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"A higher ambition" : Bay Area women fight for suffrage in California

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“A HIGHER AMBITION”:
BAY AREA WOMEN FIGHT FOR SUFFRAGE IN CALIFORNIA

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
Karen Lynne Skahill

December 2004

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ABSTRACT

“A HIGHER AMBITION”: BAY AREA WOMEN FIGHT FOR SUFFRAGE IN CALIFORNIA

By Karen Lynne Skahill

This thesis examines the role of Bay Area women in the fight for suffrage from 1870 to the passage of the nineteenth amendment in 1920. During this time suffragists waged two state campaigns, made numerous trips to the California legislature, aided individual states, and lobbied for the national amendment.

Research revealed that Bay Area suffragists extensively lobbied the male electorate. By building a suffrage coalition that included club women, socialists, college educated and professional women, and wage earners, suffragists showed that they were a powerful force. In addition, Bay Area women battled for enfranchisement not only in their own counties, but also in other areas of California, sending speakers and organizers. Most importantly, they did not stop working for suffrage in 1911 when they gained enfranchisement. Instead many suffragists continued to participate in state campaigns and worked for the passage of the national suffrage amendment.

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Finally, this thesis would never have been accomplished without the help of my family. My husband, Kevin, and my children, Emily and Danny, have been a continual source of support, inspiration, and understanding. In addition, my parents Sharon and Richard have encouraged me every step of the way, taking care of Emily and Danny at a moment's notice in order for me to attend classes and complete research.

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INTRODUCTION

In July 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott held the first women's convention in Seneca Falls, New York, at which they encouraged women to claim their rights as citizens of the United States. Historian Eleanor Flexner explains that the convention was significant because "a movement had been launched, which [women] could either join or ignore, that would leave its imprint on the lives of their daughters and of women throughout the world."¹

Women's rights issues had spread to the West Coast by 1849 at which time married women's property rights became a controversial issue debated at California's first constitutional convention.² California, historian Lisa Rubens argues, "was fertile ground" for the women's rights movement as it became a state in 1850. Pioneer women, who often came from the East Coast where the women's rights movement was strongest, brought with them "advanced ideas about the role of women in society."³

It would take sixteen years for woman suffrage to become a topic of political concern in California. Mrs. C.M. Stowe, a spiritualist and lecturer, wrote in California's San Jose Daily Mercury newspaper on January 9, 1865:

I know I am entering on a subject as yet little agitated, but I am a woman and for women I must speak. Let justice be done to all—to the colored race, and to woman also. Give her a higher ambition than that of playing

¹ Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959), 72.

² Donald Waller Rodes, "The California Woman Suffrage Campaign of 1911" (Master's Thesis, California State University Hayward, 1974), 4.

³ Lisa Rubens, "Politics Within The Suffrage Movement," California Historical Courier (September 1986), 1.

the doll and setting man-traps—and ambition to develop and expand the faculties which by nature she is entitled...Enfranchise woman.⁴

The first major suffrage lecture was delivered at San Francisco's Platt Hall on February 18, 1868 by Laura de Force Gordon, the second woman to become a lawyer in California. Her lecture entitled "The Elective Franchise: Who Shall Vote?" was based on the premise that "suffrage must be based on intelligence to be essentially Republican."⁵ Interest in women's enfranchisement continued into the following year at which time twenty-five year old Emily A. Pitts became co-editor and co-owner of San Francisco's California Weekly Mercury, later to be renamed the Pioneer, which dedicated a large portion of its articles to the suffrage cause. Historian Sherilyn Bennion explains that Emily A. Pitts' paper "seems to have been the first paper in the West to have had this as its principal aim."⁶ In the first edition, Pitts states:

With this issue, a new field has been laid out for the Mercury... We defend the rights of women fearlessly and to the best of our ability. We shall claim for her each privilege now given to every male citizen of the United States. In short, we shall claim for her the right of suffrage—believing that by this she will gain the position for which God intended her—equality with man.⁷

⁴ Mrs. C.M. Stowe quoted in Robert J. Chandler, "In the Van: Spiritualists As Catalysts For the California Women's Suffrage Movement," California History 73 (1994): 191.

⁵ Chandler, 194 – 195.

⁶ Sherilyn Cox Bennion, "The Pioneer: The First Voice For Women's Suffrage in the West," Pacific Historian 25 (Summer 1981): 16.

⁷ Emily A. Pitts quoted in Sherilyn Cox Bennion, "The Pioneer: The First Voice For Women's Suffrage in the West," Pacific Historian 25 (Summer 1981): 15.

The California Suffrage Association was then organized in January 1870 with Sarah Wallis of Mayfield (presently known as Palo Alto) serving as president.⁸ In her election speech she stated, “I thank you for this expression of your high esteem and confidence in electing me...I shall persevere until the emancipation of women is effected.”⁹

The following year Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton visited California, giving speeches and lectures throughout the state. Their visit proved to be influential and inspiring to the state suffragists, and it was clear that the issue of woman suffrage would not fade away in California. This is evident in a letter written by Emily Pitts Stevens to Laura de Force Gordon in 1871 in which she wrote: “And California today is in reality more thoughtful, and interested in the vital question of woman suffrage than it has ever been before.”¹⁰

Although Stevens was hopeful in 1871 that California would soon enfranchise its women, it would take forty years of diligent effort for California women to win the right to vote. It was in the 1911 election that most Southern California counties as well as many rural areas of California voted heavily in favor of suffrage while the two largest counties in Northern California voted against the amendment.¹¹ Suffragists in San Francisco and Alameda counties, in particular, had difficulties convincing the male

⁸ Pam Gullard and Nancy Lund, History of Palo Alto: The Early Years (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 1989), 68.

⁹ Regnery, 4.

¹⁰ Emily Pitts Stevens to Laura de Force Gordon, 3 January 1871. Laura de Force Gordon Papers, Bancroft Library.

electorate to vote for suffrage because of a large Catholic immigrant population, an influential liquor lobby, cultural differences between middle-class suffragists and working-class women, and an indifferent upper-class male electorate.¹² These substantial obstacles, in the end, caused the defeat of the suffrage amendments in San Francisco and Alameda counties in the elections of 1896 and 1911.

Nonetheless, Bay Area suffragists made valuable contributions to the suffrage movement in California as well as the national movement as they campaigned for women's enfranchisement from 1870 to the passage of the nineteenth amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920. The majority of Bay Area counties including Santa Clara, Contra Costa, Merced, Napa, Sonoma, and Santa Cruz voted in favor of suffrage.¹³ And although Alameda and San Francisco counties defeated suffrage in the 1911 election, the margin by which the amendment was defeated was significantly less than in the 1896 election. In San Francisco, 26.1 percent of the electorate voted for suffrage in 1896 while 38.1 percent of the electorate voted for suffrage in 1911.¹⁴ Given the large population of these counties, this contributed greatly to victory in 1911. In addition, Bay Area suffragists battled for enfranchisement not only in their own counties, but also in

¹¹ San Francisco Chronicle, October 13, 1911 and Frank C. Jordan, California Blue Book or State Roster 1911 (Sacramento, California: Friend W. Richardson, Superintendent of State Printing, 1913), 575.

¹² Susan Englander, Class Coalition and Class Conflict in the California Woman Suffrage Movement 1907 – 1912: The San Francisco Wage Earners' Suffrage League, (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1992), 136 - 143.

¹³ San Francisco Chronicle, October 13, 1911. For the purposes of this thesis, the Bay Area is inclusive of the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma. Although Santa Cruz county is not typically included in the Bay Area, I have chosen to include it because of its close proximity to the other counties. In addition, there is an important link between suffragists in the Bay Area counties and suffragists in Santa Cruz dating back to the 1870s.

other areas of California such as Butte, Sacramento, and San Joaquin counties, sending speakers and organizers to help rally the electorate to support the suffrage cause. Bay Area suffragists' efforts paid off as these counties voted largely in favor of the suffrage amendment in 1911 (63% of Butte, 52% of Sacramento and 54% of San Joaquin counties' electorates voted for the suffrage amendment).¹⁵ Most importantly, Bay Area suffragists did not stop their campaign in 1911 when they were granted statewide suffrage. Instead, many Bay Area women such as Charlotte Anita Whitney, Maud Younger, and Alice Park continued their efforts and became important figures in the national fight for suffrage.

Newspapers such as the Sacramento Bee, San Jose Daily Mercury, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Call, Los Gatos Mail, Daily Palo Alto Times, and Labor Clarion provide crucial information needed to document the suffrage movement in the Bay Area. These newspapers present a range of sentiments from conservative to moderate to radical about woman suffrage and give historians a sense of how Californian's viewed the issue. They also fill in the missing links between the local leaders and their organizations, especially since there is limited material written on the Bay Area's suffrage movement.

Many useful primary documents help piece together the movement in California. The History of Woman Suffrage by Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, discusses the suffrage campaigns in California, indicating the National Woman Suffrage

¹⁴ Englander, 142.

¹⁵ The San Francisco Chronicle, October 13, 1911.

Association's interest and activity in California's campaigns.¹⁶ In addition, Selina Solmon's personal account, How We Won the Vote in California, written in 1912, provides a first-hand portrait of the campaign.¹⁷ The Northern College Equal Suffrage League published Winning Equal Suffrage in California in 1913, compiling individual league members' reports in order to demonstrate to other states how to wage a successful campaign. The greatest strength of this source is that it provides multiple perspectives on the 1911 campaign.¹⁸ One of the richest collections of Northern California suffrage material is located at the Bancroft Library at the University of California Berkeley. The Hester Harland Papers, the McKeith-Henry-Pond Collection, the papers of Laura de Force Gordon, and the Dane-Coolidge papers provide significant information in the form of personal correspondence, newspaper clippings, and individual accounts of the suffrage campaign in California.

Valuable secondary sources, such as Gayle Gullett's Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women's Movement, 1880 –1911, set the context of women's emergence in the public sphere as they became involved in clubs and began to participate in politics.¹⁹ Reda Davis' California Women: A Guide to Their Politics 1885 – 1911 provides brief biographical sketches of many prominent California

¹⁶ Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, The History of Woman Suffrage: Volume IV 1883 – 1900 (Indianapolis: the Hollenbeck Press, 1902).

¹⁷ Selina Solomons, How We Won the Vote In California: A True Story of the Campaign of 1911 (San Francisco: The New Woman Publishing Co., 1912).

¹⁸ College Equal Suffrage League, Winning Equal Suffrage in California: Reports of committees of the College Equal Suffrage League of Northern California in the Campaign of 1911 (National College Equal Suffrage League, 1913).

men and women who participated in the suffrage movement.²⁰ Susan Englander's Class Coalition and Class Conflict in the California Woman Suffrage Movement successfully disproves the myth that the California suffrage campaign was waged mainly by middle-class women and shows that "female wage earners were actively involved in the final phase of the campaign for woman suffrage, verbalized pro-suffrage opinions publicly, formed an organization to promote the suffrage cause, successfully lobbied labor organizations to support suffrage actively and worked side by side with middle-class suffragists to ensure passage of Amendment Eight."²¹ In addition, Mae Silver and Sue Cazaly's The Sixth Star: Images and Memorabilia of California Women's Political History 1868 – 1915 provides reproductions of newspaper articles, songs, campaign activities and memorabilia, as well as a brief narrative description of California women's fight for suffrage.²²

From its inception, the California suffrage movement maintained strong ties with the leaders and activities of the national movement. However, secondary sources documenting the national suffrage movement rarely mention the California campaign, its significance and the personalities involved. Thus secondary sources covering the national suffrage campaign are most helpful in placing the California struggle within the context of the larger movement. Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick's Century of

¹⁹ Gayle Gullett, Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women's Movement 1880- 1911 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

²⁰ Reda Davis, California Women: A Guide To Their Politics 1885 – 1911 (San Francisco: California Scene, 1967).

²¹ Englander, 2.

Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States stands out as an exemplary account that chronicles the experiences of suffragists. Flexner and Fitzpatrick state, "the vote was a passkey to public life, the vast arena outside the home where ideas were propagated, fortunes made, and the future charted by those who participated in rather than observed or reacted to the making of public policy."²³ Aileen Kraditor's The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890 – 1920 provides a unique analysis of the ideology of the movement stating, "the woman suffrage movement had no official ideology. Its members and leaders held every conceivable view of current events and represented every philosophical position."²⁴ In addition, Sara Evans's Born For Liberty documents the women's movement from the early 1800s to the 1920s, looking especially at how women pioneered "the creation of new public spaces—voluntary associations located between the public world of politics and work and the private intimacy of family."²⁵

The above sources unveil the well-orchestrated campaign waged by Bay Area women as they strove to convince the male electorate to grant them the right to vote. This regional study focuses on the efforts of Bay Area suffragists by providing an overview of the early suffrage movement in California and the subsequent 1896

²² Mae Silver and Sue Cazaly, The Sixth Star: Images and Memorabilia of California Women's Political History 1868-1915 (San Francisco, California: Ord Street Press, 2000).

²³ Flexner and Fitzpatrick, ix.

²⁴ Aileen Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1981), xi.

²⁵ Sara Evans, Born For Liberty: A History of Women in America (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 3.

campaign, documenting suffragists' efforts to rebuild the suffrage movement after the defeat of 1896, and revealing how upper and middle class suffragists developed new strategies to involve a more diverse and heterogeneous group of women, especially, the working woman. In addition, it demonstrates the hard work of Bay Area suffragists in the campaign of 1911 and shows how their efforts contributed to statewide success despite the losses within San Francisco and Alameda counties. Finally, this thesis showcases the subsequent work of prominent Bay Area suffragists in the national campaign for enfranchisement.

CHAPTER 1

BEGINNING THEIR QUEST FOR SUFFRAGE

The year 1869 marked the beginning of California women's quest for the ballot as suffrage organizations were organized across the Bay. Elizabeth Schenck of San Francisco organized the San Francisco Suffrage Association, and Sarah Knox organized the Woman Suffrage Association of San Jose.²⁶ With the help of Laura de Force Gordon, other suffrage societies were organized in Oakland, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Petaluma, Sacramento, Nevada City, and San Diego and funds were raised in order to hold California women's first state suffrage convention.²⁷

By 1870, suffragists held their first convention in San Francisco in which participants created the constitution of the California Woman Suffrage Association and created many new local suffrage chapters. As reported in The History of Woman Suffrage, "from that date meetings were held regularly and a committee of women did faithful work at the Legislature every session, securing many changes in the laws to the advantage of women."²⁸

In March 1870, over three thousand men and women, mainly from Northern California, lobbied the legislature to amend the state constitution to grant women suffrage. Suffragists based their demand on the principle that women should speak for themselves, not through the vote of their fathers and husbands.²⁹ The legislature, however, voted forty-seven to twenty-four against the petition.

²⁶ Helen Arbuckle, San Jose's Women: Colonial Days to the 1970s (San Jose: California, 2002), 47.

²⁷ Dorothy Regnery, "Application for Registration of Historical Landmark," June 12, 1896, De Anza College, California History Center, Clippings File, 4.

²⁸ Anthony and Harper, Volume IV 1883 – 1900, 478.

²⁹ Gullett, 11.

The next year prominent suffragists Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton toured California, lecturing throughout the state. Many Californians, however, were not yet ready to embrace woman suffrage, their attitudes mirroring others nationwide. The San Francisco Chronicle reported on July 16, 1871: “We have heard nothing in the points made by either of these ladies to lead us to the conclusion that either man or woman would be benefited by the extension of the privilege of voting to the latter.”³⁰

While Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were touring California, the trial of Ellen Van Valkenburg was taking place in Santa Cruz County. In 1869, Ellen Van Valkenburg attempted to vote using Anthony’s argument that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments allowed women this right. In an editorial about the trial in the suffrage newspaper, the Revolution, Susan B. Anthony wrote: “Judge McKee, echoing the author, Judge Bingham of Ohio, of those recent assertions, decided that women are citizens only in matters pertaining to civil rights, and not at all in those pertaining to political rights.”³¹ The Democratic Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court ruled “the amendments banned denial of suffrage only on the basis of race, color, or previous condition of servitude...power of exclusion upon all other grounds, including that of sex, remains intact.”³² In her diary Anthony recorded that the most significant aspect of Van Valkenburg’s trial was that more men in Santa Cruz were thinking about suffrage than ever before and that “whole months of protracted discussions by woman suffrage

³⁰ Silver and Cazaly, 17.

³¹ Susan B. Anthony quoted in Ann Gordon, ed., The Selected Papers of Susan B. Anthony (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 444.

³² Chandler, 199.

advocates would not have so awakened the men of all classes as did this three days' arguments in the court-room by Government officials."³³

Near the end of the tour, Susan B. Anthony ignited a storm of controversy during a speech given in San Francisco in which she "declared that women must be enfranchised so that they have the power to influence legislators to pass laws that will enable them to receive wages that are on par with men's so that they can be economically self-sufficient."³⁴ The main cause of the controversy centered on the court case of Laura Fair, a prostitute who murdered her lover. Anthony argued that if men protected the economic needs of women, Laura Fair would not be in prison. Newspapers reported that Anthony was endorsing prostitution and Fair's crime.³⁵ Anthony recorded in her diary that "every paper came out terrifically against me and my speech last night—never before got such a raking."³⁶ In the wake of controversy, the rest of Anthony and Stanton's lectures were cancelled.

The rally for woman suffrage in California continued however, and in 1872 Mrs. Nettie C. Tator, from the Bay Area, addressed the Joint Committees of the California Senate arguing, "God almighty, has delegated the office to her of building a house that is worthy of the habitation of a human soul. Therefore she should have the power of deciding what her circumstances should be."³⁷ This argument that the vote would allow women to become better wives and mothers was becoming popular amongst suffragists

³³ Susan B. Anthony quoted in Ann Gordon, 445.

³⁴ Judith E. Harper, Susan B. Anthony: A Biographical Companion (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO Biographical Companion, 1998), 202.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Susan B. Anthony quoted in Ann D. Gordon, 434.

³⁷ Address of Mrs. Nettie C. Tator Before the Joint Committees of the Senate and Assembly of the State of California on the Subject of Extending the Right of Suffrage to Women (Sacramento: Hopkins and Bynon, Steam Book and Job Printers, 1872), 6 – 7.

nationwide. According to historian Aileen Kraditor in Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, the vote would thus enable women “to teach her children from firsthand experience the meaning of citizenship; it would make her a better wife by permitting her to become her husband’s equal.”³⁸

By the 1870s, Bay Area suffragists were attracting national attention as well. Laura de Force Gordon, one of the driving forces behind California’s suffrage movement, traveled to Colorado to help in its state campaign. In 1877 Colorado suffragist Alicia C. Avery wrote to Gordon: “Your kind letter of the 20th came duly to hand, and was most cheering. Your generous offer to come and help us for two months seems almost too good to be true, but we will continue to believe in it, unless you forbid.”³⁹

Although the suffrage movement was energetic in California during this time, women working for suffrage were still in the minority. Thus the suffrage process proved to be just as slow in California as it was in other parts of the nation mostly because as historian Gayle Gullett states, “most women saw themselves as living private lives and did not see a relationship between the angers many felt about their lives and the demand for the vote.”⁴⁰

By 1880, the momentum of women’s suffrage in California had slowed dramatically. Mrs. C.H. Sprague from Woodland, California wrote to Laura de Force Gordon: “There seems to be no interest taken on the suffrage question among the women here, so those that have the most influence will not do anything.”⁴¹ Clara Shortridge Foltz, an ardent suffragist and the first woman lawyer in California, voiced her own

³⁸ Kraditor, 56.

³⁹ Alicia C. Avery to Laura de Force Gordon, 26 March 1877. Laura de Force Gordon Papers, Box 1 Folder 4, Bancroft Library.

⁴⁰ Gullett, 11.

⁴¹ Mrs. C.H. Sprague to Laura de Force Gordon, 18 March 1880. Laura de Force Gordon Papers, Box 2, Bancroft Library.

frustration to a friend when she said, "O, how much I do wish we could rally the women to the necessity of doing something for their own cause. The only remaining argument to refute is 'the women don't want to vote.' This is the 'stunner' that we friends of the cause have to meet at every hand."⁴²

Although the suffrage movement lost momentum in California during the 1880s, a larger variety of women were becoming involved in the public sphere by participating in women's clubs. The women's club movement was a national phenomenon that was taking hold in California as well, mainly as a result of the "domestic revolution" that allowed women to have more leisure time.⁴³

The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), for example, was a national organization that formed a state branch in California in 1879. The purpose of the WCTU was to protect families and homes from the ill effects of liquor. Historian Gayle Gullett explains that the WCTU was an important organization, serving as "a retreat, refuge and resource for suffragists" because "temperance women entered politics to protect women's place in the family."⁴⁴ Under the leadership of Beaumelle Sturtevant-Peet, the Northern California WCTU sought temperance education in 1882, campaigned to elect temperance women to the San Francisco school board in 1883, endorsed woman suffrage in an 1886 convention, passed the compulsory temperance education bill in 1887, and as a joint effort with state suffragists, lobbied its first suffrage bill before the state legislature in 1889.⁴⁵ Local chapters of the WCTU could be found throughout the Bay Area. Mrs.

⁴² Clara Shortridge Foltz quoted in Joan M. Jensen and Gloria Ricci Lothrop, California Women: A History (Sparks, Nevada: Materials For Today's Learning, Inc., 1988), 63.

⁴³ Flexner and Fitzpatrick, 171. In order to learn more about the phenomenon of women's clubs in the United States consult the following sources. Kathleen McCarthy, Lady Bountiful Revisited: Women, Philanthropy, and Power (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990). Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

⁴⁴ Gullett, 17.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 19-23.

Nellie Eyster, for instance, became the first president of San Jose's WCTU which was founded by twenty-five charter members in 1880.⁴⁶

Another influential club, the Pacific Association of Collegiate Alumnae, established in San Francisco in 1885, focused on helping women college graduates find meaningful employment.⁴⁷ This organization was responsible for the establishment of the Associated Charities of San Francisco in 1887 and formed the Public School Reform Association to elect women to San Francisco's school board beginning in 1886.

The Century Club, organized in 1888 by elite women of San Francisco, provided the Pacific Association of Collegiate Alumnae with the leadership, funding, and candidates for San Francisco's school board elections. The San Francisco Chronicle reported that women's school board campaigns were beneficial because they were "conducted by women for a woman and for the benefit of the schools" and that "even society women, who are generally somewhat apathetic about these matters, worked and induced other luke-warm women to do the same thing."⁴⁸ Thus the Century Club provided a "safe" way for elite women to participate in the public sphere.

The Women's Education and Industrial Union was also formed in 1888 to help working-class women in Northern California. Its goal was to increase the educational and employment opportunities of women regardless of their class or cultural background.⁴⁹ This organization created classes for working women, cooperated with the WCTU on a bill requiring female police matrons that became law in 1889, lobbied for

⁴⁶ Arbuckle, 34.

⁴⁷ Gullett, 35.

⁴⁸ San Francisco Chronicle, February 10, 1895.

⁴⁹ Gullett, 47.

improved working conditions for saleswomen, and established services for working women such as an employment bureau and a downtown women's lunch room.⁵⁰

Other women's clubs that popped up throughout the Bay Area during this time were the King's Daughter Society of San Jose (1887), the San Jose Woman's Club (1894), and the Woman's Club of Palo Alto (1894), whose goals were philanthropic in nature and the Los Gatos History Club (1897), the Willow's Reading and Study Club (1896) and the Gilroy Ladies Reading Club (1890s), which focused on "self-improvement."⁵¹ With the establishment of various women's clubs and organizations in the Bay Area during the 1880s, Bay Area women learned important leadership and organization skills. They also gained confidence in their abilities to organize and orchestrate a larger political campaign for woman suffrage in the 1890s.

Perhaps one of the most visible Bay Area organizations, the Pacific Coast Woman's Press Association, was formed in 1890. One of its most prominent acts was the "pure press" campaign that was instigated by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1893. Circulating petitions and holding mass meetings, this association rallied the press for "objectivity which they defined as the clean statement of facts and truth."⁵² According to Gullett, the "pure press" campaign was significant because it demonstrated to Californians that women were competent and influential in the public sphere.⁵³

One of the negative aspects of women's clubs in the Bay Area, as well as nationally, was that most clubs were not racially integrated. Although clubs did not directly deny women of color membership, it was common for subtle exclusionary

⁵⁰ Ibid., 47-52.

⁵¹ "Second Fiddle: Women's Clubs Orchestrate New Roles 1900-1920," Exhibit at California History Center & Foundation: A Center or the Study of State and Regional History De Anza College, April 2004, (hereafter cited as Exhibit at California History Center).

⁵² Gullett, 59.

⁵³ Ibid., 63.

policies to exist.⁵⁴ For example, candidates were only accepted if their name was proposed by more than one member. In addition, the Board of Directors had the ability to decline membership to anyone nominated. The Political Equity Club of San Jose was one of the only racially integrated clubs in the Bay Area with the purpose of gaining the vote for black and white women.⁵⁵ Flexner and Fitzpatrick argue that “the exclusion of black women from the organizations of white women, by and large in the north as well as in the south, reflected the existing, still basically unchallenged pattern of segregation in nineteenth-century society.”⁵⁶

As a result, African-American women who wanted to become active in the public sphere formed their own clubs in the Bay Area. In 1899, African American women of Oakland formed the Fannie Jackson Coppin club while the Garden City Women’s Club of San Jose was formed in 1906. In that same year, African American women’s clubs organized under the State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs with the intent of doing “some monumental work of interest to the race.”⁵⁷

The year 1890 proved to be a turning point for the national suffrage movement when the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) united into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The new organization continued to fight for a federal amendment while trying to rally support within the states. They believed that by winning

⁵⁴ Exhibit at California History Center.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Flexner and Fitzpatrick, 178.

⁵⁷ Gullett, 123. For more information related to Colored Women’s Clubs see the California Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs Collection located at the African American Museum and Library in Oakland, California.

enough state suffrage amendments, Congress would pass a federal amendment.⁵⁸

Historians Eleanor Flexner and Ellen Fitzpatrick argue: “twenty years had seen a profound change of public attitude. Woman suffrage was not yet generally accepted, but it was no longer considered the province of eccentrics and crackpots.”⁵⁹ By 1890, California suffragists appeared ready to wage a renewed campaign, exciting national leaders because California ranked as the twenty-second largest state, with a population of 1,208,130 (See Appendix 1).⁶⁰ National leaders believed that if suffrage could be won in California, it might spur other states to grant women’s enfranchisement.

The push for woman suffrage in California continued in 1891 with Northern California State Senators McGowan, Dargie and Simpson as well as Southern California Senators Carpenter and McComas sponsoring a bill to enfranchise women by statute. On February 7, Laura de Force Gordon, Sarah Severance, Addie Ballou, and Emily Pitts Stevens spoke before the Judiciary Committee encouraging the legislature to enfranchise women.⁶¹ In addition, Mrs. Sturtevant Peet, of the WCTU presented a petition with fifteen thousand signatures. The San Jose Daily Mercury reported: “It will be a surprise if it passes, but the surprise will be agreeable to many and perhaps to most of the intelligent people of the community. The franchise is certain to be granted to women sooner or later, and California might just as well lead as follow in the movement.”⁶²

⁵⁸ Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, One Woman, One Vote: Rediscovering the Woman Suffrage Movement (Troutdale, Oregon: NewSage Press, 1995), 12.

⁵⁹ Flexner and Fitzpatrick, 210.

⁶⁰ U.S. Census Bureau., Electronic data compiled by the inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, Information retrieved on December 4, 2002. <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census>

⁶¹ Anthony and Harper, 484.

⁶² San Jose Daily Mercury, February 9, 1891.

Although the bill passed in the state senate by twenty-one votes to seventeen, “it had been delayed so long, however, that it was too late to reach the Assembly.”⁶³

The next two years were filled with frustrating set-backs and inspiring events for Bay Area suffragists. The California legislature, for instance, granted women the right to vote in school board and bond elections only to be vetoed by the governor. While this was disappointing for California suffragists, Gullett argues that it “said much about the growing viability of suffrage as a political issue.”⁶⁴ And in 1892, suffragists successfully lobbied the Populist Party to endorse woman suffrage and to elect a woman as vice-chairman of the party. In the same year, San Jose’s Carrie Walter published the Santa Clara and the Tourist, a literary monthly that promoted suffrage as well as other reforms.⁶⁵ In addition, Colorado’s adoption of woman suffrage in 1893 motivated California women to work with even more diligence.⁶⁶

Perhaps one of the most inspiring events for women nationwide was their participation in the Columbian Exposition at the World’s Fair in Chicago in 1893. Club women, temperance workers, settlement workers, labor activists and suffragists participated in the exposition. California women formed a Board of Lady Managers, who organized a display of the work California women had accomplished thus far. Women’s organizations throughout the state sent members to the Fair as representatives and as Gayle Gullett argues, “California women’s participation in the World’s Fair proved to be a defining experience for the development of their political consciousness.”⁶⁷

⁶³ Anthony and Harper, 485.

⁶⁴ Gullett, 82.

⁶⁵ Arbuckle, 55.

⁶⁶ Anthony and Harper, 479.

⁶⁷ Gullett, 65.

One of the most influential aspects of the Columbian Exposition was California women's participation in the Congress of Representative Women. Clara Shortridge Foltz spoke at two of the legal congresses and "returned home filled with enthusiasm, urging 'women of the coast to organize,' predicting California women would soon gain the ballot."⁶⁸ Influenced by their Chicago experience, the Pacific Coast Woman's Press Association organized a meeting of women's organizations from the Bay Area in the spring of 1893 to form their own state Woman's Congress that would unite women from Northern and Southern California.

In the spring of 1894, California suffragists held their first Woman's Congress in San Francisco. As a result of this meeting, the Woman's Congress Association of the Pacific Coast was organized with the intention of holding an annual Woman's Congress. This would prove to be a crucial organizational tool in California women's subsequent campaign for suffrage.⁶⁹

Momentum kept building throughout 1894 as Republicans endorsed woman suffrage at their state Republican convention, adopting a plank that stated: "Believing that taxation without representation is against the principles of the Government, we favor the extension of the right of suffrage to all citizens of the United States, both men and women."⁷⁰ This endorsement gave California suffragists the legitimacy needed to wage a serious suffrage campaign as well as a greater chance at success, since the California legislature was strongly Republican.

Thus Bay Area suffragists stepped up their lobbying efforts in Sacramento. On January 24, 1895, a hearing was held before the California Senate and Assembly Judiciary Committee. Clara Shortridge Foltz spoke for almost two hours on the issue of

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 78.

⁷⁰ Anthony and Harper, 479.

woman suffrage stating that “a law for woman suffrage will stand every test of the constitution.”⁷¹ Laura de Force Gordon continued the argument by stating that she “found no case where a law had been found unconstitutional, where it was to extend or enlarge their privileges.”⁷² She emphasized her passion for woman suffrage by saying, “I believe I have more patriotism in my body than there is in all the men in America who oppose woman suffrage. Such a man is not fit to make laws for me, and I protest against it.”⁷³ The next day the San Francisco Chronicle reported: “Suffragists fought their first battle today and considered the result to mean a victory... For the first time in the history of California they appeared before the members of a political party which had announced itself in favor of woman suffrage.”⁷⁴

In February 1895, suffragists continued to lobby the California Assembly. Nellie Holbrook Blinn of San Francisco, tried to persuade Republicans to grant suffrage:

Men have told us from the beginning of our country, that the individual needed the ballot for his own protection, but when the woman asks for it she is told she does not need it....many say woman's place is in the home. What better protection for the home than the ballot, and who better than a mother, can teach the son by practical illustration, as well as theoretical, the proper exercise of the ballot.⁷⁵

Two days later, Mrs. Sturtevant Peet, president of California's WCTU, also spoke before the Assembly: “I stand here tonight representing 10,000 women of this State who have been appealing to several Legislators for the ballot. They have sent me as their

⁷¹ San Francisco Chronicle, January 24, 1895.

⁷² Sacramento Bee, January 25, 1895.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ San Francisco Chronicle, January 24, 1895.

⁷⁵ Sacramento Bee, February 7, 1895.

representative to this Capital for the last three sessions...yet it is said that women don't want to vote.”⁷⁶

A bill enfranchising women by “legislative statute,” was then introduced in the Assembly by Judge E.V. Spencer and was passed on February 11. When a defect was found in its title, the bill was revised and passed by the Assembly eight days later only to be defeated by the Senate. In a compromise, Senators McGowan and Bulla as well as Assemblyman Spencer “championed a resolution to amend the constitution by striking out the word ‘male’ from the suffrage clause.”⁷⁷ In other words, suffragists would now need to wage an influential campaign to convince the electorate to grant women enfranchisement.

The deep depression of the mid 1890s, the need to convince unwilling men to vote for woman suffrage, and waging a suffrage campaign during a presidential election presented suffragists with challenging, if not impossible conditions.⁷⁸ An editorial in the San Francisco Chronicle on February 21, 1895 conveyed the attitude of the typical voter that suffragists would face as they began their campaign:

It does not speak very well either for the Assembly of the Legislature of California or for the women who are active in favor of woman suffrage that a bill should be passed pretending to confer on women the right to vote when there is a direct and positive Constitutional inhibition against women voting in this State....The women of California, as a whole, are not ready for the ballot, partly because many of them do not desire it, and partly because most of them are not educated, politically, to appreciate its duties and responsibilities.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid., February 9, 1895.

⁷⁷ Anthony and Harper, 485.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 486.

⁷⁹ San Francisco Chronicle, February 21, 1895.

In May 1895, the Bay Area hosted the second Woman's Congress with Susan B. Anthony and Reverend Anna Shaw in attendance. Their presence inspired extensive press coverage as well as a greater turnout at the meetings. "Women Suffragists Were Rampant," and "Twenty-five hundred People Attended" were the headlines that greeted San Franciscans in the San Francisco Chronicle as it reported:

Nobody ever supposed that the women of San Francisco cared for aught except their gowns, their teas and their babies. But they do...Not more than a year ago there were not a hundred women in San Francisco who could have been dragged to a woman suffrage meeting, but yesterday twenty-five times that number struggled and tore their clothing in their determination to hear Miss Anthony and Miss Shaw.⁸⁰

The second Woman's Congress was a resounding success as was evidenced by the three thousand five hundred people who filled the First Congregational Church to hear the speakers on May 23. Reverend Anna Shaw eloquently advocated, "if women must take care of their homes and children, they must have the power to protect them."⁸¹ The comments of Reverend Dr. C.O. Brown, a participant in the Congress, were especially significant in showing how many Californians were beginning to give credence to the idea of woman suffrage:

I am one of those who have been slowly converted to the idea that what women want they will get. It is nonsense to say that women are incapable after the magnificent addresses we have listened to from this platform. They are superior to the orations that any man in this city could deliver, as is evidenced by the crowds that come.⁸²

Susan B. Anthony encouraged the audience to "get your political committee and conventions to indorse this amendment. The vast number of voters never go to a woman's meeting and never hear a woman speak. They will vote as their leaders tell

⁸⁰ San Francisco Chronicle, May 24, 1895.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

them.”⁸³ And WCTU member and ardent suffragist Sarah Severance of Gilroy argued: “they tell us that the ballot will draw women down to men’s level. Well, men are of all kinds. Some of them are in the depths and some on the heights. There is no degradation in politics. It is leaving politics to the degraded that degrades the profession.”⁸⁴

At the conclusion of the Woman’s Congress, Susan B. Anthony presided over a meeting to form the California State Suffrage Amendment Campaign Committee. The first order of business was to remedy the problem of divisiveness within the organization--some supported the leadership of Laura de Force Gordon while others supported Nellie Holbrook Blinn. Following the advice of Susan B. Anthony, Bay Area suffragists elected a new leader, Sarah B. Cooper, as the chairman of the committee.⁸⁵ In accepting her task, Cooper stated: “I intend to put all of me into current coin and use it to forward this heaven-ordained work. If ever a woman was thoroughly converted to this idea, I have been. I am going to accept this charge.”⁸⁶ Other Bay Area suffragists such as Ellen Clark Sargent, Mrs. E.O. Smith, Nellie Blessing Eyster, Sarah Knox Goodrich, as well as many others were elected to the State Central organizing committee.⁸⁷ “The utmost harmony is said to prevail among the suffrage workers of the state,” reported the Boston Woman’s Journal, thus “old differences have been adjusted, and the ladies feel confident that they are pressing on to victory.”⁸⁸

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Gullett, 87.

⁸⁶ San Francisco Chronicle, May 25, 1895.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Boston Woman’s Journal, September 7, 1895, located in Hester Harland Papers, Box 1 Folder 3, Bancroft Library.

After the meeting, suffrage organizations formed campaign committees throughout the state. In the Bay Area, for example, a campaign club was formed in San Jose under the direction of Dr. Alida C. Avery, originally from Colorado and in Palo Alto, the Political Equality Club was organized under the leadership of Annie Corbert, whose purpose was to publicize and educate the people of Palo Alto on the issue of suffrage.⁸⁹ San Francisco suffrage societies were organized into precincts, while Oakland, Stockton, and Fresno, among other areas, formed new suffrage societies.⁹⁰

A spring drive to circulate petitions, supervised by Ellen Clark Sargent in Northern California and Alice McComas in Southern California, was one of the first official acts in the amendment campaign. Throughout the spring, suffragists gathered forty thousand signatures in support of the suffrage amendment. Sargent stated that the petition work was extremely educational because “it gave opportunity for the distribution of a vast amount of literature and for the discussion of woman suffrage with large numbers of people, and it offered an effective answer to the old stock objection in that ‘women do not want to vote.’”⁹¹

Bay Area women spent much time in the rural areas of California campaigning for suffrage. Hester Harland, originally of Napa County and later a resident of Oakland, was one of these women. Harland’s efforts were highlighted in the Search Light, a journal “devoted to the upbuilding of a higher civilization through the emancipation of the mother of the race.” The journal reported:

Mrs. Harland, the state organizer, will travel over the state again organizing county and auxiliary suffrage associations and after these organizations have been thoroughly established, a great state convention

⁸⁹ Margaret Rodgers Feuer, ed., A Walk Through History: Women of Palo Alto (Palo Alto: Pip Printing, 1994), 22.

⁹⁰ Anthony and Harper, 481.

⁹¹ Ellen Clark Sargent quoted in Donald Cooper, “The California Suffrage Campaign of 1896: Its Origin, Strategies, Defeat,” Southern California Quarterly 71 (Winter 1989), 314.

will take place in San Francisco next spring... There is no doubt that after Miss Shaw lectures and Mrs. Harland's organizing trip that a popular wave of suffrage will sweep the country.⁹²

In March 1896, California suffragists asked Susan B. Anthony to return to California to help supervise the campaign. Anthony agreed as long as suffragists were able to gain the endorsement of the major political parties in California. Thus suffragists set up a series of conventions throughout the state that would advertise the suffrage issue to the voters in order to influence political conventions to endorse suffrage.⁹³

The third Woman's Congress was held again in San Francisco in May 1896, with the theme "Women and Government." While in session, a suffrage contingent made up of Susan B. Anthony, Ellen Clark Sargent, Nellie Holbrook Blinn, Rev. Anna Shaw, and Ida Husted Harper attended the Republican state convention. They presented their case before the Republicans, resulting in an endorsement from the party. A telegram was sent to the Woman's Congress: "Woman suffrage endorsed. Now think for victory in November."⁹⁴ Later that evening, Anthony stated: "It is the first time in the history of this movement that a dominant party has passed such a resolution as your Republican party has done. Heretofore the resolutions have been complimentary, but this party has pledged itself that all its newspapers and all its political meetings shall be open for the discussion of the question."⁹⁵

On May 12, another contingent of suffragists attended the Populist Convention in Sacramento. They were "received with cheers, escorted to front seats, invited to address

⁹² Search Light, September 1895, located in Hester Harland Papers, Box 1 Folder 3, Bancroft Library.

⁹³ Gullett, 93.

⁹⁴ San Francisco Chronicle, May 7, 1896.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

the convention,” and witnessed the unanimous endorsement of the suffrage amendment.⁹⁶ Suffragists also attended the Prohibition, the Socialist Labor and the National Parties’ conventions, receiving their endorsements as well.

The final endorsement suffragists sought was that of the Democrats, an almost impossible feat since most Democrats were against suffrage. Suffragists attended the state convention on June 16 and after much hesitation, were finally given a few minutes to speak. In the end, Democrats voted 420 to 149 against endorsing the suffrage amendment. Although defeated, suffragists looked at the vote positively, excited that they were able to gain more than one-third of the Democrat votes.⁹⁷

The 1896 suffrage campaign officially started a few days later when suffragists held a rally at the Metropolitan Temple in San Francisco to ratify the suffrage planks endorsed by various political parties.⁹⁸ Headquarters for the campaign were established at the Parrott Building on Main Street in downtown San Francisco, donated by William Harper, the manager of the Emporium.⁹⁹ The State Suffrage Association organized state-wide meetings in every county with a town comprised of more than two hundred people and from April to June, over one hundred ninety suffrage meetings were held.¹⁰⁰ In May 1896, for instance, a suffrage convention was held at the Methodist church in Santa Cruz with Anna Shaw as a key speaker.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Anthony and Harper, 488.

⁹⁷ Cooper, 317.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Anthony and Harper, 489.

¹⁰⁰ Cooper, 317.

¹⁰¹ Ross Eric Gibson, “Crusading Women,” Information retrieved on March 2, 2004, www.santacruzpl.org/history/19thc/suffrage.html.

The main strategy of the Bay Area campaign was called the “society plan.” Devised by Carrie Chapman Catt and Lucy Stone during the 1893 Colorado campaign, its goal was to recruit prominent women who had the time and resources to hold “parlor meetings” that would help persuade other wealthy individuals to join and support the campaign.¹⁰² Elite women were recruited into leadership roles to speak at clubs, ward meetings, parlor lectures, political rallies, church assemblies, Salvation Army meetings, African societies, socialist organizations, granges, WCTU clubs, and labor organizations.¹⁰³ One such meeting was held at the Palo Alto Women’s Club in January 1895 during which Mrs. Severance gave a lecture on “Why Should Women Vote.” Historians Pam Gullard and Nancy Lund state that at this meeting “Mary Campbell and other women leaders in town were becoming sympathetic to the movement.”¹⁰⁴

Other upper class women found it inopportune to publicly support the campaign, but instead quietly donated funds to the movement. Jane Stanford, for example, donated money and railroad passes for suffragists to use while traveling throughout California, while declining a more public role. Susan B. Anthony wrote in a letter to Jane Stanford in 1895: “At 6:30, while my sister and I were at the tea-table, a boy brought your telegram saying you had sent the passes [for the train]...I wired back my thanks. But I want to write them also, and when I get to San Francisco I shall want to speak them too.”¹⁰⁵

In the Bay Area, working class women played a limited role in the 1896 amendment campaign, primarily because suffragists did not value them as an integral

¹⁰² Gullett, 96.

¹⁰³ Anthony and Harper, 490.

¹⁰⁴ Gullard and Lund, 144.

¹⁰⁵ Gunther Nagel, Jane Stanford: Her Life and Letters (Stanford, California: Stanford Alumni Association, 1975), 2.

component to winning the campaign. While there were limited attempts to gain working women's support in San Francisco, such as noontime suffrage speeches in San Francisco's factories, foundries, and mills, this was not the emphasis of the campaign. Gullett asserts, "the suffragists did not perceive the immigrant working class as providing enough political support to make greater efforts worthwhile."¹⁰⁶ This would prove to be one of Northern California suffragists' greatest mistakes in the campaign of 1896.

Throughout the campaign there was a desperate need to raise funds and in the end over nineteen thousand dollars was collected. The California State Association and the NAWSA sold badges, leaflets, and photographs of Susan B. Anthony and Rev. Anna Shaw as well as collected ten dollars from every precinct in California.¹⁰⁷ Other contributions were donated by the wealthy, such as Mrs. Phoebe Hearst, who contributed one thousand dollars, and others who contributed as much as five hundred dollars.¹⁰⁸ Working class and professional women, however, contributed the most. Historian Olivia Coolidge records that the funds came in small installments. "Working women would drop in to pay twenty-five cents on a two-dollar photograph of Miss Anthony and Miss Shaw remarking 'I have done without tea this week,' or 'I made a piece of fancywork evenings and sold it.'"¹⁰⁹ In the end, wealthy women donated approximately three thousand dollars while the rest was donated by working class and professional women.¹¹⁰

Although suffragists wanted to keep the issues of suffrage and temperance separate during the campaign, members of the WCTU played a prominent role in the

¹⁰⁶ Gullett, 94.

¹⁰⁷ Cooper, 320.

¹⁰⁸ Katherine Anthony, Susan B. Anthony: Her Personal History and Her Era (Garden City: New York, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1954), 441.

¹⁰⁹ Olivia Coolidge, Women's Rights: The Suffrage Movement in America, 1848-1920 (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1966), 82.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

campaign. Susan B. Anthony asked that the WCTU not participate in the suffrage campaign as an organization, but instead encouraged its members to participate individually. She warned suffragists to “put aside every other consideration and do not ask for personal favors of any sort. If you do this, you will do more harm than good.”¹¹¹

As the state’s largest and most highly organized woman’s association, with six thousand members, WCTU women worked hard to pass the amendment. The History of Woman Suffrage reported: “the work of the WCTU deserves a prominent place in the history of the struggle, as all the powers of its excellent organization and experienced workers were devoted to the success of the amendment, and the majority in several counties at least was due to its efforts.”¹¹² Dorcas James Spencer wrote in The History of the WCTU of Northern and Central California that “to prevent discords, the W.C.T.U. officially kept in the background, but individually all its members helped in every direction, as well as carrying forward activities in other departments, that added force and membership.”¹¹³ Sarah Severance, for example, was a long time member of the WCTU and became a popular suffrage speaker and writer throughout the Bay Area.¹¹⁴

One of the most influential people in the campaign was Ida Husted Harper, originally a newspaper journalist from Indiana who came to California to attend Stanford University. During the 1896 campaign she was appointed Chairman of the Press Committee, working closely with Susan B. Anthony. Both Harper and Anthony visited every newspaper editor in San Francisco “and assurances were received that the

¹¹¹ The San Francisco Chronicle, May 25, 1895.

¹¹² Anthony and Harper, 490.

¹¹³ Dorcas James Spencer, A History of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union of Northern and Central California (Oakland, California: West Coast Publishing Company, 1913), 66.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

amendment would have respectful treatment.”¹¹⁵ Historian Olivia Coolidge states, “almost all the papers were in favor, and in the course of an eight month campaign, nine thousand clippings were obtained, an extraordinary number when it is remembered that local papers depended on advertising money, which was not available from the suffrage movement.”¹¹⁶ In addition, Harper wrote articles in the Sunday Call as well as many political advertisements and pamphlets. In a pamphlet entitled, Woman Suffrage and the Home, Harper states that “if the home is the foundation of the state, so also is the state the protector of the home.”¹¹⁷ Susan B. Anthony also contributed a weekly editorial to the Sunday edition of the Examiner. In the end, over two hundred fifty papers statewide endorsed woman suffrage with only twenty-seven opposing the amendment. Among the opponents were the San Francisco Chronicle, Argonaut, Sacramento Record-Union and the Los Angeles Times.¹¹⁸

The press continued its coverage in the last days before the election. An editorial in the San Jose Daily Mercury on October 29, endorsed woman suffrage stating:

The splendid campaign which the women have carried on, paid for by funds subscribed by themselves, has won the admiration of all men who appreciate brains, pluck and perseverance....The women have also displayed a marked talent for organization....Let every man who believes that the franchise should not be a question of sex but of intelligence vote for Amendment No.6.¹¹⁹

The Sacramento Bee repeated its endorsement of suffrage two days later stating “The Bee has always been in favor of woman suffrage. It is in favor of it today. It has never been

¹¹⁵ Anthony and Harper, 491.

¹¹⁶ Coolidge, 82.

¹¹⁷ Ida A. Harper, Woman Suffrage and the Home, 1896. Bancroft Library.

¹¹⁸ Anthony and Harper, 491.

¹¹⁹ San Jose Daily Mercury, October 29, 1896.

able to see any objections against woman suffrage that could not be made just as potent against male suffrage. Vote ‘Yes.’”¹²⁰ Not all Bay Area newspapers were advocates of the amendment however, as was evident on November 2, when the San Francisco Chronicle encouraged its readers to vote “No” on the amendment.¹²¹

Throughout the last months of the campaign, Bay Area cities continued to showcase suffrage speakers. One such meeting was held in Santa Clara on October 10 in which the San Jose Daily Mercury reported:

Santa Clara presented another brilliant appearance last evening, the occasion being the grand Republican rally in honor of the three distinguished visitors, Hon. E.F. Loud, Republican nominee for Congress, Hon. D.L. McKinley, elector-at-large, and Rev. Anna Shaw. The streets were thronged with people and there were two huge bonfires...Rev. Anna Shaw, the last speaker, proved to be a very talented speaker and spoke very eloquently for the woman’s cause.¹²²

By the end of October, the campaign was drawing to a close. To the suffragists’ chagrin, the amendment was placed sixth and last on the ballot. They had tried to prevent a first or last placement by talking with and gaining the agreement of state officials. When suffragists learned of the placement, they were extremely disappointed because now the suffrage amendment would be an easy mark for the illiterate.¹²³

On November 3, suffragists awaited the results of the election. Anthony told suffragists that “today will decide whether the allied decency and religion of this State can and will overcome the powers of darkness.”¹²⁴ Women were advised “to remain away

¹²⁰ Sacramento Bee, October 31, 1896.

¹²¹ San Francisco Chronicle, November 2, 1896.

¹²² San Jose Daily Mercury, October 10, 1896.

¹²³ Silver and Cazaly, 47.

¹²⁴ San Francisco Chronicle, November 4, 1896.

from the polls. Their presence would not gain death-bed converts and the sight of them might scare away voters, timid as birds.”¹²⁵

Suffragists did not stay away when the ballots were counted, however. At 275 of the 313 polling places, women watched as the ballots were read. As reported in the San Francisco Chronicle, the presence of the women kept the clerks honest. “They conquered their desire to fudge, especially when they found they had just at their shoulders a pair of bright eyes and a treble voice not at all afraid to call them to order. For the most part women had fair play.”¹²⁶

Meanwhile, the returns from nearby precincts began to arrive at suffrage headquarters. The early returns from San Francisco appeared unfavorable showing a ratio of two to one against the amendment. The returns from rural areas came via telegram, giving suffragists hope as those results favored the amendment. The San Francisco Chronicle reported, “It was a tug of war, with city against country, and the odds in favor of the places where careful precinct work had been done.”¹²⁷

In the end, amendment number six was defeated, losing by 26,744 votes. 23,772 negative votes came from San Francisco County and 3,627 negative votes came from Oakland and Alameda. On the contrary, every county in Southern California voted a majority for woman suffrage; Los Angeles County took first place with a vote of 3,596 in favor of the amendment (See Appendix 2).¹²⁸

Many contributing factors led to the defeat of the suffrage amendment in 1896 including a shortage of funds, a large state to be canvassed, lack of organization, apathy

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ L.H. Brown, Statement of the Vote of California At the General Election, Held November 3, 1896, 15. See Appendix 2 for the complete election results.

amongst the majority of California women, a large immigrant population and traditional attitudes against enfranchising women from the general population.¹²⁹ However, the two most crucial reasons for its defeat were the withdrawal of support by the major political parties, and most importantly, the successful lobbying efforts of the liquor industry in San Francisco.

Throughout the campaign, suffragists gradually lost the support of the political parties. The Populists, longtime allies of the suffragists, joined with the Democrats over the issue of “free silver,” hoping they would defeat the Republicans. Gullett states that while the Populist Party “for the most part, was loyal to the amendment they could not fully control the speakers or platforms at the rallies and it was kept out of sight as much as possible.”¹³⁰

Republicans experienced internal division as members split over the issue of “free silver” and catered to the powerful interests of the liquor lobby, which threatened to withhold funds and votes if suffrage was supported. In addition, the chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, Major Frank M’Laughlin, contacted county chairmen, instructing them to prevent suffragists from speaking at meetings or having access to the schedule.¹³¹ Thus California suffragists lost their most powerful allies in the campaign. As Anthony and Harper argue, “had it not been the year of a presidential election it is probable that the amendment might have carried, but the bitter competition of politics soon produced many complications and, although the suffrage question was kept absolutely non-partisan, it could not escape their serious effects.”¹³²

¹²⁹ Anthony and Harper, 492.

¹³⁰ Gullett, 488.

¹³¹ Anthony and Harper, 492.

¹³² Ibid.

Perhaps the greatest cause of the amendment's defeat in Northern California was the successful efforts of the powerful liquor industry, which believed that all suffragists were temperance workers and would vote for temperance legislation and eventually prohibition. With over twenty percent of the state's population, San Francisco was the largest county in California with a population of 298,997, almost three times the size of Los Angeles, the second largest city in the state.¹³³ According to historians Mae Silver and Sue Cazaly, San Francisco "had more liquor stores than any other city west of Mississippi," and the liquor industry historically held a powerful position in the city.¹³⁴ They further argue: "San Francisco was a party town from its earliest days, and has retained that persona to the present day. Beyond this social custom involving good food and spirits was the fact that the city's economy and tax base became heavily reliant on its flourishing liquor business."¹³⁵ The powerful influence of the liquor industry in defeating woman suffrage was not just a California phenomenon, but was a major factor in the national suffrage movement as well.

The Liquor Dealers Association proved to be highly organized in targeting the immigrant vote of San Francisco with advertisements, door to door canvassing, and bringing voter registration pamphlets to factories and shipyards.¹³⁶ Ten days before the election, the following letter was issued throughout California:

Dear Sir: At the election to be held on November 3d, Constitutional Amendment No.6, which gives the right to vote to women, will be voted on. It is to your interest and ours to vote against the amendment. We request and urge you to vote and work against it, and do all you can to

¹³³ Historical Census Browser, University of Virginia Library, Information retrieved December 24, 2002, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/censusbin/census/cen.pl>.

¹³⁴ Silver and Cazaly, 8-9.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Coolidge, 83.

defeat it. See your neighbor in the same line of business as yourself, and have him be with you in this matter.
Very truly yours, E. Garnier and Co., California Wines.¹³⁷

On the day of the election, members of the Liquor Dealers' Association escorted hundreds of men, mainly immigrants, to the polls, showing each man a sample ballot and indicating where to put an "X." The fact that the suffrage amendment was last on the ballot made it an easy target.¹³⁸ The History of Woman Suffrage documented that "hundreds of tickets were cast in San Francisco on which the only cross was against this amendment, not even the presidential electors voted for."¹³⁹ After the election, Ida Husted Harper stated:

The humiliation and defeat belongs to those who aided in downing a great and righteous cause. The Liquor League told us they had 14,000 votes in San Francisco which would go solid against suffrage. They said that they were protecting their own interests. The women also had interests, but they stood, equally large in numbers, but powerless, where men had left them, lacking the ballot.¹⁴⁰

Upon analyzing the results of the election, Northern California suffragists were surprised to find that some of the assumptions they made in their campaign were proven untrue. For example, Alameda County, which was made up predominately of Republicans and Populists, voted strongly against the amendment.¹⁴¹ In addition, suffragists were shocked that the elite of San Francisco, not just the working class districts, voted heavily against the amendment. Selina Solomons reported in How We Won the Vote in California that the "adverse vote came about equally from the 'upper

¹³⁷ Sacramento Bee, November 2, 1896.

¹³⁸ Cooper, 322.

¹³⁹ Anthony and Harper, 492.

¹⁴⁰ San Francisco Chronicle, November 6, 1896.

¹⁴¹ Anthony and Harper, 493.

and lower slums' of these cities....The total vote in the 'North of Market' precincts gave the same proportion against us—three to one—as in the despised 'South of Market' precincts. It was not the 'ignorant and the foreign vote' that had undone us!"¹⁴² The same pattern occurred in Alameda county as well; the negative majority in the upper class precincts was as large as in the poorest precincts.¹⁴³ Alameda county's vote was "a most unpleasant surprise" to Bay Area suffragists because most of the voters were Republicans or Populists "whom were pledged in the strongest possible manner in their county conventions to support the amendment."¹⁴⁴

That Southern California was more successful in rallying support for the suffrage amendment than the North seems surprising at first because the evolution and initial development of the suffrage cause in California occurred in the Bay Area. Powerful women who were instrumental in the suffrage cause since its inception came from the Bay Area, the first suffrage societies were formed there, and all of the main suffrage conventions and Women's Congresses were held in San Francisco.

Looking back at the suffrage campaigns in these two regions of California, however, the reasons for success in Southern California become clear as they had distinctly different conditions and strategies. First, there was a more homogenous population in Southern California during the 1890s; the majority were white native-born Protestants who were advocates of temperance and supported Presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan. Second, many suffrage leaders were members of a variety of clubs, which according to Gayle Gullett, "enabled them to created a much broader, more harmonious suffrage coalition than the one in the north."¹⁴⁵ Third, Southern California's

¹⁴² Solomons, 4.

¹⁴³ Anthony and Harper, 494.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 493.

¹⁴⁵ Gullett, 96 - 97.

strong socialist presence influenced the strategies used by suffragists as they tried to gain the support of every voter, regardless of class and race. And finally, Southern California women encouraged working class women to be part of their campaign, a factor that helped them win the working class vote in the election.¹⁴⁶

A State Woman Suffrage Association meeting was held on November 5 and 6 in San Francisco in order to assess the results of the election and to say farewell to the national suffrage workers who aided in the campaign. The tone of the meeting was primarily optimistic as suffragists looked forward to a future campaign. “Under apparent defeat the women saw victory, and were not downcast,” reported the San Francisco Chronicle, “The morning they spent looking backward over the work, in thanking the prominent workers in city and county and in taking a birdseye view of the campaign just passed.”¹⁴⁷ At the end of the meeting, the association adopted a resolution that read: “While we accept the verdict of the election, we do not regard it as final, but, believing that our cause is just and must prevail, we will enter at once upon a vigorous campaign, which will end only when the ballot is placed in the hands of California women.”¹⁴⁸

California suffragists went to the Legislature in 1897 full of optimism that they could wage another campaign while their organizations were still intact. When the bill came to a vote it received a majority in both Houses, however, it came up short of the necessary two-thirds in the Assembly and the Senate.¹⁴⁹ The momentum that California suffragists enjoyed in the mid 1890s virtually disappeared in the following years. Historians have often labeled the period from 1896 -- 1910 the “doldrum years” because no additional states would grant woman suffrage and the efforts to win a federal

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ San Francisco Chronicle, November 7, 1896.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Anthony and Harper, 186.

amendment would falter as well.¹⁵⁰ Although California suffragists professed optimism after the election, they were not able to gather enough momentum to wage another campaign for fifteen years.

¹⁵⁰ Beverly Beeton, Women Vote in the West: The Woman Suffrage Movement 1869–1896 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986), 148.

CHAPTER 2

REBUILDING AND BROADENING THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

One of the failures of the 1896 suffrage campaign in the Bay Area was that it did not include a variety of women. In fact, Bay Area suffragists were primarily white, native-born, middle class and Republican or Populist women. To wage a new campaign, Bay Area suffragists would need to rebuild and broaden their movement to include a coalition of people such as clubwomen, Socialists, Progressives, educated and professional women, and most significantly, working women.¹⁵¹ This coalition was formed gradually in the Bay Area and by 1911 it proved to be the ingredient that would bring suffragists victory in California.

The loss of the 1896 suffrage campaign had so crippled the suffrage effort in California that historian Beverly Beeton argues many discouraged members left the suffrage organizations in mass so that “they were maintained by skeleton crews of stalwart souls.”¹⁵² By 1900 there were only approximately one hundred active suffragists in nine suffrage clubs throughout the state.¹⁵³

Although participation in suffrage organizations had dramatically decreased at the turn of the century, many Bay Area women were beginning to become more involved in clubs and reform organizations. For many women, belonging to a woman’s club was a status symbol, so much so, that many newspapers dedicated a section of their Saturday edition to “club news.” The woman’s club movement was a national phenomenon as

¹⁵¹ Gullett, 174.

¹⁵² Beeton, 107.

well. By 1900, more than two million women in the United States were members of women's clubs, thus becoming "a driving force of the Progressive movement," and initiating significant social change across the country."¹⁵⁴

In order to organize the expanding clubs in California, Clara Burdette formed the California Federation of Women's Clubs in 1900. She believed that "home must always be the center, but not the limit of woman's life" and "envisioned city mothers as engaging in a policy of separate but equal; they would expand and empower women's sphere in politics."¹⁵⁵ By 1902 over forty clubs, totaling seven thousand women, belonged to the California Federation of Women's clubs.¹⁵⁶

Clubwomen of the 1900s were more active in local government activities than their predecessors. Building playgrounds, beautifying cities, and working for the establishment of a juvenile court system are some examples of projects that club members sponsored. In A Record of Twenty-Five Years of the California Federation of Women's Clubs, Mary Gibson recalls, "from small beginnings the growth is very plain through-out the first ten years of the life of the Federation. This was a period of learning and investigating which preceded the time when it was possible for women to take an active personal part in legislation."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Sherry Jean Katz, "Dual Commitments: Feminism, Socialism, and Women's Political Activism in California: 1890 – 1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1991), 260.

¹⁵⁴ Exhibit at California History Center.

¹⁵⁵ Gullett, 117.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Mary S. Gibson, A Record of Twenty-Five years of the California Federation of Women's Clubs (The California Federation of Women's Clubs, 1927), 172.

Club women, however, did not consider their activism political. Instead, they tied their actions with “civic altruism.” Gullett argues that club women “labeled their public deeds as altruistic to separate themselves from corrupt politics, to underscore that they were performing in public the same tasks of moral guardianship that they had previously done in private spaces.”¹⁵⁸ As women started to take their roles as citizens more seriously, they became more involved in organizations that brought them out of their domestic sphere. Suffrage newspaper editor, Abigail Scott Duniway, of Oregon’s the New Northwest, believed that the “women’s club movement provided a ‘safety valve.’ It legitimized organized activity for more conservative women who were not politicized enough to support suffrage and often provided suffragists with an audience—an arena in which they strove for conversions.”¹⁵⁹

Santa Clara County mirrored other areas of the nation as nearly every town in the county had its own woman’s club. The Santa Clara Woman’s Club and Mountain View Woman’s Club were established in 1904 while the Garden City Woman’s Club was established in 1906.¹⁶⁰ Some of the clubs emphasized suffrage and politics while others concentrated on self-improvement or community service. In the beginning the clubs held their meetings in private homes. As they grew, many moved their meetings to libraries, city halls, churches, and clubhouses.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Gullett, 107.

¹⁵⁹ Abigail Scott Duniway quoted in Nancy Woloch, Women and the American Experience: A Concise History (New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 1996), 215.

¹⁶⁰ Exhibit at California History Center.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

Women of color formed their own organizations because of the racist policies of many women's clubs and unions during the early twentieth century. As historian Joan Jensen states in California Women: A History, "women progressives left a mixed legacy. While they might cross class boundaries to support strong unions for women and to work for expanded suffrage, they discriminated against black and Hispanic women, and opposed immigration of Asian women."¹⁶² Nonetheless, African American women, for example, did work for suffrage and formed their own suffrage leagues throughout Northern California.¹⁶³

At the beginning of the century, one of the largest women's organizations in California was the ever-popular WCTU, which claimed a membership of six thousand women.¹⁶⁴ The WCTU thrived into the early twentieth century, "jump-starting" the new campaign for suffrage as its members participated in the political sphere and demanded enfranchisement.

The California WCTU took the first step to revitalizing the suffrage movement in 1899 by sponsoring a "school suffrage" bill, which would enable women to vote in school board elections. Many suffragists thought that it was useless to work so hard to pass such a bill, when full voting rights were deserved. Others, like Sarah Severance thought "that agitation must be continuous, that work for statutory suffrage educates

¹⁶² Jensen and Lothrop, 57.

¹⁶³ San Francisco Call, August 24, 1911. Dane-Coolidge Papers, Box 17, Folder Entitled Mary Roberts Coolidge, Bancroft library.

¹⁶⁴ Gullett, 117.

Legislators and paves the way for full suffrage.”¹⁶⁵ In the end, the state legislature approved the bill. However, Governor Gage vetoed it and the school suffrage bill was never adopted.

Some long time Bay Area suffragists were becoming impatient working through the “normal channels” and began taking matters into their own hands. For example, Ellen Clark Sargent, whose deceased husband, Senator Aaron Clark Sargent had been the first to advocate woman’s suffrage in the United States Congress in 1871, had been involved in the suffrage fight for many years. In 1899, Sargent decided to make her efforts more public by attempting to register to vote in San Francisco; she was turned away because she was not a male citizen. Sargent then attempted to vote, but was again turned away. Thereafter, Sargent refused to pay her property taxes because she had been denied the right to vote. In 1901, she began the rallying call for all suffragists that “Taxation Without Representation Is Tyranny.”¹⁶⁶ Indirectly, Sargent’s efforts led to a 1909 California suffrage advertisement that stated “For the Long Work Day, For the Taxes We Pay, For the Laws We Obey, We Want Something to Say.”¹⁶⁷

By 1900 Northern California women began to rebuild their suffrage organizations. In an effort to revitalize the whole state, Mary Wood Swift, president of the Northern California Suffrage Association, traveled to Los Angeles to encourage

¹⁶⁵ Sarah Severance quoted in Gayle Gullett, 144.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 146.

¹⁶⁷ Silver and Cazaly, 60.

women to rebuild their suffrage league.¹⁶⁸ The state convention was again held in San Francisco in December of that year.

In 1901, Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, toured California and according to Katz, “breathed new life” into the California movement.¹⁶⁹ Following Catt’s visit, Bay Area suffrage clubs began to blossom again. Mary McHenry Keith revived the Berkeley club, for instance, and Oakland and Alameda’s suffrage organizations began to make strong comebacks. Three clubs in San Francisco were revitalized and the Santa Clara County suffrage organizations became active again.¹⁷⁰

The California State Suffrage Association’s annual convention was held at the end of October 1902 in San Francisco. In an inspirational address to the convention, Mary McHenry Keith of Berkeley stated:

The most admired leaders of society will not be those who lead in fashions of dress and entertainment. They will be leaders such as we have had examples of in Helen Gould, Frances J. Willard, Susan B. Anthony, Jane Addams and Clara Barton—noble women, who spend their time in trying to uplift society and to benefit their race. All of these women are outspoken advocates of equal rights for women, especially of the right of suffrage, and in the best sense are leaders, who think, plan, and fight, although they may not worry. Such women, and their followers and imitators will be multiplied a hundred fold in the Twentieth Century, when the brotherhood of man and sisterhood of women will be better understood, when the cause of co-education and equal rights will be won,

¹⁶⁸ Gullett, 145.

¹⁶⁹ Katz, 259.

¹⁷⁰ Ida Husted Harper, History of Woman Suffrage: Volume VI (New York: Source Book Press, 1922), 28.

and when women will be given credit, more fully in the past, for their part in the work of civilization.¹⁷¹

The National American Woman Suffrage Association saw California's potential for achieving state suffrage in the near future and in 1904 sent New York lawyer and suffrage organizer Gail Laughlin to help organize the state suffrage association, create new suffrage clubs, and rebuild old ones. One of the results of Laughlin's efforts was the creation of the California Equal Suffrage Association (CESA), which the local suffrage groups would join as affiliates. The Association held its first convention in Los Angeles in 1904.¹⁷² By 1905, Laughlin had helped establish fifty-two new suffrage clubs and reinvigorated twenty old suffrage clubs.¹⁷³

Just as the suffrage movement was beginning to gain momentum in 1906, a devastating earthquake hit the San Francisco Bay Area. The estimated death toll in San Francisco was 450 while at least twenty people died in San Jose and five in Oakland.¹⁷⁴ Every brick building collapsed within the downtown area of Santa Rosa, which was fifty miles north of San Francisco. To the south, the Santa Clara Valley suffered extensive damage while raging fires plagued San Jose.¹⁷⁵ In Campbell, sixty-eight percent of

¹⁷¹ Mrs. William Keith, Address Delivered at the California State Suffrage Association San Francisco October 25, 1902 (Berkeley, California: Press of Berkeley Daily Gazette, 1902), 8.

¹⁷² Gullett, 147.

¹⁷³ Katz, 260.

¹⁷⁴ Alan Hynding, From Frontier to Suburb: The Story of the San Mateo Peninsula (Belmont, California: Star Publishing Co, 1984), 185 – 186.

¹⁷⁵ California Historical Courier, April/May 1986. California Woman's History Clippings File, California History Center at De Anza College.

chimneys fell, two wooden water tanks collapsed and most windows were broken in the downtown area.¹⁷⁶

Much of the suffrage data was lost in the aftermath of the earthquake, but this did not discourage Bay Area suffragists. One month later, the officers of the California Equal Suffrage Association met and decided to try and convince California's Democratic and Republican parties to add woman suffrage as a plank to its platforms.¹⁷⁷ Twenty-one suffrage workers organized a Suffrage State Central Committee with Lillian Harris Coffin presiding as chairman and Katherine Reed Balentine becoming secretary.¹⁷⁸ In addition, Bay Area suffragists supported Oregon's suffrage campaign by sending members, such as Mary Sperry, and pledging \$1000 towards Oregon's effort.¹⁷⁹

An important part of rebuilding the suffrage movement in California was reorganizing and spurring on publicity, which had been started by Ida Husted Harper in the 1896 campaign. In 1906, Mabel Craft Deering was appointed National Press Chairman for the entire state and she began the new press campaign by contacting the 700 existing newspapers in California. "Almost 400 of the editors replied," remembers Deering, "and most of the replies were favorable—that is, the editors agreed to print at least part of the matter which would be regularly sent."¹⁸⁰ Thus Deering submitted the material published by NAWSA and news of local suffrage activities to supportive

¹⁷⁶ Jeanette Watson, Campbell: The Orchard City (Campbell, California: Campbell Historical Museum Association, 1989), 87.

¹⁷⁷ Englander, 109.

¹⁷⁸ Harper, Volume VI, 52.

¹⁷⁹ Englander, 109.

newspapers. The strength of the newspapers Deering believed was that “for five years, the men in the interior of California got little notes on the progress of equal suffrage mixed in with their news. They became accustomed to the idea that equal suffrage was being adopted everywhere.”¹⁸¹

By 1907, Bay Area suffragists began to earnestly lobby club women to become involved in the suffrage cause. Gullett explains, “Laughlin chose to build the suffrage movement—at least in part—by appealing to club women.”¹⁸² In the July issue of the Western Woman, for instance, the following appeal was made to women’s clubs:

Clubwomen of California, don’t pass this up. It is the official letter and enclosure sent from the State Central Committee of the California Equal Suffrage Association to women’s organizations throughout the State, that women may soon get out of the ‘criminal, insane, feeble minded class.’ In order that we may arrive at the general sentiment of California on this question, we are making a canvass of clubs and organizations. Will you not as a body give this matter, which is vital to a large body of law-abiding, tax-paying citizens, your careful consideration, and return the enclosed resolution with your endorsement?¹⁸³

The California Club of San Francisco, Women’s Press Club, San Francisco Pioneer Women’s Club, Calistoga Civic Club, San Francisco Collegiate Alumnae, Vallejo Women’s Improvement Club, Napa New Century Club, Eureka Monday Club, Watsonville Woman’s Club, Napa Study Club, and Oakland Woman’s Civic Club were amongst the first organizations in the Bay Area to endorse the suffrage amendment to the

¹⁸⁰ Mable Craft Deering quoted in Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 17 – 18.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 18 - 19.

¹⁸² Gullett, 149.

¹⁸³ Western Woman, July 11, 1907.

State constitution.¹⁸⁴ Thus, clubwomen who had previously been uninterested in suffrage were now becoming activists for the cause and the first major group in the new suffrage coalition.

A second group of women who joined club women as part of the suffrage coalition in the Bay Area were the socialists. Socialists had been active in the suffrage movement in California from the 1870s and as Katz explains, it was the socialists who held the suffrage movement together after the 1896 election. “During these bleak years, populist and socialist women, active in the suffrage movement since the early 1890s, played instrumental roles in keeping the suffrage movement alive, especially in Los Angeles.”¹⁸⁵

At the same time that the Woman’s Socialist Union of California (WSU) was formed in September 1902 as an umbrella organization for the state’s Socialist Women’s Club, the state’s suffrage movement was beginning to gain momentum.¹⁸⁶ The leaders of the Socialist movement believed they had a dual role as socialists and feminists. Katz explains, “women’s self-determination, in economic, political, and personal terms, was central to the ideal future society. Few believed that the abolition of private property alone would fully liberate women. Overcoming unequal relations of power between the

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Katz, 259.

¹⁸⁶ Wheeler, 249.

sexes required a conscious struggle. Some held that women's freedom had to precede socialism."¹⁸⁷

Although the socialist movement was much stronger in Southern California, there were many socialist organizations in San Jose, Palo Alto, San Francisco, and Oakland that worked closely with mainstream suffrage organizations. Delegates from the WSU's attended city and county suffrage conventions and held large public meetings that showed the distinct relationship between socialism and suffrage.¹⁸⁸

Women socialist leaders, such as Josephine Cole, president of the WSU, maintained that socialists must work with mainstream suffrage organizations in order to build a strong movement for change. Therefore many socialist women participated in socialist organizations as well as various women's clubs. In addition, many socialists became leaders in mainstream suffrage organizations.¹⁸⁹ Historian Mari Jo Buhle carefully points out however, that even though these socialist women participated in mainstream suffrage organizations, they "preserved their own identity [as socialists] at all times."¹⁹⁰ Some of the most influential socialists within the mainstream suffrage movement in the Bay Area were Lillian Harris Coffin and Mary Fairbrother of San Francisco, Jean Kellogg of Oakland, and Alice Park and Jennie Arnott of Palo Alto.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Katz, 101.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 274.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 245.

¹⁹⁰ Mari Jo Buhle, Women and American Socialism, 1870 – 1920 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 230.

¹⁹¹ Katz, 274.

One of the largest contributions socialists made to the suffrage movement in California was their willingness and desire to recruit working class women into the struggle. Katz explains that while mainstream middle class suffragists did attempt to recruit working women, it was the socialist women who felt it was their “special duty” to involve working class women in the suffrage movement and to educate them on the benefits of socialism.¹⁹² Therefore, the socialists were responsible for a great amount of propaganda materials created to attract working class women.

College graduates and professional women formed the third part of the Bay Area’s suffrage coalition when the College Equal Suffrage League (CESL), modeling itself after the National College Equal Suffrage League, was formed in Northern California in 1908. The CESL’s prominence was due to the efforts of women like Maude Wood Park and Mary McHenry Keith who were successful in recruiting a large number of college women to be advocates for suffrage.¹⁹³ With the close proximity of Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley, the CESL had a large reservoir of potential recruits.

The CESL was a state organization that was independent of the California Equal Suffrage Association. Yet it cooperated with all of the suffrage clubs and leagues of the state. With over 1,000 members, the CESL set up large and effective committees to organize mass events, create billboards and store window displays, and sponsor pageants,

¹⁹² Ibid., 254.

¹⁹³ Gullett, 184.

parades and plays, all of which helped gain support for suffrage.¹⁹⁴ Gullett argues the unique aspect of the CESL was that “as college militants, they could cross the boundaries that had once restricted respectable women and speak for all women.”¹⁹⁵ Originally the CESL had limited its membership to college and professional women, but by 1911 it allowed all women to join.¹⁹⁶

One of the most unique aspects of the CESL was that its singular goal was to educate women and men on the importance of woman suffrage. Charlotte Anita Whitney, president of the CESL during the 1911 suffrage campaign, reflected that the most important trait of a suffrage worker was that she “must believe in equal suffrage as a great, world-wide movement—an essential part of a moral and spiritual awakening; believe in it so firmly that faith begets courage and enthusiasm; and never forget that because it is a great educational movement the foundation of work must be laid with all sincerity and truth.”¹⁹⁷ From 1908 until the passage of the suffrage amendment in 1911, the CESL played a prominent role in the Bay Area suffrage coalition, opening offices in downtown San Francisco, establishing a publicity department and providing speakers to suffrage groups and rallies throughout the Bay Area. As will be seen, the Bay Area CESL played an influential role in the campaign of 1911.

¹⁹⁴ Solomons, 29 and Gullett, 185.

¹⁹⁵ Gullett, 185.

¹⁹⁶ Al Richmond, Native Daughter: The Story of Anita Whitney (San Francisco, California: Anita Whitney 75th Anniversary Committee, 1942), 51.

¹⁹⁷ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 16.

Just as Bay Area suffragists needed clubwomen, socialists, and educated and professional women to help in the fight for suffrage, they also needed the aid of male Progressives to champion their cause. The growing Progressive movement throughout the state of California and the nation deeply influenced the California suffrage movement. By 1906, the “good government” movement had brought men and women reformers together to end corruption in their city governments. Gullett argues that many of the women in the “good government” campaign were progressives and suffragists. “They felt that progressivism and suffrage were inextricable: progressives made women’s suffrage possible and women’s political participation made the good government movement viable by making its tenets of morality and nonpartisanship credible.”¹⁹⁸

Women in San Francisco campaigned for mayoral candidate, Dr. Edward Robeson Taylor, lobbied for playgrounds throughout the city, and led the fight to rid the city of rats in order to put an end to the bubonic plague. Although some male reformers were still reluctant to work with women, many men accepted their help.¹⁹⁹

When San Francisco male reformers formed the Citizen’s League of Justice to support the prosecution of corrupt business leaders and unionists, women created a woman’s auxiliary to the organization whose sole purpose was to “pack” the court with sympathetic audience members. Their presence was especially noteworthy in the graft trials of San Francisco Mayor Eugene Schmitz and Abraham Reuf. Clubwoman and suffragist Elizabeth Gerberding was elected president of the auxiliary and stated the

¹⁹⁸ Gullett, 152.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 151-155.

importance of women's role was "one of teaching morality, not simply to guilty individuals but to the classes she felt they represented—workers and upper-class businessmen."²⁰⁰ She also believed that women's experiences in the courthouse gave them useful insight into the political sphere, which would eventually aid them in their fight for the ballot. After a few years, the male members of the Citizen's League of Justice accepted women as equal members of the club with full voting rights.²⁰¹

By 1909, Progressives at the state level, had gained the majority in the Republican Party. Responding to the request of suffragists and in appreciation for their help on progressive issues, the Party created a suffrage plank within its platform during the 1910 election campaign. Hiram Johnson, the Republican running for governor, did not openly support woman suffrage, writing that "the more I think of the situation with regard to women's suffrage, the more I think [this is]...something that will destroy us." Nonetheless, the Republicans endorsed suffrage because according to Gullett, "large numbers, men and women, felt they shared many of the same values. Both endorsed measures to expand democracy, such as 'direct legislation.'"²⁰²

One of the greatest benefits for women in the "good government" and Progressive movement was that they were able to work with their male counterparts and prove that they were qualified to be involved in the political sphere. In addition, as supporters,

²⁰⁰ Elizabeth Gerberding, quoted in Gayle Gullett, 157.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 158.

²⁰² Ibid., 175.

leaders, and activists of the Progressive movement, Bay Area women gained crucial male allies as they embarked on their quest for the ballot.

Progressive male allies alone would not be powerful enough to help California suffragists win the ballot. By 1905, middle class suffragists began to realize the importance of including working class women in the suffrage movement and began to make concerted efforts to bring them into the suffrage coalition. At the same time, union women realized the need for suffrage if there was ever to be parity in the work place. The relationship that formed between the middle class and working class suffragists was at times strained and tenuous because of their differing priorities, but in the end, their efforts to work together would bring all California women the ballot.

The San Francisco union movement was very strong in the early twentieth century. After surviving the depression and antiunion activities of the 1890s, the San Francisco labor movement made an incredible comeback. In response to the tumultuous and violent waterfront strike of 1901, San Francisco workers created the Union Labor Party to look after labor's interests. By 1901, trade union membership increased by five hundred percent and Eugene Schmitz of the Union Labor Party was elected mayor of San Francisco.²⁰³ Schmitz and other Union Labor Party candidates won the elections of 1903 and 1905 as well. The union friendly environment in San Francisco helped wage-earning women's efforts to unionize. By 1910, nearly eight percent of San Francisco's working women were unionized while the national average was closer to 1.5 percent.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ Ibid., 176- 177.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

At its inception, the women's labor movement in the Bay Area traditionally worked to improve the well-being of women in the work place by fighting for shorter hours, increased and equitable pay, and safer working conditions. Englander argues that as working women became more involved in the labor movement, "they learned to organize around specific goals and demands, developed speaking skills, and began to articulate a shared body of interests for working women, all faculties analogous to those arising among middle-class suffragists as a result of their political activities."²⁰⁵ By the early 1900s, many women in the labor movement were becoming aware of the value of the ballot and as a result, they brought experience and leadership skills with them in the struggle for the vote.

In 1906, Lillian Harris Coffin, a member of San Francisco's California Club, saw that there was tremendous potential in creating a "cross-class suffrage alliance," and organized the California Equal Suffrage League of San Francisco, which was dedicated to converting workers to the suffrage cause. This organization was successful initially in attracting union men and women, but fell apart when suffragists refused to support the streetcar strike of 1907.²⁰⁶

The streetcar strike was the first of many occasions during which middle class suffragists and wage earning suffragists found they had opposing interests. The streetcar strike began on May 5, 1907 when Patrick Calhoun, president of United Railroad, refused to grant carmen an eight-hour day or raise wages. Initially the San Francisco Labor

²⁰⁵ Englander, 3.

²⁰⁶ Gullett, 166.

Council did not back the carmen's union. Two days after the strike began, however, Calhoun hired strikebreakers to drive six cars out of the barn, which was armed with guards. "The United Railroad attempted to run its cars yesterday and met with an opposition on the part of the striking carmen and their sympathizers which resulted in one of the bloodiest pages in the history of San Francisco," reported the San Francisco Call the following morning.²⁰⁷ A riot ensued in which two men were killed and twenty were injured. After "Bloody Tuesday," the San Francisco Labor Council supported the carmen's position and staged a boycott.²⁰⁸

One month later the strike was still in effect and the Labor Clarion reported: "Tens of thousands of people continue to walk and patronize the various vehicles impressed into transportation service since the strike began."²⁰⁹ The labor unions, including women's unions Local #48 and the Steam Laundry Workers Union, contributed to the support of the carmen by asking each of their members to contribute money in support of the strikers.²¹⁰

One of the most contentious points of the strike for wage earning suffragists was that their middle class counterparts ignored the boycott and continued to ride the streetcars. In fact, when the first women passengers boarded the streetcars on May 11 it was treated as a major news event. This angered unionists, like Louise La Rue, who

²⁰⁷ San Francisco Call, May 8, 1907.

²⁰⁸ Englander, 83 -84.

²⁰⁹ Labor Clarion, June 7, 1907.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

argued that they had supported the Equal Suffrage League in the past, but now there was no reciprocal support for the laborer's cause. La Rue criticized the middle class suffragists for disregarding the boycott and argued that "they would have to stay with us and be friends with us even if we were wrong...but if they couldn't stick to us when we were wrong, we didn't want them when we were right."²¹¹

Another issue of contention between the working class and middle class suffragists were the 1906 graft trials of San Francisco Mayor Eugene Schmitz and Abraham Reuf who were indicted for taking corporate bribes in return for city contracts.²¹² While the laboring class did not support the actions of Reuf and Schmitz, it did support the election of a new Union Labor Party mayor and an end to the graft trials. Unionist Minna O'Donnell formed the Women's Municipal League that advocated for an end to the graft trials, arguing that the money would be better spent on improving schools, repairing streets, and creating more parks and playgrounds.²¹³ Englander argues that because the graft trials and the suffrage movement overlapped from 1908 – 1910, "the identification of leading suffragists with pro-prosecution forces was clear and unequivocal, one which union women would come to view with scorn and contempt."²¹⁴

Prohibition was another issue that caused tension between the middle class and working class suffragists because of the strong ties between suffragists and the

²¹¹ Englander, 84- 85.

²¹² Ibid., 88.

²¹³ Ibid., 94.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

temperance movement. Alcohol not only played a large role in the social activities of many immigrant groups, it also provided an important source of jobs for women in restaurants and bars that served liquor. As Englander states, “to these women, liquor consumption was less a moral issue than an economic one.”²¹⁵

Even with these tensions, working class and middle class suffragists put aside their differences and tried to work together. In 1908, for instance, Maud Younger and Louise La Rue, representing the laborers and Lillian Coffin, A.J. Jarmuth, and Frances S. Gibson, representing the Suffrage League, presented their suffrage resolution before the State Federation of Labor’s convention. “The hall was invaded by a quartette of determined woman suffragists,” reported the San Francisco Examiner and in the end they were able to convince the State Federation of Labor to endorse suffrage.²¹⁶

In an effort to attract wage-earning women from the Mission district to the suffrage cause in July 1908, Laundry Workers’ L C. Walden and Local 48’s Louise La Rue and Maud Younger, organized the Twentieth Century Club. The purpose of the club was to provide education, entertainment, and a place to socialize. Englander speculates that the club, which was modeled after the influential California Club of San Francisco, was formed as an extension of the union so that unionists could reach out to female wage-earners in a similar way as middle class suffragists often attempted to do. “Such a club,” argues Englander, “could expose young workers to union activities and philosophy,

²¹⁵ Ibid., 81.

²¹⁶ San Francisco Examiner, January 10, 1908.

continue to instill and activate a sense of community solidarity and advance the social function of the union beyond its own walls.”²¹⁷

In August 1908, unionist Maud Younger wrote an influential article in the Labor Clarion entitled “Why Wage-Earning Women Should Vote,” which was reprinted in numerous newspapers throughout the state and nation. In the excerpt below, Younger details the need and moral imperative for woman suffrage:

Six million women in the United States daily leave their homes to go out in the world and fight beside men for their living. They work under greater disadvantages and temptations than men, they work for longer hours and lower wages, they bear the greater burdens of our industrial system, yet they have not the protection which men have of the ballot... The working women of California have gained everything themselves, inch by inch, through the Union. Without a voice in the government, they turn to the Union for protection. They give it their allegiance. But the Union cannot do everything. They need good laws to protect them at home as well as at work.... There are two ways to secure laws—by vote and by ‘influence.’²¹⁸

By September 1908, working class women realized that in order to continue the campaign for suffrage they needed to do so in their own way and through their own organization. Therefore, representatives from nearly all the women’s unions attended a meeting to organize the San Francisco Wage Earners’ State League, which would later be renamed the Wage Earners’ Suffrage League (WESL). The Labor Clarion reported “the object of the new movement is to better conditions for working women and at the same time promote the suffrage idea.”²¹⁹ The WESL was thus formed as an independent

²¹⁷ Englander, 114 - 115.

²¹⁸ Maud Younger, “Why Wage-Earning Women Should Vote,” Labor Clarion, August 21, 1908.

²¹⁹ Labor Clarion, September 25, 1908.

organization that would develop its own suffrage strategies, foster the development of working class leaders and concentrate on the unique challenges of working women.²²⁰

At the close of the state suffrage convention in October 1908, an opportunity arose for the California Equal Suffrage League to discuss the formation of the WESL. The San Francisco Call reported: “The ship of equal suffrage, after a long day of squally weather had a real storm to encounter at the close of yesterday’s convention.”²²¹ President of the WESL, Minna O’Donnell, was invited to address the California Equal Suffrage League. She vehemently opposed an alliance stating:

We want the ballot for very different reasons from the ones you have for wanting it. Our idea is self-protection; you want it to use for some one else. We cannot join you and we can not send representatives to your gatherings. Your men simply smile. They won’t give you what you want. Ours are with us heart and soul. They are telling us to ‘go to it.’ And we are going to get it far sooner than you ever could because we have influence with the people who can give it to us, and you have not.²²²

After O’Donnell’s address, the Equal Suffrage League broke into small groups with union representatives present in each of the groups. The unionists stood resolved in maintaining a separate organization. Maud Younger argued that for the California Equal Suffrage League, enfranchisement was a matter of sex, whereas for the wage-earning woman “it is a question of the things that affect men and women alike. The unions have for some time been unfriendly in their feeling to certain members of the suffrage league, saying they are using the unions as tools only, and I know that this outbreak would come

²²⁰ Englander, 2.

²²¹ San Francisco Call, October 4, 1908.

²²² Ibid.

soon, if not today.”²²³ Darkness forced the meeting to adjourn. In the end, Bay Area working women would campaign for enfranchisement as equal partners in the suffrage coalition, cooperating with middle class suffragists and yet maintaining their own suffrage organizations.

Nationally, suffrage leaders were beginning to realize the importance of having labor allies as well. In 1909, NAWSA withdrew its original resolution that suffrage should have educational restrictions in order to gain the support of working class voters. NAWSA also passed a resolution endorsing the American Federation of Labor, which had supported woman suffrage since 1903. These changes allowed wage-earning and middle class suffragists to pursue their own interests while at the same time forming a pro-suffrage partnership.²²⁴

By 1909, Bay Area suffragists had successfully organized the coalition that would lobby the legislature to pass a suffrage amendment. It included club women, Socialists, Progressives, educated and professional women in the CESL and wage-earning women. A large contingent of the Bay Area suffrage coalition traveled to Sacramento and organized relays to keep lobbyists at the capital for an extended period of time. Louise La Rue, Maud Younger and John I. Nolan, represented labor, for example, and were strong lobbyists for the cause.²²⁵ The Labor Clarion reported “the legislators will be

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Englander, 119.

²²⁵ Labor Clarion, January 22, 1909.

asked to submit the question to the electors of the state. There should be no opposition to such a reasonable request.”²²⁶

The paper was incorrect in its assumption that the legislature would look kindly on suffrage. On January 12, 1909 Speaker Phil Stanton enforced “Rule 96” which stated that “no persons except Senators, State officers, Governors of States, member of Congress, Judges of the Supreme Courts, members of the press when properly accredited by their respective journals, ladies when specially invited by a member of the House, shall be admitted within the Assembly chamber except in the galleries during the session of the House.”²²⁷ Suffragists circumvented this rule the following day. The Sacramento Bee reported that women seized a loophole that “provides that friends specially invited may remain on the floor during the session. Every woman lobbyist has a special invitation, and several remained triumphant today.”²²⁸

Bay Area suffragist Selina Solomons remembered the campaign of 1909, stating: “From the first it was evident we had no chance to win. The insurgents, of whom Assemblyman Drew was the leader, had failed to secure any part of the ‘organization,’ being left out of all important committees, and therefore completely on the outside.”²²⁹ To placate the suffragists, legislators offered “municipal suffrage.” In response, California suffragists maintained “we would insist on the whole loaf of political equality

²²⁶ Ibid., January 8, 1909.

²²⁷ San Francisco Chronicle, January 13, 1909.

²²⁸ Sacramento Bee, January 13, 1909.

²²⁹ Solomons, 10.

or no suffrage bread at all.”²³⁰ After five weeks of intense lobbying, suffragists left Sacramento to prepare for the next year’s fight.

The suffrage campaign continued in 1910 when a suffrage rally was held at the Golden Gate Commandery Building in February to celebrate Woman’s Day. Five addresses were given including one by Maud Younger entitled “The Need of the Ballot to Working Women,” and one by Elizabeth Lowe Watson entitled “Women and Economics.”²³¹

One of the greatest achievements for California suffragists during this year was the endorsement of suffrage by the Republicans. Selina Solomons recounted the experience at the Republican convention and stated:

For by this time insurgency, which was always favorable to us, had become strong enough to control the convention. The Los Angeles delegation was composed largely of progressives; like-wise Santa Clara county, and these two together outnumbered San Francisco, which had lost in its voting population since the great earthquake and fire.”²³²

Suffragists were still unable to attain the Democrats’ endorsement, however. Solomons attributed their failure to “the ‘machine’ forces which had heretofore dominated the Republican convention and now had taken hold in the Democratic platform.”²³³

The fortieth annual woman suffrage convention was held in San Francisco during the first week of October 1910. Free lectures on woman suffrage, child labor and

²³⁰ Ibid., 11.

²³¹ Labor Clarion, February 25, 1910.

²³² Solomons, 12.

²³³ Ibid..

education were given in the new suffrage headquarters located in the Pacific building.²³⁴ Elizabeth Lowe Watson, of Cupertino, was chosen as the new president of the California Equal Suffrage Association. Historian Yvonne Jacobson argues, “Watson’s speaking ability, her dedication to the cause of woman’s suffrage, and the reverence in which she was held made her a likely choice for the leader of the new suffrage effort.”²³⁵

Although lobbying efforts proved fruitless for California’s suffragists in 1910, they were inspired by the victory of women in the state of Washington, who won suffrage by referendum on November 8. Katz explains that Washington’s victory was significant because it “broke the logjam and lifted the hopes of suffragists from coast to coast.”²³⁶ Now suffragists hoped to win suffrage in a larger, more influential state to continue the momentum throughout the nation. Katz argues, “since the West provided the most fertile ground for such an achievement, eyes turned to California to provide the seed for a revitalized campaign.”²³⁷

After Washington’s victory, middle class suffragists, such as Mary McHenry Keith and Elizabeth Watson, began to appear before labor unions as well as clubs and churches, realizing the necessity of union endorsements.²³⁸ In addition, Selina Solomons created the “Votes for Women Club” which was “the outgrowth of the need of agitation

²³⁴ Davis, 124.

²³⁵ Jacobson, 10.

²³⁶ Katz, 128.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Englander, 127.

among that large class of self-supporting women heretofore hardly approached.”²³⁹ The headquarters were located on Sutter Street and lunch was served to the working women. The club, according to Solomons, attracted working girls “who greatly enjoyed the freedom and social atmosphere of the place. Some were already ardent suffragists, but had never been or known how to be affiliated with the movement.”²⁴⁰

Thus the suffrage coalition of clubwomen, socialists, Progressives, educated and professional women, and working women gained momentum in 1911 as it began an all-out campaign for enfranchisement. When the campaign swung into motion it did so as a coalition that included nearly twenty thousand clubwomen, the State Nurses’ Association, the Mothers’ Congress, the Native Daughters of the Golden West, the Catholic Ladies Aid Society, the Grange, women’s labor unions including the influential WESL, the Collegiate Alumnae, the College Equal Suffrage League, the Woman’s Socialist Union, and African American club women.²⁴¹ “When organized women in California began working for the vote in 1911,” argues Gullett, “their movement was a fluid, heterogeneous collection of groups that formed shifting coalitions.”²⁴² This suffrage coalition would prove to be one of the major factors behind their success in the 1911 suffrage campaign.

²³⁹ Solomons, 16.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 17.

²⁴¹ Jensen and Lothrop, 64.

²⁴² Gullett, 181.

CHAPTER 3

WAGING THEIR FINAL CAMPAIGN FOR SUFFRAGE

The Bay Area suffrage coalition formed in the early twentieth century would have to work hard to convince the California legislature to bring the suffrage amendment to a vote. Immediately prior to the 1911 legislative session, the California College Equal Suffrage League (CESL) sent letters to every member of the legislature, signed by the officers of its league. Cornelia McKinne Stanwood recounted their efforts, stating: “As college women, we made a direct appeal to the college men...So our College League members, scattered all over the State, wrote letters to their friends and classmates in the Legislature. Some sent telegrams, others night letters; in every way we told them we wanted the vote.”²⁴³ Following this action, members of the CESL appealed to legislators by placing advertisements in prominent newspapers.²⁴⁴

The progressive political climate in California during 1911 proved to be beneficial for suffragists because Progressives dominated the Republican Party’s platform committee, the legislature and elected the governor. Although Governor Hiram Johnson was not a strong advocate of woman’s suffrage, many on the platform committee were strong proponents of the suffrage amendment.²⁴⁵ On the sixth of January, one hundred fifty-nine bills were introduced within two hours in the lower house. The bills

²⁴³ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 25.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Englander, 128.

included proposals for initiative and recall, railroad regulations, workmen's compensation, charter governments for counties, and woman suffrage.

A contingent of Bay Area suffragists, representing middle class and working class women, then traveled to Sacramento to lobby the California Legislature. Among the group were Maud Younger, Louise La Rue, Ethel Moore, Cornelia McKinne Stanwood, Lillian Harris Coffin, Agnes Ray, Elizabeth Gerberding, and Mary Gamage.²⁴⁶ Their lobbying efforts, historian Gayle Gullett states, "presented a message of diversity and unity."²⁴⁷

Anti-suffragists also lobbied the legislature during this time. Selina Solomons remembered that when the suffrage lobby arrived, "it was joined by a delegation of 'antis,' who for the first time had organized and were lobbying in California."²⁴⁸ The Daily Palo Alto Times speculated, "As the liquor associations are known to contribute large sums, both publicly and privately toward the defeat of suffrage bills in different states, there is always the question whether they are paying the bills of the 'antis' and salaries besides."²⁴⁹

A bizarre turn of events occurred when Senator Sanford submitted a bill to the Senate that called for all California women to vote on whether they wanted the ballot or

²⁴⁶ Solomons, 13 and Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 26. Maud Younger, Louise La Rue, Elizabeth Gerberding, and Lillian Harris Coffin were from San Francisco. Cornelia McKinne was from Oakland. Ethel Moore was president of the Oakland Park and Playground Association and represented the College Equal Suffrage League.

²⁴⁷ Gullett, 181.

²⁴⁸ Solomons, 13.

²⁴⁹ Daily Palo Alto Times, January 21, 1911.

not. Anti-suffragists were strongly in favor of the bill. Mrs. Mary S. Caswell of Los Angeles, the president of the Anti-Woman's Suffrage Association stated, "we are heartily in favor of that plan and, I believe, the women will demonstrate at that sort of an election that they do not wish to enter politics."²⁵⁰

Suffragists, on the other hand, were against Senator Sanford's bill because it would take too much time and would prevent them from submitting their constitutional amendment to the current legislature. As reported in the San Francisco Chronicle, "Mrs. Elizabeth Gerberding and Mrs. Lillian Harris Coffin of San Francisco said that the Sanford proposition was not fair and that its only effect would be to delay the vote by the men of the State on the question."²⁵¹ In addition, many proponents of suffrage, such as Senator Lee C. Gates of Los Angeles, argued that "suffrage was not a privilege but woman's actual right, and that the pledged Republican platform that the constitutional amendment should be submitted to the people should not be broken."²⁵² In the end, the Sanford bill was defeated ten to one by the Senate Committee on Election Laws.

On January 18, the suffragists and anti-suffragists presented their arguments regarding the suffrage bill during an open meeting of the Judiciary Committee. Senator Bell from Pasadena began the session by advocating for an equal suffrage amendment. Thereafter Elizabeth Gerberding provided introductory remarks followed by Maud Younger who spoke for working women. Ethel Moore spoke from the vantage point of

²⁵⁰ San Francisco Chronicle, January 16, 1911.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, January 17, 1911.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

her experience with children in California followed by Cornelia McKinne Stanwood who advocated that women “needed the ballot for their own development.” Lillian Harris Coffin, representing the California Suffrage Association, encouraged legislators to honor the suffrage plank in their party platform. Shelby Tollhurts of Los Angeles closed the debate “with brilliance and conviction.”²⁵³

Mary S. Caswell, representing the anti-suffragists, was then given time to refute the woman suffrage bill. She spent nearly fifty minutes reading a paper that gave numerous reasons why California women should not obtain the ballot. She “urged that while a few women desire suffrage, to confer it would rob the great body of the sex of privileges ‘written and unwritten’ which they now enjoy.”²⁵⁴

Finally on January 26, the woman suffrage constitutional amendment was passed by the Senate. The Assembly Committee on Constitutional Amendments then met and agreed nine votes to one to recommend its adoption by the lower house. In the end, woman suffrage, along with twenty-two other amendments would be brought to a vote in a special election to be held on October 10, 1911. One of the greatest challenges facing Bay Area suffragists was convincing their diverse male electorate that they were justified and deserving of the vote.

Once the suffrage amendment became a reality, suffragists throughout the state started to organize. In Berkeley, for instance, the Woman Suffrage League sponsored the play “How the Vote Was Won” at the end of February. The San Francisco Chronicle

²⁵³ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 26.

²⁵⁴ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 26 and San Francisco Chronicle, January 19, 1911.

reported: "Society women of the bay cities will stage a play in Hearst Hall at the University tomorrow afternoon to arouse interest in the cause of suffrage among the women students here."²⁵⁵

Bay Area women held especially prominent positions in the state campaign with Elizabeth Lowe Watson of Cupertino serving as president of the California Equal Suffrage Association (CESA), Jennie Arnott of Palo Alto heading the presidency of the Santa Clara County Suffrage Association, Alice Park of Palo Alto chairing the CESA committee on literature and printing, and C.D. Blaney of Saratoga appointed as a member of the CESA legislative committee.²⁵⁶

By March, CESA had established headquarters in San Francisco's Pacific Building and created a strategic plan to organize the thousands of suffragists throughout the state who were not directly affiliated with CESA. The group asked for help from members of the California Federation of Woman's Clubs, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Socialist organizations, the grange, women's unions, and independent suffrage organizations including the Wage Earners' Suffrage League (WESL) and the College Equal Suffrage League (CESL). Eventually two state coordinating committees were formed in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and a Cooperative Council was created to represent all of the organizations.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ San Francisco Chronicle, February 24, 1911.

²⁵⁶ Daily Palo Alto Times, January 21, 1911.

²⁵⁷ Spencer, 95 and Katz, 277.

San Francisco began its suffrage campaign in earnest when the Woman Suffrage Party sponsored the lecture of British socialist and suffrage leader, Sylvia Pankhurst. According to Selina Solomons, “the great audience listened for two hours with rapt attention and bated breath, to the moving recital, paying the tribute of a silence too deep and solemn even for applause. And truly did it seem that the shoulder of every woman present must have been stirred by this noble example to at least some slight effort of true self-sacrifice in the same splendid cause of her fellow women.”²⁵⁸

The College Equal Suffrage League (CESL) also booked Pankhurst to speak at its first mass meeting in Oakland, believing it “needed a strong start to the campaign in Oakland, Berkeley and Alameda.” To fill the theatre, suffragists put up billboard posters, distributed handbills on the streets, and placed window-card announcements throughout the three towns. In the end, over one thousand people paid for tickets to the lecture.²⁵⁹

The suffrage campaign in Santa Clara county was gaining momentum during this time as well. In April, The Santa Clara County Equal Suffrage Society held its convention at the Unitarian Church in San Jose with Jennie Arnott serving as county president. In addition, four new suffrage clubs had been formed in the county and membership in the existing clubs had increased.²⁶⁰

One of the most significant events to occur in the early days of the 1911 campaign was the convention of the California Federation of Women’s Clubs. As the largest

²⁵⁸ Solomons, 34.

²⁵⁹ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 30.

²⁶⁰ Daily Palo Alto Times, April 15, 1911.

woman's organization in California, its endorsement of woman suffrage would be crucial to the campaign although many feared that it would take much persuasion to gain club women's approval. The atmosphere at the convention, however, was charged with positive feelings towards suffrage as club women spoke passionately in favor of the amendment. "The suffragists had massed their forces," recalls Mary S. Gibson "and when Mrs. Waters ruled that the resolution should come before the convention, strong speeches in its favor came promptly from Mrs. Edson, Mary Foy, Mrs. Lobinger, Mrs. O.P. Clark and Mrs. James B. Hume, and when the vote was taken there was an overwhelming majority in its favor, nearly five to one."²⁶¹ In addition, the Federation passed a resolution advocating a "living wage" for working women and the creation of a department that focused on industrial and social conditions. This was significant because it signaled to the working women that club women supported them and included them in the fight for woman suffrage.²⁶²

Suffrage events continued to be organized around the Bay Area as the campaign entered the summer months. In order to gain the attention of the male electorate in Santa Clara County, for instance, the Equal Suffrage League held an impressive fourth of July celebration at Bunker Hill Park in Los Gatos. "Come and enjoy the day! Bring the babies! This is to be Woman's Liberty Day," advertised the Los Gatos Mail.²⁶³ Reverend Charles Aked, an ardent suffragist, was scheduled to speak at the event and the Los Gatos

²⁶¹ Gibson, 62.

²⁶² Gullett, 182.

²⁶³ Los Gatos Mail, June 8, 1911.

Mail reported, “No one within a dozen miles of Los Gatos should miss hearing this very talented man.”²⁶⁴

In August, the CESA created the State Central Committee which consisted of representatives from the major suffrage organizations: the WESL, the Woman’s Suffrage Party, Club Women’s Franchise League, and CESL. While waging individual campaigns, the various suffrage organizations, through the State Central Committee, kept each other apprised of their efforts. The State Central Committee also served as a way for these organizations to coordinate suffrage activities throughout the Bay Area and the state.²⁶⁵

An important tactic implemented by suffragists during the campaign was targeting the diverse ethnic population of the Bay Area. In San Francisco alone, 65 percent of the city’s residents were born in the United States and 36.9 percent of these citizens had parents who were foreign-born.²⁶⁶ Englander argues that the diverse ethnic population in San Francisco posed a significant challenge for Bay Area suffragists because “second-generation Americans were closely bound to their ethnic traditions and communities. Together with foreign-born residents, they comprised over two-thirds of San Francisco’s population.”²⁶⁷ By 1911, the Irish were the most prominent group in San Francisco with Germans coming in second and Italians following closely behind.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Los Gatos Mail, June 8, 1911 and June 29, 1911.

²⁶⁵ Englander, 130.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

Because of the heterogeneous population in San Francisco and the Bay Area, the CESA published campaign literature in foreign languages and visited churches, clubs and other immigrant organizations. In addition, during the last week of the campaign, advertisements were placed in Italian, French, German, Swiss, Portuguese, and Chinese newspapers. It was crucial for suffragists to persuade immigrants to vote for suffrage because they made up a large part of the electorate.

The CESL also worked hard to persuade San Francisco's large Catholic population by distributing leaflets to all of the thirty-six Catholic congregations after mass. Although most Catholic priests were either against or lukewarm on the issue, Father Joseph Gleason from Palo Alto was a strong advocate of women's enfranchisement, providing written and oral arguments for the cause.²⁶⁹ In a San Francisco speech, Father Gleason argued:

The Catholic church teaches above all things reverence for women and veneration of motherhood, but there is no danger to the dignity of womanhood or motherhood to be feared from the ballot... You might as well try to stop the torrents of Niagara as to stop the equal suffrage amendment in California.²⁷⁰

There were also limited efforts to reach the African American vote. The Colored Women's Suffrage League, for instance, was active in the suffrage campaign. In addition, the San Francisco Call reported that Julia Sanborn "has undertaken to secure the colored vote, which amounts to 30,000 or more in California."²⁷¹ She presided over the

²⁶⁹ Solomons, 35.

²⁷⁰ "Some Catholic Opinions," Political Equality Leaflets by the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Pamphlets in American History Microform 21/22.

²⁷¹ San Francisco Call, August 24, 1911.

first meeting on August 24 in which “the most influential colored voters in the city” attended “and it is believed that if this body can be persuaded to support the suffrage movement the outlying districts would follow suit more readily.”²⁷² Suffragists Gail Laughlin and Mary Fairbrother spoke at this meeting as well.

Even during this “progressive era” of politics, there was much prejudice against the Chinese population. As Gullett argues, “although white suffragists of all classes claimed the vote as a democratic right for women, they sought to limit that right selectively.”²⁷³ Historian Reda Davis also proves that the anti-Chinese sentiment amongst suffrage workers was very high during the campaign and that “much was made of Chinese servants who could vote while their employers could not. More than one speaker claimed to have learned through her cook that the Chinese community planned to vote against woman suffrage.”²⁷⁴

Bay Area suffragists knew how close the vote would be in its major cities. At a very early point in the campaign, suffragists realized it was crucial to canvass other areas of California as well. Thus Bay Area women campaigned not only in their own counties but also in other areas. During the summer of 1911, Elizabeth Lowe Watson and Anna Chase spent twenty-three days in an automobile tour of the Sacramento Valley speaking for suffrage day and night.²⁷⁵ Historian Dorcas James Spencer states that Chase “gave

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Gullett, 186.

²⁷⁴ Davis, 101 – 102.

²⁷⁵ Spencer, 96.

five weeks of arduous work, speaking from automobiles wherever a crowd gathered, from Court House steps, in churches or halls, or from a soap-box.”²⁷⁶ The largest meeting of Watson and Chase’s automobile campaign took place in Chico where they spoke before an audience of three thousand people.²⁷⁷

When Sacramento suffragists asked for help with their floundering campaign, the Bay Area’s Mary Roberts Coolidge representing CESL and Mrs. E.V. Spencer representing CESA were sent to help. Because little suffrage work had been done in Sacramento due to a lack of money and speakers, Coolidge and Spencer spent weeks trying to organize the area. As Coolidge remembers, “there were only two or three women in the town who could or would speak at meetings; therefore Mrs. Spencer and I spoke several times a day at department stores, for ten minutes at noon or at six o’clock; at church societies and clubs in the afternoons and evenings.”²⁷⁸ They also passed out pamphlets at schools for children to take home to their parents in order to reach families that they would not have been able to reach otherwise. Because the campaign started so late, many thought it would be impossible to achieve a majority vote in Sacramento. Suffragists were surprised, however, when the city voted in favor of the amendment. Afterwards Coolidge stated, “the campaign was worth the effort put into it because it

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Keith-McHenry-Pond Papers, Box 3, Mary McHenry Keith Writings Folder, Bancroft Library.

²⁷⁸ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 99.

roused the apathetic and not unfavorable class to take an interest and encouraged the local suffragists who had thought it impossible to carry the town.”²⁷⁹

The San Joaquin Valley also received visits from Bay Area suffragists in October. “Miss Breeze Huffman and Mrs. W.G. Wallow,” reported the San Francisco Call, “accompanied by other members of the Clubwoman’s League have opened a campaign throughout the San Joaquin Valley, where they have held a series of open air rallies. All the valley towns have been visited by them and the reports show a favorable leaning to the side of equal suffrage.”²⁸⁰ In the end, the efforts of many Bay Area women and extensive press coverage in the newspapers persuaded other counties, especially in rural areas, to vote for the suffrage amendment.

Learning from past mistakes, Bay Area suffragists did not overlook the working class vote in 1911 as they had in the 1896 suffrage campaign. The WESL, for instance, established branches in San Francisco, Richmond and San Jose and lobbied hard for suffrage throughout 1911. During February and March 1911, the WESL and the Women’s International Union Label League worked simultaneously on the suffrage campaign and the campaign for the eight-hour day for women. The eight-hour day bill passed the State Senate by a vote of 34 to 5 and was signed by Governor Johnson on March 22.²⁸¹ The San Francisco Star reported, “It is unnecessary to say that the working women of California, and the working men also, are more than pleased by the passage of

²⁷⁹ Report on Suffrage Campaigning in Sacramento, Chico and Oakland: September 1 – October 10 1912, Dane Coolidge Papers, Box 18, Bancroft Library.

²⁸⁰ San Francisco Call, October 3, 1911

²⁸¹ Labor Clarion, March 17, 1911.

the bill, for they could not be otherwise...It is a righteous law, and it means much for the welfare of women in California.”²⁸²

The eight-hour day victory provided inspiration for California’s working women that suffrage could become a reality as well. In May, the WESL held a well-attended meeting at the Central Theater in San Francisco at which a variety of suffragists spoke. Eliza D. Keith and labor representatives John I. Nolan, John O. Walsh, P.H. McCarthy and Will J. French spoke at the platform while Minna O’Donnell acted as chairman and Louise La Rue introduced the speakers. The Labor Clarion reported:

The talks proved to the satisfaction of those present that women needed the ballot for their protection, that they were intensely interested in the school and other civic questions and that women are the natural house cleaners, and therefore able to do good work when a ‘clean up’ is needed in state or city.²⁸³

By August, representatives of the WESL had visited seventy-eight unions and had obtained endorsements from nearly all of them. The San Francisco Call reported, “In the majority of these 78 organizations, which have 4,000 members, the endorsement was unanimous.”²⁸⁴ Younger and other members of the WESL addressed between three and six meetings every night targeting both male and female workers and planned to visit forty more unions before the election. Many working women, who were unable to give their time during the day due to their work, volunteered to speak at meetings in the evenings. In addition, the WESL held noonday meetings in the streets and at the

²⁸² San Francisco Star, March 11, 1911.

²⁸³ Labor Clarion, May 19, 1911.

²⁸⁴ San Francisco Call, August 18, 1911.

factories to try to persuade working men to vote for the suffrage amendment. The first of a series of outdoor meetings was held at Union Iron Works.²⁸⁵

The endorsement of the Brewery Workers' Union was the most surprising and gratifying to the members of the WESL. Maud Younger said she was most pleased to gain its endorsement because when she first attended its meeting she was unsure that she would even be allowed to speak before the assembly. She was surprised, however, when she was invited into the chambers and reported that members "listened attentively and with but few preliminaries expressed themselves as favorable to the amendment."²⁸⁶

On August 31, the WESL held a mass meeting at the Valencia Theater in the Mission district. "The wage-earners," reported the San Francisco Call, "have been working indefatigably among the union men and have an enormous following in the city."²⁸⁷ The main speakers at the meeting were Margaret Daley and Raymond Robins of Chicago with Minna O'Donnell providing the introductions.

Smaller meetings targeting workers were held in the Sunset and Mission Districts during September and were often sponsored by the CESL. These meetings were held from the back seat of an automobile in an effort to attract the "common man" and the speeches usually revolved around the issue of how the vote would protect working women.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., August 27, 1911.

²⁸⁸ Rodes, 162 and Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 40.

The CESL and the WESL collaborated on one of their most prominent events on September 4, 1911 when they created a float for the San Francisco Labor Day parade. The float was inspired by the WESL, but its workers did not have time to build it. When Maud Younger asked for help with the float's creation, "the College League detached several workers, already overwhelmed with chairmanships...to make immediate plans for the float."²⁸⁹ The WESL provided the working girls for the float, representing various trades, while Younger sat with the driver and held the reins.

The day of the parade was one of joy for the suffragists and they proudly looked on as the float moved down Market Street:

A heavy platform was built over a truck drawn by six black horses...each horse wore a yellow blanket lettered in black with the words, "Votes for Women." A smaller platform surmounted the large one and upon this were posed two classical figures representing California asking Justice for the ballot. Below, and all about the sides of this raised group, were realistic groups of women—working women—busy with the materials of their actual trades. One was a group of cannery girls pasting labels on fruit cans with deft, accustomed strokes; another was of real shop-girls working at a ribbon counter; and another a type-writer at her machine. A trained nurse, in uniform, and a college woman, in cap and gown, had come to stand for their procession... its real significance lay in the fact that working-women, in plain working-clothes, gave up their holiday to endure the severe fatigue of being jolted through the streets for hours, placarded with great signs saying, 'These women need the vote.'²⁹⁰

Samuel Gompers, the Parade Grand Marshall and president of the American Federation of Labor, saluted the women as they marched by. When the float came to a stop at Market Street, the women held an impromptu rally prompting cheers from the onlookers.

²⁸⁹ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 96.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

The collaborative efforts of the CESL and the WESL paid off as the float achieved its intended effect of gaining the attention of the parade goers.²⁹¹

Other suffrage organizations also lobbied for the worker's vote as well throughout the campaign. Gail Laughlin, for instance, spoke before the San Francisco Labor Council in October 1911. "She made an earnest plea for women who work and earn their living to be given the right to vote," reported the San Francisco Chronicle, because "'they work the same as men and should have the same right and voice in framing the laws to better their condition and the condition of their children who are obliged to work.'"²⁹²

One of the most significant aspects of the 1911 California suffrage campaign was that it revolutionized the way that suffragists throughout the nation would wage their own suffrage movements: it proved to be a campaign of spectacle, innovation, and glitz.²⁹³ Learning from the 1896 campaign, suffragists wanted to become as visible as possible. Some suffragists believed that they lost the 1896 election because of the powerful liquor industry. In 1911, liquor interests contributed three-quarters of a million dollars to the anti-suffrage campaign.²⁹⁴ To combat their powerful opponents, suffragists effectively used new forms of "public space" and nontraditional methods of campaigning.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ Englander, 136.

²⁹² San Francisco Chronicle, October 7, 1911.

²⁹³ Margaret Finnegan, Selling Suffrage (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 54.

²⁹⁴ Mrs. Henry M. Youmans, "Press Bulletin of the Political Equality League of Wisconsin," (September 7, 1912), Information retrieved March 24, 2004, <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext>.

²⁹⁵ Finnegan, 54 – 56.

In the Bay Area and throughout California, suffragists staged parades, rallies, street speeches, plays and mass meetings, put up electric street signs, billboards, and signs on buildings, created buttons and badges, and arranged automobile caravans. Historian Margaret Finnegan explains in Selling Suffrage, “in 1910, Washington State women won the vote by cultivating a politics of respectability. In 1911, California women ignored this example and instigated the most sensational suffrage campaign to date.”²⁹⁶

One of the glitziest photo opportunities occurred when Mary McHenry Keith spoke for suffrage on the battleship Pennsylvania in the San Francisco Harbor. The event was momentous because promoters had arranged to have the aviator Ely land on the vessel, the first time such a thing had ever been attempted. As the guests toasted Ely’s success, Mary McHenry Keith spoke on the subject of suffrage. She began her comments by remembering that while she was a college student “a wise professor told the speaker [Keith] that two things would never happen: men would never fly in the air nor would women vote; yet she lived to see both predictions fail; men did fly and women in other states than California do vote; why not California?”²⁹⁷ Some newspapers published a picture of Mrs. Keith that was much larger than the picture of the battleship with a caption that read: “She talks of Woman Suffrage on One of Uncle Sam’s Battleships!”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 170.

²⁹⁷ Keith-McHenry-Pond Papers, Box 3, Folder entitled Mary McHenry Keith Writings Regarding the Suffrage Movement in California, Bancroft Library.

²⁹⁸ Keith-McHenry-Pond Papers, Box 3, Folder entitled Mary McHenry Keith Writings Regarding the Suffrage Movement in California, Bancroft Library.

The Bay Area's strongest proponent and creator of suffrage advertisements was Alice Park, a Palo Alto suffragist and journalist. She wrote, "we made good use of color in our California campaign... we said it [yellow] was the most beautiful color in the world, especially in the golden state; that California owed its life to the gold in the hills; that the golden poppy is the state flower; that the golden orange grows here, and golden grain."²⁹⁹ All suffrage badges, signs or buttons sported "suffrage yellow."

From August 21 to August 28, the CESL used "suffrage yellow" to attract the attention of San Franciscans by gaining the consent of shop managers throughout the city to dress their windows in woman suffrage colors. According to the notes of the CESL, "when the day came, shopwindows, from one end of the city to the other, blossomed in every known shade of yellow, and to point the reason for the color, copies of the prize poster...gave the campaign cry, 'Votes for Women'...Many shops outran our brightest expectations."³⁰⁰

Products like "Gets-It," a corn remover sold in San Francisco, were advertised widely throughout city newspapers, targeting suffragists in the advertisements because of the long marches in which they participated.³⁰¹ Another suffrage advertisement created by the California Equal Suffrage League was entitled: "Justice to Women" and stated:

WOMEN VOTE on some questions in Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky and in 26 other states.

²⁹⁹ Alice Park quoted in Ellen DuBois and Karen Kearns, Votes For Women: A 75th Anniversary Album (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1995), 19.

³⁰⁰ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 56.

³⁰¹ Finnegan, 129.

*WOMEN VOTE equally with men in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah,
Idaho and Washington.
Why not in California?*³⁰²

Novelty items such as crepe paper caps, sandwich boards, kewpie dolls, fans, lapel buttons, suffrage stationary, baggage stickers and lapboards were also created during the campaign. Alice Park commented that each community of suffragists “wanted its own badge for local publicity.”³⁰³ Finnegan explains that novelty items “certainly allowed women to express their beliefs and promote the movement under a variety of circumstances. But, perhaps more important, novelty goods brought the movement to a mass audience of nonsuffragists and allowed them to participate in suffragists’ infectious spectacles.”³⁰⁴

Technological innovations such as the telephone, radio and automobile were also widely used throughout the campaign. The telephone allowed for simpler and more efficient communication throughout the state, and permitted women to coordinate their efforts with more ease. And the radio provided an easy way for suffragists to reach large audiences. In one case Mary McHenry Keith and Elizabeth Lowe Watson delivered suffrage speeches over the radio, which reached four hundred fifty miles.³⁰⁵ “There seems to be no end to the ingenuity of California women in their efforts to gain the ballot,” reported the Woman’s Journal. “For the first time in the history of the wireless

³⁰² Mae Silver and Sue Cazaly, 59.

³⁰³ Alice Park quoted in Margaret Finnegan, Selling Suffrage, 124.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 124.

³⁰⁵ Keith-McHenry-Pond Papers, Box 3, Folder entitled Mary McHenry Keith Writings Regarding the Suffrage Movement in California, Bancroft Library.

telephone in San Francisco, two women talked equal suffrage into the machine the other day, and for hundreds of miles around women suffrage was 'in the air.'”³⁰⁶

The automobile was also used as a means of political advertisement. The CESL, for example, used its “Blue-liner” seven passenger car to roam throughout the state spreading its campaign slogans. Mae Silver and Sue Cazaly, explained in the Sixth Star “when the ‘Blue Liner’ wheeled into town, parked at a corner and a college suffragist stood in the car and began to speak, soon a crowd of men gathered around. The target audience suffragists wanted to reach was men. The car attracted the right audience.”³⁰⁷

One such automobile party, in which members of the local woman’s suffrage organization toured the city and held open-air meetings, was covered in the San Francisco Chronicle.

The meetings were all well attended and the speakers were in all cases listened to with respect and attention. The plea was made by the various orators that women, having a vital interest in the welfare of the city, were entitled to have a say in this ruling and their hearers were urged to take the women of California out of the class which includes them with criminals and lunatics.³⁰⁸

Another automobile parade was advertised in the Berkeley Independent stating “One of the most impressive and inspiring sights that Berkeley has seen for many a moon will be the suffrage automobile parade that will cover the main thoroughfares of the city Friday evening. At each of the speaking points the addresses will be continuous.”³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Silver and Cazaly, 11.

³⁰⁸ San Francisco Chronicle, October 5, 1911.

³⁰⁹ Berkeley Independent, October 4, 1911 quoted in Silver and Cazaly, 76.

An especially visible suffrage event occurred in August when Bay Area suffragists traveled to the state fair in Sacramento. A large rally was scheduled on August 24 at Oak Park Theatre to kick off the activities. Bay Area leaders including Elizabeth Lowe Watson, Mary Sperry, Hester Harland, Agnes Ray, Louise La Rue, Charlotte Anita Whitney, and Maude Younger spoke at the rally.³¹⁰ The next day more Bay Area suffragists boarded the “yellow special” train chartered by the Woman Suffrage Party and traveled to the State Fair, stopping in Oakland, Stockton, Niles, Lodi and every important town along the route.³¹¹ The Daily Palo Alto Times reported:

A veritable army will invade the state capital today with yellow banners flying and an array of campaigners in fighting costume. A large majority of the active suffrage workers of San Francisco will board the special train at 9:30 this morning armed with the manuscripts of a score of speeches, cases of ‘equality tea’ and a vast store of buttons to pin on all the men at the state fair.³¹²

Once at the fair, suffragists distributed yellow literature and held “parlor meetings” in private houses.³¹³

The most important source of “advertisement” for the suffrage campaign, however, came from newspapers. Through their extensive coverage of suffrage activities, newspapers played an important and crucial role in the suffrage campaign. Ernest Finley’s Press Democrat of Sonoma County was one of the first newspapers to

³¹⁰ San Francisco Call, August 24, 1911.

³¹¹ Daily Palo Alto Times, August 25, 1911.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ San Francisco Call, August 18, 1911.

endorse woman suffrage in the 1911 campaign.³¹⁴ The San Jose Evening News also provided favorable suffrage coverage and on September 21, 1911 it reported: “Never was a political campaign in this State fought with greater determination than the one now drawing to a close. The women of California realized the importance of a victory at this time, and inspired and encouraged by the success of women in other western-states, entered upon this campaign with tremendous energy and determination.”³¹⁵

On October 8, the San Jose Mercury and Herald openly endorsed the amendment when it published the following editorial in all capital letters:

WE ESPECIALLY APPEAL TO THE VOTERS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY WHO BELIEVE IN THE JUSTICE OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE TO VOTE YES. IN THIS DAY OF EDUCATION AND COMON ENLIGHTENMENT ON PUBLIC QUESTIONS WE NEED THE CLEAR JUDGEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE DETERMINATION OF THOSE QUESTIONS WHICH ARE SETTLED BY THE BALLOT. LET NO ARGUMENT OR MISREPRESENTATION WEIGH WITH YOU WHERE THE PROTECTION OF YOUR HOME IS CONCERNED.³¹⁶

This newspaper repeatedly printed articles and editorials favoring suffrage. Journalist, Robert R. Syer stated in an October article titled “Woman Equal of Man in the Eyes of the Law,” since “women are mentally and physically able to vote, it is unfair to deny them the privilege.”³¹⁷ In addition, the San Francisco Call, Examiner, Post, Labor

³¹⁴ The Press Democrat, May 23, 1999.

³¹⁵ San Jose Evening News, September 21, 1911.

³¹⁶ San Jose Mercury News, October 8, 1911.

³¹⁷ San Jose Mercury News, October 8, 1911.

Clarion, Star, Bulletin, and Oakland Enquirer, among others, recommended that their readers vote for suffrage.³¹⁸

The San Francisco Chronicle, however, was much more difficult to gauge in terms of its perspective on the suffrage issue. While it covered the necessary stories and printed the suffrage advertisements, it did not lend its support to the amendment. State Press Chairman, Mabel Craft Deering noted, "One of the large Oakland papers was secretly opposed and at least one of the large San Francisco papers, perhaps two, would have been pleased to see the amendment defeated, but so strong was the movement that none of these San Francisco Bay papers dared to come out in opposition."³¹⁹

The major opponents of enfranchisement, the anti-suffragists, also used newspapers to "advertise" their point of view. In October, The Northern California Association Opposed to Woman's Suffrage issued a circular letter published in the newspapers that stated:

We desire to bring to the attention of the voters of California a significant misstatement contained in the argument of Senator Bell advocating the extension of universal suffrage to women in California. This statement is misleading and fundamentally untrue. It is in regard to the endorsement of Amendment 8 by the California Federation of Women's Clubs at the annual meeting held in May at Long Beach. Instead of 30,000 women within that body there were 22,342. These women were represented by less than 400 delegates, practically all uninstructed and without platform, and the action, moreover, was in direct violation of the constitution of the organization....Consequently, instead of 30,000 women on record for the Amendment 8 there are, at the most generous estimate, considerable less than 400.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 23-24.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

³²⁰ San Francisco Chronicle, October 7, 1911.

Bay Area suffragists, dismayed by the accusations of the anti-suffragists, publicly refuted the charges before their supporters. The San Jose Mercury News reported:

What the friends of suffrage feared—the eleventh hour onslaught of the anti-suffragists—occurred today when circulars were scattered broadcast stating that none of the women’s clubs were wholly for suffrage, but that methods had been used to coerce into the movement that would put old-time ward heelers to blush. Tonight’s meetings were given over principally by friends of suffrage to a refutation of these charges.³²¹

Throughout September and October, Bay Area suffragists campaigned hard and long. On October 3, prominent men and women of Palo Alto and Stanford University attended a suffrage rally at which Reverend Charles Aked spoke.³²² And on October 5, five days prior to the election, the CESL sponsored “post-card day.” Suffragists, wearing yellow chrysanthemums in their lapels, distributed basketfuls of suffrage cards to people on the streets, encouraging them to “Vote for Women.” One suffragist thought the post-cards were beneficial because “it brought the suffrage question before some people who did not attend meetings,” and it provided a way for suffrage workers to discuss the question with people.³²³ More than fifteen thousand postcards were sold, reported Chairman Frank Patterson, and “it was but one of the many pieces of work that we can look back upon and say that it was worth doing.”³²⁴

³²¹ San Jose Mercury News, October 10, 1911.

³²² *Ibid.*, October 3, 1911.

³²³ Winning Equal Suffrage in California, 104.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*

A huge mass meeting sponsored by all of the suffrage and labor groups of San Francisco, was held on October 5 at Dreamland Rink. Elizabeth Lowe Watson presided over the meeting which attracted six thousand people.³²⁵ Because such a large crowd appeared and could not fit in Dreamland Rink, Solomons remembers, “the speakers, including all the noted ones, both men and women, an aggregation that could not be equaled in the West, were escorted in turn by the stalwart guardians to repeat their addresses to the crowd in the street, which filled it to the extent of half the block. And truly, they seemed inspired under the moonlight.”³²⁶

The woman’s committee of the Socialist Party held another massive rally the following night at the Valencia theater.³²⁷ J. Stitt Wilson, the Socialist Mayor of Berkeley, was the main speaker at the rally. Mrs. John Rodgers, Jr. of New York, William McDevitt, a socialist candidate for Mayor of San Francisco, Bessie Beatty, a newspaper writer, Max Popper, a Democrat who championed woman’s suffrage for over fourteen years, Miss Lillian Bishop, secretary of the Socialist party, Jennie Ream, a San Francisco school teacher, and Maud Younger, representative of the WESL, all spoke for the cause of suffrage at the rally.³²⁸

The final days before the election brought a flurry of activity for suffragists around the Bay. In Mountain View, a suffrage meeting was held and well attended, while

³²⁵ Ibid., 40.

³²⁶ Solomons, 56.

³²⁷ San Francisco Chronicle, October 2, 1911.

³²⁸ Labor Clarion, October 6, 1911.

in San Jose, Catherine McCullough, a Chicago lawyer, gave a noontime lecture on the corner of Santa Clara and Market streets.³²⁹ Meanwhile, the Club Woman's Franchise League spoke and distributed literature at the San Bruno Improvement Club meeting on October 7.³³⁰ In addition, the Oakland Suffrage Amendment League issued an appeal to voters which stated:

As citizens, tax payers and mothers of this community we appeal to you to vote for the equal suffrage amendment on October 10. Most of us have desired the franchise for many years for ourselves, for other women who need it, and for the welfare of our children, who so soon go out from the homes, where we have given them our best care and instruction, to life outside, surrounded by conditions over which mothers have now no control. Our investigations and inquiries as to conditions where equal suffrage prevails have strengthened our belief that the direct method, that is, the ballot, is the best means of securing better conditions without discouraging delays.³³¹

On the day before the election, five open-air meetings were held throughout the city, suffragists visited factory workers and spoke at churches, and two thousand businessmen attended a noon-hour rally at a local theatre in San Francisco.³³² In the evening, Madame Lillian Nordica sang in Union Square to a crowd of over four thousand people. The San Francisco Bulletin reported, "Nordica came expressly to sing for woman's suffrage. And she did more than sing for the cause. She made a speech, in

³²⁹ San Jose Mercury News, October 6, 1911.

³³⁰ The San Francisco Chronicle, October 7, 1911.

³³¹ San Francisco Call, October 7, 1911.

³³² San Jose Mercury News, October 10, 1911.

which she pleaded with the men to show justice and fairness to the women of California today.”³³³

The anti-suffragists were hard at work the day prior to the election as well. One of their most public and influential actions occurred on the day before the election when they paid five hundred dollars for a full page advertisement in the San Francisco Chronicle which encouraged the electorate to reject the amendment so as not to “thrust the womanhood of this state into the political arena.” They clearly stated that women did not want the ballot, that they “do not want to vote; they depend upon the manhood of California to protect them from the responsibilities of the ballot. They rely on manhood suffrage and a safe and sane government.”³³⁴

Election day, October 10, proved to be a day of extensive activity for suffragists. Instead of sitting idly by and waiting for the election results, suffragists “manned” the polls, drove people to polling places, and handed out leaflets. Learning from their experience in 1896, women planned to “guard” the ballot boxes, especially in Oakland and San Francisco. In San Francisco alone, “an army of 2,000 Suffragists ‘manned’ the 356 precinct booths, and it was noted that most of the militant work had been assigned to the youngest and most attractive of the vote seekers.”³³⁵ According to Selina Solomons, “we remained at our posts of duty, the one hundred-foot limit from the polls, until relieved, handing to each voter the special circular printed for election day, and having a

³³³ Bulletin, October 10, 1911.

³³⁴ San Francisco Chronicle, October 9, 1911.

³³⁵ Sacramento Bee, October 10, 1911 and Doris Weatherford, A History of the American Suffragist Movement (Santa Barbara, CA: The Moschovitis Group, Inc., 1998), 186.

word with him when deemed advisable, on the subject of Amendment Four.”³³⁶

Suffragist Emma McAulay distributed suffrage literature that day and wrote her experiences in a letter:

At 6 in the morning we were at the polls. Two papers I mailed with this will show you. It was interesting as a study of expression as the men came to the corner and we offered the yellow paper. Some would not take it and the next would lift his hat and be so polite. We had to stand 100 feet away from the polls. No women inside! The sidewalk was cold till 9 a.m. and when it came time for the schoolchildren, they were much interested. One little fellow looked at me—“Say are you a woman’s suffragist? ‘Yes.’ So am I!”³³⁷

In Oakland, Mary Roberts Coolidge was responsible for coordinating the suffragists at the polls. She reported that a member of the Colored Women’s Suffrage League approached her several days before the election and indicated that their league was eager to help. Coolidge recounts, “I told her to pick out the places where there were the largest groups of colored people and I would take special pains to have my husband protect them. She said quite calmly that they could take care of themselves and she did not think they would have any trouble.”³³⁸ In the end, the Colored Women’s Suffrage League took responsibility for two precincts and encountered no problems.

Bay Area suffrage leaders stayed at headquarters long into the night, awaiting the election results. When it appeared that the amendment was in jeopardy, the CESL issued the following statement after midnight: “The fate of the Woman Suffrage Amendment is

³³⁶ Solomons, 59.

³³⁷ Santa Cruz Sentinel, November 16, 1986.

³³⁸ Dane-Coolidge Papers, Box 17, Folder Entitled Mary Roberts Coolidge, Bancroft Library.

still in doubt. If the final returns shall show defeat at this election, they will only mark the beginning of a new campaign which will end in victory.”³³⁹

The headlines which met Californians on the day after the election shocked those who supported the amendment. The San Francisco Chronicle’s, “Woman Suffrage Amendment Defeated,” and the Bulletin’s, “Suffrage Defeat: San Francisco’s Vote Ends Hope of Suffragists,” seemed to definitively cast a pall on the day.³⁴⁰ The initial returns showed that San Francisco and Alameda counties had voted heavily against the amendment while Los Angeles County had voted favorably. The Bulletin reported that: “San Francisco stabbed the cause. This city was the crucial background. The story had to be told here, and suffragedom waited with bated breath all last night and this morning.”³⁴¹

Suffragists were so convinced they had lost the election that arrangements were already being made to wage a new campaign. According to the San Jose Mercury News, “One of the county leaders said that a fund had already been started to begin the fight anew and that with longer time to agitate the question there would be no doubt of the result.”³⁴² Spokeswoman Bessie Beatty of the CESL stated, “We think the vote generally indicated that the representative people of the State are in favor of Woman’s Suffrage. We have learned the weak point now and we think that by means of a vigorous campaign of education directed against ignorant voters, we will be able next time to win

³³⁹ San Jose Mercury News, October, 11, 1911.

³⁴⁰ San Francisco Chronicle, Bulletin, October 11, 1911.

³⁴¹ Bulletin, October 11, 1911.

³⁴² San Jose Mercury News, October, 12, 1911.

the fight.”³⁴³ Applauding the efforts of Bay Area women, the San Jose Mercury News wrote, “that there was not more interest shown in the election was no fault of local Woman’s Suffrage workers, who for months used every means within their power to awaken the voters to the magnitude of the question and the justice of settling it according to the views of the workers.”³⁴⁴

To the surprise of the suffragists, when Californians awoke on October 12, headlines throughout the state indicated that woman suffrage had been victorious: “Suffrage Has Won is Now Indicated,” “Cause of Women Is Making Big Gains on Count From the Interior Precincts,” “California Women Win Suffrage,” “Suffrage May Prove Victorious When All States Returns Are In: Early Totals From Populous Centers Mislead.”³⁴⁵ “We had kept back our womanish tears on that Black Wednesday,” remembered Selina Solomons, “now we gave free rein to our emotions, in both manly and womanly fashion, with handshaking and backslapping, as well as hugging and kissing one another.”³⁴⁶

The remaining votes that trickled in continued to work in the suffragists’ favor. The Bay Area counties that voted for woman suffrage were Contra Costa, Napa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma. San Francisco, Alameda, Marin, and San Mateo counties voted against it. Many of the counties outside of the Bay Area where Bay Area

³⁴³ Sacramento Bee, October 11, 1911.

³⁴⁴ San Jose Mercury News, October 11, 1911.

³⁴⁵ Sacramento Bee, San Jose Mercury News, and San Francisco Chronicle, October 12, 1911.

³⁴⁶ Solomons, 64.

suffragists campaigned also voted for suffrage including Butte, El Dorado, San Joaquin, and Sacramento (see Appendix 3).³⁴⁷ As writer Gertrude Atherton concluded, “conservative people and the liquor trust fought the campaign successfully in San Francisco; but the women, who had taken motors and visited practically every farmer and hamlet in the state, won the country vote.”³⁴⁸

By the thirteenth of October, suffrage victory was assured and women throughout the state rejoiced at their newfound rights. They had won the ballot by a narrow margin of 3,587 votes, less than a two percent majority. Telegrams from the East Coast arrived, congratulating the women for their hard work and filled with hope that East Coast women would soon gain enfranchisement.³⁴⁹ According to Ida Husted Harper, “with the gaining of this old and influential State the extension of the movement to the Mississippi was assured.”³⁵⁰ California’s victory was also covered in newspapers throughout the nation.

The Atlanta Georgian wrote:

In capturing the important State of California, the woman’s suffrage movement has achieved its greatest victory so far. This movement, for years more active in debating societies than elsewhere, soon passed out of the realm of academic discussion into the realm of actual test...Its California victory has added greatly to its standing and prestige. It can no longer be ignored by any thoughtful student of our institutions and the

³⁴⁷ Frank C. Jordan, Statement of the Vote of California At The Special Election Held October 10, 1911 on Constitutional Amendments (Sacramento: Superintendent of State Printing, 1911), 4.

³⁴⁸ Gertrude Atherton, California: An Intimate History (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1914), 327.

³⁴⁹ San Francisco Chronicle, October 13, 1911.

³⁵⁰ Ida Husted Harper, History of Woman Suffrage: Volume V, 1900-1920 (New York: J.J. Little and Ives Company, 1922), xx.

trend of their development. The result of the California election carries with it many lessons well worthy of study and reflection.³⁵¹

The male voters of San Francisco defeated the suffrage amendment in every district. Englander notes, “In looking at the vote by neighborhood, however, those areas with predominantly working-class residents cast a higher percentage of affirmative votes than any other neighborhood.”³⁵² As for the progressive middle-class districts, “only little more than one in three men voting in these districts expressed their approval of woman suffrage at the ballot box.”³⁵³

Englander argues that the voting statistics in working class neighborhoods “take on a new significance” when they are compared to the 1896 election because “approximately one quarter of those casting ballots in the South-of-Market and artisanal districts voted for woman suffrage in 1896. By 1911, pro-suffrage voters in the same areas rose to forty percent or more of the turnout in those districts.”³⁵⁴ One can infer that the intensive efforts to target immigrants and workers, who were often one and the same, were effective even though the amendment did not pass in working class districts.

In retrospect, it is instructive to focus on the successes of Bay Area suffragists despite their failure to win the counties of San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo and Alameda. One of the most significant aspects of the campaign was that working class and middle class women worked together, often for very different reasons, realizing that

³⁵¹ National American Woman Suffrage Association, “The Newspaper on the California Victory,” 1911, Pamphlets in American History (microform).

³⁵² Englander, 137.

³⁵³ Ibid.

it was necessary for women to claim their rights as citizens. Building on this idea, Gullett argues that “California women who stood under the suffrage umbrella of 1911 nonetheless agreed on some basic principles. Women were individuals with the rights of full citizenship. This had always been true, but the changes in women’s work made it easier now to understand why they needed to exercise those rights.”³⁵⁵

In the end, suffragists’ persistent lobbying for the ballot was rewarded in the campaign of 1911, which proved to be tumultuous, exciting and difficult. Women achieved their goal not only because of the Progressive political climate of the era, their innovative use of modern advertising techniques, and their motivation to campaign beyond the boundaries of their own counties, but mostly because they recognized the power of a unified “sisterhood” and created a powerful suffrage coalition. An editorial printed in the Sacramento Bee lauded the significance of California’s victory: “California, at one stroke, has put women on complete equality with men politically. And this is as it should be.”³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 140.

³⁵⁵ Gullett, 191.

³⁵⁶ Sacramento Bee, October 13, 1911.

CHAPTER 4

JOINING THE NATIONAL FIGHT FOR SUFFRAGE

Soon after California's suffrage victory, the National suffrage convention took place in Louisville, Kentucky, from October 19 to October 25, 1911. According to Ida Husted Harper, "it might well be called a 'jubilee' meeting, for it celebrated two of the most important victories yet won for woman suffrage in the United States—the adoption of state amendments by a majority of the voters in Washington in November 1910, and in California in October 1911, giving the same franchise rights to women as possessed by men."³⁵⁷ Representatives from the Bay Area including Elizabeth Lowe Watson, Mary Sperry, Charlotte Anita Whitney and Rose French attended and spoke at the convention.

A note was sent to the Woman's Journal that described the joyous atmosphere:

Altogether it is a most inspiring and encouraging convention and we are daily excited with news of the good prospects of more campaign States and more victories in the very near future... We all have votes-for-women tags on our baggage, yellow badges and pins, California poppies and six-star buttons on our dresses and coats and dainty votes for women butterflies on our shoulders, and as we go about in dozens or scores or hundred the onlookers receive the fitting psychological impression and we find them thinking of us as victors and conquerors.³⁵⁸

With four million California women gaining the right to vote, historians Silver and Cazaly argue that these women "raised the specter of considerable political clout in the eyes of politicians in Washington."³⁵⁹ The power of woman's enfranchisement was felt on the local level as well. In Santa Rosa's city election of 1912, for instance, "several

³⁵⁷ Ida Husted Harper, Volume V, 310, 317.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 311.

³⁵⁹ Silver and Cazaly, 86.

hundred women” who had registered to vote affected the outcome of the election.³⁶⁰

John Rinner, an optometrist with a clean record of community service, ran for city council with the endorsement of the local newspaper and incumbent councilman. During the campaign it was alleged that Rinner opposed woman suffrage, charges that he denied. The accusations remained an issue, however, and Rinner lost the election. The Press Democrat reported that “since that historic night, safe to say, no intelligent candidate or city office in Santa Rosa failed to court the women’s vote.”³⁶¹

Within a year the College Equal Suffrage League was reorganized into the California Civic League and had established over thirty civic leagues throughout the state, to educate women on civic issues and local reforms.³⁶² In San Jose, for instance, the Women’s Civic Center planned to devise a new city charter that would address many of the problems that the city faced due to mismanagement. Raising one thousand dollars from house-to-house campaigns, training women in charter study classes, and campaigning through two elections and a referendum, the fifty women of the Women’s Civic Center helped to establish a new charter for the city of San Jose.³⁶³

The State Federation of Women’s Clubs then organized the Women’s Legislative Council of California in 1912 as a “non-sectarian, non-partisan, non-political” Central Committee representing “State, county and some local organizations—about sixty in

³⁶⁰ The Press Democrat, March 5, 1995.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Harper, Volume VI, 51.

³⁶³ Mary Roberts Coolidge, What the Women of California Have Done With the Ballot (San Francisco: California, no publication information available, 1916), 2-3.

all—representing a membership of over 100,000 women.”³⁶⁴ Its purpose was to coordinate the legislative efforts of California women’s organizations so that they were working towards common goals.

In addition to using their new civic rights on the state and local level, Bay Area suffragists, like many women who had won suffrage in other states, felt a deep sense of responsibility to women who had not yet obtained the vote. This is evidenced in the way that enfranchised women in the West helped in the multitude of state campaigns throughout the United States and in the fight for the adoption of the suffrage amendment to the federal constitution.

When California women held their suffrage convention in January 1912, they clearly felt this responsibility and decided that the state association would remain intact in order to help neighboring states with their suffrage campaigns. Mary McHenry Keith was elected president and remained the organization’s leader for several years.³⁶⁵ Suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt recalls that “suffragists in all the States were amazed at the distinct change of attitude occasioned by the action of California” to grant women suffrage, spurring on suffrage campaigns in six states—Arizona, Kansas, Oregon, Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio.³⁶⁶ During these campaigns, California suffragists willingly lent their support and services. Elizabeth Lowe Watson, for instance, spoke throughout Wisconsin in 1912 and numerous other suffragists such as Mr. and Mrs.

³⁶⁴ Harper, Volume VI, 51 – 52.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 51.

³⁶⁶ Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, Woman Suffrage and Politics: The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 176.

William Kent, Dr. Charles F. Aked, J. Stitt Wilson, Mary Sperry, Maud Younger, Charlotte Anita Whitney, Alice Park, and Mary Ringrose participated in Oregon's final push for suffrage in 1912 and in Nevada's three year campaign.³⁶⁷

Although numerous California women and men aided individual states and the national campaign from 1912 until 1920, three Bay Area women stand out as exceptional examples who fought vehemently for suffrage after their own enfranchisement: Charlotte Anita Whitney, Maud Younger and Alice Locke Park. By examining their participation in suffrage activities one can trace the influence that the state of California had on the national movement.

Charlotte Anita Whitney, born in San Francisco in 1867, could claim among her ancestors five Mayflower pilgrims and a leader in the first Puritan settlement on Massachusetts Bay. She was deeply influenced by her father, an attorney, who became a state senator from Alameda County. Her father inspired "a passion for honesty and the courage to profess the truth and defend it."³⁶⁸ Whitney's uncle, Supreme Court Justice Stephen J. Field, with whom she would spend several years living with in Washington D.C., also had a profound influence on her.³⁶⁹ Whitney attended local elementary schools and the San Jose State Normal School (now San Jose State University). With great reluctance, Whitney allowed her father to persuade her to attend Wellesley College. Thinking she would only stay one year, Whitney soon found that she enjoyed Wellesley

³⁶⁷ Harper, Volume VI, 398 and 702.

³⁶⁸ Richmond, 20.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

and stayed for four years until she graduated in 1889. While a student, Whitney became deeply influenced by the biblical motto of the school: “Also I heard a voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I: send me.”³⁷⁰ After graduation and a trip abroad, Whitney returned to the Bay Area to teach Sunday School in Oakland. Finding this unsatisfactory, Whitney became involved in Collegiate Alumnae organizations, but as she stated “I made an attempt to have the same pleasures and pastimes as the young people around me, but I was always more or less conscious of a feeling of boredom.”³⁷¹

On the way home from a Wellesley college reunion in 1893, Whitney visited the College Settlement house in New York. Not intending to stay, Whitney was curious about the settlement work and wanted to spend a week there. Encountering “debasing poverty and squalor, its teeming tenements, its bed bugs and cockroaches, its babel and noise, its profusion of odors,” Whitney remained for three months until she was called home to attend to her ill father.³⁷² Whitney’s experience at the College Settlement had a profound effect on her and influenced her actions throughout the rest of her life. Upon her return to California, Whitney again attempted to teach at private schools and helped to open clubs for boys and girls in the slums of West Oakland. In 1901, Whitney

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 26 – 28.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 29 – 30.

³⁷² Ibid., 31 –34.

accepted a position on the council of the Associated Charities of Alameda County where she worked for seven years.³⁷³

By 1911, Whitney had become disillusioned with organized charities and became involved in the woman's suffrage movement. In the same year she became President of the College Equal Suffrage League, stating that she supported the enfranchisement of women "because I believe in the entity of the individual. The world has recognized the mind of woman in schools and colleges, and her political identity must be the next phase of her expression."³⁷⁴ As president of the CESL, Whitney orchestrated one of the most influential organizations of the 1911 campaign. Biographer Al Richmond states, "like others, she was simply swept away by the crusading zeal of the movement into an exaggerated appraisal of the prize to be won. She worked, as did others, day and night, and they did a tremendous job of propaganda."³⁷⁵

Realizing that California's newly enfranchised women would need education and guidance, the CESL reorganized and became the California Civic League for "social justice, education for citizenship and the promotion of just legislation."³⁷⁶ Whitney continued as president for the first two years and remained on the executive committee for several more. The California Civic League, with nearly four thousand members, formed twenty-five centers throughout Northern California and wielded a large amount

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Daily Palo Alto Times, August 17, 1911.

³⁷⁵ Richmond, 51.

³⁷⁶ Harper, Volume VI, 51.

of influence in local governments.³⁷⁷ “The league was a school in politics for hundreds and thousands of women,” stated biographer Al Richmond, “and Anita through her leadership in the organization helped make California’s women a potent, conscious influence in the political life of the state.”³⁷⁸

In addition to her work with the California Civic League, Whitney was chosen by NAWSA to act as the second vice-president, serving with Anna Howard Shaw who was elected president and Jane Addams who was elected first vice-president.³⁷⁹ As an officer of NAWSA she was sent to Oregon and Nevada to help in their campaigns.

In February 1912, Whitney spoke at the “kick off” meeting for the woman suffrage campaign in Salem, Oregon. She campaigned in this state throughout the rest of the year, organizing a College Equal Suffrage League in Eugene at the University of Oregon and speaking at the first State rally in June.³⁸⁰ Oregon women achieved suffrage in November 1912.

During April of the same year, Whitney spoke in Carson City, Nevada to aid the suffrage campaign in that state. The speaking tour helped to educate the largely conservative male electorate; however, suffrage was not to be won in 1912.³⁸¹ The Nevada campaign gained momentum again in 1914 and called for support from

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Richmond, 57.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 56 –57.

³⁸⁰ Abigail Scott Duniway, Path Breaking: An Autobiographical History of the Equal Suffrage Movement in the Pacific States (Portland, Oregon: James, Kerns & Abbott Co., 1914), 261 – 263.

³⁸¹ Ann Warren Smith, “Anne Martin and a History of Woman Suffrage in Nevada, 1869 – 1914,” (Master’s Thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 1975), 112 – 130.

suffragists throughout the country. Whitney returned to Nevada in July, traveling around Carson Valley by automobile. She related to state organizer Anne Martin that “the majority of men declare without hesitation that they intend to vote for the suffrage amendment” and in 1914 Nevada’s electorate finally granted women suffrage.³⁸²

By 1915, Whitney had become involved in the Congressional Union, a national organization established by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns whose single ambition was to work for the federal suffrage amendment. In the beginning, NAWSA approved of the organization. As the group became more insistent on “an all-out campaign for immediate passage of the federal suffrage amendment on the grounds that its passage and ratification by three fourths of the states was a practical goal,” the national organization “felt that such a program was entirely premature” and that it should continue to concentrate its efforts in individual states.³⁸³

Representing the California Branch of the Congressional Union in September 1915, Whitney was primarily responsible for setting up a woman suffrage booth in the Education Building at the Panama Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco. In her oral history, suffragist Sara Bard Field recalls that Whitney “had set up the booth charmingly decorated and very attractive” in order to gain the attention of the thousands of Western voting women who were attending the fair.³⁸⁴ The main purpose of the women’s booth was to get voter’s signatures on a huge petition that would eventually be

³⁸² Charlotte Anita Whitney quoted in Ann Warren Smith, 217.

³⁸³ Flexner, 258.

³⁸⁴ Amelia R. Fry. Suffragists’ Oral History Project: Oral History of Sara Bard Field (The Regents of University of California, 1979), 294. Information retrieved on January 21, 2004. <http://texts.cdlib.org>,

delivered to the Capitol. Field states that “In all the plans for the booth and in the pursuance of the duties that accompanied it,” Charlotte Anita Whitney “was faithful to the limit taking charge many days when others didn’t.”³⁸⁵

In addition to the woman suffrage booth at the Exposition, the Congressional Union organized the first ever Woman Voter’s convention in which women voters of the twelve enfranchised western states met. Whitney delivered the address of welcome. During the convention, NAWSA announced its intent to hold a country-wide campaign to secure a national suffrage amendment beginning with this woman voter’s convention, holding subsequent conventions in Congressional districts throughout the nation, and culminating in December at a rally in Washington.³⁸⁶ Mrs. Belmont of New York stated:

We women of the North, of the South and of the East, branded on account of sex, disenfranchised as our criminals and imbeciles, come to the glorious West, where the broad vision of its men has seen justice....All we ask is that the Western man and the Western woman voter stand by the Susan B. Anthony amendment when presented to congress in December, and victory shall be ours.³⁸⁷

One of the most significant aspects of the Woman Voter’s convention argues historians Silver and Cazaly was that it connected California to Washington, D.C. Governors and representatives from Western suffrage states, national representatives, and women from China, Italy and Persia attended the convention and many took to the podium.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 301 –302.

³⁸⁶ San Francisco Chronicle, September 14, 1915.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., September 15, 1915.

³⁸⁸ Silver and Cazaly, 87.

The Woman Voter's convention ended by holding a massive rally at the Court of Abundance at which ten thousand people gathered. Along with the American flag a huge banner was hung behind the podium that stated: "WE DEMAND AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES ENFRANCHISING WOMEN."³⁸⁹ At the end of the evening, two emissaries, Sara Bard Field and Frances Jolliffe, were sent off to travel across the country by automobile to carry the suffrage resolutions and petitions with "hundreds of thousands of signatures" gathered during the summer and to be presented to the President.³⁹⁰ Prior to the event, the Suffragist reported that the California delegation would be headed by Whitney. These plans changed as Sara Bard Field and Frances Jolliffe were appointed to make the trip in the end.³⁹¹

Over the next few years, Whitney continued to be involved in suffrage activities on the state and national level. Her new interest and activism within the Socialist Party, however, would become a greater part of her life.

"The Millionaire Waitress," "Sister Maud," "Mother of the Eight Hour Law," and "Champion of the Underdog," are some of the nicknames given to California's ardent unionist and suffragist, Maud Younger. Suffragist Inez Haynes Irwin described Maud Younger as "one of the most picturesque of the many picturesque figures among the native daughters of California: a student of economic conditions; a feminist; much traveled; an ex-president of the Waitresses' Union; her life is as inextricably mixed with

³⁸⁹ Inez Haynes Irwin The Story of the Woman's Party (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921), 106.

³⁹⁰ Doris Stevens, Jailed for Freedom (New York: Boni and Liveright, Inc. 1920), 39.

³⁹¹ Amelia R. Fry, 302.

the labor and suffrage history of California as later it was bound with the Woman's Party."³⁹²

Younger was born in San Francisco in 1870 to upper middle-class parents. Her father, Dr. William J. Younger, was a distinguished dentist. When Younger was twelve, her mother died, leaving her a considerable trust fund. Historian Susan Englander states, "in her early years, Younger led the life suitable to that of the child of a prominent dentist. She grew into a young debutante, filling her time with an active social and church life and voyages abroad."³⁹³

On the way to Paris to visit her father in 1901, Younger decided to stop at the College Settlement in New York. Writer Vera Edmondson recounts that Younger's stay at the settlement house, "lengthened into a five-years' residence; and from that first girlish groping of a soul already aflame to know and see, we may trace every later step to the militant career of the labor agitator and feminist of today."³⁹⁴ Eventually she became disillusioned with the way settlements dealt with working women. Determined to work "side by side" with the working-class women, Younger became a waitress, earned her union card and learned how to become an organizer within the union movement. She believed that during her time as a waitress she "grew to know the wage-earning woman and her problems far better than I had ever known anything else, and everything I learned

³⁹² Irwin, 104.

³⁹³ New York Times, June 28, 1936 and Englander, 110.

³⁹⁴ Vera Edmondson "Feminist and Laborite," Sunset Magazine (June 1915 volume 34), 1179 – 1180.

was one more argument for suffrage.”³⁹⁵ Returning to San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake, she began working for Waitress’ Union Local #48.

In 1907 Maud Younger wrote articles for McClure’s magazine that detailed her experiences as a waitress in New York. The following year Younger wrote an article in Sunset Magazine explaining how her experiences in San Francisco were different than in New York due to San Francisco’s successful unionization efforts. She stated, “Perhaps the sunshine of California has got into their souls, for certainly none of the girls looked crushed....The air was charged with a cheerful self-reliance, which seemed to bring with it a marked sense of responsibility.”³⁹⁶ At the end of the article she indicates how waitresses viewed unions so differently in California than in New York when a San Francisco waitress stated: “Why, no, everyone believes in them [unions], everyone belongs.” Another waitress commented that “we girls have got everything ourselves, inch by inch, and we’ll fight to the finish to keep it.” “It was my first inkling,” wrote Younger, “of the wide separation of classes in San Francisco, of the two worlds so interwoven and so apart, where peace is but an armed truce.”³⁹⁷

As working women became more involved in labor unions, Younger realized that unions alone could not protect them. In her article, “Why the Ballot is Needed By Women,” she stated:

³⁹⁵ Englander, 110 – 111 and New York Times, June 28, 1936.

³⁹⁶ Maud Younger, “Taking Orders: A Day As a Waitress in a San Francisco Restaurant,” Sunset Magazine XXI (October 1908): 520-521.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 521.

Even in California, where the conditions are comparatively good, we find that of all our young women, one in three is a breadwinner. The conditions under which these women work concern the entire community...Since it is more difficult to secure good conditions for women through organization, then it is even more essential that they should be protected through the ballot...Working women need the ballot. First, as a protection to the women themselves; second, as a protection to organized labor; third, as a protection to the community.³⁹⁸

Younger's strong belief that the ballot was essential for the protection of working women led her to become not only a labor advocate but a suffragist as well.

As the prior chapter showed, Maud Younger played a major role in the California suffrage movement by organizing the Wage Earner's Suffrage League (WESL) and lobbying the California legislature to adopt a suffrage amendment. During the California suffrage campaign Younger was one of the representatives on the CESA's State Central Committee. She spoke at hundreds of meetings and wrote numerous articles for magazines and newspapers. Englander argues that Younger was one of the most influential labor leaders and suffragists who worked to support "the relationship between the labor and suffrage movements in San Francisco and, perhaps, all of California."³⁹⁹ In addition, as an eloquent and powerful orator, Maud Younger was chosen to speak at innumerable suffrage meetings and rallies. As a prolific and talented writer, her ideas and views were published in newspapers and magazines throughout the state and nation.

When the California suffrage campaign ended, Maud Younger continued her efforts to improve the lives of working women but devoted most of her effort to winning

³⁹⁸ Labor Clarion, September 1, 1911.

³⁹⁹ Englander, 110.

the franchise for American women in other states.⁴⁰⁰ As part of the Women's Union International Label League, Younger led a campaign that encouraged California's working women to register to vote and in 1914, she participated in the campaign for woman suffrage in Nevada. One of her greatest contributions to this campaign was "stirring up" Nevada women in Battle Mountain, Winnemucca, Austin and Tonopah to work on election day.⁴⁰¹

Younger's work in the national drive for suffrage began when she met Alice Paul for the first time in 1915 at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Alice Paul, head of the Congressional Union which advocated militant British-style suffrage tactics including rallies, marches, and picketing the White House, encouraged Younger to join the newly formed organization. By June 1915, Younger had become a regular speaker for the Congressional Union. At one meeting in Massachusetts, Younger stated, "the ballot for women will only come through the persistent and unremitting effort of the women in free States."⁴⁰² Once Younger began her work with the Congressional Union, she spent much more of her time in Washington D.C. at the organization's headquarters.

By 1916, the Congressional Union split from NAWSA and became the National Women's Party, consisting of members of the Congressional Union from the twelve suffrage states. The Woman's Party's main objective was to "withhold its support from

⁴⁰⁰ Edmondson, 1180.

⁴⁰¹ Smith, 217.

⁴⁰² Maud Younger quoted in Inez Haynes Irwin, 104.

all existing parties until women were politically free, and to punish politically any party in power which did not use its power to free women.”⁴⁰³ Its single plank aimed to pass the federal suffrage amendment. At its first convention Younger gave the keynote address in which she stated:

With the foundation of the Woman’s Party, a new force marches on to the political field, a new cry rings out in the national campaign. For the first time in a presidential election, voting women are a factor to be reckoned with. Four years ago, women voted in six states—today in twelve including Illinois. These states with their four million women constitute nearly one-fourth of the electoral college and more than one-third of the votes necessary to elect a President. With enough women organized in each state to hold the balance of power, the women’s votes may determine the presidency of the United States.⁴⁰⁴

In January 1917, a meeting was held between President Wilson and suffrage leaders in which he again declined to advocate for the federal amendment. Instead he advised them that he could not do anything without the consent of his party, for things cannot be accomplished “by the individual voice but by concerted action, and that action must come only so fast as you can concert it.”⁴⁰⁵ Feeling rebuffed by the President, suffragists within the Woman’s Party began to picket the White House the following day; Maud Younger was one of the picketers. This concerted action continued for four months until many of the participants were arrested. In order to publicize the picketers’

⁴⁰³ Carol O’Hare, ed., Jailed For Freedom: American Women Win the Vote (Troutdale, Oregon: NewSage Press, 1995), 49.

⁴⁰⁴ Maud Younger quoted in Eleanor Flexner, 269.

⁴⁰⁵ President Wilson quoted in Carol O’Hare, 56.

experiences and their unjust treatment in prison, Maud Younger was chosen to travel throughout the United States, speaking to numerous audiences.⁴⁰⁶

In addition, Younger was in charge of the National Woman's Party's committee that was responsible for lobbying Congress for the passage of the Federal Amendment. An ardent lobbyist since her early suffrage days in California, she believed that "the mind of a United States Senator is not a thing of adamant, fixed and immovable like a stone wall" instead it is a "living thing, and all living things must grow or decay."⁴⁰⁷ Younger believed that with care and attention, senators could be persuaded to change their minds. Younger stated, "In my first three years as head lobbyist of the National Woman's Party, twenty-two Senators changed from 'anti' to 'pro' suffrage. This shows that the minds of Senators can grow rather rapidly."⁴⁰⁸ Thus Younger spoke as a representative of the National Woman's Party in front of a United States Senate committee on May 18, 1917 and again on January 5, 1918.

At the same time that Younger was lobbying the United States Senate, California's Legislature passed a resolution in 1917 which was introduced by the State Federation of Women's Clubs and stated:

Whereas, the women of the United States are being called upon to share the burdens and sacrifices of the present national crisis and they are patriotically responding to that call, be it Resolved by the Senate of California with the Assembly concurring that the denial of the right of women to vote on equal terms with men is an injustice and we do urge upon Congress the submission to the Legislatures of the States for their

⁴⁰⁶ Irwin, 292.

⁴⁰⁷ New York Times, June 28, 1936.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

ratification of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote.⁴⁰⁹

Even though the nation was in the midst of World War I, the California Legislature, feeling strongly about this resolution, passed it unanimously in twelve minutes.⁴¹⁰

When the suffrage amendment was finally approved in the United States Congress in 1919, Younger did not stop her efforts. Instead, she campaigned vigorously in numerous states for the ratification of the suffrage amendment. The New York Times reported, “in this long period of struggle she was introduced to audiences as “the woman who has done more than any other to bring about the passage of the Federal Amendment with the single exception of Miss Alice Paul.”⁴¹¹ When ratification by the states was finally accomplished in 1920, Maud Younger began a new fight to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, remaining a member of the national council of the National Woman’s Party for many years.

Another prominent California woman who made innumerable contributions to the state, national, and international suffrage campaigns was Alice Locke Park. “Incurable Optimist,” “Cheerful Conspirator,” and “Cheerful Instigator,” were some of the nicknames given to one of the most visible women in the California suffrage movement.⁴¹² Biographer Francesca Miller states “her belief in the power of organization to exert moral suasion grew out of her work within the women’s suffrage

⁴⁰⁹ Harper, Volume VI, 57.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ New York Times, June 28, 1936.

movement; her convictions were shaped by her Unitarian-Quaker heritage and encyclopedic reading; and her near-century of activism was fired by her remarkable intellectual and physical stamina.”⁴¹³

Born in Boston in 1861, Alice Locke was deeply influenced by family members, such as her famous suffragist cousin Lucretia Mott. She received her teaching credential in Rhode Island and taught for four years before marrying Dean William Park, a mining engineer. In 1893, Alice and Dean along with their two children settled in San Francisco where they lived until the 1906 earthquake. Subsequently, the Parks moved to Palo Alto, where they would remain.⁴¹⁴

Alice Park began her career as a suffragist early in her life as she attended her first suffrage meeting at seventeen. In 1894, she joined the international feminist movement and picketed the White House.⁴¹⁵ From 1902 to 1911, she played a tremendous role in the California suffrage campaign as she advocated modern advertising methods. As discussed in the previous chapter, Park was the Chairman of the Committee of Literature and Printing and was primarily responsible for the “glitz” and “glamour” of the 1911 California suffrage campaign. She wrote numerous leaflets, created advertisements and designed posters that were mass produced and dispersed throughout the state. Eventually

⁴¹² Una R. Winter. *Alice Park of California: Worker For Women Suffrage and For Children's Rights* (Upland, California, 1948), 16.

⁴¹³ Harold Josephson, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Peace Leaders* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), 727 – 728.

⁴¹⁴ Feuer, 58.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 58 – 59.

these materials were adapted to other states' campaigns and widely distributed.⁴¹⁶ Park also promoted her strong belief that suffragists should wear their colors and advertise suffrage by wearing pins and badges. In the Woman's Journal Alice Park wrote that "every badge, pin or button is a help, arousing curiosity among strangers, stimulating conversation among acquaintances and discussion among friends and antis."⁴¹⁷ In addition to her advertising expertise, Alice Park was a journalist who regularly contributed to the Boston Woman's Journal, San Francisco Star, Palo Alto Daily Times, and she became an associate editor of the Western Woman Voter.⁴¹⁸

Like Charlotte Anita Whitney and Maud Younger, Alice Park knew that her work was not finished after California women won suffrage. According to Ida Husted Harper, Alice Park "came at her own expense and took charge of the distribution of literature" during the final campaign for suffrage in Arizona in 1912.⁴¹⁹ Anna Howard Shaw wrote:

In Arizona one of the highlights of the campaign was the splendid effort of Mrs. Frances Munds, the State President, and Mrs. Alice Park, of Palo Alto, California, who were carrying on the work in their headquarters with tremendous courage, and, as it seemed to me, almost unaided. Mrs. Park's specialty was the distribution of suffrage literature, which she circulated with remarkable judgment.⁴²⁰

In June 1913, Governor Hiram Johnson of California appointed Alice Park to be a delegate and speaker at the International Woman Suffrage Alliance Congress in

⁴¹⁶ Winter, 4.

⁴¹⁷ Alice Park quoted in Finnegan, 121.

⁴¹⁸ Nancy L. Roberts, American Peace Writers, Editors, and Periodicals: A Dictionary (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1991), 216 – 217.

⁴¹⁹ Harper, Volume VI, 14.

Budapest, Hungary. In July, she picketed Holloway Jail in London to protest the incarceration of Emmeline Pankhurst and marched in a Woman Suffrage Pilgrimage throughout England. She also visited Ireland to attend an informal conference of suffrage leaders.⁴²¹

When the Panama Pacific International Exposition took place in San Francisco during 1915, Alice Park was responsible for the creation and design of eleven 8" x 10" posters to be displayed in the eleven state buildings. And in Chicago 1916, Park participated in a suffrage parade, walking two miles in rain and wind.⁴²²

In 1925, at the age of sixty-four, Alice Park embarked on a trip around the world to promote suffrage. The Boston Globe's headline "Noted Feminist, Grandmother, Here After Trip Around the World," highlighted her continued activism in the movement:

Ever since Mrs. Park was old enough to know what suffrage meant she has worked for it. She is a member of so many suffrage organizations she can't count them off hand. Active in obtaining votes for women in California 1911 she was equally active in the national triumph and then, unlike the hard workers throughout the pioneer suffrage period, she could not sit back and let the young people take the reins, she had to keep right on going in international suffrage, which accounts for her present trip. She has been to Europe twice before and to Hawaii, but never all around the world.⁴²³

While on her journey, Park stopped in Tokyo, where a special luncheon was held in her honor. Madam Kubushiro gave a special tribute to Park, naming her "Madam Living List

⁴²⁰ Anna Howard Shaw, *The Story of a Pioneer*, chapter xiv. Information retrieved on May 16, 2004. www.worldwideschool.org,

⁴²¹ Winter, 9.

⁴²² Ibid., 18.

⁴²³ Boston Globe, September 2, 1926 located in Keith-McHenry-Pond Papers, Alice Park folder, carton 3, Bancroft Library.

of Women's Movements.”⁴²⁴ While touring India, Alice Park met Gandhi. The Boston Globe reported, “Mrs. Park discounts the repeated report by the British press that Gandhi's influence is waning. She thinks it is increasing.”⁴²⁵

In addition to being an ardent suffragist, Alice Park was a vegetarian and a socialist, who participated in many labor movements. She was a member of the Humane Society, the National Labor Committee, the Simplified Spelling Board, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the Housewives Union. Park also spent much energy being a conscientious objector and pacifist. In December 1915, she was chosen to embark on the Ford Peace Ship, whose purpose was to “hasten the end of the first world war.”⁴²⁶ Park was also an international correspondent and member of the Federated Syndicate Press from 1913 – 1933.

Rosa Jensen wrote in the Daily Palo Alto Times that “although Mrs. Park is radical in her beliefs, she is not embittered by her long, hard struggle, and points with pride to any indication of the progress of her sex.”⁴²⁷ She supported the economic independence of women, birth control, sex education, and legalized abortion.

One of Alice Park's greatest legacies was her avid collection of suffrage material, which included printed pamphlets and advertisements, buttons, badges, and other

⁴²⁴ Keith-McHenry-Pond Papers, Box 3, Alice Park folder, Bancroft Library.

⁴²⁵ Boston Globe, September 2, 1926 located in Keith-McHenry-Pond Papers, Box 3, Alice Park folder, Bancroft Library.

⁴²⁶ Winter, 3.

⁴²⁷ Rosa Jensen quoted in Winter, 3.

paraphernalia, which she donated to over thirty libraries throughout the United States.⁴²⁸

Alice Park named herself the suffrage movement's "unofficial historian" by traveling throughout the country and the world, collecting "interesting pieces of history, including huge amounts of correspondence between suffragists and government entities."⁴²⁹ Alice Park's substantial collections provide the crucial information that historians need to piece together the suffrage movements that took place throughout the state, nation and the world. Thus Park's influence on women's history has continued long after her death.

Charlotte Anita Whitney, Maud Younger, and Alice Park are excellent examples of Bay Area suffragists who continued the suffrage fight even after California women gained enfranchisement. While other Bay Area suffragists also participated in the national campaign, it is difficult to find biographical information on many of these women. The lives of Mary McHenry Keith, Selina Solomons, Frances Jolliffe, Elizabeth Lowe Watson, Sophia Durst and many others deserve to be further investigated and would enhance our understanding of the connections between regional suffrage campaigns and the national movement.

⁴²⁸ Winter, 7. Park donated suffrage items to the Boston Public Library, Chicago Public Library, California Hospitals for the Insane, California Public Libraries, Denver Public Library, California Prisons, Great Falls Montana Public Library, Huntington Library, Madison Law Library, Library of Congress, Los Angeles Public Library, National Woman's Party Collection, New York Public Library, Palo Alto Public Library, Portland Public Library, San Francisco State College, San Jose State College, Stanford University Library, and Santa Barbara State College, Sacramento State Library, Seattle Public Library, University of Wisconsin Library, and The Rand School of Social Science.

⁴²⁹ Palo Alto Weekly, December 19, 1997. Information retrieved May 16, 2004.
www.paloaltoonline.com.

CONCLUSION

Attaining enfranchisement was a long, hard battle fought by many Bay Area women. Most suffragists who started the movement in the 1870s did not see their dream realized; it would take over forty years, numerous trips to the California legislature, and two momentous campaigns for California women to gain victory.

Throughout the struggle, Bay Area women demonstrated they were deserving of the ballot by becoming part of the political sphere. Learning from their mistakes in the 1896 campaign, they realized the necessity of working together and formed a coalition that included club women, socialists, college educated and professional women, and wage earners. United by the common goal of attaining civic rights and gaining the protection of the ballot, Bay Area women showed that by overcoming their differences, they could be a powerful force.

Belief in their cause propelled Bay Area suffragists to continue their fight even in the face of such a powerful opponent as the influential liquor industry. In order to defeat their foe, suffragists were inventive and creative in their efforts. They utilized modern advertising techniques and technological innovations such as the telephone, radio and automobile to reach a more diverse audience.

Knowing that San Francisco and Alameda counties posed an enormous challenge in the campaign of 1911, Bay Area suffragists did their best to convert its electorates to their cause. In addition, they knew that every vote counted and thus traveled to other counties throughout northern and central California to spread their ideas on suffrage.

This effort would prove to be significant in the final vote as many of these counties voted for suffrage.

In a suspenseful and emotional finale to the 1911 suffrage campaign, California women narrowly won enfranchisement. Their success led to the creation of many civic clubs that promoted voter registration, provided education, and instigated needed reforms on the local and state level. In 1914, Representative William Kent's wife spoke before Congress "telling how the suffrage societies [in California] became civic leagues after the vote was won and stood solidly back of seventeen bills relating to the welfare of the State and the home and the influence they were able to exert because of having the franchise."⁴³⁰ After national suffrage was granted in 1920 these civic clubs were organized into the League of Women Voters which is still influential in educating voters today.

Using tactics learned during the 1911 campaign, voting women united their various organizations to work for measures that benefited the welfare of women and children. By 1917, California women were successful in lobbying the legislature to pass measures such as equal guardianship for children, a \$200,000 detention home for girls, the Iowa Redlight Abatement and Induction law, raising the age of consent from sixteen to eighteen, the teacher's pension law, mandating birth, death and marriage registrations, a compulsory education law, and many others.⁴³¹ A survey conducted by the California Federation of Women's Clubs in 1916, concluded:

⁴³⁰ Harper, Volume V, 433.

⁴³¹ Mary Roberts Coolidge, 5 and Mrs. Seward Simons, A Survey of the Results of Woman Suffrage in California (California Federation of Women's Clubs, 1917), 2 – 3.

Women are much more interested in public questions than before they were enfranchised; the general attitude towards suffrage, according to these reports from all over the state is one of approval, and the opinion is universal that if the question of suffrage or women was to be voted on again in California it would carry overwhelmingly, with but few votes against it.⁴³²

Realizing that the vote was something deserved by all women of the United States, many Bay Area suffragists contributed much time and effort campaigning in various states as well as in the national campaign. Representing the feelings of many California suffragists, the California Federation of Women's survey on women and the vote stated: "To the women of the nation, the women of California extend the hand of fellowship and the hope that their unenfranchised sisters may soon enter the political life of the country, there to find increased strength and power, and manifold possibilities for the good of the community and the strength of the nation."⁴³³ Among other Bay Area suffragists, Charlotte Anita Whitney, Maud Younger and Alice Park made significant contributions to the cause of women, not only in the Bay Area, but throughout the nation and overseas.

In 1876, Elizabeth Cady Stanton criticized California because on its official seal the figure of a goddess presided over the state and yet "the constitution limits the franchise and thus makes outlaws of all the noble women who endured the hardships... who helped make [California] all that it is....The position of the real woman who shares the every day trials and hardships...inspires no corresponding admiration and respect."⁴³⁴

⁴³² Simons, 3.

⁴³³ Ibid.

California redeemed itself, however, when it passed the woman suffrage amendment in 1911 and became a strong advocate of the ratification of the national suffrage amendment in 1920. As Carrie Chapman Catt stated upon the adoption of the national suffrage amendment: "Our mothers began it. So it came on to us, in a way, a sacred trust. And a great part of our rejoicing today in the hour of victory is compounded of our feeling of loyalty to the past and our satisfaction that we have stood faithful to its trust."⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ Elizabeth Cady Stanton quoted in De Anza College 75th Anniversary Woman Suffrage Exhibition Notes, 12.

⁴³⁵ Carrie Chapman Catt quoted in "Suffrage Leaders Rejoice in Victory," San Francisco Chronicle, August 19, 1920.

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APPENDIX A

POPULATION OF CALIFORNIA BY COUNTY

County	Population 1900	Population 1910
Alameda	130,197	246,131
Alpine	509	309
Amador	11,116	9,086
Butte	17,117	27,301
Calaveras	11,200	9,171
Colusa	7,364	7,732
Contra Costa	18,046	31,674
Del Norte	2,408	2,417
El Dorado	8,986	7,492
Fresno	37,862	75,657
Glenn	5,150	7,172
Humboldt	27,104	33,857
Imperial	---	13,591
Inyo	4,377	6,974
Kern	16,480	37,715
Kings	9,871	16,230
Lake	6,017	5,526
Lassen	4,511	4,802
Los Angeles	170,298	504,131
Madera	6,364	8,368
Marin	15,702	25,114
Mariposa	4,720	3,956
Mendocino	20,465	23,929
Merced	9,215	15,148
Modoc	5,076	6,191
Mono	2,167	2042
Monterey	19,380	24,146
Napa	16,451	19,800
Nevada	17,789	14,955
Orange	19,696	34,436
Placer	15,786	18,237
Plumas	4,657	5,259

County	Population 1900	Population 1910
Riverside	17,897	34,696
Sacramento	45,915	67,806
San Benito	6,633	8,041
San Bernadino	27,929	56,706
San Diego	35,090	61,665
San Francisco	342,782	416,912
San Joaquin	35,452	50,731
San Luis Obispo	16,637	19,383
San Mateo	12,094	26,858
Santa Barbara	18,934	27,738
Santa Clara	60,216	83,539
Santa Cruz	21,512	26,140
Shasta	17,318	18,920
Sierra	4,017	4,098
Siskiyou	16,962	18,801
Solano	24,143	27,559
Sonoma	38,480	48,394
Stanislaus	9,550	22,522
Sutter	5,886	6,328
Tehama	10,996	11,401
Trinity	4,383	3301
Tulare	18,375	35,440
Tuolumne	11,166	9,979
Ventura	14,367	18,347
Yolo	13,618	13,926
Yuba	8,620	10,042
Totals	1,485,053	2,377,549

Source: <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census>

APPENDIX B

1896 CALIFORNIA ELECTION RESULTS BY COUNTY: AMENDMENT 6

County	For	Against
Alameda	7,953	11,580
Alpine	46	22
Amador	779	1,153
Butte	2,024	1,825
Calaveras	960	1283
Colusa	681	900
Contra Costa	1,002	1,658
Del Norte	266	307
El Dorado	1,057	1,135
Fresno	3,247	2,512
Glenn	536	582
Humboldt	2,762	2,056
Imperial	-----	-----
Inyo	379	354
Kern	1,371	1,408
Kings	841	586
Lake	603	718
Lassen	246	457
Los Angeles	15,996	12,400
Madera	529	497
Marin	609	1,368
Mariposa	466	608
Mendocino	1,519	1,927
Merced	846	692
Modoc	392	358
Mono	219	232
Monterey	1,567	1,896
Napa	1,173	1,724
Nevada	1,531	2,045
Orange	1,868	1,260
Placer	1,473	1,676

County	For	Against
Plumas	516	490
Riverside	2,072	1,233
Sacramento	3,023	4,535
San Benito	733	685
San Bernadino	2,778	2,315
San Diego	4,129	2,717
San Francisco	12,969	36,741
San Joaquin	2,819	2,978
San Luis		
Obispo	1,667	1,444
San Mateo	635	1,487
Santa Barbara	2,015	1,477
Santa Clara	5,021	5,222
Santa Cruz	1,873	1,702
Shasta	1,275	1,380
Sierra	459	513
Siskiyou	1,258	1,424
Solano	1,529	2,611
Sonoma	2,736	4,042
Stanislaus	986	1,134
Sutter	548	714
Tehama	874	933
Trinity	412	433
Tulare	2,490	1,255
Tuolumne	758	897
Ventura	1,578	1,146
Yolo	1,296	1,347
Yuba	865	1,025
Totals	110,355	137,099

Source: Brown, L.H. Secretary of State, Statement of the Vote at the General Election Held November 3, 1896 (Sacramento, California: State Printing Office, 1897), 15.

APPENDIX C

1911 CALIFORNIA ELECTION RESULTS BY COUNTY: AMENDMENT 8

County	For	Against
Alameda	10,627	12,802
Alpine	26	16
Amador	478	629
Butte	1,829	1,076
Calaveras	736	481
Colusa	438	427
Contra Costa	1,569	1,548
Del Norte	305	198
El Dorado	601	389
Fresno	3,192	2,518
Glenn	614	367
Humboldt	1,815	1,061
Imperial	619	310
Inyo	400	220
Kern	1,760	1,607
Kings	708	531
Lake	471	341
Lassen	339	196
Los Angeles	27,391	22,228
Madera	578	376
Marin	1,102	1,550
Mariposa	164	151
Mendocino	1,285	1,273
Merced	798	411
Modoc	423	177
Mono	109	79
Monterey	1,186	1,190
Napa	1,001	833
Nevada	869	695
Orange	1,787	1,826
Placer	1,133	756

County	For	Against
Plumas	383	226
Riverside	1,955	1,366
Sacramento	3,220	3,025
San Benito	560	401
San Bernadino	2,548	2,254
San Diego	3,331	2,464
San Francisco	21,919	35,635
San Joaquin	2,417	2,052
San Luis Obispo	1,284	1,029
San Mateo	1,187	1,482
Santa Barbara	1,396	1,198
Santa Clara	4,762	3,120
Santa Cruz	1,517	934
Shasta	1,170	582
Sierra	279	182
Siskiyou	1,126	749
Solano	1,438	1,152
Sonoma	2,461	2,271
Stanislaus	1,556	766
Sutter	381	281
Tehama	781	437
Trinity	343	150
Tulare	1,935	1,060
Tuolumne	561	428
Ventura	816	856
Yolo	859	691
Yuba	499	397
Totals	125,037	121,450

Source: Jordan, Frank C. Secretary of State, Statement of the Vote of California at the Special Election Held on October 10, 1911 on Constitutional Amendments, (Sacramento: W.W. Shannon, Superintendent of State Printing), 4.