina), March 23, 1920.

⁷²⁸ These states first became eligible for homesteading under the Southern Homestead Act of 1866, a short-lived law enacted during Reconstruction. There were significant social, cultural, and political differences between these states and most of the rest of the country settled under the Homestead Act of 1862, and it is no surprise that they did not support women's suffrage – no state in the “Deep South” did, Homestead Act or otherwise.



Map 12- Map of Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment by State. Template courtesy of MapChart, map by author.

During the summer of 1920, Nashville became a battleground. The state's Senate passed the measure quickly, but it stalled in the House of Representatives, at a 48-48 tie. A 24-year-old Congressman, Harry. T Burn, who had previously sided with the Anti-Suffragists, had a letter from his mother with him at the session on August 18, 1920, which said: "Dear Son, Hurrah and vote for Suffrage and don't keep them in doubt... I've been watching to see how you stood but have not seen anything yet."⁷²⁹ She urged him to support Carrie Chapman Catt, leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, in her quest to push ratification across the finish line, saying "Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Thomas Catt with her 'rats.' With lots of love, Mama."⁷³⁰ Burns said, "I knew that a mother's advice is always safest for a boy to follow." He voted In Favor of suffrage and broke the tie. His vote pushed the Nineteenth Amendment across the finish line on August 18, 1920 – Tennessee was the 36th and final state required to ratify.

It was signed into law on August 26, as the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. It states that: "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."

⁷²⁹ Letter from Febb Ensminger Burn to Harry T. Burn, August 17, 1920. Harry T. Burn Papers, C.M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library. [Letter to Harry Burn from Mother - Woman Suffrage - Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection \(knoxlib.org\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷³⁰ Letter from Febb Ensminger Burn to Harry T. Burn, August 17, 1920. Harry T. Burn Papers, C.M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library. [Letter to Harry Burn from Mother - Woman Suffrage - Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection \(knoxlib.org\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

“A Mighty Political Experiment” – Everything but the Vote is Still to Be Won

Many suffragist leaders refused to rest on their laurels after the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment – including many women with homesteading, land ownership, and agrarian ties across the country. Emma Smith DeVoe, daughter of Dakota Territory homesteaders, first proposed a national league of women voters at the 1909 annual NAWSA conference. Following the passage of a suffrage bill in her home state of Washington in 1910, she organized the National Council of Women Voters, which contained members of each of the states that had passed women suffrage to that point. The National Council of Women Voters (NCWV) was a non-partisan organization which sought to educate women voters in the exercise of their citizenship, to secure legislation in their own states “in the interests of men and women, children, and the home,” and to aid in the further extension of woman suffrage elsewhere in the United States.⁷³¹ It was based out of Tacoma, Washington, as the Northwest had up to that point come first in the suffrage movement – by 1913 Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Washington, California, Oregon, Arizona, Kansas, and the Alaska Territory had all granted full suffrage – the only states to do so, and all major centers of homesteading.

As the organization was initially made up entirely of homesteading states with large number of women homesteaders, it’s no surprise that many of its leaders and members were themselves landowners. For example, when that leadership issued an “emergency call for a conference” in Washington, D.C., in 1913 in order to promote the federal suffrage amendment being debated in the Senate, the majority of the NCWV leadership were either directly landowners themselves, or had close family ties to homesteaders. The organization was led by a President and Honorary Vice President, two Secretaries, a Treasurer, an Auditor, a Vice-President for each of the ten member states or territories, and a congressional committee of eleven.⁷³² Taking into account some overlap in positions, there were a total of 24 women in leadership roles with the organization – and at least 12 of them were either homesteaders and landowners themselves, or had close family ties to one. While these women were exceptional in their political clout, many of them came from humble beginnings, often starting their rise to economic success and stability through acquiring public domain land. In their call, they noted that “one-fifth of the Senate, one-seventh of the House, and one-sixth of the electoral vote come from equal suffrage states. At this stage of the progress of the Federal Amendment, women voters are the decisive factor” – but it wasn’t just women voters, it was women homesteaders, and homesteading states that were the decisive factor – as every single suffrage state at that point was.⁷³³

President Emma Smith DeVoe, featured in Chapter One, homesteaded in Faulk County, South Dakota with her husband in the 1880s.⁷³⁴ Her close Washington suffrage compatriot, Dr.

⁷³¹ National Council of Woman Voters – Call to Conference. July 28, 1913. Caroline Katzenstein Papers 17448. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, [HSP Digital Collections · National Council of Women Voters all to Conference, 28 June 1913 · HSP Exhibits](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷³² “National Council of Women Voters.” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, Oregon), Friday, October 31, 1913, p4.

⁷³³ National Council of Woman Voters – Call to Conference. July 28, 1913. Caroline Katzenstein Papers 17448. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, [HSP Digital Collections · National Council of Women Voters all to Conference, 28 June 1913 · HSP Exhibits](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷³⁴ John H. DeVoe. Faulk County, South Dakota. Homestead Patent #4648. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

Cora Smith King, served as the Treasurer and Chairwoman of the Congressional Committee of the NCWV. Cora Smith King was part of an entire extended family homestead effort in North Dakota – her Civil War veteran father, her brother, and her grandmother all claimed land under several public land laws. Cora successfully proved up a Timber Culture claim in her own name in 1902 – while actively engaged in the suffrage movement in the state, before heading further west to Washington.⁷³⁵ Corresponding Secretary Berthe E. Knatvold-Kittelsen was another NCWV leader based out of Washington with homestead roots. She was the daughter of Norwegian immigrant Hans E. Knatvold, who declared his intent to become a U.S. Citizen to meet the requirements of the Homestead Act, successfully commuting a claim to 160 acres in Kitsap County, Washington in 1890, when Berthe was a young girl.⁷³⁶

It wasn't just the Washington membership of the National Council of Women Voters leadership, either - committee members, officers, and vice presidents throughout the west held strong ties to land ownership and political power. Honorary President Abigail Scott Duniway, from nearby Oregon, homesteaded under the Oregon Land Donation Act along with her husband, as explored in Chapter One. Elsewhere in Oregon, committee member Maud West Prescott grew up her father's modest 37-acre homestead not far from Portland.⁷³⁷ Dr. Viola Boley Coe's family homesteaded in the Dakota Territory.

Committee member Ida H. Mondell, of Wyoming, engaged in farming and ranching on the 320 acres of land she owned in her own name in Wyoming, half of which was claimed under the Desert Land Act in 1899, then commuted to a cash sale, and the other purchased outright at a public sale in 1912.⁷³⁸ She married Frank W. Mondell, a powerful ally in both the suffrage movement and to women homesteaders (the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 was often referred to as the Mondell Act). Frank Mondell also served as Assistant Commissioner of the General Land Office, and later as a congressional representative for the state of Wyoming. He was the House Majority leader when Congress passed the Susan B. Anthony amendment. Not only did he vote in favor, but he was one of the six congressional representatives who introduced the resolution in favor, along with several other congressional leaders with homesteading connections, as follows: Jeannette Rankin, John E. Raker, Henry F. Ashurst, as homesteading representatives leading the way to suffrage.⁷³⁹

⁷³⁵ Cora E. Smith-Eaton. Benson County, North Dakota. Timber Culture Claim #1548. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) Her father, Eliphaz Smith's claim - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) Her brother, Fred Eliphaz Smith's claim - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#), and her maternal grandmother, Eliza Jane Barnes - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷³⁶ Hans E. Knatvold. Kitsap County, Washington. Sale – Cash Entry (Commutated Homestead) Patent #11664. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷³⁷ Maud's father, Josiah West, successfully proved up in Washington County, Oregon, in 1871. Josiah West. Washington County, Oregon. Homestead Claim #135. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷³⁸ "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – 1955." Database with images, FamilySearch. Wyoming, Vol. 17, Image 51 of 258. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

⁷³⁹ "To Pass H.J. Res. 1, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution Extending the Right of Suffrage to Women. (P. 78-2) May 21, 1919. [TO PASS H.J.RES. 1, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION EXTENDING THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE TO WOMEN. \(P. 78-2\).](#) -- [GovTrack.us](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

California's NCWV congressional committee representative, Iva G. Spencer, had a powerful political ally as a potential suffrage champion in Congress in her spouse, John E. Raker. The two married in 1889 and claimed a homestead in rural Modoc County. The federal tract book reflects that they had filed the claim by 1906, and though it took longer than the usual five years, they successfully proved up two claims of 160-acres each in 1916, under the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Desert Land Act of 1877.⁷⁴⁰ Raker was a U.S. congressional representative for the state of California from 1911 until his death in office in 1926. Additionally, Raker was a member of the House of Representatives' Committee on Woman Suffrage in the 65th Congress. He was one of the six members of the House to introduce the resolution, and subsequently voted yea on the proposed amendment.⁷⁴¹

Arizona's Elizabeth McEvoy Reno was married to Henry F. Ashurst. Both had a small land claim in their own name in La Paz County, Arizona Territory in addition to Henry's 157 acres in Navajo county.⁷⁴² When Arizona was granted statehood in 1912, Henry became its first Senator, a position he held until 1941. During the 1919 Senate vote on the proposed federal suffrage amendment, Ashurst voted yea.

As these women engaged in politics, they weren't just aligning with men who could help promote the cause – they were winning the vote themselves! Frances Willard Munds, the Arizona homesteader featured in Chapter Two, also held a leadership role with the National Council of Women Voters, representing the state of Arizona. As one of the first women elected as a state senator, she reflected the trend of homesteading women holding many of the political “firsts” for women in America – like the first mayor, Oklahoma land rush participant and homesteader Susanna Madora Salter, first state senator, Utah homesteader Martha Hughes Cannon, and the first U.S. Senator, Jeannette Rankin – the only woman in Congress, and thus the only woman to cast a ballot in support of the Nineteenth Amendment.⁷⁴³

Carrie Chapman Catt took DeVoe's idea of the National Council of Women Voters, and moved it along further. Just as DeVoe transitioned the west from actively fighting to achieve the vote in their home states to organizing and educating new women voters on civics and politics, Catt sought to do the same on a national basis. She merged the National Council of Woman Voters and the National American Woman Suffrage Association to create the League of Woman Voters in 1920 following congressional approval of the Susan B. Anthony bill, which sent the proposed Nineteenth Amendment to the states for ratification. Nina Allender drew the below

⁷⁴⁰ John E. Raker. Modoc County, California. Homestead Patent #793. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and John E. Raker. Modoc County, California. Desert Land Patent #371. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#); “United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800-1955,” database with images, FamilySearch, California Vol. 28, Image 213 of 264, Records Improvement, Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

⁷⁴¹ “To Pass H.J. Res. 1, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution Extending the Right of Suffrage to Women. (P. 78-2) May 21, 1919. [TO PASS H.J.RES. 1, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION EXTENDING THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE TO WOMEN. \(P. 78-2\).](#) -- [GovTrack.us](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁴² Elizabeth L and Henry F Ashurst. La Paz and Navajo Counties, Arizona. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷⁴³ Winifred Conkling. “Jeannette Rankin: One Woman, One Vote.” National Park Service. [Jeannette Rankin: One Woman, One Vote \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

cartoon in 1923 for the National Woman's Party, urging members to fight on – that Susan B. Anthony would tell the women of today 'everything but the vote is still to be won.'



Figure 40 - "Everything but the Vote is Still to be Won" - Drawing by Allender, depicting Susan B. Anthony in 1923. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Homesteaders Leading the Way

In an era in which American women had few legal rights, homesteading became a route to property ownership – increasing their political, social, and economic mobility through the establishment of legal property rights at the federal level. The ranks of landowning women homesteaders across the Midwest and Western states swelled between 1862 and 1920, and especially in the early twentieth century. As more and more women joined the ranks of propertied Americans, they increasingly sought the rights that had traditionally been associated with being a landed citizenry – the vote.

In early America, the right to vote was largely limited to landowning white males. With the historic link of land ownership and the right to vote in the U.S., women homesteaders began to pursue – and achieve – the right to vote in homesteading states. These women homesteaders spurred the suffrage movement onward through the same rallying cry of “no taxation without representation” that erupted with the American Revolution, as they were acquiring property in their own name, paying taxes in their own name – and having no say in how those taxes were spent.

Homesteading offered women more than just the opportunity to own land; it was a powerful catalyst in the women's suffrage movement, especially in the twentieth century. Homesteaders created networks and communities wherever they settled, through town building,

creating transportation systems, and establishing financial, commercial, social, and educational institutions. Their experiences and talents in creating these networks and organizations enabled them to coordinate, mobilize, participate in, and enact the local, state, and national suffrage and reform-based organizations that challenged the status quo to ensure their rights, liberties, and freedoms were not violated.

If homesteaders numbered about 1.6 million, and women homesteaders were a little over ten percent of that number, then more than 160,000 women were joining a historically enfranchised class and using their newfound economic power to push for their equality in the eyes of the law. When accounting the numbers of women who were the wives and daughters of homesteaders, or single women homesteaders who did not successfully prove up and earn their patent, then that number swells even higher.

It is no coincidence that as the Midwest and Western homesteading states were exploding in population, they were also granting women the vote – something few eastern states had done. In fact, the only non-homestead states that granted women voting rights before the Nineteenth Amendment were New York, Rhode Island, Maine, and Tennessee. Of those four states, only New York granted full voting rights. By contrast, 24 of 30 homestead states, and every single Midwest state granted woman suffrage prior to the Nineteenth Amendment.

By the early twentieth century, the wave of homesteading states which had enshrined women's rights to vote helped set in motion a national strategy to grant women the vote, led by women who either claimed land themselves, in their own names, were the family members of those who did so, or otherwise were influential in promoting homesteading as well as the vote. These homesteading women were trailblazers and pioneers for the women's suffrage movement, leading the way to the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment.

The suffragists in this study homesteaded and fought for the vote in 24 of the 30 homesteading states. They came from all walks of life, from a kaleidoscope of diverse backgrounds and experiences over the many decades and many states that the Homestead Act was in place. They claimed thousands upon thousands of acres of land, from the Florida Gulf Coast to Alaska, and nearly everywhere in between. They ranged from leaders of national and state organizations, down to the foot soldiers. Every single one of the states in this study voted to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, in no small part due to the work of women homesteaders there. In 1920, 72 years after Seneca Falls, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified – women were guaranteed the right to vote across the United States. It was women homesteaders and the Homestead Act of 1862 that took the seeds of suffrage and planted them in the soil.

Epilogue: “Shall Not Be Denied” –

For many women in the United States, the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in August of 1920 was not the end of the story. The amendment stated that the right of citizens to vote “shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.” However, that right only applied to citizens– which meant that it did not necessarily apply to Native American women, who were not guaranteed citizenship until 1924, or to Asian American women, who were not considered to be citizens until the 1940s. Additionally, though Black women were citizens, in many parts of the country voter suppression tactics such as poll taxes and literacy tests prevented their ability to vote.

The story of suffrage doesn’t end in 1920, with many women continuing to have to fight for their right to vote for decades after. But they determined that their voices, their votes, shall not be denied. Many of these black, indigenous, and other people of color participated in the suffrage movement or the Civil Rights movement, in addition to becoming landowners through various federal public land laws, including African American suffragists and civil rights leaders Blanche Armwood Beatty (Florida) and Mahala Ashley Dickerson (Alaska); Latinx suffragist Adelina Otero-Warren (New Mexico); LGBT suffragist Marie Equi (Oregon); Native American suffragist Zitkala-Sa (South Dakota), and Asian-American suffragist Mabel Ping Hua Lee (New York).

African American Suffragists Shall Not Be Denied

Blanche Armwood Beatty Washington was born in Hillsborough County, Florida, in 1890 to Levin Armwood, Jr. and Maggie Holloman. Her father, Levin Armwood, Jr. and paternal grandfather, Levin Armwood Sr., were born enslaved in Georgia and North Carolina, respectively. After emancipation, the family migrated to Florida, where they became successful farmers, taking advantage of the extension of the Homestead Act to Florida in 1866, under the Southern Homestead Act.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, many southern Blacks expected to be granted farms in the spirit of General William Sherman’s Special Field Order Number 15, which granted hundreds of thousands of acres of land to formerly enslaved African Americans seeking land – the inspiration for the well-known slogan “forty acres and a mule.”⁷⁴⁴ That first hope was crushed after Lincoln’s assassination, when President Andrew Johnson rescinded the order. Congress passed the Southern Homestead Act in June of 1866, which opened 46 million acres of public lands in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi. This amendment to the original Homestead law allowed claims of up to 80 acres for a \$5 filing fee, and explicitly prohibited discrimination on the basis of race or color.⁷⁴⁵ During the post-war period of

⁷⁴⁴ Gladstone, William A. William A. Gladstone Afro-American Military Collection: Special Field Orders, No. 15, Headquarters, Military Division of the Mississippi, by Major General W. T. Sherman. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss83434256/> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁴⁵ Gates, Paul W. “Federal Land Policy in the South, 1866-1888.” *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 6, No 3 (August 1940), 303-330.

Reconstruction, Congress and the Freedmen's Bureau saw an opportunity to transform the rural south from a plantation economy based upon enslavement to a society of free black and white landowning small farmers. There was enough land for hundreds of thousands of potential claimants, and Black homesteaders were given a special six-month window to claim land before it was opened to others – the government sought to establish autonomy and economic self-sufficiency for the millions of Black Americans in the South.

Normally the distribution of homestead land fell to the General Land Office and the Department of the Interior, but the Southern Homestead Act was administered by the Freedmen's Bureau, in the Department of War. The Freedmen's Bureau was, unfortunately overworked and understaffed – it had many programs and tasks to attempt to provide aid to southern blacks, which meant that resources to distribute land under the Southern Homestead Act weren't all they could have been.

In total, somewhere around 36,000 freedpersons lived on a total of around 6,000 farms successfully proved up under the Southern Homestead Act – about 1% of the Southern Black population, before the Southern Homestead Act was repealed in 1876.⁷⁴⁶ A recently conducted historic resource study by the Center for Great Plains Studies found that there were several reasons for the limited number of successful applicants. First, most were extremely poor, and lacked the resources to move to public lands and establish new farms. The available land, though it was free, was not easily converted to farming. It was mostly heavily forested, which meant a time consuming and expensive process to convert it to farmland. Additionally, surveys, maps, and land offices were few and far between – so even finding land and filing a claim was tough. Finally, Black Homesteaders in the South were subjected to southern whites' hostility and racialized violence – southern whites attempted to prevent southern blacks from transforming themselves into independent, landowning small farmers.⁷⁴⁷

Given the obstacles faced by black homesteaders in the south – racism, poverty; the Southern Homestead Act can be considered a relative success, and those who claimed land under it showed great courage and determination – including the Blanche Armwood's family. The Armwood family, like many Black homesteaders, used the Southern Homestead Act for their own benefit and uplift, but also as a launching pad which provided resources for the community and for generational uplift. For Blanche Beatty Atwood, the family homestead provided resources for her fight to provide reform, education, and suffrage for African-Americans all across Florida.

Homesteading ran in the Armwood family, as well as in the Holloman family – the two families successfully claimed hundreds of acres of land in Florida. Blanche's Great-Uncle, John Armwood, claimed 160 acres of land in Hillsborough County, Florida, under the Homestead Act of 1862. He filed the claim in July of 1882, paying a \$10 filing fee for 159.5 acres of land.⁷⁴⁸ The land was surrounded by swamps, with most of the parcels in the township being allocated not under the Homestead Act, but under the Swamp Land Act of 1850, which required occupants to

⁷⁴⁶ Richard Edwards. *Black Homesteaders in the Great Plains Historic Resource Study for the National Park Service*. Lincoln: Center for Great Plains Studies, 2020.

⁷⁴⁷ Richard Edwards. *Black Homesteaders in the Great Plains Historic Resource Study for the National Park Service*. Lincoln: Center for Great Plains Studies, 2020.

⁷⁴⁸ "United States Bureau of Land Management Tract Books, 1800 – c. 1955." Database with images. FamilySearch, Florida, Vol. 62, Image 124 of 244. Bureau of Land Management, Washington, D.C.

drain the land to turn it to productive agricultural use. Despite that challenge, he successfully proved up, and received the patent in 1890. He then transferred 80 acres of the land to Levin sometime in the 1890s, as reflected by tax assessments listed in Tampa.⁷⁴⁹ Blanche's uncle Lewis Armwood (her father's brother) also homesteaded nearby, claiming 80 acres and successfully receiving the patent in October of 1884.⁷⁵⁰ Mills Holloman acquired a further 240 acres under two different homestead claims in 1883 and 1892.⁷⁵¹ The family used these hundreds of acres of fertile, productive citrus land to launch themselves to prosperity in the community.



Figure 41 - Armwood Family Reunion at the Homestead, December 1912. Photo from Exploring Florida. Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, University of South Florida.

Blanche Armwood dedicated her life to social reform: education, women's suffrage, temperance, and African American Civil Rights. She was part of a movement stretching back generations, built upon the experience and years that Black women had participated in, organized, and led anti-slavery societies, churches, and civil rights organizations.⁷⁵² African Americans engaged, participated in, and were often even leaders in Republican-dominated Southern politics during Reconstruction (Blanche's own great-grandfather and grandfather both

⁷⁴⁹ *The Weekly Tribune*. (Tampa, Florida), July 27, 1899.

⁷⁵⁰ Lewis Armwood. Hillsborough County, Florida. Homestead Patent #3770. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷⁵¹ Mills Holloman. Hillsborough County, Florida. Homestead Patent #9209. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) and [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷⁵² Martha S. Jones. *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All*. New York: Basic Books, 2020, 149.

served as county commissioners in the 1860s and 1870s).⁷⁵³ But by the time Blanche grew up in Florida, the progress in civil rights made during Reconstruction seemed a distant memory: the turn of the century in the south was a time when Jim Crow, segregation, and the brutality and horrors of racial violence and lynching were an ever-present trauma.

Like Ida B. Wells, Armwood took a stand against the suffrage movement's racism, and crusaded against the racialized violence of lynching. She was the President of the Colored Woman's Club in Tampa, and crusaded against racial injustice, including racial violence and laws and methods of African American voter suppression. Colored Women's Clubs offered a route into politics and social reform for African American women, joined together under the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs (NACW) in 1905, under its first president, suffragist and activist Mary Church Terrell. By the 1920s, NACW membership was nearly 100,000 women nationwide.⁷⁵⁴ Terrell noted the shared history of black and white women working together for suffrage before the Fourteenth Amendment, and that black women had to create their own organizations "not because we are narrow and wish to lay special status upon the color of the skin... [but because our] status in this country seems to demand that we stand by our selves."⁷⁵⁵

Armwood shared Terrell's approach to lifting both women and African Americans simultaneously. In 1920, Armwood worked with Warren G. Harding's presidential campaign. In his nomination speech, Harding stated "I believe the federal government should stamp out lynching and remove that stain from the fair name of America... [Blacks have earned the full measure of citizenship]."⁷⁵⁶ In 1922 she penned a piece to the *Tampa Tribune*, noting that recent Tulsa Massacre "where the bloodthirsty mob found pleasure in destroying the lives and property of [Blacks] as a means of humiliating the entire race."⁷⁵⁷ That same year, Blanche, as Executive Secretary of the Tampa Urban League, commended the Tampa Sheriff for preventing the lynching of a black man in the city, "lest some outcropping of the crime of lynching and which flourishes in many sections of the Southland come forth to mar the serenity of our law abiding community."⁷⁵⁸ She also continued her political advocacy in the 1924 presidential campaign when she gave a speech for the Florida Republican State Convention.⁷⁵⁹

In 1923, Armwood represented Florida at a meeting of the National Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, working with Mary McLeod Bethune who, in addition to educational outreach and uplift, sought to lead voter registration drives after Black women gained the vote in 1901.⁷⁶⁰ She assisted in organizing a visit from Ohio African American Suffragist and orator

⁷⁵³ Michele Alishahi. "For Peace and Civic Righteousness": Blanche Armwood and the Struggle for Freedom and Racial Equality in Tampa, Florida, 1890-1939. M.A. Thesis. University of South Florida, 2003.

⁷⁵⁴ Jones, 152.

⁷⁵⁵ Jones, 154.

⁷⁵⁶ Keith Halderman. "Blanche Armwood of Tampa." *The Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol. 74, No 3 (Winter, 1996): 287-303, 297.

⁷⁵⁷ "Mrs. Beatty Protests Editorial Expression on Pending Dyer Bill." *The Tampa Tribune* (Tampa, Florida), December 2, 1922.

⁷⁵⁸ "Praise Spencer for Handling Situation." *The Tampa Tribune* (Tampa, Florida), September 26, 1922.

⁷⁵⁹ "Rebuffs for the Lilywhites." *The New York Age* (New York, New York), May 17, 1924.

⁷⁶⁰ "Urban League Notes." *The Tampa Tribune* (Tampa, Florida), January 28, 1923.

Hallie Quinn Brown, to speak to the Tampa Federated Colored Women's Clubs on the importance of the vote and political education.⁷⁶¹

Though Blanche Armwood Beatty passed away at the young age of 49, her life was dedicated to African American social uplift, educational reform, and welfare. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided her and her family with opportunity and hope for a new life, just as it did for African American homesteaders under both the Southern Homestead Act of 1866 in Reconstruction America, and later in the Great Plains, when African Americans sought to create new lives at Black homesteader colonies such as Nicodemus.

LGBT Suffragists Shall Not Be Denied

Some who engaged in the suffrage movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would probably today self-identify as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Many formed long-term companionships with partners who spent years, even decades of their lives together. Some of these women were open about their relationships, others were not. These committed, oftentimes intimate relationships were once referred to as "Boston marriages." Women who homesteaded, just like women who were participants in the suffrage movement in many regards sought to question and alter the social status quo which had previously restricted female landownership as well as the vote. Women who were both homesteaders and suffragists were considerably more willing to defy gendered expectations and norms of the era, fighting for their social and civil rights. Homesteading women who may have considered themselves today as LGBTQ+ include North Dakota homesteader Alma Lutz, who cohabited with her fellow National Woman's Party member Marguerite Smith from 1918 to 1959; New Mexico homesteader Nina Otero-Warren, who homesteaded and ranched with Mamie Meadors at their ranch "Las Dos," and Oregon homesteader Marie Equi, who homesteaded and cohabited with Bessie Holcomb.

Marie Diana Equi was a leader in social reform for the American proletariat in the early twentieth century, inspiring others to object against injustice. Equi was born in the historical whaling town of New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1872. Her parents were European immigrants Giovanni and Sarah Mullins Aque, who came to America to escape political oppression.⁷⁶² Perhaps their experiences in Europe led them to instill in their eleven children a desire to oppose authoritarianism and fight for civil rights and liberties.⁷⁶³

Marie attended New Bedford High School before going to work in the textile mills as a teenager.⁷⁶⁴ She was one of the untold thousands of children in nineteenth-century America that worked in exploitive conditions in unregulated industrial factories: extensive hours, unlivable wages, dangerous conditions, and health issues. These experiences would inspire her to fight for

⁷⁶¹ "President National Federation of Colored Women's Clubs to Visit Tampa." *The Tampa Tribune* (Tampa, Florida), January 21, 1923.

⁷⁶² Michael Helquist. *Marie Equi: Radical Politics and Outlaw Passions*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2015, 3.

⁷⁶³ Helquist. *Marie Equi: Radical Politics and Outlaw Passions*. 5.

⁷⁶⁴ Helquist, 11.

labor reform years later. Her former classmate, Bessie Bell Holcomb, encouraged Marie to leave the mill and pursue her academic interests at Northfield Seminary for Young Ladies, with Bessie even giving one hundred dollars out of her own pocket to pay for Marie because she “desire[d] to see her develop into a true Christian woman.”⁷⁶⁵ Nearly three years later, Bessie persuaded Marie to join her in the West. Together, the women represented the changing social values of the Progressive Era “New Woman.”

In 1891, Holcomb journeyed to the west coast, aiming to stake a land claim. She settled on 122 acres in The Dalles, Oregon, just across the river from Washington.⁷⁶⁶ Shortly after she arrived there, she wrote to Marie to join her. The local paper reported that “Miss Aque, of New Bedford” arrived in 1892 to spend the winter with her Miss Bessie Holcomb on their homestead.⁷⁶⁷ The couple proved up their homestead together and received the patent to the land in 1897.⁷⁶⁸

Several Oregon newspapers discuss the friendship between Miss Holcomb and Miss Equi. *The Dalles Time Mountaineer* stated, “Miss Aque, of New Bedford, is in the city, and will spend the winter months with her friend, Miss Bessie Bell Holcomb”⁷⁶⁹ Though these newspapers did not disclose it, the friendship between the two women was a romantic relationship. *The Bostonian* by Henry James referred to these financially independent female relationships as “Boston Marriages” in 1886.⁷⁷⁰ Close romantic, affectionate, even intimate, companionship between women in Victorian era America was not uncommon. However, homosexual relationships in the late nineteenth century were often not recorded or directly acknowledged. Marie Equi had several Boston Marriages in her lifetime, beginning with Bessie Holcomb on her homestead for nearly ten years. Marie was open about her sexuality but did question and sometimes denied it to the public. A letter by a friend assured her that she was “perfectly sane” to pursue same-sex relationships.⁷⁷¹

Marie Equi dedicated most of her life to the welfare of women, and to the cause of the working class. In 1905, she spoke at the National American Women’s Suffrage Association in Portland, Oregon.⁷⁷² The convention included many leading suffragists such as Susan B. Anthony, Abigail Scott Duniway, and Carrie Chapman Catt. The work of Equi continued after

⁷⁶⁵ Helquist, 14.

⁷⁶⁶ Bessie B. Holcomb. Wasco County, Oregon. Homestead Patent #2682. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) Accessed April 12, 2022

⁷⁶⁷ *The Dalles Times-Mountaineer*. (The Dalles, Oregon), July 29, 1893. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93051669/1893-07-29/ed-1/seq-4/>; *The Dalles Times-Mountaineer*. (The Dalles, Oregon.), September 10, 1892. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93051669/1892-09-10/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁷⁶⁸ *The Dalles Times-Mountaineer*. (The Dalles, Oregon), November 21, 1896. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93051669/1896-11-21/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁷⁶⁹ *The Dalles Times-Mountaineer*. (The Dalles, Oregon.), September 10, 1892. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn93051669/1892-09-10/ed-1/seq-1/>

⁷⁷⁰ “Boston Marriages.” Longfellow House Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/boston-marriages.htm> Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁷¹ Nancy Krieger. “Queen of the Bolsheviks,” *Radical America*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (September 1983): 55-73, 58.

⁷⁷² Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage* Vol. V, 149.

the devastating San Francisco earthquake of 1906. She was awarded for her efforts by President Theodore Roosevelt.⁷⁷³ Equi worked for women's rights across the state of Oregon for years. She aligned and joined the efforts of progressives, suffragists, and even socialists in the state, and across the Pacific Northwest, including Mrs. Duniway and Dr. Coe.⁷⁷⁴ The *Spokane Chronicle* reported on Equi in July 1913: "the Industrial Worker of the World leader, [was] arrested on Thursday night for rioting... the charges against her are inciting a riot, carrying concealed weapons after making threats to kill, and assault with a deadly weapon."⁷⁷⁵

The charges were brought as part of a "cleanup campaign started by Sheriff Word to rid the city of the vagrant element," attempting to force Equi and her "radical" ideas from the state.⁷⁷⁶ Law enforcement agencies continued to target Equi, with a federal investigation during World War I ending in her incarceration on charges of sedition. Under the Espionage Act, authorities cracked down tightly on socialists and radicals, such as the arrest and imprisonment of Socialist presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs, or Kate Richards O'Hare. Equi wrote to President Woodrow Wilson, accusing the government of targeting her for being a member of the LGBTQ+ community. She requested clemency, and upon her release, continued fighting for civil rights.

Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians Shall Not Be Denied

The Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 forbade states or the federal government from denying the vote based on gender. But most Native Americans were not yet citizens, meaning that they were denied the vote on those grounds. Even after the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 (or Snyder Act) of 1924 granted citizenship to all Native Americans, many states continued to bar indigenous peoples from voting.⁷⁷⁷

Helen Piotopowaka Clarke (Piegan Blackfeet) was the first Native American woman to hold public office. Like Zitkala-Sa, Clarke worked for the Department of the Interior, with the General Land Office. She was born in northern Montana in 1846 to Cothcocona and Malcolm Clarke. As a young girl, she was sent to school in Cincinnati, before returning home to her family's ranch in Montana.⁷⁷⁸ Increased encroachment of Anglo-American settlers into Blackfoot territory led to increased tensions. In 1869, Malcolm Clarke was killed by Owl Child, Helen's mother's cousin. With white settlers in the area fearful following the perception of a white rancher dead at the hands of a Native American, the U.S. Army massacred hundreds of Piegan

⁷⁷³ *New York Times* (New York, New York), July 15, 1952, 21.

⁷⁷⁴ Kimberly Jensen, "Neither Head nor Tail to the Campaign," *Oregon Historical Society* Vol. 108, No. 3, 2007: (350-383), 363.

⁷⁷⁵ "Woman Won't Leave Portland." *Spokane Chronicle* (Spokane, Washington), July 19, 1913.

⁷⁷⁶ "Woman Won't Leave Portland." *Spokane Chronicle* (Spokane, Washington), July 19, 1913.

⁷⁷⁷ In some circumstances, Native Americans could become citizens prior to the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act. The Choctaw signed the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830, which ceded Choctaw lands in Mississippi in exchange for their Removal to Oklahoma. Under Article 14 of that treaty, those who wished to could remain in Mississippi and accept American citizenship. Native Americans were permitted to naturalize as American citizens if they renounced their tribal affiliation.

⁷⁷⁸ Andrew R. Graybill. "Helen P. Clarke in 'the Age of Tribes:' Montana's Changing Racial Landscape, 1870-1920." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, Spring 2011 (3-19), 4.

Blackfeet at the Marias River. The pain and trauma of both the murder of her father, and the resulting brutal reprisals against the Piegan Blackfeet lead her to move to the east for several years, where she pursued an acting career in theater.⁷⁷⁹

As the mixed-race daughter of a Scottish-American fur trader and a Piegan Blackfoot woman, Clarke was at many times caught betwixt each culture, in a world where racial identity was increasingly crystallizing in American culture. The Department of the Interior measured that identity in terms of “Blood Quantum.” Helen was determined to fight for reform. In 1882, she became the first woman elected to public office, serving three terms as the Superintendent of Schools of Lewis and Clark County, from 1882-1888.⁷⁸⁰ Though she managed an impressive victory, the passage of the 1887 Dawes Severalty Act brought Native Americans to an ambiguous point. The Dawes Act would carve up tribal lands into individual allotments to “civilize” Native Americans by creating a society of yeoman farmers. The original intent of the law placed these allotments in trust under the federal government for a period of twenty-five years, during which it would not be taxed. Helen was issued a patent in trust, receiving 83 acres in Glacier County, on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. She received the patent for her land on August 11, 1922.⁷⁸¹

After the passage of the Dawes Act, it was subsequently amended by the Burke Act of 1906. The Burke Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to find allottees “competent and capable,” and thus able to be removed from federal trust status – receiving the patent to the land immediately. Competency could be determined in a variety of ways, including education, farming, to blood quantum – taking the already racialized and racist concept and assuming that those with a larger perceived degree of “whiteness” were more competent.⁷⁸² In theory, the Dawes Act could have provided an opportunity for citizenship and enfranchisement for Native American men (and women, in states with woman suffrage). On that basis, Helen took a job with the Department of the Interior in 1890. She traveled to Oklahoma Territory to explain the Dawes Act to the Otoe-Missourias, the Poncas, and the Tonkawas. Clarke argued to tribal leaders that allotment and individual land ownership could bring Native Americans a path to the vote and to citizenship.

In practice, the Dawes Act served as an engine for increased dispossession of Native American lands. Once plots had been assigned to all tribal individuals or families, the remaining tribal land was considered “surplus” The Burke Act meant that many Native Americans were taxed off their land and forced to sell it to speculators or settlers. The Dawes and Burke Acts

⁷⁷⁹ Andrew R. Graybill. “Helen P. Clarke in ‘the Age of Tribes:’ Montana’s Changing Racial Landscape, 1870-1920.” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, Spring 2011 (3-19), 5.

⁷⁸⁰ Graybill, 8.

⁷⁸¹ Helen P. Clarke. Glacier County, Montana. Indian Trust Patent. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷⁸² Dee Garceau. “‘A Right to Help Make the Laws:’ Helen Piotopowaka Clarke, Virginia Villedeaux, and Blackfeet Empowerment.” *Equality and the Ballot Box: Votes for Women on the Northern Great Plains*, ed. Lori Ann Lahlum and Molly P. Rozum. Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society Press, 2019, 345.

sped up the process of settler colonialism – between the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887 and its repeal in 1934, Native American lands shrank from 138 million acres to just 48 million.⁷⁸³

Zitkala-Sa (“Red Bird”) was a member of the Yankton Dakota. She was born in 1876 on the Yankton Reservation, in southern South Dakota. Though the Yankton signed a treaty in 1858 with the U.S. federal government ceding 11,000,000 acres of land opened for white settlement and guaranteeing a 430,000-acre reservation, by the 1880s, white settlers were homesteading on the reservation. While homesteading often served as an avenue for women to acquire property and fight for the right to vote, for Zitkala-Sa and indigenous women across the continent it held an entirely different meaning. Zitkala-Sa was coerced by Quaker missionaries as a young girl to attend White’s Indiana Manual Labor Institute, against her and her mother’s will. After the traumatic experience of being forcefully sundered from her home, her family, and her culture, she felt ambivalent about returning to the Yankton Reservation, questioning whether she fit in, somewhere in between two worlds. Boarding schools such as the infamous Carlisle Indian School left a sinister legacy for tribes across the country – forced attempts at assimilation, violent traumatic abuse, and for many children, death.

Zitkala-Sa began writing about Native American life, to counter stereotypes and argue against assimilation. Her work attacked the boarding school system in its current state. Despite her opposition to the institution of boarding schools, she took a job with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), where she had the opportunity to continue her work for cultural, political, and social reform for Native Americans, by attempting to reform from within the system. She began her teaching career teaching music at the infamous Carlisle Indian School, in Pennsylvania, in 1897.⁷⁸⁴

While working for the BIA she met and married Captain Raymond Talefase Bonnin, who also was of Dakota descent, in 1902. The couple continued their work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, where they were assigned to the Uintah-Ouray Reservation in Utah. Zitkala-Sa and her husband acquired patents to land in their own name in Utah, as well as in South Dakota, under the Dawes Act. Zitkala-Sa received patents issued to “Gertrude Bonnin” or “Gertie Simmons” in South Dakota in 1910, and Utah



Figure 42 - Zitkala-Sa, 1898. Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

⁷⁸³ “Native Americans and the Homestead Act.” Homestead National Historical Park. [Native Americans and the Homestead Act - Homestead National Historical Park \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/naahp/) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁸⁴ Report on Teachers at the Carlisle Indian School in 1897. Richard Pratt to Office of Indian Affairs. September 1897. Record Group 75, Entry 91, Box 1458. Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C. [NARA RG75 91 b1458 38947.pdf \(dickinson.edu\)](https://www.dickinson.edu/digital/collection/p26030coll1/p145838947.pdf) Accessed March 9, 2022.

in 1912, under the Indian Fee Patent authority of October 14, 1865.⁷⁸⁵ Zitkala-Sa's husband, Captain Raymond T. Bonnin, also held the title to land.

Zitkala-Sa and Helen Piotopowaka Clarke both turned to reform and Native American political activism after experiencing the trauma and hardships inflicted upon nineteenth century tribes by settler colonialism. Though neither claimed homesteads, their lives were impacted by processes generated by that colonial process. They did, however, receive fee patents under the Allotment Act, and worked within the Department of the Interior, attempting to bring change and reform by working through and in the system.

Asian Americans Shall Not Be Denied

Asian immigrants and their Asian American children and descendants settled across the homesteading west in large numbers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first large wave of immigration began with Chinese immigrants to California in the 1850s, during the California Gold Rush. These immigrants were often brutally exploited as a source of cheap labor and were often the targets of racialized violence from Nativists Anglo-Americans. The Homestead Act, which was created in part as an immigration law to settle the U.S. West did not apply to Asian immigrants – only immigrants who were eligible to become naturalized citizens could homestead. At that time, citizenship was restricted based upon race, with only whites or those born in the United States eligible to become citizens. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prohibited further immigration from China, though the Supreme Court ruled in *United States vs. Wong Kim Ark* (1898) that a child born in the U.S. to immigrant parents was a citizen, legally opening up homesteading to Asian-Americans, though in practice legal limitations at the state level placed a further barrier.

With the restriction on citizenship preventing most Asian immigrants from acquiring land under the Homestead Act, very few Asians or Asian Americans ever successfully acquired public domain land. One of the earliest to do so was Harry Sato, who received land under the Newlands Homestead Reclamation Act of 1902. Harry and Noi Sato immigrated from Fukushima, Japan, to the United States in the early 1900s. Sato first worked on the railroad in California, before migrating to Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska to farm. He was assigned Roe G. Liddle's homestead claim in 1922, and successfully proved it up and received the patent to the land in 1929.⁷⁸⁶ Yet the census record clearly notes that Sato was not a naturalized citizen – at that point in American history, first-generation Asian immigrants were not eligible to be naturalized citizens. It would take another two decades before Japanese immigrants could become citizens.

John Yoshio Kobayashi was a Japanese-American man who was born in Idaho to Japanese immigrant parents in 1921. After graduating high school, he served in the U.S. Army during World War II. Even in the face of racial prejudice, he served with valor in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The 442nd was a famous unit composed almost entirely of second-

⁷⁸⁵ Gertrude Bonnin. Charles Mix, South Dakota and Duchesne, Utah. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷⁸⁶ Harry Sato. Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. Homestead Reclamation Patent #5826. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

generation American soldiers of Japanese ancestry (“Nisei”).⁷⁸⁷ The unit remains one of the most decorated in American military history, helping to win the war with their service in Europe. The Regiment was initially made up of 4,000 men and had to be replaced nearly 2.5 times over. About 14,000 men served, earning almost 10,000 Purple Hearts, as well as 21 Medals of Honor. In July 1946, President Harry Truman presented a Presidential Unit Citation to the 442nd, stating “You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice, and you have won.”⁷⁸⁸

After Kobayashi returned from the war, he married Sumiko Dorothy Yagi. Sumiko was born in Seattle, Washington to first generation Japanese immigrant parents Genji and Ume Yagi in 1920.⁷⁸⁹ Though her parents were not naturalized citizens, Sumiko was granted citizenship per the ruling of *U.S. v Wong Kim Ark*, as a child born in the U.S. The Yagi family operated a small grocery store in Seattle.

Sumiko and her family experienced extreme racial prejudice and a sense of wartime hysteria. Like many Japanese Americans on the west coast, they were forced away from their homes and businesses, and sent to Minidoka Incarceration Center, in Idaho, as part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066.⁷⁹⁰ That Executive Order authorized the United States Army to remove all persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast and imprison them without due process of law. More than 120,000 were held in these incarceration camps – the vast majority of whom were citizens born in the United States, like Sumiko and her younger siblings Sachiko and George. By the Spring of 1942, Japanese Americans were given just days’ notice that they had to abandon their homes, their businesses, and the lives they had built for themselves. For business owners like the Yagis, that led to the euphemistically named “evacuation sales” – knowing that they had only days, prices were slashed – merchandise, groceries, houses, and cars were all sold, often for pennies on the dollar, as they were only allowed to bring what they could carry.

Following the war, Kobayashi and Yagi married and moved to Riverton, Wyoming, where they homesteaded as part of the Riverton Reclamation Project, under the 1902 Newlands Reclamation Act. Reclamation homesteading was established in areas where farming was impossible without extensive irrigation, which required federal money and planning to build the necessary expensive infrastructure. As a veteran, John received preference in the lottery drawing for the land, which he successfully proved up in 1952.⁷⁹¹ However, due to a problem with the project, Kobayashi sold his homestead and instead relocated to the Minidoka Reclamation homestead project in Idaho. It must have been difficult for Sumiko to return to Minidoka, site of

⁷⁸⁷ For more on the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and Japanese American military service during World War II, see C. Douglas Sterner’s *Go for Broke: The Nisei Warriors of World War II Who Conquered Germany, Japan, and American Bigotry* (2008).

⁷⁸⁸ President Harry S. Truman, on addressing the 100th Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team, July 15, 1946. Virtual Museum Exhibit, Manzanar National Historic Site. [Manzanar National Historic Site \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/manzanar/virtual-museum-exhibit) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁸⁹ Final Accountability Rosters of Evacuees at Relocation Centers, 1944-1946. Microfilm Publication M1965. Records of the War Relocation Authority, Record Group 210. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. NARA Roll 8, Minidoka, October 1945, No. 11797.

⁷⁹⁰ The National Park Service now operates Minidoka National Historic Site to remember and tell the stories of the more than 100,000 Japanese Americans who were incarcerated at such camps.

⁷⁹¹ John Y. Kobayashi. Fremont County, Wyoming. Homestead Patent #75598. Bureau of Land Management, “Land Patent Search,” digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](https://www.blm.gov/land-patent-search)

her family's forced incarceration under Executive Order 9066. Despite the trauma she may have felt at returning to the area, they successfully received a patent there in 1955, receiving 127 acres a few miles west of Minidoka.⁷⁹² John and Sumiko lived on the land the rest of their lives.



Figure 43 - Mabel Lee, Chinese American Suffragist. Image courtesy of New York Tribune, 1912.

The most renowned Asian American woman in the suffrage movement was Mabel Ping-Hua Lee. Lee was born in Guangzhou, China, in 1896, and migrated to the United States in the early 1900s. As a young woman, she rose to prominence in the suffrage movement. A large photograph of Mabel Ping-Hua Lee appeared in the New York Tribune on April 13, 1912, celebrating her upcoming participation in the suffrage parade in New York City.⁷⁹³ The headline read "Chinese Girl Wants Vote – Miss Lee Ready to Enter Barnard, to Ride in Suffrage Parade" – she was to ride on horseback to help extend the franchise to women.⁷⁹⁴ The university she attended, Barnard, was an all-women's school in New York City. It was created because, at that time, Columbia refused to admit women. Mabel Ping-Hua Lee was invited to participate in the 1912 parade as part of transnational conversations on women's rights and women's suffrage, happening not just in the United States, but across the world.⁷⁹⁵

She continued her advocacy as a student at Barnard, publishing an article entitled "The Meaning of Woman Suffrage" in *The Chinese Student Monthly* in 1914.⁷⁹⁶ She discussed the disdain and mockery that many women experienced from anti-suffragists – "if when in company

⁷⁹² John Y. Kobayashi. Minidoka County, Idaho. Homestead Patent #5385. Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," digital images, General Land Office Records. [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

⁷⁹³ *New-York tribune*. (New York, New York.), April 13, 1912. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1912-04-13/ed-1/seq-3/>

⁷⁹⁴ *New-York tribune*. (New York, New York.) April 13, 1912. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Library of Congress. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1912-04-13/ed-1/seq-3/>

⁷⁹⁵ Cathleen D. Cahill. "Mabel Ping-Hua Lee: How Chinese-American Women Helped Shape the Suffrage Movement." [Mabel Ping-Hua Lee: How Chinese-American Women Helped Shape the Suffrage Movement \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#) Accessed October 11, 2023.

⁷⁹⁶ Mabel Lee. "The Meaning of Woman Suffrage." *The Chinese Student Monthly* (May 1914), 526-529.

one should wish to scramble out of an embarrassing situation... all that [one] would have to do would be to mention woman suffrage, and they may be sure of laughter and merriment in response.”⁷⁹⁷ Ping-Hua Lee argued that suffrage was simply the application of justice and equality – the “application of democracy to women.” Suffrage to her meant the equality of opportunity, which was the fundamental principle of democracy.⁷⁹⁸ Though New York State granted women the vote in 1917, and the Nineteenth Amendment followed suit in 1920, as a first-generation Chinese American immigrant, Mabel was not eligible for citizenship due to restrictive laws. Still, her efforts, and those of other Asian immigrants to the United States played an important role in the fight for the vote, and for civil rights for all Americans. Kobayashi, Sato, and Ping-Hua Lee, like many other Asian Americans, fought to ensure their rights, liberties, and freedoms were upheld.

The ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in August of 1920 was not the end of the homesteading suffrage story. Homesteaders - suffragists, and civil rights leaders of many diverse backgrounds - continued to fight. They were determined that their voices, their votes, shall not be denied. The Homestead law empowered traditionally marginalized groups, including women, Latinx people, African Americans, and foreign-born individuals, by increasing their political, social, and economic mobility through land ownership, thus providing enfranchisement and access to the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Thanks to their efforts, suffrage and the women’s rights movement in America were planted in the soil.

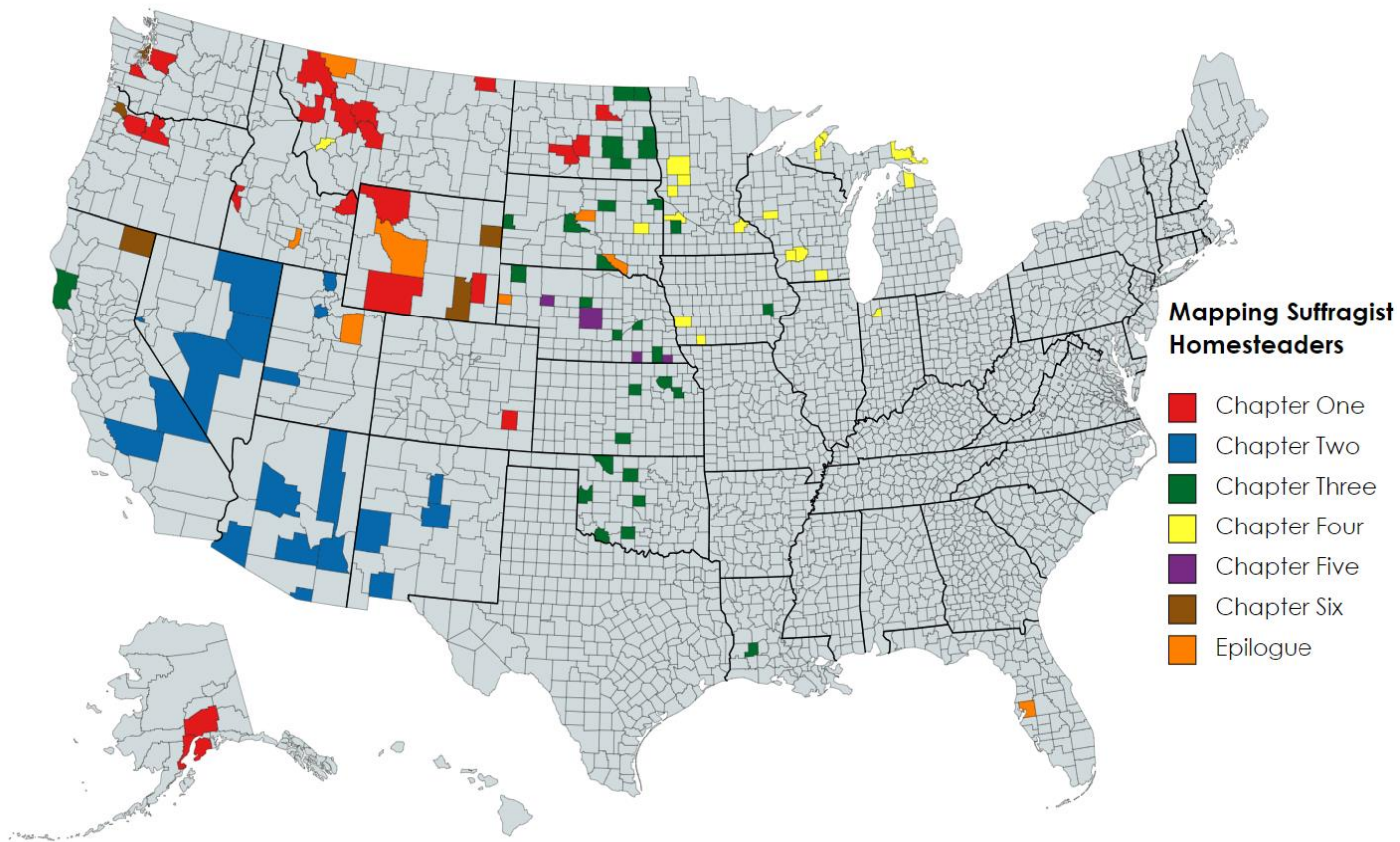
⁷⁹⁷ Mabel Lee. “The Meaning of Woman Suffrage.” *The Chinese Student Monthly* (May 1914), 526.

⁷⁹⁸ Lee, 526.

Appendix

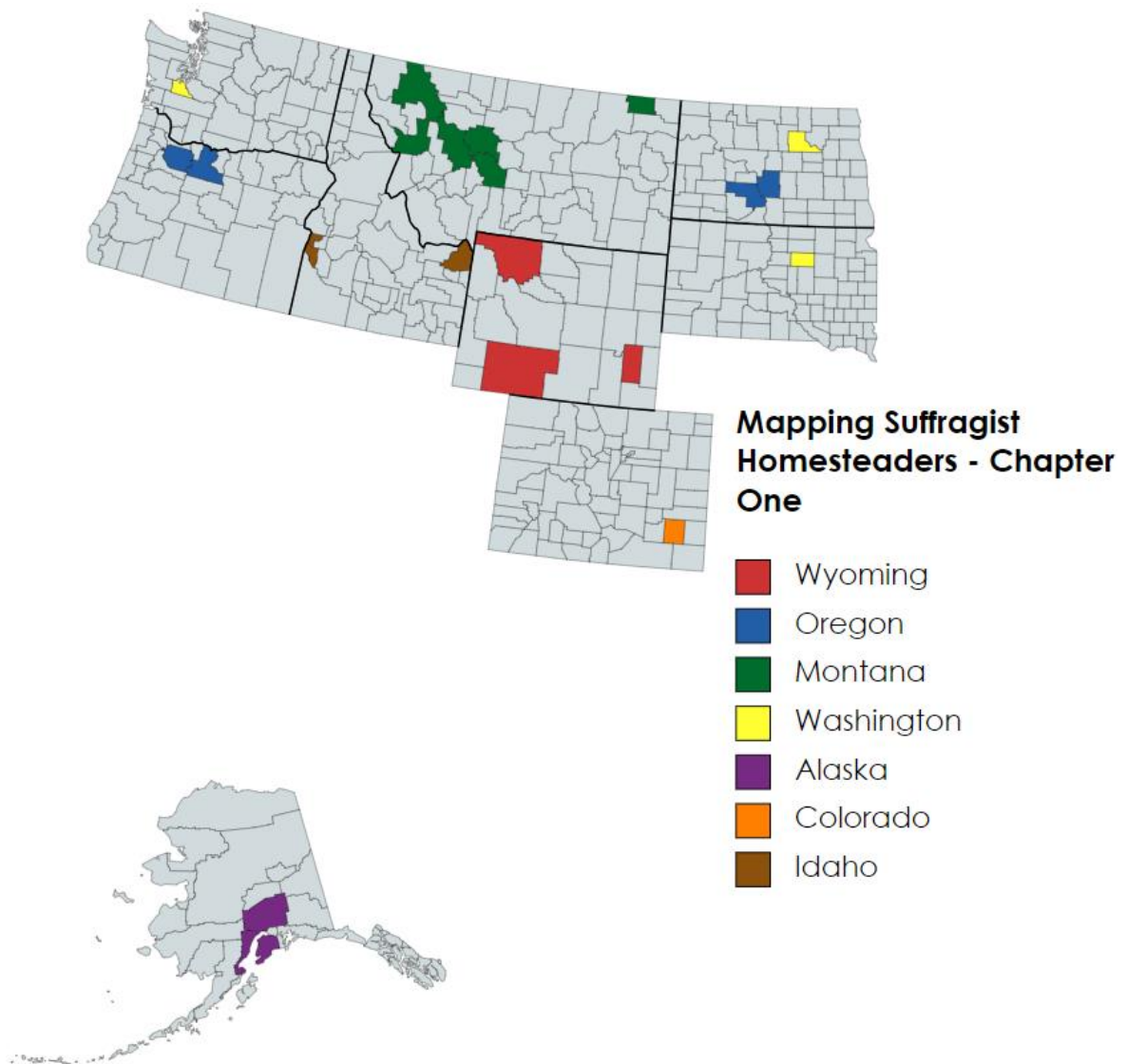
Mapping Suffragist Homesteaders

The women's suffrage movement and homesteaders went hand in hand across the nation. This map provides a visual illustration of where these women homesteaded. It is not intended as a comprehensive map of all the places where homesteading and the suffrage movement intersected, but as an illustration of those who appear in this work.



Map 13 - Suffragists with Homesteading Ties. Map by author, template courtesy of MapChart.net

Appendix, Chapter One:



- Wyoming

- Amalia B. Post. - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 653.36 acres. (Section 6, T24N, R67W; Platte County, Wyoming – Desert Land Act). Filed by and issued in own name. Patent Issued September 23, 1890. Husband received an additional 120 acre claim under the Timber Culture Act in 1886.
- Elinore Pruitt Stewart – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 169.863 acres. (Sections 19, 24, 25 T12N, R11W; Sweetwater County, Wyoming – Homestead Act of 1862). Filed by Elinore Pruitt Stewart, relinquished to mother-in-law Ruth C. Stewart when she married. Patent Issued August 26, 1915.
- Cecilia Hennel Hendricks – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 80.40 acres. (Sections 8&9, T55N R98W; Park County, Wyoming – Homestead Reclamation Act of 1902). Filed by husband John Hendricks. Patent issued November 10, 1930.

- Oregon

- Abigail Scott Duniway – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 320 acres. (N ½ Section 17, T5S R1E; Clackamas County, Oregon – Oregon Donation Act of 1850). Filed by husband Benjamin C. Duniway. Patent Issued February 10, 1885.
- Dr. Violet Boley Coe – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 163.60 acres. (SW ¼ SE ¼, SE ¼ SW ¼ Section 10, T139N R81W; Burleigh and Morton Counties, North Dakota – Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by father Elijah Boley. Patent issued March 30, 1883.
- Dr. Marie Equi – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 121.28 acres. (NE ¼ NE ¼ Section 31, Section 32, T2N R13; Wasco County, Oregon – Homestead Act of 1862). Filed by and issued to Bessie B. Holcomb, partner of Dr. Marie Equi. Patent issued April 23, 1897.

- Montana

- Jeannette Rankin – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (SE ¼ SE ¼ E ½ NE ¼ NE ¼ SE ¼ Section 20, Section 29, T14N R19W; Missoula County, Montana – Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by father John Rankin. Patent issued June 30, 1892.
- Robert Sutherlin – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (E ½ SW ¼, W ½ SE ¼, Section 18, T9N R7E; Meagher County, Montana – Homestead Act of 1862, commuted to cash.) Filed and commuted by Robert Sutherlin. Patent issued March 26, 1892.
- Jessie Nakken – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 320 acres (SE ¼, S ½ NE ¼ Section 6, T33N R51E; Daniels County, Montana – Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909.) Filed by ex-husband Herman J. Nakken. Patent issued September 28, 1914.
- Martha E. Rolfe Plassman – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - (SW ¼ SW ¼ Section 2, W ½ NW ¼ SE ¼ NW ¼ Section 11, T14N R7E; Cascade County, Montana – Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Martha in her own name. Patent issued July 16, 1907.
- Laura E. Howey - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – (N ½ NE ¼ Section 8, T31N R22W; Flathead County, Montana – Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Laura's husband, Robert H. Howey. Patent issued August 26, 1904.
- Frances Corwin Haire - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 80 acres (S ½ SE ¼ Section 10, T14N R2W; Lewis and Clark County, Montana – Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Charles S. Haire. Patent issued November 16, 1918.

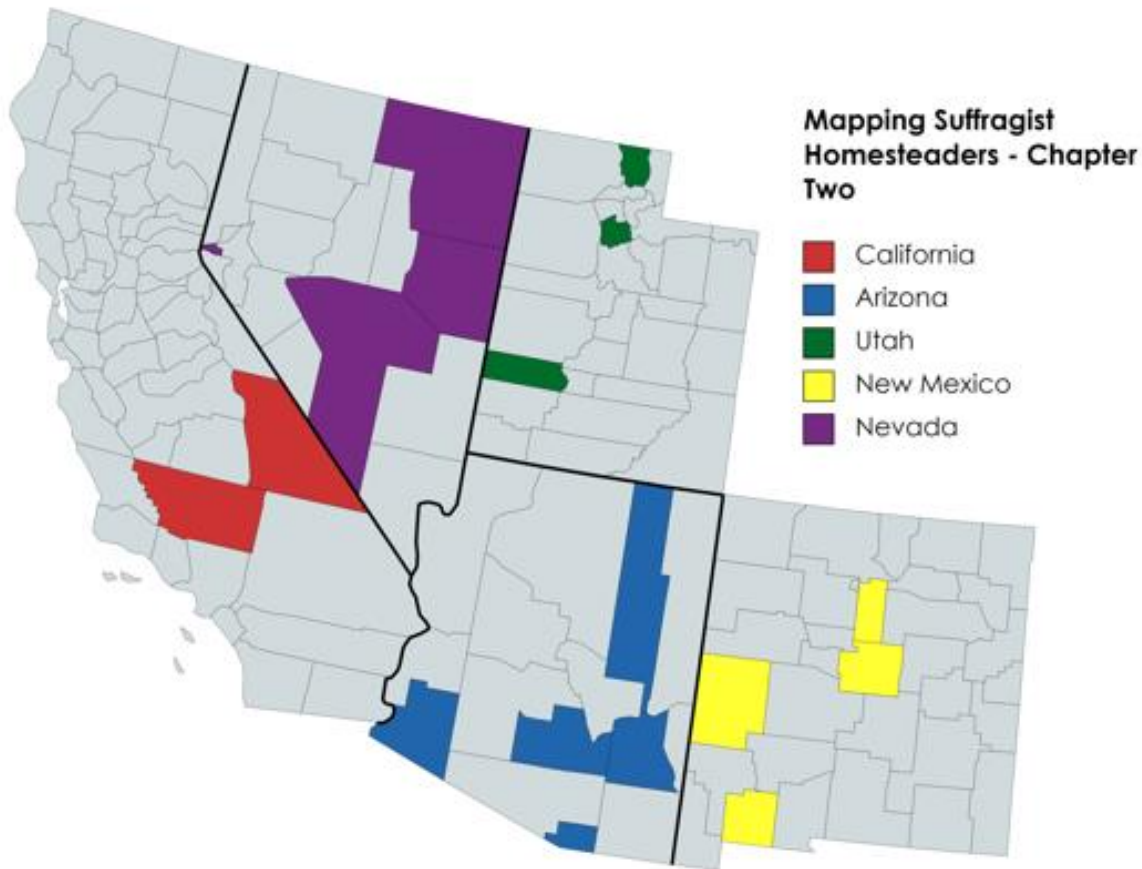
- Washington

- Mary Olney Brown – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 322 acres. (Section 3, Section 4, T18N R2W; Thurston County, Washington – Oregon Donation Act of 1850.) Filed jointly by Mary Olney Brown and Benjamin F. Brown. Patent issued March 6, 1866. Additional Homestead patent in King County, Washington.
- Charlotte Emily Olney French – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 322 acres (Section 3, Section 4, Section 5, T18N R2W; Thurston County, Washington – Oregon Donation Act of 1850.) Filed jointly by Charlotte E. French and George W. French. Patent issued March 6, 1866. Additional Morrill Act patent in Thurston County, Washington.
- Emma Smith DeVoe – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (SW ¼, Section 26, T119N R67W; Faulk County, South Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862, commuted to cash.) Filed and commuted by John H. DeVoe. Patent issued November 13, 1884.
- Dr. Cora Smith Eaton – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 164.19 acres. (E ½ NW ¼, Section 23, T151N R62W; Benson County, North Dakota – Timber Culture Act of 1873.

Filed by and issued to Cora E. Smith / Cora Eaton. Patent issued March 21, 1902. Family had multiple homesteaded in the neighboring counties.

- Alaska
 - o Ada Brownell – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 309.40 acres. (Section 9, T1S R1W; Kenai Peninsula Borough, Alaska. Homestead Entry Alaska of 1898.) Filed by and issued to Ada's husband, Don Carlos Brownell. Patent issued December 23, 1914.
 - o Mahala Ashley Dickerson – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (Section 29, T17N R2W; Matanuska / Susitna Borough, Alaska. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Mahala Ashley Dickerson. Patent issued March 24, 1964.
- Colorado
 - o Perlina Sizer – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (SW ¼ SW ¼ Section 5, W ½ NW ¼ NW ¼ SW ¼ Section 8, T24S R52W; Bent County, Colorado. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Perlina's father, Eber Sizer.
- Idaho
 - o Elizabeth Badley – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 40 acres. (SW ¼ NW ¼ Section 5, T2N R3W; Canyon County, Idaho. Homestead Reclamation Act of 1902.) Filed by and issued to Elizabeth's husband, Durbin Badley. Patent issued May 2, 1918.
 - o Mary McGee – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 40 acres. (NW ¼ NE ¼ Section 22, T3N R2W; Canyon County, Idaho. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Mary's husband, James McGee. Patent issued April 18, 1898.
 - o Frances Richards – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 320 acres. (S ½ Section 9, T7N R4W; Payette County, Idaho. Desert Land Act of 1877.) Filed by and issued to Frances' husband, James Heber Richards. Patent issued January 15, 1896.
 - o Rebecca Mitchell – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 11, T7N R39E; Fremont County, Idaho. Preemption Act of 1841.) Filed by and issued to Rebecca Mitchell. Patent issued November 16, 1891.
 - o Kate Green – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 320 acres. (S ½ NE ¼, SE ¼ Section 6, S ½ SW ¼ Section 5, T2N R1W; Canyon County, Idaho. Desert Land Act of 1877.) Filed by John DeWitt and issued to Kate Green as assignee. Patent issued July 25, 1898.

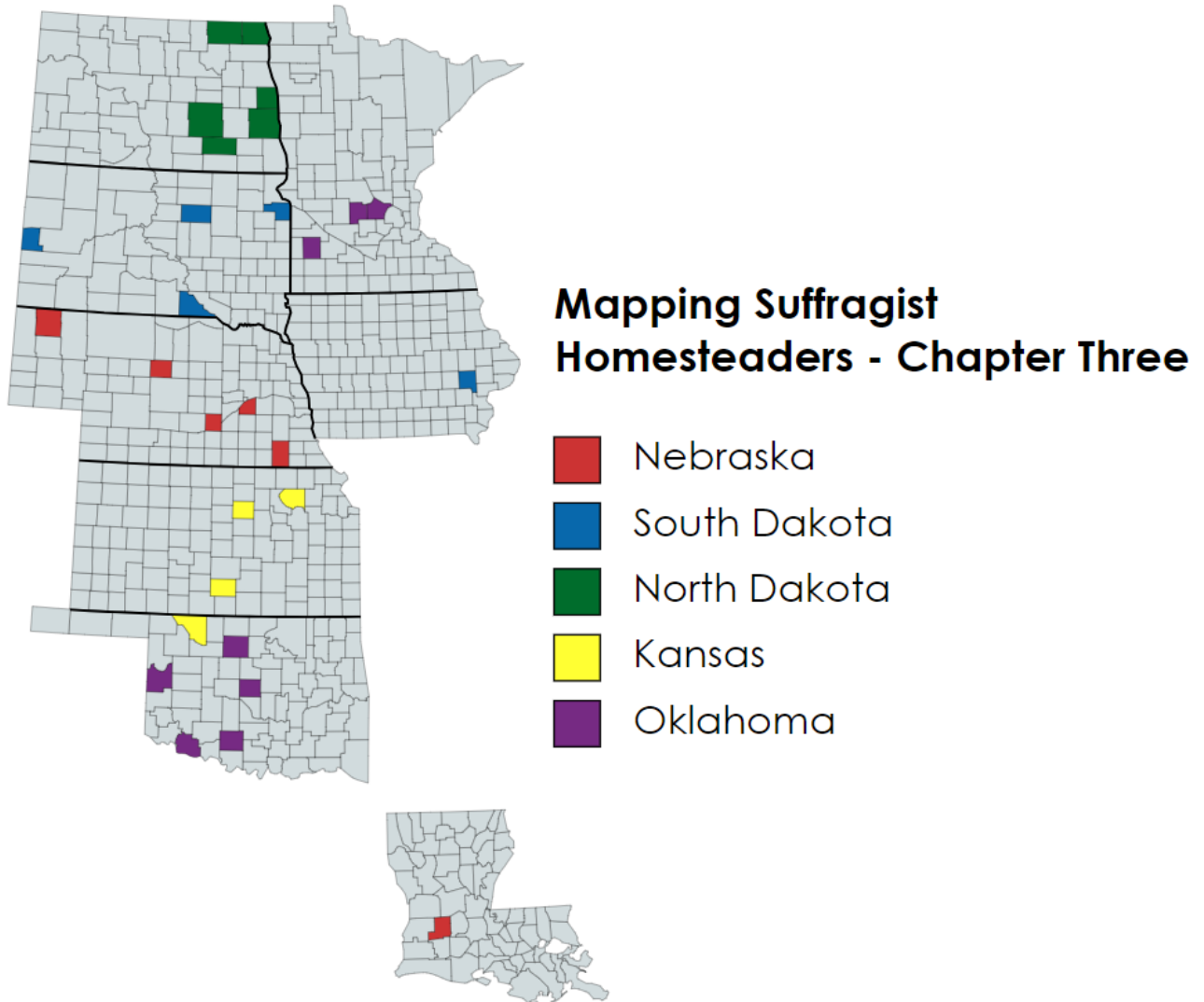
Appendix, Chapter Two:



- California
 - o Mary Hunter Austin – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 8, T16S R36E; Inyo County, California. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Mary’s husband, Stafford W. Austin. Patent issued February 27, 1901. Mary’s brother and mother both received 160-acre homesteads in Kern County, California.
- Arizona
 - o Frances Willard Munds – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (NW ¼ SW ¼ Section 27, E ½ SE ¼ SE ¼ NE ¼ Section 28, T16N R3E; Yavapai County, Arizona. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Frances’ mother, Mary Grace Vineyard Willard. Patent issued December 9, 1892.
 - o Angela H. Hammer – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 321 acres. (Section 14, T7S R6E; Pinal County, Arizona. Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909.) Filed by and issued to Angela Hammer in her own name. Patent issued July 29, 1927.
 - o Linda Scott – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) -160 acres. (E ½ SW ¼ SW ¼ NE ¼ NW ¼ SE ¼ Section 10, T9N R22E; Navajo County, Arizona. Homestead Act of 1862). Filed by and issued to Linda’s husband, James Scott. Patent issued August 19, 1890. Additional 158-acre patent issued under the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, March 7, 1912. Her parents (John and Nancy M. Rollins) had additional land claims in Graham County, Arizona.

- Victoria Garvin – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 40 acres. (NW ¼ NE ¼ Section 8, T10S R24W; Yuma County, Arizona. Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902.) Filed by James S. Garvin and issued to Victoria A. Garvin in her own name. Patent issued July 19, 1938.
- Grace Weidman Corl - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 638.44 acres. (T23S R14E; T23S R15E; Santa Cruz County, Arizona. Stock-Raising Homestead Act of 1916.) Filed by and issued to Grace’s husband, Henry L. Corl. Patent issued October 25, 1922.
- Utah
 - Martha Hughes Cannon – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 138.80 acres. (W ½ NW ¼ Section 14, Section 15, T4S R1W; Salt Lake County, Utah. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Martha’s plural marriage partner, Angus M. Cannon. Patent issued November 20, 1882.
 - Julia P. M. Farnsworth – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 30, T29S R7W; Beaver County, Utah. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Julia’s husband, Philo T. Farnsworth, Jr. Patent issued March 13, 1879. Julia’s father also acquired land under the Desert Land Act.
 - Emmeline B. Wells – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 80 acres. (N ½ SE ¼ Section 4, T11N R1W; Cache County, Utah. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to John K. Whitney, plural marriage son of Wells’ second husband, Newel K. Whitney. Patent issued March 24, 1887.
- Nevada
 - Felice Cohn – Though Felice Cohn did not homestead herself, she worked for the Department of the Interior and assisted many other women in claiming homesteads, promoting the distribution of lands through the General Land Office.
 - Mae Caine – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 73 acres and 80 acres. (Lots 1 & 2, Section 16, T36N R70E; Elko County, Nevada. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by James G.B. VanBrunt and issued to Mae’s husband, Edwin E. Caine. Patent issued October 29, 1914. Second patent – 80 acres. (SW ¼ NW ¼ Section 24 T36N R61E, NE ¼ SW ¼ Section 26, T36N R64E; Elko County, Nevada. Homestead Act of 1862).
 - Emma Lee Adams – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 200 acres. (S ½ SE ¼ Section 1, NW ¼ NE ¼, E ½ NW ¼ Section 12, T5N R60E; Nye County, Nevada. Desert Land Act of 1877.) Filed by and issued to Emma in her own name. Patent issued March 5, 1918. Her husband, Jewett Adams, received several further homestead parcels in White Pine County.
- New Mexico
 - Ada M. Morley – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 320 acres. (S ½ SE ¼ Section 7, S ½ SW ¼ Section 8, N ½ N ½ Section 17, T2S R9W; Catron County, New Mexico. Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909. Filed by Ada M. Morley, issued posthumously to her heirs. Patent issued April 25, 1928.
 - Adelina Otero Warren – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 633.09 acres (Section 29, Section 30 T18N R9E; Santa Fe County, New Mexico. Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916.) Filed by and issued to Adelina Otero Warren in her own name. Patent issued September 6, 1935. Also had an earlier Small Holding Claim in Torrance County.
 - Lilian Greer Bedichek – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (N ½ NE ¼, SE ¼ NE ¼, NE ¼ SE ¼ Section 32 T24S R8W; Luna County, New Mexico. Homestead commuted under Cash-Sale Act of 1820.) Filed by and issued to Roy Bedichek, Lilian’s husband. Patent issued July 16, 1913.

Appendix, Chapter Three:

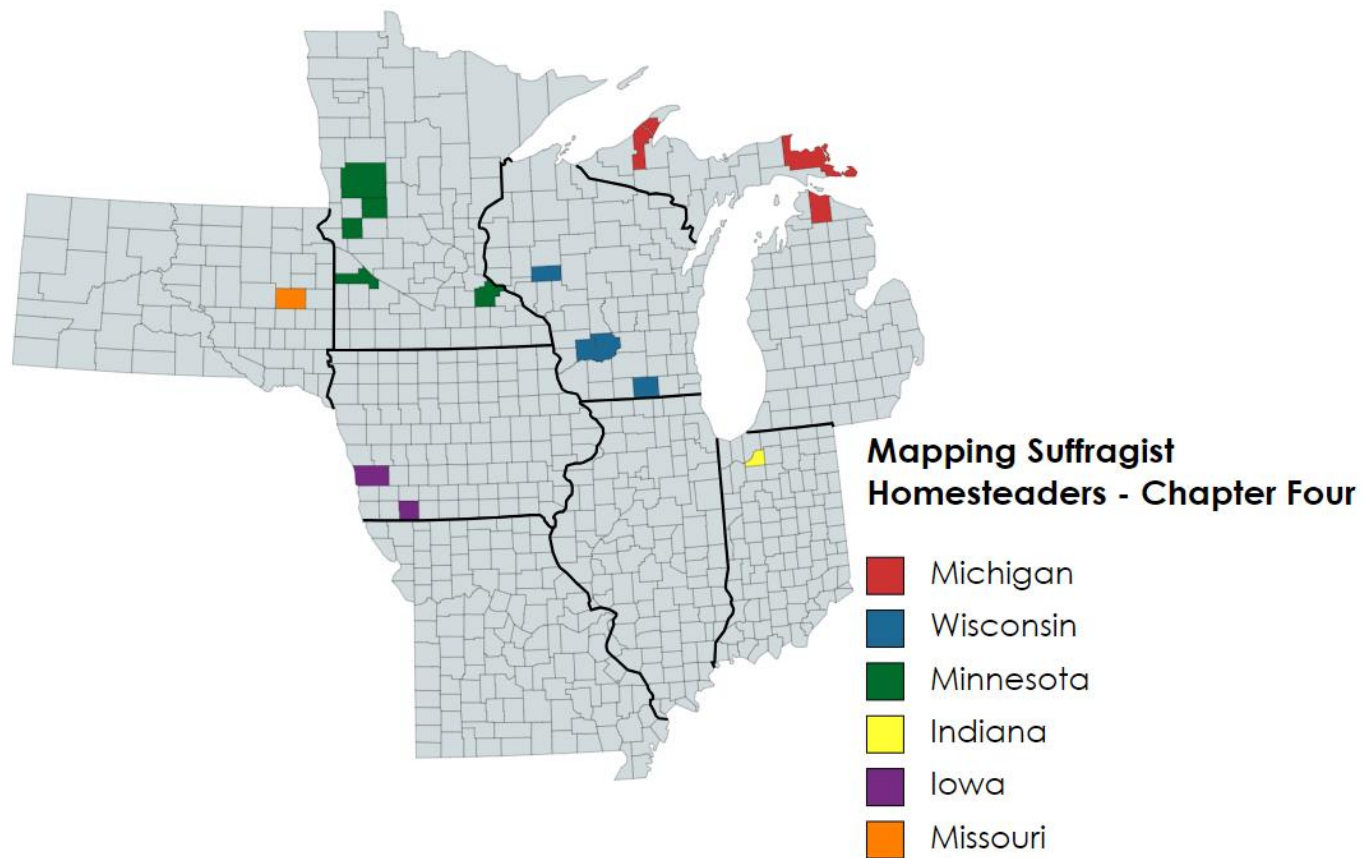


- Nebraska
 - o Mary E. Smith Hayward – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160.15 acres. (NE ¼ Section 6, T31N R51W; Dawes County, Nebraska. Homestead commuted under Cash Sale Act of 1820). Filed by and issued to Mary E. Smith in her own name. Patent issued January 16, 1890.
 - o Mamie Claflin – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 32, T12N R11W; Hall County, Nebraska. Homestead Act of 1862). Filed by and issued to Mary Perkins' father, Richard C. Perkins. Patent issued September 26, 1877.
 - o Frances B. Heald – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 82.96 acres. (N ½ NE ¼ Section 4, T14N R3W; Polk County, Nebraska. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to John B. Heald, Frances' husband. Patent issued April 5, 1877.

- Elizabeth S. Brewster – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (SE ¼ Section 21, T23N R22W; Blaine County, Nebraska. Timber Culture Act of 1873.) Filed by and issued to George W. Brewster, Elizabeth’s husband. Patent issued March 18, 1897.
 - Dr. Inez C. Philbrick – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) 167.34 acres. (SE ¼ Section 24, T6S R5W; Allen Parish, Louisiana. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Philetus H. Philbrick, Inez’s father.
 - Mary Myer – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) 160 acres. (W ½ SE ¼ W ½ NE ¼ Section 24 & 25, T4N R5E; Gage County, Nebraska. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Mary Myer in her own name. First woman homesteader, patent issued September 1, 1869.
- South Dakota
- Nellie Spindler – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 37.43 acres. (Section 11, 12, 14, T5N R3E; Lawrence County, South Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Willis C. Spindler, Nellie’s husband. Patent issued December 9, 1909.
 - Elizabeth Corey – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 240 acres. (SE ¼ Section 2, E ½ SW ¼ Section 2, T3N R30E; Stanley County, South Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Elizabeth F. Corey. Patents issued December 1, 1916, and August 1, 1919.
 - Alice M. Alt and John Pickler – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 18, T118N R70W; Faulk County, South Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to John Pickler, husband of Alice M. Alt. Also had a Timber Culture Claim. Patents issued December 15, 1888, and June 7, 1897.
 - Oscar Micheaux – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 29, T97N R72W; Gregory County, South Dakota. Homestead commuted under Cash Sale Act of 1820.) Filed by and issued to Oscar Micheaux. Patent issued April 25, 1910.
 - Alonzo Wardall – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 12, T120 N R50W; Grant County, South Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Alonzo Wardall, April 5, 1883.
- North Dakota
- Matilda Joslyn Gage – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 4, T133N R64W; Lamoure County, North Dakota. Timber Culture Act of 1873.) Filed by and issued to Matilda’s son-in-law, James D. Carpenter. Patent issued January 2, 1895.
 - Kate Selby Wilder – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 2, T147N R52W; Traill County, North Dakota, Soldiers and Sailors Homestead Act of 1872.) Filed by and issued to Kate’s father, William A. Selby. Patent issued August 3, 1882.
 - Ida Clarke Young – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 18, T160N R61W; Cavalier County, North Dakota, Timber Culture Act of 1873.) Filed by and issued to Ida’s husband, Newton C. Young. Patent issued January 7, 1898.
 - Elizabeth Preston Anderson – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (NW ¼ Section 32, T141 N R55W; Cass County, North Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Elizabeth’s father, Elam S. Preston. Patent issued November 24, 1888. Her father also received land under the Timber Culture Act.
 - Lynn Joseph Frazier – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 Acres. (SE ¼ Section 33, T159N R54W; Pembina County, North Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Lynn’s father, Thomas. Patent issued June 1, 1888.

- Alma Lutz - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SE ¼ Section 12, T143N R66W; Stutsman County, North Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862. Commuted to Sale-Cash Entry.) Filed by and issued to Alma’s father, George. Patent issued February 28, 1890.
- Kansas
 - Samuel C. Pomeroy - [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) – 640 acres (T7S R11E; Pottawatomie, Kansas. Four claims under Scrip Warrant Act of 1855, 160 acres each.) Patents issued on July 1, 1861, and July 1, 1864.
 - Mary Ellen Lease - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (S ½ NE ¼, Lots 1 and 2, Section 4, T29S R9W; Kingman County, Kansas. Land Act of 1820.) Filed by and issued to Mary’s husband, Charles L. Lease, July 28, 1888.
 - Kate Richards O’Hare - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 120 acres. (N ½ SW ¼, SE ¼ SW ¼, Section 11, T11S R5W; Ottawa County, Kansas. Timber Culture Act of 1873.) Filed by and issued to Kate’s father, Andrew Richards, January 18, 1892.
 - Clarina Irene Howard Nichols - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 162.99 acres (Section 34, T17N R 14 W; Mendocino County, California. Homestead commuted under Cash Sale Act of 1820.) Filed by and issued to Clarina’s son, Aurelius O. Carpenter. Patent issued March 18, 1905.
 - Susana Madora Salter - [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 25, T27N R14W; Woods County, Oklahoma. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Susana’s husband, Lewis. Patent issued July 9, 1901.
 - Nina E. Allender – Though Allender did not homestead herself, she had ties to the General Land Office through her mother, one of the first female employees of the GLO.
- Oklahoma
 - Kate Himrod Biggers - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SE ¼ Section 14, T2N R8W; Stephens County, Oklahoma. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Kate’s husband, Thomas. Patent issued August 8, 1919.
 - Julia Lovelace Woodworth - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres (NW ¼ Section 26, T12N R25W; Roger Mills County, Oklahoma. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Julia’s husband, Lewis E. Woodworth. Patent issued May 13, 1907. Her family additionally received patents in Lyon County, Minnesota.
 - Kate Chapman Stafford - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (NW ¼ Section 22, T20N R4W; Garfield County, Oklahoma. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Kate’s husband, Irvin. Patent issued June 9, 1902.
 - Anna Laskey - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 32, T1N R2W; Oklahoma County, Oklahoma. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Anna’s husband, Eugene. Patent issued May 25, 1896.
 - Robert L. Owen - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (E ½ NW ¼ and NW ¼ NE ¼ Section 7, T5S R14W; Tillman County, Oklahoma. Cash Sale Act of 1820.) Filed by and issued to Robert L. Owen. Patent issued February 3, 1920.

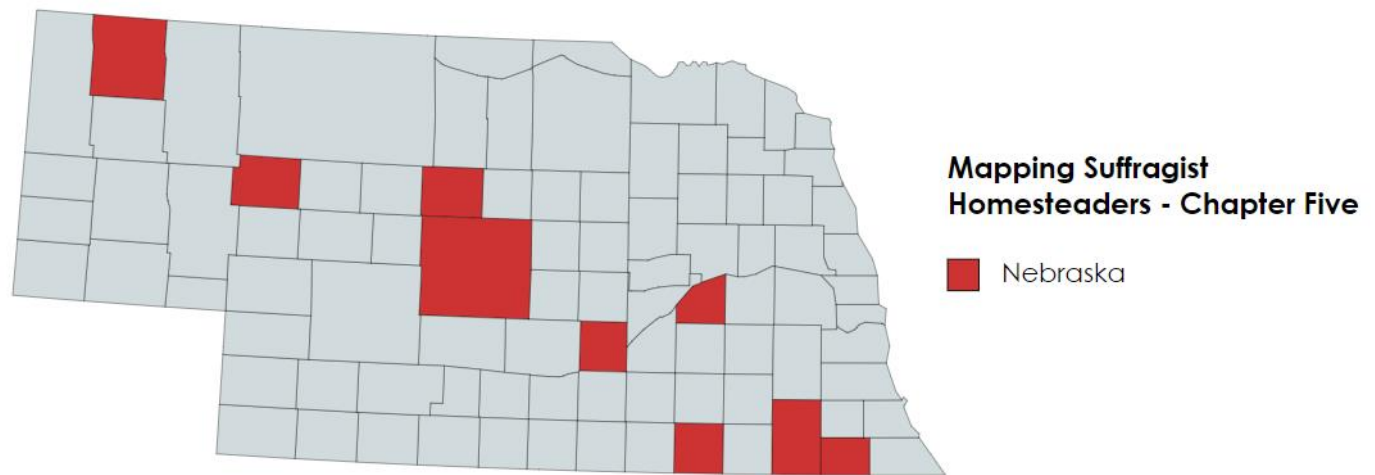
Appendix, Chapter Four



- Michigan
 - o Maggie Walz - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (W ½ SE 1/4, N ½ NE ¼ Section 12, T41N R6E; Chippewa County, Michigan. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Maggie in her own name. Patent issued November 14, 1910. She also acquired land in Houghton County, Michigan.
 - o Agnes Schenk Dietz - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 80 acres. (W ½ SE ¼, Section 11, T38N R3W; Cheboygan County, Michigan. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Agnes' father, Carl. Patent issued December 20, 1884. Her presumptive uncle was issued a homestead patent on the same day.
- Wisconsin
 - o Joseph and Isabella Cobban Irish – Though Joseph and Isabella did not homestead themselves, Joseph was a surveyor and Register of the Land Office in Richland County, Wisconsin, responsible for distributing land to homesteaders in their area.

- Frances Willard - [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (E ½ NE ¼ Section 10, W ½ SW ¼ Section 11, T2N R12E; Rock County, Wisconsin. Land Act of 1820.) Filed by and issued to Willard's father, Josiah. Patent issued March 3, 1843.
- Minnesota
 - Ignatius Donnelly – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 32, T126N R42W; Stevens County, Minnesota. Timber Culture Act of 1873.) Filed by and issued to Ignatius. Patent issued February 7, 1893.
 - Nanny Mattson - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (Sections 15, 21, 22, T112N R16W; Goodhue County, Minnesota. Scrip Warrant Act of 1855.) Filed by and issued to Nanny's father, Hans Mattson. Patent issued September 1, 1858.
 - Helga Johanssen Estby - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (NW ¼ Section 8, T115N R45W; Yellow Medicine County, Minnesota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Helga's husband, Ole Estby. Patent issued April 28, 1888.
 - Knute Nelson - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 120 acres. (SE ¼ SE ¼ Section 19, W ½ SW ¼ Section 20, T128N R37W; Douglas County, Minnesota. Soldiers and Sailors Homestead Act of 1872. Patent issued March 10, 1874.
 - Ole Sageng - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 40 acres. (SE ¼ NE ¼ Section 4, T131N R42W; Otter Tail County, Minnesota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Patent issued February 28, 1885.
- Indiana
 - Anna Carter Dunn Noland - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 41.83 acres. (SW ¼ SW ¼ Section 18, T32N R2W; Starke County, Indiana. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Anna's husband James. Patent issued April 21, 1900.
- Missouri
 - Laura Ingalls Wilder - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 21, T111N R56W; Kingsbury County, South Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Laura's husband Almanzo. Patent issued June 17, 1887.
- Iowa
 - Carrie Chapman Catt –
 - Amelia Jenks Bloomer - [Search Results - BLM GLO Records](#) – 520 acres (Section 25, 26, T75N 42 and 43W and 68N 35W; Pottawattamie and Taylor Counties, Iowa.) Amelia had 9 different land patents issued in her name between 1856 and 1859.

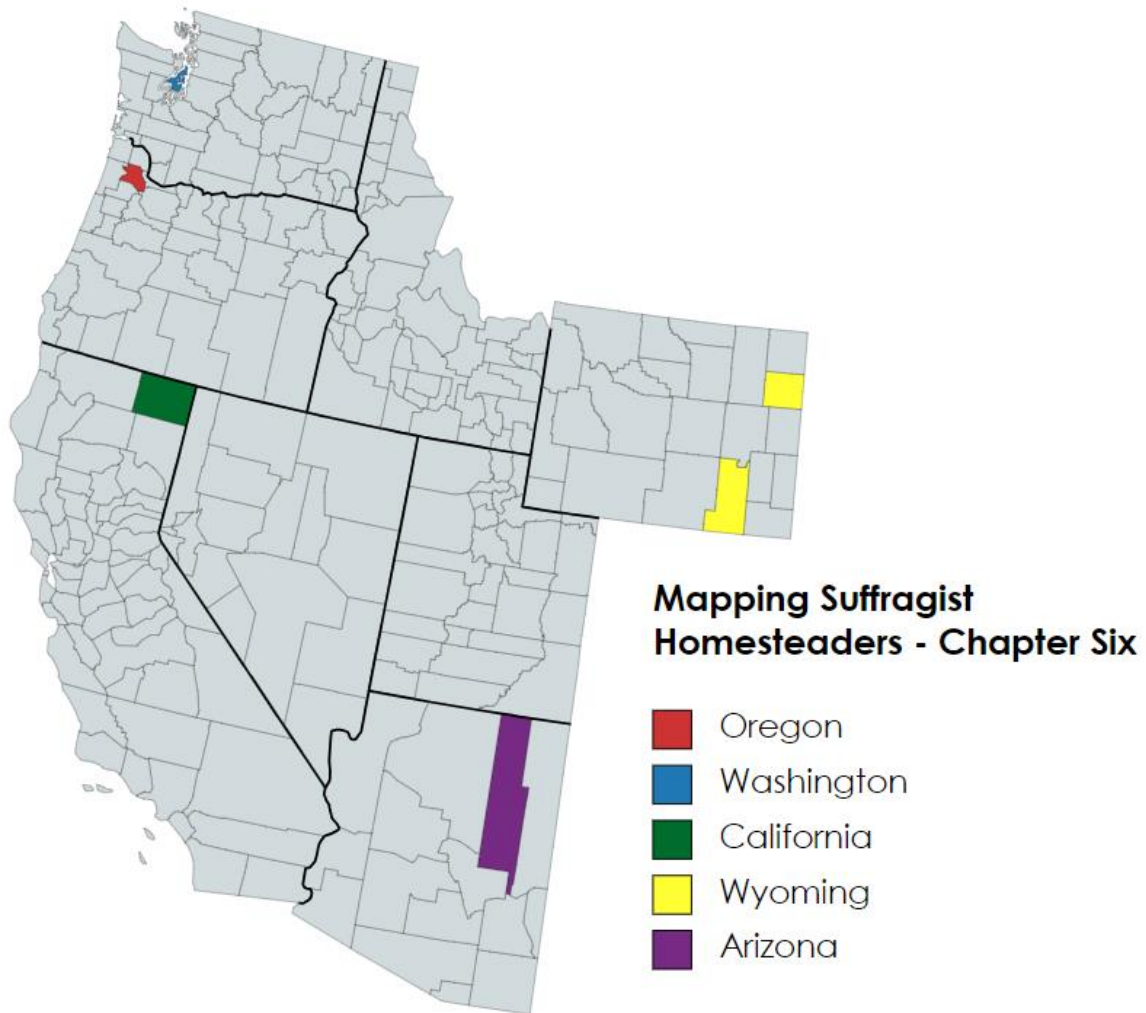
Appendix, Chapter Five –



- Nebraska
 - Erasmus and Lucy Correll - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (NW ¼ Section 2 T2N R3W; Thayer County, Nebraska. Homestead commuted under Cash Sale Entry Act of 1820.) Filed by and issued to Erasmus M. Correll. Patent issued August 15, 1872.
 - Viola Harrison - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 28; Pawnee County, Nebraska. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and proved up by James Coard, Viola's father. Patent issued October 20, 1871.
 - Anna R. Kovanda - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (Sections 29 and 32, T3N R11E; Pawnee County, Nebraska. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Anna's father, John Clema. Patent issued August 1, 1874.
 - Emma Warner Demaree - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 173.10 acres. (Sections 8 and 9, T24N R39W; Grant County, Nebraska. Timber Culture Act of 1873.) Filed by and proved up by Emma's husband, Henry Clay Demaree. Patent issued May 4, 1904.
 - Nellie Taylor - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 10, T17N R21W; Custer County, Nebraska. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and proved up by Nellie's father, Miner Taylor. Patent issued March 23, 1901. Miner had an additional claim under the Timber Culture Act of 1873 for 160 acres, issued July 25, 1895: [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)
 - Lillian U. Stoner - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 80 acres. (S ½ NW ¼ Section 24, T14N R2W; Polk County, Nebraska. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and proved up by Lillian's father, Christian D. Stoner. Patent issued July 20, 1877. Stoner had an additional 80 acres under the Homestead Act, issued March 30, 1888: [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

- Amanda J. Linn Marble - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 1, T2N R11E; Pawnee County, Nebraska. Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed and proved up Amanda's brother, James L. Linn. Patent issued March 1, 1872.

Appendix, Chapter Six:

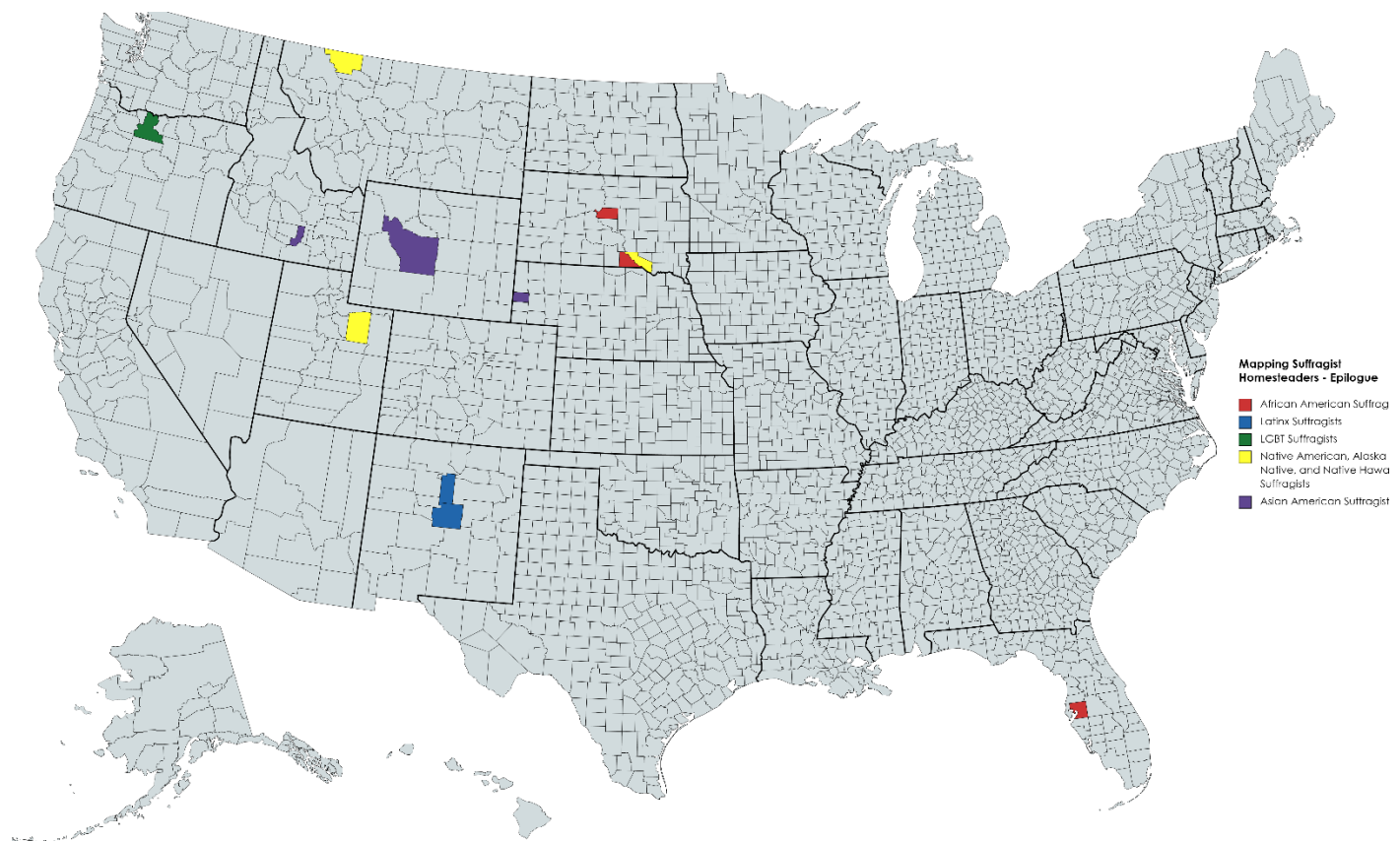


- Oregon
 - o Maud West - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 37.18 acres. (Sections 3 and 4, T1N R3W; Washington County, Oregon – Homestead Act of 1862.) Filed by and issued to Maud’s father, Josiah West. Patent issued July 20, 1871.
- Washington
 - o Bertha Knatvold-Kittelsen - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (Section 5, Section 8, T22N R2E; Kitsap County, Washington - Homestead Act of 1862, commuted to Cash Entry Sale.) Filed by and issued to Bertha’s father, Hans E. Knatvold. Patent issued May 3, 1890.
- California
 - o John E. Raker and - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (SW ¼ NE ¼, SE ¼ NW ¼ Section 1, T042N R012E; Modoc County, California. Homestead Act of 1862.)

Filed by and issued to John E. Raker. Patent issued April 26, 1916. Raker had an additional patent under the Desert Land Act for 160 acres, issued September 21, 1916: [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)

- Wyoming
 - o Frank W. Mondell - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (W ½ SE ¼, SE ¼ NW ¼, SW ¼ NE ¼ Section 3, T44N R62W; Weston County, Wyoming. Sale – Cash Entry.) Filed by and issued to Frank W. Mondell. Patent issued April 21, 1910.
 - o Ida H. Mondell - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 169 acres. (SE ¼ NW ¼, E ½ SW ¼ Section 6, T16N R76W; Albany County, Wyoming. Sale – Cash Entry.) Filed by and issued to Ida H. Mondell. Patent issued December 30, 1905. Additional claim in Weston County, Wyoming: [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#)
- Arizona
 - o Elizabeth McEvoy Reno and Henry F. Ashurst - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 157 acres. (E ½ SW ¼ Section 6, T10N R19E; Navajo County, Arizona. Sale – Cash Entry.) Filed by and issued to Henry F. Ashurst. Patent issued December 16, 1912.

Appendix, Epilogue



- African American Suffragists Shall Not Be Denied
 - o Blanche Armwood – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) 80 acres. (S ½ SE ¼ Section 27, T28S R20E; Hillsborough County, Florida. Homestead Act of 1862.) Patent issued to Blanche’s uncle, Lewis, October 4, 1884.
 - o Oscar Micheaux - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) 160 acres. (SW ¼ Section 29, T97N R72W; Gregory County, South Dakota. Land Act of 1820, Commuted Homestead.) Patent issued April 25, 1910.
 - o Benjamin Blair – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 160 acres. (NE ¼ Section 14, T115N R80W; Sully County, South Dakota. Homestead Act of 1862.) Patent issued April 9, 1908. Additional Timber Culture Claim and Cash Sale patents in same county.
- LGBT Suffragists Shall Not Be Denied
 - o Marie Diana Equi - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 121 acres. (NE ¼ NE ¼ Section 31, Lot 1 and 2, Section 32, T2N R13E; Wasco County, Oregon. Homestead Act of 1862). Patent issued to Equi’s partner, Bessie Holcomb, April 23, 1897.
- Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians Shall Not Be Denied
 - o Zitkala-Sa, or Gertrude Simmons Bonnin - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) 89 acres. (Lot 3, Lot 4, Section 2, T95N R63W; Charles Mix County, South Dakota; Indian Fee Patent.) Patent issued May 23, 1910. Additional patent in Duchesne County, Utah, 1912.

- Helen P. Clarke - [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 83 acres. (Lot 1, Lot 2, Section 23, S ½ SW ¼ NE ¼, Section 25, T31N R13W; Glacier County, Montana; Indian Trust Patent.) Patent issued August 11, 1922. Her brother received a Homestead patent nearby in 1889.
- Asian American Suffragists Shall Not Be Denied
 - Harry and Noi Sato – [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) - 160 acres. (NW ¼ Section 11, T22N R57W; Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902.) Patent issued June 24, 1929.
 - John and Sumi Kobayashi [Patent Details - BLM GLO Records](#) – 127 acres. (Aliquot F, Section 9, T8S R24E; Minidoka County, Idaho. Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902.) Patent issued April 7, 1955. Originally had a Newlands claim in Wyoming.

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