Circa 1880-1920
The Suffrage Movement
Chautauqua County and
Woman's History Making
EDITH M. AINGE

February 1921, outside National Woman's Party headquarters, Wash. D.C.

I. SOME BACKGROUND

1848: Seneca Falls Convention adopted a declaration calling for woman's suffrage.

At left are Elizabeth Cady Stanton with daughter Harriot. Above are photos taken at the Women's Rights National Historical Park/Wesleyan Chapel site in Seneca Falls.
1868: 15th Amendment passes U.S. Congress, enfranchising African American males but not women.


1872: Susan B. Anthony attempts to vote, arguing she has right under 14th Amendment; arrested several days later; not allowed to testify on her own behalf at her trial.

1875: Minor v. Happersett denied any constitutional right for women's suffrage & reinforced states' rights to decide.

1890: NWSA & AWSA now merge to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA); Wyoming becomes the first state to grant women the right to vote.
II. LOCAL WOMEN MOBILIZE:  
THE 1890'S POLITICAL EQUALITY MOVEMENT

- July 24, 1885: Lillie Devereaux Blake, president of state suffrage association, addresses crowd at Opera House in Jamestown, calling on local women to organize

- Jamestown Political Equality Club founded Nov. 1887 at home of Mrs. Daniel Griswold with 13 women present

- 14 other local clubs by 1889: Kennedy, Mayville, Frewsburg, Ellington, Fredonia, Sinclairville, South Stockton, Gerry, Westfield, Harmony, Kiantone, Dunkirk, and Pomona & Ross Granges

- Chautauqua County club organized Oct. 31, 1888 in Jamestown
WOMEN WANT TO VOTE.

JAMESTOWN, N. Y., Aug. 10.—Miss Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton are the guests of the Jamestown Political Equality Club, a women's suffrage organization. To-night they addressed a large audience in the Allen Opera House on "The Dignity of Politics and the Party Platforms of 1888." This city has a large club, and the women propose to have representatives on the Board of Education as a starter. Political Equality Clubs are being organized in every town in the county by women of the highest social standing engaging in the movement.

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P.E.C. ACTIVITIES

- Annual "conventions" held at various locations around county, featuring distinguished speakers
  - E.g. the Rev. Anna H. Shaw, Carrie Chapman Catt
- 'Political Equality Day' at Chautauqua Institution
- 'Woman's Day' at Lily Dale Assembly
MORE P.E.C. ACTIVITIES

- Distribution of suffrage literature
- “Drills in civic government” at meetings
- School election campaigns
  - E.g. Jamestown in 1889
  - 27 female school trustees in Chaut. Co. by fall 1892
  - 1892 state law granted women right to vote for county school commissioner; Martha Almy ran in 1893
PRESIDENT Elnora M. Babcock's Address, Oct. 1892, Mayville

- "There never was a time since the beginning of this movement for equal human rights when there was such cause for rejoicing and such hope for the future as at the present time."

- "In the various spheres of activity in which [woman] has engaged, her influence has been that of a refining, purifying, and ennobling power."

- For centuries relegated to the rear, compelled to take thought second hand, denied a healthful freedom and the right of liberal education so highly prized by man, all these years she has been striving to overcome the prejudices of the past, until to-day she stands ready to show to the world what can be accomplished by a free woman, free to exercise in every field the rare powers of mind with which she has been endowed. Woman having once put her hand to the plough for a purpose she knows to be right, will never turn back. She is characterized by an abiding faith in the ultimate triumph of right and in the permanent possibilities of her sex."

- "The successful passage of our Co. School Commissioner bill, which was due almost entirely to the untiring efforts of our own Senator [J. T. Edwards] and Assemblyman [W.C. Gifford], gives us great cause for rejoicing. This crumb from the great political loaf means far more than many of us are aware of and perhaps more than many of our Legislators realized; they looked upon it as merely an extension of school suffrage, which it is, but it is also far more. The election of school trustees is held by itself, and the office is without salary, while the office of Co. School Commissioner is a salaried office, and, above all, it brings women into the general elections, where the inconsistency of not allowing them to vote for all the officers while there, will be shown still more clearly, and the old prejudice of a woman at the polls will receive its death blow."
THE NEW PRESS CHAIRMAN

"Mrs. Elnora Babcock, Dunkirk, New York, has been appointed National Committee on Press Work. Mrs. Babcock has acted in the capacity of State Superintendent of Press Work in New York for five years, and has wrought wonderful results in that conservative State. She possesses courage, persistence, consecration, tact and level-headed judgment. All correspondence concerning this department of work should now be directed to her. Under her able generalship the Press Work may be counted upon to become a powerful factor in the future of our work."

SOME LOCAL MEMBERS OF DISTINCTION

- Mrs. Elnora M. Babcock went on to serve as "Superintendent of Press Work" for NYS Suffrage Association 1894-1899 and eventually national press chairman for NAWSA
- Mrs. Kate S. Thompson served as treasurer of NYS Suffrage Association 1895-1897
- Mrs. Martha P. Almy was elected vice president of NYS Suffrage Association Nov. 1893
DECLINE BY 1900

- 1894 campaign to eliminate “male” from new state constitution being drafted in Albany ... failed.

- Declining membership
  - From over 1,000 members reported in 1891 to only 14 active members present at 1898 meeting
  - Martha Fuller Prather’s report of 1908 meeting: “The faithful few who clung to principles which originally bound them together, met in twenty-first annual convention at Grange Hall, Chautauqua.”

- Name changed to Chautauqua County Woman Suffrage Party, 1912, upon state reorganization.
ANTI-SUFFRAGE PAMPHLET (CIRCA 1910)

**"Housewives!**
- You do not need a ballot to clean out your sink spout. A handful of potash and some boiling water is quicker and cheaper...
- Why vote for pure food laws, when your husband does that, while you can purify your ice-box with saleratus water?

**"Vote NO on Woman Suffrage**
- BECAUSE 90% of the women either do not want it, or do not care.
- BECAUSE it means competition of women with men instead of cooperation.
- BECAUSE 80% of the women eligible to vote are married and can only double or annul their husband's votes...
- BECAUSE in some States more voting women than voting men will place the Government under petticoat rule.
- BECAUSE it is unwise to risk the good we already have for the evil which may occur. "

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**Household Hints**

**Vote NO on Woman Suffrage**

**BECAUSE** one of the women does not want it, or do not care.

**BECAUSE** it means competition of women with men instead of cooperation.

**BECAUSE** all of the women eligible to vote are married and can only double or annul their husband's votes.

**BECAUSE** in some States more voting women than voting men will place the Government under petticoat rule.

**BECAUSE** it is unwise to risk the good we already have for the evil which may occur.

**National Association OPPOSED to Woman Suffrage**

Headquarters

356 Madison Avenue

New York, N. Y.

Branch

278 Pennsylvania Street N. W.

Washington, D. C.

Votes of Women can accomplish no more than votes of Men. Why waste time, energy and money, without result?
III. NEW BLOOD: 1913-1920

“Early in 1914 a representative, Miss Jane Pincus, of the Woman’s Political Union, an independent organization, came to Jamestown, opened headquarters, and proceeded to work, as she stated, ‘on virgin soil.’ Miss Pincus being much younger than most of the suffragists here, probably did not know otherwise. She was a pleasing, vigorous young woman, and spoke before many societies and organizations.”

Source: Downs 1921 Chautauqua County history; entry compiled from writings of Elnora M. Babcock & Martha Fuller Prather
Women's Political Union founded by Harriot Stanton Blatch in 1910
(formerly Equality League of Self-Supporting Women, founded 1907)

At left: Harriot Stanton Blatch exhorts crowd gathered on Wall Street, 1913
Young American suffragist Alice Paul was influenced by Emmeline Pankhurst in England; founded Congressional Union in 1913, which merged with and became known as National Woman's Party in 1917.

Below: Paul in 1906, upon earning master’s degree in sociology from University of PA.

At left: Paul, date unknown.
LOCAL SIGNS OF NEW LIFE

- 1914: 1st ‘street meeting’ held in Jamestown; also club organized at JHS
- Campaign Club led by Miss May Gellstrom
- City Committee led by Miss Marion Patterson
  - Eventually elected president of Chaut. Co.’s district organization in 1917
- Intense campaign leading up to NYS state referendum in 1915
  - Passed in Chautauqua County by 2,667 votes, biggest margin in state
  - But failed statewide
• Born in Bradford, England, Sept. 10, 1873 to William Ely Ainge and Susannah (Taylor) Ainge
• One of 9 children
• Came to U.S. as a child
• Lived most of her life in Jamestown
• Became active in Women’s Political Union in 1914; soon local chairman
• Spearheaded local participation in 1915 tour of “Liberty Torch”
• Went to Washington, D.C. in 1917 to participate in National Woman’s Party White House pickets
• Arrested 5 times for participating in demonstrations, 1917-1919

EDITH M. AINGE
(1873-1948)

Photograph from:
Jailed for Freedom by Doris Stevens, 1920
ALICE PAUL & NWP ‘MILITANTS’ PICKETED WHITE HOUSE DURING WWI

Photograph of unknown suffragist with "Kaiser Wilson" poster, 1917

Source: National Archives and Records Administration
FIRST ARREST: SEPT. 4, 1917

"It is unjust, Mr. President, to deny women a voice in their own government while the government is conscripting their sons."

Reported in Jamestown newspapers on Sept. 7

At left: Morning Post
At right: Evening Journal
edted by Carol O'Hare

Source: Jailed for Freedom by Doris Stevens, 1995 Revised edition,
I was arrested on the 4th day of June and
sentenced by Judge White to serve sixty days at the
District Workhouse for forgery and larceny. I was
imprisoned by the President and the President's
voice in his own words, we saw the President,
while the government is controlling their own,
workhouse for a week. I was in
There were no prisoners there, and when I
was sent to the district jail, Sunday, October 22nd,
the end of six weeks, I had lost twenty pounds and
was unable to walk for the lack of food. I had been
given food that was impossible for me to eat; celery
and rice that were warn
d and corn bread made from very mean
food. I was not given any
coffee, and when I asked for the coffee, it was not
for anyone to drink. The meat was often too
and when I
was
in the cooking, and the shares were both warn
and bad. The meat was often too
time, but they were
hard and green. I sat in the sun all day, and at
four thirty p.m. with a half hour for dinner.
The working day was kept in an endless
Toilet, consisting of a short walk on Sunday
thirty minutes from four thirty until six.
A Mr. A. was sent to
the
workhouse for a week.

On Tuesday, October 30th, we made a protest for six
The official would not open the window, so at it, near
He was
and then he was sent to the
workhouse, where he was kept for six weeks.

We were denied the privy, and we were informed by
Mr. A. that he had been sent to the workhouse because
of his connection with a political party.

UPON RELEASE, NOVEMBER 3, 1917

Source: Records of the National Woman’s Party, Library of Congress
"Jamestown Woman in Jail," an editorial published in the *Evening Journal* on Sept. 7, 1917 called the picketing a "disgraceful" attempt to "annoy the president during this his time of great trial and his whole-souled devotion to American's interests in war and peace." The editor continued, "Miss Ainge is naturally too intelligent a woman to get mixed up in this militant movement that can have not possible have [sic] any good results looking toward the enfranchisement of women. She is a woman of unusual energy and independence from whom it is reasonable to expect better service than that which has been credited to the White House pickets... While her friends may have some sympathy for Miss Ainge, they will have none whatever for her acts."

"Patriotic Women Repudiate Pickets," an editorial published in the *Morning Post*, Sept. 7, 1917 emphasized: "The militants, who are doing this White House picketing, in no way represent, through affiliation or otherwise, the great body of patriotic suffragists throughout the state and the nation. The pickets are only a small band, whereas the New York State Woman Suffrage Party is an organization having a membership of more than 500,000 women, all of whom believe that if not on the ground of fundamental justice, at least through their patriotic service, they should be entitled to a voice in the government under which they live. This right should be given by the voters of New York State on November 6th." The editorial goes on to credit local women for helping to take the recent military census "and doing their part in recruiting, as well as acting in co-operation with the Liberty Loan Committee, the Hoover Food Administration Bureau and the Red Cross committees" during the current war in Europe. "After what the women of New York State have done for the soldiers at the front, giving up their own state campaign in the meanwhile to do it, it is hardly fair or just that the woman suffrage movement should be made to suffer any charge of lack of patriotism."
IV. VICTORY IN SIGHT?

- Nov. 6, 1917: New York State women were the first women to be enfranchised on the East Coast
- But women in most U.S. states still could not vote
- Fall pickets soon spurred U.S. House of Representatives to pass the “Susan B. Anthony” Amendment for women’s suffrage on Jan. 10, 1918. But ratification process could not go forward without Senate approval that session....
PHOTOGRAPH FROM: Jailed for Freedom by Doris Stevens

LAFAYETTE SQUARE
2ND ARREST: AUG. 1918
THE WATCH FIRE DEMONSTRATIONS
JANUARY 1919

Source: Records of the National Woman's Party, Library of Congress
VICTORY!

- House of Representatives re-approved amendment in next session on May 21, 1919. Senate finally followed suit on June 4, 1919 by 2 votes.

- 19th Amendment became law Aug. 26, 1920, following ratification of Tennessee.
Alice Paul unfurls suffrage ratification banner on Aug. 26, 1920, showing one star for every state that had ratified the 19th Amendment, to date.