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"Go home Lucy Stone" : the women who fought against suffrage and their supporters

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**“GO HOME LUCY STONE”
THE WOMEN WHO FOUGHT AGAINST SUFFRAGE
AND THEIR SUPPORTERS**

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Stacy Catherine Beddeson

December 2003

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patricia E. Hill", written over a horizontal line.

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ABSTRACT

“GO HOME LUCY STONE” THE WOMEN WHO FOUGHT AGAINST SUFFRAGE AND THEIR SUPPORTERS

by Stacy Catherine Beddeson

This thesis is a study of the organized resistance to female suffrage in the United States. Believing only disaster would follow in the wake of enfranchisement, America's most conservative and wealthy women rallied together to stop the extension of suffrage to women. They began by forming small committees, becoming a full-fledged movement by the late 1800s. Although they ultimately failed, antisuffragists were effective in delaying female suffrage, utilizing the very public practices that they claimed to hate.

What this thesis reveals is the many reasons why women were opposed to female suffrage. It also investigates the backgrounds of several women, such as Josephine Jewell Dodge and Alice Hay Wadsworth, concluding that the movement was led and organized by society's most affluent women and that the campaign was not a monolithic crusade but a combination of several mini-movements that had one goal in mind—to stop female suffrage. Moreover, this thesis examines the influence and contributions of the three main forces behind the antisuffrage movement—big business, liquor lobbyists, and the religious camp.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION*

*Society is evidently in a period of rapid transition.*¹

- The *Baltimore Sun*, 1894

Between the end of the Civil War and roughly around 1900, Victorian America proved to be a complex culture, encompassing many characteristics that excluded women from the public sphere and affected the decades to follow. After blacks were granted the right to vote—more specifically, after the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteen Amendments collectively abolished slavery and broadened civil rights to include suffrage for former slaves—women, including Alice George and Ida Minerva Tarbell, insisted they deserved enfranchisement as well, claiming they were as oppressed as the blacks had been before emancipation. Ironically, however, not all women agreed.

* The title of this paper was coined from: "Gone Up," an editorial in *The Pueblo Chieftain* (October 9, 1877), reprinted in "Colorado Opponents of Woman Suffrage," *Woman's Journal* 8 (November 3, 1877): 352, retrieved on December 5, 2002, <http://womhist.binghamton.edu/colosuff/doc5.htm>.

¹ Quote taken from the *Baltimore Sun*, n. d., reprinted in "For and Against Woman Suffrage," *The Literary Digest* IX (May 5, 1894): 6.

For many women, female suffrage was a deplorable idea. Believing the work of mankind was inherently divided between men and women, typifying a social and political balance of power, these women did not consider themselves deprived of the vote but exempt from the hazards of political life. "Placed on a pedestal"² and praised for their pious and moral influence not only at home but also in society, they firmly believed that it was the responsibility of their husbands and fathers to legislate for their protection. "A man," noted historian Aileen Kraditor, "voted not for himself but for all the members of his family, as their political representative."³ Challenging this tradition, a new women's movement, otherwise known as feminism, developed at the turn of the century, creating major social changes directly affecting females and their relationship to the social order.

Feminism was not an "organized" movement but a new awareness that allowed women a sense of freedom they never had. "All women's movements and organizations taken together," said feminist writer Marie Jenney Howe, "form a part of feminism. But feminism means much more than these... more than a changed world. It means a changed psychology, the creation of a new consciousness in women."⁴ Simply put, women began to recognize their personal alienation was due to their subordinate roles as wives and mothers. Needing to break free from prescribed social and economic

² Prof. Robert Kumamoto, "Victorian Society." Lecture given at San Jose State University on March 19, 2002.

³ Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981), 24.

⁴ Marie Jenney Howe, "Feminism," *New Review* VI (August 1914): 441, quoted by Mari Jo Buhle, "Radical Feminism of the 1910s," (seminar paper, Brown University, 1974), 1.

institutions, they began to favor activities to match their interests and infuse them into society.

Although feminists' interests spanned a range of social reforms, female suffrage became a major focal point. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a pioneer of the women's rights movement and driving force behind the 1848 Convention claimed, "it is our duty to assert and reassert this right [to vote], to agitate, discuss and petition, until our political equality can be fully recognized."⁵ Nonetheless, many women did not share with their sisters the belief that the vote was the answer to their problems.

Feeling misrepresented by the small proportion of females fighting for enfranchisement, women opposed to suffrage repeatedly noted that only a minority of females wanted the "burden of the ballot."⁶ According to the 1910 U. S. Census, there were 24,555,754 women eligible to vote in the United States, but only a mere three to four million women confirmed they would go to the polls.⁷ With the majority ostensibly on their side, female antisuffragists often stressed that suffragists had no right to impose their ideas and opinions on *all* women. "Anti-suffragists," articulated an anonymous anti⁸ in *The Woman's Protest*, "believe that in democracy the majority should rule; and so long as Suffragists remain a very small fraction of the population they should not be allowed

⁵ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, quoted by Geoffrey G. Ward and Ken Burns, *Not For Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 44.

⁶ Everett P. Wheeler, "The Burden of Suffrage Ought Not to Be Imposed on Women Who Do Not Want It," in *The Woman and the Vote*, booklet of addresses given at Carnegie Hall, New York, January 26, 1914, published and distributed by The Man-Suffrage Association, 5.

⁷ "Ten Anti-Suffrage Reasons," *The Woman's Protest* 5 (September 1914): 10. These statistics were originally printed on a leaflet distributed by The Minneapolis Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women.

⁸ Female antisuffragists regularly referred to themselves as "antis," whereas males called themselves antisuffragists.

to force suffrage upon the women of the State.”⁹

Determined to stop female enfranchisement in America, antisuffragists engaged in activities that were inconsistent with their ultimate goals. They adopted strategies that pushed them into the public sphere, a move considered destructive to all of womankind. By campaigning and even lobbying, female antisuffragists showed they were so intent on stopping suffrage for women that they were willing to sacrifice their womanly images for the welfare of humanity.

Traditionally, historians have viewed the suffrage movement as the study of two distinct groups, those arguing “for” the enfranchisement of women and those fighting “against” it. As historian Elna C. Green commented, “suffragists and antisuffragists were locked in something resembling an organized ping-pong game, with each action of one group requiring a response from the other.”¹⁰ Yet, this position has shortchanged the history of female antisuffragists, since many of the conclusions made about women opposed to suffrage were based on the testimony given by suffragists, who were hardly in the position to offer credible information about the intentions of those involved in the antisuffrage movement.

Beginning in the 1960s, the rise of another women’s movement sparked a fresh interest in the history of female suffrage, raising new questions and ideas about not only the movement itself but also about the individual women who participated both “for” or

⁹ “We Do Not Wish to be Governed By Women Who Misrepresent Us,” *The Woman’s Protest* 5 (August 1915): 11.

¹⁰ Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), xii.

“against” it. First written in 1959 and later revised in 1975 and again in 1996, *Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States*, by Eleanor Flexnor and Ellen Fitzpatrick, demonstrated both arguments identifying hundreds of women. They only dedicated one chapter to the history of women opposed to suffrage, however. Still, in this one chapter, the authors accomplished more than almost all authors had done before them, because they included oral reports from individual female antisuffragists and official documentation from several organizations across the United States. In addition, they presented some analytical information about the suspected top three forces—big business, liquor lobbyists, and the religious camp—encouraging opposition to female suffrage.

Only recently has there been more interest in studies featuring those women who opposed their own right to vote, but most inquiries observe the female antisuffrage crusade from a particular viewpoint. In *Women Against Women: American Anti-Suffragism, 1880-1920*, published in 1994, Jane Jerome Camhi presented a thorough analysis of the antisuffrage campaign, but she focused primarily on upper-middle-class women. Likewise, 1997's *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign Against Women Suffrage*, written by Susan E. Marshall, offered an impressive examination of the antisuffrage movement, but she also concentrated on affluent women. Unfortunately, by focusing on prosperous women, mostly found in metropolitan areas, these authors neglected to mention other groups of women interested in the antisuffrage movement.

Though she did not write an entire book on women opposed suffrage, Elna C.

Green made an important point in *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Movement*. She claimed, “despite the presence of antisuffrage organizations in some southern towns and cities...the real heart of southern antisuffrage was rural.”¹¹ It is precisely because contemporary history still lacks a thorough investigation of all types of women, whether they be rich or poor or from the North or South, that the study of the antisuffrage movement still needs further attention. Moreover, besides the work of Eleanor Flexnor and Ellen Fitzpatrick, very few studies have commented on the influence and/or contributions of big business, liquor lobbyists, and the religious camp.

This thesis will begin with an examination of the many reasons why women were against female enfranchisement, explaining several of the justifications why women preferred to hold onto tradition rather than aid their sisters in the fight for their right to suffrage. In addition, it will offer the profiles of several *individual* women, such as Elizabeth Dwight Cabot and Lucy Scott, integrating “mini-biographies” to demonstrate that the antisuffrage movement was not necessarily a monolithic crusade since the females who took interest in the campaign did so for different reasons. Finally, this thesis will analyze the motives and effectiveness of three main contributors to the antisuffrage movement—big business, liquor lobbyists, and the religious camp—concluding that the antisuffrage movement needed help from powerful men in order to sustain itself.

¹¹ E. C. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 45.

CHAPTER II

WHY WOMEN WERE OPPOSED TO SUFFRAGE

*The anti-suffrage arguments are found to consist largely of fears.*¹²
-Eugenia Brooks Frothingham, n. d.

The opponents of woman suffrage employed a variety of arguments to influence public opinion against female enfranchisement. The complexities of such opinions are not the focus of this section, nor is the aim to define every reason. What the following will provide is a solid overview of some of the justifications used by female antisuffragists to, in the words of historian Susan Marshall, “keep women out of politics.”¹³

A threat to the home. Because the American Revolution so disrupted their customary lifestyle and failed to include them in the public domain, women in the nineteenth century were forced to develop a new image, one that meshed with the new republican society and did not compromise their obligations at home. For that reason,

¹² Eugenia Brooks Frothingham, “Fears of the Anti-Suffragist,” pamphlet published by the National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, New York City, n. d., 3.

¹³ Susan E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign Against Women Suffrage* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 94.

some females indulged in a separate but equally important identity for women—a concept otherwise known as Republican Motherhood—that provided a basis from which they could participate in public affairs without surrendering their traditional domestic roles.¹⁴ Celebrating their moral superiority over men, the granddaughters and great-granddaughters of the Revolution took pride in their duties as wives, mothers, caregivers, and preservers of the household. It was their responsibility to tend to the home, rearing healthy and obedient children and providing a place where men could rest after a full day's work.

Women opposed to suffrage assumed female enfranchisement would forfeit their respected place in society. “Many women,” historian Linda Lumsden confirmed, “opposed the suffrage movement because they believed women’s entrance into the political sphere spelled changes for women’s well-defined role in the home.”¹⁵ Females had an obligation to preserve and maintain the family unit, which was considered the root of society and social order.

Antisuffragists reasoned that females would become overwhelmed with the extra burden of voting. In 1914, Miss Alice Hill Chittenden, president of the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, explained, “the extension of suffrage to women does not mean the extension of another right to individual women. It means the imposition of political responsibilities upon all women in addition to those they already

¹⁴ As concluded in Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect & Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: The North Carolina Press, 1980), 283.

¹⁵ Linda Lumsden, *Rampant Women: Suffragists and the Right to Assembly* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 89.

have.”¹⁶ Women against female suffrage mostly feared wives and mothers would abandon their household duties and neglect their children if they became involved in public life. “We cannot spread ourselves over everything,” rationalized anti Mary Ella Swift. “We must work to be thorough in a few things, to have time to think, to learn that it is not a worth while attempt.”¹⁷

By remaining outside the political arena, with the exception of church and charity efforts, antisuffragists also argued females would have a better chance at transforming the world within their own realm. It was thought that there was no limit to a woman’s power at home, since females could exercise more political influence by nurturing sons, fathers, and brothers than they could with a single ballot. “Women can remake the world and remold the citizens to each succeeding generation,” exclaimed an article in *The Woman Patriot*. “Women have a greater, a nobler, a more spiritual and more powerful part to play in the world’s work than she can ever perform in politics.”¹⁸

Taking their roles as educators seriously, antisuffragists also reminded women of their responsibility to instruct and cultivate a wise voter. “Our need,” insisted anti Alice J. George, “is not more voters but better voters and if the men have failed...it is because the woman has neglected her part in training them to ideals of righteousness which shall be translated at the polls into votes for candidates who stand for that which is true and

¹⁶ Alice Hill Chittenden, “Why New York State Opposes Federal Amendment,” *The Woman’s Protest* 4 (January 1914): 5.

¹⁷ May Ella Swift, “Suffrage for Women a Handicap in Civic Work,” *The Woman’s Protest* 3 (August 1913): 3.

¹⁸ “The Right Road,” *The Woman Patriot*, May 11, 1918, 4.

clean in public life.”¹⁹ In this way, women were delegated a superior role, because it was up to them to guide males to make the best political decisions for everyone.

Jeopardizing God's plan. Influenced by Victorian culture, women based their feminine principles on virtue and piety. Therefore, the very idea of women *voluntarily* wanting to move into the male's sphere came as a shock to many females. “These women,” feminist writer Janelle Collett affirmed, “believed that God had entrusted them with certain duties, and that enfranchisement would lead to the destruction of their sacred role as mother and housewife.”²⁰ Writing for *The Reply: An Anti-Suffrage Magazine*, anti Helen Kendrick Johnson exclaimed,

What was the first Scripture ideal of woman's life and work? The statement of it has been strangely overlooked or misread, but it is as simple, as clear and as sweet as the ripple of a forest stream over its bed. It is this: “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Woman's life and work, then, was to be that of the world's nourisher, its food bringer, the world's beautifier, the world's teacher of righteousness. What a marvelous and glorious picture! How strangely it has been belittled! Man had gone as far as he was able—had shown power, intellect, organization. In response to his God-implanted dream of a being that could pass where he could not—into the realm of the unseen—into the moral and spiritual world, had come woman... This ideal was set for all time.²¹

To deny a woman her “natural right”²² to specialize in the functions she has been

¹⁹ Alice J. George, “Woman's Rights vs. Woman Suffrage,” pamphlet issued by The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, New York City, n. d., 8.

²⁰ Janelle Collett, “Created Equal: The Movement for Women's Suffrage,” *Remember the Ladies*, 2002. Feminist.com, retrieved on November 16, 2002, <http://www.feminist.com/resources/artsspeech/remember/rt15.htm>.

²¹ Helen Kendrick Johnson, “The World's Need of Women,” *The Reply: An Anti-Suffrage Magazine* 1 (May 1913): 8-9.

²² Grace Goodwin, *Anti-Suffrage: Ten Good Reasons* (New York: Duffield and Company, 1912), 18; Virginia B. Le Roy, “Should Women Vote? A Woman's Argument Against Woman's Suffrage,” *World To-Day* 15 (October 1908): 1062; “Against Suffrage for Women,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1895, 4.

granted by God was to stop her progress. Thought to have a higher destiny, many females believed that women's real power was at home and positive changes in society would occur only if they remained loyal to their Creator and his grand design, which meant staying out of public life. As historian Margaret Mary Finnegan articulated, "women influenced public policy through private entreaty and prayer and therefore did not need the ballot."²³

Though they believed women and men were created by God to perform certain functions in society, antisuffragists did not consider their duties less significant than those of men. "We acknowledge no inferiority to men," stated one of several bulletins distributed by the Illinois Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women. "We claim to have no less ability to perform the duties which God has imposed on us than they have to perform those imposed upon them."²⁴ Accordingly, the test of a woman's worth was based on her ability to solve the problems she faced as a female.

A sex antagonism. With the rise of industrialization, women began to enter fields of labor and education that were once solely dominated by men. Some toiled in factories or worked in shops, while others enrolled in colleges or medical schools. Realizing the many inequalities between men and women in the work force, especially the unequal distribution of wages, several females aspired to make changes, envisioning the right to

²³ Margaret Mary Finnegan, *Selling Suffrage: Consumer Culture & Votes for Women* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 84.

²⁴ Illinois Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women, "The Campaign of Noise," (bulletin number two, April, 1909), back cover.

vote as their answer to equality.²⁵ "In close company with these intellectual and professional aspirations, or indeed, part and parcel of them," concluded anti Emma G. Sebring, "came visions of political enfranchisement, yearnings to participate in the arena of politics, to share equally with man in civic privileges and responsibilities."²⁶ Yet, according to antisuffragists, a woman's transition from homemaker to political associate only agitated men and women alike, for now she was competing with a man for *his* position in the natural order.

Female antisuffragists insisted that in a healthy society there can be no rivalry between the sexes. Women had their domestic duties and responsibilities, and men were obligated to legislate for their protection. By challenging this tradition, women opposed to suffrage declared suffragists were fighting a losing battle, since men and women were predestined to be partners, not competitors. "Men and women," exclaimed anti Alice J. George, "are held together in a common relation to the social organism, and as society develops, the interests of its members become more and more harmonious, but not identical."²⁷

By trying to compete with men in the public sphere, female antisuffragists argued women would never be able to change society's view of women or achieve equality.

"Competition with men," pronounced the *New York Evening Sun*, "will not raise a

²⁵ Antisuffragists were quick to recognize that equal pay in suffrage states did not exist. After women were allowed to vote in Massachusetts, females received only sixty-two per cent of a man's earnings, and in Colorado, they received only forty-seven per cent. Ellen R. Robbins, "Why Woman Suffrage?," *National Magazine* 44 (May 1916): 267.

²⁶ Emma G. Sebring, "'The Call of the New Lady'," *The Woman's Protest* 6 (April 1915): 10.

²⁷ Alice J. George, "Why We Are Anti-Suffragists," *The Woman's Protest* 7 (October 1915): 5.

woman to a higher type of her sex nor make her the social equal to man."²⁸ For many antisuffragists, women's desire to compete with men in the political realm at all only demonstrated their egotism to rival men in general.²⁹

Considering their identity as women unique, female antisuffragists felt females should celebrate their power in the home rather than push for equality by entering a man's sphere of influence. "She must not prove her equality by doing in his way the things that man does," declared anti-Ida M. Tarbell, "but by doing the things for which she is fitted and which the world needs from her."³⁰ If women gained equality, the opposition believed the results would offset women's natural influence over social change and corrupt the special privileges entitled to them as wives and mothers.

The fear of women becoming too manly. To control and exercise legal and political power, men instinctively developed what was known as "manly virtues." They had to be firm, abrasive, and combative. Having only the male-model to follow, female suffragists often used militant and aggressive tactics to convey their reasons why women should be allowed to vote.³¹ "She [the suffragist] constantly pickets and pesters friend

²⁸ *New York Evening Sun*, n. d., reprinted in "Competition With Men Not Woman's Vocation," *The Woman Protest* 5 (July 1914): 10.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Ida M. Tarbell, quoted in Clara M. Hobbs, "Shall Women Vote? A Discussion by Readers of the *Outlook*: The Other Woman," *Outlook* 101 (August 3, 1912): 770.

³¹ It should also be noted that antisuffragists often compared American suffragists with English suffragettes, who regularly employed destructive strategies in their own fight for suffrage. For example, in one particular riot, several suffragettes, according to Scotland Yard authorities, "perpetuated deeds of arson, placed bombs, [and] destroyed the property of innocent victims." Gertrude Sanford Balmer, "Militancy in America," *The Reply* 1 (June 1913): 36. However, American women were not confronting the same immediate issues as English women. When the women of England began to fight for suffrage, ruthless politicians and policemen reacted by throwing females in jail, forcing them to live under filthy conditions. Consequently, English suffragettes responded with more militant tactics in order to martyr themselves for

and foe alike, threatening, wheedling, and bossing,"³² proclaimed *The Woman Patriot*. Though they gradually moved into the public realm themselves, antisuffragists abhorred this "imitation-of-man movement."³³

Women opposed to suffrage worried that females would lose their femininity. "The suffrage ideal of womanhood," wrote anti Emily P. Bissell, corresponding secretary for the Delaware Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, "is that of a woman putting on masculinity [and] assuming men's tasks."³⁴ In the world of politics, there was (and still is) bitterness, contention, stress, impatience, and excitement—everything adverse to what many considered the true character of a female at the turn of the century. Women were respected for their moral, tolerant, unselfish, and noble influences in society, and if they entered politics by way of the vote, where conflict and tension ruled the day, it was believed females were destined to lose such feminine qualities. "Woman in strife," warned Hon. Elihu Root, "becomes hard, harsh, unlovable, [and] repulsive."³⁵

Women lack physical strength. Compared to men, females were thought to lack the physical strength needed to implement the laws of the government. "To express it

the cause. Winnifred Harper Cooley, "Suffragists and 'Suffragettes,'" *The World To-day* 15 (October 1908): 1066-1071.

³² "Suffrage Senators Growing Disgusted with Women Managers," *The Woman Patriot*, June, 15, 1918, 2.

³³ "The Woman Patriot," *The Woman Patriot*, April 27, 1918, 4.

³⁴ Emily P. Bissell, "A Talk to Every Woman," *The Virginia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage*, n. d., 22, quoted in Jane Jerome Camhi, "Women Against Women: American Antisuffragism, 1880-1920" (Ph. D. diss., Tufts University, 1973), 40.

³⁵ Hon. Elihu Root, quoted in Clara M. Hobbs, "Shall Women Vote?," 769. Conversely, women opposed to suffrage also feared men would become too feminine. This assumption implied two things. First, suffragists wanted to "clean up" politics, making it more honest, moral, and respectable, but by doing so, they would "effeminize" the government and its policies, weakening its control and, in time, its stability. Second, if women were preoccupied with politics, men would be compelled to engage in feminine activities around the home, which would make them lose their "manly" qualities.

bluntly," asserted anti Olive L. Reamy, chairperson of the New Canaan Branch of the Connecticut Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, "the franchise belongs to man because he is physically able to enforce his will. Men are not law enforcers because they vote, but they vote because they are law enforcers."³⁶ Similarly, the National Anti-Suffrage Association, comprised of both men and women, reasoned, "the basis of government is PHYSICAL FORCE, and the physical power to enforce the law, without which the vote is useless, [and] is NEITHER POSSIBLE NOR DESIREABLE FOR WOMEN."³⁷

Though females were considered weaker in bodily strength, this did not mean society thought less of them in terms of power. "Women as a class," noted antisuffragist A. J. Wolfgarten, "are as strong as men, not in brute force, but in character, energy, ambition, etc."³⁸ Fittingly, women opposed to suffrage took pride in their physiological make-up, reinforcing the need to emphasize the differences between men and women and not the similarities.

Their bodies a planned scientific formulation, females were designed to contribute to the evolutionary process. "From their physical constitution," commented anti Ellen Coit Elliott, "women more than men must inevitably sacrifice themselves for the progress of the race."³⁹ To reject their physical disposition and its limitations would

³⁶ Olive L. Reamy, "A Review of 'Women and the Republic'," *The Reply* 1 (July 1913): 55.

³⁷ National Anti-Suffrage Association, "The Case Against Woman Suffrage," (pamphlet, Boston, 1916), 2. Capitalized writing as shown in pamphlet.

³⁸ A. J. Wolfgarten, "Shall Women Vote—An Attempt to Cut a Gordian Knot," *The Reply* 1 (April 1914): 279.

³⁹ Ellen Coit Elliott, "Let Us Therewith Be Content," *Popular Science* 51 (July 1897): 342.

be to disrupt the advancement of all mankind.

The frailty of women's minds. Not only did many females believe that women were physically inferior compared to men, but they also believed women were incapable of keeping up with the mentally-draining aspects of public life. Though they glorified “womanhood” as a special and unique privilege, female antisuffragists repeatedly used the argument that their sex was psychologically impaired. “Women’s sex is a handicap to her—always was and always will be,” explained a pamphlet distributed by the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women. “From youth to old age every woman requires regular periods of mental and bodily rest—when these are denied, her life and health and the birthright of her children are sacrificed.”⁴⁰ Therefore, assuming all females were predisposed to nervousness and other emotional impediments, women opposed to suffrage deemed females unfit for politics. “There are qualities in the nervous system of woman that... make at least certain forms of aggressive and responsible life dangerous...,” wrote an anonymous female antisuffragist. “Measured by fair rules of intelligent testing, I should say that the average zealot in the cause has about the mental age of eleven.”⁴¹

Feeling women might become psychologically overwhelmed, female antisuffragists further argued a woman should not waste her time trying to figure out politics but conserve her strength for the family’s sake. “All our wisdom and energy,”

⁴⁰ Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women, “Facts and Figures About Woman Suffrage, (Boston: January, 1915), quoted by J. J. Camhi, “Women Against Women,” 29.

⁴¹ “A Noisy and Selfish Propaganda,” *Elm Tree Monthly and Spirit of Age*, n. d., reprinted in *The Woman’s Protest* 7 (June 1915): 19.

maintained anti Metta Folger Townsend, "should be turned on the home, to show its importance and to dignify the task of mothering men."⁴² It was also feared that if a woman did too much, she would drive herself mad. In 1914, anti Anna M. Fielding uniquely expressed this very idea in a poem titled *Jill of All Trades*:

Now Jill was a woman of the Suffragist class,
Who tried to do much—unsuccessful, alas!
Her ambition was great, her ability small,
She thought without the vote she was held in
base thrall.

She claimed that no man could excel what
she knows,
Nor recognized handicaps sex does impose.
She struggled to be and accomplished so
much,
Success was a height she could not even
touch.

A wife and a mother, a teacher, a nurse,
Politician, musician, and then what is
worse,

She attempted so much, nervous wreck she
became;
Sanitarium's the place she's now playing
the game.

Her family and friends gave a sigh of relief;
They were weary of suffrage beyond all
belief;
The home seems more peaceful; they say
everyone,
"A Jill of all trades and a mistress of
none."⁴³

Despite the fact that antisuffrage women considered themselves mentally weaker than men, they did not think of themselves as unintelligent. "I doubt," stated anti Clara

⁴² Metta Folger Townsend, "Good Reasons For Opposition," *The Woman's Protest* 3 (June 1913): 3.

⁴³ Anna M. Fielding, "A Jill of All Trades," *The Woman's Protest* 3 (May 1913): 11.

A. Jess, "whether women could stand the strain, though there is nothing in their impulses and emotions preventing them from rendering just as good decisions as men."⁴⁴

Inappropriate for public discussion, a woman's intellect was supposed to remain muted and only demonstrated through the education of her children.

The connection of sexual behavior and the female vote. During the Victorian era, traditionalists were highly critical of sexual permissiveness. Feminists challenged this practice by deconstructing the sexual double standard between males and females and promoting changes in women's sexual habits. Because feminists were usually suffragists, women opposed to female suffrage condemned their provocative behavior, accusing them of being "sex fanatics."⁴⁵ Preaching to the *New York Times*, anti Josephine Dodge of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage warned, "a 'sex disturbance' lay at the heart of the suffrage movement."⁴⁶

Female antisuffragists frequently charged that suffragists dressed in an offensive manner, intentionally using their sexuality to attract support for their cause. "Some of them," informed the *Chicago Tribune*, "not only spoke to the passing men, but smiled at them, in an attempt to be winning [them over]. Not a few of the young women were overdressed and obviously wore a good deal of make up."⁴⁷ After witnessing a suffrage

⁴⁴ Clara A. Jess, "Couldn't Stand the Strain," *The Reply* 1 (August 1913): 80.

⁴⁵ "Sex Fanatics," *The Reply* 1 (November 1913): 173.

⁴⁶ "Can Militant Methods Gain Hold Here?," unidentified newspaper clipping, Reel 3, HSB Papers, quoted by L. Lumsden, *Rampant Women*, 89.

⁴⁷ "The Spectacle of Young Women 'Taggers,'" *Chicago Tribune*, n. d., reprinted by *The Woman's Protest* 4 (November 1913): 9.

parade in New York, Dodge noted, "the sex appeal was flagrant and a dominant note."⁴⁸

The erotic undercurrent displayed by many of the suffragists was perhaps a way to get attention, and female antisuffragists were quick to point out what they considered a lapse of good judgment. By degrading themselves, suffragists disgraced the female character. More importantly, they demonstrated how they could potentially persuade male voters at the polls. Speaking before the Committee on Rules, Mrs. O. D. Oliphant questioned, "if women begin campaigning like this before they get the vote, what will they do in an exciting political campaign?"⁴⁹

A risk to the State. Numerous female antisuffragists maintained that women's "possession of the ballot"⁵⁰ would slow progress and ultimately harm the nation as a whole. Though suffragists claimed that their vote would bring "a broader view" into politics, some women opposed to suffrage feared their contributions to governmental decisions would be impractical and irrelevant. "She," remarked anti Rose Terry Cooke, "is incapable of seeing correctly or judging impartially the character or conduct of others. A fit of hysterics, an access of reasonless anger, make her for the time being an irresponsible agent."⁵¹ In his autobiography, Frederic Harrison, a man well known at the time for his humanitarian efforts, wrote, "they [women] form opinions more quickly, less patiently, less coolly than do men... It is laughable to tell us that men and women are

⁴⁸ "Antis Condemn Paraders," *New York Times*, May 6, 1913, 16.

⁴⁹ Mrs. O. D. Oliphant, speaking at the "Committee on Woman Suffrage: Hearing before the Committee on Rules," House of Representatives, sixty-third Congress, second session, December 3, 4, and 5, 1913, 74.

⁵⁰ Gail Hamilton, *Woman's Wrongs: A Counter-Irritant* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1868), 109; Theodore Roosevelt quoted by Julia Ward in "Shall Women Vote?" *Outlook*, 777.

⁵¹ Rose Terry Cooke, "Woman's Council Table: A Symposium—Woman's Suffrage," *Chautauquan* 13 (April 1891): 74-5.

equally fitted by nature... Common sense records the contrary as a fact."⁵²

A woman's proper place in society was teaching her children to be good citizens, and if mothers were preoccupied with trying to keep informed about the latest issues, female antisuffragists worried the entire country might collapse. "It [female suffrage] is dangerous to the State, in that the true efficiency of citizenship lies in the moral responsibility of the individual, [and] the mothers of the nation are responsible for its morality,"⁵³ explained anti Georgianna S. Breese, president of the New Jersey Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. Working against nature, females would only initiate a "degeneration of public life."⁵⁴

An unpatriotic endeavor. A number of women opposed to suffrage reasoned that giving females the vote would be unpatriotic, especially after the United States entered the First World War. Indeed, the thought of suffragists continuing their fight for enfranchisement made female antisuffragists question their loyalty to the nation. "The true American woman," asserted Mrs. George F. Richards, "is too busy doing good and loyal work for her family and her country to stop to clamor for 'recognition.'"⁵⁵

For their part in the war effort, women were expected to care for their homes until their male family members returned from combat. It was up to the females to ration items and keep up morale. Writing for Boston's *American*, Miss Anne Morgan noted,

⁵² Frederic Harrison, quoted by Harold Owen, *Women Adrift: A Statement of the Case Against Suffragism* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1911), 146.

⁵³ Georgianna S. Breese, "'Women Have the Power to Mould Public Opinion,'" *Evening Sun*, July 23, 1915, reprinted by *The Woman's Protest* 7 (August 1915): 10.

⁵⁴ Annie Nathan Meyer, "Woman's Assumption of Sexual Superiority," *North American Review* 178 (January 1904): 104.

⁵⁵ Mrs. George F. Richards, "Washington News and Notes," *The Woman's Protest* 11 (September 1917): 8.

Once upon a time when the man went to war the woman remained home and wept. Now she must remain at home and do her part of the work. It deals with the economy of the home—with the bread and meat question. It deals with the keeping on [*sic*] circulation of the life blood of a country so that the fighting body may not suffer congestion.⁵⁶

Though some women took on new responsibilities, such as nursing the sick or working in manufacturing plants that produced ammunition and clothing, it was considered an injustice to all men if the women left behind neglected their households in order to pursue careers or other trades.

In addition, many suffragists were pacifists who frequently criticized the actions of the armed forces, and antisuffragists viewed this as an example of their inability to understand the need to protect their country. "The extent to which they will go in condemning the army and navy at this critical time in our history," stressed Mrs. John B. Heron, "is a good indication of their fitness to have a voice in the grave problems of the government."⁵⁷ It was also perceived as a direct insult to womanhood. As mothers and wives, thousands of women watched their husbands and sons leave for combat to defend not only their homeland against the saboteurs of democracy but also the honor and safety of their families.

Even before the United States entered the war, several female antisuffragists endorsed "preparedness," participating in several public events to show their patriotism. For example, on May 13, 1916, New York City had a Preparedness Parade, and though they refused to march, female antisuffragists set up a First Aid Station at Broadway and

⁵⁶ Anne Morgan, "Woman's Part in Preparedness," Boston's *American*, n. d., reprinted in *The Woman's Protest* 9 (June 1916): 6.

⁵⁷ Mrs. John B. Heron, quoted in *The Woman Protest* 7 (August 1915): 4.

Fourteenth Street.⁵⁸ They also took out numerous ads in newspapers and magazines. Demonstrating its allegiance to the war effort, the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage published the following resolution in *The Woman Patriot*:

Whereas, An emergence exists which may lead to the active engagement of the armed forces of the United States to protect the lives and property of American citizens, and

Whereas, The cost of conflict is minimized when all citizens contribute their share of service to their common country, therefore,

Be it resolved by the board of directors of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage:

That in harmony with our work for home and humanity the facilities of this organization be dedicated to the service of "America First."

That we cooperate with the United States government, the American Red Cross and other patriotic organizations in contributing to the comfort of the men who serve the nation on land and sea, and in providing for the protection and subsistence of the women and children who remain at home.⁵⁹

Like several of the women opposed to suffrage, many suffragists steadily showed their commitment to the war effort, but unlike the female antisuffragists, they demanded to be rewarded. As compensation, suffragists had only one prize in mind—the right to vote—and this infuriated antisuffragists. "In persisting in their untimely struggle," observed an article in *The New Republic*, "in nagging the President, and speaking of him with disrespect, in questioning his sincerity as they have done, in demanding the vote as a 'reward' of patriotic service... the leaders of the suffrage cause have been but poor patriots."⁶⁰

The evils of socialism. As social reform became prominent in American society,

⁵⁸ "Anti-Suffrage—For Patriotism and Preparedness," *The Woman Protest* 9 (June 1916): 5. Female antisuffragists did not march because "parading" was considered unladylike and usually associated with suffragists.

⁵⁹ "Antis For America First," *The Woman Patriot*, May 11, 1918, 6. The resolution was first adopted June 29, 1916.

⁶⁰ "Correspondence," *The New Republic* 13 (December 1917): 124.

more and more people began to join the Socialist Party. Under socialism, workers would own the means of their production rather than rich capitalists. In order for it to be a success, however, the nation would have to abolish some of the main forces guiding society. According to Frederick Engels, co-founder of socialism, "three great obstacles block the path of social reform—private property, religion, and the present form of marriage."⁶¹

To strengthen their party, socialists advocated female suffrage. Not too surprisingly, female antisuffragists accused them of using women, claiming socialists only supported the enfranchisement of women so they could influence females to vote for future socialist programs. "The Socialists," warned an anonymous antisuffragist in *The Woman's Protest*, "say that the women Suffragists... are merely striving to enfranchise women, while they, the Socialists, are striving to show women what to do with the ballot when they get it."⁶²

With the help of the female vote, women opposed to suffrage feared socialism would compromise their distinguished position in society. Historian Doris Weatherford concluded nearly every woman from the middle-class or higher wanted to keep her high status, which meant remaining superior to laborers. "Most anti-suffragists," she declared, "continued to be women married to wealthy men, and some did not hesitate to openly state that the reason they opposed the vote was that they wanted to keep their servants

⁶¹ Frederick Engels, quoted in "Why Socialists Are Suffragists," *The Reply* 2 (January 1915): 26.

⁶² Signed G. B., "Suffragism and Socialism," *The Woman's Protest* 3 (May 1913): 11.

and other working-class and black women in their secondary place.”⁶³

It was also assumed that socialism would double the vote of the poorer classes, lessening the effectiveness of the elite vote, which would subdue the elites’ concept of representation. Because only distinguished men were elected to make decisions for the good of the country, female antisuffragists felt the “ignorant vote”⁶⁴ of women would undermine an already well-managed republic. As ex-Justice Henry B. Brown of the United States Supreme Court articulated, “the possession of the ballot would at once add a mass of voters to the voting list who are little informed as to the questions that are before them, are little accustomed to deal with external pressure, and are correspondingly open to undue influence.”⁶⁵

Allied with socialism, female suffrage would also lend too much power to the individual. “One of the principles of Socialism,” read a pamphlet distributed by National Anti-Suffrage Association, “is that the interests of husband and wife are different, the INDIVIDUAL and NOT THE FAMILY should be the unit of the State, and the enfranchisement of women... is necessary to put this principle into action.”⁶⁶ By giving the individual too much voting power, female antisuffragists worried the home might become threatened. As anti Alice J. George explained,

⁶³ Doris Weatherford, *A History of the American Suffragist Movement* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1998), 168-9.

⁶⁴ Mrs. George F. Arnold, “‘Ignorance of the Real Issues,’” *The Woman’s Protest* 6 (April 1915): 14; Heloise Edwina Hersey, *To Girls: A Budget of Letters* (Boston: Small, Maynard, & Company, 1901), 166-167.

⁶⁵ Henry B. Brown, “Selected Arguments Opposed to Woman Suffrage,” in Edwin DuBois Shurter, ed., *Bulletin No. 233 of the University of Texas: Woman Suffrage Bibliography and Selected Arguments* (Austin: University of Texas, June 12, 1912), 59-60.

⁶⁶ National Anti-Suffrage Association, “The Case Against Woman Suffrage,” 27. Capitalized writing as shown in pamphlet.

There are just two ways... in which a married women can vote—either with her husband or against him. If she votes with him she merely doubles the vote without changing the result. If she votes against him, then the family ceases to come in contact with the State as a unit—which is exactly what Socialists want.⁶⁷

* * *

Predicting only disastrous results if females were permitted to vote, women opposed to suffrage believed political involvement would place women in a vulnerable position where they would be readily exploited. Though female suffragists worked endlessly to counter the image of feminine passivity in politics, their sisters strove to preserve the “traditional” woman in her separate sphere. For the most part, women opposed to suffrage were equally concerned with social order and feminine power but believed their influence should remain in the home. In an age when only a very small proportion of married women worked, the prospect of females moving into politics meant changes in the already well-defined role of “civilized” American women. Given the many reasons why women were against female suffrage, it becomes necessary to rediscover the variety of women involved in the female antisuffrage crusade.

⁶⁷ Alice J. George, quoted in National Anti-Suffrage Association, “The Case Against Woman Suffrage,” 27.

CHAPTER III

THE WOMEN OPPOSED TO SUFFRAGE AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

*Women opposing suffrage are not the drones and parasites
the suffragists love to call them, but earnest, thoughtful women.*⁶⁸
- I. T. Martin, 1912

In 1871, the first organized opposition to female suffrage mobilized. Based primarily on a combination of the several explanations already mentioned, nineteen women rallied together and published a petition in the editorial section of *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*.⁶⁹ The petitioners not only educated females about the dangers of the female vote but also, with the approval of *Godey's*, invited women to copy the petition and gather signatures in their neighborhoods. As a result, by the end of the year, five thousand names were gathered and presented to the United States Congress.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ I. T. Martin, "Concerning Some of the Anti-Suffrage Leaders," *Good Housekeeping* 55 (July 1912): 80. See Appendix A for the names of women in leadership positions.

⁶⁹ Petition and the women's plea found in "Editor's Table," *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, May, 1871, 476, noted in S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 19-20. It is unknown exactly who the nineteen petitioners were or from where they originated. The magazine itself appealed mostly to upper-class females, expressing guidance and suggestions as to how women should behave in the home and in society.

⁷⁰ The claim of the number of signatures was made by Madeline Vinton Dahlgren, *Thoughts on Female*

The women who signed this first petition were not secluded homemakers. They were urban socialites, embodying all the qualities of privileged American women.⁷¹ Married to wealthy and powerful men, the signers remained modest about their political and cultural influence. For example, four were married to Republican senators, one was the wife of Civil War general William Tecumseh Sherman, one was married to the former governor of Ohio, while another was the wife of the chaplain of the United States House of Representatives.⁷² Looked up to by other females, these upper-class women felt obligated to make a difference in their communities by becoming the initial leaders of the antisuffrage movement. It was their way of contributing to the security of the American political system, as well as preserving their privileged place in society. Although their social status made them renowned, only a few had professional accomplishments of their own.

Catharine Esther Beecher, an accomplished author and educator, was one of these women.⁷³ She became famous after writing *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*, which was first published in 1841. In *A Treatise*, Beecher urged women to stay home, where they could best influence the morality of American society. Helping to standardize female household duties and reinforce womanly values, she went on to write other

Suffrage and in the Vindication of Women's True Rights (Washington, D.C.: Blanchard, Mohun, 1869), 3, noted by S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 20.

⁷¹ See: Susan A. Ostrander, *Women of the Upper Class* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984) for more information about the lifestyles and psychological make-up of upper-class women in Victorian America.

⁷² S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 20.

⁷³ See: Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976) for the life story of Catharine Beecher.

articles and books, including "Female Education" (1827), *The Duty of American Women to Their Country* (1845), *Common Sense Applied to Religion* (1857), and, with Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home* (1869). Although she never married or had any children of her own, Beecher was able to provide guidance to woman across America on the many facets of domestic life.

Perhaps this was in part due to the fact that she came from a prominent family. Her father, Lyman Beecher, was a famous evangelical minister. She was the sister of suffragists Henry Ward Beecher, Isabella Beecher Hooker, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, who became famous after writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1851. Furthermore, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, author of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, was her great-aunt.

By 1871, when the petition was submitted to Congress, Beecher was an elderly woman. Of all the petitioners, she was the only unmarried woman who signed her own name. Until a year before her death on May 12, 1878, she continued to write in opposition of female suffrage, and after her death, Beecher's work was reprinted and often referred to in countless forms of antisuffrage literature.

Another accomplished signatory was Madeleine Vinton Dahlgren. She was the daughter of Romaine Madeleine Bureau and Samuel Finley Vinton, who was a congressman and leading figure in the national Whig party. In 1865, at the age of forty, she married her second husband, Admiral John Adolph Dahlgren, a legendary naval officer and inventor of the Dahlgren gun. Founder of the Washington Literary Society and Ladies Catholic Missionary Society, Dahlgren was committed to several noble ventures, but she gained most of her fame as a prolific writer.

Though she penned several works,⁷⁴ *Thoughts on Female Suffrage and in the Vindication of Women's True Rights* (1871) was Dahlgren's most famous work concerning her opposition to female suffrage. Possibly in response to English feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792),⁷⁵ which argued that women should have the same rights as men, *Thoughts on Female Suffrage* claimed women were created by God to be the moral educators of society and should remain at home to complete His plan. Within months of the petition's publication, Dahlgren alone gathered one thousand of the five thousand signatures presented to the United States Congress in 1872.⁷⁶ Stepping further into the public sphere in January of 1878, she, along with several fellow antisuffragists, went before the United States Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections to lead an argument against the proposed sixteenth amendment to the Constitution that would allow for female suffrage.

In addition to Catharine Beecher and Madeleine Vinton Dahlgren, Almira Hart

⁷⁴ Madeleine Vinton Dahlgren's collection of writings include: poems and short stories printed in the *New York Tablet* and other newspapers; manuscripts, such as "Memoir of Ulric Dahlgren" (1872), "Memoir of John A. Dahlgren" (1882-1891), "Etiquette of Social Life in Washington" (1873-1881), which was later titled "The Social-Official Etiquette of the United States" (1894), and "Samuel Finley Vinton: A Biographical Sketch" (1895); books, like "South Sea Sketches" (1881), "South Mountain Magic" (1882), "A Washington Winter" (1883), "The Lost Name" (1886), "Lights and Shadows of a Life" (1887), "Divorced" (1887), "Chim, his Washington Winter" (1892), "The Secret Directory" (1896), and "The Woodley Lane Ghost and Other Stories" (1899); and various foreign language translations, such as "Pius IX and France in 1849 and 1859" by Charles Forbes Rene de Tryon, the Count of Montalembert (from French, 1861), "Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism and Socialism Considered in Their Fundamental Principles," by Juan Donoso Cortes, the Marquis of Valdegamas (from Spanish, 1862), and "The Executive Power in the United States: A Study of Constitutional Law," by Charles Adolphe de Pineton, the marquis of Chambrun (from French, 1874).

⁷⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* reached a wide audience in its day and was referred to time and again by suffragists.

⁷⁶ Eleanor Flexnor and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959; reprint 1975, 1996), 287 (page citations are to the 1996 reprint edition).

Lincoln Phelps was quite influential. Though she was *not* one of original signers, Phelps was most likely responsible for the petition's placement in *Godey's*. An extremely gifted writer and educator, Phelps had connections to an array of publishers who empathized with her antisuffrage sentiments.

After the death of her first husband, Simeon Lincoln, editor of the *Connecticut Mirror* of Hartford, Phelps became a teacher for the next eight years at Troy Female Seminary, which was founded by her sister, Emma Hart Willard. In 1829, she published a highly praised textbook, *Familiar Lectures on Botany*,⁷⁷ and married her second husband, John Phelps, in 1831. From 1838 to 1839, Phelps was the principal of the Young Ladies' Seminary in West Chester, Pennsylvania, and then spent the next fifteen years as head of the Female Institute of Rahway, New Jersey. While most schools offered "polite attainments"⁷⁸ for women, she created curriculums that were rich in the sciences, mathematics, and natural history, raising the standards for females in academia. Though this may seem out of sync with the usual arguments against female suffrage, Phelps believed females were the teachers of the world and needed to be educated in all fields in order to be as useful as possible in society.

Despite the efforts of the first female antisuffragists, a full-fledged movement failed to develop in the United States. For the next twenty years, many women continued

⁷⁷ Throughout her years, Almira Hart Lincoln Phelps continued to publish a variety of books and textbooks. They include: *Lectures to Young Ladies* (1833), *Botany for Beginners* (1833), a novel called *Caroline Westerly* (1833), *Geology for Beginners* (1834), *Chemistry for Beginners* (1834), *Natural Philosophy for Beginners* (1836), *Lectures on Natural Philosophy* (1836), *Lectures on Chemistry* (1837), *Christian Households* (1858), *Hours with My Pupils* (1859), and another novel titled *Ida Norman* (1848).

⁷⁸ "Phelps, Almira Hart Lincoln," *Women in American History by Encyclopaedia Britannica*, retrieved on July 9, 2003, http://search.eb.com/women/articles/Phelps_Almira_Hart_Lincoln.html.

their opposition but did so in a modest fashion. Some sent letters to the government and/or distributed literature while others became involved in legislative hearings, hiring “male counsel”⁷⁹ to represent them. A few even met in groups to share their opinions and discuss what further actions they could take.

In 1882, thirteen Boston women, calling themselves the Committee of Remonstrants, assembled regularly to monitor the actions of suffragists. Under the leadership of Nancy Houghton, wife of the founder of Houghton-Mifflin Company, they kept a watchful eye on state legislatures, becoming alarmed in 1889 when nineteen states began to take into account women’s rights, which included female suffrage.⁸⁰ Still, it was not until early 1890, after the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) reunited,⁸¹ that the Boston Committee of Remonstrants began to reconsider their conservative strategy opting for a more aggressive approach. For example, in late 1890, they published the first issue of *The Remonstrance*, a yearly publication until 1907 when it was published quarterly, dedicated solely to warning the public about the problems associated with female suffrage.

In the early part of 1895, the Massachusetts state legislature passed the Wellman bill. The measure allowed all women who were already qualified to vote for school

⁷⁹ E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 287.

⁸⁰ S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 24.

⁸¹ When the suffrage movement first began, suffragists were split in into two factions—the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). Headed by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, NWSA opted for a more radical approach in order to acquire female suffrage, while AWSA, created by Lucy Stone, Henry B. Blackwell, Julia Ward Howe, T. W. Higginson, and others, wanted to exercise a more conservative strategy. After twenty-one years of operating independently of one another, the two groups merged in 1890 to become the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

suffrage to vote on the issue of female municipal suffrage in a “mock” referendum.⁸²

While this provided suffragists with an opportunity to prove their voting capabilities, it infuriated antisuffragists, forcing them again to reassess their tactics. Before the votes were tallied, the Boston Committee of Remonstrants responded to the experiment by formally organizing as the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women (MAOFESW) in May 1895. The outcome of the “mock” referendum was disastrous for suffragists, and antisuffragists were quick to point out the negative results. Publishing his thoughts in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Lyman Abbott commented,

Of the 575,000 voting women in the state only 22,204 cared for it enough to deposit in a ballot box an affirmative answer to this question. That is, in round numbers, less than four per cent wished to vote; about ninety-six per cent were opposed to woman suffrage or indifferent to it. That this expresses fairly well the average sentiment throughout the country can hardly be questioned.⁸³

Calling itself a women’s organization, MAOFESW concentrated on the “clerical” aspects of the movement, relinquishing the “political” aspects to the men’s Massachusetts Anti-Suffrage Association.⁸⁴ “Our women members,” said Miss Evelyn Sears, “have been busy organizing branches all through the State and canvassing for

⁸² By the 1890s, several states had passed a School Suffrage Act, allowing both men and women the right to vote in school meetings.

⁸³ Lyman Abbott, “Why Women Do Not Wish the Suffrage,” *The Atlantic Monthly* (September, 1903): 289, internet article retrieved on November 24, 2002, http://womenshistory.about.com/library/misc/bl_life_1906.htm.

⁸⁴ The Massachusetts male organization was apparently known by different names. For example, it was dubbed “Massachusetts Man Suffrage” in S. E. Marshall’s *Splintered Sisterhood*, “Men’s Massachusetts Anti-Suffrage Committee” in Louise L. Stevenson, “Women Anti-Suffragists in the 1915 Massachusetts Campaign,” *New England Quarterly* 53 (March 1979): 81, and “Man’s Suffrage Association” in James Kenneally, “Woman Suffrage and the Massachusetts ‘Referendum’ of 1895,” in *Historian XXX* (August 1968): 622 and *The New International Encyclopaedia*, transcribed by Miriam Medina, retrieved on July 13, 2003, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~blkyn/Vote/Suffrage.html>.

signatures, but we have left the political end entirely to the men.”⁸⁵ By cooperating with the men’s group, the women of MAOFESW were able to justify their activities since “assisting men” was an acceptable duty for women.

In addition to clerical work, MAOFESW also focused on educating the public about the dangers of female suffrage. “Our greatest desire,” claimed MAOFESW, “is to promote study of the subject.”⁸⁶ Another way to rationalize their actions, “suffrage education” provided a basis from which antisuffragists could protect their traditional womanly image and recruit members. Creating an educational committee, MAOFESW became ultra proficient in the production and distribution of antisuffrage literature.

Throughout its years of operation, MAOFESW had several different presidents. Its first leader was Elizabeth Dwight Cabot, a hard-working community volunteer in the Boston area and wife of James Elliot Cabot, a prominent architect and author. After enjoying a privileged childhood,⁸⁷ she became determined to give back to her community quickly learning the value of charity work and the importance of club activities. In particular, for nearly twenty years, she acted as a Brookline overseer of the poor. While acting as president of MAOFESW, Cabot was also the chair of the Volunteer Aid Society, a member of the Brookline School Committee, and president of the Mayflower Club, a “ladies’ club” where women took refuge from their domestic responsibilities.

⁸⁵ “Some Things Men Can Do Better,” *Boston Advertiser*, April 22, 1915, reprinted in *The Woman’s Protest* 7 (May, 1915): 16.

⁸⁶ MAOFESW, Annual Report, 30 April 1896; MAOFESW, EC, 12 October 1900, 10 May 1901, 25 March 1904, 13 January 1905, 10 November 1911, 8 December 1911; MAOFESW, EDC, 11 January 1896, 9 November 1898, 15 December 1898; MAOFESW, EOC, 4 October 1911, quoted in S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 185.

⁸⁷ Cabot’s father had made a fortune in the textile industry.

Following Cabot's death in 1901, vice-president Mary Lyman Guild became the next president of MAOFESW in 1902. After almost six years in operation, the organization decided it needed more help, and Guild suggested to solicit an official all-male advisory committee.⁸⁸ At one meeting, where the community's elite male members were in attendance, she appealed to the audience by giving the impression that the women of the organization were overwhelmed. "Our hands are full," Guild pleaded, "the work is not easy, and we ask that we be relieved of at least part of the burden."⁸⁹ Although two male committees—one to consult with and the other to help with raising money—were eventually formed, official membership was never extended to any of the men. In 1905, Guild resigned as president of MAOFESW but remained on the executive staff.

From 1905 to 1910, Cora Lyman Shaw acted as president of the organization. She was the daughter of a U.S. congressman and Harvard overseer and granddaughter of Theodore Lyman, who was once the mayor of Boston. Married to G. Howland Shaw, who created the Calumet and Hecla copper mines with his brother Alexander Agassiz, Shaw was a founding member of the Boston Committee of Remonstrants in 1882. An elderly woman by the time of her presidency, she was overruled much of the time by younger female antisuffragists. Shaw relinquished her position to Mary S. Ames.

For three years, Ames served as president of MAOFESW. Born into an extremely

⁸⁸ Though the Massachusetts Anti-Suffrage Association was still an ally of MAOFESW, it had little time to deal with MAOFESW's agenda.

⁸⁹ Mary Lyman Guild, "Address at a Conference of the Executive Committee with Gentlemen, March 30, 1906," MAOFESW, quoted in S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 71.

wealthy family, she used her status to help underprivileged women, becoming a part of numerous charity and aid organizations throughout her life. While leading the group, she also remained vice-president of the Women's Municipal League of Boston and an officer of several philanthropic and educational societies, including the Boston Home for Incurables, the Woman's Free Hospital in Brookline, the Industrial School for Crippled and Deformed Children, and Broke House, a home for working girls.⁹⁰ In 1913, she left MAOFESW to become the vice-president of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.

MAOFESW then enlisted Henrietta Codman to be its next president. Codman, wife of James M. Codman, a well-respected lawyer, was involved in civic affairs throughout her life. In the 1880s, she was elected to be a Brookline overseer of the poor and later became a member of the State Board of Lunacy and Charity. During her time as president of MAOFESW, Codman also remained the organization's treasurer and a member of the Mayflower Club. Though she remained on MAOFESW's executive committee until 1919, Codman resigned her position as president in 1915, handing the reigns over to Catherine Balch.

By the end of 1917, MAOFESW started to have leadership troubles. Unable to keep up with the demanding schedules needed to stay ahead of suffrage victories in several states, core leaders, including Catherine Balch, began to resign their positions by the end of that year. As a result, MAOFESW no longer had a president but a

⁹⁰ I. T. Martin, "Concerning Some of the Anti-Suffrage Leaders," 81.

“chairperson” to watch over the group’s activities. The first and only chair for the Massachusetts Association was Mrs. Stephen S. Fitzgerald.

A few months after MAOFESW began, the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NYSAOWS) formed. While the Wellman bill initiated the antisuffrage movement in Massachusetts, a Constitutional Convention instigated one in New York. In 1894, the state of New York held a Constitutional Convention allowing female suffragists to request a state suffrage bill. Having no organization to represent them, women opposed to female suffrage began to have “emergency protest meetings.”⁹¹ In Brooklyn, Mrs. William A. Putnam led a small committee in her neighborhood. In Albany, Mrs. John V. L. Pruyn chaired a group, and in New York City, Mrs. Francis Lynde Stetson asked women to meet regularly at her house. For less than a year, each group spent much of its time collecting signatures, eventually sending the names of seventeen thousand women, all of whom were twenty-one years old and residents of the state, to Hon. Elihu Root who presented them to the state legislature.⁹²

Realizing the need for proper organization, the groups met at the home of Mrs. Abram Hewitt and formed NYSAOWS in 1895. Like MAOFESW, the New York group focused on recruiting new members and educating the public about the dangers of female suffrage. “The aim of the association,” wrote Mrs. Barclay Hazard, “is to increase general interest in the subject which its name indicates, and to educate and stimulate

⁹¹ Mrs. Barclay Hazard, “The New York Anti-Suffrage Association,” *Harper’s Bazar* 43 (July 1909): 730.

⁹² Ibid.

public opinion to an intelligent opposition.”⁹³

The first president of NYSAOWS was Lucy Scott. Wife of Francis M. Scott, who represented the New York opposition in 1894 and later became a state supreme court justice, she became one of the first women to speak for herself at an antisuffrage legislative hearing. Addressing the Senate Judicial Committee in 1895 with a short speech, Scott demonstrated to an unaware body of men that *women* were against female suffrage, which proved to be an effective device for the opposition. On March 24, 1897, she went before the Committee again. This time Scott prepared a longer address offering several reasons why women were against female suffrage, all of which stemmed from the fundamental argument that men and women were different. In closing, she pleaded that women would be overburdened if they were expected to vote.

You are asked to give all women the ballot. Not the widow and the spinster only, but all women, and I am here to ask you whether women are not already doing their full half of the world's work; to beg you to consider whether they have done their share so well, with so much time and energy, and ability to spare, that you are justified in asking them to take a part of your work in addition, and finally to impress upon you the fact that I speak for thousands of women, who look to your decision to leave them opportunity for consistent development, and pray that their lives may not be hampered and held back by the obligation to enter upon political life with its distractions, its struggles and contentions.⁹⁴

Abby Hamilin Abbott was the second president of NYSAOWS from 1903 to 1907. During her time as leader, she published several pieces of antisuffrage material including an article titled *Why Women Do Not Want to Vote* and one of her public

⁹³ Mrs. Barclay Hazard, "New York Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage," *Chautauquan* 59 (June 1909): 85.

⁹⁴ Lucy Scott, "Address Delivered before the Judiciary Committee of the Senate of the State of New York, March 24, 1897," reprinted in a pamphlet published by the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 7.

speeches titled *Mrs. Lyman Abbott on Woman Suffrage: Address Before the Anti-Suffrage Society of Albany, New York*. Wife of Lyman Abbott, a prominent clergyman and author, who himself wrote numerous pieces of antisuffrage literature, she felt very strongly about preserving the image of true womanhood. "The position of defense is never easy," noted Abbott, "and our duty requires patience that is not experience, it calls for readiness which is not aggressive, and vigorous expression of our views which must never be acrimonious."⁹⁵ In 1907, Carolyn Haines Putnam, the former chair of the Brooklyn auxiliary and wife of William A. Putnam, took her place and became the third president of NYSAOWS until 1913.

The fourth president of NYSAOWS was Miss Alice Chittenden. Before her tenure as leader of the organization, she spent time as an overseer for the Friendly House Settlement and became a member of the council of the Brooklyn parks and playground committee. A gifted writer, Chittenden wrote several articles as president of NYSAOWS. In one particular piece, titled "The Counter Influence to Woman Suffrage," she asserted her concerns about working women but remained steadfastly against the ballot to improve their situation. "No one," she stated, "can close his eyes to the fact that the road traveled by the woman who has been forced into a position of economic independence is hard and difficult, but it is a false notion to suppose that the ballot will be the panacea to bring about the much needed changes."⁹⁶ While acting as president of

⁹⁵ Abby Hamilin Abbott, "Why Women Do Not Want to Vote," 3, quoted in S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 106.

⁹⁶ Alice Hill Chittenden, "The Counter Influence of Woman Suffrage," *Independent* 67 (July 29, 1909): 249. In the 1920s, Chittenden went to Europe as a Red Cross volunteer and later became active in partisan

NYSAOWS, Chittenden also became a member of the Industrial Commission, which investigated the conditions of wage-earning women and children in the state of Connecticut.

Between 1918 and 1920, the leadership of NYSAOWS was unstable. Reacting to the New York suffrage victory, the organization was unsure of what to do next. In 1918, Miss Mary Kilbreth led the group but left after six months to help defeat the federal suffrage amendment in Washington. Afterwards, the group dissolved as NYSAOWS, renaming itself the Women Voters' Anti-Suffrage Party, which was headed by Mrs. Charles Fairchild.

Following MAOFESW and NYSAOWS, other state organizations began to form throughout the country. By 1900, antisuffrage associations could be found in Illinois, California, South Dakota, Washington, and Oregon. Of these, the Illinois Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (IAOWS) was the most active.

Reluctant to be in the public spotlight or hire counsel to represent it, IAOWS focused its efforts on circulating literature rather than activity on the legislative floor. One of the group's concerns was the advancement of socialism if women were allowed to vote. Addressing this issue, one bulletin printed by IAOWS commented:

Socialism, the parent of woman suffrage, twin born with Anarchy and for so many years interwoven with it that it was difficult to separate them, has a strange

politics helping found the Women's National Republican Club and serving two terms as its president.

and peculiar character and history, and one which plainly challenges the attention of all thoughtful and loyal citizens. It is undermining the constitution of the United States; it is bamboozling the political world; it is honey-combing the church; it is leading women astray from their natural and legitimate labor; and it is especially and without any logical reason making of men the ruined victims of a false and pernicious doctrine as fatal to all natural and healthy development as the fabled maism of the Upas tree.⁹⁷

The founder and long-time president of IAOWS was Caroline Fairfield Corbin. Daughter of Jason Williams, she was educated at Brooklyn Female Academy as a young woman. Also the founder of the Association for the Advancement of Women, she believed woman suffrage brought with it "mischievous teachings... [and] false ideas."⁹⁸ Fearing the natural relationship between the sexes would be perverted, Corbin became an avid writer for the opposition, publishing numerous articles and pamphlet. In one article, titled *Where Woman's Work Is Most Needed*, she not only discussed how a woman's place was in the home caring for her children and husband, but also how a female's respected place in society would decline if she were to vote. "When women are given the ballot," she wrote, "when the change is even strongly suggested, women instead of being uplifted, speedily become the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the race of male politicians."⁹⁹

With the growing pace of suffrage successes, antisuffragists realized the need to show their strength in numbers, so state associations developed various strategies to

⁹⁷ Illinois Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, "Woman Suffrage: A Socialistic Movement," (bulletin number seventeen, February, 1913), 7.

⁹⁸ J. J. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 439. Corbin's most famous book was *Letters from a Chimney Corner*.

⁹⁹ Caroline F. Corbin, "Where Woman's Work Is Needed Most," *The Reply* 1 (June 1913): 35.

recruit new members. One of the easiest tactics was to utilize kinship ties. For example, founder of the first Rhode Island antisuffrage committee in 1903, Mrs. William Ely was originally recruited into the movement by her mother, Henrietta Codman, who at the time was an officer of MAOFESW. Some members were daughters of famous male antisuffragists, such as Eliza Greene, whose father Episcopal bishop William Croswell Doane of Albany regularly preached about the dangers of women in the public sphere. Others were married to male antisuffragists like Pauline Kleber Wells, president of the Texas Association Opposed To Woman Suffrage, who was married to James B. Wells, a political boss in southeast Texas.

Beyond familial kinship bonds, there was also the ancestral connections. The Maine Association Opposed to Suffrage for Women recruited members through Puritan bonds. Likewise, the New York Association's first three presidents had kinship ties to Puritan Boston. While establishing their state associations, both the Illinois and Oregon organizations called on their New England Yankee sisters to help organize and recruit members.

Another way antisuffragists recruited members was by visiting women's clubs and "patriotic-hereditary societies."¹⁰⁰ Because many of the state association's officers came from prominent families or had exclusive social backgrounds, they were able to speak freely at different church and social functions. Traveling from state to state, they would set up meetings, addressing "women of high social standing" and "the best

¹⁰⁰ S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 51.

people” who vowed “to protect the purity” of America.¹⁰¹

Ida Minerva Tarbell was an antisuffragist who made a career out of touring the lecture circuit.¹⁰² However, she was not a typical spokesperson for the movement. Tarbell came from a frontier family, never married, and did not have financial security. What she did have was persuasive tongue and elegant writing style that made her a celebrated representative for the antisuffrage cause. After gaining notoriety for her editorial pieces in *The Chautauquan* and *American Magazine*, the fifty-seven year old from Titusville, Pennsylvania, decided to travel the country speaking about industrial conditions, war, politics, business, and women’s rights, which did not include female suffrage. Often referring to her 1912 book, *The Business of Being a Woman*, Tarbell commented on a woman’s place in society.

Learning business careers, political and industrial activities—none of these things is more than incidental in the national task of woman. Her great task is to prepare the citizen. The tools for this are in her hands. It calls for education, and the nation has provided it. It calls for freedom of movement and expression, and she has them. It calls for ability to organize, to discuss problems, to work for whatever changes are essential. She is developing this ability. It may be that it calls for the vote; I do not myself see this, but it is certain that she will have the vote as soon as not a majority—but an approximate half—not of men—but of women feel the need of it.¹⁰³

Clearly, the first recruitment efforts were focused on society’s most elite

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Lynda Belte, “Never Too Old for New Ventures: Ida M. Tarbell’s ‘Second Profession,’” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 99 (October 1975): 476.

¹⁰³ Ida M. Tarbell, “The Business of Being a Woman,” excerpt from the book reprinted in *American Monthly Magazine* 73 (March 1912): 568. Antisuffragists frequently reprinted quotations or passages from her book. Other published works by Tarbell include: *Madame Roland* (1896), *Napoleon: With a Sketch of Josephine* (1895), *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (1897), *The History of the Standard Oil Company* (1903), *He Knew Lincoln* (1907), *Father Abraham* (1909), *The Ways of Woman* (1915), her autobiography *All in a Day’s Work* (1939), and countless articles in *McClure’s*, *Scribner’s*, *The Chautauquan*, and *American Magazine*.

members found in metropolitan areas across America. In particular, larger associations like MAOFESW and NYSAOWS never considered rural areas their main target. For them, noted Marshall, "agricultural communities were 'scattered' and hard to reach."¹⁰⁴ Even if asked to join the antisuffrage crusade, the opposition believed most farm women would decline the offer because they had little time to spare on matters outside of their homesteads.

In the South, however, the countryside was the main target for recruitment. "Despite the presence of antisuffrage organizations in some southern towns and cities, like Macon and Montgomery," said Green, "the real heart of southern antisuffrage was rural."¹⁰⁵ Because southern antisuffragists realized the need to show they were a valuable body of people, especially when the legislature met, women as well as men would willingly travel to state capitals like Montgomery, Raleigh, Nashville, and Richmond in order to show their support. Since the South usually had smaller organizations, its organizations had to rely on "specialized" strategies to recruit new members. For example, the Alabama Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage enlisted its members under mottos like "Home Rule, State's Rights and White Supremacy"¹⁰⁶ and "Alabama for Alabamans."¹⁰⁷

Realizing the need to diversify, state organizations began to create local branches, which were able to reach out to women (and men) who otherwise would have been

¹⁰⁴ S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 175.

¹⁰⁵ E. C. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 45.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁰⁷ S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 212.

forgotten.¹⁰⁸ Not too surprisingly, these branch committees were more likely to be found in larger cities as spin-offs of state associations. For instance, there was an auxiliary in Buffalo, New York, and one in Portland, Maine.

One of the successes of the branch committees was their ability to recruit working women. Although most antisuffragists had little in common with them, both had a similar goal—to acquire enough economic security to be able to stay home.¹⁰⁹ For that reason, working women became invaluable supporters of the opposition, especially since suffragists often used the argument that female suffrage could spell changes for wage-earning women.

The primary spokesperson for working women who opposed female suffrage was Minnie Bronson. After graduating from Upper Iowa University with a Master of Arts degree in 1892, she dedicated herself to educating others. From 1889 through 1899, she taught mathematics at St. Paul, Minnesota High School until she realized her talents could be used elsewhere. In 1900, she worked for the U. S. Commission to the Paris Exposition as an assistant in the Department of Education, moving up to Director of the Educational Department at the Pan-American Exposition in 1901 and Superintendent of Elementary and Secondary Education at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. Bronson was also appointed Special Agent of the U. S. Bureau of Labor, investigating the conditions

¹⁰⁸ It should be noted that some local branches were created before state organizations were formed and remained independent. For example, the Brooklyn auxiliary continued to be a self-regulating group, though it often consulted with NYSAOWS.

¹⁰⁹ J. J. Camhi, "Women Against Women," 202.

of women and children.¹¹⁰ It was this experience that drove her to defend working women and oppose female enfranchisement.

Bronson was quick to point out that female suffrage did not necessarily mean fairer treatment of women in industry, better protective legislation, or full protection of children. In a pamphlet, titled "The Wage Earning Woman and the State," she described how non-suffrage states had more and better protective laws for wage-earning women. In fact, she claimed they were even better than the laws protecting wage-earning men.¹¹¹ "The ballot," Bronson concluded, "can do nothing... those of us who oppose Woman Suffrage believe that women can, and have, accomplished more... by creating public opinion... and influencing legislation toward the conservation of the race."¹¹²

Antisuffragists failed to win over the majority of working women. Their biggest mistake was trying to secure support from working men at the same time. While they told wage-earning women enfranchisement would not help them, they told wage-earning men that female suffrage would only spur more women to compete with them in the workforce. Antisuffragists believed females caused males' salaries to go down because they were willing to work for less money. They also believed women only worked temporarily and for "pin money" rather than for a "living wage."¹¹³ Antisuffragists failed

¹¹⁰ Bronson also served as a Special Agent for the U. S. Department of the Interior at the Alaska Exhibit of the Seattle Exposition from March to July in 1909 and as Special Agent during the Shirt Waist Makers Strike from January to June, 1910.

¹¹¹ Minnie Bronson, "The Wage Earning Woman and the State," pamphlet published and distributed by MAOFESW, 1910.

¹¹² Minnie Bronson, "Woman Suffrage and Child Labor Legislation," pamphlet published and distributed by the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, 1914, 3-4.

¹¹³ Priscilla Leonard, "The Working Woman and Anti-Suffrage," *Harper's Bazar* 43 (November 1909):

to understand that most women worked for pitiful wages in various industries because they had to and not because they wanted to. Nevertheless, a fair number of working women opposed female suffrage and joined the movement.

Also due to the efforts of branch committees, antisuffragists were able to recruit tenement women. While working in the tenement districts of Boston, Elizabeth McCracken spoke to many young women about the possibility of voting. Some believed enfranchisement could help their children's future education. "Most of them have children who go to school," noted a coworker of McCracken. "They ought to care how the schools are conducted. They have a right to a voice in the matter; they should use that voice."¹¹⁴ Willing to help those women who wanted to learn how to register, McCracken offered her assistance, but when asked what her real thoughts were about the issue, her antisuffrage sentiments came out and influenced several tenement women to stay away from the polls.

McCracken pointed out that voting for school committees was not the same as voting on political issues. Since many of the tenement women in the Boston area were already qualified to vote in school elections, she believed universal female suffrage unnecessary.¹¹⁵

Many of the women in the tenements were unmarried mothers who worked two or three jobs to make ends meet. Accordingly, McCracken suggested that acquiring new

1169.

¹¹⁴ Quote cited by Elizabeth McCracken, in "Women Suffrage in the Tenements," *Atlantic* 96 (December 1905): 750.

¹¹⁵ To be qualified, women had to be twenty-one years old and legal citizens.

burdens might not be wise. Taking her advice, one unmarried tenement woman with five children remarked, "the things I've read 'bout women voting' made me sort o' low in my feelin's, an' doin' my jobs got to seem harder... I think I was right to stop botherin' 'bout suffrage."¹¹⁶

Able to connect with tenement women, McCracken persuaded many of these females that enfranchisement was not in their best interest and recruited them into the movement. After visiting numerous tenements, she also found that poorer women would make horrible voters because they were uneducated, inexperienced, and often overworked. "The ultra-suffragists," she concluded, "declare that women have always been ready for the ballot; the extreme antisuffragists predict that women never will be... the women of the tenements, the over-burdened women, the women whose opportunities for development have been pitifully meager, are not ready."¹¹⁷

Just as antisuffragists recruited from a variety of social classes and regions, the basis of opposition to suffrage varied along class and regional lines. In the Northeast, industry and business owners were the main source of opposition. Already affected by urban issues, especially after the population continued to steadily increase after the turn of the century, antisuffragists believed female suffrage would only add to the mixture of inner-city problems. "The civilization in the North," explained Miss Belle Kearney, "is threatened by the influx of foreigners with their imported customs; by the greed of monopolistic wealth and the unrest among the working classes; by the strength of the

¹¹⁶ Quote cited by Elizabeth McCracken, in "Women Suffrage in the Tenements," 752.

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth McCracken, "Women Suffrage in the Tenements," 759.

liquor traffic and encroachments upon religious belief.”¹¹⁸

In the South, giving the black female population the right to vote meant the system of Jim Crow would most likely be overthrown. “Any change in voting” explained historian Jean E. Friedman, “opened the possibility of black enfranchisement, a threat to white supremacy. And because states’ rights protected grandfather clauses, literacy tests, and property qualifications that disenfranchised blacks, a national suffrage amendment would challenge the southern states’ racial order.”¹¹⁹

Lastly, in the Midwest, antisuffragists argued that the sparsely settled West did not have the same problems as the large, diverse populations in the Northeast and segregationist South. The biggest issue on the political front was the radicalism and anti-democratic sentiments infecting the West’s concept of a representative government. To that end, antisuffragists believed the female vote would surely weaken what little hold the democratic politicians had in the West.¹²⁰ Moreover, a vast majority of brewing companies in located in Western states. Fearing women would interfere with their right to sell and distribute liquor, or worse, use the vote to enact prohibition, liquor wholesalers, saloonkeepers, and associated businessmen joined the antisuffrage crusade.

Because the antisuffrage movement was so widespread, and because it yielded so

¹¹⁸ Miss Belle Kearney, quoted in Ida Husted Harper, “The History of Woman Suffrage,” published by the National American Woman Suffrage Association, 1922, 83. By 1910, permanent antisuffrage associations were found in New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, Washington D. C., and Maryland.

¹¹⁹ Jean E. Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1985), 121.

¹²⁰ Billie Barnes Jensen, “‘In the Weird and Wooly West’: Anti-Suffrage Women, Gender Issues, and Woman Suffrage in the West,” *Journal of the West* 32 (July, 1993): 44. The radicalism and anti-democratic sentiments were mainly found in the form of Socialist politics or Mormon religious practices.

many different opinions, the need for a national organization became evident. In November of 1911, during a convention of five eastern state antisuffrage groups, the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS) was founded. With national coordination, it was assumed a strong networking system would develop between states and information would be spread more efficiently. Consequently, NAOWS brought the antisuffrage movement to a new level pushing it further into the public spotlight.

The first of three presidents of NAOWS was Josephine Jewell Dodge. Like most of the women opposed to female suffrage, she was born into a prominent and influential family. Her father was appointed U.S. Minister to Russia and, after living with him for three years in St. Petersburg, she returned to the United States in 1873 and married Arthur M. Dodge, a well-known New York businessman and philanthropist, the following year. Beginning in 1878, Dodge became involved in the day nursery movement sponsoring the Virginia Day Nursery, a small operation that helped working mothers and their children in New York's slum districts. Ten years later, she founded the Jewell Day Nursery, which not only provided day care but also "Americanized" immigrant children. In 1895, she founded the Association of Day Nurseries of New York City and in 1898, she became president of the National Federation (later Association) of Day Nurseries.

In 1899, Dodge became involved in the antisuffrage crusade. For her, female suffrage was unnecessary since protective rights for women had already been established without women's votes. "It would be a brutal interpretation of women's rights," she

pleaded, "to insist that the hard-won body of legislation, which protects woman because she is the potential mother, be abolished and the vote given to woman in exchange."¹²¹ When NAOWS moved from New York City to Washington D. C., Dodge resigned her position and Alice Hay Wadsworth was elected in her place.¹²²

Daughter of John Hay, a famed statesman and distinguished writer, Wadsworth married James W. Wadsworth, a U.S. senator from the state of New York. She was a member of the Visiting Board Craig Epileptics and belonged to numerous women's clubs and civic organizations. In her acceptance letter, Wadsworth emphasized that her position as president was her duty and not necessarily her choice. "Although most reluctant to shoulder any additional burden outside the care of my family, the War Relief work and the charities in which I am already engaged, I feel it is my duty, *in the interest of National Defense and Patriotism*, to accept this office and do my utmost to justify your confidence."¹²³ She remained president until she became ill in 1919 and resigned her position to Mary G. Kilbreth.

By the time Kilbreth became leader of the NAOWS, several states, including New York and Massachusetts, had ratified the Susan B. Anthony Amendment. Unwilling to surrender, she looked to the South for inspiration because in states like Alabama and North Carolina, state suffrage amendments were repeatedly rejected. She sought to reverse the ratification process by filing an "official rejection" of the Amendment with

¹²¹ Josephine Jewell Dodge, "Woman Suffrage Opposed to Woman's Rights," in James P. Lichtenberger, ed., *Women in Public Life: The Annals* LVI (November 1914): 99.

¹²² Though she was no longer president of NAOWS, Dodge remained active at the local level.

¹²³ Alice Hay Wadsworth, "Our New Headquarters in Washington: Mrs. Wadsworth Succeeds Mrs. Dodge," reprinted in *The Woman's Protest* 11 (July-August 1917): 3. Italics as shown in the periodical.

the U. S. secretary of state. To accomplish this, however, both houses of thirteen state legislatures would have to defeat it. Her attempt failed miserably. In reaction, she focused solely on the South—the only seemingly effective antisuffrage activists left in the Union.

In its heyday, NAOWS was instrumental in organizing new state associations and dispensing antisuffrage literature throughout the country. “Its object,” stated the group’s officers, “is to bring together, under one committee, representation from the State associations, thus securing co-operation and a similar policy, to assist in organizing associations in States where they do not exist, [and] to form public opinion by the distribution of literature.”¹²⁴

Within six months of its establishment, NAOWS began publishing a monthly magazine, called *The Woman’s Protest* (reorganized later as *The Woman Patriot* in 1918), that consolidated all state journals’ antisuffrage opinions into one periodical. It was hoped the publication would “arouse the indifferent women to a realization of the danger of having this additional burden thrust upon them by a minority.”¹²⁵ Published in New York, the periodical became the antisuffrage handbook—reporting on the progress of suffrage at the state and national level, commenting on several of the arguments developed by antisuffragists, quoting well-known advisors of the movement, criticizing the activities of suffragists, and defending antisuffragists against the attacks of their rivals.

¹²⁴ “The National Association,” *The Woman’s Protest* 1 (May 1912): 3.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Although state organizations had begun to employ more aggressive tactics before the NAOWS was formed, they reached a new level of public activism after the National Association began to coordinate its efforts with theirs. Aside from publishing countless pamphlets, leaflets, brochures, and articles in newspapers and magazines, both the state and national organizations developed other tactics to recruit members and inform people of the hazards of female suffrage. NYSAOWS sponsored fund-raising events where females would often perform on a small stage, acting like famed suffragists in a satirical manner. In 1912, MAOFESW not only sold pink antisuffrage pencils, buttons, and roses on the streets at ten cents a piece but also paid for slide shows in moving-picture theaters.¹²⁶

Beginning in 1915, the traditional taboos against engaging in political work seemed to fall by the wayside. Blocking female enfranchisement on a state-by-state basis proved to be ineffective prompting antisuffragists to shift their attention to Washington and the new presidential election. The likely candidate to win was incumbent Woodrow Wilson, who appeared to be leaning toward suffrage. In reaction, antisuffragists traveled to various national conventions in order to block committee hearings on the suffrage question. Despite their efforts to stay out of the political arena, they found themselves compelled to enter the political arena. By the end of 1915, the presence of antisuffrage women at legislative hearings became commonplace.

¹²⁶ MAOFESW, executive meeting minutes, February, 28, 1913; MAOFESW, education and organization committee meeting minutes, March 17, 1915; "Red Rose as Anti's Badge," *New York Times*, May 5, 1915, 13; "Antisuffrage Rose Named 'Mrs. Dodge'," *New York Times*, April 6, 1915, 4, noted in S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 192.

Of the many women who spoke before Congress, Alice J. George was arguably the most boisterous. A Wellesley graduate and participant in numerous organizations, such as the National Trust for the Preservation of Historical Places, the College Club, the Research Committee of the Educational and Industrial Union, the Welfare Department of the National Civic Federation, the Woman's Trade Union League, the American Association for Labor Legislation, and the Massachusetts Child Labor Committee, George was a devoted member of MAOFESW and field secretary for the National Association. A prolific writer for the cause, George believed it was her duty to sacrifice her respected place in society and present her case against female suffrage.

On December 20, 1915, George along with five of her peers went before the sixty-fourth Congress to share her grievances.¹²⁷ "We are here," she began, "because of our hope that there may be some moral effect in the presentation of the opposition rather than because of any vain hope that we may make some political gain to-day."¹²⁸ She went on to discuss the failure of woman suffrage to bring about female voters in particular states, namely Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado.

These four States served as a [*sic*] experiment station in which [female suffrage] could be tried out, under the most favorable conditions, the great experiment of giving woman a share in the responsibilities of government, of doubling the present electorate. After the experiment had been working for about 20 years it was found it was not turning out the results which the suffragists had so fondly hoped for. The experiment station now increased to some Pacific Coast States, were not given the looked for results. Woman suffrage accomplished nothing that was not accomplished under the workings of male suffrage. There were signs the electorate was weakened by

¹²⁷ The five other antisuffragists included Mrs. A. M. Dodge, Mrs. M. C. Talbot, Miss Florence H. Hall, Mrs. George P. White, and Miss Lucy J. Price.

¹²⁸ Alice J. George, "Hearings Before the Committee on Woman Suffrage," sixty-fourth Congress, first session, December 20, 1915, 62-3.

woman suffrage. The reluctance of women to register and vote showed that this movement of the enfranchisement of woman was, even in woman suffrage States, a minority movement.¹²⁹

In closing, George made one final plea for the safety of all of mankind. "When the day comes," she pleaded, "that women are to show their power only by political victories wrested from reluctant men at the polls, when that day comes we have lost something which all the votes of men and women can not give back to us."¹³⁰

Although it might seem trivial to recollect minor details of the antisuffrage movement, a crucial point to remember is that the movement itself was founded, staffed, and led by women. Unfortunately, however, only the most socially prominent women, most of whom were urban, white, and upper-class were glorified in pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, and other literary material.¹³¹ Therefore, the backgrounds and activities of lesser known luminaries have largely been lost, leaving one to wonder if the movement was really designed to save *all* women from the burden of the vote.

Moreover, one must be skeptical of the biographical information that does exist on these not-so-famous women because female antisuffragists regularly offered inaccurate data about "women of lesser means" to show the public that the antisuffrage movement had the majority of women on its side.¹³²

¹²⁹ Ibid., 63.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 74.

¹³¹ More specifically, the exposés often simply depicted the gallant and supposedly unselfish accomplishments of antisuffrage spokeswomen and officers of various organizations.

¹³² J. J. Camhi, "Women Against Women," 432.

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE AND/OR CONTRIBUTIONS OF BIG BUSINESS, LIQUOR LOBBYISTS, AND THE RELIGIOUS CAMP

Many industrialists, distillers, and brewers felt threatened by the reforming potential of women voters, believing that women were different than men and would act out of their "natural" maternal instinct to prohibit alcohol consumption [and] interfere in business practices.¹³³
Woman's Journal, 1912

Antisuffragists were not alone in their fight against female enfranchisement. They found a great deal of support from three main interest groups—big business, liquor lobbyists, and the religious camp. Each felt the female vote was a threat to the social, economic, and political arrangements already established in their favor. In other words, each acted out of self-interest and, as Nicole Herz articulated, “demonstrated with unabashed lucidity the American mentality concerning women and men, the prejudices of the period, and the essentially conservative consensus of the middle class.”¹³⁴

¹³³ “Anti-Suffrage Arguments,” *Woman's Journal*, 1912, retrieved on November 24, 2002, <http://1912.history.ohio-state.edu/suffrage/interest.htm>.

¹³⁴ Nicole Herz, “Opposition to Female Suffrage in the United States,” *The Concord Review*, Northwestern University, 1992, retrieved on November 25, 2002, <http://www.tcr.org/advpl9.html>.

Big Business

Though there was not a nationwide recruitment of big business leaders, some business groups fought persistently against female suffrage informing companies on a state to state basis that jointly their business interests could be compromised if women were able to vote. "I am a bit fearful that the banks, mine owners, and other big business," cautioned suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt, "are really sending along an official warning to the men of other states to beware of the menace of woman suffrage."¹³⁵ Acting as a quasi political bloc, those with business interests vigorously stood their ground.

For the most part, it is not difficult to understand why big business did not have faith in female enfranchisement. Beginning in 1913, Woodrow Wilson's new domestic policy, which included antitrust legislation and the reorganization of the country's banking system, created fear amongst business leaders. Already pressured by the government to make changes in their practices, a fresh group of voters whose votes were uncertain presented a new threat. "They were terrified at the possibility of any considerable change in the voting body,"¹³⁶ remarked anti Maud Wood Park. Moreover, many industries worried that women would use the vote to improve the working conditions of females, especially in the South where cotton mill owners depended on the

¹³⁵ Carrie Chapman Catt to Anna Howard Shaw, March 16, 1916, quoted in E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 291.

¹³⁶ Maud Wood Park, *Front Door Lobby*, 177, quoted in E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 293.

cheap labor of women.

To their advantage, big business had several politicians on its side. Because they often came from the same elite social background as businessmen, politicians were defenders of class and ethnic privilege. Perhaps more importantly, the "ignorant vote" of women could potentially push them out of office. As spokesmen for those with business interests, politicians became a powerful ally. Senator James Wadsworth continued to oppose female suffrage in New York despite the fact that women won suffrage rights in 1917 in that state, and ex-Justice Henry B. Brown of the United States Supreme Court wrote countless pamphlets about his opposition. On May 27, 1913, Governor Francis E. McGovern of Wisconsin, who came from an extremely prosperous and influential family, vetoed a Woman's Suffrage Bill on the grounds that the issue was decided the year before and that the majority of the population did not want female enfranchisement.¹³⁷

To support the antisuffrage movement, numerous businesses offered financial assistance. In Colorado, a Congressional investigation of Swift & Company found that meat packers gave an abundance of *secret* contributions.¹³⁸ Other corporations that contributed to various state organizations included: the Gulf Refining Company, the American Express Company, and the Southern States Portland Cement Company.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ "Wisconsin Suffrage Bill Vetoed," *The Woman's Protest* 3 (June 1913): 12.

¹³⁸ *Government Control of the Meat-Packing Industry*, Hearings on S. 5305 before the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, U.S. Senate, 65 Cong., 3 Sess., Part 2, pp. 1750-52 (testimony of Mr. Henry Veeder, counsel for Swift & Co., February 8, 1919), noted in E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 291. The contributions were secret because the company was intimidated by the overwhelming presence of pro-suffrage patrons who bought from the company.

¹³⁹ *New Republic*, vol. 4, no. 42 (August 21, 1915), pp. 62-64, noted in E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 292.

Many railroad companies also contributed money. During the 1918 Senate Committee investigation of brewers' activities, court officials found that the Santa Fé Railroad, Union Pacific, Illinois Central, M-K-T, and Southern Pacific donated funds to a variety of antisuffrage organizations.¹⁴⁰

In 1915, the Corrupt Practices Act was passed by the United States Congress. Under the new legislation, a committee was formed to monitor the funds of any group that spent over twenty dollars to support or defeat a new constitutional amendment. In Massachusetts, financial records were submitted that showed approximately eighty per cent of the contributions donated to MAOFESW were from individual men.¹⁴¹ One donation of \$31,695 was given by 135 men, which averaged out to \$235 a piece.¹⁴² The *Journal of Women's Suffrage* later reported the majority came from "bankers, brokers and directors of the monied section of Boston."¹⁴³

In addition to the reports from Massachusetts, financial records from other antisuffrage organizations confirmed an abundance of contributions donated by individual businessmen. In Oklahoma, Pat Malloy, who worked in the oil industry in Tulsa, offered unlimited funds to antisuffragists,¹⁴⁴ and Eric P. Swenson, a banker in New York and owner of several ranches in Texas, gave large amounts of money to

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Robert S. Grandfield, "The Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Referendum of 1915," in *Historical Journal of Western Massachusetts* 7 (January 1979): 49.

¹⁴² *Woman's Journal*, XLVII (January 15, 1916): 17, noted in R. S. Grandfield, "The Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Referendum of 1915," 49.

¹⁴³ Ida Husted Harper, *Journal of Woman's Suffrage* VI (New York, 1922): 290, quoted in R. S. Grandfield, "The Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Referendum of 1915," 49.

¹⁴⁴ Marjorie Schuler speaking to Carrie Chapman Catt, October 19, 1918, Sophia Smith Collection, North Hampton, Massachusetts, noted in E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 291.

several state-run antisuffrage organizations in order to protect his investments.¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, Eben Drape and other members of his family, all of whom were in the textile industry, regularly contributed funds.¹⁴⁶

Instead of offering money to antisuffragists, some of those with business interests paid for antisuffrage advertising. For example, the Texas Businessmen's Association bought article space in newspapers throughout the state.¹⁴⁷ In 1885, Edward B. Stahlman, who later became commissioner of the Southern Railway and Steamship Association, bought the *Nashville Banner* and regularly ran antisuffrage editorials and cartoons at no cost.¹⁴⁸ Other companies produced and distributed their own material, like the "National Farmers Union," which issued several pieces of antisuffrage literature.¹⁴⁹

Besides offering donations and free advertising to various state antisuffrage organizations, those with business interests tried to use their influence to get the others to side with their antisuffrage sentiments in particular states. For instance, in 1914, the state of Nebraska had a woman suffrage referendum. Hoping to persuade people to vote against the bill, nine railroad and municipal transit executives, seven bankers, and other assorted businessmen signed a public appeal.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ *Brewing and Liquor Interests*, pp. 2541-44, 2550-52, 2574-78, 2604. Mr. Swenson was at this time not only a partner of Swenson & Co., but also a director of the National City Bank of New York. At other times, he was also a director of Southern Pacific Railroad, Pacific Oil Company, and Pacific Mail Steamship Company, noted in E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 292.

¹⁴⁶ Lois Merk, "Boston's Historical Public Crisis," *The New England Quarterly* XXXI (March, 1958): 310, noted in J. J. Camhi, "Women Against Women," 193.

¹⁴⁷ E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 291-2.

¹⁴⁸ Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, ed., *One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman Suffrage Movement* (Troutdale, Oregon: NewSage Press, 1995), 342.

¹⁴⁹ E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 292.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 291.

Because most of the women involved in the antisuffrage movement came from elite circles, the ties between them and leading figures in the business community were easy to detect. "We must help out our men if we want them to help us,"¹⁵¹ exclaimed anti Helen W. Glover. Mattie C. Elsberry, a chief representative of Alabama's antisuffrage organization, was married to an executive of the Tallahassee Falls Manufacturing Company, while Mary Hillard Hinton, the first leader of North Carolina's antisuffrage group, came from a prominent plantation family and had close ties to the railroad industry. Margaret Whitney, vice-president of the MAOFESW, was the wife of Henry Whitney, who was heavily involved in both shipping and mining, and even Frances Louise Morgan, the reserved wife of the renowned businessman-banker J. P. Morgan, was an antisuffrage sympathizer.

To warn people of the dangers female suffrage could have on businesses, female antisuffragists printed numerous articles on behalf of big business leaders. Of the many pieces written about the effects that female enfranchisement could have on business, one editorial stood out. It was written by a *businesswoman*, named Alice Edith Abell, who was employed by a large corporation as a stenographer. Before taking her job, she worked for the Treasury Department in Washington for five years in addition to short terms of employment with various firms, so "her statements are from conviction based on experience and observation."¹⁵² Not only did Abell agree with the antisuffragists who

¹⁵¹ Helen W. Glover, "Why We Should Organize Against Woman Suffrage," *The Reply* 1 (May 1913): 38.

¹⁵² Alice Edith Abell, "A Business Woman's Protest Against the Ballot," *The Woman's Protest* 3 (September 1913): 8.

argued females are mentally unfit for politics but she also explained ironically that the nature of woman makes her too delicate for any real success in the business sphere.

It is claimed that women's presence in politics will improve the atmosphere as it has that of the business world. Whatever good effects on the opposite sex may have resulted from her entry into the field of commerce, in raising the moral tone and improving working conditions for her particular comfort, are more than offset by the consequent wear and tear on her nervous system, due to her need for a certain amount of relaxation which is not always compatible with the requirements of a successful business. While it is true that women have more endurance than men, and are often more than their equals in rising above the actual physical limitations by means of this nervous force, there is no way of estimating at what point it may snap when continuously strained to its limit... In advocating the equal franchise... of women, therefore, Suffragists present a very narrow and short-sighted view to the world.¹⁵³

The fear of disturbing the status-quo was undoubtedly at the heart of big business opposition to female suffrage. Business resistance was based on the belief that a shift in power would occur if women were allowed vote. Since there was no organized protest, Eleanor Flexnor and Ellen Fitzpatrick say those with business interests were the hardest to link to the antisuffrage movement, but this was not necessarily the case with liquor lobbyists.

Liquor Lobbyists

Most historians assert the liquor camp was a potent force working against female suffrage. With the threat of Prohibition, brewers and distillers as well as those with other interests in the liquor industry were willing to do anything to stop, in the words of

¹⁵³ Ibid.

antisuffragist Charles Metcalfe, "the old maids and masterful women... [from getting] in the way."¹⁵⁴ Fearing that women would try to outlaw alcohol, they became immediate allies with antisuffragists since both had a common goal.

Quick to notice the connection, suffragists often embarrassed antisuffragists by publicly criticizing them for their association with the liquor lobbyists. Because suffragists were usually prohibitionists, it was easy for them to argue that opposition to female suffrage meant opposition to prohibition as well. Hoping to damage the reputations of antisuffragists, they persistently sought to discredit their opponents by forcing them to face up to the "liquor lie."¹⁵⁵

The exact relationship between antisuffragists and those with liquor interests was difficult to determine, because both tried to avoid being linked to one another. Whenever antisuffragists were accused of associating with or accepting funds from the liquor camp, they usually responded by denying the charges. Defending all antisuffragists, *The Woman's Protest* insisted, "by every form of cartoon, implication or innuendo, the suffrage journals or speakers can concoct, the public is urged to believe that brewery and liquor interests contribute to the anti-suffragists. There is absolutely no truth in these insinuations."¹⁵⁶ In so far as the liquor lobbyists themselves, they too denied offering money to any antisuffrage organizations. "The Southern Rejection League in Alabama," declares Green, "went so far as to threaten to sue anyone who claimed that it was

¹⁵⁴ Quote from Representative Charles Metcalfe of San Angelo to Minnie Fisher Cunningham, February 10, 1918, Cunningham Papers, box 14, folder 213, quoted by M. S. Wheeler, ed., *One Woman, One Vote*, 323.

¹⁵⁵ J. J. Camhi, "Women Against Women," 183.

¹⁵⁶ "Another Answer to the Only (?) Suffrage Argument," *The Woman's Protest* 8 (April 1916): 4.

financed by or associated with any liquor interest."¹⁵⁷ In June of 1915, the Iowa Brewers Association stressed, "we are of the opinion that woman's suffrage can be defeated, although we believe that the liquor interests should not be known as the contending force against this campaign."¹⁵⁸ Despite such protests from both sides, their connection was irrefutable, as well as detectable.

The part that liquor lobbyists played in the defeat of female suffrage did not become readily apparent until a Senate judiciary committee began an investigation of propaganda charges against Bolshevik and German brewers in 1918. It was then that the minutes from a United States Brewers' Association conference, held on October 13, 1913, revealed their involvement. For example, the transcripts directly linked brewers to the antisuffrage campaign in South Dakota. "We have defeated women's suffrage at three different times in South Dakota... the United States Brewers' Association... has been able to cope with it, and... has always been fortunate in winning."¹⁵⁹ The amount of money reportedly contributed to several antisuffrage organizations by the Association totaled into the tens of thousands, but they were not the only investors in opposition to female suffrage.¹⁶⁰

Brewers across America donated millions of dollars to the antisuffrage

¹⁵⁷ E. C. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 47.

¹⁵⁸ *Brewing and Liquor Interests, and German and Bolshevik Propaganda*, Report and Hearings of the Subcommittee on the Judiciary, U. S. Senate, 65 Cong., 1 Sess., vol. I, p. 1179, quoted in E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 290.

¹⁵⁹ U. S. Congress, Senate, *Brewing and Liquor Interests, German and Bolshevik Propaganda Report and Hearings before the Subcommittee on the Judiciary*, 1918, 65th Cong., 1st sess., vol. 1, p. 1179, in Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), 116, quoted by Cecelia M. Wittmayer, "The 1889-1890 Woman Suffrage Campaign: A Need To Organize," *South Dakota History* 11 (Summer 1981): 207.

¹⁶⁰ C. M. Wittmayer, "The 1889-1890 Woman Suffrage Campaign: A Need To Organize," 207.

campaign.¹⁶¹ Theodora W. Youmans, writing of the "Ohio situation," declared:

The liquor interests, both beer and whisky, are very strong in Ohio. And we have found out that in every place, at every time, under all circumstances, the liquor interests and their allies oppose woman suffrage. The great amount of money which they command and their readiness to expend thousands or hundreds of thousands—report says they poured three-quarters of a million dollars into the anti-suffrage campaign in California—makes their opposition a very serious matter.¹⁶²

In Nebraska, a report from a brewer's "strategy conference" revealed a 1911 woman's suffrage referendum was defeated at an enormous expense¹⁶³ and in Texas, the liquor industry allocated a substantial amount of money to fight against the female vote.¹⁶⁴

Arkansas suffragist Alice Ellington wrote to Minnie Fisher Cunningham in Texas requesting information about how Texan antisuffragists were financing their operation. In response, Cunningham answered, "the anti-suffrage campaign, as far as we can locate it in Texas, is waged by the corrupt political machine of the state, which is the Liquor Machine."¹⁶⁵

In New Jersey, suffragist Mrs. Antoinette Funk publicly stated that the liquor camp donated funds to antisuffragists. "We have only \$5,000 in our treasury," she commented. "The N. J. Antis have \$500,000, *received* from the liquor interests in this

¹⁶¹ Nancy Kohlhoff, "Women, Men and Suffrage," Indiana, AAUW, last updated January 13, 2002, retrieved on November 29, 2002, <http://www.indstate.edu/aauw-in/women1416.html>.

¹⁶² Theodora W. Youmans, "The Ohio Situation," *Press Bulletin of the Political Equality League of Wisconsin*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 7, 1912. Vol. 1, No. 35. From the State Historical Society of Wisconsin: Pam 85-1667, retrieved on November 28, 2002, <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/WIReader/WER0153-3.html>. It is unknown what report Youmans spoke of when referring to the three-quarters of a million dollars donated to the antisuffrage campaign in California.

¹⁶³ E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 289.

¹⁶⁴ "The Movement Comes of Age," Texas State Library and Archives Commission, last updated on November 13, 2002, retrieved on: November 28, 2002, <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/suffrage/comesofage/page1.html>.

¹⁶⁵ Minnie Fisher Cunningham to Alice S. Ellington, 12 July 1917, Minnie Fisher Cunningham Collection, Metropolitan Research Center, Houston Public Library, quoted in E. C. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 46-7.

state.”¹⁶⁶ Responding to the accusation, antisuffragists replied, “The New Jersey Anti-Suffrage Association has never received or been offered any money whatever by any individual or organization connected with liquor interests.”¹⁶⁷ It is unknown if in fact the New Jersey treasury was filled by donations from the liquor camp.

In an article found in Philadelphia’s *Public Ledger*, Mrs. Ida Husted Harper declared those with liquor interests planned to donate \$8,000,000 to antisuffragists in Massachusetts. “The report,” she stated, “comes from a credible source that the liquor interest of Massachusetts have decided to spend \$8,000,000 to defeat the woman suffrage amendment in that State. This may be an overestimate of a few millions [*sic*], but there will be plenty for the men and women who work against it and not very much for those who work for it.”¹⁶⁸ Angered by Harper’s claim, Massachusetts antisuffragists retorted: “Not only have the liquor interest not contributed, or offered to contribute \$8,000,000, or \$1,000,000, or \$1, or any sum whatever to the anti-suffrage campaign in Massachusetts, but such contributions, or any contribution, if offered by liquor interests, would not be accepted by the Antis-Suffragists of Massachusetts.”¹⁶⁹ Whether or not the money was actually donated remains a mystery.

Like those associated with big business, brewers and distillers also helped dispense a huge amount of antisuffrage propaganda. With brewery money, the Texas Business Men’s Association, as historian Marjorie Spruill Wheeler affirmed, “distributed

¹⁶⁶ “An Eight Million Dollar Falsehood,” *The Woman’s Protest* 7 (May 1915): 13. Italics as printed in the article.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Ida Husted Harper, “An Eight Million Dollar Falsehood,” 13.

¹⁶⁹ Mrs. James M. Codman and Augustin H. Parker, “An Eight Million Dollar Falsehood,” 13.

[an] anti-suffrage and anti-prohibition boilerplate to hundreds of county newspapers."¹⁷⁰

Along with their own advertising, the Retail Liquor Dealer's Association sent an antisuffrage advertisement created by the Michigan Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage to several newspapers.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, numerous barkeepers even allowed antisuffragists to hang posters in their saloons.¹⁷²

Besides donating money and providing an outlet for antisuffrage editorials, those with liquor interests tried to influence voters. Liquor affiliates regularly assigned quotas of "no" votes to bartenders in upcoming polls, putting saloon keepers in charge of persuading their patrons to side with antisuffragists.¹⁷³ In some cases, the voters were paid outright for their votes.¹⁷⁴ During the Massachusetts referendum of 1915, bars and saloons distributed pink slips that read: "Good for 2 drinks if woman suffrage is defeated."¹⁷⁵ To better their odds, a few brewers even purchased saloons to increase their control of people voting on the woman suffrage question.¹⁷⁶

In addition, liquor lobbyists tried to persuade legislative votes. The lieutenant-governor of Wisconsin told Mrs. Ben Hooper that he had watched a liquor lawyer from Milwaukee "sit in the gallery of the Senate and tell his men with his hand how to

¹⁷⁰ "Brewing Propaganda," *New Republic*, August 21, 1915, 62-64; Anti-Saloon League, *The Brewers and Texas Politics*, 2 vols. (San Antonio, 1916), 1: 109-112, quoted by M. S. Wheeler, ed., *One Woman, One Vote*, 320.

¹⁷¹ C. Chapman Catt and N. Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 275, in J. J. Camhi, "Women Against Women," 186.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 186.

¹⁷³ E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 290.

¹⁷⁴ Nancy Kohlhoff, "Women, Men and Suffrage," <http://www.indstate.edu/aauw-in/women1416.html>.

¹⁷⁵ Robert Grandfield, "The Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Referendum of 1915," *Historical Journal Of Western Massachusetts* 7 (January 1979): 49.

¹⁷⁶ Ross Evans Paulson, *Woman Suffrage and Prohibition: A Comparative Study of Equality and Social Control* (Glenville, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1973), 114.

vote.”¹⁷⁷ On October 23, 1915, the *Springfield Republican* reported that skilled politicians were “quietly” fighting against female suffrage in a “low-key” manner on behalf of those with liquor interests.¹⁷⁸

Some politicians were directly involved with the distribution and sale of alcohol. Tennessee state representative from Hamilton County J. O. Martine was a liquor wholesaler, and J. S. Boyd, Tennessee state representative from Davidson County, was a former saloon owner. Both voted against female suffrage referendums in that state and the Susan B. Anthony amendment in 1920.¹⁷⁹ Unwilling to give up, some politicians were adamant in their opposition to suffrage. “As late as 1918,” asserted Flexnor and Fitzpatrick, “with Prohibition staring them in the face, lobbyists for the brewers were still lobbying against the woman suffrage amendment in Washington.”¹⁸⁰

The amount of money liquor lobbyists donated to antisuffrage organizations and the practiced ease with which they could print antisuffrage propaganda and persuade voters reflected an element of strategy that antisuffragists could not help but to use to their advantage. Liquor lobbyists were arguably more passionate about the cause than big business, especially as Prohibition grew closer. Still, there was one more influence on the antisuffragists’ side—religion.

¹⁷⁷ Quote found in “Autobiography of Jessie Jack Hooper,” unpublished typescript in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, quoted in E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 290.

¹⁷⁸ R. Grandfield, “The Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Referendum of 1915,” 49.

¹⁷⁹ E. C. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 48.

¹⁸⁰ E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 290.

The Religious Camp

Throughout the United States, many different religious groups joined in the crusade against female enfranchisement. Concerned about the deterioration of the family, clergymen warned churchgoers that female suffrage would lead to a degeneration of the social order. Perhaps even more troubling for those with religious interests were the unknown changes that female suffrage could bring. Religious leaders often feared that new developments in the political structure or social climate would be destructive to their established principles and values.

Quoting scripture, Christian leaders' principal argument was that God had reserved for women certain responsibilities as wives and mothers. Ephesians 5:22-24 instructs: "Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything."¹⁸¹ Peter 3:1-6 tells wives to "be submissive to your husbands" and to have "a gentle and quiet spirit."¹⁸² Furthermore, in Timothy 2:11-15, Paul says: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence... she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."¹⁸³ With

¹⁸¹ Ephesians 5:22-24, King James Version (KJV).

¹⁸² Peter 3:1-6, as quoted on Aarondot.com, last revised on February 13, 2003, retrieved on August 11, 2003, http://www.aaronandstacia.com/2003/02/13/1_peter_316.php.

¹⁸³ Timothy, 2:11-15, KJV.

biblical teachings such as these taken seriously, it is no wonder why women were not permitted to engage in the public sphere.

Leading the fight against female enfranchisement was the Catholic Church. Despite their reluctance to publicly comment on the issue, priests unmistakably disapproved of the political advancement of women. "The Church itself," wrote historian John D. Buenker, "had no official position on the question, but it was clear the bulk of the influential clergy were solidly opposed."¹⁸⁴ Presenting a challenge to its authority, female suffrage directly violated the Church's concept of separateness between the sexes. "The Catholic opposition to the participation of women in politics," explained historian James J. Kenneally, "rested in the belief that there were two distinct spheres of activity, one for each sex. That of woman centered around her position in perpetuating the race and as nucleus of the society of the family."¹⁸⁵

Although historians have traditionally focused only on the influence of the Catholic Church, it was not the only faith associated with the antisuffrage movement. As church organizations became more and more hierarchical and formal in their rituals, female suffrage not only posed a threat to the social order but also to the individual success of each church. This is not to say that the Catholic Church was not the main influence connected to the antisuffrage movement but that other denominations supported the antisuffrage campaign *in addition to the Catholic Church*.

¹⁸⁴ John D. Buenker, "The Urban Political Machine and Woman Suffrage: A Study in Political Adaptability," *Historian* 33 (February 1971): 266.

¹⁸⁵ James J. Kenneally, "Catholicism and Woman Suffrage in Massachusetts," *Catholic Historical Review* LIII (April 1967): 43.

Numerous Protestant churches did much to discourage women from their own emancipation. For example, several Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches were adamant about preserving conservative views of women. While they allowed women freedom in charity and church activities, some affiliated with these religious groups frowned upon females moving into the political sphere. Speaking to his congregation in New York, Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix of Trinity Church stated: "A man must have his share, a woman hers; the woman was not made to do the man's work, nor the man that of a woman's. To see this is wisdom; to maintain it inflexibility is security and peace; to ignore it must end in destruction and unhappiness."¹⁸⁶

Despite such conviction from various ministers, Protestants did not uniformly oppose suffrage. Writing for *Harper's Bazar*, Priscilla Leonard (a. k. a. Emily Bissell) claimed three-fifths of all Protestants were against female enfranchisement.¹⁸⁷ Though this may have been an accurate assertion prior to 1900, it is an unlikely estimate in 1910 when the article was written. In reality, after the turn of the century, Protestant clergymen and their congregations tended to increasingly sympathize with suffragists.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, individual ministers took on the antisuffrage cause themselves, hoping to convince their listeners that female suffrage directly contradicted the teachings and ideals of Christianity.

Approval from church leaders proved to be a powerful tool used by antisuffragists

¹⁸⁶ Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix, "Protestantism and Suffrage," *The Woman's Protest* 3 (September 1913): 9.

¹⁸⁷ Priscilla Leonard, "Temperance and Woman Suffrage: The Churches and the Women," *Harper's Bazar* 44 (April 1910): 289.

¹⁸⁸ J. J. Camhi, "Women Against Women," 200.

to fill their treasuries. Often casually persuading people to contribute money, they became indispensable allies for the antisuffrage cause. The Georgia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage frequently publicized the support it received from Warren Chandler, bishop of the Southern Methodist Church, and by doing so, antisuffrage organizations in that state received generous contributions.¹⁸⁹ After Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore wrote an open letter detailing the reasons for his opposition to a New Jersey Democratic leader before the state's 1915 suffrage referendum, the message was repeated by priests the following Sunday. This incited loyal Catholics to donate considerable funds to antisuffrage associations across the United States.¹⁹⁰

Like the business and liquor interests, the religious camp also provided a large amount of antisuffrage propaganda. In 1917, Rev. Lyman Abbott, protégé of Henry Ward Beecher and his successor as pastor of Brooklyn's Plymouth Congregational Church, composed an article, titled "Why Women Do Not Wish the Suffrage," for the *Atlantic Monthly*,¹⁹¹ and William Croswell Doane, an Episcopal bishop in Albany, New York, penned an article, called "Why Women Do Not Want the Ballot," for *North American Review* in 1896.¹⁹² Rev. Charles H. Pankerhurst, pastor at New York City's Madison Square Presbyterian Church, wrote a monthly column in the *Ladies' Home Journal*

¹⁸⁹ E. C. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 73.

¹⁹⁰ S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 82. Cardinal Gibbons' letter was reprinted in *The Woman's Protest* and repeatedly quoted by antisuffragists.

¹⁹¹ Rev. Lyman Abbott, "Why Women Do Not Wish the Suffrage," *Atlantic Monthly*, 1917, reprinted in *The Woman's Protest* 10 (April 1917): 6.

¹⁹² S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 82.

opposing women's suffrage.¹⁹³ Furthermore, for close to twenty-five years until his death in 1895, Rev. O. B. Frothingham, a Unitarian clergyman from Boston, authored antisuffrage articles for various newspapers and magazines.¹⁹⁴

In a forty-page pamphlet, Rev. F. Z. Browne, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Starkville, Mississippi, expressed his concern about feminism and female suffrage. Reciting and translating passages from the scripture, he attempted to illustrate how "the wiles of that old serpent, the devil,"¹⁹⁵ were luring "the new woman"¹⁹⁶ away from her "rightful position"¹⁹⁷ as wife and mother. "As in the first temptation [in Eden]," wrote Browne, "he is leading the woman to act independently of man, her head and representative, and of God."¹⁹⁸ Fearing women were "being led captive by Satan,"¹⁹⁹ he warned that female voters would disregard the fundamental principle of the separation of church and state. "To quote one of their own advocates," he wrote, "'all active suffragists believe that Woman Suffrage is close akin to religion.' In harmony with this attitude their first impulse, after having made the effort to justify their positions from the Scriptures, is exerted in the direction of bringing their whole political reform propaganda bodily into the churches."²⁰⁰ Calling female suffrage "one of the great errors of the

¹⁹³ Ibid., 84.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 82.

¹⁹⁵ Rev. F. Z. Browne, "Feminism and Woman Suffrage in the Light of Holy Scripture," (New York: Charles C. Cook, 1917), 38.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 7.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 6.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 9.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 10.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 12.

age.”²⁰¹ Browne concluded that a woman’s move into politics would lead to moral corruption in both the church and society.

In addition, female antisuffragists themselves wrote numerous pamphlets and articles in defense of religion. For instance, Florence Goff Schwarz wrote a pamphlet titled “An Open Letter to Clergymen: Arguments in Verse.”²⁰² A member of the Nebraska Association Opposed to Female Suffrage, Mary Nash Crofoot composed a pamphlet called “Lest Catholic Men Be Misled,”²⁰³ and Susan Fenimore Cooper wrote an article for *Harper's New Weekly Magazine* titled “Female Suffrage: A Letter to the Christian Women of America.”²⁰⁴

Writing for *The Catholic Mind*, Martha Moore Avery penned “Woman Suffrage,” which was a combination of six individual essays each linking the suffrage question to the words and wisdom of God. The first of her essays, titled “The Basic Issue,” described a woman’s place in the Christian world. “Women supply comfort and graces, while men exhibit their power by supplying the material means.”²⁰⁵ The second, called “The Genesis of Woman Suffrage,” criticized the new woman’s movement stating female suffrage was not part of God’s plan. Commenting on “Political Equality” in her third essay, Avery maintained women did not need political equality because God entrusted them to care for the family. In “Economic Equality,” she argued there was no

²⁰¹ Ibid., 11.

²⁰² Advertised in *The Woman's Protest* 5 (August 1914): 20.

²⁰³ Mary Nash Crofoot, “Lest Catholic Men Be Misled,” (pamphlet, November 2, 1914).

²⁰⁴ Susan Fenimore Cooper, “Female Suffrage: A Letter to the Christian Women of America,” *Harper's New Weekly Magazine* XLI (June - November 1870): 438-446, 594-600.

²⁰⁵ Martha Moore Avery, “Woman Suffrage: Six Papers,” *The Catholic Mind* XIII (December 8, 1915): 629.

need for equal pay since men provide for women in "the well-established order of Christian civilization."²⁰⁶ In her fifth essay, titled "Spread of Social Disorder," Avery blamed suffragists for the current social upheaval claiming they failed to carry out their prescribed duties as women. "Suffragists have so long been weaving public opinion with the warp of mental rebellion and woof of sex discontent the very foundations of our Republic are being sapped, because of the failure of a vast number of women to do the work of God set them to do."²⁰⁷ Lastly, in "Right Reason the Cure," she defended her conservatism and spiritual reasons against female suffrage. "Conservatism does not mean stagnation, but an active defense of what is old and good... Woman's rights are hers by the gift of God... it will be seen that woman suffrage is but a further extension of the rebellion... against the moral order as instituted by Christ our Lord."²⁰⁸

Generally speaking, the relationship between antisuffragists and the religious camp proved to be an effective alliance. A number of religious groups including the Catholic Church and various Protestant churches, were instrumental in helping antisuffragists collect donations from parishioners and promoting antisuffrage rhetoric. Although some affiliations were hesitant to support the antisuffrage movement because of its connection to the liquor group, others promptly joined in the crusade against female enfranchisement, because the political advancement of women was seen as unnatural and a threat to the universal order.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 641.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 646.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 651-654.

* * *

Finding support among diverse interest groups, mainly big business, liquor lobbyists, and the religious camp, antisuffragists offered a platform for powerful men to legitimize their opposition to female suffrage. Perhaps such alliances were inevitable considering the economic backgrounds and social class of most of those involved in antisuffrage work. On the other hand, not all churchgoers were wealthy demonstrating the power of cultural motivations. Nevertheless, the influence and contributions of these three main forces became formidable obstacles for suffragists and can not be overlooked. Without their support, it is unlikely that the antisuffrage movement could have sustained itself for as long as it did.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

*Without a radical change in human nature,
of which the world has never given the faintest sign,
women cannot be equally emancipated.*²⁰⁹

-Frances Parkman, 1888

Ultimately, antisuffragists were unable to stop the extension of female suffrage. In June, 1919, the Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States approved the Nineteenth Amendment, and twenty-nine states responded by calling special sessions to ratify it within fourteen months.²¹⁰ On August 26, 1920, it was official—qualified women were allowed to vote in the United States.

Because it was a victory for suffragists, the efforts of antisuffragists are often only mentioned in passing. In some cases, they are completely ignored. They were the losers, and history has a tendency to glorify winners. But, why should we ignore the

²⁰⁹ Frances Parkman, "Some of the Reasons Against Suffrage," *Pamphlets in American Society*, 1888. Printed at the request of An Association of Women, University of Wisconsin, 1-2.

²¹⁰ Most of these states had already passed laws allowing for female suffrage.

mobilization of roughly 700,000 female antisuffragists²¹¹ and the millions of dollars donated to their cause by various supporters? More importantly, how can contemporary feminists push aside the fact that the most passionate opponents of female suffrage were the women themselves? Whether one considers their plight noteworthy or inconsequential, no one can deny that female antisuffragists made a major impact on the way female enfranchisement came about in this country.

For one thing, they had a great effect on suffragists. Suffragism had been around since the early part of the nineteenth century, so for decades suffragists had been able to build a following. In 1895, when MAOFESW and NYSAOWS first organized, suffragists acknowledged that an opposition was beginning but did not feel threatened by its small membership and “silent” tactics. Sometime around 1910, this all changed. From that point on, realizing they had a menacing rival, suffragists were forced to defend their position.

Female antisuffragists also impacted public opinion. Their influence was demonstrated in countless remarks and editorials. From homemakers and clergymen to journalists and political figures, Americans from many walks of life expressed their support for the opposition, often using antisuffrage rhetoric. Public opinion of antisuffragists, of course, varied from place to place, but what remained constant was the antisuffragists’ ability to get individuals across America to talk about the issue at hand.

The impact of antisuffragists was further illustrated by the results of several state

²¹¹ S. E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 5.

referendums that proposed female suffrage. Antisuffragists would dutifully rally men together to vote against the proposed public measure. If that did not work, they paid for votes. In California in 1911, in Michigan in 1912, and in Iowa in 1916, antisuffragists bought referendum votes.²¹² Incidentally, the same tactics were used during numerous elections where the candidates supported female suffrage.

In essence, the antisuffrage movement became a force to be reckoned with eventually encompassing more than twenty-five state associations, numerous city and local branches, and a national association. Providing a refuge against the demands of feminists, the opposition offered a foundation from which conservative women could fight for their right to remain at home. Antisuffragists believed men and women were inherently different and should keep to the "natural places" in society. Unable to accept the possibility that their power in the home may have been the result of manipulation by men who wanted to keep them out of the political process, they leaped into the public spotlight to defend what they considered their privileges as women.

While gathering data on the various reasons women opposed suffrage proved to be an easy task, the process of accumulating biographical information on individual females proved to be a challenge. The only data readily available was that of the movement's more affluent women. Perhaps this was because the opposition appealed mostly to urban, upper-class white women. A more likely conclusion could be that lower-class women left behind no traceable information with the exception of what was

²¹² E. Flexnor and E. Fitzpatrick, *Century of Struggle*, 286.

written about them by fellow antisuffragists. For that reason, it is not surprising that contemporary historians have focused only on the women of the social "aristocracy" rather than on poorer women.

The progression of antisuffrage resistance appears to have remained the same throughout the country. At first, opposition began as simple public comments, newspaper editorials, or the occasional denunciation from the pulpit. It was only after female suffrage began to make serious headway that some women became alarmed enough to try and stop it. For example, MAOFESW was organized in response to the passage of the Wellman bill, which allowed all women who were already qualified to vote for school suffrage to vote on the issue of female municipal suffrage in a "mock" referendum, and a few months later NYSAOWS was formed after a Constitutional Convention allowed female suffragists to request a state suffrage bill.

Once the movement started, however, antisuffragists disagreed on various issues, such as recruitment. The first recruitment efforts were focused primarily on society's most elite members, but as the suffrage movement picked up momentum, antisuffragists had to look elsewhere for membership to show they were still the majority. While the larger associations, mostly found in metropolitan areas in the North, continued to use kinship ties and social networks to facilitate enrollment, smaller associations scattered throughout the South and Midwest depended on "specialized" strategies, such as advertising that the female vote would bring more trouble to those areas of the Midwest already infected with radicalism and anti-democratic activists. Furthermore, branch associations were formed in large cities to help recruit working-class and tenement

women, most of whom antisuffragists did not really seem to care about but needed in order to demonstrate that female suffrage was not a mainstream goal.

After studying the recruitment efforts employed by antisuffragists, it became apparent that the basis of opposition to female suffrage varied throughout the nation. In the North, industry and business owners did not want females meddling in their affairs. In the South, the white population wanted to keep its dominance over the black populace, and in the Midwest, brewing companies feared women would interfere with their right to sell and distribute liquor. What this demonstrates is that the antisuffrage movement was not a monolithic movement but a combination of several mini-movements with one supreme objective—to stop female suffrage.

Helping the cause, three main interest groups—big business, liquor lobbyists, and the religious camp—supported the opinions and actions of the opposition. Their influence as well as their donations gave antisuffragists the power to become a full-fledged movement. Without their support, antisuffragists and their cause were unlikely to mount an effective challenge to the suffrage movement after 1910.

By 1922, the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage and all of the state organizations disappeared. Having lost the battle, antisuffragists were devastated. Forced to compete in the public sphere, they formed new groups like local Women's Constitutional Leagues and the Women's Voters' Anti-Suffrage Party. Remaining persistent in their views that women were bad for politics, they had a new mission—to encourage voters to vote against the men who had enfranchised them.

There still remains much work to be done on this subject. First and foremost, there should be more emphasis placed on those *individual* females involved in the antisuffrage movement, especially since so many different women took an interest in the campaign. My comments on the motives and personalities of working class and tenement female antisuffragists are speculative, although based on several well-researched sources.

Second, this thesis attempted to describe some differences between the northern, southern, and midwestern antisuffrage organizations, jumping around the United States to provide a broader perspective. It was noted that opposition in the South was based on fear of the Negro vote. Due to the fact that female antisuffrage was predominantly a white cause and racist views were common in all of American society during the first half of the twentieth century, was the possibility of black women voting an issue for Northerners or Midwesterners? Or was this a mute point in areas outside of the South?

Lastly, a much more in depth analysis needs to be conducted of those interests that bankrolled the antisuffrage movement. We can conclude that big business, liquor lobbyists, and the religious camp associated with antisuffragists, but we need to learn more about their influence on what was largely a movement maintained by women.

APPENDIX. ANTISUFFRAGE ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR LEADERS

The data presented is incomplete. It is impossible to locate every name of every woman who served as an officer. Furthermore, dates have been purposefully left out, with the exception of the presidencies and a few other official positions of NAOWS, MAOFESW and NYSAOWS, because the exact time each member held a position was not available. However, with the information provided, one can begin to link different women with the various associations. All names were found in the volumes of The Woman's Protest between the years 1912 and 1918.

It should be noted that the position of vice president and secretary was held by several women at any one time.

National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage

Presidents:

Josephine Jewell Dodge (1911-1917)
Mary G. Kilbreth (1919-1920)
Alice Hay Wadsworth (1917-1919)

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. Horace Brock
Mrs. Stephen B. Elkins
Grace B. Evans
Mrs. A. Louis Frothingham
Mrs. F. W. Goddard
Mrs. John B. Heron
Mrs. Henry P. Kidder
Miss Anne McIlvaine
Mrs. John F. A. Merrill
Mrs. Edward Porter Peck
Mrs. George B. Puller
Mrs. Sidney W. Thaxter
Mrs. Henry B. Thompson

Secretaries:

Miss Minnie Bronson
Mrs. Morgan G. Bulkeley
Mrs. William B. Glover
Miss Anne Squire
Mrs. Eli Whitney

Treasurers:

Mrs. Robert Garrett
Miss Caroline W. Stewart

Alabama Association

President:

Miss N. V. Baker

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. John Burns
Kate M. Gardner
Mrs. Nathan Kahn

(Alabama Association: Vice Presidents cont.)

Lida B. Robertson

Secretary and Treasurer:

Mrs. William Roberts

Executive Committee Member:

Mattie C. Elsberry

Connecticut Association

President:

Mrs. Daniel Markham

Vice-Presidents:

Mrs. Charles C. Beach

Miss Elizabeth Burnell

Mrs. Gilbert Calhoun

Mrs. William B. Glover

Mrs. Lynde Harrison

Mrs. H. H. Mason

Miss Martha J. Wilkinson

Mrs. William B. Williams

Secretaries:

Mrs. John L. Bunce

Mrs. William Howe

Mrs. Walter H. Schutz

Mrs. Caroline Taylor

Treasurers:

Mrs. Albert S. Cook

Mrs. Charles Lawrence

Delaware Association

President:

Mrs. Henry B. Thompson

Secretaries:

Miss Emily P. Bissell

Mrs. David Reinhardt

Mrs. Murray Stewart

Treasurer:

Mrs. Eugene Dupont, Jr.

District of Columbia Association

President:

Mrs. Charles H. Davis

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. Douglas Putnam Birnie

Mrs. Thomas T. Gaff

Mrs. Joseph M. Stoddard

Secretaries:

Mrs. George B. Puller

Miss Anne Squire

Treasurer:

Miss Alice Card

Executive Committee Members:

Miss Elizabeth Davis

Mrs. Arthur Wallace Dunn

Mrs. Charles Hussey

(District of Columbia Association: Executive Committee Members cont.)

Miss Murray Ledyard
Mrs. E. Rollins Morse
Miss Josephine Patten
Mrs. Swager Sherley
Mrs. James W. Wadsworth, Jr.

Georgia Association

President:

Miss. Caroline Patterson

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. W. E. Godfrey
Mrs. Richard Cuyler King
Mrs. J. E. Peacock
Mrs. N. K. Troutman

Secretaries:

Mrs. S. E. Moore
Mrs. B. F. Sutton

Treasurer:

Mrs. Flewellen Holt

Chairpersons of the Press Committee:

Mrs. Walter D. Lemar
Miss Pendleton

Chairperson of the Membership Committee:

Mrs. Robert J. Taylor

Chairperson of the Finance Committee:

Mrs. Charles Hilbun

Illinois Association

President:

Caroline Corbin

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. T. B. Blackstone
Mrs. S. M. Nickerson
Mrs. R. J. Oglesby
Mrs. James M. Walker

Secretary:

Mrs. George W. Kretzinger

Treasurer:

Miss J. C. Fairfield

Iowa Association

Presidents:

Mrs. Simon Cassidy (former secretary for the association)
Mrs. Martin Flynn
Mrs. F. A. Millard

Vice-President:

Miss Alice French

Secretaries:

Miss Mary Chittenden
Mrs. Harry Phillips

Treasurers:

Mrs. F. I. Harriett
Mrs. Ralph Rollins

Maine Association

Presidents:

Mrs. Clarence Hale
Mrs. Sidney W. Thaxter

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. George E. Bird
Mrs. Isaac Watson Dyer
Mrs. Phillip W. McIntrye
Mrs. John F. A. Merrill
Mrs. David W. Snow
Mrs. Oscar R. Wish

Secretaries:

Mrs. E. G. Abbott
Mrs. James P. Baxter
Mrs. P. M. Blake
Mrs. W. H. Bradford
Mrs. Clarence H. Corning
Mrs. John Glidden
Mrs. George S. Hobbs
Mrs. Fred E. Hollis
Miss Mary King Longfellow
Miss Elinor S. Moody
Mrs. Charles S. Ogden
Mrs. F. A. Quimby
Mrs. F. C. Robinson
Miss Louisa Spring
Miss Catherine Talbot
Miss Hannah L. Talbot
Miss Marion Richmond Weeks
Miss Alice Wood

Treasurer:

Mrs. Bertrand T. Wheeler

Registrar:

Mrs. Clayton Whipple

Auditor:

Mrs. Edville G. Abbott

Maryland Association

Presidents:

Mrs. Robert Garrett
Mrs. Oscar Lesar

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. John Haslup Adams
Mrs. P. Thompson Coyle
Mrs. Hobart Duvall
Mrs. Arthur B. Kinsolving
Mrs. Francis T. Redwood
Miss Catherine M. Selfe (former secretary for the association)
Mrs. Rosalie Straus
Mrs. Michael Wild
Mrs. W. P. E. Wyse

(Maryland Association cont.)

Secretaries:

Miss Katherine Davis
Mrs. Claude Hall
Mrs. Nathan A Middleton
Mrs. M. C. Talbot
Mrs. P. Lea Thom

Treasurers:

Mrs. J. Frank Crouch
Miss Caroline W. Latimer
Mrs. Charles B. Penrose

Chairperson of Member Committee:

Mrs. Francis T. Redwood

Massachusetts Association

Presidents:

Mary S. Ames (1910-1913)
Catherine Balch (1915-1917)
Elizabeth Dwight Cabot (1895-1901)
Henrietta Codman (1913-1915)
Mrs. Stephen S. Fitzgerald (chairperson, 1917-1920)
Mary Lyman Guild (1902-1905)
Cora Lyman Shaw (1905-1910)

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. George Agassiz
Mrs. Robert Bradley
Julia Gardner Coolidge
Miss Anna L. Dawes
Mrs. Charles E. Guild
Eliza Homans
Mrs. Agnes Irwin
Mrs. Frances C. Lowell
Elizabeth Lowell Putnam (1912-1917, moved to a branch committee of MAOFESW)
Mrs. Robert Russell
Margaret Whitney (1897-1917)

Secretaries:

Mrs. S. Reed Anthony
Mrs. Randolph Frothingham
Alice J. George
Miss Elizabeth Johnson
Mrs. Robert W. Lord (1897-1904)
Mrs. E. C. Post
Mrs. Charles P. Strong
Miss Ellen Tower

Treasurer:

Henrietta Codman (1901-1919)

Michigan Association

President:

Mrs. Henry F. Lyster

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. Charles W. Casgrain
Mrs. L. E. Clark
Miss Stella Ford

(Michigan Association: Vice Presidents cont.)

Mrs. C. A. Kent

Mrs. Joseph B. Schotman

Secretaries:

Mrs. William S. Jerome

Mrs. Helen E. Keep

Treasurer:

Mrs. James Cosslett Smith

Minnesota Association

Presidents:

Mrs. J. B. Gilfillan

Mrs. Johnson W. Straight

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. William Davis

Mrs. Daniel R. Noyes

Mrs. Edmund Pennington

Mrs. Alfred Pillsbury

Mrs. Walter Richardson

Mrs. E. C. Stringer

Secretaries:

Ruth M. Currie

Mrs. W. W. Sykes

Treasurer:

Mrs. H. F. Stevens

Nebraska Association

President:

Mrs. Edward Porter Peck

Chairwoman of the Executive Committee:

Mary Nash Crofoot

Secretary:

Mrs. William Archibald Smith

Treasurers:

Mrs. C. C. George

Mrs. Frank J. Hoel

Executive Committee Members:

Mrs. F. N. Conner

Mrs. John C. Cowin

Mrs. J. W. Crumpacker

Mrs. Gerrit Fort

Mrs. J. W. Griffith

Mrs. W. H. Koenig

Mrs. Helen Arion Lewis

Mrs. T. J. Mackay

Mrs. Arthur Chittenden Smith

Mrs. Janet M. Wallace

Mrs. John L. Webster

Mrs. Henry W. Yates

New Hampshire Association

Presidents:

Mrs. A. T. Dudley (former vice president of the association)

Mrs. Edison J. Hill

(New Hampshire Association cont.)

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. Thomas C. Bethume
Mrs. O. D. Felton
Mrs. Will B. Howe
Mrs. John J. Spring
Mrs. Barrett Wendell

Secretaries:

Mrs. Otis G. Hammond
Miss Grace Morrill

Treasurer:

Miss Carey R. Todd

New Jersey Association

Presidents:

Mrs. Edward Yarde Breese
Miss Anna Dayton

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. C. Ledyard Blair
Mrs. Grover Cleveland
Mrs. F. N. Conner
Mrs. Mrs. Thomas Craven
Mrs. Henry M. Darcy
Mrs. John R. Emery
Mrs. Garret A. Hobart
Mrs. Cornelius Hook
Mrs. Alexander F. Jamieson
Mrs. Sherman B. Joost
Mrs. William J. Libbey
Miss Anne MacIlvaine (former secretary for the association)
Mrs. H. O. Magie
Mrs. Thomas J. Preston
Miss Clara Vezin
Miss Janet M. Wallace
Mrs. Theodore Woodbury

Secretaries:

Mrs. Elsworth A. Corbett
Miss Fanny Dickenson
Miss Elizabeth R. Hendrickson
Mrs. R. C. Maxwell
Mrs. Orville D. Oliphant

Treasurers:

Mrs. Joseph M. Forst
Mrs. Charles Minnegorode
Mrs. Charles R. Smith
Mrs. George B. Yarde

Finance Chairperson:

Mrs. John Constable Moore

New York Association

Presidents:

Abby Hamlin Abbott (1903-1907)
Miss Alice Chittenden (1913-1918)

(New York Association: Presidents cont.)

Mrs. Charles Fairchild (1918-1920, chairperson of the new Women Voters' Anti-Suffrage Party)

Miss Mary Kilbreth (1918, six months)

Carolyn Putnam (1907-1913)

Lucy Scott (1895-1903)

Vice Presidents:

Bertha Koenig Achelis

Josephine Dodge

Mrs. Richard Watson Gilder

Mrs. William D. Guthrie

Miss Eleanor G. Hewitt

Miss Georgine Iselin

Mrs. George Douglas Miller

Mrs. William P. Northrup

Mrs. Thomas J. Preston

Mrs. James Roosevelt

Mrs. Elihu Root

Mrs. Frances M. Scott

Mrs. James Wadsworth

Mrs. George W. Wickersham

Secretaries:

Mrs. Elizabeth F. Gallaudet

Lilian Bayard Taylor Kiliani (a.k.a. the "international" secretary for NYSAOWS)

Mrs. K. B. Lapham

Mrs. M. E. Loomis

Treasurers:

Mrs. John A. Church

Mrs. Charlton Lewis

Mrs. Herbert L. Satterice

North Carolina Association

President:

Mary Hillard Hinton

North Dakota Association

President:

Mrs. N. C. Young

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. T. L. Beiseker

Mrs. R. H. Bosard

Mrs. H. C. Chaffee

Mrs. L. B. Dochterman

Mrs. N. C. Frick

Mrs. E. B. Goss

Mrs. J. G. Gundersen

Mrs. H. R. Hopkins

Mrs. M. O. Moyine

Mrs. J. W. Reynolds

Mrs. C. E. Wolf

Secretaries:

Mrs. Ralph Beard

Mrs. E. L. Wiswell

(North Dakota Association cont.)

Treasurer:

Mrs. H. F. Caffee (former vice president for the association)

Executive Committee Members:

Mrs. D. B. Holt

Mrs. W. J. Howe

Ohio Association

Presidents:

Mrs. Herman M. Hubbard

Mrs. Nicholas Longworth

Mrs. H. E. Talbot

Vice Presidents:

Miss Alice Bennett

Mrs. Harry G. Carnell

Mrs. W. W. Clippinger

Mrs. Joseph Crane

Mrs. W. Austin Goodman

Mrs. John Bradley Greene

Mrs. John M. Gundry

Mrs. Milton James

Mrs. Frank D. Jamison

Mrs. Joseph J. Jeffrey

Mrs. Helen M. Lucas

Mrs. Cyrus Newby

Mrs. Charles Orr

Mrs. J. Herbert Roach

Mrs. J. H. J. Upham

Secretaries:

Miss Clara Markeson

Miss F. Ewing Martin

Miss Lucy Price

Mrs. Florence Goff Schwarz

Treasurers:

Miss Alice B. Haney

Mrs. John A. MacMillan

Oregon Association

President:

Mrs. Francis J. Bailey

Vice Presidents:

Miss Failing

Mrs. R. W. Wilbur

Secretary:

Miss Eleanor E. Gile

Treasurer:

Mrs. Wallace McCamant

Pennsylvania Association

Presidents:

Mrs. Horace Brock

Mrs. J. Gardner Cassett

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. William W. Birdsall

(Pennsylvania Association: Vice Presidents cont.)

Miss Grace Falkner
Mrs. Simeon H. Guilford
Agnes Irwin
Miss Sophy Dallas Irwin
Mrs. James Large
Mrs. John Markoe
Mrs. William L. McLean
Miss Mary Newhall
Mrs. Frank Samuel

Secretaries:

Mrs. Briton Coxe
Mrs. Charles Bingham Penrose

Treasurers:

Miss Elise Balch
Mrs. Charles W. Henry

General Secretary and Treasurer:

Laura M. Sloan

Rhode Island Association

President:

Mrs. Rowland G. Hazard

Vice President:

Miss Louise C. Hoppin
Mrs. Stephen O. Metcalf
Mrs. Howard O. Sturges

Secretaries:

Mrs. Albert Harkness
Mrs. Earnest Howe

Treasurer:

Mrs. Elisha Howard

Chairpersons:

Mrs. William Ely
Mrs. Joseph Howland
Mrs. Charles Weaver

Tennessee Association

Vice President:

Queenie Woods Washington

South Dakota Association

President:

Mrs. Ernest Jackson

Vice President:

Mrs. George B. Mansfield

Secretary:

Mrs. Elias Jacobsen

Treasurer:

Mrs. S. S. Ruble

Chairperson:

Mrs. E. B. Northrup

Texas Association

President:

Pauline Wells

(Texas Association cont.)

Vice President:

Mrs. George F. Arnold

Chairperson:

Ida M. Darden

Vermont Association

Presidents:

Mrs. David Conant

Mrs. Clarence Morgan

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. Edward Kirkland

Mrs. Edmund C. Mower

Mrs. Frank Parker

Mrs. N. E. Phelps

Mrs. M. C. Webber

Mrs. Edward Wells

Secretaries:

Mrs. Arthur Myrick

Mrs. Blanche Stranahan

Treasurers:

Miss Hattie Brock

Mrs. Walter Isham

Executive Committee Members:

Mrs. Humphrey

Miss Lindsey

Virginia Association

Presidents:

Mrs. Jane M. Rutherford

Miss Francis D. Williams

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. Hunsdon Cary

Mrs. William F. Gray

Mrs. Henry Harwood

Mrs. Thomas Cary Johnson

Mrs. Otho G. Kean

Mrs. James Lyons

Mrs. Hunter McGuire

Mrs. E. V. Valentine

Miss Annie Rose Walker

Mrs. Charles Whitlock

Mrs. E. Randolph Williams

Mrs. Arthur Wilmer

Secretaries:

Mrs. Charles M. Ferrell

Mrs. Maury Robinson

Treasurer:

Mrs. Louis Strauss

Washington D. C. Association

Presidents:

Mrs. C. H. Davis

Mrs. Arthur Dunn

(Washington D. C. Association: Presidents cont.)

Mrs. Augustus P. Gardner
Mrs. Frank Goodwin

Vice Presidents:

Mrs. Douglas P. Birnie
Mrs. Thomas T. Gaff
Miss Grace Dunio Litchfield
Miss Jane Riggs
Mrs. Elihu Root
Mrs. Mollie Elliot Seawell
Mrs. Swager Sherley
Mrs. Joseph M. Stoddard
Mrs. John W. Weeks
Mrs. George Wickersham

Secretaries:

Miss Elizabeth Davis
Miss Esther Denny
Mrs. C. L. Harrold
Mrs. George G. Washington
Mrs. Kingsbury Waterman

Treasurers:

Miss Alice Card
Miss McMullen

Executive Committee Members:

Mrs. Jessie Lincoln Beckwith
Mrs. William Cogswell
Mrs. Frederick Keep
Mrs. Murray Ledyard
Mrs. J. Alex Mahon
Mrs. E. Rollins Morse
Mrs. William W. Mathewson
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