

# The Federal Suffrage Association

## ITS ORIGIN AND CONSTITUTION.

IN THE early Spring of 1892 the following circular was published in the *Woman's Tribune* and in the *Woman's Journal*, in the great city dailies and other papers:

### TO ALL FRIENDS OF LIBERTY.

For some time there has been a demand for general suffrage reform, especially as it relates to the election of national officers. The timely publication of Francis Minor's article on "Citizenship and Suffrage" in the *Arena*, arousing new interest in the subject, and pointing out new lines of work, prompted to immediate steps toward the organization of a new suffrage society, and suggested its name. The Federal Suffrage Association was initiated on the 10th of March, 1892, at a meeting of a few friends, residing in and about Chicago, with representatives from several neighboring states. At this meeting letters from eminent people in different parts of the United States, were read, expressing interest in the movement, and readiness to join the society. Among other well known names were those of Mrs. Louisa Southworth, of Cleveland, Ohio; Mrs. Abigail Scott Duniway, of Oregon; Belva Lockwood, of Washington, D. C.; Dr. Laura Ross Wolcott of Milwaukee, Wis.; Miss Mary A. Ripley of Nebraska, and others of national reputation. A temporary organization was formed and the nucleus of a constitution was adopted.

The object of the new Association is, to obtain such legislation as will secure every citizen of the United States in the exercise of the right of suffrage, and also to advocate uniformity in the election of national officers. Some plan of effective National work will be adopted.

It was voted to hold a meeting on the 10th of May at the Sherman House parlors, Chicago, at 2 P. M., to complete the organization. The officers were instructed to issue a circular inviting the attendance and co-operation of all friends of republican ideas.

The Association has already been offered handsome headquarters during the Fair in the immediate vicinity of the World's Fair buildings, and has, among its supporters, persons of wealth and influence.

You are earnestly invited to attend the meeting of May 10th, and to assist in the inauguration of this work.

President, HON. M. B. CASTLE,  
Sandwich, Ill.

Secretary, MRS. E. J. LOOMIS,  
Chicago, Ill.

In response to this call as many people as could be accommodated in the club room of the Sherman House assembled at the time named. Among

those present were Mrs. Lucia Blount of Washington; Mrs. Lucinda Stone of Kalamazoo; Mrs. Mary E. Holmes of Illinois; Mr. Walter Thomas Mills and many others.

The *Chicago Times* gave the following report of the meeting:

"The suffragists formed a new National Association at the Sherman House yesterday. Its title is the Federal Suffrage Association of the United States, and its especial object is to secure equal and uniform federal suffrage for all citizens of the country. The new Association is in no wise antagonistic to other Suffrage Associations, but merely takes up the special subject of equal federal suffrage as distinguished from equal, state, municipal, or school suffrage, whose claims are being urged by other organizations. Then, as Mrs. Isabella Beecher Hooker, who is especially interested in and largely responsible for the new society, says, the country is large and the women cannot get too many Associations before the public to urge their demands for full and equal suffrage.

On motion of Clara B. Colby the following memorial was adopted and Miss Colby was directed to submit the same to Clarence D. Clark, congressman from Wyoming, who has introduced a bill in congress providing for the federal enfranchisement of women:

TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED:

Whereas, The right to vote for members of the House of Representatives is, by the constitution of the United States, vested in the people of the United States, without condition, limitation, or restriction, and women are people. Therefore, we, members of the Federal Suffrage Association of the United States, respectfully request your honorable bodies to pass a bill enabling women citizens of the United States to vote for members of the House of Representatives. Signed this 10th day of May, 1892.

OLYMPIA BROWN,  
Acting President.  
ELIZABETH LOOMIS,  
Secretary.

Judge C. B. Waite made a short speech, in which he urged that the women of the Association vote for Congressmen at the next election, and send in their vote to the House of Representatives, thus forcing that body to pass upon the legality of votes of women.

The officers were instructed to present a memorial to the National Republican Convention asking for a resolution in favor of suffrage reform.

#### CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS.

The following Constitution and By-Laws were unanimously adopted:

Inasmuch as our government is founded upon the principle of the liberty of each individual, and that the ballot is the true exponent of such liberty, we therefore do unite our names, our influence, and our efforts to secure for every citizen of the Republic, full, complete, and perfect representation.

ARTICLE I. This organization shall be called the Federal Suffrage Association of the United States.

ART. II. The objects of this Society shall be to enlist and unite all persons of the various congressional districts for earnest work to secure the ballot to all citizens of the United States.

ART. III. The officers of this Association shall be a President, Vice-President at large, four Vice-Presidents, Recording Secretary, Corresponding

Secretary, Treasurer, two Auditors, and such other officers as may be needed from time to time.

ART. IV. These officers, together with five members to be elected by the Association, shall constitute the Executive Committee, which shall have charge of and transact all the business of the Association, subject to the approval of the Association at its annual meeting.

ART. V. Any person may become a member by signing the Constitution and by paying an initiation fee of \$1, and the dues shall be \$1 annually.

ART. VI. This Constitution may be altered or amended by a two-thirds vote at any annual meeting, provided a notice of such amendment has been given in writing to the Executive Committee three months previous to the meeting.

#### BY-LAWS.

1. The country shall be divided from north to south in four districts, to be known as the Atlantic, East Mississippi, West Mississippi, and Pacific divisions, and the four Vice Presidents shall have charge of these districts respectively. It is designed to hold one large convention each year in each of the four great divisions.

2. The headquarters of the Association shall be in Chicago, and the annual meeting for the election of officers and for other business shall be held there at the call of the Executive Committee.

3. There shall be an Advisory Board selected and appointed by the Executive Committee, to whom matters of importance may be continually referred for suggestion and advice.

4. All members in good and regular standing shall be entitled to vote at all meetings of the Association.

Mrs. Hooker explained that the object of the longitudinal divisions of the country was to secure the co-operation of northern and southern women in the same divisions.

#### OFFICERS ELECTED.

After the adoption of the Constitution the election of officers was held with the following results: President, M. B. Castle, Sandwich, Ill.; Vice-President at large, Rev. Olympia Brown, Racine, Wis.; Recording Secretary, Mrs. E. J. Loomis, Chicago; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. A. J. McKinney, Chicago; Treasurer, J. H. DeVoe, Harvey, Ill.; Executive Committee, Mrs. Sarah M. Perkins, Cleveland; Harriet E. Robinson, Malden, Mass.; Walter Thomas Mills, Chicago; Mrs. Emma S. DeVoe, Chicago, and C. B. Darrow, Chicago; Vice-Presidents, Isabella Beecher Hooker, Atlantic division; Mrs. Louisa Southworth, eastern Mississippi division; Mrs. Virginia F. Minor, western Mississippi division; Mrs. Abigail Scott Duniway, Pacific division; Auditors, Mr. C. B. Darrow, Mrs. C. V. Waite."

The Executive Committee held a meeting at 3 P. M., on May 11th. It was voted that societies wishing to co-operate with the Federal Suffrage Association, might do so upon payment of \$5 annually into the treasury of the Federal Suffrage Association, and such associated societies should be entitled to two votes in the annual meeting. It was voted to institute a lecture bureau, composed of such members of the Association as might be available for the presentation of the cause.

It is the aim of the Association as soon as practicable to secure a president for each congressional district.