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the presidents of the League of Women Voters**

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San Jose State University, 1994

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THE LADIES HAVE SPOKEN: RECURRING TENSIONS IN THE
DISCOURSE OF THE PRESIDENTS OF
THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Eleanor Raye Osborn

May, 1994

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ABSTRACT

THE LADIES HAVE SPOKEN: RECURRING TENSIONS IN THE RHETORIC OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

by Eleanor Raye Osborn

This thesis addresses the topic of the League of Women Voters in the United States between 1920-70. It traces the values established for the League by its founder, Carrie Chapman Catt, as they were discussed by three League Presidents (1920-4, 1950-8, and 1968-74) in their Annual Addresses. The values are political participation, non-partisanship, and citizen education. This thesis examines the effects of value tensions which developed in the first two values as a result of challenges from both external and internal influences. Tracing these value tensions determines if an organization has maintained, altered, or discarded its founding values and, as a result, changed its Mission.

The research reveals that, although the League was subject to external influences, such as negative reactions to women's political activity, threats of Bolshevik sympathizing, and many social changes as well as internal operational adjustments, the organization has adhered to its founder's values.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	
An Assessment of Value Adjustments and Their Place in the Annual Addresses of the League of Women Voters	1
Values	2
The Annual Address	10
Organizational Changes: The League of Women Voters	12
Woman Suffrage: From Movement to Organization	14
The Woman Suffrage Movement	15
Development of the Movement's Social Values	17
Emancipation and Organization	21
Research about the League of Women Voters	25
Value Tensions in League Discourse	29
Political Participation	30
Non-Partisanship	32
Significance of Study	33
Method	35
 Chapter 2	
Moving from the House of Prejudice into the House of Freedom	43
Carrie Chapman Catt	44
"The Nation Calls"	49
Maud Wood Park, President of the League of Women Voters, 1920-1924	57
External Influences: American Society	60
Internal Influences: The League of Women Voters	63
A Review of the Annual Addresses	65
Value Tensions within the Speeches	67
Political Participation	68
Non-Partisanship	77
The Theme of Citizen Education	79
Summary	82
 Chapter 3	
The Final Step from the Private to the Public Sphere: The Annual Addresses of Percy Maxim Lee	85
External Influences: American Society	94
Internal Influences: The League of Women Voters	99
A Review of the Annual Addresses	102
Value Tensions within the Speeches	107
Political Participation	107
Non-Partisanship	113
The Theme of Citizen Education	114
Summary	118

Chapter 4	
Determining Our Limitations, Not Limiting Our Determination: The Annual Addresses of Lucy Wilson Benson	123
External Influences: American Society	126
Internal Influences: The League of Women Voters	128
A Review of the Annual Addresses	132
Value Tensions within the Speeches	135
Political Participation	136
Non-Partisanship	140
The Theme of Citizen Education	141
Summary	144
Chapter 5	
Value Patterns Evident in the Annual Addresses of the League of Women Voters, 1920-1970	147
Review of the Three Presidents' Annual Addresses	147
Discussion of Values	151
Significance of Study	157
Contributions to the Field of Rhetoric	157
Contributions to Organization Communication	159
Contributions to the League of Women Voters	163
Recommendations for Future Studies	164
The League in the Future	168
Conclusion	170
Works Cited	172

Chapter 1

An Assessment of Value Adjustments and Their Place in the Annual Addresses of the League of Women Voters

Within a democracy the people and their representatives collectively decide the business of that democracy. These decisions are based on the collective, social values of the democracy. These values are the "shared convictions of a community" (Sillars and Ganer 1982, 187); they "indicate desirable or preferred . . . collective goals or explicit purposes" (Burns 1978, 75). Similarly, an organization has its own collective values which are called its culture. By considering an organization as an example of a community, we can extend this concept of "shared conviction" to the organization. It is through assessing the founding values of an organization that we learn whether that organization has adhered to its original values throughout its history. Such an assessment can further identify any significance those changes make to the organization.

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWV) is an example of a woman's political organization based upon the values of its founder, Carrie Chapman Catt: political participation, non-partisanship, and citizen education. Together these values presented difficult goals for the members. They were to be politically active on one level while remaining non-partisan in the League's work on another while, at the same time, educating the citizens about political issues and policies. In this study I will show that by first identifying the founding values of the League and then tracing them through the Annual Addresses of its

Presidents, it is possible to discern if those founding values have been maintained, adjusted, or discarded.

This first chapter will provide the framework for the study. I will begin with an assessment of the concept of values. Following that, a brief history of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States and the subsequent formation of the League of Women Voters will furnish an historical perspective to the study. Included will also be a brief biography of the League's founder, Carrie Chapman Catt. Next, I will address the three identified values as they are evidenced within League discourse. The significance of this study to the field of communication, the method used, as well as a preview of the other chapters in this thesis will follow.

Values

We usually understand the concept of values better if we first think in terms of our own individual values. Simpson called values "the filters through which beliefs about our universe are passed" (71). Therefore, values do not arrive in our lives in a vacuum. They are rooted in "conscious choice[s] among real alternatives" we make throughout our lives; they are originally formed from the values held by those who influence us, parents, educators, religious and political leaders (Burns 1978, 36). They "describe for us what we accept or reject as appropriate thoughts or behavior toward other people or objects" (Simpson 1971, 71). Burns (1978) called values standards based on choices we make among alternatives. Gans (1988) extends that definition by pointing out that values do not necessarily influence how

we will get something, they just influence which parts of our lives we want to improve. They become preferences among choices.

Over time each value changes or at least adjusts its relative position of importance, its priority, with the other values within our social value system. As we mature, we respond to the values of people around us and to societal demands placed on us. We, as individuals, organizations, or a society, adjust these values according to what else is happening and influencing us from within and without our sphere (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, and Grube 1984). By sifting out what we do not believe, we arrive at what core values we hold dear.

If we apply those same ideas about values to organizations, we realize that an organization's values result from choices made by the organization based on the founder's originally stated values after sifting out what is not workable. Organizations would then be able to take action which exhibits adjustments to its collective values. If so disposed we can transport those individual/collective values in a sequential line to a social movement and then to a resulting organization. As a result of the development of her individual values, Carrie Chapman Catt was able to link with other women in the Woman Suffrage Movement who shared the same values. As Catt's values were adjusted, she transported them through the collective values of that movement and into the foundation of the League of Women Voters.

De Tocqueville was the most notable Western social philosopher in the nineteenth century who consciously observed and recorded his impression that society must possess common ideas so that "common action

can be taken" (1966, 398). Values which are shared by both the individual and the society are called social values. Social values are usually consistent throughout a country's history, and American values "are pervasive and enduring" (Minnick 1957, 210). In the United States we still maintain values related to the Puritan ethic such as diligence, thrift, and charity while also valuing equality of people, change and progress, education for a purpose, cooperation, the individual, and meaningful work (Gans 1988; Gorney 1972; Steele and Redding 1962).

Values are also an important and popular way of analyzing rhetoric because they are "the symbols in our language which transform our individual, even selfish, needs into the communal needs represented by societal demands" (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, and Grube 1984, 25). Values are found in or are inferred from messages and are consistently noted in texts (Sillars and Ganer 1982). Difficulty can arise in locating them because they often are so well embedded within our rhetoric that they may be difficult to discover.

Since I have made a comparison between one's personal life and that of an organization, and since I established that each of us has our own value system, I can carry the analogy farther to discuss how an organization creates its own value system, its culture (Siehl 1985). As in society, it is important for the people in the organization to develop a "common ideology and a sense of mission" (Kimberly, Miles, and Associates 1980, 175). Organizational values should then also be evident as a focused subset of national values.

Organizations are social tools and need to be bound by common beliefs. For that reason the organization must decide what its values are and who will hold them together. Siehl (1985) shows us that a leader comes forth in the organization who verbalizes the reasons for that organization to exist just as a leader arises early in a social movement. This founder visualizes and defines the movement or organization while influencing the followers; this is usually done through the use of language. These leaders arise from the upper levels of mainstream society, not from the fringe, and include such professionals as educators (such as Carrie Chapman Catt), lawyers, civil servants, religious leaders, and business people (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 1989). Therefore, the values they carry with them into the work of the movement or organization would be the same as, or at least strongly similar to, those their society exhibits.

Historian James MacGregor Burns (1978) said that the leader is fundamentally responsible for making the people so strongly aware of their true needs and defining their values so meaningfully, that they can be moved to purposeful action. Carrie Chapman Catt, the founder of the League of Women Voters, defined the League's purpose as finishing the Woman Suffrage fight and aiding the reconstruction of the nation, both very pragmatic goals. This purpose would be achieved by educating citizens, especially the newly-enfranchised women, about citizenship so they would then be able to participate knowledgeably in the politics of their communities. In her speech, "The Nation Calls" delivered on March 24, 1919, Catt identified the founding values of the League as political

participation, non-partisanship, and citizen education. By defining these values Catt was also setting up the possibility of tensions developing within the League.

As the League began its work, it needed to make compromises with its values by bending them from time to time. In other words, our values are ideals which we have accepted, but they have been challenged by a deviation from that ideal; this creates a tension (Dobkin 1962). The resulting stress is evidenced by the pulling and resisting forces of the tension. It is then up to the individual or the organization to decide how to deal with these tensions. It is in the dealing with these tensions that we adjust our values. Within the League an external force (people erroneously criticizing the League leaders for being pro-Red) or an internal force (leaders taking so much time for administration that they can not pay attention to program) may be the catalyst which provides the challenge to the values system resulting in tension.

The importance of the connection between values and tension for this study is in the use I make of the tensions as the outward, visible sign of how the League presidents have discussed the challenges to the organization's original values as defined by the founder.

We will see that the League's early years were especially tension-ridden, not because the values of the organization were inappropriate for such a group but because of the features of American society and democracy which challenged them. For example, not only were these women challenging the political power holdings of the men, they were also trying to introduce legislation to correct the inequities facing women

and children in the labor market and in health care. For the first time in U.S. history we see a united group of women, with the power of the vote, striving to make the home and family issues of the private sphere become an integral part of the political action in the public sphere. This was carried out within the difficult parameters the founder had initiated as non-partisanship and expected citizen participation.

As I developed the scope of these founding values as well as the specifics of the resulting tensions, I realized that the value of education is present in both of the other values. Citizen education is a process by which the League disseminated findings from its studies. For example, the League initially planned to educate the citizens about how to vote (the process) as well as about the issues of the day (information). Citizen education is linked with political participation which is the function of education. Citizen education is adamantly non-partisan and is the mode of education.

The first tension I identified concerns the encouragement of the citizens' political participation. This League goal of increasing citizens' political participation, indeed of citizens accepting the responsibility to participate, runs counter to the prevailing ideal of individualism in the United States. Individualism allows us to choose whether we want to participate in political activities as long as we do not intrude on our neighbor's rights. Political theorists discuss how we do not practice citizenship naturally, we must be prodded and shaped into being a citizen (Oldfield 1990); this is done mainly through

education and by having a set of collective mores with the others in one's community.

De Tocqueville (1966) in the early 1800's and Bellah (1985) in the late 1900's both argued that individualism was detrimental to the workings of a democracy. They saw it as a cancer eating at the very marrow of our country's future. They foresaw that Americans would become insulated from other aspects of communal life. The League maintains this concern. Even though the tension between political participation and individualism seems never-ending, it is so basic to the work of the League that each president can be expected to discuss it.

The second tension I identified sets non-partisanship against partisanship. Non-partisanship is narrowly defined within the League as not supporting any candidate for political office and not identifying their work with the Democrat, Republican, or other political party. The question here is should the League support partisan candidates or should it remain non-partisan—or as the early Leaguers said, all-partisan? This is a tension which arose in the first years of the life of the League. Each president would be expected to explain her concern for maintaining this basic value. The value which was challenged first was non-partisanship. Although Catt had called for a policy of non-partisanship. she had also told League members to work within the political parties. Therefore, in June, 1920, just four months after the League was founded, "President Park led an impressive delegation of League officers and prominent Republican women to the Republican

Convention" (Young 1989, 46). Two members of the League's National Board were also members of the National Party Campaign Committees, one Republican and one Democrat (Young 1989). This internal tension about non-partisanship would not be resolved for at least ten years and will be discussed in the next chapter. The League has continued to maintain a statement of non-partisanship in its Statement of Purpose.

These two tensions are significant because during its 74 years the LWV has developed a strong reputation among the general public with regard to its work in governmental affairs. It has been referred to as "the dominant voice for women in politics in the United States" (Black 1983, 590) as well as "the volunteer group considered most powerful on the political front" (Whaley 1972, 91). In 1970 John Gardner, the Chair of the Urban Coalition as well as the Chair of the League's 50th Anniversary Sponsors Committee, said that "there is no other organization with as much knowledge about government or with as much practical know how about how citizen participation can be brought about than the League of Women Voters" (Benson 1970, 253). The consistency with which it has studied all sides of the issues and refrained from partisanship has established this reputation for the LWV (Black 1983). Therefore, a change in this consistency by a League President would signal an adjustment to challenges to the founder's values.

Values do not change quickly; in fact, there is usually a slow pattern of adjustment which changes and evolves over a period of time (Scott 1984). For that reason, a study of selected presidents who spanned 50 years of League history should give us an indication of any

evolution in these founding values. It should also show how the Presidents and the organization have adjusted to internal and external influences which challenged this organization's beliefs and values. For example, how did Maud Wood Park discuss the Leagues's commitment to political participation after 1920 when the polls showed women had voted in disappointingly small numbers?

The Annual Address

While there are numerous ways to approach a study of values, I have chosen to observe how the rhetoric of leaders at ceremonial events expresses these values, in this case through the Annual Address. It is usual for ceremonial discourse to require a conventional rhetoric (Hart 1990). Ceremonial discourse helps a community maintain itself and straddle inherent tensions "by revivifying social values and ennobling the shared past" (Jamieson 1988, 84). When we attend a graduation, a wedding, or a funeral, we expect the words of the principal speaker to follow a specific pattern. As we listen to such speeches, we develop an expectation of what will be said; any digression leaves us unsatisfied. For example, graduation addresses tell students what they can expect in the working world after praising them for completing their studies. Eulogies praise the dead and give comfort to the living while wedding rhetoric unites two people who will offer comfort to each other. Similarly an organization's president's Annual Address is an epideictic, rhetorical act at a ceremonial event, a convention. Inherent in this type of speech, as in epideictic speech in general, is a rehearsal of the nation's or an organization's values. It is in the Annual Address

that the president pulls the delegates together and guides them in creating "an identity that unifies its members and distinguishes them as a group. . . . [through] a retelling of the past that emphasizes shared experience" by reiterating the organization's values (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 54-5). The president assesses the organization's state at that point in time, causing the delegates to stop, listen, and meditate on where their work during the past two year interval fits into the larger frame of the organization's goals and activities. Then the President leads the organization to gain insight into where it wants to go and indicates how it will best progress (Campbell and Jamieson 1990).

The argument made by Campbell and Jamieson (1989) for the State of the Union Address can also be made for the Annual Address of organizations. As a privilege of the president, the Annual Address is a specifically defined form of rhetoric which can be analyzed to delineate an understanding of the president's assessment of an organization's state at that point in time. The Annual Address can be used to discern how a specific president negotiates the tensions which are the outward evidence of the organization's values tested by real-world challenges resulting from the values established for it by its founder.

The criteria as explained by Campbell and Jamieson generated commonly expected characteristics about the Annual Address. The specific characteristics generated by Campbell and Jamieson are: "(1) public meditation on values, (2) assessments of information and issues, and (3) policy recommendations" (1990, 54). Taken together, these

represent the characteristic concepts of rehearsing the past, defining the present, and suggesting the future. Therefore, we can use those characteristics to structure a prototype Annual Address against which we can evaluate more specific models of the genre.

Organizational Changes: The League of Women Voters

The founder's influence is paramount in the early years of an organization because the leader is the bridge between the social movement and the organization. The founder's influence can remain for many years embedded in stories that the members tell about her. For example, Becky Cain, the current President of the League of Women Voters, said that sometimes "at the board meetings when we're fussing over something that's just really meaningless and . . . somebody [asks], 'What would Carrie do?' And I say, 'She would say I can't believe you're even talking about this. Just go do it.'" (Cain 1993).

Characteristics which make an organization successful in the beginning are exactly what may need redefining, changing, or obliterating at a later time in order for the organization to continue to be successful. This is a paradox defined as institutionalization, "that process whereby new norms, values, and structures become incorporated within the framework of existing patterns of norms, values, and structures" creating stability and predictability within organizations (Kimberly, 1980, 31). It would be understandable to expect the rhetoric of the League president at any period of time to talk of current goals, newly-adjusted work procedures, and "a new

beginning." On the other hand, losing some of the original "more imaginative people" and bringing on board new people who possess the unique qualities needed for their special tasks, can lead to a loss of enthusiasm within the original staff. These new people may not be as aware of the zeal, the enthusiasm, the purpose, or the traditions of the organization as were the original members. This change in members over time would also be expected to result in adjustments of the founder's original values, creating tensions for presidential rhetoric to discuss and resolve.

The rhetoric of an organization represents what that organization epitomizes. This rhetoric might be evidenced by communication from ordinary internal memos, advertising, or official proclamations, such as news releases. Usually people studying organizational rhetoric use as their data those "publicly accessible messages from organizational leaders that are intended to represent the entire organization" (Cheney and MacMillan 1990, 102). This is the approach I have taken by using the Annual Addresses. More recently researchers have looked to making use of those internal memos or the stories told by the people within the organization which provide a rich accounting of the organization's history (McMillan 1990; Wilkins 1983; Mitroff and Kilmann 1975). Crable, in his explanation of the "Fourth System" Model of rhetoric, attests to the need for a study of organizational rhetoric to include elements of organization self-concept such as its values and also to address the internal as well as the external audiences (1990).

By recognizing that organizations are alive, with change an expected factor, and by tracing those changes through the Annual Addresses, I will show how the League presidents have adjusted to the tensions resulting from the challenges to the organization's values. I will also show how the original purposes have survived in the League of Women Voters. Before discussing the individual presidents and their rhetoric, it is essential to understand the nature and the form of the League of Women Voters. Further, by understanding the concept of values and recognizing those values Catt identified, we can understand why the League espouses particular values.

I began this chapter by discussing values and their resulting tensions. I specifically examined tensions inherent within the operations of the League of Women Voters. In order to understand the balance of the material presented in this chapter, it is necessary to understand some of the background issues. Therefore, I will explain the creation of the League of Women Voters of the United States, concentrating on the importance of its founder, Carrie Chapman Catt. Following that discussion I will explain the criteria for the selection of data and the method I used to examine that data. This section will include a summation of the importance of the Annual Address as well as the rationale for my having chosen specific presidents of the League to study.

The last section of this chapter will outline the remaining chapters of this study.

Woman Suffrage: From Movement to Organization

The LWV is a political, non-partisan organization dedicated to educating the public about political issues in their city, state, and/or nation. It is political because it deals with governmental and policy issues; it is non-partisan because it neither supports nor opposes partisan candidates. The League is also political in another older but now more obscure use of the word. Political life also means the life of a citizen. One definition in the Oxford English Dictionary for the word political is "of, belonging or pertaining to the state or body of citizens, its government and policies, especially in civil and secular affairs" (Murray 1961, 1074). In this use of the word a political life is not only the most inclusive form of life but also "the highest form of human living-together that most individuals can aspire to" (Oldfield 1990, 6). It is these people coming together who create politics. By encouraging their working together and providing necessary information, the League resolves its main purpose, to encourage active and informed political participation of citizens.

I maintain that the original, basic League values resulted from the life and learning of its founder, Carrie Chapman Catt. As with each of us, she was a product of her environment and her times; the most direct influence on her life was the Woman Suffrage Movement.

The Woman Suffrage Movement

Carrie Chapman Catt was an important participant in the Woman Suffrage Movement. Its leaders had worked for over 70 years to convince Congress and the people of the United States that women had a right to

suffrage, a right to vote. The idea for the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 was sparked by the treatment of American women at the London convention of the Abolitionist Society (Anderson 1984; Millett 1970; Roosevelt 1954). Elizabeth Cady Stanton attended as the guest of her husband, Henry Stanton, an American delegate, while Lucretia Mott was an American Delegate in her own right. Both of these women, along with the eight other American women delegates, were denied admission to the convention because they were women--only because of their sex (Anderson 1984).

Returning home, Cady Stanton and Mott called together like-minded women and men to talk about the discrepancies in American society with regard to the status of women. At the meeting in Seneca Falls the delegates produced a Declaration of Sentiments, "the first public protest in America against women's political, economic, and social inferiority" (Kraditor 1965, 1), which they modeled after the Declaration of Independence. In it they claimed that throughout history men had held an "an absolute tyranny" over women. In Resolutions 5, 7, and 11 the women addressed the commonly-held idea in American society that women had moral superiority which had been granted to them by the men who had taken intellectual superiority for themselves. Moral superiority did not allow for public action and political participation, so these women also demanded the right to speak in public and the right of suffrage (Solomon 1991).

Originally, many suffragists, including Susan B. Anthony, opposed the sentiment which demanded woman suffrage. They later realized the

futility of such a position because the men in the legislatures had the power of the vote. With one vote these men had the power to cancel the advancements the Suffragists had made in their work for the rights of women and children. The women would then have neither a vote nor representation. They were powerless to rectify the situation, and their work would have been for naught.

Development of the Movement's Social Values

At the center of the Woman Suffrage Movement are its ideals which have their roots in the social values which had coalesced in the early 1800's in the United States and then had been exemplified in other movements in American society. The period between the Revolutionary War and the 1830's, usually accepted as the beginning of the modern period of United States history, saw an integrating of values which are now considered standard in our society. These values included a sense of responsibility on the part of citizens to participate in their political society, an increasing desire for more equal educational opportunities, and a progressive philosophy.

"The simple faith underlying the movement's key demand, the ballot, was the belief in republican citizenship passed down from the American Revolution" (Buhle 1978, 1). Yet, this republican citizenship had heretofore addressed only the rights of white, male landowners. Other residents were not citizens. Carrie Chapman Catt would later declare that there are two restrictions on human liberty. One is "the restriction of law and the [other is the] restraint of custom" (Walker 1950, 187). Her belief was that women could only become equal to men

through constitutional change because it would take so long (in her estimation at least 100 years) for custom to change.

After 1830 through the end of the nineteenth century, the social values in this country remained relatively constant, but women became more active in society. It must not be forgotten that the woman leaders of the suffrage movement were members of the same social and economic class as the men who were dominant in the society. Therefore, they could be expected to share the same social values and prejudices as their men even though they did not share the same political power (Elshtain 1981). As a result we can identify that access to the power of the ballot was the primary political difference between the sexes.

Their involvement in other movements, such as the Temperance and Anti-Slavery Movements which were popular in the early 1800's, brought American women into public life. Even though they had successfully influenced legislation on these issues by persuasion and petition, women needed the ballot. Catt described it as "the most effective, most dignified, most self-respecting means of exerting an influence' toward improving the society in which people live" (Clevenger 1955, 94). Consequently, the first part of raising their own consciousness involved analyzing their barriers, letting women know they could make a difference and a change, and organizing the women to be committed to the cause (Campbell 1989b; Solomon 1991). This adjustment to women's lives paralleled the opening up of educational opportunities for women which further helped them to participate more fully in society.

The means used by the majority of women to mark their place in the public sphere was public address. A culture shows its prevailing concerns through its oral, public address (Walker 1950), so it seems logical that women emerged as public speakers, immersed in their topics. Many women had also learned the principles of rhetoric and studied oratory at school. Consequently, they could define the problems inherent in the women's rights issue through a clarity of style and argument in an extemporaneous manner acceptable to the audience (Clevenger 1955; Yoakam 1960). The result was that there was an increasing acceptance of their ideas in the public mind so that suffragists could build on these experiences and close the gap in women's emancipation.

One important result of the suffragists' establishing national women's organizations, such as the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the National Federation of Women's Clubs, was the establishment of their own annual conventions. While there had been conventions for the various social movements, they had not allowed women a significant amount of participation. It was the conventions of the national women's organizations which provided a training ground in leadership for the women. Inexperienced women presented their first public addresses, chaired their first assemblies, and brought issues of concern to women before both the public eye and the press; people were now forced to debate women's issues openly and publicly.

It was in such a period of female awakening that Carrie Chapman Catt emerged as a dominant suffrage leader. Catt's early life had

established her value system which will be reviewed in Chapter 2. The prime elements of it which have a direct bearing on this chapter are political participation by the citizens, political education for the citizens, and non-partisanship.

With regard to citizen participation, Catt argued for the "advancement of good citizenship" through people taking action within their communities (Clevenger 1955, 33). Citizenship means more than one's nationality; it also connotes "the liberty, even the responsibility, to share in the governance and political life of a community" (Sapiro 1983, 7).

Catt's vision, which revisited earlier views of women as the moral sex, was that women would "revitalize the country's political life" by being trained through the League in civic politics and gradually improve the United States's political climate by their participation (Young 1989, 49). She advanced the idea of women deserving the vote in her speeches through a syllogism about no taxation without representation, an idea from the American Revolution. She reasoned that:

People who are taxed should vote.

Women are taxed.

Women should vote. (Clevenger 1955, 97).

This premise had often been accepted for men; she had the audacity to apply it to women.

The education of the citizen was another of Catt's values as she often bemoaned the ignorance of the masses. She believed that when women got the vote and were educated, they would surpass men who had

incomplete educations and were under the control of male politicians (Fowler 1986).

Consequently, education of both its members and other citizens became the means by which the League aided them in participating politically. Catt cautioned that the League members needed "to be sufficiently educated to recognize the reality that elections mattered" and to let the League opponents know that the League knew that (Fowler 1986, 102)!

With regard to Catt's third value, an emphasis on non-partisanship, she believed that women had "to go the route of politics, though not the route of partisan or party politics" (Fowler 1986, 103). Women could learn about the operation of politics and the pros and cons of political issues without following either political party's line.

Catt had been greatly influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution while at school and maintained a commitment to that concept throughout her life. She also remained staunchly non-partisan; Catt believed that out of people working together for a common cause would evolve a much better way to govern in a democratic society. For example, Catt wanted leaders of all political parties to join with the suffragists in a non-partisan manner to work against corrupt politics. Out of this work would evolve improved "democratic practices and [a] clearing of the way for the enfranchisement of women" (Clevenger 1955, 189).

Emancipation and Organization

The road to emancipation speeded up toward the end of the nineteenth century, paving the way for the establishment of the League

of Women Voters. By 1916 it was apparent that both of the major political parties had failed to endorse "the federal method of enfranchising women" (Park 1960, 15), that is, through a direct acceptance by the Congress of the 19th Amendment. The parties agreed that woman suffrage should be granted state by state, thus alleviating their responsibility of having to take a stand on Woman Suffrage. Catt presented "a demand for legislative activity in every part of the country" to the board of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) to make a final, concentrated fight for suffrage (Park 1960, 16). NAWSA was the suffrage organization formed in 1890 from two competing groups – the National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association. Catt was its president between 1900 and 1904 and between 1915 and 1920.

As she realized that the Suffragists were getting close to realizing their dream, Catt knew that the momentum they had generated could not be lost. She also realized that these women who would now be able to vote had to know how to vote, to know what the issues were, and to learn how to participate in the democratic process. Consequently, with the idea in mind that the women needed to be prepared to vote, she presented a draft of a proposal to the 1917 Executive Council meeting of NAWSA. In the draft she outlined the formation of a new organization, a league of women voters, which would bring together representatives of states which had already adopted woman suffrage (Harper 1970). In 1920 she would explain her reasons for calling for this organization:

The old suffrage associations had gone to pieces. There was no common body which could stand for a special session and bring political influence to bear. There were organizations . . . [but not] an organization that is designed for that kind of campaign. . . . There was no non-partisan organization (Catt 1920, 3-4).

The preliminary formation of the League of Women Voters occurred at the penultimate NAWSA convention in 1919. Catt's purpose in organizing the League at that time was to speed suffrage, to teach women the responsibilities of being citizens, and to teach them the mechanics of voting before they actually received the vote (Clevenger 1955; Fowler 1986).

Therefore, when the leaders of NAWSA met in St. Louis in 1919 at its 50th Year Jubilee Convention, they received the proposal from Carrie Chapman Catt in a speech titled "The Nation Calls." In it she suggested to all of the NAWSA members the formation of a League of Women Voters, a living monument to the suffrage movement, which would "finish the fight" of the suffragists (Catt 1919, 917; Buhle 1978; Fowler 1986).

Catt gave direction to the organization she envisioned by listing the three most important aims of the League: to gain enfranchisement for women in the U.S. and abroad; to remove legal discrimination against women; and to stabilize democracy in the U.S. through literacy and the Americanization of all citizens for the purpose of active citizen participation. This last item was necessary, Catt felt, because a person must know and understand the issues in order to be able to participate actively, and citizens must be able to read English to read about these issues (Catt 1917).

The last Annual Meeting of NAWSA, February 12-18, 1920, in Chicago, Illinois, became known as the Victory Convention because the women knew that victory was near. The Call to the Convention shouted: "Suffragists hear this last call to a suffrage convention!" (Catt and Shuler 1970, 383). In 1918 the House of Representatives and in 1919 the Senate had passed the legislation necessary to put in place the 19th Amendment, called the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. When the ladies met in February in Chicago only a few states needed to ratify the amendment. Therefore, the vote was cast on February 14, 1920, to disband NAWSA and to "merge" with the National League of Women Voters. The ladies were enthusiastic.

It has been shown that an organization can arise from a social movement. In Chicago in 1920 "the phoenix of a new organization, with fresh ideals, aims and program, had arisen from the old" (Catt and Shuler (1970, 386). In order to implement her program, Catt immediately held Citizenship Schools for over 200 ladies who had attended the convention. They stayed for an extra week for the express purpose of learning how and why to vote as well as learning the background to the issues important at that time. They were then given the task of fanning out into their respective states in order to teach other women, effectively covering the United States with teachers for all the newly enfranchised women voters.

The League in 1920 adopted the following objectives:

the political education of newly-enfranchised women
citizens. . . . the establishment of some *modus vivendi*
within the political parties that would yield access to

opportunities for women to take part in governing. . . .
[and] an ambitious agenda of liberal legislation reforms . .
. [through] majority consent (Young 1990, 2).

Paramount in these objectives was Catt's conviction that the League of Women Voters must represent "a new, different model of politics, one that left old parties and old ways behind" (Fowler 1986, 102).

The delegates to the Victory Convention had been accurate in their enthusiasm and belief that victory was, indeed, at hand. On August 26, 1920, the last state, Tennessee, ratified the 19th Amendment and it became part of the Constitution. "Meetings, processions, flag raisings, transformations from suffrage associations into Leagues of Women Voters were the order of the day for the month that followed" (Catt and Shuler 1970, 456). For 72 years millions of American women and unknown numbers of men had labored for the emancipation of women; it was now official. Still, their work did not stop; the scope evolved and changed course. The League of Women Voters began its job of taking the Suffrage Movement to its next phase, an organization.

Research about the League of Women Voters

In light of the League's continued political influence, I found it surprising that the League of Women Voters, as a specific topic, has been seldom researched. The research which is available has been completed in the fields of political science, business, and women's studies. Most of the research which focuses on the League is about the formation of the organization (Lemons 1973; Harper 1970) or how women use the League as a training ground prior to entering partisan politics (Hartmann 1989; Black 1983; Gruberg 1968).

The literature which examines the formation of the League is also that which has chronicled the Woman Suffrage Movement. For example, After Winning: The Legacy of the New Jersey Suffragists, 1920-1947 (Gordon 1986), reviewed the work of the Suffrage Movement and its aftermath in New Jersey. This type of record is beneficial because it traces the problems and successes of local suffrage groups as they made the transition to civic organizations, including the League.

As a result of the increase in the number of Woman Studies Departments in United States' universities and the raising of American consciousness since the 1960's with regard to feminist issues, more authors are looking at women's contributions to numerous areas of American society, including public address (Kennedy and O'Shields 1983). Slowly, we see the contributions of women public speakers discussed and critiqued (Campbell 1989; Foss and Foss 1991; Yoakam 1960), but no authors have examined the Annual Address of presidents of women's or civic organizations.

While the League publishes materials produced by its national office as well as by its local and state chapters throughout the United States, these materials relate to the League's positions on issues rather than discuss how the League relates to the larger world of politics in the United States. Although the minutes of League national conventions and some office correspondence are available on microfilm, the bulk of the League's papers remain uncatalogued.

Only one work has been written on the specific history of the League of Women Voters of the United States. In the Public Interest:

The League of Women Voters, 1920 - 1970 was written by Dr. Louise M. Young (1990), a League member and an historian. She took on this study at the request of the League so that the organization would have a definitive record of its progress.

Many recent publications which mention the League have a feminist tone (Baxter and Lansing 1983; Gruberg 1968; Millett 1970). Some of the authors follow the example of Kate Millett who said the League was finished as an organization after the Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Protection Act reversal in the late 1920's since it did not "make use of the ballot for direct purposes of women's self-interest" (1970, 83). This Act provided federal and state matching grants to promote maternal and infant hygiene and establish national medical care for children at a time when the infant mortality rate in the United States was higher than in most of Europe (Young 1989). As such, the Act could definitely be said to have been supported in the self-interest of women and was a milestone for the fledgling organization. In reality, the Sheppard-Towner reversal did show the women how difficult it was going to be to battle a male-dominated Congress.

The significance of these "feminist" authors such as Millett, and Baxter and Lansing is that they criticized the League for not working strictly for feminist issues. They said that the League policy of non-partisanship destroyed its "capacity to lead a political women's movement which could cut across class or political party lines" (Baxter and Lansing 1983, 54). Critics have called the League conservative, unambitious, lacking a real cause, and even suffering from "political

virginity" (Black 1983; Gruberg 1968). What these writers neglect to mention is that the League has never been a feminist organization even though it is historically a woman's organization. It was founded to pursue citizen interests whether those citizens were men or women.

The only researcher who sought to dispel these feminist myths about the League was Naomi Black. She reviewed the League's actual contributions to American political life, finding that so often research into women in politics demotes women to second class status. Black (1983) methodically pointed out that considering entry into partisan politics as the avenue to political participation is a masculine approach to politics. This view denotes faulty reasoning when it is used as a guide for women because women do not necessarily see entering politics as a candidate as the only mode of influencing their communities. This conviction has been confirmed with research by Hartmann (1898), Baxter and Lansing (1983) and Githens and Prestage (1977). Although today we see an increase in the number of women seeking political office, the majority of women do not necessarily consider office-seeking their only way to participate. Women want and need a more flexible approach to participation.

Minimal research has been done about specific women who have been associated with the League. Fowler (1986), Walker (1950), and Clevenger (1955) examined the life of the League's founder, Carrie Chapman Catt. Maud Wood Park, the League's first president, wrote her own book, Front Door Lobby (1960), which looks at the lobbying efforts of NAWSA in its waning years before the League was established. The papers of some of

the presidents of the League are uncatalogued and are housed in several university libraries.

In hindsight it is no wonder that the League was founded. It evolved from a social movement which pitted women who demanded the right to the ballot against men in business and politics who did not wish to share their power. The strength of character in the suffragists was passed on to League members who still had battles to fight. Having accepted the values established by Catt, the League members had to implement them. It is not surprising that those values would be challenged immediately in an environment where women were demanding a share in the political power.

Value Tensions in League Discourse

Inherent in the aims Carrie Chapman Catt delineated are the values she was transmitting to the LWV, including a belief in active participation by citizens in the governing of their communities and a belief in the League's maintaining a strict non-partisan policy. These values were challenged which developed tensions in the League's work.

The rhetoric used by each president to discuss the stress brought about by such tensions indicates her position with regard to the original values. Has there been a move toward partisan politics or toward tolerating the citizen's right to choose to participate in politics? The answers will indicate the continuing strength of Catt's vision of this organization.

I will now explain the specific value conflicts that give rise to such tensions.

Political Participation

The concept of political participation has been tension-ridden for centuries. In the ancient Greek city state of Athens, it was the citizen's obligation to participate in his community's politics (Oldfield 1990). In his "Funeral Oration" Pericles declared, "We alone regard the man who takes no part in [politics], not as unobtrusive, but as useless" (Saunders 1970, 35). Today we still hear that political participation is a responsibility of a citizen; it is how a citizen is involved in his community to a degree greater than obeying laws or paying taxes (Sapiro 1983). Throughout recent history there has been a conflict between this philosophy, called civic republicanism, and one developed in Europe in the 17th century, liberal individualism. The latter espouses that the individual can choose not to participate in the political community as long as this citizen does not encroach on the rights of other citizens (Oldfield 1990). This tension is still prevalent in our American society where on the one hand we have strongly adopted the liberal individualism philosophy and on the other hand organizations such as the League advocate a more civic republican philosophy.

At the center of this discussion is who will make the decisions within a democracy. There is a conflict between "the selfish soul and the common good," an aspect of American society de Tocqueville identified (Creedon 1992, 40). As our problems become increasingly complex, the decisions we make must navigate those complexities and reach a conclusion acceptable to the majority. The basic premise of a

democracy is that all eligible citizens have a right and an obligation to participate in that decision-making and to be informed about the issues. If they do not, then the pool of decision-makers decreases and the non-participants are subject to the other's decisions.

One theory about political participation is that active participation in politics is an unnatural occurrence for most people. It is perceived as a less rewarding activity to most citizens in a democracy than is being with their family and friends or pursuing recreational pursuits. Explanations for this lack of "connection" to politics have included politics not being an acquired taste as we might have for classical music and our not having been educated to be active politically (Berry 1989).

This last statement is relevant in two ways. First, it has been borne out through studies that political participation is more prevalent in people who have more education and that education is the most important factor in fostering democratic values (Baxter and Lansing 1983; Simpson 1971). Yet, it is not just the level of general education which the person has which is significant. It is also necessary that the citizens be educated in the process of being a citizen so that they know where and when they are allowed to participate (Sapiro 1983). This is the argument Catt used against allowing newly-arrived immigrant men to vote while American women who already had this knowledge about the process were denied the vote.

Oldfield (1990) points out several conditions which must exist before citizens can be expected to practice their citizenship. They

must have the information and skills necessary to do the work; they must have the opportunity to practice their citizenship; they must be motivated to want to do this work. These three conditions have been what the League of Women Voters, from Carrie Chapman Catt to the present, has sought to foster in American citizens. While the concepts of liberal individualism and civic republicanism can have blurred boundaries at times, the idea of non-partisanship is more straightforward.

Non-Partisanship

Throughout its 74 years the League has maintained a policy of non-partisanship. The LWV is the only political organization in the United States which is non-partisan and looks at a broad rather than single or narrow range of issues with the purpose of promoting citizen participation. In a speech she delivered before the last NAWSA convention on the day the League of Women Voters was founded, Catt described the "one thing I want to warn you about. It is the only thing I fear about the League of Women Voters...It is what we ordinarily call partisanship" (1920, 6).

Catt then described this tension:

In the League of Women Voters we have this anomaly: we are going to be a semi-political organization. We want to do political things. We want legislation. We are going to educate for citizenship. In that body we must be non-partisan and all-partisan. Democrats from Alabama and Republicans from New Hampshire must be friends and work together for the same things. . . . Yet [they] . . . must get inside the . . . [parties]. They must convert their respective parties to have confidence in women, confidence in our platform and confidence in the League of Women Voters, but I must further warn you that only about one man

in twenty-five will be big enough to understand that you, a republican, can work with you, a democrat, in a non-partisan organization and be loyal to your respective parties at the same time. . . . To sail between the Scylla of narrow-minded partisanship on the left and the Charybdis of ultra conservation on the right is the appointed task of the League of Women Voters (1920, 7-8).

This tension continues. The League of Women Voters has been derided for not actively participating in party politics (Baxter and Lansing 1983; Millett 1970), but two factors are not considered. The first is that, following the advice of Carrie Chapman Catt, individual members of the organization are very actively involved in all political parties in any number of capacities. More often they are not only the campaign workers and managers but also the candidates. Historically, League members have been elected to city councils, boards of supervisors, and governors' offices.

The other factor to remember is that the public needs sources of unbiased information, which supplies background facts but does not succumb to the current arguments on issues, in order to determine its positions on our increasingly complex issues. At this point two values come together. The League provides unbiased, non-partisan information to the public so that the citizens can better participate politically.

Significance of Study

Condit suggests that communication studies should examine "a broad range of speeches" in order to expand the field's knowledge of discourse types (1985, 296). This study covers the discourse of the League of Women Voters, a subject not previously studied in the field of communication. While I am using specific speeches (the Annual

Addresses) as the data, I am really looking at the discourse of selected Presidents of the League with regard to identifying their discussion of the founder's values during the League's first fifty years. Inherent in this discussion is a look at how the anticipated adherence to the founder's values set the League on a course that brought it into conflict with social and political conditions; the result was exhibited in institutional value tensions. As such, this thesis furthers prior research for both organizational values and founder's values.

One importance of this style of study is that it does not focus on only one point in time as single speech studies do. Kimberly, Miles, and Associates (1980) have criticized some organizational studies for being static in time, for providing snapshots of an organization rather than a more longitudinal view. In fact, Kimberly states that there is a paucity of longitudinal organization studies usually because the "client" wants a rapid response to the study and prefers not to wait or pay for a longitudinal study. The result is that studies which look at only one time in history get responses from people only temporarily associated with the organization and who have impressions which are historically skewed. This study, by contrast, looks at the rhetoric of three Presidents of the League at three different periods of the organization's history while using their Annual Addresses as the common item for analysis. In that way, the study was able to identify any significant patterns of contrast or similarity in the discussions of values and resultant tensions which occurred among the Presidents' Addresses.

An additional significance of this study is that its scope helps to broaden the genre of the "State of the Union Address" to include Annual Addresses of organizations such as the League. By using a communication medium--public speeches, particularly the Annual Address--as the basis for following the progress of and the changes within an organization, I extend both areas of study. This study opens up the information from studies previously done on government (such as the characteristics of the State of the Union Address [Campbell and Jamieson 1990]) or business organizations (as in Hospice studies [Olson 1988]) and applies that information to civic organizations. The fact that this study examines a woman's political organization is also significant because this genre is seldom studied. Research in both the area of women's organizations as well as women's rhetoric in general will, therefore, be expanded.

Method

This study demonstrates how the two previously identified value tensions within the League exemplify its original values which have been evident within the national Presidents' Annual Addresses at the national conventions. The Annual Addresses are used as a barometer to establish what was important to the organization at a specific time and, in turn, discussed or reflected upon by the president. In other words, the texts of the Annual Addresses were the vehicle for assessing how each president discussed the stress brought about as a result of the challenges to the values.

As Campbell and Jamieson indicate, the State of the Union Address embodies a recapitulation of an organization's history, its present issues of merit, and the president's plan for the future (1990). Therefore, in each Annual Address I would expect to see not only evidence of the prototype Annual Address but also to hear discussed examples of the League's current work on political participation as well as statements relating to its non-partisanship policy. The President could also be expected to discuss how she foresees the task of citizen education.

A president's Annual Addresses are usually printed in the organization's literature making them readily accessible. For an older organization, such as the League, it is common that convention proceedings have been archived more completely than everyday business matters. As a result the Annual Addresses of these conventions can be expected to provide a readily and consistently available source of texts for analysis.

The manner of selecting the speeches to study was very simple; they were the official addresses of the LWV presidents at each national convention during their terms in office. There have been a total of fourteen presidents of the LWVUS who have spoken before the public at news conferences, before Congress at hearings, and before the membership at conventions. While this pattern has changed little over time, each president has brought her own manner of speaking and expression to her speeches.

Until 1927 the conventions were held annually; after 1927 they were held biennially. In the off years, there was an Executive Council meeting for the President, the National Board and Officers of the organization as well as the Presidents of each state League (Young 1989). It was customary for the president to address this group as well, but those speeches are not included in this study. Only convention addresses where the president addressed the entire membership through its representatives are used.

There can be many different forms of analysis both possible and helpful in the furthering of the understanding of the place values hold in the study of communication. For this study I have chosen the following specific method of analysis. I first looked at the speech given by Carrie Chapman Catt on March 24, 1919. It is the initial statement of the League's purpose. In this speech I identified the values of political participation and non-partisanship.

I then chose those presidents' terms of office which represented different periods in the League's history. In this study that meant choosing the first President, Maud Wood Park (1920-24), because the first president sets the tone of the organization and gets it moving. I also anticipated that her rhetoric would be similar to that of Carrie Chapman Catt, the LWV's founder, since they were not only friends but had worked closely during the Suffrage Movement. Therefore, Maud Wood Park would be expected to provide a link between the suffrage movement and the newly-formed organization.

While there is no specific amount of time for an organization to spend in its development, I sensed that by the time an organization was fifty years old it would have had time to mature. Accordingly, in order to set a boundary for this study, I chose only to look at the first 50 years of the League's existence. For that reason Lucy W. Benson (1968-74), the president during the 50th Anniversary Celebration, was selected.

Not wanting to leave such a large interval between analyses, I chose the president whose term fell approximately half-way between these two presidents. She is Percy M. Lee (1950-58). Her term is significant for two other reasons. The first is that it came shortly after the major revisions made at the 1946 convention, leaving time for the changes to have been introduced. Therefore, Percy Lee's rhetoric could be expected to reflect those changes. Also, it was during her term that the League became more actively involved in its traditional concern for international affairs, particularly with the relatively new United Nations founded in 1945.

For the second step I analyzed each president's speeches as a single unit rather than separately. I chose this method because my purpose in analyzing the speeches was to place them within the context of the organization's overall time frame, not to distinguish a specific address. This is not intended to be an inclusive study of League discourse, not even of the Annual Addresses. It is meant as a guide which will show patterns in the treatment of key tensions within the rhetoric of the Annual Address running through this discourse. Third,

I read the Annual Addresses of each of the chosen three presidents and examined their rhetoric to ascertain whether the presidents have consistently discussed the two major values laid out by Carrie Chapman Catt: political participation and non-partisanship. If so, does each president's rhetoric reflect a pattern? Further, is there a similar pattern reflected in the rhetoric of the three presidents combined?

Primarily, two questions must be answered with regard to each president's speeches. The first question is: have the identified value tensions been "meditated" upon? In other words have they been talked about as pertinent to the current work of the League?

The second question is: have the values inherent in these tensions changed over time? Since external factors such as the events in our public, social, and political life can affect our prioritization of values causing tension, does the message of the organization's leaders reflect a change in tensions and then a resolution? If so, do these actions indicate that the League has lost or modified its original values?

Choosing the specific manner of analysis was the next step. In order to keep the data of the textual analyses organized, I created a chart and prepared one for each Annual Address analyzed. On this chart I first designated space for the President's name, title of speech, the number of the annual convention where it was presented, and the date of the speech. Then I listed the questions I wanted to answer beginning with: Have the tensions been mediated upon as pertinent to the League's current work? Leaving space for specific citations from that speech, I

added sections for the two tensions as well as any discussion on citizen education. On the second page the specific question was: Have the values inherent in these tensions changed over time? Two sub-questions were included: Does the message of the organization's leaders reflect a change in value priorities? and Does such an action indicate that the organization has changed its original values? On page three I listed questions which would aid me in situating the speech. What is discussed within the speech about the external environment? What is discussed about the internal environment? Which carried more weight? When? What statements by the president indicate that the work of the League may have some affect on the external political environment? On page four I listed some auxiliary questions to help in the general analysis. What is different from the previous speech? How different is the topic selection between this president and the others? By citing examples within each of these categories, I was usually able to evaluate quickly which sections were more dominant in a president's Addresses as well as able to compare them with the other presidents' Addresses.

Another important aspect of this research is that, when discussing any genre of rhetoric, it is important to pay some attention to the historical context, to situate the speech, since our speech comes out of our times. The historical context necessarily "includes both the variety of external forces that shape organizations and set them on particular courses and the internal culture that constrains their decision-making and strategic choice processes" (Kimberly 1980, 6). Too often research is restricted because the researchers have a lack of

appreciation for the roles that history and situational contexts have on the material researched (Kimberly 1980). Placing the president in a particular period of time highlighted both the external stimuli, the events within the American society, as well as the internal stimuli, the workings within the League. Therefore, I briefly described the period of history, what was being discussed externally in the United States, and the main issues within the League.

It is vital to the outcome of this study to understand that since I am a member of the League, I am looking at this organization from within. My analysis is understandably skewed. As Burns said, "The eye of the beholder may govern what is seen" (1978, 83). In the case of this study of the League, though, I believe that this has been an advantage. As was shown earlier in this chapter, nearly everything written about the League has been done by an outsider. Therefore, the knowledge I have gained about the organization over the years, as well as the intuitive understanding I have of its inner workings, should coalesce to form a deeper explanation of the data examined. The tensions I have named are the topics that all of us in leadership capacities within the League wrestle with on a fairly regular basis. The understanding of the League which I bring to this study will augment the research done about it and the selected words of the presidents and the founder.

Since "the early chapters of an organization's biography are strongly influenced by prehistory and powerfully condition the shape and content of later chapters" (Kimberly, Miles, and Associates 1980, 17), I

will trace in Chapter 2 how the values selected by Carrie Chapman Catt to establish the League of Women Voters developed from her life's work and her time in history.

Throughout this study we must remember that it is the president's responsibility to lead the group. In this capacity she must not only "create and celebrate" an identity, but she must also "tie together the past, present, and future" (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 54). This most important responsibility of leadership by the presidents will be described through an explanation of the results of the analyses of their Annual Addresses. I combine the rhetoric of Maud Wood Park (1920-4), the first League President, and the founder Carrie Chapman Catt in Chapter 2 in order to analyze the rhetoric which launched the organization. In Chapter 3 I discuss the Annual Addresses of Percy Maxim Lee (1950-8), and in Chapter 4 I discuss the Annual Addresses of Lucy Benson (1968-74).

In Chapter 5 I summarize the findings of this study in relation to the questions I posed throughout this chapter. I also make some recommendations for further study.

Chapter 2

Moving from the House of Prejudice into the House of Freedom:

The Genesis of an Organization

The final years of the Woman Suffrage Movement and the beginning years of the League of Women Voters saw women moving from their weak position in society as the subjects of men to establishing their own legal presence within American society. In Catt's words they were moving from "the House of Prejudice into the House of Freedom" (1919,918).

A movement which transposes itself into an organization must maintain a continuity through capable, dedicated leaders. The founder, Carrie Chapman Catt, and the first president of the League of Women Voters, Maud Wood Park, provided such a continuity. This chapter will look at the issues of political participation and non-partisanship as well as the tensions which they evoked as they were discussed by both Catt and Park.

In order to analyze better the Annual Addresses of the presidents, I found it necessary to understand the personality and the history of the founder of the League of Women Voters, Carrie Chapman Catt. She established the founding values for the League which developed from her background. For that reason, a knowledge of how she arrived at those values was useful. Therefore, I will begin by discussing her life as it relates to the development of her values. After that I will analyze her speech, "The Nation Calls", delivered in 1919 before the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) in which she called for the

formation of the League of Women Voters. It is through this speech that we can identify how her values in turn were evolved into the values of the League.

Next I will present a brief biography of Maud Wood Park, the League's first president. I will then evaluate the Annual Addresses she delivered at the League's National Conventions between 1921 and 1923 paying particular attention to how she discussed the values of the League. This evaluation will be based on the internal and external challenges influencing this new organization, and I will be identifying how Park reacted to them.

Carrie Chapman Catt

Carrie Chapman Catt, who played a major role in bringing the 19th Amendment to fruition, was also the person responsible for conceiving of the League of Women Voters. She was born on January 9, 1859, in Ripon, Wisconsin, the only daughter and second child of Lucius and Maria Lane. When she was seven the family moved to a farm in Iowa (Clevenger 1955; Walker 1950).

Those early years were spent in a period of rapid social change. Young girls still wore hoop skirts; most people walked for their major means of transportation; women's ready made clothes appeared for the first time. The discovery of oil wells in Texas paved the way for kerosene lamps to follow shortly. Karl Marx was writing about political economy in the mid-1800's, and Charles Darwin published The Origin of Species in 1859. Each of these incidents would have an influence on this young girl who learned early about the inequality of the vote.

When she was thirteen Carrie Lane was sitting on her father's lap when she asked him why her mother was not going with him to vote. When he replied that women were not allowed to vote, Carrie retorted that she would do something about that (Clevenger 1955). And she did.

Before Carrie Lane graduated from Iowa State College at Ames in 1880 she had been greatly influenced intellectually by progressive thought and the Darwinian theory of evolution (Clevenger 1955; Roosevelt 1954; Walker 1950). We will see the Progressive opposition to social injustice, to political power being taken from the people by special interests, and to unequal educational opportunities played out often in Catt's ideals. She believed that nothing remains static, but neither is most change revolutionary: it is evolutionary. This evolution, especially in a democracy, was advanced primarily through education. Therefore, as long as citizens had access to education, they could individually and collectively progress to a better state of being (Clevenger 1955). It was as if we progressively wend our way up a spiral, each circle bringing us to an improved democratic situation. This idea restated Tocqueville's notion about institutions in Western history continuously evolving toward a more equal status (Grimes 1967). For example, he showed how the printing press had made information readily available to a larger group of people, and, subsequently, rural mail delivery had conveyed the information to even more people in a larger geographical area.

Catt's interest in evolution also allowed her to look objectively at both sides of an issue. As she commented in later years: "Both sides

are needed to bring . . . truth uppermost" (Walker 1950, 34). This practice would show up later as a major tenet of the League in the establishment of the non-partisanship policy and in the process of consensus. During her freshman year in college Catt studied rhetoric and practiced impromptu speaking in the college literary society, a skill she employed in later years throughout the world (Clevenger 1955; Walker 1950).

After graduating from college, Carrie Lane became the principal of the Mason City (Iowa) High School and in 1883 became the superintendent of the school district (Clevenger 1955). It was during these years that she began working for woman suffrage. In 1885 she married Leo Chapman, the owner of the Mason City Republican, the local newspaper. He died the next year, and in 1890 she married George Catt, an engineer whom she had known at Iowa State College. It was this marriage which allowed her the freedom to pursue active participation in the Woman Suffrage Movement. The Catts signed a pre-nuptial agreement stating that he would earn enough money for the two of them to live on and she would do the public service for them both. Another part of the agreement stated that she would be free to travel and do her speaking on suffrage matters for two months in both the fall and the spring of each year. His death in 1905 left her financially independent so that she could maintain their home and her secretary while devoting her time to the suffrage movement (Catt and Shuler 1970; Walker 1950).

During her first period as a widow, Carrie Chapman served as the state organizer for the Iowa Woman Suffrage Association. She spoke

before crowds as diverse as farmers in their fields, political groups, royalty, and government leaders; during her lifetime she made more than 7,000 speeches throughout the world (Clevenger 1955). In 1890 she was asked to speak before the convention of NAWSA. This was her first national speaking experience, and it was the event which brought her to the attention of NAWSA's national leaders (Walker 1950).

It was at the NAWSA Convention in 1901 (her first as president) that Catt admonished the members to "go forth determined to educate, agitate, and organize with greater vigor than ever before" (Walker 1950, 178). These words were a direct reflection of her idea that even in an organization there is evolution, and that the normal progression is to go from agitation through education to realization (Walker 1950).

Catt saw the woman suffrage issue as part of a larger human evolution encompassing our progression toward more control over our lives. She argued that we Americans had gotten rid of the Divine Right of Kings through the American Revolution. This first reformation freed men and progressed toward control of the government by the people. Catt called this "the man movement". She further argued that the women in the United States were now engrossed in the overthrow of the Divine Right of Men to rule over women. This was to be abolished with woman suffrage, "the woman movement" (Catt and Shuler 1970).

Catt saw women as citizens ready to take their rightful place and responsibility in American political life. She felt women had a larger role to play in our society than that of wife and mother. With the technological advancements early in the twentieth century, women would

not need to spend as much time caring for the house. The Industrial Revolution had contributed time-saving devices, such as the sewing machine, while an opening up of opportunities in education for women allowed them to be exposed to a greater range of knowledge.

We can find two values which developed from Catt's studies and her early life and which continually recur in her speeches and writings. The first value is citizen political participation. Catt argued that one of the tenets of citizenship in a democracy was for citizens to take action on political issues within their communities. Her work in the Woman Suffrage Movement developed from her desire to see more citizens, especially women, able to participate in making good government. At a NAWSA Council meeting in 1919, Catt stated that she "was confident . . . that those [women] with a natural bent for politics would make their voices heard within the parties as representatives of the new voters" (Young 1989, 37).

The second value is the policy of non-partisanship within the League. Catt wanted an organization that was quasi-political but not partisan. As a result of her belief in the necessity of hearing two sides of an issue, Catt contended that the League was to learn about issues and then support candidates who supported those issues, regardless of party affiliation (Fowler 1986). Catt also stated that "the League would certainly educate and lobby for programs it favored, but . . . it would do so by focusing on [the information in the] issues" thereby "always avoiding partisan politics" (Fowler 1986, 98, 101).

Because of her belief that education was the means by which societies evolved to an ever-higher plane of fulfillment, Catt remained committed "to a belief in change and progress" (Walker 1950, 440). Catt concluded in the New York Times in 1913 that: "'Reason and evolution, not emotion and revolution, are the normal ladders by which people must climb to new liberties'" (Clevenger 1955, 8).

Catt set forth her plan for the League of Women Voters in a speech titled "The Nation Calls" which she made at the NAWSA Victory Convention on March 24, 1919. In the following section all citings, unless otherwise noted, refer to this speech; the page number will be given.

"The Nation Calls"

After having been immersed in the woman suffrage movement for at least 30 years, having seen the dedicated work of so many other women like herself, and having realized that emancipation would soon be theirs, Carrie Chapman Catt by 1919 had formulated her idea for the future of woman's place in the American political arena. She did not want to see "a monument built of marble" erected to the memory of herself and the millions of other women who had fought the long fight. She wanted there to be "the most natural, the most appropriate and the most patriotic memorial that could be suggested - a League of Women Voters" (917).

It was with this memorial in mind that on March 24, 1919, Catt, the president of NAWSA, took the dais at the NAWSA Victory Convention and called for the establishment of this new organization. The women had arrived at the convention knowing that their work for suffrage was

winding down. It is reasonable to expect that those women who had worked for many years for the passage of the 19th Amendment were relieved that they could now contemplate rest. Women like Catt and others who had more recently joined the movement wanted to get on with the work of learning how to vote and seeing how much change within the political world they could effect. While Catt discussed political participation and non-partisanship, her comments on citizen education dominated the speech; that theme permeated the other two subjects.

At the time this speech was made, the House of Representatives had passed the 19th Amendment. This left the Senate to pass it and the states to ratify the Amendment. Catt challenged the NAWSA members to discard their organization's single purpose (woman suffrage) and unite to address the many "more great issues [which] are pressing for attention" (voting and education) (918). In other words the women were to evolve to another, higher level on the spiral. The women who had already won suffrage in individual states were asked to stand with those who had not achieved emancipation, thereby creating a cohesive stance on political participation.

The purpose of this speech was to marshall the forces of the suffragists to finish the fight for emancipation. They and their predecessors had worked for over 70 years to achieve that goal, and they were tired. The language in the speech indicates that Catt was calling the women to action, to begin "a new crusade" (921). They needed to remain vigilant during these last months until enough states had ratified the amendment to make it a law. They needed to remain

mobilized so that they could "move out of the House of Prejudice and into the House of Freedom not later than 1921" (918). That the women did. As would be expected, Catt's patriotism was evident as she said, "I believe in my America, I believe in her ideals, her common sense, her responsiveness to duty" (921).

Catt briefly addressed the two values of political participation and non-partisanship; the theme of citizen education is evident throughout the speech. Since she was calling for the establishment of the League of Women Voters, these values had not developed into tensions for the League. Still, she observed some current tensions while developing her argument to incorporate these values into the new organization.

I will first explain her position on education. As a Progressive Catt was most interested in broadening people's knowledge through education, and that subject also set the tone for her other topics. It is obvious from reading this speech that Catt valued a basic education for all people who would be citizens. This basic education would not only cover the 3 R's, it would also make a person familiar with the tenets of democracy, American history, the American values and lifestyle, and, especially, the responsibility of the citizen within a democracy (Fowler 1986).

Her target in the crusade she asked the women to join was ignorance, "the world's oldest enemy" (921). Catt examined the issue of education from two main angles: education for the voter (citizen education) and literacy. She first addressed the fact that the majority

of these women who were now going to vote were not trained in the ways of political participation or the mechanics of voting. Secondly, she described examples of the problems the military and the public had because of a lack of literacy. Because women had not been encouraged, even allowed, to get a public education until late in the 1800's, literacy education was a major factor in her campaign. The first task of this project was to teach English to non-English speakers and to teach literacy to Americans who could not read or write. She was appalled at the widespread illiteracy in the United States and at its effect on American citizens. For example, she described how 2,500,000 farmers could not read the Agriculture Department bulletins sent to educate them about farming and how illiterate housewives who, hearing the rumor that the Government was going to confiscate the canned goods they had put up, were willing to give them to thieves posing as Government inspectors. This ignorance was anathema to Catt.

Catt's concern was that all citizens receive a general education so they would be literate and able to read about the ballot issues, thus becoming political participants. In response, the members of the League quickly began teaching literacy. This literacy work apparently stopped soon thereafter, and I found no reference to literacy in the subsequent Presidents' Annual Addresses which I analyzed. The members believed that the adults who needed and wanted literacy training had received it. Unfortunately, the problem of illiterate adults was not solved in the 1920's, and we still see an inordinately large percentage of illiteracy in our population today.

Catt also believed that English should be the national language and that there should be an educational requirement for voting (921). I infer that this suggestion resulted not as much from women's lack of education as it did from the lack of education of immigrants.

The crux of her argument for education of the voter in this speech really lay with her idea of teaching people about American ways, the Americanization of the immigrant. Catt had often verbalized her concern with the large numbers of immigrants who entered the United States around the turn of the century. Catt was disturbed by this fact because men, who had no understanding of American values or the democratic process, were allowed to vote, sometimes paid to vote, within a short time of their arrival. That incensed Catt because the suffragists had spent over 50 years trying to be emancipated, had spent their lives here, and were denied the vote--because they were women:

Many an American woman with Revolutionary blood in her veins, born on American soil, educated in American schools, familiar with American history and ideals, has seen the process by which her state has denied to her a voice in her own Government [because of] the votes of men born in other lands, unable to speak our language, unable to read their ballots, but automatically enfranchised when the nation extends its certificate of naturalization (919).

She pointed out that American women had toiled for over half a century "to lift them[selves] up to political equality with men who cannot speak our language and who cannot read their ballots" (921). It is for that reason that Catt was adamant that there be established schools which would not only teach citizenship but also literacy to Americans and immigrants alike.

We must not forget that Carrie Chapman Catt's life work was devoted to working for woman's emancipation because she believed that American women would assist the democratic political process. She maintained that women born in the United States had been raised with American values and understood what it meant to be an American. Therefore, when they were granted the vote, they would not have to be "taught" American values, just the process to put those values into practice. On the other hand, men and women were arriving daily into the United States from Eastern and Southern Europe, from nations which did not have the democratic traditions of the United States.

Catt addressed the topic of political participation primarily to the suffragists. She stated that "the world expects the millions of women voters and near-voters to take their appropriate place in the political work, to have opinions on the great questions of the day" (917). Still, political participation by all citizens was the underlying theme throughout. All citizens--American men, American women, and immigrants--deserved the right to vote in due time. To Catt that due time was when they understood the American democratic political process.

Throughout her speeches I "hear" Catt calling for universal, active citizen participation in politics. There seems to be no option in her mind for people choosing to opt out of participation. Even her argument against immigrants getting the vote was not against their getting the vote per se but against their getting it before American women did. It was the statement of a woman who was frustrated, angry, and embarrassed

that the Congress would on the one hand block emancipation for American women who had worked so long for the right to vote, and, on the other hand, turn their backs on payments by big business to some immigrants, a practice which elevated the immigrant man to his own emancipation (Fowler 1986).

Catt's sentiment is indicative of one we have seen throughout history. The new arrivals must prove themselves to the satisfaction of those already holding claim to an area. This was true whether the new arrival was an immigrant from Southern Europe or a newly-arrived easterner on the American western frontier. We continue to see this attitude expressed today against the large numbers of illegal aliens arriving in California. Another underlying emotion is that we each can be more charitable to others when our needs and wants have been satisfied. Indeed, after suffrage was granted, Catt called for no more animosity or discrimination toward immigrants (Fowler 1986).

Carrie Chapman Catt's comments about non-partisanship were more precise than those for political participation. She called for "a league that shall be nonpartisan and nonsectarian in character" (917). She was "impatient of [the negative aspects of] narrow partisanship" (918). She envisioned people working together without the onus of political party positions so that they could progress through the evolutionary spiral.

Catt discussed at length her observation that there was evident in the United States Senate and in the commercial world a minor group bent on using dubious actions to stop progressive proposals. This group,

commonly called the Anti-Suffragists, reacted negatively against woman suffrage and against the League of Nations. Representatives of the brewing, cotton, and railroad interests organized schemes which were counter productive to the emancipation of women. They not only paid for and controlled the votes of foreign-born voters, they also supported reactionary candidates who would all agree to vote against woman suffrage. In the Western United States, particularly, the brewers were most interested in curtailing the women's right to vote because they feared that the women would vote in masses for Prohibition (Fowler 1986). The same scenario was played out in the south by the cotton industry and in the northeast by the textile manufacturers. The latter group was afraid that emancipated women would vote against the poor working conditions of women and children. Their fear proved to be correct. In Illinois in 1912 the Suffrage vote passed before the Prohibition vote, so the women were able to vote in that election. Prohibition won. Representatives of the liquor industry ranted and raved in the press against the women who had "closed more than a thousand saloons" (Catt and Shuler 1970, 192). According to Catt's figures, this Anti-Suffrage campaign added 25 years to the time the women fought for emancipation.

With her speech, "The Nation Calls," Carrie Chapman Catt established her values for a League of Women Voters: political participation, non-partisanship, and citizen education. Clearly, citizen education was the overriding concern in 1919. She described a nation which could suffer severe danger if its people were not educated

in not only the basic subjects but also the American democratic way. The fact that one would be an active citizen and participate in the politics of one's community was assumed. I never believed she thought there was room for choice, nor would such a stance be expected from a woman so involved with working to get the vote for women so they could participate. Catt deliberately laid out her view that this organization needed to be non-partisan. While she did not discuss non-partisanship as much here as she would in a speech eleven months later at the last NAWSA and the first LWV convention, she remained adamantly in favor of non-partisanship.

Catt succeeded in delivering many of the NAWSA members to the League of Women Voters so that they could "finish the fight." When Catt declined the Presidency of the League, a position she had never wanted, Maud Wood Park was elected. She would be responsible for initiating the values of Catt and setting the tone for the new organization.

With this speech and with the subsequent actions by the NAWSA members in 1920, the League was born, paving the way for the work of its first president, Maud Wood Park.

Maud Wood Park, President of the LWV, 1920-1924

Less than a year after Catt presented "The Nation Calls," NAWSA ceased to be active, and the League of Women Voters was formed. Its first president was Catt's friend, Maud Wood Park, who served from 1920-1924. Park was born and raised in New England and lived most of her life there. It was during her college years at Radcliffe that she was first exposed to the suffrage movement. While at school she joined the

Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association, and in 1901 she and a friend formed a college woman's suffrage group. Having enjoyed being a debater in college, she used those skills to make speeches to college women's groups where she explained the importance of the suffrage movement.

Park's suffrage work on the national level began in 1917. After completing her college education and having a short teaching career, she was invited by Carrie Chapman Catt first to participate in and then to lead the Front Door Lobby in the nation's capital (Fowler 1986). The name, the Front Door Lobby, was given to the Congressional Committee of NAWSA in Washington as a "half-humorous, half-kindly name" generated by the press-gallery men. It referred to the fact that these women "never used backstairs methods" (Park 1960, 1). Its purpose was to coordinate NAWSA spokeswomen as observers in the sessions of the House of Representatives and the Senate and as lobbyists of the members of Congress for woman suffrage. This was a new venture for these women who were emerging from the private sphere and learning the ways of the public sphere.

Since the halls of Congress were new territory where these women were not always welcome, the first item of protocol for them was to make their visits to the Congressmen in pairs. This was desirable for two reasons. It would first dispel the idea that these were the "siren" type of women persuaders, and secondly it would mean that a statement made by a Congressman before two delegates would be more difficult to repudiate than one made in front of just one woman (Park 1960, 20).

Maud Wood Park had the responsibility of coordinating all of the visits of the NAWSA representatives. She herself spent many days and evenings in the Senate and House buildings, sometimes into the early morning hours, listening to the floor debates and observing the proceedings. This experience in organizing a group of people and getting to know the inner workings of Congress proved beneficial when she became president of the League. Observing elected officials at work continues today throughout the United States as local League members observe the proceedings of city councils, county boards of supervisors, and school boards.

Catt was pleased with the selection of her friend Park as the first President of the League because she appreciated Park's talents and experience with the college suffrage groups as well as the Front Door Lobby (Fowler 1986). As she introduced Park at the Second Annual Convention in 1921, Catt said, "We have the right woman in the right place . . . She will never disappoint you; she will never be unfair; she will never be hasty . . . she will always be the same calm, loving, fair-minded, judicious person that she has been every minute of the last three hundred sixty-five days" (1921, 632-3). The stability of Park's character as well as her having the founder's approval indicated an expected continuity of values within this fledgling organization. Catt was also pleased with Park's selection because she wanted to see many new faces leading this new organization rather than having the League rely on the same suffrage leaders from NAWSA.

Maud Wood Park was president of the League from 1920 through the national convention in 1924. During that time she spoke at each of those conventions. I have reviewed her Annual Addresses from the 1921 convention in Cleveland, Ohio; the 1922 convention in Baltimore, Maryland; and the 1923 convention in Des Moines, Iowa. I was not able to locate the Annual Address at the 1924 convention in the convention proceedings. Unless otherwise noted, all citings in the remainder of this chapter refer to the Annual Addresses of Maud Wood Park. The year of the address and the page number in the convention proceedings will be noted.

Park's term spanned the first four years of the League, the Genesis stage. It was the time for the development of the organization's system of proceedings as well as a time for women to channel their enthusiasm of victory into the work of progress. She described the women voters as having "the enthusiasm of youth" because they were embarking on a new venture based on the work of "three generations of women [who] have toiled and suffered and sacrificed in order that we might have the opportunity [of a new beginning] that is ours today" (1921, 637).

External Influences: American Society

Before looking at how Park discussed the three values, we should get a brief overview of what events were occurring during her term both in American society and within the League.

The years immediately following the granting of suffrage to American women was a time of opportunity and change for many within the American society. The country was no longer suffering at the hands of

"the supreme inefficiency of world-wide war" (1922, 99). The economy was more stable after the hard financial times of the prior decade. A new sense of freedom for women was evident as their style of dress radically changed. Women threw away their long, burdensome dresses just as they discarded "the old suffrage movement" (1921, 632) for the freer, simpler, more youthful clothing indicative of their new lives. The women in their role as voters were experiencing "the first flush of youth" (1922, 196).

In 1920 when women got the vote in the United States, when the League was formed, and when Park became president of that organization, the reputation of American politics was suffering because of its corruption. Women were discouraged from participating in such a "corrupt" practice as voting by people who still judged women the moral sex and "pure" (Campbell 1989, 181). It is interesting to note that in spite of such advice many women ran for office in the 1920's; it is not unexpected that few of them were elected (Catt and Shuler 1970). This presumption of defeat caused a demoralizing effect on the suffragists because they realized that they had not been able to effect the changes they had wanted to make in the time span they had expected once they got the vote (Elshtain 1981).

Many women simply chose not to vote for women. There was no "female vote" even though this had been a major fear of politicians (Campbell 1989; Ware 1982). As a result, women realized that they first needed to raise their consciousness "to make political participation a meaningful engagement for so severely subordinated a class" (Young 1989,

2). In turn, the League realized that in spite of Catt's encouragement, just gaining knowledge about how the political system works and how to participate in it does not preclude that one will actively participate (Sapiro 1983). This situation allowed the League to gain strength because of its concentration on political participation resulting from civic education, especially for women. Women created power in numbers as they worked together on issues they understood.

It needs to be mentioned here that the League did not single-handedly take on the task of educating women about their obligations in this new arena of politics. The League expanded its citizenship schools established by Catt at the 1919 NAWSA Convention to teach women the process of being a citizen; these women were expected to return home and teach other women. The print media also took up the matter of civic education. Several magazines ran columns, such as "Good Citizenship" in Woman's Home Companion. These articles served to bridge the woman's private sphere and her role as mother with her new public sphere role of voter. The women were told that by participating in politics and voting they could make their children better citizens (Gruberg 1968).

Another organization created by women to aid them in their civic understanding was the League of Political Education, an organization formed by suffragists in New York before the 19th Amendment was passed (Overstreet and Overstreet 1938). Later, this organization evolved into the Town Hall lecture organization. Their speakers helped these women better understand their places in the political community.

The growth and acceptance of the League within the community was not universal. Political parties, particularly, objected to the League because they feared "the female bloc" would vote them out of office. The parties were also behind "hostile pressures" exerted on the League by business interests, such as the liquor, cotton, and meat industries (Catt 1920, 920). The women of the General Federation of Women's Clubs also objected to the League because they felt that they were already doing the work the League set out to do (Young 1989).

These women, or their predecessors, had worked for years to gain suffrage. After having the vote for awhile they surely must have been dismayed that there was still so much opposition to their voting. Inside the League the organization was adjusting to its new structure by having merged members of NAWSA with women who had not worked on the suffrage campaign.

Internal Influences: The League of Women Voters

One of the first areas of action for this new organization was national legislation. Because their lives had been so entrenched in the private sphere, League members were very aware of the needs of women and children, generally expressed in health and welfare issues. Therefore, the League became intensely active in gaining advances through legislation in these issues.

The infant organization concentrated on the passage of three specific items of legislation in its early years. This targeted legislation achieved varied levels of success. In 1921 Congress passed the Sheppard-Towner Act, a health care program which targeted prenatal

care, child care, and health education. By 1927 this legislation was killed through lobbying by the American Medical Association which resulted in barring any further appropriations from Congress (Gruberg 1968; Campbell 1989a). The second item of legislation, which was successfully enacted, was the Cable Act of 1922 which granted independent citizenship for married women. The third item of legislation was the Child Labor Amendment. Passed by Congress in 1924, it was not ratified by enough states, so it was defeated.

Although the League members experienced both the joy of winning and the sting of defeat through these successes and failures, they, more importantly, learned swift lessons in the workings of government. They were not defeated. Although some of the pieces of legislation they sponsored failed to become law, the women realized that was part of the political game. The work of the women in the League did not stop.

Another painful chapter for the League during Park's term of office was the "red-baiting" incident, "the curious propaganda that has been going across this country from one end to the other" (1923b, 138). One example of these red-baiting tactics was the Spider-Web Chart. A chart shaped like a spider's web supposedly showed the influences of communists within some women's groups in the United States (Campbell 1989a). Among those targeted were the Parent Teachers Association, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the League. Any group suspected of pacifist leanings was marked for their supposed Bolshevik influences on the workings of government. While these false allegations were

painful to the League, especially to the members targeted, they, also, did not stop the novice organization's work.

The importance of these incidents and items of legislation to the League is that they established the organization as a champion of women's and children's issues, as an organization which worked indefatigably to accomplish its goals, and as a group of women who did their homework. Unfortunately, the outcomes were disheartening at best and contributed to a temporary weakening of the women's enthusiasm.

A Review of the Annual Addresses

Although Maud Wood Park's experience in the Front Door Lobby had prepared her for the fluctuations in legislative action and outcome, it was up to her to muster all of the understanding and fortitude she had since she had the responsibility of setting the tone for the League in its formative years.

The Annual Addresses Maud Wood Park presented between 1921 and 1923 showed a lively appreciation for the new organization. Park approached the occasions of her delivering the addresses with concern for speaking but also with delight in being able to address the assembled women.

Park presented her first Presidential Address on April 13, 1921, at the Statler Hotel in Cleveland, Ohio; this was the Second National Convention of the National League of Women Voters. Her style was primarily narrative as Park told stories of her travels throughout the nation on League work during the prior year. This speech is full of ideals both in word and in plan and of simple experiences of the novice

organization. She is the leader guiding the members as they create this new organization.

In April, 1922, Park delivered a speech of lists. She talked about three convictions of faith which make up the cornerstone of the League, four summaries of League achievements within the past year, and six "essential requirements of good citizenship" (1922, 105-6). The latter included being informed about public issues and political parties, voting, obeying the laws, supporting the policies that the citizen approved of, respecting the rights of others, and regarding citizenship as a public trust (1922, 105-6).

Park seemed more comfortable addressing the delegates as their leader in 1923 than had been evidenced the prior year. By now the organization had existed for two years, and its activities were being more defined.

The 1923 speech creates a dilemma for analysis because there were two versions of the speech. One was in the convention proceedings and appeared to be the one Park supposedly presented to the delegates. The other one was printed in a booklet as a souvenir for the delegates. I analyzed them together because the souvenir speech had more information in it, but I preferred reading the copy from the convention proceedings since it evidenced her light, friendly, even humorous style. While this booklet of the League President's Annual Address was a fine souvenir for the delegates, its existence causes concern for textual historians. There are discrepancies between the delivered text and the printed text in 1923 not only in the manner of delivery but also in the substance.

At one point within the speech included in the convention proceedings there is a note that Mrs. Park then read her three-page prepared address. Therefore, I can not be certain that the texts I analyzed actually represent what she presented to the delegates at the convention.

By now the League had experienced success in some of its programs which was reported in the press. She spoke at length of these press comments in a jovial manner letting the delegates know how they were perceived by the public. The League had been called radical in some camps and reactionary in others, Republican in some towns and Democratic in others. Many people seemed to be trying to understand what this new organization represented. Other people chose to label the members as supporters of the Bolshevik Soviet Government.

Since the League was such a new organization, there was little success or failure for Park to report at the first few conventions. Understandably, she spent much of the first two Annual Addresses discussing the establishment of the League. In 1921 she commented that "starting with empty coffers funds have been collected so that headquarters have been furnished, delegations sent to the two national political conventions; . . . leagues organized in every state in the union" (1).

Value Tensions within the Speeches

The values I identified from "The Nation Calls" were political participation and non-partisanship. Now that the League has been established, we can look to see how Park discussed the values and

identify the tensions which would be natural results of them. Will the League presidents continue to expect and to encourage citizens to participate actively in the politics of their communities, or will the presidents accept the idea of American individualism? Will the League maintain its policy of non-partisanship so adamantly stressed by its founder, Carrie Chapman Catt? These are the issues I will look for and address.

It is important to remember that the tensions from the values will not necessarily surface immediately or at the same time within the organization.

Political Participation

As Maud Wood Park progressed through her term, she adjusted her position on political participation from the idealistic approach she had in the first year to a more pragmatic idea later. Park believed that people were interested in "good citizenship"; this is a term she used often. For example, in 1922 she referred to the work of the League as bringing as many people as possible "to assume the full duties of good citizenship" (105). She later mentioned that "good citizenship [means that] . . . we should be willing to learn from our mistakes" (106). At a later point in the same Address Park discussed the voters in the last national election as "functioning as good citizens" while acknowledging that there were other organizations in the United States "devoting themselves to the study of special problems in good citizenship" (108). Good citizenship's partner phrase is "good government," a term we will see more often in the 1950's in the League. There is a reciprocal

relationship here; good citizens make good government, and good government encourages good citizens.

By 1923 Park had changed the term "good citizenship" to "efficient citizenship." Efficiency within the League's parlance refers to work done in the simplest and most direct manner possible using the most efficient forms of energy, but most especially human energy. Efficient citizenship seemed to refer to voters being able to perform their civic duties with little disruption--such as being able to find the voting location easily, knowing how to operate the voting machine, and "obedience to the law whether he likes it or not" (1923a, 8). In this Address she summarized the "essentials of useful citizenship [as] . . . good will, clear ideas, and energy" (1923a, 3). She voiced her view on this subject when she said that "if government by the people is to mean efficient government, the average citizen must be interested enough to vote at all elections with the best information that he or she can get" (1923a, 4). Similarly, the Citizenship Schools which the League was running were to include "the institutes on efficiency in government arranged for the discussion of admitted defects in governmental machinery and proposed remedies" (1923a, 5).

The League's initial purpose was "to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government" and to "take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest" (Young 1989, 3). Interestingly enough, the leaders listed the original statement of the League's purposes in February of 1919 as "fostering education in citizenship and of supporting important

legislation" (Harper 1970, 691). Active citizen participation was not listed. From reading the minutes of some of the League meetings and the writings of League leaders, I sensed that this omission was made because the leaders assumed that active political participation would naturally follow a citizen's political education.

Maud Wood Park concentrated in her Annual Addresses on the subject of political participation. Political participation is any activity in which the citizens participate that relates to the working of their community. The most common act of participation is voting, but participation has many faces. It may occur when parents want a stop sign installed next to the local elementary school. It is evident when the citizens react (positively or negatively) when the garbage collection or the bus schedules are changed. Park wove her comments on political participation throughout her addresses, and these comments centered around four categories: voting, government by the people, political parties, and League contributions to American society.

Park solidified any seemingly preferential references to Civic Republicanism by League presidents when she made her first reference to individualism, although not mentioning it by name. She explained that the most serious opposition the League would find was in "the colossal inertia of large numbers of persons. If this nation ever faces final disaster, it will be because what is everybody's business is nobody's business except the self seekers" (1922, 110-1). This is a direct reference to the threat of individualism in the form of not taking the whole society into account and just concentrating on what one wants

alone by abnegation of community. This concept revisits the reference Catt made in "The Nation Calls" to "consequent tempering interference [to progress in the Republic] of those whose only motive is private gain" (1919, 920).

Voting was the most obvious act of political participation in the early years of the League. Park indicated her strong belief in the importance of a citizen's need to participate by voting through her description of the purpose of the League as aiding "women in making intelligent and helpful use of their votes" (1923a, 3). Park expressed her concern about the small number of people voting and stated that the League "can do no more important piece of work . . . than to set a goal of reasonable increase in the percentage of votes cast" (1923a, 11). In this statement she addressed her main priority for this type of League work.

She also addressed the fact that the small numbers of voters were a continual disappointment to the League in the beginning. Park's frustration indicated an obvious tension developing between political participation and individualism. She pointed out that in the 1920 presidential election only 49 per cent of possible voters did so, and in 1922 only 39 per cent voted. "Fewer than half the citizens of the country did their duty. . . . Obviously, then, we are not in truth a democracy. We are not ruled by the majority. We are ruled by the minority" (1923a, 10). She seemed greatly disgruntled which would be understandable after she and other suffragists had worked so hard for the right to vote. Nevertheless, the idea that a citizen has a

responsibility to participate by voting is very strong here. The fact that 51% in 1920 and 61% in 1922 of the eligible voters did not go to the polls indicates a strong faction of apathetic individualism within the society. Already the League was frustrated by the lack of citizen political participation.

It was in 1923 in the Articles of Incorporation that the League declared as its purpose "to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government; to render such other services in the interest of education in citizenship as may be possible" (LWVUS 1992, 1). If my prior opinion about the omission of political participation as an issue is correct, then the inclusion could have been made because the newly-enfranchised American women had not been voting in the large numbers the Suffrage leaders had expected.

Government by the people was another category of political participation. Park argued that citizens need to learn by doing, and "there is no better way of learning about the existing practices of government than by working in a legislative body for an urgently needed measure" (1922, 100). Our country needed people who were "willing and able to form their own opinions and to support them with [action]" (1922, 108). Her concept of the "essentials of useful citizenship" was summed up in the statement on the cover of the 1923 convention program, "The most powerful factors in the world today are clear ideas in the minds of energetic men and women of good will" (1923a, 2). "One fact we must never lose sight of, and that is that in the last analysis every important public question is, or should be, decided by votes" (1923a,

10); this is a direct reference to government by the people and repeats the call of Carrie Chapman Catt:

Whenever there is a cause of justice, of common national welfare, of national progress, here in America we 'tell it to the people,' and from mountain and valley, city and farm, this great middle class rallies to its support." (1919, 920).

Park described her perception of the faith of these newly-enfranchised women who have "at this time a peculiar opportunity given by their recent enfranchisement to help in the full realization" of creating a "political system clean, efficient and just" (1923b, 94). As she made this faith the "cornerstone" of the League she pointed out that there are three convictions necessary to complete it. The first conviction expressed the idea that whatever the majority of the intelligent and "actively interested" voters decide is to the common good. This last statement indicates that by now she realized that not all people would vote. She does not reflect the optimism of Catt that women would consider it "natural" to flock to the voting booth to show their gratitude for enfranchisement. Park stated that "anything and every thing that tends to arouse and sustain public interest in public affairs, to bring about intelligent consideration of public questions, and to stimulate activity in our common concerns is so much to the good" (1922, 94).

Later she expressed her opinion that if the League members assume that their major work is not following issues but "the awakening of the average citizen to active interest in the duties of citizenship" (107), then they can expect to see an exponential growth in the numbers of

active citizens. As women become more knowledgeable and active in political affairs and affect the involvement of their husbands and children, the numbers would necessarily increase. Actively seeking to overcome individualism, Park considered that if 15 million of the estimated 25 million "potential women voters" (in 1922) become active and "enlist the interest and help" of 10 million men voters, all of whom would function as "good citizens," they would nearly equal the number of voters (26.75 million) in the prior election. These good citizens would be the majority, and "once a majority of the voters perform the full duties of citizenship, we need have no anxiety about the result" (1922, 107-8). Perhaps this statement is rather naive, but it expresses the fervor with which the early leaders felt their mission and the strong belief in the rightness of their cause. Throughout all of this is the theme of the League existing to be "a training school for women citizens" (1923, 136).

It was Park who described the League as an "every woman's organization" (1923a, 16). The importance of this term would not be identified until the 1946 convention when it was actually the individual members who became important and worked directly with the national League. Prior to that time all work had gone through the state League. (Young 1989).

By mentioning the political parties and the poor reception the women received, Park was identifying a major problem for the women. They had come from "the private sphere" to "the public sphere" of the men and had been turned away. Park described the differences between

men and women in the political realm at that time. She explained that men have been working on matters in the "economic world," the public sphere which created "the viewpoint of business interest" (1922, 96-7). That was not enough. Business interests were not sufficient to create legislation for all citizens in this country. "Women by virtue of their distinctive experience in life have a tendency to see affairs in government in such terms as education, public health, public morals . . . as social welfare" (1922, 97). We are still hearing this argument today as large numbers of women earn positions of power in government and the press deliberates on the "feminine" viewpoints relative to hearth and home about political issues.

Park often spoke about the League's contributions to American society. In 1922 she reported to the convention delegates of her trips to many of the League chapters during the previous year. She embroidered her story with a description of "a great tapestry . . . with vast numbers of figures." The theme of this tapestry is "a new crusade - a crusade of women" (93) which reinforced the rhetoric in Catt's call for the formation of the League.

The League had also begun immediately to work on its contribution to world society. The League quickly branched out, offering help to and seeking advice from women of other nations about a woman's place in a democracy and following the admonition of Carrie Chapman Catt to make suffrage possible for women throughout the world (Catt 1919). In 1922 the League of Women Voters sponsored a Pan American Conference of Women featuring government appointed women representatives from twenty-two

Latin American nations. Since there were few organizations for women in Latin America, the League sponsored this meeting to assess and decide its future work in the international scene (Clevenger 1955).

As its first President, Maud Wood Park effectively set up the process of political participation within the League of Women Voters. From an enthusiastic, even at times naive, beginning in her 1921 Address she advanced through the development of good citizenship in 1922 to the efficient citizen of 1923. Throughout her term she maintained an underlying reference to the civic republican idea that it is the citizen's responsibility to be an active, participating citizen.

As the League reacted to the poor showing of voters in 1920 and 1922, Park became more specific with what those responsibilities were, such as in her plan in 1923 for the Campaign for Efficient Citizenship, a system which required "all the available energy we can muster, all the clear ideas we can bring to bear upon it and all the good will we can feel and foster" (1923a, 9). The underlying reason for this rhetoric about political partisanship can be summed up in Parks' statement in 1922 that "inertia is a thoroughly uninteresting opponent" (1923b, 111).

Taken together, these actions allowed her to establish the League as a leader not only in the fight for women to be fully enfranchised but also in the fight for active political participation by all citizens. She took the zeal of the League members and channeled the energy into avenues of action.

The second value of Carrie Chapman Catt which developed into a tension for the League of Women Voters was non-partisanship.

Non-Partisanship

The tension of partisanship versus non-partisanship was intense during Park's term of office because the women were juggling these two ideas. There were camps on both sides. Catt had directed the women to go and join the main political parties because that was where the power was; if women were to have any of that power, they needed to be in the parties. Many went and joined the Democratic, the Republican, or one of the other political parties. They shortly found out that they were not welcome in the centers of power and were relegated to the fringes doing clerical work.

On the other hand Park championed the "all-partisan" League approach where:

women of all parties have an opportunity to come together in an organization devoted solely to the interests of women as voters . . . [which] are far more likely to be attained if a program is outlined by an inclusive group of women than if left solely to the initiative of political parties (1921b, 1).

Although Park herself had appeared at national political conventions in the preceding year, here she repositioned Catt's directions and called for a stricter reading of the non-partisanship policy. The tension arose because Catt had not made a distinction between whether members and/or board members should be participating in party politics. Throughout League history the various Boards of Directors have tried different approaches to which of their members may actively participate in party politics. Today it is customary for the local or the state President and the Voters Service Chair to be denied

by their By-Laws to participate in any political party event. In the early 1920's many members as well as local and state board members actively worked in one of the party's campaigns. In early years the League even defined its issues and presented its own plank to each of the Presidential Nominating Conventions (Young 1989), and both major political parties endorsed the full platform of the League (Sapiro 1983). Other officers and board members believed that they should remain separate from partisan politics.

Park seldom mentioned this topic in her Addresses as if the practice was accepted at that time. In 1921 she stated her opinion that the League, by working within the political parties, was providing a service to them for their benefit. "To the political parties, whether they realize it or not, the League is a source of benefit because we put them upon their metal to defend principles with facts which bear the test of intelligent examination" (1921b, 1).

It was just before this convention that the League polled some congressmen on their opinions of this new organization; the respondents were mostly suffrage supporters. They generally expressed satisfaction in having these "'nonpartisan women' supporting them," but "Utah's Reed Smoot thought the difficulties in the path of a nonpartisan but avowedly political organization almost insuperable" (Young 1989, 55-6).

Although Park had not addressed it as such, this friction between a policy of non-partisanship and one of partisanship remained during her term; it was addressed as a major policy decision during the next president's term.

In the late 1920's President Belle Sherwin's staff and directors presented a report to the League which indicated that partisanship within the League was "disruptive." It had created "misunderstandings that might be hard to correct [within the public] and [gave] rise to skepticism regarding the Leagues' sincerity" (Young 1989, 94). The result was that "the committee recommended that the League reaffirm its policy of non-partisanship, and reconcile itself to coexistence with the parties" (Young 1989, 95), thereby closing the door for the League's active participation at political party conventions.

The Theme of Citizen Education

Education of the people was another important value of Catt; it has been maintained as a theme throughout League history. In her speeches Park spoke to the issue of education, gradually increasing her recognition of the importance of education. Her ideas of education were usually couched in the discussion of participation as she explained that members need to be educated in order to be able to participate. Park placed the notion of citizen education as less important than political participation. When:

speaking about the citizenship schools which the League has arranged, . . . the courses of study in the principles and practices of government . . . the all partisan pre-election meetings . . . these are but details to meet the requirements of that idea of ours about the primary duties of citizenship (1923a, 5-6).

In other words, civic education was the method used to achieve the goal of political participation.

I found it surprising that in her first Annual Address, in 1921, she referred directly only once to education, and that was in a general comment about education of young children, not about a citizen's political education.

That situation changed quickly, and by 1923 Park had placed citizen education at the forefront of the convention. The motto of the 1922 convention was "The education of citizens is the safeguard of a republic" (91). She mentioned the citizenship schools for women (96) and addressed the fact that 20 million women had recently been enfranchised and were ready to be trained "to the activities of good citizenship" because they also "realize that they have much to learn" (94-5). This statement revisits the idea that Susan B. Anthony expressed many times throughout the suffrage movement--that the women needed to have study before action. I would think that Park's increasing interest in education as a means to the end of political participation developed as she realized that not as many women were going to the polls as had been anticipated; therefore, she saw the need for more far-reaching civic knowledge by the voters as an aid to developing their political participation. Park said in 1922 that:

No voter is properly trained for citizenship who lacks comprehension of measures in behalf of child welfare, education, [social issues], . . . No citizen is trained in citizenship who is not eager to promote every honorable means whereby abiding peace may be secured (99-100).

I need to point out that, except for the citizenship schools, education as discussed by Park was for the League's own members through its own internal publications (1922, 101). Evidence was provided when

Park once again addressed the most important topic of peace, "the members of the League of Women Voters should take pains to inform themselves upon these important issues in order intelligently to support the methods that seem wisest" (1923a, 9).

Still, it was not just for themselves that the League members proceeded with studies and publications. They felt an obligation to pass this information on to the public. In the League this practice is called Voters Service, and it is strictly non-partisan. Park called for "a major get-out-the-vote campaign for the 1924 elections, urging a thorough grass-roots survey of nonvoters as well as outlining proposals for what was to become Voters Service, perhaps the League's best-known activity" (Young 1989, 74). Voters Service "was to offer a greater field for direct political participation than any other aspect of the League's work" (Young 1989, 74).

In the 1921 report Park concentrated on the other part of citizen education, action, as she delineated ways that the League had worked with Congress for passage of bills such as the Sheppard-Towner Bill, but she seldom commented on how the League had generated political participation within the community. Perhaps this was another item considered in committee reports. On the other hand it represents the very essence of leadership. The leader has the responsibility to uncover conflicts between values and practices within the organization. Many times these values need realigning, and it is the responsibility of the president to initiate such adjustments (Burns 1978). The Annual

Address is the perfect place to do that, but Park did not attempt to address local action.

Summary

Maud Wood Park was the ideal person to be the first president of the League of Women Voters. Her experience in Congressional and legislative matters was used to form a background for the serious work of this organization. Her experience organizing the college suffrage group and pulling together the Woman's Joint Congressional Committee stood her in good stead to oversee the organization of the League. Park's job was to launch this organization which she did with enthusiasm and knowledge, qualities needed in the Genesis Stage.

Park understood that political participation was the primary job facing this new organization. From lauding the work of local Leagues on their new crusade to stressing good citizenship and later good government, she addressed this issue. Park tempered Catt's idea of emancipated women "naturally" participating in politics with the fact that people had to know specifically what was expected of them before they would participate. She did not reduce the civic republican's demand for a citizen accepting not only the right but also the responsibility of citizenship; she acknowledged the League's greater responsibility in making that responsibility known to the citizen. This idea of responsibility was reiterated in her discussion of citizen education, appealing for education as a means to an end.

Park repositioned Catt's call for the League's work in citizen education to be completed within five years. Park had overseen League

operations during four of those first five years and realized that the project would take much longer. Her lack of emphasis on direct education of citizens but her concern for education of the League members suggests that she was following Catt's dictate for the Citizenship Schools and setting a precedent for later League work. The members were to learn and then go teach in their local communities. This is a pattern we will see with later presidents who expect that the direct education of the public is through the local Leagues.

Non-partisanship was surprisingly not often considered in the Annual Addresses of Park. In reality, she remained a levelling force between two strongly opposed camps. Park, in turn, cleared the way for the next League President, Belle Sherwin, to deal with defining the terms of political non-partisanship .

Belle Sherwin inherited a League which had both won and lost legislative battles but which, through that process, was positioned as an organization of women who thoroughly studied the issues. Sherwin also inherited an organization which called for active political participation by all citizens but had not resolved its position on its own members' participation in political activities. On the other hand, the League now pragmatically understood that it had taken on a monumental task with regard to advocating a politically educated electorate.

Park's Addresses taken in toto show that she developed over the years a more sophisticated and serious manner of reporting to the national conventions her ideas about this League of Women Voters. As we

shall see with the other two Presidents, the pattern remained that they should revisit the past, explain the present, and present their plans for the future, the scenario identified by Campbell and Jamieson for the Annual Address. Park quickly took hold of her responsibilities as President of this organization and placed her own stamp on its operation. We shall see that the other two Presidents continued this process, adding their own imprint in the development of the office of the President of the League of Women Voters.

Chapter 3

The Final Step from the Private to the Public Sphere:

The Annual Addresses of Percy Maxim Lee

In the years between the end of Maud Wood Park's term of office (1920-24) and the beginning of Percy Maxim Lee's term in 1950, the League underwent several significant changes. After establishing its non-partisanship policy in Belle Sherwin's term (1924-34), the League entered a time of relative stasis. There were only three presidents between 1924 and 1950. Each served between six and ten years, allowing the others to be part of the National Board and work closely together. Therefore, they collectively evidenced harmony and continuity. The League's Statement of Purpose would not change until 1946.

In the intervening years the League's achievements in national issues centered on civil service reform, the development of the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the formation of the United Nations. Party patronage was the element of civil service which the League fought hardest to eliminate. Following the theory behind Catt's own call for non-partisanship that we should work together without benefit of party intrusion, the League called for civil service jobs to be secured through the merit of the worker (Young 1989). After facing disappointment in its early years because of the failure of the League of Nations, the LWV mounted its "most successful community based contribution to public understanding of a major issue," the United Nations (Young 1989, 1941). Recalling the successful Citizenship

Schools of the 1920's, the League in 1944 instituted a nationwide training program for 5,000 League members called the "Take It to the People" campaign (Young 1989). Once again the members were trained to take the League message to the citizens in their local communities. As part of the success of this campaign, the State Department began receiving about 1,000 letters a day in support of the United Nations; 90 per cent of them were from League members (Young 1989).

Although the members could present a united front to the nation, at times they experienced confusion within the organization. Action taken at the 1944 Convention had caused "internal disorganization," so it was at the 1946 Convention that the League acted to adjust its policies and operations. The organization was finding that it was now possible that "its original methods of implementing its founding goals no longer applied" (Young 1989, 137).

The 1923 Statement of Purpose remained in place until 1946, signifying that the language used met the needs of the League as it further developed the form and the function of the organization. In other words, there was apparently an existing equilibrium between the League's values and outside challenges which did not need adjusting.

Young (1989) pointed out that the convention of 1946 was a turning-point for the organization. The name was changed from the National League of Women Voters, which had been used since the organization was formed in 1919 and which indicated a collection of state Leagues, to The League of Women Voters of the United States signifying a "fulfillment [of the] evolutionary trends set in motion

during the Sherwin era toward a concept of individual responsibility" (Young 1989, 147). Sherwin had called for an organization where each member joined the national League, cutting out the bureaucracy and the "middleman" represented by the state Leagues. This change began the process of streamlining the League's operation.

As a result of the League's instituting an every-member canvas after the 1944 convention, the members rewrote the main purpose of the League. While retaining the section on "promoting political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government", the purpose statement deleted any reference to political education of those citizens. The board concluded that the people who were enfranchised as a group in 1920--the women of the United States--had been politically educated, and the League no longer needed to concentrate on that part of its original program (Young 1989).

This statement appears to me to be as naive as the one Catt made in 1920 that the League would accomplish its goals within five years (919). Yes, we can expect that by 1946 the women who originally got the vote in 1920 would have been politically educated. The statement does not show insight into the fact that not only young people just reaching voting age but also war brides and other immigrants (including, for example, my mother) who arrived here after the end of World War II would need to be educated in the political process of the United States. Many of them would shortly be participating in the naturalization process.

Although Anna Lord Strauss, the President of the League in 1946, would help implement many of the changes, the person who would accept

the real challenge to carry on these directives would be the fifth President of the League of Women Voters of the United States, Percy Maxim Lee (1950-1958). Lee was only the second post-suffrage president of the League; Strauss had been the first. As such, they had few ties with the Woman Suffrage Movement. Since most of the members now were also post-suffragists, Lee was responsible for leading them in making that final step from the private sphere into this exciting public sphere.

Lee had learned about the League from her mother, Mrs. Hiram Percy Maxim who had been a suffragist and an early League member. Percy M. Lee joined the League of Women Voters in Farmington, Connecticut in 1934. Between 1938 and 1942 she served as the local League's president; between 1941 and 1949 she was President of the Connecticut League of Women Voters. From 1944 she was also a member of the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of the United States. As she said in the Foreword to Young's book, "These years marked a watershed between the inherited suffrage organization and the modern League (1989, ix).

One sign of change was that Lee was the first commuter president of the organization. She maintained her home in Connecticut and spent two weeks a month in the national League office. In her first Annual Address in 1952 she described the effect this commuting had on her household which included her husband, four children, and an Irish maid:

The life of a non-resident President is not 100% a joyful one. . . . The only ones which have fallen by the wayside are a couple of dogs. The horse has had no exercise, the old setter is mournful beyond belief, and the new kittens

have been legion. The humans, curiously enough, seem to be bearing up quite well (1).

During her weeks in Washington, she stayed at the League apartment on P Street. Wishing to quell any member's idea that owning an apartment was an extravagant undertaking for the League, she pointed out that "P Street" was an unassuming basement apartment (1952, 1). The apartment had "a wholesome effect on members of the national board," who also stayed there, helping them "retain their essential contacts with domesticity while they struggle with world problems" (1952, 1). Her statement provided a clue that league board members were keeping one foot in the public sphere while maintaining the other in the private sphere.

Although Percy Lee did not attend college, choosing to marry early and raise her four children, she maintained a lifelong interest in education. She was appointed to the boards of several educational institutions and was a consultant to the Women's Archives at Radcliffe College. President Lee received four honorary degrees.

Lee was intensely interested in international relations. She was a member of the College Grants Advisory Committee of the Ford Foundation, a liaison group between the public and the Foreign Operations Administration in the mid-1950's, and the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund (CCCCMF, now called the Overseas Educational Fund International). In her Address in 1952 Lee described the CCCCCF, an organization established by the League in 1947 (the year Catt died), as a vehicle to carry on "Mrs. Catt's interests in education for

citizenship and in developing international understanding" (4). Its main purpose was to do research and educate the citizens in other countries about how democracy works.

Percy Maxim Lee began her first term 30 years after the League was formed; therefore, it is not unexpected that during her term we see the League's work changing. She addressed four national conventions; I have studied the Annual Address she presented at each one. On April 28, 1952, she delivered an Address titled, "State of the League, 1952" in Cincinnati, Ohio. "Report by the President" was delivered in Denver, Colorado on April 27, 1954. Two years later the LWVUS met in convention between April 30 and May 4, 1956, in Chicago, Illinois, and Percy Lee spoke on "Hugging a Delusion." Her final address as President of the League was made on April 21, 1958. Simply titled "Keynote Address," it was delivered in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Unless otherwise indicated, all citings in this chapter will refer to these Annual Addresses; the year and the page number will be indicated.

A large part of the change within the League discussed by Lee was operational. During her Addresses we begin to hear talk about the League's needing to clean out accumulated dead wood. Percy Lee was mostly concerned with making the League leaner and more efficient; otherwise, the League would get in its own way. For example, the League had developed a Platform (positions on issues) it could use to address and lobby governmental bodies. By 1952 the Platform had grown so unwieldy that she asked, "Do we go on accumulating items indefinitely; do we never delete so-called dead wood?" (5). She then suggested a

mandatory, periodic review of the Platform to cull out unused material. By the 1954 convention the Platform Committee recommended that the members reduce the issues in the Platform from 38 to eight, updating and streamlining the positions.

One position which would have far-reaching effects in the next two decades was the decision to delete the League's opposition to an Equal Rights Amendment which they had maintained since the 1920's. The League had outgrown its opposition to the ERA because its original concern for equitable and safe working conditions for women and children had largely been resolved. "The quiet abandonment of opposition to an equal rights amendment was to pave the way for the vigorous support given to the ERA proposal subsequently passed by Congress in 1972" (Young 1989, 159).

At the same time the League was experiencing tremendous growth which resulted in a greater diversity of ideas about issues and procedure for the organization. Since greater diversity usually results in more refinement of procedure so that we codify what is expected of all of the group, we can expect to see a streamlining of the League's procedures from the 1950's forward (Appleby 1962, 22).

The purpose of the President's Annual Address is to present her overview of the recent work as well as what she foresees the League doing in the future. Traditionally, the various committee chairs would then be called upon to present a recapitulation of their last two years' work. In fact, in 1954 President Lee broke with tradition by stating:

I am not going to present to you the usual President's Report - one which reviews the work and growth and attainments of the past two years. You will find all of

this recorded in the material in your Workbooks, your Kits and in the verbal reports which will be presented to you during this convention" (1).

The Address in 1956 titled "Hugging a Delusion" digressed even more from the usual Annual Address format. Specifically, the tenets of the Annual Address as delineated by Campbell and Jamieson for the State of the Union Address lead us to expect the President to begin by recounting highlights of the organization's history with an emphasis on what the organization represents, its values. We then expect the President to proceed to the present situation within the organization and finish with her suggestions for future work. "Hugging a Delusion" reported only the historical and legislative achievements of the League.

The 1956 Address was so out of character with the other three that I contend there was a specific reason for Lee's making such an Address. The Address during the 1954 convention had been forceful in its recommendations. Lee had been in office for four years and had developed strong opinions about what she saw as necessary changes within the League. She spoke forcefully to the delegates reminding them of the League's established practices, such as not polling the members and maintaining the nonpartisanship policy. She spoke just as strongly for some adjustments, such as encouraging a minority opinion to balance the majority opinion and changing the way the National Board members were elected.

Lee did not just suggest changes. First, she acknowledged strengths and weaknesses within the League which needed to be considered: it had always been an action group which invited opposition

from both outside and inside. Therefore, it was imperative that the League know exactly where it was going as it progressed into a more complex and interdependent future (1954).

I suggest that these statements were too pointed for the members, and touched some raw nerves. Perhaps Lee had asked the delegates to be ruthless in jettisoning the unnecessary and changing much of the rest. To Lee's credit, this was the speech of a take-charge president who was willing to state her mind about what she specifically advocated. Her words were strong and deliberate. Nevertheless, she was re-elected two times more.

Therefore, by 1956 I suggest that Lee felt that she had to be more oblique with reinforcing her earlier call for change. It must also be remembered that these members, unlike Park's audiences, no longer had the zeal of participating in a new organization. The League was established, pragmatic, and in danger of becoming staid. I surmise, then, that the 1956 Address was written to explain the many wonderful and varied achievements the League had made, allowing the delegates to want to be part of making their own change.

Lee immediately took control of the conventions. We see no hesitation as we did with Maud Wood Park. Lee appeared to relish an opportunity to be part of the process of adjusting the League's procedures so it could be a more viable organization in the 1950's.

I identified three main topics which Lee discussed in her Annual Addresses: streamlining the League, international relations, and racial issues. The latter two topics will be discussed in the next section on

external influences; the first topic will be discussed in the following section on internal influences.

External Influences: American Society

The purpose of an organization, what drives it, is not to address its own edification or even existence but the needs of those on the outside, the organization's public (Burns 1978, 302). Lee pointed out that:

one of the curious things . . . about the League of Women Voters is its inherent ability . . . to reflect quite accurately the climate of the Nation as a whole. . . . [and to be] slightly ahead of the great mass of public opinion . . . [serving] as a barometer which indicates the weather just over the horizon" (1958, 106).

Because the League believed itself to be a barometer of the future, it is necessary that we look briefly at what was happening outside of the League during the 1950's.

The years which encompassed Percy Maxim Lee's term of office, 1950-58, were years of significant change within the United States. Although these years have been recently popularized as "Happy Days" with the influence of the Cleavers and the Nelsons, they were also the years which saw the launching of Sputnik by the Soviets and the beginning of integration of Little Rock schools. It was a time of "flight" to the suburbs by many Americans which left a majority of impoverished people living in the inner cities. All of these issues were addressed by Lee.

Lee's rhetoric in the Annual Addresses about external issues centered on three main topics: urban issues, McCarthyism, and international relations. Urban issues were considered in 1952 while

speaking of the flight to the suburbs which took both "money and talent" out of the inner cities. Lee described a new study sponsored by the CCCMF which would look at how big city Leagues could "promote political responsibility" within their environs (4). Initiated by the immediate past president of the League, Anna Lord Strauss, this study looked at how the League and other volunteer associations dealt with "a slow paralysis of civic effort in the inner cities" (Young 1989, 182). Although the findings of the study were reported to the National Board in 1953, only the Cook County (Illinois) League embraced its proposals. This fact indicates that only the Cook County League had the resources to follow-up on the proposals or that it was the only League interested in taking action.

Racial tensions ran high throughout this period as integration became a mandated way of life in many parts of the country. Lee acknowledged the extent of such feelings in 1958 when she said that "racial conflicts are as old as man (sic). . . . [because] man is his own worst enemy" (119). She was undaunted by the scale of this problem, preferring to look upon the "growth and changing patterns of life" as common to everyone and offering "the League unparalleled opportunities for service and for creative leadership" (1958, 122).

The second external influence on the League in the early years which Lee discussed was the campaign led by Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin to remove the Communists which he declared had infiltrated our government and business, a result of an "anti-Communist phobia" of the heated-up cold war period (Young 1989, 168). With an agenda not unlike

that of the Spider Web saga which Maud Wood Park addressed in the 1920's, McCarthy succeeded in creating blacklists of such suspected Americans. Once again the leaders of some of the women's organizations, including the League of Women Voters, were listed. Lee was particularly adept at warding off the blows from both McCarthy and later the American Legion which she simply termed "the scattered attacks upon us from sources outside the League" (1952, 8). "Lee provided inspired guidance to the League in the face of malicious attacks by the American Legion and extreme right-wing organs" (Young 1989, 160). One result of McCarthyism for the greater American society was an increased interest in individual civil liberties, a subject which the League embraced throughout that period. Such a development signals that Americans were moving ever closer to embracing individualism whole-heartedly. Interestingly enough, even though the League had a history of working for the common good, it made no attempt to discourage this trend toward more inward thinking about individual rights.

By far, Lee's most consistent talk of external influences on the League centered on international relations. By the 1950's this subject lauded by Carrie Chapman Catt as of primary importance to the League was accepted by members and the public alike as a mainstay of League programs. Percy Lee felt that Americans had become "ostrich-like," burying their heads in the sand and pretending "that certain things don't exist" (1958, 129). She specifically cited our approach to the Soviet Union, separate from our attitude to Sputnik. She recommended "accept[ing] the Soviet Union for what it surely is, a powerful and

skillful antagonist, a dynamic and growing influence in the world" (129). She further cautioned that we should never forget that the "basic objective [of Communism] . . . is to destroy Western Civilization" which we can counteract if we "make a concerted effort to understand Communist inspired motivation and behavior" (1958, 129). At first, this statement sounds like a scare tactic much as McCarthy fashioned; it was not. It was a pragmatic appraisal of international affairs as they were. As such, Lee suggested the United States open its eyes and objectively and unemotionally appraise the international situation.

The impact of the Soviet Union's launching of Sputnik was mentioned in 1958 by Lee as a precaution that, in this endeavor "to advance our scientific capacity," Americans not lose sight of our need to balance science with our need to maintain an equilibrium with the humanities "where mankind's true values are to be found" (110). She asked us not to "become so absorbed in our desire to conquer outer space that we fail to reach for New Dimensions in our inner space" (1958, 134).

A brighter external influence during the 1950's and one in which Percy Lee was intensely interested was the development of the United Nations (UN). The League had maintained international cooperation as a major goal since its endorsement of the United States membership in the League of Nations. Supporting "the principle of international cooperation for over 30 years . . . [was] the position we have most frequently re-affirmed" (1954, 6). While the 1921 League convention

reacted to the partisan battles outside the League and withdrew actual encouragement of U.S. membership, the National LWV continued to pursue avenues of establishing peace and cooperation within the world (Young 1989, 119); in the 1940's the object of their work was the UN for which the league had "labored since its inception" (1952, 6).

Lee often spoke about the United States' position in the world.

At one point she pondered whether this country had indeed:

reached a point of maturity . . . to develop a sort of sustaining philosophy in regard to its purpose in the world at large. . . . We have been stirred to greatness in times of crises and calamity. It is another thing altogether to accept and sustain voluntarily, a global responsibility for the development of other free societies (1958, 133).

This idea would surface often in League history. In the later 1980's it would resurface in the Poland Project and in the 1990's in the Hungary Project to educate the people of these newly-freed countries on their roles as citizens in a democracy.

By the 1950's the League's work had been accepted by the media; the President and the Board Members appeared as speakers, on TV, and at governmental conferences (1952). This also indicates a greater acceptance of the League by the public and expanded the ways the League could disseminate its information. The League was being referenced more often in research as a participant in larger national studies. An example was Bauer, Pool, and Dexter's (1972) study of the Reciprocal Trade Act in the 1950's and of the League's participation in their study (Black 1983).

By now the League had 30 years of experience as an organization lobbying for particular issues. Members had studied an ever-increasing number of issues, and had taken positions on them had been taken. Therefore, the League could assemble these positions in various configurations as needed to quickly set up a plan of action at any level.

Internal Influences: The League of Women Voters

Within its own organization the League was also reflecting change. Immediately in 1952, the end of her first two-year term, President Lee acknowledged the contributions to the League through "the careful groundwork laid by Miss [Anna Lord] Strauss," the prior president who had guided the League through an important transition period (1). Strauss had presided over the convention in 1946 which had made many internal changes in the League, including its change of name from the National League of Women Voters to the League of Women Voters of the United States. This name change outwardly indicated a change in internal arrangement "from a federation of states to an association of members" (Young 1989, x). Misunderstandings between state and local Leagues had hampered the smooth and regular dissemination of information between the National Office and the members. Now, the individual members joined the national organization directly and did not have their affiliation processed through the states. "The more cumbersome the apparatus and the more indirect the participation, the wider the gulf between the member and the organization" (1958, 115). "The local league emerged as the organization's core," and its grass-

roots character was firmly established (Young 1989, 147). This event resolved Maud Wood Park's desire that the League should be an every woman organization. By 1952 the ideas generated in the 1946 convention had seeded and were now coming to fruition as evidenced in Lee's Addresses.

Along with the organizational changes within the League, there were changes in its office operations. The national office had recently moved to more spacious quarters and added more staff. The League also purchased "a magnificent new machine - the multilith . . . which has made it possible for us to publish material less expensively and more attractively" (1952, 6-7). Since the League was annually publishing more materials for use in its work, this was a welcome and much-needed change. Percy Lee talked often of the increases in the number of League publications, an area of League work which was in its "second infancy" (1952, 2). As we shall see later, most of these national publications were for internal use.

Another major change was The National Voter, a monthly magazine which was launched during Lee's term. It "provided the long-needed direct channel to our members" (1952, 3) as well as needed "internal cohesiveness . . . [through] a communication channel that would reach every member" (Young 1989, 159). Lee once again is stating her conviction that it is through the individual member and her activities in her local community that the real work of the League is accomplished.

The topic which Lee discussed most often with regard to the League's internal matters was a need for streamlining its operations and

programs. It was true that "the more unwieldly (sic) . . . our League program, the more distracted and less attracted members become" (1958, 112). This comparison between the cumbersome program and members' participation reflects an internal tension similar to an external one. The League had continuously called for a simplification of the national voting process as a means of attracting more voters and increasing political participation. Here, the League is saddled with an analogous situation within its own operation. :

A philosophical concern surfaced as Lee remarked that she viewed "the League as a tool we use to shape responsible citizenship and not as an end in itself . . . [she was] increasingly concerned that the tool itself, (sic) is taking on more importance than its function" (1958, 113). This was a new idea within the League as she saw it in the 1950's. I found that statement revisited in the 1990's with the words of the current President of the League of Women Voters, Becky Cain. She said that organizations often think that:

only serving the bureaucracy and keeping the organization alive is their goal. And it should not be. That is not why the League of Women Voters was founded, so that there would be a League of Women Voters. We have to keep your (sic) eye on the Mission and what we're there for (Cain 1993, 6).

As an internal response to an external influence, the League of Women Voters Education Fund was established in 1957:

to develop and promote educational programs with financial support from foundations, corporations, government agencies, and individuals - whose financial support would not otherwise have been available because of the League's nondeductible tax status as a political advocacy organization" (Young 1989, 155).

Lee's vision that the League needed multiple sources of funding to be able to do its work allowed her to champion this new feature of the League.

Throughout these Annual Addresses, Lee concentrated more on the internal than the external influences on the League. Hers was the era of implementing the changes initiated in 1946 while also adjusting to the many societal changes of the 1950's. Except for the 1956 Address when she reviewed the League's history as it related to the external world, she used external influences only to explain her reasons why the League should take more action, as when she said, "The pursuit of liberty, equality and justice is still a mission incompleated (sic). For most of mankind these are revolutionary ideas and they are ideals universally cherished, still unrealized" (1958, 134).

A Review of the Annual Addresses

An examination of the Annual Addresses of Percy M. Lee shows that she seemed comfortable addressing the assembled members. She usually began her Addresses lightheartedly with stories about what had happened within the past two years to particular members of the League. She enjoyed poking fun at herself. Throughout her term she maintained a "cool-headed, courageous, and principled stance" (Young 1989, 160). Even though Percy Maxim Lee was very specific and logical in her speeches, she evidenced a natural, warm personality, and wit. For example in 1958 she humorously related the story of a stewardess dumping two dinners in her lap just before landing and meeting Queen Juliana of

the Netherlands; in 1952 she told of pulling a bureau away from the wall at the P Street apartment only to have the wall fall down.

By the 1950's the President's Annual Addresses were still being printed separately in the Convention Proceedings as they had been in the later year's of Park's term. The difference is that now they were a typed handout and not a printed separate booklet. In fact, I could not find a separate section for the 1958 Address; it was within the body of the proceedings.

Now the President of the League was talking openly and with pride about how the League of Women Voters of the United States could and did have an effect upon the political life within the United States. Percy Lee mentioned that the development of more local Leagues and their work within their communities would "be of prime importance to the country and thus an essential long term investment [for the League]" (1952, 4).

In the Address of 1952 Lee described a League of Women Voters which was busy, partly as a reaction to the changes made at the 1946 Convention and partly because of the "new era" this League was entering. Lee responded to the international climate by calling the members to maintain their interest in the nation's having a presence in other countries.

This was also a time of greater acceptance of the League by the public. As Lee indicated in 1952:

The number of people who want the League to help with some project or other, the number of TV forums that would like us represented, the number of magazines which want articles on citizenship, and the number of conferences we are asked to attend or sponsor are constantly increasing (2).

In her 1954 Address Lee was very action-oriented and wanted to streamline the internal order of the League so that it was more workable. The purpose was not so much for efficiency as for fairness. She recognized the dissension among the members, particularly with regard to the non-partisanship policy, but she offered direct action to compensate. Her commitment to the rights of individuals was mentioned often, and she wanted the members to cooperate in leading their communities to action on civil rights. In fact, she concluded her 1954 Address by saying:

I have come to look upon the League not as just a worthwhile but somewhat incidental occupation, but as a vivid and vital expression of that imperishable idea that is deeply rooted in the American conscience . . . the idea of the dignity and worth and capacity of the individual human being. This idea does not need crisis-treatment at this time as much as it needs steady, commonplace, everyday application" (9).

This concentration on the civil rights of the individual points to a playing-out between individualism and collective action. It will affect the League's stance on political participation and will be addressed later.

Lee dismissed making a report on the League's work, leaving that to be discussed by the various committee chairs later in the agenda. Also, she did not address the League's past. Instead she preferred to talk seriously "about some of the things which have been much on my mind - things which bear on the future of the League" (1). In so doing she laid out her ideas of leadership in order to pull this organization together. "In charting the League's future course, which is the duty of this Convention" (2), she addressed such issues as action and procedure

within the League, polling of members, Voters Service, and the Bricker Amendment. The Bricker Amendment, which the League opposed, was introduced in 1953 and sought to "limit the scope of international treaties to which the United States could be a party . . . [while imposing] novel controls on the power of the President to negotiate treaties and executive agreements" (Morris 1970, 414). It was defeated in 1954. She spoke with authority to those delegates who would be deciding the work of the League for the next two years as well as the direction it would take for many years to come. She knew her position and was willing to wield power and exert persuasion over the convention.

Lee's 1956 Annual Address departed drastically from any other Address I read. At first reading the speech appears to be a retelling of the League's history. Upon a subsequent reading, though, it is evident that Lee was out to dispel any such delusionary ideas; women were not acting under a delusion that their work matters in the political arena, it did matter. In her prior Address, Lee had shown the members that they needed to take specific action, reorganize, and stand up for the League's beliefs. It is my contention that she wanted to use this Address to explain to the delegates that such action was possible, even desirable, as well as necessary if they wanted to maintain the rich history which other League members had created.

This Address was delivered in a narrative form as Lee told stories about the League's history. She couched it in the action the League had taken because "We've always been so busy doing the job we didn't have much time to reflect on our accomplishments" (2). She initiated this

discussion with a description of a LIFE magazine cartoon from 1916 wherein a woman was hugging a rolled-up paper titled "Hugging a Delusion." The reference was to woman suffrage as a delusion of women. She compared it to the 1956 attitude of some people that women were still hugging "a delusion that anything can be accomplished by women through using the vote" (1).

While this Address was interesting from an historical standpoint, it proffered few specifics about what was actually happening within the League at that time. Its importance is in its recapping for Lee the work of earlier members as a call to action for the present members. Any organization needs to stop periodically and reflect upon the past before leaping into the future. Of course, we have seen that this is part of the purpose of the Annual Address. In 1956, Lee made it her sole purpose.

By the 1958 Convention Lee's tenure as President of the League of Women Voters was ending. In this her final Address before the assembled members she again returned to her earlier pattern of spending the first several minutes in a carefree mood. In fact she stated that she did not want to get "too serious too soon" (97) and then launched upon a short series of reminiscences. She began with a story about her initial trip to Michigan where she found a strange reception brought about by the fact that "they had been completely unaware of any plan for me to visit them and couldn't have been more surprised when I turned up" (98-9).

After discussing the recent past (her term) and the extended past (stories of the founder, Carrie Chapman Catt), she spent the remainder

of the Address talking about the League at the present time and presenting her recommendations for where the League could go in the future. Once again she called for a reevaluation of the League with a view to change. As I read this Address, I "heard" her say that the world is changing so rapidly, especially in the area of science and technology, that it would be possible, but detrimental, for the League to carry a lot of unnecessary baggage and not maintain a leanness to be ready for action.

Lee appears to have been an accomplished speaker who carefully organized her speech material so that there was a definite progression from point to point. They were easy to read and understand because of the conversational sound and use of League jargon which was not obtrusive. The balance of humor, personal experiences, and administrative details created a well-rounded talk. Even still, she was not afraid to discuss the reality of the situation of the League at any time by examining its values.

Value Tensions within the Speeches

Each of the two tensions was dealt with in Lee's Annual Addresses although she spent little time on non-partisanship. The theme of citizen education was evident throughout each of the speeches.

Political Participation

One result of the changes made at the 1946 convention was "a challenge to increased participation in the political life of the community through Voters Service" (Young 1989, 147). Voters Service

included educating the public about the process of voting as well as about the issues upon which they would vote.

Lee readdressed Catt's and then Park's commitment to the importance of educating the citizens on both the process and the issues of government when she said that Voters Service "show[s] citizens how to participate effectively" which is the "most powerful weapon against lethargy and apathy, - the two great enemies of democracy" (1952, 8). An example of new methods used by Voters Service occurred at the 1952 convention. Candidates were invited to participate in the "Citizen's View of '52" forum which predated the League's sponsorship of the televised Presidential Debate in 1976.

The change to a grass-roots arrangement of local Leagues made Lee comment that the League's "aim is consistent: to prepare citizens to participate [especially at the local level] in the evolution of a dynamic democratic society" (1958, 123). Having said what the League knew to be its purpose, Lee chastised the delegates to take a hard look at their practices.

We have provided a sort of cafeteria designed to tempt all tastes, and not necessarily to satisfy any real hunger. We have persuaded ourselves that everyone has a natural instinct to be a good citizen, and that we can successfully cultivate this instinct by doling out sugar-coated pellets of information (1958, 107).

She continued by saying that that was an illusion:

because it creates the false impression that informed and active participation of citizens in government is a simple skill to be acquired with little effort. . . . [and yet we] know that the exercise of civic responsibility is not an instinctive virtue universally shared (1958, 107).

In that statement Lee revisits the concept put forth by Oldfield and mentioned by Park that all citizens in a democracy do not embrace active political participation. Her answer for how the League members could bridge the reluctance of the citizen to participate (individualism) with the League's belief that it was a necessary action within a democracy (civic republicanism) was to return to education as a means to an end, an idea we first saw with Carrie Chapman Catt and developed by Maud Wood Park. This statement further reflects the reason for her suggestion to prune away the deadwood from the League program. The League's program was also run cafeteria-style. League A could study subject 1 while Leagues B-D studied subject 2. Such variety makes an observer wonder where the "real" League is. The League can not be all things to each member as well as serve the needs of the public. This is a hard point to address when so many members have joined to pursue a specific avenue of interest. Still, the initial purposes of the League to encourage political participation can get lost in its subsequent work.

Percy Maxim Lee had a capacity to see "the larger picture." She talked not just of action; she discussed vision. She discussed political participation not only from the viewpoint of the citizenry but also from that of the League members themselves. "Many of us are still not sufficiently sold on the importance of what we are doing to see it in really big terms, financewise. We are trying to keep the breath of life strong and healthy in American democracy while on a starvation diet ourselves" (1952, 4). Can this be a reflection of women still making

the transition from the private sphere to the public and not being attuned to the need for asking for financial support from the public? Remember that Lee was part of that first generation of League leaders who had not participated in the Suffrage Movement. It was up to this new generation to continue that evolution from the private sphere into the public sphere not only in their personal lives but also in their work within the League.

For example, Lee returned to an idea expressed during Park's term that women were not politically effective because they did not hold office. Now, in 1956, 36 years after women got the vote, they still held few political offices. To Lee this was a matter to be addressed but not bemoaned. Even though she acknowledged that there were "too few women in Congress," it was a natural occurrence to her because the "women were housewives and mothers. The job of a housewife is in the home or close enough to home so that she can get there in a hurry if the need arises" (1956, 1). We may accept that as a comment from a woman of the 1950's with one foot in the public sphere while the other foot remained in the private sphere. It is a situation women continue to adjust.

Lee also considered political participation from the viewpoint of those women who gained political office and who faced other battles. Lee knew that it was a fact of political life that the women usually needed "to work through men . . . [since] . . . most legislative bodies are composed almost exclusively of men . . . [who often] convinced

themselves that the legislation was their idea in the first place" (1956, 1).

Lee believed that the most efficient and accessible form of government for action was the local government, "the core of our governmental system" (1952, 7). She continued by saying that "it is in local and state governments where the heart of the matter lies. Here we establish direct citizen participation and influence. . . . In our communities we create our nation" (1952, 8).

Lee often talked about her desire to extend the work of the League, taking it one step farther. She extended International Relations; she extended the commitment to educating the citizens by calling for subject specialists. By 1954 Lee extended political participation as it was played out within the League itself by highlighting the importance of the minority opinion. Recognizing that the League "does take political action as an organization" (1952, 2), Lee pointed out that it does so only after "a majority of the Board agrees that the members are prepared, that there is evidence of widespread member agreement and that the League can be politically effective" (1954, 3). This is consensus. The action is also taken only on issues, not with candidates. Still, Lee was adamant that the minority opinion by members who did not share the League's position but who themselves had a strong opinion be openly expressed. Lee's stand here reflects the rights of the individual: the right to be heard whether expressing the majority or a minority opinion. Explaining this concept further, Lee said, "We operate on the basis of the will of the

majority of those who participate. The minority may work within the League to modify or change majority opinion. The minority may work also as individuals outside the League against a majority opinion" (1954, 4).

The phrase "of those who participate" as well as the increasing emphasis on individual rights suggests that the League was acknowledging the increasing evidence of individualism. This indicates a change to me that the League was adjusting its stance on political participation, edging away from a strictly civic republican attitude. Nevertheless, because of its continued emphasis on collective, consensual action and the necessity of speaking with one voice, the League had not wholly embraced individualism.

Although Lee was usually critical of the "deadwood" in the League programs, she did applaud the accumulation of program positions which allowed the League to participate actively and quickly with regard to international affairs. Shortly after the 1950 convention the League was caught up in the country's reactions to the Korean Conflict. Since the League had consistently maintained an interest in and positions on international relations, the National Board was able to mobilize their resources quickly and efficiently and act. The Program adopted in 1950 "had emphasized the expansion of world trade and international economic development" as well as continued "support of the UN. . . . [and the] development of military and economic strength" (1952, 6). This action resolved the calls made by Catt and Park for international involvement, in their day through the League of Nations. Now the League of Women

Voters had established positions on various aspects of international relations and could quickly act with one voice.

Percy Maxim Lee's comments inevitably get around to discussing how people need to be involved in action within their communities. She created a large vision of the League as an international player, yet, she said that the local and the state Leagues are where the work of the League needed to be upheld. To her it was not surprising that "the period of great strides in social legislation, in education and in working together internationally have (sic) occurred during the 36 years that women have had the vote" (1956, 1). A major contributing factor to the League's success has been its non-partisan policy established by Catt.

Non-Partisanship

President Lee seldom addressed the issue of non-partisanship in her Annual Addresses. In 1952 when she was discussing in general terms the attacks upon the League from the McCarthyites and the American Legion, she prefaced her statement with a comment which we first heard from Maud Wood Park that the League members were often referred to as Republicans in one area of the country and Democrats in another (8). That question of non-partisanship seemed mild at a time when some of the League members were being depicted as leading the country to socialism!

The only Address in which a direct reference to the concept of non-partisanship occurred was in 1954. After the 1952 Presidential election there had been "a reassessment of the League's interpretation of its nonpartisanship policy" (1954, 5). For 30 years both the

Articles of Incorporation and the By-laws had stated that the League "shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate" (1954, 5). After holding 18 regional meetings in the United States and finding "an alarmingly wide range of interpretations existing in the Leagues," the National Board felt it necessary to tighten its nonpartisanship policy (1954, 6). The Board adopted the following statement to be inserted in the Local Leader's Handbook. "It is the policy of the League of Women Voters that no member of any League Board shall engage in partisan activity during her term of office" (1954, 6). In this case, Lee revisited Carrie Chapman Catt with the importance of maintaining the nonpartisan policy. We saw that it had been adjusted in the 1920's partly in response to the confusion surrounding Catt's call for League members to work from within the parties so they could influence the party's work. By the 1950's it was once again time to rethink the League's stand on non-partisanship. We will see it change again in the 1970's.

I suggest that Lee felt as strongly as Catt that non-partisanship was imperative for the work of the League. Whereas Catt focused on the organization's being nonpartisan, Lee focused more on the individual leaders being strictly nonpartisan. Lee's was a more defined statement than Catt's had been.

The Theme of Citizen Education

The theme of citizen education has been addressed by the League in two ways: the first type of education of the citizen is through publications such as Pros and Cons, Candidate's Nights, and community

meetings. The other form of citizen education is that of the individual League members. The two forms of citizen education are evidenced in Lee's Addresses. She is most prone to educating the League member who can go out and act with that knowledge.

For example, Lee pointed out that the League delegates to the Conventions have particular information, usually summaries or background information, in their Convention Kits (1952, 8). This statement indicates that, first, the Conventions were getting more organized so that material was prepared before the convention began and distributed to all of the delegates. Second, it indicates that the delegates were expected to do their "homework" even at the convention; they were not at a spectator event.

Lee extended the general concept of citizen education, though, because she called for "subject matter specialists", those members of the League who would become "real honest-to-goodness experts--in various fields of government" (1958, 108). Lee called for the League to have "hundreds of specialists who will provide a firm foundation from which thousands of citizens can take their first political steps with confidence" (1958, 109). I see the statements as an internal reaction to the external influences of the scientific threat of Sputnik, an increase in the general level of education in the country, and the rise in numbers of specialists in numerous fields. The League would be no different. Lee was careful to point out that not all members would be specialists; most would prefer "to know a little about a lot and must be served by those who know a lot about a little" (1958, 108). This

statement evidenced the times and was counter to the idea of Marguerite Wells, the League President between 1934-44. She "always objected to the League's stress on program specialists, and the resulting fragmentation of the membership into groups devoting themselves to particular areas of concern" (Young 1989, 134).

Another way the Leagues were educating citizens was by producing their own publications at the local level. One of the most important of these was the Know Your Town pamphlet which each League was encouraged to publish. Know Your Town included information about a city's history, form of government, elected officials, and offices to contact. This handbook was an effective aid to political participation when it was distributed to new citizens, to activist groups, and other concerned citizens. As an example of local members helping their own communities, Know Your Town was one of Lee's favorite tools.

As a means to further educating the public, Lee believed that when the League published information about an issue upon which it had "a clearly defined position," the publication should support the League position. It was imperative that the League's:

authority and our position should be as clear as crystal in all Program material we publish and we should present our material so that it supports our position. The situation is different, I believe, in Voters Service publications. In these I think we should never attempt to persuade anyone to support, and should seldom even reveal, our point of view. In these materials we should not be open to the charge that we are trying to influence the voter (1954, 5).

Through this statement Lee repeated Park's original call for Voters Service as a means to educate not influence the voter. It reflects the

tension between Program Action and Voters Service. Voters Service still remains neutral on issues; Program Action expresses the League's position on issues, not its support of a particular political party's position.

During Lee's term the education of citizens did not stop at our country's shores:

The publications issued by CCCMF, - Simplified Parliamentary Procedure, Self Government USA, and Individual Liberty USA, - have filled a real need, not only for the League but for other organizations as well. It is worth noting that they have been placed in U.S. Information Centers abroad as has much League material. Many have been translated into several foreign languages, with Arabic and Turkish the latest (1952, 5).

We see in Lee's work the link which existed between the public and the League members; the League was to educate its members so they, in turn, could educate the public. This process began with Catt's establishing the Citizenship Schools. Lee further extended the idea of citizen education not only to adults in community settings but also linked it to children at school. She proposed that one way to accomplish this goal of civic education and also to encourage political participation would be for the League to "facilitate a desperately needed political education . . . incorporated into our educational systems. . . . [establishing] an elementary education in practical politics" (1958, 111-2). Once again, Lee pointed out that this work could be accomplished by League members in their own home towns

Summary

At a time when many women fit the stay-at-home housewife role, Lee was travelling throughout the country, meeting League members and royalty, speaking of local participation and international involvement. She was a model for League members who shared "a sense of adventure which serves as a connection with the indomitable and imperishable spirit best personified by Carrie Chapman Catt" (1958, 103). As president, Lee seemed very competent in administrative, financial, and international matters; she also evidenced a confident personality and did not appear to be easily flappable. Where we saw a hesitancy in Park to address the delegates at convention, we saw a poised Lee who immediately took charge of each convention. She evidenced strength and stability in one sense by being able to strike a balance in her Addresses between serious and light-hearted matters by reporting on the League's work during the prior two years and then chatting about personal matters, such as her description of how her family was coping during her long absences.

Reflecting one of the characteristics of the prototype Annual Address to make policy recommendations, Lee often made recommendations about streamlining the organization, to look to the problems inherent in urban issues, and to maintain the League's historical interest in international affairs.

We heard from Park a sense of wonder and uncertainty about where this new organization would go. By the 1950's Lee was describing a League which was overgrown with deadwood and needed severe pruning.

That idea was not met with unanimous approval from the members, a situation which is understandable. Most of us prefer to maintain a status quo rather than experience major changes. Yet Lee was able to accomplish change by explaining to the delegates the reasons for the changes. She knew the League needed to be leaner and able to act more quickly in a more complex world. In this case she was right; after her term we began to see political issues, such as conservation, become more intertwined, just as the nations of the world became more interdependent. Lee was able to remain focused on this change and lead the League to a greater acceptance of her ideas. Although work on urban issues was initiated during her term, it would become more of an issue in the terms of subsequent presidents.

That sense of League continuity in Lee's speeches allowed her to have the vision and the confidence to see the changes needed and to direct the work of the League in the direction which she deemed appropriate to her period in history. At all times Lee cautioned the League to embrace the untried and the unknown, while keeping its feet solidly planted in its own convictions. Evidence of Lee's pragmatic attitude occurred when she said that the members must remember that they are "dealing with the world the way it is, not the way we wish it were" (1954, 7).

Lee revisited the theme of evolution which we first heard from Catt when she stated "that the length, breadth and depth of human experience is evolutionary; that old ways, old views may not satisfy the needs of today, that new visions must be sought" (1958, 97).

Through this talk of evolution Lee set us up to discuss the values within the League at that time. She called upon the members to "review the process which has brought us to the present . . . [in order to] find the experience and the values from which the future will be shaped" (1958, 97). As an example, Percy Lee also called for a "supplementary document for wide membership and public use which will set forth our principles in simple and clear terms" (4). In this statement she was ahead of her time because it forecasts the establishment of the Mission Statement in 1988 and the Goals, Beliefs and Intentions Statement in 1992.

The sense of evolution is also evident when we compare the Addresses of Maud Wood Park with those of Percy Maxim Lee. Whereas, Park's audiences possessed the enthusiasm of women who had achieved a major victory and were forming a new organization, Lee's audiences were more subdued because they had an established organizational process which they followed. Similarly, Park's delegates benefited from the appearances of the League's founder, Carrie Chapman Catt, at their conventions, while to Lee's audiences Catt was a name in their collective history.

By the 1950's we saw a change in political participation. Women were being elected to public office, although in small numbers. While Park had talked about how the participation of women in politics would be natural, Lee discussed the individual more often whether it was because of one's civil rights or recognizing that a majority is still based on those who participate. There is a more pragmatic approach to

political participation from Lee which appears to have evolved from the innocent approach of Park. By Lee's presidency, the subject of the local League being where the real work of the organization took place was obvious.

Neither Park nor Lee talked much about nonpartisanship. To Park it was an idea of the founder which needed to evolve as the members created the procedures for the League's operation. To Lee, in the scheme of the other issues facing the League for consideration at convention, non-partisanship did not seem imperative. The League had readdressed the issue and maintained their position.

On the other hand, citizen education was a topic which they each discussed often and with the same intent. The members during Lee's term had accepted the responsibility of working through the Citizenship Schools and teaching others. Lee championed that idea but concentrated on educating the individual League members, such as through The Voter. She believed that the members needed to know the issues so that they could teach the people in their own communities. One of the avenues the local Leagues used was to publish its own materials; the national League began using television to tell its story.

Even though the external world was changing during Lee's term, even though she saw a need for multiple changes within the League, Percy Maxim Lee was able to traverse this bumpy terrain with a dignity and a firmness which kept the League on course and prepared it to remain steadfast in the stormy years ahead. The President of the League during

the turbulence of the late 1960's and early 1970's was Lucy W. Benson.
We will look at her contributions to the League in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Determining our Limitations, Not Limiting Our Determination:

The Annual Addresses of Lucy Wilson Benson

Between 1950 and 1970 the League reached the stage of organizational maturity and had defined itself as a grass-roots organization. This was an era where the League had "paid its dues" and could look to determining its limitations by setting its own parameters. There were only two Presidents of the League of Women Voters of the United States during this time. Ruth Phillips (1958-64) and Julia Stuart (1964-68) further modernized the League's operations and encouraged more community action. The "center of gravity" of League action remained in the small cities and the suburbs owing in large part to the flight from the cities which Percy Lee had decried (Young 1989, 157).

During the 1950's and 1960's the League acted upon areas of concern which had been with the organization throughout its history: "a peaceful and secure international order, good government and citizen rights, the well-being of the least protected members of society, and resource conservation" (Young 1989, 162). For example, they further developed their long-standing interest in water issues which had been visible during their advocating for the Tennessee Valley Authority in the 1920's.

By its 1964 Convention the League was receiving national television coverage of its convention proceedings. This activity was "emblematic of the coming-of-age of women's political participation"

(Young 1989, 161). The United States Information Service filmed the entire convention and then used the film overseas as an example of women's political involvement in this country (Young 1989). By being the subject of such a film the League extended the original call of Catt to carry the message of American democracy throughout the world. The film also reviewed the Pan-American Conference the League sponsored in the 1920's and previewed the Poland and the Hungary Projects of today.

The end of the 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's was an era of severe turmoil and division within the United States. There were gender splits over the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), generational splits over the Vietnam War, plus moral and political splits over Watergate. As Benson said in her first Annual Address, "These are fast-moving times. . . . The gap between the rate of growth of problems relative to the rate of solutions, [and] the finding of solutions to these problems grows" (1970, 245). In this mood Benson called on the members to assess how they could limit the scope of their work without limiting their determination to do the work.

Nobody experienced this time in history without also experiencing personal change. Likewise, organizations reflect the turmoil in society by usually experiencing adjustments within their own cultures. The League of Women Voters was no exception and was guided through this period by an especially strong and steady leader. Lucy Wilson Benson served as the eighth president of the League from 1968-1974; she was the president during the League's 50th Anniversary celebration.

Lucy Benson was born and raised in Massachusetts and was living in Amherst at the time of her election as President of the League. She received both a B.A. and an M.A. in history from Smith College. Benson was awarded honorary doctorates from five universities. She also received fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute for Independent Study in 1965-7 "to do research on the politics of the civil rights movement" (LWVUS 1973, 2). At various times between 1961-5 she served her home state on studies of the administration of the University of Massachusetts, salaries of state employees, and "the educational effects of racial imbalance in the public schools" (LWVUS 1973, 2).

When Lucy Benson joined the League in Amherst in 1950, she began a serious commitment to community service that continued for many years. She subsequently was elected to the position of President for both the Amherst League (1957) and the Massachusetts League (1961). Her tenure as a member of the Board of Directors for the League of Women Voters of the United States began in 1965 and continued in 1966 with her elevation to the position of Second Vice-President and Chair of the League's Committee on Human Resources.

When we hear the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts called "unquestionably the most powerful political action group in the state" and Lucy Benson called "the most influential woman on the Massachusetts political scene" (LWVUS 1973, 2), we can see that the evolution of women from the private into the public sphere has been accepted by the public and the press. Governor Nelson Rockefeller in a speech to the New York League stated, "Your record of legislative tenacity and success is

formidable. Grown men shudder at your opposition and wise men strive for your support" (LWVUS 1992). Even accounting for grand eloquence, the statement acknowledges that League members were at least heard.

Benson's experience in the League was a positive factor in her being appointed by President Johnson in 1968 to his Public Advisory Committee on Trade Policy and subsequently nominated by President Carter in 1977 as Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance. Benson's particular contribution to the League was her ability to "sustain the League's role as a broadly active agent in national politics" (Young 1989, 162). She understood the League, but, more important, she understood how the League's work meshed with the political environment at all levels.

Like the other two presidents observed, Benson had been active in her local League and community. Of them all, she had acquired the most solid grounding in political action at the state and national levels before assuming the presidency. Therefore, she was prepared to grasp the interdependence of all three levels of government.

External Influences: American Society

Benson was heard to revisit one of the statements of Percy Lee; "we all must be able to operate in a context of this world and that context is frequently not what we would like it to be" (1970, 254). By identifying this conflict, Benson was able to launch an acknowledgement of some of the nation's problems. The most serious problems facing the United States during Benson's term were the ERA, the Vietnam War, and the Watergate break-in.

By far the most important, far-reaching external influence on the League during this time was the ERA. The League had not always felt this way. In 1923 after the first Equal Rights Amendment was introduced, the League leaders, including Catt and Eleanor Roosevelt, chose not to support the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. They advocated protective labor legislation for women "as a complement to unionization for men" and were afraid the ERA would take away the labor protection for women and children (Fowler 1986, 158).

In 1954, during Percy Lee's Presidency, the League's opposition to the amendment disappeared from its national program. After the ERA was once again introduced into and passed by Congress in 1972, the League voted "overwhelming support for the ERA" (Young 1989, 180) and worked diligently throughout 1972-82 in coalition with other groups to help get the amendment ratified (LWVEF, 1988).

During this time the League was criticized for not working solely for feminist issues; Lucy Benson responded, "Although the League was born of the suffrage movement, it has never been a feminist organization. We've been involved in women's issues, but not exclusively" (1974, 16).

One external influence which had a great effect on the United States was the Vietnam War. The wrenching apart of families, Congress, and our nation has often been played out in video and film. The experience of living through those years changed both people and institutions. Interestingly enough, this subject was not discussed in Benson's Annual Addresses. I suggest that partly because of the lack of

League positions on war but more probably because of the League's preoccupation with the political ramifications of Watergate, Benson had no reason to discuss the former. She had much to say about the latter. The break-in at the Democratic Headquarters in the Watergate complex in Washington, D.C. by burglars representing the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP) precipitated "the dull agony and ache that is Watergate" (1974, 24). For an organization which championed good government, this was a devastating event. Although the external influences were tumultuous in themselves, they also influenced the work within the League.

Internal Influences: The League of Women Voters

The two main topics Benson discussed about internal matters were changing membership and a restructuring of the way the League achieved its position statements. Changing membership was evident in the number of working women and a rapid turnover in members; both of these instances caused fewer people to do the large pool of work which any local League expected to do. This situation created a tension within the organization, and the League responded with several forms of adjustment. One was to hire a management consulting firm to assess the League's operation in 1970. Here, we see the League once again obtaining outside help to assess where it was in its progress and to develop a new sense of direction.

By the time the League celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 1970, its main concerns were "financial security, increased membership and visibility" (LWVUS 1992). Its work paid off. The League raised \$11

million, and it continued to grow in numbers and influence. Shortly after Benson's term, in 1977, the League counted 150,000 members, which Young (1989) termed "a modest cohort" (177). It increased its visibility partially as a result of the new national Public Relations Department and partially as a result of the League's use of local media. The strength of the organization still "lay in the quality of its human resource base. . . . [consisting of] social commitment, high intelligence, and solid education of a talented pool of women" (Young 1989, 177). In spite of fluctuating membership rolls, this cohort of women was formidable either as an ally or as an enemy. These were women bent on action.

Their quest for action took them to all manner of governmental bodies. As we have seen, the League's action involves lobbying elected officials using the positions it has adopted after studying the issues. We saw in Lee's term that enough program positions were in place to be configured so that the League could make action statements. By the late 1960's it had become apparent that the League needed a quicker way to adapt to the changing times. Its two-year studies and consensus process were unwieldy at a time when more speedy action was needed.

Subsequently, the battle over reapportionment provided the impetus for the League to reassess its procedures and make adjustments. The General Council in 1965 voted that the League could have an "immediate study and early consensus on the reapportionment question" (Young 1989, 171). This action negated the traditional time-consuming process whereby a proposed study had to be accepted at one national convention,

and the position to be adopted at the next national convention, two years later.

Nine years later at the 1974 National Convention Benson picked up this topic and queried the members about whether every league study had "to start at point A to get to point Z, or could we make certain assumptions and jump in at point M or P" (20). She was asking the delegates to adjust the established process of "every member participation and involvement in every aspect of league program, [because] it's just not realistic" (1974, 22). She was successful; the delegates amended their bylaws. This action allowed the National League to speak out and to lobby on some pervasive issues without having to resort to a lengthy, new study; they could rely on current positions (Young 1989). Here we see a loosening up of the procedures of the League. Perhaps it meant placing greater confidence, born of practice and trust, in its members. I think we ought to consider that it opened up the membership to participating in smaller special interest groups. If many groups were following their own agendas, then it appears that those members were not as likely to be grounded in the overall philosophy, values, and history of the League as a cohesive group could be. Marguerite Wells called those groups "a little bundle of pressure blocs" (Young 1989, 134).

A major reason for the need for such adjustments to League procedure was what we saw in the 1950's with Percy Lee calling for a paring-away of the program "deadwood." In 1974 we "hear" Lee again when Benson pointed out that "some of our problems stem from the fact that

we've been around for such a long time. . . . [so that] our basic structure . . . [has] been covered over with a few levels of barnacles that need scrapping. The league has a tendency to add, and never subtract" (21).

By the 1970's the need for adjustment of procedures took another tack. Benson called for consolidation of the issues studied and positions adopted rather than the pruning of deadwood. Fifty years after its creation the League created "the seamless web," a consolidation of programs which could more fluidly adapt to the times (Young 1989, 177). For example, legislation targeted toward women and children in the 1920's had now evolved and broadened to include "a commitment to the struggle to eradicate conditions of deprivation among all disadvantaged social groups" and in the next few years would embrace reproductive choice (Young 1989, 162).

By its 50th Anniversary the League was a mature organization. Its accumulation of positions and procedures needed revising so that as Lee had said it could be lean and ready for action. For example, in 1974 she rephrased Lee when she told the delegates that "this organization changes constantly, but you'd never know it from some of our internal publications" (22). The members were all to get new editions of the local and state handbooks. "Parts of the versions now in print sound like edicts out of the old testament, thou shalt or shalt not. And if you don't the earth will tremble and locust shall descend upon your league" (22).

Lucy Wilson Benson believed in the work of the League even though she got impatient with it at times. "I know how terribly good this organization is, but I also know how much better it can be" (1974, 28). It is not surprising, then, that she spent more of her time discussing the internal rather than the external influences within the League. Benson had the responsibility of being its leader and its guide and did not shirk from that obligation.

A Review of the Annual Addresses

Two Annual Addresses of Lucy Benson were analyzed, the 1970 and the 1974 Addresses. I was not able to find an Address in the 1972 Convention Proceedings. As with the information about the other two presidents, unless otherwise noted, the citings are from Benson's Annual Addresses. The year and the page number from the Convention Proceedings will be noted.

In 1970 Lucy Benson spoke before the 31st National Convention of the League in San Francisco. Her text was included in the proceedings of the convention and listed as Report of the President. I was not able to find an Annual Address in the 1972 Convention Proceedings. In 1974 she addressed the National Convention again at its 33rd Convention at San Francisco. In the Proceedings of the Convention this speech is not titled.

The 1970 Address was a disappointment as an Annual Address because it did not employ the expected elements of such an Address, such as we have found at times with the other two presidents. This speech was definitely a report. In fact, in the beginning Benson states that she

is going to give a "brief review of the past two years" (245), and she does. We learn about the Youth Conference on Community Involvement which the League had sponsored in Colorado, the advances in cooperation with the media, and changes in the fiscal structure of the organization. Unfortunately, there is little time spent on the issues of political participation, and there are no comments about nonpartisanship. Her comments on the theme of citizen education are sparse and centered on the role of the media.

The 1974 speech better fits the pattern of an Annual Address because she began with a few comments about the "rich heritage" of the League. Benson began by describing her dilemma in constructing this address because she admitted to being in a time warp:

I found myself looking back at more than two decades of active league work and thinking also about events in earlier periods of league history. Then I'd be pulled back to the present and to the critically important business that will occupy all of us this week. And then my head would go where I really wanted it to go, to the future, the future of the league and of the society in which it functions (13).

This experience she fittingly described as a "temporal tripod" (13), a balanced structure of past, present, and future. Still, as a unit this Address stops short of being epideictically satisfying.

I anticipated that after the introduction she would progress through the expected stages, rehearsing the values of the organization, explaining the present, projecting the future, and calling upon the rhetoric of Carrie Chapman Catt and the seven presidents before her to set the stage. That was not the case. She remained in the present, discussing what was current within the League and made only sporadic

references to the past. Interestingly enough, she chose "to look ahead to the shape of the league, in our society in 1984" (24), invoking the Orwellian spirit at a convention whose theme was "The League in the Next Decade" (23). I found this concentration on the present unfulfilling, especially because of the turbulent times in American society. Earlier she had identified a temporal tripod upon which "every activity the League undertakes rests" (1974, 13). This speech did not rest well because one of the three legs was ignored. Benson did not ground herself and the delegates in an historical review in order to establish their collective identity before she advocated change.

Although Benson still does not mention nonpartisanship, she does spend time discussing political participation and the theme of citizen education. As with the last Address made by most presidents and as we saw with the 1958 Address of Percy Maxim Lee, this one is a look back at the organization's accomplishments during Benson's term as well as a look forward to what she would like to see the League achieve in the future.

Benson appears to be very professional and business-like and does not evidence the informality of Lee. She talked of the nostalgia fad sweeping the country presented by the "wizards of the pop culture establishment . . . a trendy view of the national mood" (1974, 14). Later she described the non-substantive approach of the media to some League work which "fits into the media exaggerated battle of the sexes view of the woman's movement" (1974, 15). At the same time she is erudite. Here we find references to scholars and theory, a realm in

which Benson seems entirely comfortable. There is a practiced sophistication evident. She talks about how the "image makers are busy putting together a new mythical past, one that urges us to . . . go back to the way we never were" (1974, 14). She appears more learned and experienced in her work in ways the other two presidents were not.

Benson's Addresses were full of internal matters; the external influences were used as explanation for situating her points about the internal affairs of the League. The call for the League's adjustments in its procedures as it celebrated its 50th Anniversary does not seem unusual.

Value Tensions within the Speeches

The prevalent idea we get from Benson's Address is one of caution for the members to do their work well. Benson urged the 1974 delegates to measure and assess "our strengths and our weaknesses. . . . [because] your actions this week represent value judgments, tangible expressions of the worth you attach to this organization, its leaders and its members" (28). While she appealed to the delegates to prepare the fullest plate for themselves, she also cautioned them to remember that they could not do everything. Benson reminded the delegates that, "Determining our limitations is not the same as limiting our determination" (1974, 28). In other words, she tempered her call for revision with an appeal to set priorities. They should limit the scope of their work but not of their zeal.

The area in which all three presidents were strongly committed, albeit in different ways, was political participation; they understood

that this was the foundation of the League upon which the other work needed to rest.

Political Participation

Benson spent more time discussing the value of political participation than either of the other two presidents. She discussed the subject of citizen political participation both from the external influences of the ERA and Watergate as well as from the internal influences of the League's proposed acceptance of men as full voting members.

By 1970 a woman's role in society was changing, and Benson acknowledged that such changes would affect the League. Participation within the League was changing. One example of changing membership was evidenced by an enlargement of "the pool of the socially active" (Young 1989, 178). Citizens were responding to needs within their communities and the multiple social movements and were willing to act. Even though the pool enlarged, there were many social movements vying for the attentions of a limited number of citizens. With so many opportunities for citizen activity, the pool was spread incredibly thin.

Another serious challenge to membership retention was the number of women working outside the home. Unlike the situation during Lee's term, where the stay-at-home wife was the norm, the situation in the sixties showed the number of women in the work place increasing dramatically. Added to this situation the rapid turnover rate of League members which hovered around 20%. Taken together, these three occurrences caused many Leagues to have fewer members who were able to

give as much volunteer time as they had in the past. "Some of our procedures and practices are geared to the life and time style of a non working woman" (1974, 22).

In what surely was a response to the fight for ratification of the ERA, Benson discussed woman's increasing presence in American politics. Although she recognized that "sex-stereotyping is stamped out of approved roles and modes of behavior," she also pointed out that "every League represented in this room has had to fight to be recognized on the political scene" (1974, 17). The battles of the Suffragists continued; women were still trying to gain their legal, equal place in society.

An external event which affected citizen political participation was Watergate. Benson felt the effects of Watergate very strongly and anticipated its effect upon the citizens and their participation in politics for years to come, especially in "public attitudes toward and respect for government" (1974, 26). Benson knew that the results of Watergate and the possible impeachment of President Nixon would affect the American voter. How deeply would remain to be seen. This wound would not stop with the citizens but would extend to the conduct of the elected officials and the media. It would be reflected in the extent of the media's "sense of restraint and fairness with which they cover the proceedings" and would test the ability of each of us "to find our way out of the political depression that now envelopes this country" (1974, 26). She recognized that it would be necessary for the citizens to identify "those aspects of Watergate which were aberrations in the

conduct of national affairs, and also to recognize and then to rectify those parts which stem from flaws, and are in a still imperfect system"

Benson's sense of responsibility came through as she said that the resultant types of anticipated reform, congressional and campaign finance as well as "redefining the delicate equilibrium between the executive and legislative branches," would be of paramount importance in "reestablishing public confidence and credibility in government;" she wanted to be part of that process, but "the League must be a part of" it (1974, 26). By making this statement Benson recognized that the League was entrenched in the workings of government and felt that it had the responsibility to do its part to put back together the confidence in and credibility of the American government. "The way that responsibility is fulfilled is the future of the League, and in the final analysis it is the future of the country" (1974, 27). Recognizing that it would not be easy and she had no answers how to accomplish such a task, she did state that the most essential element of the League's work would be "confidence in ourselves as individuals, as functioning members of society which have something to say and who are worth listening to" (1974, 27). (1974, 26). In this statement she recognized the theme initiated by Lee that it is the smallest segment of the League--the individual or the local League--where action would be accomplished.

An internal facet of political participation was evidenced through a major discussion at the 1974 Convention which centered on whether the League of Women Voters was going to grant full voting membership to men. For years, men had been able to join as associate members without

benefit of voting. Now, with the League being very vocal about the ERA, the members felt bound to consider changing their own By-laws. As Benson very logically reasoned, "There's an element of hypocrisy in our fighting full strength for the equal rights amendment, while we continue to deny equal rights to men" (16). She continued by reminding the delegates that the League "encourages the participation of all citizens. . . . If we want all citizens to have an opportunity to participate in the business of government, then we should be willing to give all citizens the opportunity to participate in the business of the league" (16).

Again, referring to the dichotomy of not having men qualify as full voting members against the League's campaigning for women's full equal rights under the law, Benson said that "we're for the equal rights amendment, and for knocking down the artificial and unnecessary barriers which frustrate and limit women's full participation in society. If we are ready for the ERA, then we darned well ought to be ready for men in the League" (1974, 18). Men were admitted to the League as full voting members at the convention in 1976.

At one point Benson discussed political participation from the vantage point of the work of the League and how it interacted with the public:

We are so busy working on the Purpose of the League, on increasing the 'informed and active participation of citizens in government,' that we sometimes don't appreciate how important the League is. It is a fact that what the [League] does is vital to this country. It is vital to self-government, it is vital to the continued existence of

our free society. We are engaged in an effort at all levels of government to make self-government work" (1970, 253-4).

With this statement, Benson expressed her belief that the League could now acknowledge its place within the larger American society. Its niche was established, and the members should appreciate that fact.

Lucy Benson faced up to the facts of the time and addressed them head-on. She confronted League members with the imbalance of their wanting full equal rights while maintaining a woman-only organization. She confronted Watergate in terms of the effect it would have on the American citizens and their belief in our government. By being so direct with the members, she allowed them to sort through their ideas on these two very serious questions of political participation. Surprisingly, throughout all of this there was no mention of non-partisanship.

Non-Partisanship

This tension was not directly addressed in either of the two speeches. The primary inference I draw from that omission is that non-partisanship was not a tension for members within the League at that time. Just as Percy Lee did not mention it at the end of her term, I would believe that non-partisanship had reached a point of stasis. The members were comfortable with their position, and it did not need discussing.

The second inference is that the League does not debate the merits of political parties; it discusses issues. It seemed surprising, though, that some hint of partisanship did not creep into her remarks.

Since Lucy Benson was appointed to national positions by Democratic presidents, I presumed that she also was a Democrat. Did Benson feel a tension because Nixon was a Republican and she was a Democrat? I do not know. Benson, though, did discuss the issues of Watergate which were deceit and misuse of power. She pointed out that "the corruption, banality, and arrogant use and usurpation of power which led to Watergate has had a deadly, corrosive (sic) effect on political thought and life" (1974, 24). I suggest that her reaction to Watergate and President Nixon represented a tension within herself between her role as the president of an organization which had always championed good government and the intense disappointment she felt resulting from the misuse of power by the President of the United States.

The Theme of Citizen Education

During Lee's term in the 1950's we saw that a two-tiered citizen education process had developed. "Political education was the pivot around which the League turned" (Young 1989, 178). There now existed an established two-tiered citizen education process, not unlike that two-step theory of disseminating information in mass media. The League "taught" its own members who in turn taught the public. Perhaps the adage of teaching someone as being the best way to learn information came into play here. Yet, with regard to education, it is to the League members that Benson addresses her remarks.

In the 1950's we heard Percy Lee explain the beginning of a new tool, The National Voter. Benson explained that the League now had "a new Voter. . . . [which is] better looking . . . [with] better writing"

(1970, 249). This educational tool had proved effective and was evolving because "our basic goals remain the same, to supply the members, and the leaders, with the information and the tools they need to conduct the business of the League of Women Voters" (1970, 249).

We have understood that that business was to encourage the active political participation of citizens, but those citizens were not identified nor was the citizen's participation in the education process addressed. Benson identified the League's audience as including not only its own members but also including "our predominantly male political establishment. . . . [who] know the tremendous difference it makes to have our decision making process buttressed by an informed and concerned membership" (1974, 19). Significantly, the League, in the person of its own president who has the responsibility of setting the tone of the organization, now spoke to its members and elected officials without directly commenting on the part the citizens would play. The League concentrated its talk on political policy, not mass political participation.

By the 1970's the League embraced the electronic age as a means of getting its message to a greater number of citizens. In fact, many of the local Leagues now had weekly television shows within their communities. Benson understood television's impact and called for the Watergate Committee's deliberations to be accessible to the American public through "television coverage of the hearings, the house debate, and if impeachment is voted, the senate trial" (1974, 25). She pointed out that just the week before the League's convention President Nixon

"opened a part of the record to public scrutiny"; this process needed to continue so that the American public would know first hand the workings of government (1974, 25). It was a first step by the League to facilitate its part in the restoration of good government.

As would be expected of any organization which had not only persisted for 50 years and reached its maturity but also was founded on continuing reassessments of itself, the structure was subject to change. One of those changes specifically aided citizen education. The 1970 Convention was told that the National Board was "working on ways to make deductible monies available on a long-term basis to local and state Leagues to increase our effectiveness" (258). Pointing out that monies would be needed more and more for the League's work for "purely educational purposes," Benson suggested that there could be "money that can be raised at the national level which is not available at the local level. . . . [but which] can [be] legally used . . . for purely educational activities of the League at all levels" (1970, 258). She was referring to national grants. As an extension of the work of the LWV Education Fund (LWVEF), these grants became a fund-raising vehicle the League has used ever since to provide materials and activities to further citizen education.

Although the bulk of educational materials were now coming from the LWVEF, it was the members in the local Leagues who had the responsibility of dealing with the political education of the citizens in their communities. In spite of this we see in Benson's speeches we see a completion of the shift from education to teach citizens how to

vote (i.e., pull the lever) to teaching the League members how to educate themselves. In turn, they are to educate both the citizen and the elected officials, but the emphasis is on the officials. One significant difference in Benson's term is that now many of those elected officials are themselves League members and have already benefited from that first level of education.

Benson recognized the problem of League members getting settled in a study area and learning for their own edification. Playing the role of the mother bird, Benson forced them to fly. While she recognized that the League was a place for women to learn political ways and leadership and was not "intended to be a shelter or a safe harbor" (1974, 17), Benson did not expect the learning to remain internal, either individually or collectively. Reflecting the League's history as being a knowledgeable burr under the saddle of government, Benson sent the members out to prove themselves against the most formidable foes within their communities. She expected the members to match or better the politician's knowledge on any of the issues upon which the League spoke.

Summary

The concept of "study before action" was entrenched by the time the League was 50 years old. There is a stability in the League during the late 1960's and early 1970's in the midst of a society in turmoil produced partly as a result of what Benson termed the League's seemingly snail's pace progress, "a nitty-gritty approach," which has allowed it

to maintain a thoroughness of operation (1974, 15). When the League speaks, others listen.

Early in her 1974 Address Benson commented that she had trouble getting her thoughts together partially because she was "trying to gain new insights into old problems" (27). Once again we hear the reassessment of the organization in order to go forward in a direct path, not meandering. Benson mentioned that, in trying to gain these insights, she had to "hit some of our lows as well as some of our highs, poke at some of our weak spots, stress some of our shortcomings" (1974, 27).

Non-partisanship seemed to be one calm port in this social storm. Benson concentrated on discussing the tensions of political participation. There were many. No matter how much the League insisted that it was an organization for all citizens, it still allowed women only as full members. Accordingly, it had to come to terms with its existence as a woman's political organization while demanding equal rights from the men in our society. The women chose to admit men as full voting members to their organization and extinguish that flame of hypocrisy, but they did not change the organization's name.

One of the shortcomings Benson tentatively addressed was the tension revolving around the members desire to learn the issues without using their knowledge for the benefit of the community. The tension explicit here is between civic republicanism and liberal individualism. It is embodied in volunteers who have the right to choose where they spend their free time. We all seek the company of people like

ourselves. Hence, League members would be expected to seek out similar people who are educated, politically sensitive, and active in their communities. It seems more logical that they would gravitate to the elected officials who usually meet those three criteria rather than seeking out the general public who may be exercising their individualism and not desirous of participating in any form of politics. Therefore, while the League as an organization still considers encouraging active political participation by the citizens as one of its chief values, its members have become so entrenched with their own kind that they often neglect personal contact with the politically uneducated. Interestingly enough, Benson's call to the members to leave the comfort of the League study was for them to challenge the officials, not the public.

Benson was not above admitting her "frustration with the League" (1974, 27) and was not afraid to let it show. In spite of this feeling she also knew that the League could do many things well. To keep it from becoming unwieldy and ineffective, she called for the members to be aware of their limitations but not to reduce their determination to do well whatever projects they chose to do. This was an opinionated president who carefully thought out her comments and did not hold her tongue for good or ill. In spite of this, perhaps because of it, she was able to lead the League through some very turbulent social times so that they could begin their next 25 years.

CHAPTER 5

Value Patterns Evident in the Annual Addresses of the League of Women Voters, 1920-1970

The purpose of this thesis was to discern whether three representative Presidents of the LWVUS consistently discussed in their Annual Addresses each of three founding values which Carrie Chapman Catt, the League's founder, identified in her speech, "The Nation Calls." Additionally, have those values been modified or discarded? What is the significance to the League of Women Voters of any change in the values over the years?

The values are political participation, non-partisanship, and citizen education. It was anticipated that the first two of these values would be discussed by a president because they evidenced the organization's working out tensions resulting from the League's adapting to both internal and external pressures and changes. These tensions were identified as political participation versus individualism and non-partisanship versus partisanship; citizen education was recognized as a theme, not a tension, because it was evident throughout League work. Therefore, I expected that each President would discuss the values and I would be able to identify the resulting tensions and trace the theme of citizen education.

Review of the Three Presidents' Annual Addresses

After briefly summarizing the contributions of each president to the League, I will compare how each addressed the values and then assess these findings. The first President of the League of Women Voters was

Maud Wood Park. Experienced in Congressional and legislative matters, she quickly accepted her responsibilities as President and launched the League with enthusiasm and knowledge. From Park we heard a sense of wonder and uncertainty about where this new organization would go as she guided the members through their formative years.

In 1950 Percy Maxim Lee became the fifth president of the League. She was an active president whose message was most often on local political participation and international involvement. Lee was competent in business matters, a trait needed at a time when the League had grown both in numbers of members and in scope of program. Therefore, the President needed to incorporate an administrative style, an understanding of and ability to cope with the many established and emerging facets of the organization and to be able to deal with the changes. Lee struck a balance in her Addresses between serious and light-hearted matters. As such she was actually a bridge between the personalities of the other two presidents. Her most forceful recommendation was to streamline the organization. Lee described an organization overgrown with deadwood, a reference to its possessing too many unused and outdated positions on issues. These positions needed severe pruning just as we prune away the deadwood in a tree. Her specific reason for this program refocusing was that the League needed to be leaner and able to act more quickly in a more complex world.

Lee created a sense of order and continuity in her speeches by employing Catt's theme of evolution and building on first one idea then another; we see the change from Park and Catt when Lee explained that it

is not natural for everyone to participate in politics, but it is a goal to seek while understanding the world as it is.

Twenty years later we hear Lucy Wilson Benson discussing League matters in a consistent and tame manner. The League was now 50 years old, and the enthusiasm and awkwardness of its youth was gone; the League was well-established as an organization. In fact, Benson, like Lee, called the members and the leaders to reassess and to adjust the profusion of the League's procedures; consolidation, not pruning, was her means to accomplish this adjustment.

Remaining calm in an extremely turbulent time of Watergate and the Vietnam War, Benson encouraged the members to exit the safety of League studies and enter the political trenches, being a burr under the saddle of government. Her most poignant example was the ERA. She identified the League as the "Avis disease." Following the lead of a popular car rental advertisement of the time, Benson indicated that the League was number two (as Avis was behind Hertz) because it was an organization of women who had to try harder to be included in the "political and social arenas" (1974, 17).

Within the Annual Addresses of these three presidents I found no consistency regarding which parts of the prototype Address they included. For example, I found sporadic examples of the rehearsal of values, but I usually found an assessment of issues in the form of a report to the delegates about the League's work during the past two years. Policy recommendations were most evident in the last Address of each President when she reviewed her term and made suggestions for the

future. There was also no consistency in these criteria among the speeches of an individual president. Maud Wood Park showed a "growing-into" the format of the Annual Address while Percy Maxim Lee diverged completely in 1956 with her historical retelling. Lucy Wilson Benson's last Address evidenced the most complete prototype of all of the Addresses. This lack of consistency across addresses was evident in the arrangement of the Addresses, in the location of the presentation within the convention proceedings (as a separate handout or within the body of the material), and in the title of the speech (a report, an Annual Address, or no title).

Generally, I came away with a sense of wanting and needing more. The presentations appeared to be required talks given to the delegates. They existed; they did not make a major contribution to the conventions. It is apparent that the President did not often address the three values because the chairs for these committees, such as Voters Service, would make their own reports on their work during the prior two year period. This is significant because if the president did not address the values of the organization it does not mean that they were not discussed; they could have been addressed by another chair. This action, perhaps, indicates that the President considers the values as a side issue and that the "bottom line" action is more important than is "rehearsing the values" of the organization. We must remember, though, that it is the President of an organization who has an obligation to discuss the founder's values and indicate their importance to the organization. It should be the job of the committee chair to report on what occurred

within her committee during the prior two years, leaving the President to discuss the organization's values as well as her vision for it. She delivers an inclusive view of the entire organization; they represent the specifics. A separation of the two areas seems in order. The President's Address had become more operational than inspirational.

When I step back from my impressions of these Addresses, I realize that I am the one putting a sense of order on them; it did not come from the presentations themselves. Since I had equated the League Presidents' Annual Addresses with the United States Presidents' State of the Union Addresses, I expected a specific form to be evident. It was not.

Discussion of Values

I originally asked if each president discussed each value. I found that political participation was the most common topic of each of the presidents, but it was difficult to keep separate from citizen education since they are so intertwined. That finding should not be surprising because it is a recurrence of Jane Addams' call in the 19th century for study before action. Also, the type of participation evolved over the years. Maud Wood Park directed political participation to the citizens because women had just got the vote. Essentially, all women were ignorant of the process of politics in the public sphere. Even the leaders of the Suffrage Movement had been more advisers rather than players in the field of politics. Women arrived on the political scene in the 1920's as equal players with men in the voting game under the law but not in practice. Whereas Park reinforced Catt's notion that

participation by women in politics would be a natural outgrowth of their emancipation, Lee called that belief an illusion, and she discussed the responsibility of the individual citizen. She, more than any of the three Presidents, evidenced an understanding of how individualism influences the American citizen. Political participation was "not an instinctive virtue universally shared" (1958, 107).

Lee reflected her times by placing the individual within the context of one's civil rights. She used both internal and external examples. Internally, speaking of the importance that a minority opinion be heard, she reminded the members that a majority is still based on those who actually participate. Externally, she discussed the civil rights of both women and minorities. There is a sense of pragmatism about political participation from Lee which appears to have evolved from the innocent, "natural" approach of Park. I think that it is not surprising that Lee acknowledged in one speech that we must live in the world as it is and not as we would wish it to be.

When the League started developing its positions on issues, the focus for political participation was more on the League members as a vehicle to get the League position to the elected official. Therefore, the direction of the League's focus on political participation was altered and split between the citizen and the elected official with more emphasis on the latter. Voters Service was still maintained and was a bridge between political participation and citizen education because the League believed that a strong democracy should have an educated citizenry. The League works for good government for all citizens. The

League is an organization of (mostly) women who believe in good government as explained by Maud Wood Park. This includes the right of the citizen to have ease in access to information. For example, a city's budget should be presented to the public in a simple, indexed form where the citizen can easily find the funds allocated for paving the streets or landscaping a new city park.

Surprisingly, none of the presidents talked much about the second value, nonpartisanship. We must remember that this is a narrowly-defined value. It was just involved with the political parties, not necessarily the issues of any particular party. Issues were above partisanship. To Park non-partisanship was the founder's idea which needed to evolve. Even though there were problems arising in the 1920's from League members openly participating within the political parties, Park seldom talked about it. The members were creating the process of the League's operation, and Park emphasized that the work of the League was "devoted solely to the interests of women as voters" (1921, 1). Today, League members understand having one foot in non-partisanship and the other foot in the world of partisan politics and being able to straddle both of them successfully.

The positions were taken on values based on what the League believed, not what any political party believed in. From the Suffrage Movement through the Progressive ideals, there is a spiral maintaining the Progressive ideals. The spiral takes the League around and around but always arriving at a higher plane. This will eventually be, in Catt's theory, a state of democracy where there will be no need for

political parties and citizens can honestly adjust their situations based on the issues, not on a specific party.

To Lee it did not seem to be a necessary topic for discussion. I believe that in her term the idea of non-partisanship was so ingrained in members' minds, so much a part of their thinking, that it did not present a problem. On the other hand, when Lucy Benson was President, the nation was stunned by the Watergate scandal which traversed both non-partisanship and political participation. I expected to hear Benson caution the members to maintain their non-partisan standing.

The fact of Watergate was corruption. Yes, it came from one political party; that was not the point. These heinous actions under the Watergate umbrella rocked the very foundation of good government, a principle the League championed. Therefore, Watergate also had repercussions for political participation. How could anyone expect ordinary citizens to be ethical in their participation when the nation's leader was under such scrutiny that he was nearly impeached?

Pointing out that she could not tell the delegates how to resolve this problem, Benson exhorted them to be part of the national healing process, to have "confidence in ourselves as individuals, as functioning members of society who have something to say and who are worth listening to" (1974, 27). This empowering statement showed a pervasive attitude of the times, that we knew something had to be done, but, initially, we did not know what it was. Benson effectively returned political participation to the individual voter. Her comment seems analogous to the fact that we each must grieve in our own, individual manner.

The third value, citizen education, was a topic which the Presidents each discussed often. I was not surprised with this development because citizen education transcends both of the other values. It appears in political participation through the work of Voters Service. The League educates the citizens about the voting process and issues while also educating the elected officials. It is evident in non-partisanship because all Voters Service work remains non-partisan.

During Park's term League members had taken the responsibility of establishing Citizenship Schools and teaching others the process of voting and the background of the issues. This was the beginning of the League's two-step process of citizen education--first educate the League member and then she will go educate the public. It was no wonder that Park had chatted lightly about the many new ideas for reaching the public. At that time there was little distinction between the members of the League and the women in the general public. They all needed to learn the process and the issues.

By the time Lee was President, the situation had changed. Lee concentrated on educating the League members. She believed that they needed to know the issues so that they could teach the people in their own communities. This was a revisiting of the two-step process of citizen education. Now, though, the League member was not likely to be equal with the majority of citizens; she was more personally knowledgeable about the issues. The League had established its own published materials so that the members could study the issues. In

fact, Lee had called for "hundreds of [subject] specialists" in the League who could make a solid "foundation from which thousands of citizens can take their first political steps with confidence" (1959, 109). Now the member would learn and go tell, but she had two distinct groups to educate. She might go to the public and hold forums or town meetings where the issues were discussed. Lee even championed the idea of "bringing the public in our communities along with us" from the time the League began to study an issue rather than just handing them the finished position (1954, 5). This is an example of Voters Service. On the other hand, she might take her knowledge and her League position to advocate for that position with elected officials, appearing before city councils, boards of supervisors, or state agencies. This is an example of the League's action.

While the original statement was to educate the women on the process of voting, by the 1950's the education was mainly through the publications of the League. In so doing, the League was channeling the responsibility of getting civic education to the citizen by requiring them more often to seek out the information. Now, even though the League encouraged citizen education, it was moving away from its own active participation with the mass of citizens. The citizens now had to want to be politically educated; that is a shift toward individualism.

I sensed a progression in demeanor with these three Presidents from the expected enthusiastic inception by Park, through the caution and more pragmatic approach represented by Lee, to the refined manner of

Benson. Each of these presidents had a vision for the League. Where Catt's vision was well-defined, Park was more concerned with getting the organization operational. Lee's vision was for a more international looking League. Interestingly enough, Benson's vision was internal toward the United States; she did not discuss international matters at all. I was not surprised with that occurrence considering the turbulent times within our own country. There were so many problems within the United States (Watergate, the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Kent State) that there was no need to go elsewhere. Added to that is the understanding that we usually react to a crisis by pulling inward.

Significance of Study

This study is significant for the field of communication because it extends prior research in the areas of rhetoric and organizational communication, particularly as they relate to civic organizations.

Contributions to the Field of Rhetoric

I chose to look at one form of public address, the Annual Address, within a civic organization. The importance of this genre is that it represents members coming together to decide the future of their organization at its convention. The public address evidences the spoken words of the president of an organization and what was important for her to say to her convened delegates at a specific point in time. This is her moment to share her beliefs and vision for the organization with them.

The speeches I used for data charted the course of each president individually and all three collectively. The study did not look just at one person's speeches but addressed those of three presidents over 50 years. This longitudinal study provided a means of comparing the several values in different periods of history. As Elshtain (1981) reminds us, it is not just our individual characteristics which form our present being, but the cumulative knowledge of what has been our collective past.

Simultaneously, a specific area within public address, the Annual Address, was extended by looking at the Annual Addresses of a woman's civic organization. This study established a prototype Annual Address by imposing the criteria for a State of the Union Address as defined by Campbell and Jamieson on a civic organization's Annual Addresses. Those criteria include: "(1) public meditation on values, (2) assessments of information and issues, and (3) policy recommendations" (1990, 54). The Annual Address is important to an organization because it creates a sense of community within that organization. As a recurring, epideictic speech event, it also establishes a pattern of the type of rhetoric one could expect to hear at such a speech event. I was surprised that there was no pattern, no standard evident for what the president says in the Annual Address within a civic organization and found that the State of the Union Address established a useful prototype. The League of Women Voters with its 74 year history lends itself to such a longitudinal study because of the volume of data available to the researcher. In spite of having readily available data, I did not find a consistent

pattern among the Annual Addresses of these three Presidents; each seemed to have created her own manner of organization.

This study also extended the area of women's rhetoric. Women's clubs and organizations represent a little-known genre of women's rhetoric, and, yet, those groups have provided a place of community for women throughout this century. As members of volunteer civic organizations these women have also provided their communities with untold hours of service in both social and political areas. Their was evident, over the years, a growth in the sophistication of the Presidents which I would at least partly attribute to the stability of their organization and their ever-increasing experience, both individually and collectively, on the platform as well as in the public sphere.

Contributions to Organizational Communication

One significance of this study is that it extends organizational rhetoric to include the woman's civic organization. This organizational genre is seldom studied. It is my contention that the civic organization is more representative of a democratic society than business or governmental organizations because it represents the citizens in their capacity as volunteers for their communities and how they use their "non-work" time. "Citizen participation makes a place in the political system for public demands that might otherwise go unheard or unstated or unanswered" (Crenson 1974, 357). It follows that citizen participation makes good citizens, and good citizens make good government. By concentrating on a woman's political organization, this

study has granted legitimacy to the organization as well as to the members as viable citizens within their communities. This is significant because women continue to need to prove themselves in any area of political activity in the United States. While any positive display of women's contributions to society can further solidify their role in politics, an acceptance by the academy would likely result in continuing research about their socio/political role.

The study further extends our knowledge of the Annual Addresses of organizational presidents. I have already identified that the Annual Address is an epideictic speaking event which should meet three criteria: it rehearses the past; it explains the present; it suggests the future. It is also expected to use a standard rhetoric. In other words, we expect to hear the current speaker's version of the same pattern which has been used in the past. This is important because if we do not hear what we expect, then we feel unfulfilled. Because I did not find a pattern in these Addresses, I did not feel that they consistently presented an epideictic experience to their audiences. If they employed a prototype Annual Address, the presidents of civic organizations in general and the League specifically could be expected to deliver a sense of regularity in their Annual Addresses.

This study also extends longitudinal studies in organizational communication. Most studies concentrate on a specific period of the organization's history without allowing for comparison of several time periods. By having this study examine three presidential terms which occurred over a 50 year period, I was able to compare the presidents'

messages as they reflected not only the internal changes of the organization but also the external changes within the American society. The result was that I found the Presidents consistently explaining the external events but, just as consistently, spending the bulk of the time reporting what had happened within the organization. Another important objective of the longitudinal study was that there would be reactions and influences within the League from people who joined the organization at different periods of its history, thus having differing impressions about the organization. For example, many of the first leaders came from the Suffrage Movement and knew the founder, Carrie Chapman Catt, while it would be unlikely that many members during Percy Lee's term in the 1950's had been associated with the suffragists. Therefore, they each brought different expectations to the organization. Although the founder is not always physically present in later years, her memory continues as a guiding influence. I found that as we got farther from the founder's presence at the conventions, there was less mention of her. For example, Maud Wood Park referred to Catt often, but Catt was also present at the convention. Percy Lee called upon the memory of the founder several times, but by Benson's term the references to the founder were rare. Interestingly enough, the current President, Becky Cain calls upon the words and memory of Catt and former Presidents often in her speeches. Consequently, I suggest that these references are more a matter of a speaker's style than one of ignoring the founder.

This thesis also contributed information to the field of organizational communication with regard to organizational values. By

imposing the idea of the tensions which resulted from the organization's attempts to cope with external and internal influences upon those shared values, another dimension was added to the knowledge of an organization's values. Values tensions could be expected to be a natural result of value development. Therefore, any organization should expect to deal with those value tensions. This pattern of studying those value tensions could be replicated by other civic organizations.

Since an organization reacts to both its internal and external environments, it faces times of transition which are resolved by the way the leaders navigate those times. By identifying tensions which could be expected to result from the organization's values, I have set up a process whereby those transition times can be identified.

One final result of the contributions this study makes to organizational communication enlarges our appreciation for and supports the founder's values studies within the field. Since it is the founder's high ideals that establish the mood of the organization, it is important to understand how his or her values are superimposed on the organization. This subject should be studied because any study which looks at a founder's values can find a means of tracing them throughout the organization's history by identifying the suggested tensions which the leaders of that organization will have to negotiate. As I was able to show in this thesis, the founder's values can exist within an organization for a long period of time even though they have been challenged from without and within. Catt identified difficult goals for the members of the League, goals which they were able to negotiate and

maintain throughout its first 50 years. This is significant for future studies because it indicates that these values do play a major role in an organization since they establish the foundation upon which all other work is performed and provide a way to chart the development of the organization.

Contributions to the League of Women Voters

By comparing the Addresses of each of the Presidents over a period of 50 years, I provided a longitudinal, historical look at the League and watched the organization evolve. Prior studies of the League have been only historical or have been from the outside without benefit of an inside knowledge of the organization. By studying the League from the specific vantage points of organizational communication and rhetoric, I was able to broaden the research on the League and set up suggestions for future research.

Following the notion of evolution, one finding indicated that between the Addresses of Maud Wood Park and those of Percy Maxim Lee, we see a shift from the enthusiasm of discovery and wonder in women who had achieved a major victory to women who were part of an established organization. By the time we arrive at Benson's term, the League is an old organization with solidified procedures; it is too old to have reactionaries. Therefore, we can expect the rhetoric and the operations to be stable. Both Lee and Benson called for changes in procedure; we would not expect to see that in Park since she was concerned with creating the procedure the others would later want to change.

This thesis looked at the values of the founder of the League of Women Voters and the difficult goals she established for this organization. She asked the members to be non-partisan in a decidedly partisan environment. She advocated the responsibility of citizens to participate in the politics of their communities at a time when individualism was becoming more the norm. She called for both the education of the citizens on issues (Voters Service) and action by members toward local and national elected officials. Just as if no time has elapsed, League leaders still discuss these issues in their local board meetings, continuing the spiral Catt defined as taking us to a more open democracy. Throughout the League's history the Presidents talked of the values and consistently worked to fulfill Catt's goals even when the values were tension-ridden. The findings of this study indicate that research into the combination of values tensions and the Annual Addresses within organizations is a relatively unexamined area available for investigation.

Recommendations for Future Study

Out of the work for this study I suggest three possible future studies. Two are directly related to this study, and the other is tangential.

The first subsequent study I suggest would be an organizational study of the League, looking at the stages of an organization to identify where the League is at the present time. When I first read these Annual Addresses as a unit, I perceived that they progressed from being enthusiastic to being staid in their statements. Seventy-five

years as an organization can compare to people of the same age. They are slowing down, looking at life differently than they did when they were 20 or 50 years old. How will the League adapt to being a senior citizen? How is enthusiasm maintained in an organization? Can any future president reinstill the liveliness of youth along with the wisdom of age? I questioned whether the enthusiasm of its current President, Becky Cain, represented a new beginning, a second generation of the League, or whether she is part of the continual remaking of the organization. Part of this new study could locate the LWV in the larger political life of the country.

Another factor to consider in a study of the organization's stages is that in the past 75 years women have made many changes in their lives. How have women's organizations adapted to these changes? Can an organization adapt to these new women? Does such an action change the basic values of the organization?

Is the League in a more "business-like" stage so that the members spend too much time "doing" issues without putting themselves, their families, their descendants into the equation? What other roles could the League adopt within the political environment in the United States? Is it pragmatic for the League to advocate for a narrower range of issues, such as maintain good government, but delete International Relations; maintain city government finance but leave the environmental matters to the Sierra Club? After all, there are a multitude of special interest groups which could benefit from the knowledge, the study before action process, and the thoroughness of League members. From Benson we

heard a call for a lightening-up, an allowing of the local League to have more autonomy about its program issues and its action activities. The result has been that what the League stands for is increasingly more general, more theoretical. How it is played out in a specific location is adjustable.

Another study might look at whether the League needs to reinstate its sense of educating the American people on how to participate in democracy. Recent new waves of immigrants who have come from lands where there is no such tradition of participatory democracy find our system confusing. We have seen the newly-freed Eastern European nations fight to understand what their next step is, what is expected of them. The League's Polish and Hungary Projects are fulfilling Catt's original call for taking democracy throughout the world, the original purpose of the League. Without having the skills necessary for political participation the citizens of other nations are subject to continued usurpations of power. This problem revisits the obstacles Catt had with admitting the immigrant men before the American women to suffrage, to the vote, before they understood the system.

A future study could look at the situation as two-pronged. On the one hand, the League is helping the former Eastern Bloc nations establish the workings of democracy. On the other hand, are the League members doing an equal amount of work in this country to help immigrants and new citizens? Although many Leagues participate in naturalization ceremonies, we have seen that the League is so intent on the study of issues that it often ignores the promotion of political participation

with the people, the citizens. If the League does not actively encourage the political participation of United States citizens, then how much encouragement would we expect the League to give non-citizens?

A word of caution is in order here. The League is based on the American value system as evidenced by its founder. In order to work successfully in Poland or Hungary, the League must adapt its system and democratic principles to their value systems.

As I researched this paper, I was plagued with questions about the rhetoric of the League as a woman's organization; some of those questions suggest a third possible study. Research into women's voices before 1830 shows that the public platform was not available to them. By 1920 that was no longer the case. Women had access to the platform. The question arose, how did the Suffrage Movement and LWV leaders get the public and the governmental officials to listen to them during times when women were just getting their voice? Or, were the leaders listened to but not heard? In the case of the LWV, I think we can answer, yes. How have women been able to maintain a place on the platform? How has the League specifically been able to maintain it since these women have spoken against a background of intolerance to women on the platform, both then and now?

The Suffragists were a beautiful example of oratory in action for a specific cause with a decided positive result. That example does not have to be the last. Such a future study would definitely expand the area of woman's rhetoric. It is generally acknowledged that there are relatively few studies which deal with women and their rhetoric. By

concentrating on a women's organization, the study would expand our understanding of both women's and organizational rhetoric.

The League in the Future

The League has been influential in shaping public discourse by giving it a more "private sphere" perspective and keeping government responsible through monitoring good government activities. Through its adherence to its values and the participation by members in politics, the League has sown those values throughout the political arena. From the results of this study I have defined three recommendations or ideas to consider for the League.

The first one considers who benefits from the League's work: citizens, League members, elected officials? The organization was originally set up to benefit the citizens, but now it seems that the League member primarily benefits through her self-development while the elected officials benefit by receiving input on issues. Still, let us not define these benefits so narrowly. We must not lose sight of the fact that the League has always been a training ground for women who want to enter the political arena. These women then take the values and the process of the League as well as its emphasis on good government and disseminate this information throughout the community. Having a League member on a government board or commission or in an elected position adds the League's voice to those politics and indirectly benefits the citizens. Therefore, the League is more effective than it seems when we narrowly define the League's involvement with the citizens' political participation.

For the second suggestion I return to the organization's founding. As I finished this study, I realized that my main concern was whether the League has finished its mandate from Carrie Chapman Catt to make democracy safe for the nation and the world, to achieve final enfranchisement for all women of the world, and to remove any remaining legal discriminations against women. The League knows its material and is believable, but it has lost sight of and has not completed its original mission. By concentrating on just those issues, the League would not only "finish the fight" but also make this brave new world better able to embrace and adopt this democracy of which we say we are so proud.

My third suggestion revisits the Annual Addresses. Because I felt a sense of disorder and incompleteness from the jumble of Annual Address formats, I recommend that the League Presidents incorporate the criteria for an Annual Address into their speeches and consciously address the past, the present, and the future in each Address. This change will lend cohesion to the President's words and establish the importance of the Annual Address which it deserves. The Presidents will then establish a continuity for not only themselves but also for the delegates. Each convention gathers together a new group of delegates. There will be a core group which attends a series of conventions, but it will be joined by new delegates. Therefore, it is imperative that the President rehearse the values of her organization in order to pull these delegates together so they are reminded of what their organization represents, what its history is.

The message from the President will extend farther because these Addresses are usually printed in The National Voter; therefore, each League member will have access to the Address.

If the Presidents adopted this prototype Annual Address, they could forsake the "Report" or history only speech as we saw with Percy Lee. Each address would be a cohesive appraisal of the situation at that time.

Conclusion

I begin my final reflections with the presumption that researchers need to look at several angles (areas) before making a pronouncement. In the language of Gans they should look at both the user and supplier perspectives. Even when the researcher tries to be neutral, (s)he should be certain that she is "not taking sides implicitly" (Gans 1988, 169). I have tried to use my involvement with the League to give insight into its workings; I hope that the insight has not intruded. On the other hand, I have also struggled with revelations about the League which were not too flattering. In trying to resolve some of the suggestions I want to make, I find myself still in a quandary.

The League of Women Voters has a long, trusted history; therefore, we could expect that it should last. Why? The future of the League will come from its continuing reappraisal of its place in American society. Whether that is evidenced by a new mood or a restating of the old methods will have to be decided. For example, at the present time the leaders are trying to inject a new enthusiasm into the organization

through talk, and hopefully action, on diversity and through another national survey of "where we are" called the Crossroads study.

I believe that there are two main reasons why the League can maintain its vitality and purpose. One is that it is a bottom-to-top organization which readjusts itself at least annually locally and biennially at both the state and the national conventions. Consensus is the other mode in which the organization constantly reassesses its positions on issues and updates them when necessary. Together these methods have the ability to keep the League current. It is up to the members to decide if they want to adjust their purpose.

We saw the latter two presidents suggest changes in the procedure the League uses to arrive at its positions and then act. Should the League move faster and react rather than act? No, I think not. The League has prided itself on leading the parade, "not ambulance-chasing" but marching just ahead of the masses (Young 1989, 162). The League's purpose remains to be a burr under the saddle—to keep government from becoming complacent.

If the past indicates the future, then "the demonstrated solidity and resilience of the League in its first fifty years . . . give every reason for confidence in its ability to rise to the demands of the future" (Young 1989, 178). The important thing to remember is that we must learn from the past but not try to recreate or to change it. "The past can teach us many things, but not if we manipulate its pluses to compensate for our minuses" (Benson 1974, 14).

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