

## Never A Fight of Woman Against Man: What Textbooks Don't Say about Women's Suffrage

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SUFFRAGE LEADER Alice Stone Blackwell wrote in 1914 that “the struggle has never been a fight of woman against man, but always of broad-minded men and women on the one side against narrow-minded men and women on the other.” Carrie Chapman Catt agreed, writing that the enemy of suffrage was not men, but resistance to change.<sup>1</sup> How many students are aware that suffragists did not see the campaign as a fight of women against men? Fifteen widely used college textbooks on American history were examined, and not one makes this clear.<sup>2</sup> Nor do these textbooks include Susan B. Anthony's statements that woman suffrage laws “probably never would have passed if it had been up to women to vote on them,” and that men were actually more progressive about women's suffrage than women were (1902).<sup>3</sup> In fact, there were many sides to the issue, and each point of view had both male and female supporters.

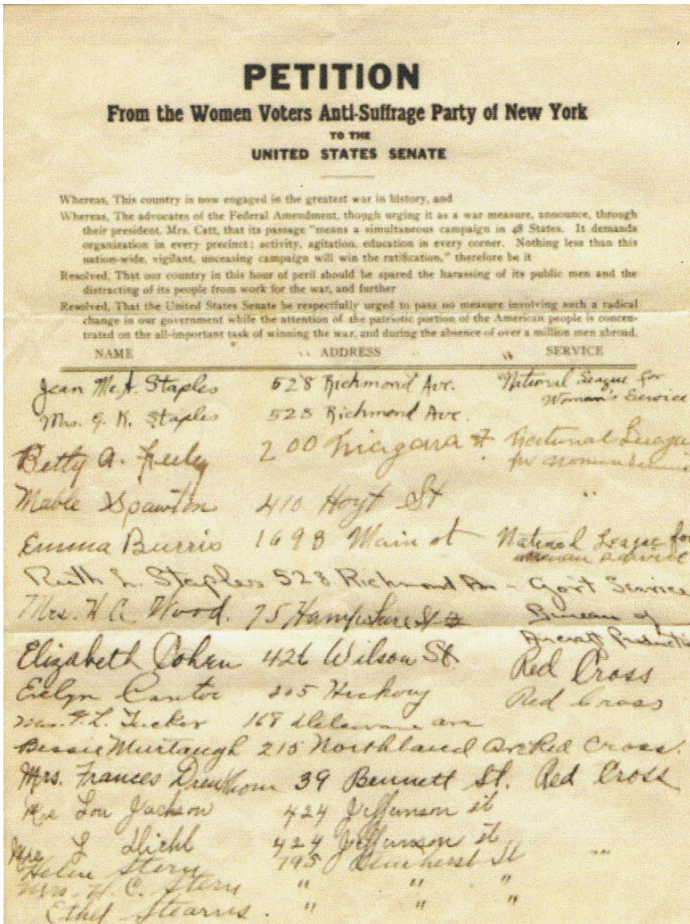
This paper explores the paradox of why intelligent, progressive, capable women led the organized opposition to women's suffrage. It looks at some reasons for their opposition: the problem of the uninformed voter, the idea that civic-minded women had more power without the vote, and the suffragists' many public relations problems.

Finally, it explores the origin of the usual women-versus-men view of the suffrage struggle, and suggests changes in how this phase of history is taught.

### **Women's Opposition to Suffrage**

Women's opposition was an embarrassing problem that plagued the suffrage movement from the Seneca Falls convention in 1848 to the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920. Despite one textbook's claim that "the Seneca Falls reformers spoke for all American women," Elizabeth Cady Stanton spoke of "the contempt with which women themselves regard the movement...it is met by the scornful curl of the lip, and expression of ridicule and disgust."<sup>4</sup> Women's support gradually increased nationwide, but even at the time of the final victory in 1920, suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt estimated in a letter that only about one-third of women supported suffrage, one-third opposed it, and one-third didn't care either way.<sup>5</sup> Yet publicly, Catt claimed the support of most or all women, as suffragists had been doing for decades. In her book, *Woman Suffrage and Politics* (1923), she wrote that suffragists represented an "unmistakable popular demand for a just cause," not mentioning her own observation that only a minority of women supported their own right to vote.<sup>6</sup> Suffrage leader Abigail Scott Duniway of Oregon similarly clouded the issue of women's support, claiming that the "silent majority" of women wanted suffrage, while also admitting that suffragists "do not claim or even desire much numerical strength."<sup>7</sup>

Everywhere that suffragists carried on campaigns, other women organized to block their progress. In 1869, Anthony and Stanton left the American Equal Rights Association to form the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), based in New York. Feeling that the National Association was too radical on religion and divorce to represent most suffragists, Lucy Stone, William Lloyd Garrison, and others organized the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), based in Boston. Anti-suffrage women responded by forming the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women, the New York State Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, and many other state organizations. The "antis," as they were called, testified before legislatures, published



**Figure 1:** Many thousands of women petitioned against their own right to vote. In this example, the women listed their service work in the Red Cross and National League for Women's Service to show that they were respectable women who contributed to society. *Petition to U.S. Senate, Women Voters Anti-Suffrage Party of New York World War I, ca. 1917, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.*

articles and newsletters, held public meetings, and eventually debated the suffragists. In 1870, a group of distinguished women collected 15,000 signatures to urge Congress not to give women the vote.<sup>8</sup> Many other petitions followed, and by 1915, hundreds of thousands of women had joined the anti movement (see **Figure 1**).

	Number of organized suffragists	Number of organized female anti-suffragists
1893	13,000	
1895		20,000 in New York alone
1905	17,000	
1907	45,500	
1910	75,000	
1912		105,000
1915	100,000	200,000
1916		350,000
1917	2,000,000	
1919	2,000,000	500,000

**Figure 2:** Organized women anti-suffragists outnumbered suffragists from 1895 through 1915, then the suffragists surged ahead in the last four years of the seventy-two-year campaign.<sup>9</sup>

Most textbooks overlook or lightly dismiss the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, founded in the Park Avenue apartment of Josephine (Mrs. Arthur M.) Dodge of New York.<sup>10</sup> Dodge was a public-spirited and indomitable woman whose father, Marshall Jewell, had been the Republican governor of Connecticut and a supporter of women's rights. Mrs. Dodge knew something about politics: she had skipped her fourth year at Vassar to live in St. Petersburg when her father became envoy to Russia, and she and her sister became minor celebrities at the Russian court due to their figure skating abilities. Mrs. Dodge was a pioneer in providing daycare to help working mothers, and she was president of the New York State antis in 1911 when California became the sixth state to give the vote to women. The California victory alarmed Dodge and her allies, motivating them to form the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage just six weeks later. From 1912 to 1918, Dodge's newsletter, *The Woman's Protest Against Woman Suffrage*, promoted her view that women had more power to improve society without the vote than with it. The organization's all-female membership totaled 105,000 in its first year, and peaked at about 500,000 in 1919. Suffrage organizations had smaller membership,

finally pulling ahead of the antis with about two million members in 1917—still only about one-fourteenth of potential women voters (see **Figure 2**).<sup>11</sup>

In 1914, sixty-six years after Seneca Falls, suffrage leader Anna Howard Shaw addressed the common objection that “the majority of women do not want the vote.”<sup>12</sup> Her response was that suffragists should not even reply to such arguments because they “have no bearing on our question.” Statements like Shaw’s gave ammunition to the anti-suffragists: how could giving women the vote be an advance in democracy, they asked, when the majority of women were either opposed to suffrage or indifferent? In an effort to put women’s lack of support in the best light possible, suffragists frequently echoed the antis’ arguments: the majority of women, they claimed, were either pro-suffrage or indifferent. The fact that many women were indifferent allowed both sides to make exaggerated claims of female support. Historians sometimes take suffragists’ claims at face value, stating for example that “suffrage... came to be seen as a goal around which all women could unite.”<sup>13</sup> It is unfortunate that few reliable opinion polls are available, but there is considerable evidence that suffrage was never supported by a majority of American women, let alone “all women.”

College textbooks sometimes portray the suffrage campaign as a battle of the sexes. *The American Promise* says that “men’s dominance over women... knit all white men together politically,” while Alan Brinkley’s *American History: A Survey* says that the anti movement was “dominated by men.” *America: A Narrative History* says that Anthony “made little impression on the defenders of masculine prerogative,” and *America, Empire of Liberty* adds that “many men, and some women” opposed suffrage.<sup>14</sup> The mention of “some women” antis is welcome, as is Brinkley’s statement that male antis were supported by “many women.” Scholars who have written about the women antis generally agree that the organized anti-suffrage campaign was primarily a movement of middle- and upper-class white women, and that male antis sometimes joined the campaign at the request of women leaders.<sup>15</sup> Just as women anti-suffragists are often overlooked today, male supporters of suffrage like Henry B. Blackwell, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, William Lloyd Garrison, Senator A. A. Sargent, and the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher are barely mentioned, and five of fifteen textbooks make

no mention of male support whatsoever. In fact, male support led the way in the earliest suffrage victories. When lawmakers made Wyoming women the first fully enfranchised women in the world in 1869, the only campaign had been two speeches by traveling women suffragists. Similarly, the second victory, in Utah Territory one year later, was apparently achieved without any campaign by women at all. Aware of the strength of male support, suffrage leaders carried out fifty-six campaigns to let men vote on the suffrage question, while they almost always opposed letting women vote on it.<sup>16</sup>

### Proposed Referendums for Women Only

The lone referendum for women only was held in Massachusetts in 1895, and only 4% of eligible women voted. Anti-suffragists had encouraged women to stay away from the polls, and the vast majority of them did. In fifty-seven towns, not a single woman voted for suffrage. Of those few votes that were actually cast, 96% were pro-suffrage.<sup>17</sup> For many years afterward, suffrage leaders like Julia Ward Howe cited that 96% figure as a victory, but they never again asked for a referendum of women only.

Susan B. Anthony opposed letting women in Washington State vote on the suffrage question in 1871, claiming that women's "condition of servitude" made them unable to see the issue clearly.<sup>18</sup> That referendum would have been a huge defeat for the suffragists: Sarah Josepha Hale, the editor of *Godey's Ladies Book* and author of *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, wrote that "For one woman who desires there are fifty who disapprove."<sup>19</sup> Suffrage leaders Anna Howard Shaw, Ida Husted Harper, and Harriot Stanton Blatch objected to a proposed referendum for New York women in 1910.<sup>20</sup> When anti-suffragist Minnie Bronson visited California in 1911, she proposed that women themselves should be allowed to decide the suffrage question by vote; the suffragists again declined the offer.<sup>21</sup>

When the Rev. Lyman Abbott, editor of *The Outlook*, proposed a women-only vote on suffrage in 1913, suffragists objected once again. Conceding that the referendum would fail, one suffragist argued that women should be given the vote despite their own opposition: "We did not wait until the majority of women wished for higher education before higher education was provided for them."

Rev. Abbott had been a suffragist in his early years, but his wife was an active anti who changed his mind. She believed that having the vote was bad for women, bad for society, and not necessary.<sup>22</sup>

Anti leader Alice Hill Chittenden of New York proposed another referendum for women only in 1914, and again suffragists declined the offer.<sup>23</sup> When Congressman Frank Clark of Florida proposed a national referendum for women in 1918, Carrie Chapman Catt objected that the idea was “unconstitutional” and “pointless.”<sup>24</sup> This is a remarkable irony: the head of the suffragists actually argued that women should not be allowed to vote because the Constitution did not allow it. Anti-suffragist Alice George of Massachusetts pointed out the paradox to Congress: suffragists, she said, wanted “more votes, more democracy, [they want to] let the women vote on every other thing except on the question of whether or not they shall have the vote.”<sup>25</sup> Actually, the antis were not completely enthusiastic about such a referendum either. It would have forced them to encourage women to get out and vote, as a way of proving that they did not want the right to vote. It would have been a very odd campaign.

None of the fifteen history textbooks mentions these proposed referendums for women. The antis regularly offered to end their campaign if suffragists could show they had majority support among women; suffragists never seriously claimed to have such support. New York suffragists tried to claim majority support in their campaign of 1917, when they presented a petition signed by 1,030,000 women and girls, just over half of the potential voters, but they did not claim that all the signers were of voting age. The intense New York campaign involved canvassing door-to-door, distributing 10,000,000 leaflets, and delivering daily press releases in twenty-five languages to newspapers. Despite the petition, it is doubtful that a majority of New York women voters were actually suffrage supporters, as U.S. Senator James W. Wadsworth Jr., a prominent anti, was reelected when New York women first voted.<sup>26</sup>

### **Why Progressive Women Opposed Suffrage**

The disagreement between suffragists and antis had little to do with progressive versus conservative social agendas. Women in both groups wanted a better world for the next generation: better

schools, more libraries and parks, a safe food supply, and an end to child labor. Their disagreement was not about goals, but rather about the best way to achieve them. Nor were the antis opposed to all changes in women's status, just those that would force women to adopt men's clumsy political methods, as the antis called them. Some *progressive* women who took the anti side were the "muckraker" journalist Ida Tarbell (although she never joined an anti organization); Caroline Corbin of Illinois, who co-founded the Association for the Advancement of Women and became the president of the Illinois antis; Agnes Irwin, the first dean of Radcliffe College; Mrs. J. B. Lippincott, who promoted scholarships for women and became a leader of the Los Angeles antis; Mrs. Gilbert E. Jones of the National League for the Civic Education of Women; Jane Croly, founder of Sorosis and president of the New York Women's Press Club; writer Jeannette Gilder; Mary (Mrs. George A.) Caswell and Anna Head, who founded girls' schools in California and became leaders of the state's anti associations; and Annie Nathan Meyer, who helped found Barnard College for women in New York, and remained an anti until her death in 1951.<sup>27</sup> It would be inaccurate to say that the antis were conservative about women's rights in general.

Six scholarly books have been published since 1990 on women anti-suffragists, but even these specialized books do not completely explain their motivations. Anne Benjamin dismissed all the antis' reasons as "inane," while Thomas Jablonsky similarly called their arguments a "complex set of rationalizations." Jane Jerome Camhi described the antis as "ultraconservative," a common misconception. Sociologist Susan E. Marshall pointed to "gendered class interests" to explain the antis' motivation, although she also wrote that the women antis "were generally drawn from the same social class" as suffragists. Susan Goodier wrote that women antis in New York supported patriarchy, benefited from it, and preferred to maintain their traditional roles as protectors of the home and family.<sup>28</sup> While these explanations have merit, they still leave one wondering why hundreds of thousands of middle- and upper-class women campaigned for decades against their own political rights. Elna C. Green wrote about Southern women's reasons, but most of them—fear of black voters, and lingering resentment over the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution—apply





**Figure 3:** A gathering of anti-suffragists in Nashville, Tennessee, in the summer of 1920. Support for suffrage was never strong in the South, and many southerners were fiercely opposed to enacting suffrage *by a federal amendment*. Courtesy of the Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

only to the South.<sup>29</sup> Southern resentment of federal amendments was so fierce that Kate M. Gordon, who had been a vice-president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, actively campaigned *against* ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, setting up a table in the lobby of Nashville's Hermitage Hotel (see **Figure 3**). Similarly, Laura Clay of Kentucky and Anne Pleasant of Louisiana had worked for suffrage, but then fought against its enactment by a federal amendment.<sup>30</sup>

Women antis made several dozen arguments for their position, many of which seem trivial or even silly today: for example, civics should be taught by non-partisan women, suffrage would increase the cost of elections, and so on. It is hard to believe that anti-suffragist Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge, who was prominent in the same New York social circle as the Rockefellers and the Astors, really cared that women's suffrage would increase the cost of elections, yet she made

# CASE AGAINST VOTES FOR WOMEN

## Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge Gives Reasons Why the Ballot Should Not Be Granted to Women.

By Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge.  
President, National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage.

**T**HE greatest political issue before the voters in 1915 is the question of woman suffrage. New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and probably Pennsylvania will decide whether women shall have the vote. Based on the Presidential vote of 1912, the political status of the six and a half million women in these four States will be determined by the votes of three million, seven hundred thousand men, at most, and yet neither suffragist nor anti-suffragist will contend that the women are voteless, as well as voteless, on this question.

Since the man, the voter, is to decide this issue, both sides are addressing and attempting to influence his ballot for or against woman suffrage. On the suffrage side, we have pleas and promises covering many phases of the subject, but which reduced to their simplest terms are these:

1. That woman has a right to the ballot, or at least more right to it than man has to withhold it from her.
2. That without the ballot, one sex, or "one-half of the human race," or of the people, as they put it, has no representation in Government or legislation.
3. That the "world"—which seems to mean politics to a suffragist—needs its women, in order to introduce more efficient "public house-keeping," clean streets, pure food, better milk for babies, &c.
4. That thousands of women pay taxes and yet are not voters—a seemingly unjust interference with their right to be represented.

5. That woman suffrage has been tried in various—some that remote—countries of the world, and in eleven Western States in America, without producing any decidedly evil results such as some of its opponents prophesied, and without exciting among the people themselves, any strong movement for repeal of the grant of "votes for women."

All these pleas and promises, especially when put forth by the aid of the feminine arts of persuasion that the woman has cultivated throughout the centuries, seem reasonable. But did you ever hear of a political platform, Republican, Democrat, Progressive, Populist, or Socialist, that seemed unreasonable, until you heard the other side, or had acquired the data and the knowledge necessary to answer its arguments? Deciding wisely on a question is not a matter of intelligence, but of information. The intelligence of men—and of women—averages pretty much alike. The same sort of instruction will develop a surprisingly average education on the minds of Hottentots or Hindus, Germans, Americans, French, or English. Once in a while a genius arises who places the trail for humanity by the discovery of a new idea, but the fundamental average of intelligence is demonstrated by the fact that no invention, no art, that has once been left to the world as the legacy of genius has failed because the rest of the race was not intelligent enough to understand and use

it. An Edison might make a poor umpire of a ball game, but not from lack of intelligence. A judge of the Supreme Court might render a ridiculous decision in judging points at a stock show, but not from lack of intelligence. A woman would make a poor voter, but not from lack of intelligence. Mistakes in either case would be due to want of information on the subject at hand.

Woman suffrage would add a new expense to the State and another duty to women is universally admitted, and, therefore, its proponents must prove conclusively that its establishment would benefit the whole people and compensate for this expenditure of energy and money. A prophecy, a promise, or a hope is not a proof; the only way in which we can judge the usefulness of an article offered

Otherwise, on the one score of not being worth while, we have sufficient reason to reject woman suffrage. Woman suffragists are proposing a doubled electorate, to support which an increase in the State budget is necessary. Therefore, the burden of proof rests solidly on the suffragists to show how the doubled electorate can or has become a better instrument of government for the people.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that, not a single law, not one improvement, is or can be claimed as the exclusive result of the votes of women. The male suffrage States lead. In mothers' petitions, child labor, limitation of hours for working women, maternity acts, supervision of dairies, pure food weights and measures, extension of educational facilities, improved sanitation, &c., the great Eastern States have worked out their social problems without woman suffrage to a higher standard than that reached by the States where women vote. On the other hand, a great increase in taxation, a multiplicity of useless laws, and a practical doubling of public office holding without any compensating gain for the citizens is the accompaniment of "votes for women."

2. Can one tax represent both? It is a question in politics parallel to a question in business as to whether one partner can represent a firm. As an isolated individual, an absolute unit of humanity, with no allegiance or attachment to any other unit, woman would seem to require a vote, if voting were the only means of adequately representing her in Government. But the unit of society is not the individual, but the family. Neither man nor woman is complete, but the complementary characteristics of both make up the whole into the smallest safe division of society, the family—a partnership for the propagation of the race and the happiness of men, women, and children.

No one would contend that the salesman does not represent the firm, nor that the factory foreman does not represent the firm. Thousands of partnerships exist where one man sells what the other makes—neither can succeed so well in the other's place, and each fully represents the business as to the respective fields of production and distribution.

As an actual fact, readily ascertained by Government statistics, the partnership of parentage, the union of one man and one woman in marriage, is the most successful enterprise in the business of civilization. With all its faults and alleged failures, less than 1 per cent. of the persons who enter into this partnership dissolve it by divorce. On the other hand, it is so popular that over 60 per cent. of all males and 70 per cent. of all females over fifteen in the United States are married, while only 7 per cent. of the human race in America rounds out its "threescore years and ten" without embarking in this most vital business—the pursuit of happiness by man and woman. *Feudalism is the theory of individualism—an unnatural assumption of man*

Evidently, then, what we desire and must have before we can render a just decision, is the other side of the question, on the points involved in the suffrage plans.

1. Woman's right to the ballot, like man's right to the ballot, is based on one, and only one, consideration—the question of the greatest good to the greatest number. It is the State's right to regulate, modify, extend, or withhold the franchise in connection with any class or sex in the interests of the common good. That

for sale, or a question of public policy, is to examine how it accomplishes the purpose for which it is intended.

If woman suffrage is to benefit the State, it must be shown beyond doubt how it has done so in the places where it has been in effect for a generation or more; if it is simply to add as new freedom, or dignity, or benefit to women, it must be demonstrated that the women with the vote have attained superior laws and conditions to those that are accorded to them without the ballot.



Figure 4: Josephine (Mrs. Arthur M.) Dodge, president of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, argued that women had more power to influence lawmakers and improve society without the vote than with it. She argued that because women were above *partisan* politics, they were perceived as working for the good of society when they asked for changes in the law, as clubwomen frequently did from 1890 to 1920. Mrs. Dodge was active in charity work and pioneered daycare for working mothers. Microfilm from *The New York Times*, March 7, 1915, also available at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9F07E3DE153BE233A25754C0A9659C946496D6CF#>>.

that argument in a *New York Times* article (see **Figure 4**).<sup>31</sup> Why did hundreds of thousands of strong, capable, civic-minded women oppose their own right to vote?

To help solve the puzzle of what motivated the antis, this author interviewed two great-granddaughters of Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge. Each had learned of Mrs. Dodge's motivations from family lore. Andrea Dodge said Mrs. Dodge was concerned that women were generally uninformed about politics, and not yet ready for the vote. Polly Brown said that even without the vote, upper-class women had significant power to influence lawmakers, and Mrs. Dodge was concerned that *they would lose that power* if they entered partisan politics.<sup>32</sup> These two reasons—"women were not ready," and "more power without the vote"—are rarely mentioned today, and they require some explanation.

### **The Problem of the Uninformed Voter**

Alexander Keyssar has written about the problem of the uninformed voter in relation to women's suffrage.<sup>33</sup> As he pointed out, the idea of universal suffrage was popular around 1850, but had become unpopular among the middle and upper classes by 1880. Because millions of voters were recent immigrants who were illiterate, unfamiliar with democracy, or inclined to sell their votes for liquor or money, many people were concerned that America's experiment with democracy might turn out to be a disaster. The absence of the secret ballot made the selling of votes easy at the turn of the century—each political party would print and distribute its own color-coded ballots. Keyssar argued that in such a chaotic and corrupt environment, the main obstacle to women's suffrage was not so much opposition to women voting, as opposition to allowing any more voters at all.

One progressive woman who shared this concern was journalist Jane Grey Swisshelm, who had outstanding credentials as a fearless and pioneering feminist. Swisshelm wrote in 1889 that the government was already "staggering under the ballots of ignorant, irresponsible men." She strongly opposed women's suffrage and believed that if women got the vote, the government could not exist for another ten years.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Senator Joseph E. Brown noted in 1884 that giving the vote to all women would mean giving it to two million black women, 99% of whom could not read the ballot, through



**Figure 5:** In the late 1800s, people were concerned about the harm caused by ignorant voters, including illiterates and recent immigrants. Since American women had not been encouraged to follow politics or world affairs, many people were concerned that letting women vote would increase the problem of the ignorant voter. Although Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton said they supported universal suffrage, they actually favored an educational requirement for all voters, to deal with this concern. As soon as the Nineteenth Amendment passed, Carrie Chapman Catt organized the League of Women Voters to educate women about politics. *Natl. League of Women Voters*, 9/17/24. Photograph by the National Photo Company, 1924. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-npcc-12394. <<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/npc2007012393/>>.

no fault of their own.<sup>35</sup> Responding to such concerns, some suffrage leaders including Stanton proposed an educational requirement for all voters. Other suffragists disagreed with this proposed solution, and Stanton's own daughter, suffragist Harriot Stanton Blatch, publicly debated her on the subject. The issue of the uninformed voter was seen as a real problem, and it led Carrie Chapman Catt to form the League of Women Voters in 1920 to educate women (see **Figure 5**). Women anti-suffragists were not so much opposed to women's

rights, as they were opposed to *immediately* granting the vote to *all* women. However, none of the fifteen college textbooks mentions that the problem of the uninformed woman voter was an obstacle to women's suffrage.

The ignorant-voter issue profoundly affected the campaign in another way as well. When black men were given the vote by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, some educated white women were hugely insulted that illiterate, lower-class men could vote while they could not. Suffragists' speeches often mentioned their resentment about being politically inferior to the lowest classes of men, including immigrants and former slaves. Allowing "Patrick and Sambo and Hans and Yung Tung" to make laws for educated white women "added insult to injury," Stanton told her audiences, and she often repeated that same speech even after abolitionist Frederick Douglass objected to the offensive term "Sambo."<sup>36</sup> This resentment of black and immigrant voters was a huge motivator for the suffragists, possibly even greater than their desire for political power. It wasn't necessarily that the suffragists themselves felt victimized by man-made laws—they admitted as much privately at Seneca Falls—it was the principle of the thing, the *symbolic* equality of the ballot in women's hands.<sup>37</sup> The inequality of giving blacks the vote before women—it is the Negro's hour, the women were told—deeply offended many white suffragists. Stanton and Anthony actively campaigned *against* giving blacks the vote by the Fifteenth Amendment because women were not included, which suggests that their sympathy for racial equality was limited. But the country was not yet ready to support women's right to vote, especially since suffragists did not have the support of a majority of women. We can understand the suffragists' indignation to a degree, but in terms of practical politics, it made no sense to combine an unpopular cause, women's suffrage, with a marginally popular cause, black suffrage, in a single Constitutional amendment. The question of whether to support a black suffrage amendment that omitted women's suffrage was another issue that separated the AWSA from the NWSA.

### **More Power Without the Vote**

From the late 1800s, many people understood the antis' paradoxical idea of civic-minded women having more power over lawmakers

WOMAN'S NON-PARTISAN POWER

WITHOUT THE BALLOT well-informed women who have the welfare of the state at heart are able to influence good legislation by creating an enlightened public opinion.

WITHOUT THE BALLOT women have no political axe to grind and are able to approach public questions on their merits, and without reference to their effect upon the fortunes of any political party.

WITHOUT THE BALLOT women are able to do for the state what men are unable to do because they are bound by party ties. This is woman's special contribution to good government and it is essential to good government.

WITHOUT THE BALLOT ill-informed and selfish women have no power to influence legislation, because they cannot create public opinion. —————BUT—————

WITH THE BALLOT the ill-informed and selfish women will have the same power to influence legislation, through the ballot-box, as the well-informed and public-spirited woman.

WITH THE BALLOT woman's hands would be tied, just as man's hands are now tied, by party considerations, and her influence for good would be lessened by party prejudice.

WITH THE BALLOT women could no longer enlist in behalf of any movement merely as women, but would divide according to old party lines and approach the question as Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, Progressives or members of some other political party.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE WOULD LESSEN THE POWER OF WELL-INFORMED, PUBLIC-SPIRITED WOMEN, AND INCREASE THE POWER OF ILL-INFORMED WOMEN WHOSE PUBLIC IDEALS ARE NOT WHAT THEY OUGHT TO BE.

VOTE "NO" on WOMAN SUFFRAGE on November 2nd, and preserve to the women of Massachusetts their non-partisan power.

Issued by Women's Anti-Suffrage Association of Massachusetts  
655 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass.

Mrs. James M. Codman, President  
Mrs. Charles P. Strong, Secretary

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**Figure 6:** Women anti-suffragists believed that they had more power to influence lawmakers without the vote than with it. People understood the distinction between influencing lawmakers by non-partisan means, as the women's clubs did, and entering the disreputable world of partisan politics, as the suffragists preferred. There is a common misconception that the antis thought a woman's place was strictly in the home. From an anti-suffrage scrapbook, c. 1915. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

without the vote (see **Figure 6**) Yet only two of the fifteen college textbooks mention it.<sup>38</sup> One early believer in the idea was anti-suffragist Catharine Beecher, who from the 1840s worked to open the teaching profession to women. Although she never joined an anti-suffrage organization, Catharine Beecher was a dedicated anti-, but at the same time she was also an indomitable campaigner for women's education and economic equality. Her method of changing society was "first convincing intelligent and benevolent women that what I aimed at was right and desirable, and then securing their influence with their fathers, brothers, and husbands, *and always with success*" (italics added). Her fifty years of campaigning convinced her that all reasonable men "are not only willing but anxious to provide for the good of our sex. They will gladly bestow all that is just, reasonable, and kind, *whenever we unite* in asking" (italics added).<sup>39</sup> The idea of women *uniting* for the common good, rather than dividing along party lines as men did, was a major theme of the women antis. In Catharine Beecher's view, using moral persuasion was quicker than using political methods, and it created less conflict. Antis pointed to the profound anti-slavery influence of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written by Catharine's younger sister Harriet Beecher Stowe, as proof that some women already had tremendous potential to improve society by moral persuasion, without the vote.

The women's clubs that became so popular in the late nineteenth century illustrate the rapidly growing power of non-partisan women who united for the common good. Clubs that were political in nature were excluded from the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the divisive topics of politics and religion were officially taboo. The motto of the Federation was "Unity in Diversity," and their books and periodicals are filled with accounts of their legislative victories from 1890 to 1920. Two-thirds of clubwomen were anti-suffragists in 1903, according to their president, yet they still achieved a long list of legislative successes on domestic issues around the country. Pure food laws were passed as a result of lobbying by women's clubs, though the credit more often goes to Upton Sinclair for writing *The Jungle*. Similarly, the establishment of parks and public libraries and the requirement that children attend school were legislative victories of the clubwomen. They understood the value of presenting a united front to legislators, and they believed that clubwomen had more power to influence lawmakers if they stayed out of the dirty



### THE PITY OF IT!

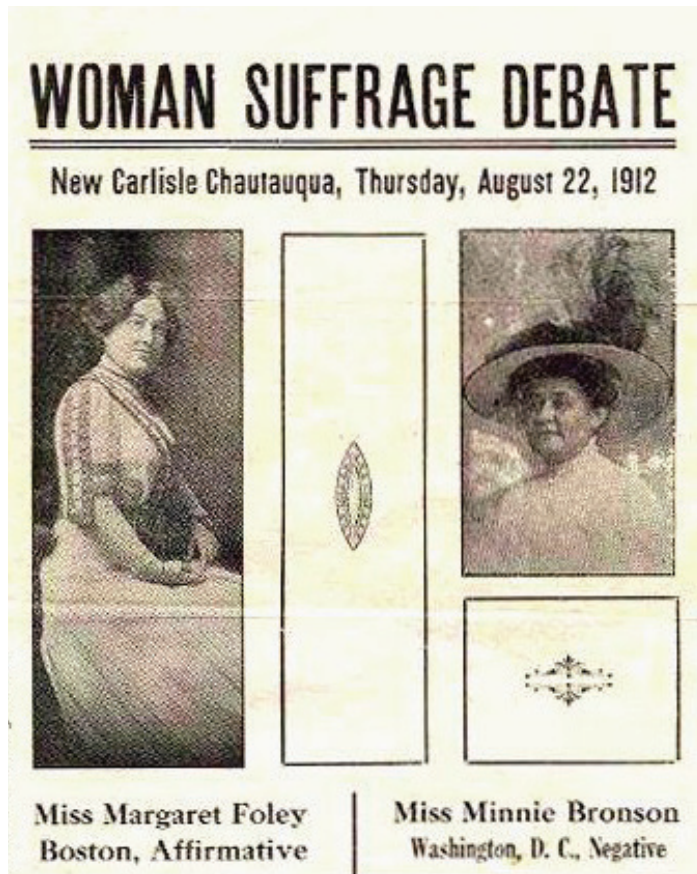
**Figure 7:** Many people regarded politics as a corrupt and disreputable business in the early 1900s, and many women strongly preferred to stay out of it. In this cartoon, a child pleads with her mother not to enter the filthy pool of politics. Swann-Cavett family papers. Courtesy of Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University.



pool of partisan politics, as the antis called it (see **Figure 7**). In the era of Tammany Hall, men's political activity involved deal-making, patronage, personal attacks, bribery, and corruption. Clubwomen and other women activists, as the antis pointed out, were in a separate class: because these respectable white women were working for the good of the community, their motives were never questioned. It was widely accepted that respectable married women occupied the moral high ground, while politicians occupied the moral low ground.

Although lobbying by 1,700,000 organized clubwomen resulted in the passage of many new laws, there is a widespread misconception that women were powerless to influence lawmakers before they could vote. Anti-suffrage women never accepted this view, and as proof, they repeatedly argued that laws favoring women, such as those prohibiting night work and long hours for women factory workers, were better in non-suffrage states than in suffrage states. From 1908 to 1910, fifty-four laws to protect women workers were enacted in non-suffrage states, versus only one such law in suffrage states, according to Minnie Bronson (see **Figure 8**).<sup>40</sup> Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge made similar points many times in *The Woman's Protest Against Woman Suffrage*: she argued that women could get the best results from lawmakers by working with them for the common good, not by dividing along party lines. Even without voting, clubwomen around 1900 actively supported political candidates, lobbied for better laws, circulated petitions, and conducted educational campaigns on dozens of issues, but without connections to any political party. People understood the distinction between women having influence over lawmakers, as clubwomen did, and entering the male world of *partisan* politics, as suffragists advocated. It is an important point, and not one of the fifteen college textbooks makes this distinction.

Suffragists regularly ridiculed clubwomen's so-called back-door method of influencing lawmakers by requesting changes rather than by voting, but Massachusetts anti Alice George disagreed that women's non-partisan methods were either ineffective or indirect: "It is the men who, because they belong to this or that party, must placate some man on the other side—not we... We go straight to the governor, the chairman of the committee, the mayor, or whoever is in highest authority. We have no favors to give and none to ask. If there is anything indirect about this, it is beyond my powers of



**Figure 8:** The organized anti-suffrage movement was primarily a women’s movement, and Minnie Bronson was a dedicated campaigner for the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. She argued that the vote would not raise women’s wages as suffragists claimed, and that laws favoring women were actually better in non-suffrage states than in states where women voted. Bronson and other antis proposed that women should vote on whether they wanted suffrage; just as paradoxically, suffragists repeatedly opposed the idea. Fifteen of fifteen college textbooks overlook the proposed referendums for women only. Debate Handbill, Ohio, 1912. Courtesy of AuthenticHistory.com.

perception.”<sup>41</sup> Because this method of influencing lawmakers is frequently overlooked, there is a misconception that antis wanted women to be powerless. James J. Lorence’s book of readings devotes a chapter to the “cult of domesticity,” saying that antis

wanted women's influence limited to their own homes.<sup>42</sup> Although the antis did emphasize the importance of good mothering in raising the next generation to be moral citizens, anti leaders were strongly in favor of women influencing both lawmakers and society; they simply preferred using non-partisan methods, and were reluctant to give up a known form of influence for an unknown one. As Ida Tarbell saw the issue in 1910, it wasn't some quaint notion of separate spheres that kept so many women away from the women's rights movement, it was fear of losing the valuable influence they already possessed.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, the suffragists also understood the benefit of being non-partisan, and often pointed out that their request for the vote was a non-partisan appeal to lawmakers. When the more-power-without-the-vote argument is overlooked, the antis seem like ultra-conservatives who acted irrationally, against their own best interests. This omission creates a false picture.

Reasonable people could disagree over whether it was better to influence society with the vote or without it. Annie Wittenmyer, founding president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), preferred to use moral persuasion, by holding prayer meetings in saloons, for example. Her successor, Frances Willard, preferred using political power, and she persuaded the WCTU to support suffrage in 1881. Wittenmeyer was so strongly opposed to women's suffrage that she actually quit the organization she had founded.<sup>44</sup>

The idea that civic-minded women had more political power without the vote was recently supported by political scientist Kristin Goss, who showed that women's advocacy for the public good peaked in the 1940s and 1950s, then declined as women became a special interest group, lobbying for their own interests. Similarly, in 1933, Sophonisba Breckinridge noted a sharp decline in women's influence over lawmakers beginning in 1924, when lawmakers realized women did not vote as a bloc.<sup>45</sup>

### **The Suffragists' Public Relations Problems**

Politics makes strange bedfellows, and the suffrage cause was burdened with several allies who were shocking and disreputable in the eyes of many people: free love advocates, critics of the Christian church, polygamists, Socialists, and violent English

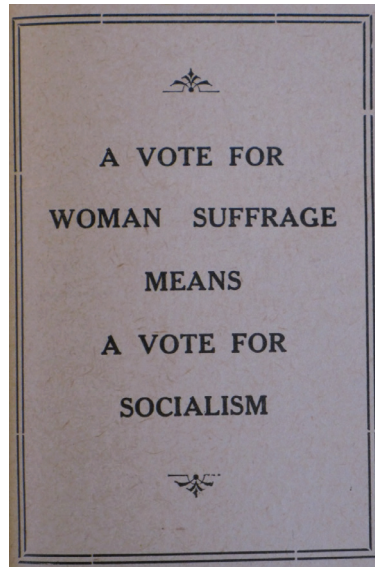


**Figure 9:** In January of 1871, Victoria Woodhull suddenly became the leading American suffragist. The fact that she was also an outspoken champion of free love led to an enormous controversy. Although Woodhull had thousands of followers, many men and women condemned her as the most immoral woman in the country—see, for example, Olive Logan’s book, *Get Thee Behind Me, Satan!* This cartoon mocks Woodhull’s support for free love as a solution to women’s problems. At a time when many women were burdened by having numerous children and alcoholic husbands, Woodhull recommended that people should practice free love, even if they were married. In an age when divorce was considered disreputable, and the science regarding birth control and disease prevention were still primitive, only a few sex radicals agreed with Woodhull that free love would improve women’s lives. *“Get thee behind me, (Mrs.) Satan!”* / *Th. Nast*. Wood engraving by Thomas Nast, 1872. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-74994. <<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/99614224/>>.

suffragettes. Anthony and Stanton accepted financial support for their newspaper, *The Revolution*, in 1868 from George Francis Train, a notorious loose cannon and publicly racist Democrat. Anthony's ally William Lloyd Garrison chastised her in a letter for choosing Train as a collaborator and sharing speakers' platforms with him. Garrison angrily called Train a "semi-lunatic," and wrote that a gorilla would have helped the cause just as much.<sup>46</sup> The fact that Anthony partnered with a flamboyantly racist Democrat was highly irritating to the many suffragists who had strong ties to the Republican-led abolitionist movement.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, Anthony embraced Victoria Woodhull—the famous free love advocate, psychic medium, stockbroker, and presidential candidate—as a suffrage campaigner in January 1871. Woodhull was a charismatic speaker, but she also became notorious for declaring her right to have a different lover every day, if she chose to do so. Woodhull campaigned for free love and suffrage at the same time, was quickly renounced by some suffragists, and in May 1872, Anthony denied her access to a suffrage speakers' platform in New York. This denial came too late, however, as Woodhull's notoriety had severely damaged the suffrage cause. Newspapers around the country published hundreds of articles condemning the free love campaign of Woodhull—the acknowledged leader of the suffragists—sometimes calling her the most immoral woman in the country. The *Philadelphia Evening Telegraph*, for example, warned of "the great danger to the nation that will result if the doctrines of the free love branch of the Woman's Rights party are generally accepted."<sup>48</sup> Bunnell's Wax Museum in New York displayed a figure of Woodhull burning in the fires of hell, and cartoonist Thomas Nast famously labeled Woodhull "Mrs. Satan" (see **Figure 9**). To say the least, the suffragists had public relations problems.

Then in October 1872, Woodhull publicized a sex scandal involving the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, the first president of the American Woman Suffrage Association. Adding fuel to the fire, Woodhull condemned Rev. Beecher, *not* for having sex with the wife of a parishioner, but rather for lying about it. The resulting Beecher trials—criminal, civil, and church trials—were huge news stories from 1873 through 1875. From May 1871 through 1875, newspapers often linked suffrage with Woodhull's radical position on free love, and there were no suffrage victories for the next



**Figure 10:** Socialists were among the most enthusiastic suffrage supporters, which caused public relations problems for the suffragists. Unfortunately for the suffragists, other radical groups such as free-love advocates, Mormon polygamists, violent English suffragettes, and critics of the Christian church were also prominent suffrage supporters. From an anti-suffrage scrapbook, ca. 1915. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

twenty-two years—no state or territory granted suffrage from 1871 through 1892. Much has been written about Woodhull, and about the suffrage movement, but the enormous negative impact of her scandals is rarely pointed out. According to Henry Blackwell and Alice Stone Blackwell, these public relations blunders involving Woodhull and Train were the main cause of the split between the American and the National Woman Suffrage Associations.<sup>49</sup> None of the fifteen college textbooks mentions that these scandals caused and maintained the split.

Anthony's closest ally, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, also sometimes alienated mainstream women. According to Alice Stone Blackwell, Stanton regularly enjoyed upsetting a whole room full of suffragists with her most radical ideas about religion and easy divorce. Stanton's 1895 book, *The Woman's Bible*, in which God was replaced with a "Heavenly Mother and Father," was too radical even for the National

American Woman Suffrage Association, which repudiated it in 1896 after two days of debate, in spite of Stanton's nearly fifty years of leadership. Despite the repudiation, the damage had been done, and suffragists continually had to face accusations that their movement was anti-religious.<sup>50</sup>

Unfortunately for the movement, other fringe elements of society were also suffrage supporters. Mormons were among the first to give women the right to vote, in Utah in 1870. Possibly the Mormons did this in an effort to prevent Congress from outlawing plural marriage, as the Mormons called polygamy. In any case, women in other states circulated petitions to take the vote away from the women of Utah, which Congress did with the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887. For many years afterward, antis pointed out the scandalous connection between suffragists and polygamists.

Adding to the suffragists' public relations problems, the Socialists were the only political party that consistently supported women's right to vote (see **Figure 10**). Socialists preferred collective child rearing, leaving suffragists open to accusations of being anti-family. Among the other parties, Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party gave consistent if lukewarm support to women's suffrage, but that party only existed from 1912 to 1916. The Populist Party and the Prohibition Party also supported suffrage, but were not major political forces. The Republicans were somewhat less hostile to suffrage than the Democrats were, yet both parties were unreliable allies whose promised support often vanished when it came time for lawmakers to vote. Republicans and Democrats finally endorsed suffrage in their national platforms in 1916, but even then, they stopped short of endorsing a federal amendment to enact it. In the age of machine politics, politicians of all major parties feared women as unpredictable voters who could not be controlled as easily as men. Politicians also feared that women might enact Prohibition, and would only vote for candidates with good morals—a frightening situation for many politicians at the time.

Other allies who added to the suffragists' public relations problems were Emmeline Pankhurst's English "suffragettes," who broke windows, set hundreds of arson fires, destroyed churches and valuable works of art, and even attacked politicians with whips.<sup>51</sup> Suffragettes were a small radical faction in the English suffrage movement, yet they received more attention in the American press



**Figure 11:** The Woman’s Party, headed by Alice Paul, picketed the White House for two years in hopes of getting a federal Woman Suffrage Amendment passed. In fact, President Woodrow Wilson was a suffrage supporter who had voted for it in 1915—he simply opposed enacting suffrage *by a federal amendment*. Very few textbooks make this distinction clear. Alice Paul adopted the strategy of attacking the party in power from the English suffragettes; that strategy was more logical in England, under a parliamentary system. Some say that the picketing harmed the progress of suffrage, others say that it helped by making the mainstream suffragists look moderate by comparison. Wilson eventually supported the federal amendment, and urged Congress to pass it “as a war measure.” Woodrow Wilson’s wife Edith, who opposed suffrage, was outraged by the picketing. *Party Watchfires Burn Outside White House, Jan. 1919*. Photograph by Harris & Ewing, 1911. Library of Congress, National Woman’s Party Records, Group II, Container II:276, Folder: Group Photographs Nos. 100-110. <<http://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000303/>>.

than the moderate English suffragists led by Millicent Fawcett. There was widespread concern that American women’s entrance into politics would change them, bringing about a similar wave of violence and destruction of property. If English women had strongly supported suffrage, there might have been less backlash against suffragette violence, yet a house-to-house poll in 1911 found only 16% of English women supported suffrage, 35% opposed it, and the remainder were neutral or made no reply.<sup>52</sup>



The respectable upper-class women who led the antis were reluctant to share their influence with lower-class women. Partly, they enjoyed their status as moral leaders in their communities, but they were also concerned that respectable women like themselves would be outvoted by “vicious women” (meaning prostitutes) in large cities and frontier towns. They feared that prostitutes would be much more likely to vote than other women, in order to keep corrupt local politicians in office and protect their own livelihood. As a result, women antis repeatedly brought up the issue of “vicious women” voters in congressional hearings. By one estimate, there were two million prostitutes in America in the 1870s, and one minister said, “we cannot afford to let this element vote!”<sup>53</sup> Respectable women already had influence over lawmakers, the antis argued; why should they share that influence with prostitutes?

A final public relations problem occurred when Alice Paul's followers, the Woman's Party—the most radical 3% of suffragists<sup>54</sup>—picketed President Woodrow Wilson for two years, beginning in January 1917 (see **Figure 11**). Anyone who sees a photo of women picketing Wilson's White House might conclude that he opposed suffrage, yet in 1915, Wilson had traveled home to New Jersey to vote in favor of suffrage. Despite Wilson's progressive stance, Alice Paul chose to target him and all Democrats, including several members of Congress who had been enthusiastic suffrage supporters for years, simply because they were the party in power and had not passed a federal suffrage amendment. This strategy of picketing the president during wartime was quite radical for the time and alienated many people, yet the picketers gained public sympathy when some of them were arrested and then treated badly in jail. Wilson initially supported suffrage only on a state-by-state basis because he felt bound by the unanimous 1875 Supreme Court decision that only the states, not the federal government, could decide who had the right to vote.<sup>55</sup> Wilson was also aware that white voters in the South fiercely opposed passage of women's suffrage by a federal amendment. Eventually, Wilson backed the Nineteenth Amendment, even over his wife's objections, and suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt thanked him for his support, calling him a great man. One can read an entire book about the picketing, a first-person account by Doris Stevens, and not learn that Wilson supported suffrage by state action and had voted for it—another example of men's support being



**Figure 12:** The AWSA, led by Lucy Stone and her husband, Henry Blackwell, was the mainstream suffrage association in the 1870s. The AWSA welcomed men as leaders and avoided controversies like free love, easy divorce, and attacks on the church. But Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton minimized the contributions of Lucy Stone, of the AWSA, and of men in general when they wrote the *History of Woman Suffrage*. Images courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; Julia Ward Howe photo courtesy of Frederick Hill Meserve's Historical Portraits, ca. 1850-1915 (MS Am 2242), Houghton Library, Harvard University; Bishop Haven photo courtesy of the Methodist Library Image Collection, Drew University, Madison, NJ. Collage by Colin Hussey.

overlooked.<sup>56</sup> Only one textbook mentions that Wilson supported suffrage before and during the picketing.<sup>57</sup>

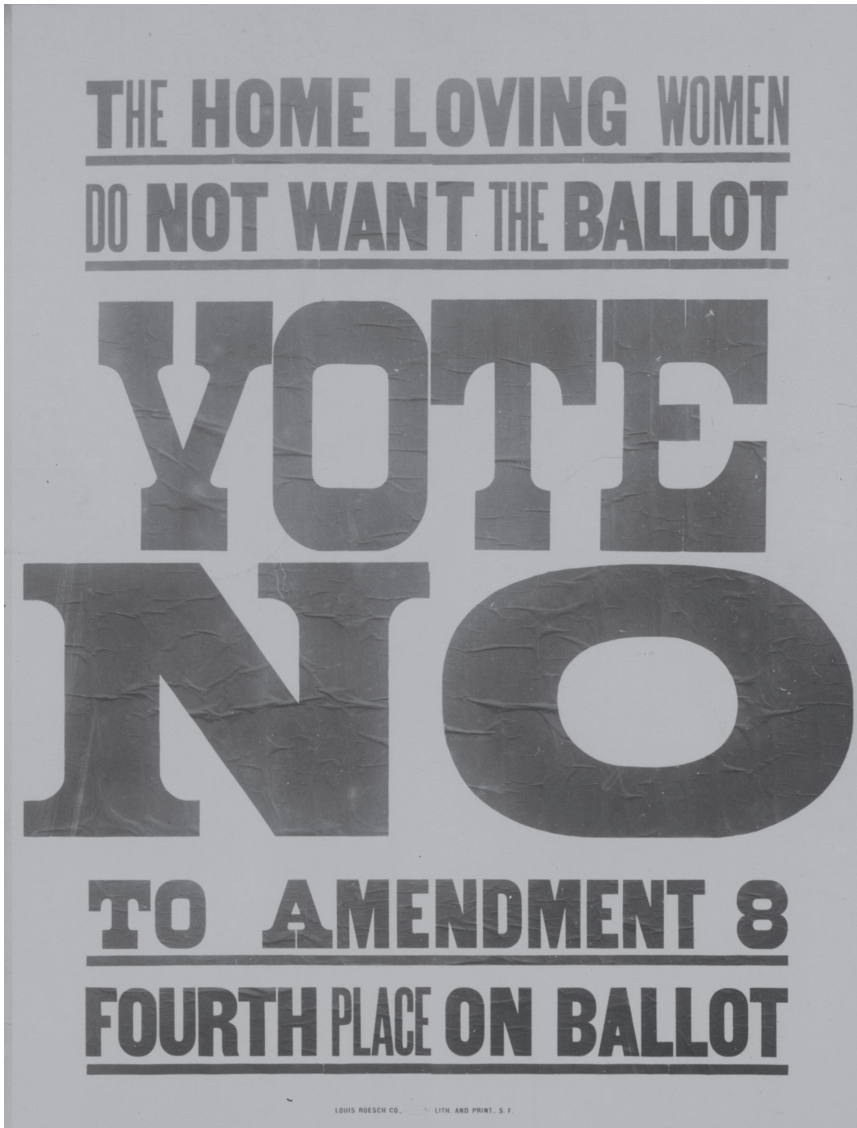
As a result of these issues, suffragists acquired the reputation of being dangerous and disreputable radicals, despite the positive influence of respectable, soft-spoken “saints” like Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, and thousands more like them. It is quite possible that these public relations problems influenced many more people than the antis’ arguments did. Yet only three of fifteen college textbooks mention that suffragists had any public relations problems at all.<sup>58</sup>

### The Origin of the Dominant Narrative

The dominant narrative—that women, on the whole, were far more progressive than men about women’s suffrage—clearly overlooks a great deal of history. How did this narrative come to be accepted? It began when the New York suffragists, led by Anthony and Stanton, wrote the monumental *History of Woman Suffrage*, which documents their suffrage campaigns in each state.

Alice Stone Blackwell’s statement that the suffrage struggle “has never been a fight of woman against man” reflected the view of her mother, Lucy Stone, who joined William Lloyd Garrison in pioneering the suffrage movement one year before Seneca Falls and three years before Anthony became involved. Lucy Stone’s cooperative attitude toward men can be seen in the fact that she, unlike Anthony and Stanton, welcomed men like Henry Blackwell and Thomas Wentworth Higginson into the American Woman Suffrage Association as leaders. Lucy Stone and her colleagues never attacked the church or the institution of marriage, and so they were viewed as more moderate than Anthony and Stanton.

The *History of Woman Suffrage*, however, was written by Anthony, Stanton, and other suffragists whose attitudes toward men differed from Stone’s. They excluded men from leadership roles in their National Woman Suffrage Association—unlike the AWSA (see **Figure 12**)—and they promoted the idea of women as powerless victims of unjust, man-made laws. Due to animosity between the New York (NWSA) and Boston (AWSA) branches of the suffragists, Anthony and Stanton at first planned to omit Lucy Stone’s contributions entirely from the *History of Woman Suffrage*. One chapter on Stone and the American Woman Suffrage Association



**Figure 13:** *The Home Loving Women Do Not Want the Ballot. Vote No To Amendment Eight. Fourth Place on Ballot.* Photograph by Louis Roesch Co., Lith. And Print., S.F., 1911. Library of Congress, National Woman's Party Records, Group I, Container I:159, Folder: California National Woman's Party Activity. <<http://www.loc.gov/item/mnwp000333/>>.

was finally included at the insistence of Harriot Stanton Blatch, who warned that reviewers of the book would ridicule its authors for such an enormous omission.<sup>59</sup> As Elna C. Green has pointed out, historians have often relied on the *History of Woman Suffrage* and other documents written by suffragists, and consequently have accepted a great deal of suffragist campaign rhetoric at face value.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps if Lucy Stone and her colleagues had written their own six-volume *History of Woman Suffrage*, textbooks today would put less emphasis on the struggle of women against men, and more emphasis on their cooperation. Fortunately, *The Woman's Journal* documents the viewpoint of Lucy Stone, Henry Blackwell, and their daughter Alice Stone Blackwell, providing an alternative to the *History of Woman Suffrage*.

The gradual evolution of history textbooks is an interesting subject for students to explore. Textbooks written during the campaign said little or nothing about suffrage. Lawton B. Evans (1914), for example, said almost nothing about women at all, except for a few female patriots. Emerson David Fite (1919) and David Saville Muzzey (1920) each gave women's suffrage one paragraph, and neither author implied that the campaign was a fight of women against men.<sup>61</sup> Wilbur Fisk Gordy (1928) described suffrage as a natural extension of democratic ideals, again without implying that suffrage was favored by most women or opposed by most men. In contrast to the modern idea that the "cult of true womanhood" oppressed women, Gordy was able to write of the changes in women's lives in a positive way: "the transfer of many household duties to the mill and the factory [released women's] energy for the more public enterprises. The activity of women in many forms of public service has fostered a finer public spirit and a better civic life."<sup>62</sup>

Hubert R. Cornish and Thomas H. Hughes (1929) mentioned eight of the female suffrage leaders, overlooking the male supporters, and described the campaign as a "struggle" that encountered unspecified opposition.<sup>63</sup> In 1930, textbook author Thomas M. Marshall took a huge step toward the modern approach when he subtly implied that all or most American women were in favor of women's rights: "The movement was progressing too slowly to please the women."<sup>64</sup> Marshall was also a pioneer in making statements like "Before the

# Special Privileges New York Women Have Secured Under Male Suffrage

Married woman not required to contribute to support of family.

Woman may work, earn money, and spend it as she pleases.

May own real and personal property and dispose of it or sell it without her husband's knowledge or consent.

Husband cannot dispose of real estate without wife's consent.

Wife cannot be required to pay husband's bills, even if contracted for support of family.

Husband must pay wife's bills, whether for the family or for her own personal expenses.

If wife obtains divorce, husband must pay alimony.

If husband obtains divorce, even through wife's fault, she pays nothing.

Wife may have millions and cut her husband off without a cent.

Husband cannot cut off wife without dower right.

If husband owns home, he cannot sell or mortgage it without wife's consent. If wife owns it, she may do as she pleases with it, and without consulting him at all.

If husband fails to support wife, he may be arrested and prosecuted criminally. Wife cannot be compelled to support husband under any circumstances, no matter how rich she may be, nor how poor he may become.

A father cannot by will appoint a guardian for minor children against the wishes of the mother.

All women are exempt from military service.

All women are exempt from jury duty.

**Woman Is Not Discriminated Against  
by Any New York State Law**

**Vote NO on Woman Suffrage!**



*Margaret Foley  
Collection*

**Figure 14:** Antis often argued that women had some important rights that men did not have, and they were concerned about losing those rights if women got the vote. College textbooks generally overlook this aspect of suffrage history. From an anti-suffrage scrapbook, ca. 1915. Courtesy of the New York Public Library.

Civil War women had few educational, legal, or political rights,” overlooking the antis’ argument that women had some important rights that men did not have—the right to use the lifeboats when a ship sank, the right to be supported by their husbands or fathers, the right to be excused from jury duty, the right not to be drafted, and so on<sup>65</sup> (see **Figure 14**). Suffrage historiography is a fascinating example of how one can make dozens of statements that are all true, and yet present a picture that is misleading or even false. Lisa Tetrault’s recent book *The Myth of Seneca Falls* is an important contribution to the literature on myths in women’s history.<sup>66</sup>

Charles A. and Mary R. Beard continued the evolution of suffrage writing in 1944; their textbook mentioned male opposition to suffrage, and subtly implied that women were generally in favor of women’s rights—“women carried on their agitation with unremitting tenacity.”<sup>67</sup> The writers who lived through the suffrage campaigns must have known about female opposition, but none of these seven early textbooks mentions it. Possibly, these textbook authors thought that women’s opposition was too complicated to explain, or perhaps they were not comfortable writing about Victoria Woodhull, free love, prostitution, and easy divorce in books for young adults. Hopefully now, after fifty years of the sexual revolution, these topics can be introduced into suffrage history at an age-appropriate level. These early textbooks also give teachers an opportunity to discuss the authors’ various perspectives. Mary R. Beard was a strong supporter of Alice Paul and a leader of the National Woman’s Party; can we assume that she overlooked the women antis because she had no sympathy for their arguments?

### Primary Sources

Many primary sources can be obtained with some effort, and some of them are fascinating: Anthony and Stanton’s *The Revolution*, Woodhull and Claflin’s *Weekly*, and George Francis Train’s *The Great Epigram Campaign of Kansas* make for lively reading, and show the radical side of the movement.<sup>68</sup> Some of this material is unsuitable for children.<sup>69</sup> A rare example of suffrage humor is Alice Duer Miller’s book, *Are Women People?*<sup>70</sup> Among the most understandable primary sources by and about the antis are Mary Caswell’s 1911 speech to the California Senate; *Good Housekeeping*’s “Non-Militant

Defenders of the Home”; *Anti-suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women*; Grace Goodwin’s letter to Senator Henry Blair; and *The Woman’s Protest Against Woman Suffrage*, especially the early years, 1912-1915.<sup>71</sup> Alice Stone Blackwell’s list of thirty-one anti arguments with suffragist replies is also interesting, if one-sided.<sup>72</sup> Especially interesting is her reply to the argument that “Women Do Not Want It”: “Many changes for the better have been made during the last half century in the laws, written and unwritten, relating to women. Everybody approves of these changes now, because they have become accomplished facts. But not one of them would have been made to this day, if it had been necessary to wait till the majority of women asked for it.”

The most readily available primary sources are searchable historic newspapers, such as *The New York Times* and the Library of Congress’s Chronicling America webpage, <[chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov)>. An excellent primary source on the split between the NWSA and the AWSA is Henry Blackwell’s 1899 article, “Life and Work of Miss Anthony.”<sup>73</sup> Leaders of both groups had kept the details of the split as quiet as possible for thirty years, until that article was published; Blackwell’s view of the split is still overlooked in most college textbooks today. For primary sources available online, see **Appendix B**.

### The Challenge of Understanding the Antis

For many reasons, the ideas of the women antis are difficult to understand. Many of the antis’ numerous arguments seem illogical or trivial today, so it is hard to imagine that they once seemed quite logical to millions of women. Many suffragists were gifted at rhetoric and public speaking, whereas the antis did not have a knack for memorable slogans. Writers for nearly a century have overlooked or minimized women’s opposition to voting: for example, an article on woman suffrage in the 1921 *Collier’s Encyclopedia* falsely stated that the *only* opposition had come from the liquor interests and machine politicians. Since almost no antis left us their papers, scrapbooks, or autobiographies, historians have had to rely on accounts written by suffragists, who dismiss the antis’ ideas as foolish. Adding to the confusion, some writers, such as Eileen Krador, have lumped the ideas of women antis together with those



of anti-suffrage men, despite the differences.<sup>74</sup> Finally, the antis are sometimes described as conservative, overlooking the ways in which they were progressive on other women's issues. Some people today assume that the antis must have been right-wing fundamentalist Christians who opposed women's rights; it is not a good assumption. The controversial issues of abortion and lesbianism, which alienated many Christian women from feminism beginning in the 1960s, were not issues in the suffrage debate. Much research remains to be done on the motivations of individual women antis, and the views of middle- and lower-class antis are particularly obscure because the movement's writers were generally upper-class.

Suffrage leaders frequently tried to claim more female followers than they really had, and few people question their claims. Both the Library of Congress and the Metropolitan Museum in New York have used the title "By Popular Demand" for exhibitions on woman suffrage. In light of the evidence presented here, the ideas that most or all women eventually supported suffrage, and that the struggle was a fight of most women against most men, need to be reexamined.

Presenting a balanced picture of women's attitudes toward the suffrage campaign is a real challenge for a history teacher, as textbooks and other scholarly works do little to explain or even mention the antis' many reasons for supporting their cause. Two documentaries from PBS promote the misconception that the struggle was a fight of women against men. *One Woman, One Vote* talks about "half the citizens in America keeping the other half from the ballot." *Not for Ourselves Alone* says that "it is a movement about men denying women the right to vote."<sup>75</sup> This misconception needs to be corrected.

### **Suggestions for Future Textbooks**

In this writer's opinion, textbooks could be improved in several ways. As a starting point, they should contain these three points: (1) that suffrage was never desired by a majority of women before 1920; (2) that more women were organized against suffrage than in favor of it until 1916; and (3) that for many years, men were on the whole more progressive on the issue than women were. Also, in this writer's opinion, there should be more focus on the western states, and more focus on Lucy Stone.

A history of women's suffrage should focus more on the West because all eleven victories for full women's suffrage before 1916 happened west of the Mississippi. The western style of winning victories was quite different from the antagonistic "hurrah campaigns" of the East.<sup>76</sup> A useful short summary of women's suffrage in the West is "Pioneers at the Polls," by Rebecca Edwards, and T. A. Larson has written extensively about suffrage in Wyoming.<sup>77</sup> Students could be asked to consider the idea that new societies in the West were more open to new ideas about women's rights.

A good history of the East Coast suffragists, in this writer's opinion, should focus more on Lucy Stone and her husband, Henry Blackwell, and less on Anthony and Stanton, both because Stone was the earlier leader and because Stone had many more followers when the eastern suffrage movement split in two. In 1870, thirteen state suffrage associations affiliated themselves with Stone's AWSA, while only Wisconsin chose to affiliate with Anthony and Stanton's more radical NWSA.<sup>78</sup> A history focusing on Stone and the American Woman Suffrage Association would naturally include more of the male leaders of the movement, as well as the model marriage contract written by Henry Blackwell. No history of the AWSA has been published yet—this could be a promising area of research for graduate students.

A good history of suffrage should emphasize that *men and women together* made the world the way it is. It could begin with William Lloyd Garrison working for women's rights with the Grimké sisters and Anna Dickinson, Lucretia and James Mott leading at Seneca Falls, California Senator A. A. Sargent working with his wife Ellen, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton receiving encouragement from William Lloyd Garrison's writings, as well as from her husband Henry Stanton. One could include the alternating male and female presidents of the AWSA: the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, Lucy Stone, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Julia Ward Howe, Bishop Gilbert Haven, Mary Livermore, William Lloyd Garrison, Henry B. Blackwell, Dr. Mary F. Thomas, and William D. Foulke.<sup>79</sup> One could write a great deal about the hundreds of ministers who made their churches available for suffragists to deliver their lectures, and who preached in favor of it.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, when writing about anti-suffragists, one could focus on men and women working together: the Rev. and Mrs. Lyman

Beecher, President and Mrs. Benjamin Ide Wheeler of the University of California, Senator and Mrs. James W. Wadsworth of New York, as well as antis Ida Tarbell, Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge, Annie Nathan Meyer, and Minnie Bronson. In this writer's opinion, any history of suffrage that includes Susan B. Anthony and the suffrage associations should also include Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge and the all-female National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. Perhaps the antis should be given as much space as the suffragists, because they outnumbered suffragists before 1916, and because their reasons are far harder to understand. Catharine Beecher should not be used to represent all female antis; as early as 1874, she was regarded as a relic of a bygone age.<sup>81</sup> Nor should the "cult of true womanhood" be overemphasized, as labeling something a "cult" is not likely to lead to an objective discussion.<sup>82</sup>

Also, writers should not assume that all the antis acted for the same reason, or that the antis' pamphlets and public speeches give a full picture of their motivations, which are still somewhat hidden from us. It is very difficult to find a summary of the women's anti-suffrage movement that clearly explains their reasons, their numbers, and their passion for their cause.

People supported suffrage for at least three reasons, and white women's resentment of uneducated black and immigrant voters was a huge factor that should be mentioned. Many prominent people supported suffrage because they felt that women's votes would "elevate the standard of civilization; that the State would gain more than woman by her enfranchisement."<sup>83</sup> The desire to change unjust, man-made laws should not be over-emphasized, as many such changes were made before women got the vote.<sup>84</sup>

As an exercise in critical thinking, students could be asked to consider the rosy promises made by suffragists: no more war, no more prostitution, and equal wages for women once suffrage was achieved. These could be contrasted with the gloomy predictions of the antis: an end to chivalry (American men were sometimes described as the most chivalrous in the world), more conflict between men and women, more divorce, and the end of the family. The best prediction of all was made by a suffragist who said that the antis would soon vanish from history and be completely forgotten.

The social history of suffrage is far more complex than textbooks usually indicate. A good history should mention that political

meetings often took place in saloons, and that voting was often done in saloons and stables, not places where respectable women were comfortable. A balanced history should mention that political affairs were “pervaded by a coarse and repulsive vulgarity” that kept many educated and successful men from even voting, and that many people believed no man could keep his integrity if he entered politics.<sup>85</sup> Rather than ridicule the idea that women were considered too fragile to drop a ballot in a box, a good history should include at least one vivid account of election violence. For example, when Isabella Bird saw two dead bodies in New York and a roadway slippery with blood, she was told not to worry: it was “only an election riot” in which a few hundred people were killed.<sup>86</sup> Violence at the polls was a regular occurrence in the late 1800s, and it is hard to imagine women being comfortable in such situations.

A history of women’s suffrage should also include the growing power of the women’s clubs from 1890 to 1920, and the considerable success that these women had in influencing state and local lawmakers by non-partisan means. It should also make clear that the suffragists were a minority in the women’s clubs in those years, probably even when the clubs officially began to endorse suffrage.<sup>87</sup> As in the country as a whole, suffragists in the women’s clubs were an active and highly visible minority, not a majority. Also, to be fair, any statements that women were *not allowed* to serve on juries, that women were not allowed to vote, and that married women were not allowed to own property, should be balanced by statements that many women *did not want* to serve on juries, that many progressive women strongly opposed suffrage, and that married women were “almost universally” opposed to controlling their own property.<sup>88</sup> It should also be stated that the right to vote very gradually expanded from property-owning white men to include most white and black men; and that some Native Americans and Asians had to wait even longer for the right to vote than women did.

Students and scholars will write numerous essays and articles on women’s suffrage as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment approaches in 2020. Will students have to rely on textbooks that portray the struggle primarily as a fight of women against men? Hopefully, textbooks will eventually devote more space to men’s support for women’s suffrage, and the many reasons for women’s opposition.

## Notes

1. *The Woman's Journal*, April 25, 1914, as quoted in Abigail Scott Duniway, *Path Breaking: An Autobiographical History of the Equal Suffrage Movement in Pacific Coast States* (1914; Reprint, New York: Schocken, 1971), 296; Mary Gray Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1944), 160.

2. Paul S. Boyer, Clifford E. Clark Jr., Sandra McNair Hawley, Joseph F. Kett, Neal Salisbury, Harvard Sitkoff, and Nancy Woloch, *The Enduring Vision: A History of the American People* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006); Alan Brinkley, *American History, A Survey Vol. 2* (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 2003); Mark C. Carnes and John A. Garraty, *The American Nation: A History of the United States* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008); Robert A. Divine, T. H. Breen, George M. Frederickson, R. Hal Williams, Ariela J. Gross, H. W. Brands, and Randy Roberts, *America Past and Present* (Boston, MA: Longman, 2011); Ellen Carol DuBois and Lynn Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes: An American History with Documents* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009); John Mack Faragher, Mari Jo Buhle, Daniel Czitrom, and Susan H. Armitage, *Out of Many: A History of the American People* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2009); James A. Henretta, David Brody, and Lynn Dumenil, *America's History* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008); James J. Lorence, *Enduring Voices: Document Sets to Accompany the Enduring Vision: A History of the American People* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2000); Pauline Maier, Merritt Roe Smith, Alexander Keyssar, and Daniel J. Kevles, *Inventing America: A History of the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006); Gary B. Nash, Julie Roy Jeffrey, John R. Howe, Peter J. Frederick, Allen F. Davis, Allan M. Winkler, Charlene Mires, Paul S. Boyer, and Carla Gardina Pestana, *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society Vol. 2* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008); Mary Beth Norton, David M. Katzman, David W. Blight, Howard P. Chudacoff, Frederik Logevall, Beth Bailey, Thomas G. Paterson, and William M. Tuttle, Jr., *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2007); Robert V. Remini, *A Short History of the United States* (New York: Harper, 2008); David Reynolds, *America, Empire of Liberty: A New History of the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2009); James L. Roark, Michael P. Johnson, Patricia Cline Cohen, Sarah Stage, and Susan M. Hartmann, *The American Promise: A History of the United States* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012); George Brown Tindall and David E. Shi, *America: A Narrative History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

3. Susan B. Anthony and Ida Husted Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage Vol. 4* (Rochester, NY: Susan B. Anthony, 1902), xxii. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage Vol. 2* (New York: Fowler & Wells, 1882), 386.

4. Faragher et al., *Out of Many*, 360; Ellen Carol DuBois, ed., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton/Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writings, Speeches* (New York: Schocken, 1981), 33.

5. Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 353.

6. Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1923), 272, 350.
7. Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 131, 155.
8. William O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle, 1969), 57.
9. Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 7; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 85; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother*, 85, 155; Susan E. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 330.
10. Paul S. Boyer et al., *Enduring Vision*, 449; Nash et al., *American People*, 684. Boyer et al. mention Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge, but not her organization. *The American People* by Nash et al., the only textbook that mentions the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, omits the fact that it was a women's organization.
11. Jane Jerome Camhi, *Women Against Women: American Anti-Suffragism, 1880-1920* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1994); Thomas J. Jablonsky, *The Home, Heaven, and Mother Party: Female Antisuffragists in the United States, 1868-1920* (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson, 1994).
12. Anna Howard Shaw, "Equal Suffrage: A Problem of Political Justice," in *Women in Public Life* (Philadelphia, PA: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1914), 95.
13. Rebecca Edwards, Review of *Not for Ourselves Alone* (video) in *The Journal for MultiMedia History* 3 (2000), <<http://www.albany.edu/jmmh/vol3/v3.html>>.
14. Roark et al., *American Promise*, 650; Brinkley, *American History*, 586; Tindall and Shi, *Narrative History*, 885; Reynolds, *Empire of Liberty*, 253.
15. Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, 76, 81, 187; Anne Benjamin, *A History of the Anti-suffrage Movement in the United States from 1895 to 1920* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 250; Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother*, 76-77.
16. Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 87-88.
17. James J. Kenneally, "Woman Suffrage and the Massachusetts 'Referendum' of 1895," *The Historian* 30, no. 4 (August 1968): 617-633; Susan Goodier, *The New York State Anti-Suffrage Movement* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 50-51.
18. Shanna Stevenson, *Women's Votes, Women's Voices* (Tacoma, WA: Washington State Historical Society, 2009), 10.
19. Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother*, 31; *Godey's Ladies Book*, May 1871.
20. "Women May Decide Suffrage Question," *The New York Times*, February 9, 1910.
21. "Suffrage Advocates Win First Victory," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 17, 1911.
22. Lyman Abbott, "Ask Her," *The Outlook*, April 19, 1913, 839; Lyman Abbott, "Don't Ask Her," *The Outlook*, May 10, 1913, 54; Lyman Abbott, *Reminiscences* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1915), 93.

23. Goodier, *New York Anti-Suffrage*, 84.
24. Peck, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 285.
25. *Hearing Before the Committee on Woman Suffrage, U. S. Senate, 65<sup>th</sup> Congress, First Session, on S. J. Res. 2, April 20, 1917*, 87.
26. Catt, *Suffrage and Politics*, 295-296; Goodier, *New York Anti-Suffrage*, 151.
27. Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother*, 36-61.
28. Benjamin, *Anti-Suffrage*, 159; Thomas Jablonsky, "Female Opposition: The Anti-Suffrage Campaign," in *Votes for Women: The Struggle for Suffrage Revisited*, ed. Jean H. Baker (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 125; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 92; Marshall, *Splintered Sisterhood*, passim; Susan E. Marshall, "In Defense of Separate Spheres: Class and Status Politics in the Antisuffrage Movement," *Social Forces* 65, no. 2 (December 1986): 328; Goodier, *New York Anti-Suffrage*, 92, 134, 168.
29. Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).
30. Jablonsky, *Home, Heaven, and Mother*, 109-110; Camhi, *Women Against Women*, 129; Green, *Southern Strategies*, 130-143.
31. For more on Mrs. Dodge's life, see Nancy Dunnan and Pauline Webel, *The Jewells and the Dodges: An American Saga* (Greenvale, NY: The Jewell Trust, 1987).
32. Personal communications, March 9, 2011 and May 5, 2011.
33. Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
34. Jane Grey Swisshelm, *Half a Century* (Chicago, IL: Jansen, McClurg, 1880), 144-145.
35. *Report of the Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage, 48<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report No. 399*, March 28, 1884, 5.
36. Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 131. Stanton had grown up in a slave-owning family in New York State; see Kathi Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 22-29.
37. Judith Wellman, *The Road to Seneca Falls: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the First Woman's Rights Convention* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 192.
38. Boyer et al., *Enduring Vision*, 449; DuBois and Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes*, 471. Boyer et al. say that for women "to invade the male realm of electoral politics would tarnish their moral and spiritual role." DuBois and Dumenil say that entering politics "would cost women their moral influence over men," 471. Both mentions of the more-power-without-the-vote idea are very brief.
39. Helen Kendrick Johnson, *Woman and the Republic: A Survey of the Woman-Suffrage Movement in the United States and a Discussion of the Claims and Arguments of its Foremost Advocates* (1897; Reprint, Fairford, United Kingdom: Echo Library, 2009), 108.
40. Minnie Bronson, *The Wage-Earning Woman and the State* (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to

Women, 1910). This particular argument of Bronson's is not entirely convincing; the suffrage states were western states with very little industry, so women there had little need for protective laws.

41. Quoted in Benjamin, *Anti-Suffrage*, 286.

42. Lorence, *Enduring Voices*, 85-90.

43. Ida Tarbell, "The American Woman: Those Who Did Not Fight," in *The American Magazine* 69, March 1910, 669.

44. Ruth Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 47, 118-119.

45. Kristin A Goss, *The Paradox of Gender Equality: How American Women's Groups Gained and Lost Their Public Voice* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013); Sophonisba P. Breckinridge, *Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), 267-269.

46. Alice Stone Blackwell, *Lucy Stone, Pioneer of Women's Rights* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1930), 222-251. Henry B. Blackwell, "Life and Work of Miss Anthony," *The Woman's Journal*, March 11, 1899, 73-75.

47. Train is often called a Democrat today although he sometimes described himself as an independent; his public positions of defending slavery and opposing the Civil War as a way to end slavery were much closer to the Democratic than the Republican positions.

48. "Marriage and Divorce," *Philadelphia Daily Evening Telegraph*, May 27, 1871.

49. Henry B. Blackwell, "Life and Work of Miss Anthony." Anthony's *History of Woman Suffrage* also overlooks these issues, saying that the split was caused by a difference in methods and some unspecified personal hostilities. Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage Vol. 2*, 400, 406.

50. Kern, *Mrs. Stanton's Bible*, 181-199.

51. Melanie Phillips, *The Ascent of Woman* (London, United Kingdom: Abacus, 2012), 236, 255. Mrs. Charles P. Strong, "Woman Suffrage and War," in *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women* (Boston, MA: Forum, 1916), 67-68. Mrs. Strong introduced her discussion of suffragette violence by saying, "The incongruity of suffragists attempting to pose as a peace party is obvious to anyone with a memory and a sense of humor."

52. Abbott, "Ask Her."

53. *Report of the Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage, 48<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report No. 399*, March 28, 1884, 8; *Report of the Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage, 50<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, Report No. 2543*, February 7, 1889, 4; Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 63-64.

54. Harriot Stanton Blatch and Alma Lutz, *Challenging Years: The Memoirs of Harriot Stanton Blatch* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), 267. Carrie Chapman Catt claimed that she, not Alice Paul, represented 97% of the suffragists.

55. *Minor v. Happersett*; see Tetrault, *Myth of Seneca Falls*, 73-74.

56. Doris Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom* (1920; Reprint, Chicago, IL: Lakeside, 2008).

57. Tindall and Shi, *Narrative History*, 976.



58. Brinkley, *American History*, 586; DuBois and Dumenil, *Through Women's Eyes*, 279, 412; Boyer et al., *Enduring Vision*, 511, 703. Brinkley mentions that suffragists were associated with divorce and promiscuity; DuBois and Dumenil mention divorce reform and prostitutes; and Boyer et al. mention arson, violence, and divorce. All of these mentions of public relations problems are brief.

59. Blatch and Lutz, *Challenging Years*, 61-63.

60. Green, *Southern Strategies*, 31, note 3, 213.

61. Lawton B. Evans, *The Essential Facts of American History* (Chicago, IL: B. H. Sanborn, 1914). Emerson David Fite, *History of the United States* (New York: Henry Holt, 1919), 527. David Saville Muzzey, *An American History* (Boston, MA: Ginn, 1920), 533.

62. Wilbur Fisk Gordy, *History of the United States* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), 492-493.

63. Hubert R. Cornish and Thomas H. Hughes, *History of the United States for Schools* (Philadelphia, PA: Hinds, Hayden and Eldredge, 1929), 535.

64. Thomas Marshall, *American History* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 666-668.

65. Hundreds of writers have pointed out laws that discriminated against women; the antis pointed out laws that treated women better than men. This author has never seen a thorough, impartial discussion of the issue. Richard H. Chused has written about property law in the early years. Richard H. Chused, "Married Women's Property Law: 1800-1850," *Georgetown Law Journal* 71 (June 1983): 1359-1425.

66. Tetrault, *Myth of Seneca Falls*, 111, 186, 192. Tetrault points out that Anthony exaggerated the press's hostility to the women at Seneca Falls; in fact, most press coverage was positive or neutral.

67. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *A Basic History of the United States* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1944), 383-385.

68. George Francis Train, *The Great Epigram Campaign of Kansas* (Leavenworth, KS: Prescott & Hume, 1867). See also George Francis Train, *Train's Great Speeches in England on Slavery and Emancipation* (Philadelphia, PA: T. B. Peterson, c. 1862).

69. For example, an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* quoted *Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly* as follows: "Chastity is not a virtue. It is rather a crime against nature." "How Some Women Write," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 14, 1871. Another touchy topic is "the Negro question," as Woodrow Wilson referred to it. There was a fear in the South that allowing women to vote would alter the racial balance of power. Some whites were willing to threaten black male voters with clubs to keep them from the polls, but felt they couldn't do that with black women. See Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, 89, 354. Regarding Wilson, see Blatch and Lutz, *Challenging Years*, 268-269.

70. Alice Duer Miller, *Are Women People? A Book of Rhymes for Suffrage Times* (1915; Reprint, Gloucester, United Kingdom: Dodo Press 2012). Here is a sample of how Miller poked fun at anti-suffrage arguments: "Why We Oppose

Pockets for Women. 1. Because pockets are not a natural right. 2. Because the great majority of women do not want pockets. If they did they would have them. 3. Because whenever women have had pockets they have not used them..."

71. Mrs. George A. Caswell, *Address in Opposition to Woman Suffrage before the Senate Judiciary Committee*, January 1911, in Meyer Lissner papers box 59, folder 900, Stanford University; Grace D. Goodwin, "Non-Militant Defenders of the Home," *Good Housekeeping*, July 1912, 75-80; Bernbaum, *Anti-Suffrage Essays by Massachusetts Women*; see especially the chapter "Woman Suffrage a Menace to Social Reform," by Margaret C. Robinson; Grace Goodwin's letter is included in *Report of the Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage, 50<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2nd Session, Report No. 2543*, February 7, 1889, 10-13. Goodwin is identified only as "The Author of Letters from a Chimney Corner."

72. Alice Stone Blackwell, "Objections Answered," in *Woman Suffrage: History Arguments and Results*, ed. Frances M. Björkman and Annie G. Porritt (New York: National Woman Suffrage Publishing Company, 1915), 161-202.

73. Henry B. Blackwell, "Life and Work of Miss Anthony."

74. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement*. Besides Jane Grey Swisshelm, Annie Nathan Meyer may have been the only female American anti who published an autobiography: Annie Nathan Meyer, *It's Been Fun* (New York: Schuman, 1951).

75. *One Woman, One Vote*, written and produced by Ruth Pollak (1995, PBS), DVD; *Not for Ourselves Alone*, by Ken Burns and Paul Barnes (1999, PBS), DVD.

76. Regarding western attitudes toward eastern leaders, see Duniway, *Path Breaking*, 116, 209-211, 244.

77. Rebecca Edwards, "Pioneers at the Polls: Woman Suffrage in the West," in *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, ed. Linda K. Kerber, Jane Sherron De Hart, and Cornelia Hughes Dayton (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Unfortunately, the chapter omits the women antis. T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1978).

78. Barbara Goldsmith, *Other Powers: The Age of Suffrage, Spiritualism, and the Scandalous Victoria Woodhull* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999), 218.

79. Anthony and Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage Vol. 4*, 428.

80. Björkman and Porritt, *Woman Suffrage*, 227. For example, in San Francisco, the Rev. Charles Aked was a prominent campaigner for women's suffrage. He said that "Nothing since the coming of Christ ever promised so much for the ultimate good of the human race as the intellectual, moral and political emancipation of women." The clergy's support for suffrage increased during the late 1800s, and was probably greatest in the West and weakest in the South. The Catholic Church opposed women entering politics, but never took an official position on suffrage. Most suffragists and most anti-suffragists were Protestant.

81. "Catharine Beecher's Appeal," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 9, 1874.

82. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 151-174.

83. "Report [on Proposed Amendment to the California Constitution]," in *Appendix to Journals of Senate and Assembly, of the Nineteenth Session of the*

*Legislature of the State of California, Vol. 3* (Sacramento, CA: T. A. Springer, 1872), 8-9.

84. Chused, "Married Women's Property Law."

85. Isabella Bird, *The Englishwoman in America* (1856; Reprint, Cologne, Germany: Könemann, 2000), 96, 333-334.

86. *Ibid.*, 311. See also Abbott, *Reminiscences*, 110-112. Regarding election violence in Wyoming, see Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage Vol. 3* (Rochester, NY: Susan B. Anthony, 1886), 728-729. Wyoming's first election was so violent that "peaceful people did not dare to walk the streets, in some of the towns." The next year (1870), when women voted, the election was peaceful.

87. "Anti-Suffragists Deny Endorsement," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 7, 1911. The national "endorsement" by clubwomen came in 1914, and led to a similar objection by antis: that only a noisy minority of clubwomen had endorsed suffrage. Regarding clubwomen, see Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980). However, Blair minimizes anti-suffragism among clubwomen.

88. Anthony wrote that married women were "almost universally" opposed to laws that would give them control of their own property. Anthony and Harper, *History of Woman Suffrage Vol. 4*, xxiii. Wyoming women were the first to serve on juries, and though they were commended for doing a good job, the plan was soon abandoned because many women preferred to be excused.

## Appendix A

### Questions to Encourage Critical Thinking

1. Many textbooks give only a few reasons why the suffrage movement took seventy-two years to achieve its goal. People who were active in the campaign gave many reasons: Stanton said that fear of the ignorant vote was the greatest obstacle, while Henry Blackwell blamed Stanton's endorsement of easy divorce and Woodhull's support for free love. Lucy Stone blamed jealousy and friction within the movement. Ida Tarbell said the greatest obstacle was women's fear of losing the moral authority they already possessed. Carrie Chapman Catt blamed the large number of immigrants, fear of Prohibition, business leaders' fear of pro-labor laws, the picketing of President Wilson, and the conservatism of the U.S. Senate. If you were writing a textbook, which of these obstacles to suffrage would you include?
2. Some suffrage leaders were renounced by other suffragists for their controversial actions. Victoria Woodhull campaigned for both free love and suffrage; did this help or harm the suffrage cause? What about Alice Paul's picketing of President Wilson? Did Mrs. Stanton's publication of *The Woman's Bible* help or harm the suffrage cause? Was each of these women an asset to the suffrage movement overall, in spite of their controversial actions?
3. Write a short history (two to three paragraphs) of women's suffrage without implying that it was a battle of most women against most men.

## Appendix B

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