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## Maine (Chapter XVIII) from History of Woman Suffrage (1902)

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

*National Woman Suffrage Association*

Susan B Anthony

Ida Harper

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### MAINE.<sup>1</sup>

There were meetings and some organized work for woman suffrage in Maine from the early '70's but little activity until toward the close of the century. In August, 1900, a convention of the State association with a "suffrage day" was held at Ocean Park, Old Orchard Beach, attended by Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. This year under the presidency of Mrs. Lucy Hobart Day, organized work was systematically begun, with meetings in eight or ten towns. State conventions were held annually for the next twenty years, in October with but four exceptions.

In 1901 special attention was given to enrollment and new sections of the State were reached in this way. The literature and press departments also extended their work. The summer assembly at Ocean Park made "suffrage day" a part of its regular program. At the convention held at Saco in 1902 plans were made to ask the next session of the Legislature to grant Municipal suffrage to taxpaying women. The State Grange passed a resolution in favor of this measure, placed woman suffrage on its convention program and from that time gave active support to the movement.

The State convention took place at Auburn in 1903 and the association became an incorporated body that year. The organization of county leagues was begun in 1904 and a successful convention was held in Portland. In 1905 after eight years of efficient service, Mrs. Day retired from the presidency. She had organized several departments in the association and was in charge of the campaign to secure Municipal suffrage for taxpaying women. Mrs. Fannie J. Fernald was elected as her successor

<sup>1</sup> The History is indebted for this chapter to Miss Caroline Colvin, Professor of History in the State University, Miss Helen N. Bates, president of the State Woman Suffrage Association, 1912-1916, and Miss Mabel Connor, president, 1917-1919.

at the convention held at Old Orchard Beach. She travelled extensively over the State, speaking before Granges and other organizations and securing their interest and endorsement. She also had charge of the legislative work.

In 1906 woman suffrage was endorsed by the Maine Federation of Labor, an important accession. The annual convention again was welcomed in Saco. At the convention of 1907 in Farmington it was voted to support the National American Association in its efforts to secure a Federal Suffrage Amendment. A department of church work was established. In 1908 at the convention in Portland it was arranged to petition Congress for the submission of this amendment. In 1909 and 1910 the usual propaganda work was continued under the presidency of Mrs. Fernald and the usual State conventions were held at Old Orchard and Portland. In 1911 Mrs. Fernald left the State and the Rev. Alfreda Brewster Wallace was elected president at the convention in Portland.

The association increased in size and interest and at the convention of 1912 in Portland Miss Helen N. Bates of that city was elected president with a very capable board. At this time the association began to do more aggressive work in personally urging the members of Congress to support the Federal Amendment. Miss Bates acted as chairman of the Congressional Committee until the submission of the amendment, when the favorable vote of every member of the Maine delegation had been secured.

In 1913 the College Equal Suffrage League was formed to help the association in its legislative work, with Mrs. Leslie R. Rounds as president. The annual convention took place at Portland this year and the next, and in 1915 at Kennebunk. Many newspapers in the State had become favorable to suffrage and propaganda was carried on through fairs, moving pictures, street speaking, etc. In 1914 the Men's Equal Suffrage League was formed with Robert Treat Whitehouse of Portland president and Ralph O. Brewster secretary. Many leading men of the State joined this League, which helped in the legislative and campaign work. The Methodist Episcopal Church endorsed woman suffrage at its state conference.

In February, 1916, a Congressional conference was held in Portland in the interest of the Federal Amendment, with Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt in attendance and speaking at public meetings with Mrs. Maud Wood Park and Mrs. Glendower Evans. It was attended by women from all parts of the State and as a result of the great interest aroused many new leagues were organized. Miss Bates resigned on account of ill health in March and her term of office was finished by Mrs. Augusta M. Hunt of Portland, who had always been deeply interested in the suffrage cause. The National Association sent Mrs. Augusta Hughston, one of its field directors, to put into operation a state-wide plan of organization. At the State convention in Portland in October Mrs. Katharine Reed Balentine, daughter of the Hon. Thomas B. Reed, was elected president. The outlook seemed favorable for securing the submission of a suffrage amendment to the voters. This year Mrs. Deborah Knox Livingston of Bangor was appointed State organizer and legislative chairman and work begun for this purpose.

From January 8th to 20th, 1917, the National American Association held a suffrage school in Portland to prepare for the expected campaign. The instructors were Mrs. Nettie R. Shuler and Mrs. Halsey W. Wilson, its corresponding and recording secretaries, and Mrs. T. T. Cotnam. The subjects taught were Suffrage History and Argument, Organization, Publicity and Press, Money Raising and Parliamentary Law. This school was attended by suffragists from different sections of the State. Later Mrs. Edward S. Anthoine and Mrs. Henry W. Cobb of the State association carried on suffrage schools in other towns and cities. On February 9, 10, Mrs. Catt went to Portland to attend a board meeting of the association at the home of the president, Mrs. Balentine, to confer on the approaching campaign.

**CAMPAIGN.** In February, 1917, urged by the suffrage leaders, the Legislature submitted the amendment. This had been done against the urgent advice of Mrs. Catt, the national president, who knew of the slight organization there, and she wrote to them Oct. 9, 1916: "If Maine goes into a campaign for 1918 with the chances largely against success, we feel that it

would be a general damage to the cause and a waste of money. If it would plan instead to go into a campaign in 1919, taking three years for preparation, we should feel that it was far more certain of victory. Let us look at the resources you need to get and which you have not yet secured: (1) a fund to begin with of at least \$5,000 or \$6,000; (2) at least five State officers who can give practically all of their time, with the determination to win as many other people to the same sacrifice as they are making themselves. I most earnestly recommend that you ask your Legislature this year for Municipal and Presidential suffrage, making a good strong campaign for this, which it can grant without referring it to the voters."

A copy of this letter was sent to the president of the association and at its annual convention held in October it was read and a long discussion followed. A delegate thus reported it: "Only a few delegates agreed with her. Many women never having been in a campaign declared that victory was sure. The convention almost unanimously voted for the referendum and when the vote had been taken and the cheers had subsided, the grand sum of \$500 was raised for the campaign. . . ." Nevertheless the National Association at its next convention (still believing that the referendum would not be submitted until 1918), voted to back the Maine campaign, although against the judgment of Mrs. Catt.<sup>1</sup>

At the request of the Maine association the National Association made it possible for Mrs. Deborah Knox Livingston to take the position of campaign manager. Through her extensive work for the Woman's Christian Temperance Union she was widely acquainted in church, club and suffrage circles, was experienced in campaigning and an eloquent speaker. In her report after the election she said: "Maine presented as difficult a field for the conducting of a suffrage campaign as has ever been faced by any group of suffragists in any part of the country. The referendum was submitted the very last of February and as the election came so early in September only about six months' time was given us for the campaign. Deducting from this time the months of April

<sup>1</sup> The above paragraphs have been copied for the sake of historical accuracy from an official report of the national corresponding secretary.—Ed.

and May, on account of the almost impossible condition of the roads, and June with its heavy rains, there was left but little more than three months for active work. Early in the campaign our country entered the World War, and the whole thought and attention of the people were given to securing support for the Liberty Bonds, Red Cross, Navy League and other patriotic and preparedness work. This greatly handicapped us in the raising of finances and the creating of organization, the two foundations upon which the structure of a successful campaign must be built, and the two things which more than anything else the State of Maine needed, so far as the amendment was concerned."

A campaign committee was formed from members of organizations in the State in favor of suffrage, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Federation of Women's Clubs, Men's Suffrage League, Civic League, Referendum League, the Grange and the State Suffrage Association, and headquarters were established in Bangor. There were only fourteen suffrage societies in the State, not all active. Eleven of the sixteen counties had an organizer in charge for the last six weeks and 269 local committees were formed in the different towns but many of them were ineffectual, as they were made up of untrained women and the time was too short to train them. The argument for suffrage, however, was put before the voters very thoroughly. One hundred thousand were circularized with the convincing speeches of U. S. Senator Shafroth of Colorado and later with a leaflet *Have You Heard the News?* which carried the strong appeal of the suffrage gains over the entire world. House to house distribution of "fliers" was made in many communities. Altogether 1,500,000 leaflets were distributed, ten to every voter in the State. In hundreds of towns there was absolute ignorance on the subject. The clergy were circularized three times—over a thousand of them—the State Grange twice, committees of the political parties and members of the Legislature twice.

As soon as a committee was organized petition blanks were sent to it and in this short space of time the names of over 38,000 women of voting age asking for the suffrage were obtained, nearly all by volunteer canvassers. The names from each county were sent to the voters from that county and 100,000

received these lists. The petitions did a vast amount of educational work among the women and answered the men who insisted that the women did not want to vote.

The newspapers on the whole were favorable. Especial mention should be made of the valuable assistance continued throughout the campaign of the *Lewiston Journal*, *Portland Argus*, *Kennebec Journal*, *Brunswick Record* and *Waldo County Herald*. The *Portland Express* gave editorial support. The *Bangor Commercial*, owned and edited by John P. Bass, made a bitter fight against the amendment and refused generally to publish even letters on the other side. It would not publish President Wilson's letter even as a paid advertisement. From July 1 to September 10 Mrs. Rose L. Geyer, a member of the staff of the *Woman Citizen*, official organ of the National Suffrage Association, conducted the publicity work in connection with Miss Florence L. Nye, the State press chairman. On August 18 the *Lewiston Journal* issued a supplement for the State association, edited by Miss Helen N. Bates, of which 65,000 copies were distributed through twenty-two newspapers.

President Wilson sent a letter to Mrs. Livingston on September 4 appealing to Democratic voters as follows: "May I not express through you my very great interest in the equal suffrage campaign in Maine? The pledges of my party are very distinct in favor of granting the suffrage to women by State action and I would like to have the privilege of urging all Democrats to support a cause in which we all believe." On September 8 former President Roosevelt sent the following telegram addressed to the Campaign Committee: "I earnestly hope that as a matter of plain justice the people of Maine will vote 'yes' on woman suffrage."

The letter and telegram were put on the moving picture screens, which were also used in other ways for propaganda. The poster sent by the National Association and those printed by the Campaign Committee, fastened on trees, fences, windows and every available space, carried the message to all passers by. Mrs. Livingston said in her report: "We can not express too gratefully our appreciation of the value of the work accomplished by the experienced organizers sent to us by the National Association

and by Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island; of that of Mrs. Mary G. Canfield of Vermont, who gave her services for one month; and of the untiring and successful labors of Mrs. Augusta M. Hunt, who had charge of York and Cumberland counties."

The entire State was thoroughly covered by public meetings, over 500 being held during the last three months. It would be impossible to give the names of all who spoke at these meetings but among the more prominent were Governor Carl E. Milliken, U. S. Senator Bert Fernald, former Senator Charles F. Johnson, Representative Ira G. Hersey, former Representative Frank E. Guernsey; among the members of the Legislature and other influential men, former Attorney General W R Pattangall, Judge Robert Treat Whitehouse, Ralph O. Brewster, Frank W. Butler, Daniel A. Poling, the Rev. Arthur L. Weatherly. On July 23, 24, in Augusta, and July 25, 27, in Bangor, Mrs. Catt and Mrs. Shuler addressed mass meetings in the evenings and held conferences with the workers through the days. In September Mrs. Catt gave a week to speaking at public meetings in various cities. Other speakers were Mrs. Lucia Ames Mead, Miss Elizabeth Upham Yates, Dr. Lee Anna Starr, Mrs. Sara A. Gilson, Miss Emma L. McAlarney, Miss Anne E. Coughlin and the Misses Loitman. The members of the Men's League were active and helpful. The mass meetings were well attended and in all the cities and many of the towns street meetings were very successful. Mrs. Livingston travelled more than 20,000 miles in the State, delivered 150 addresses and raised over \$4,000.

Not in any other State campaign had the women anti-suffragists taken so conspicuous a part. There was a society of considerable social prominence in Portland and the associations in Massachusetts and New York sent nearly twenty speakers and workers, all women except J. B. Maling of Colorado and Charles McLean of Iowa, whose utterances had more than once been repudiated by the men and women of their States. Mrs. James W. Wadsworth, Jr., president of the National Association, addressed parlor meetings. Toward the end of the campaign their numbers became much less, as they learned that the



"machines" of both political parties expected to defeat the amendment.

The election took place Sept. 10, 1917, and the amendment received 38,838 noes, 20,684 ayes—lost by 18,154, the negative majority nearly two to one. About half as many men voted for it as the number of women who signed a petition for it. Mrs. Livingston gave as the principal reasons for the defeat: 1. Inherent conservatism and prejudice. 2. Resentment at the "picketing" of the White House by the "militant" suffragists. 3. Briefness of the campaign. 4. Inability because of lack of organization to reach the rural vote. 5. Reactionaries of both parties uniting in opposition.<sup>1</sup>

In her summing up Mrs. Livingston said: "Without the aid of the National American Association the campaign would have been impossible. The magnificent generosity with which it furnished speakers, organizers, posters and literature will make the women of Maine forever its debtors."<sup>2</sup>

At the convention of the State Association in September, 1917, in Augusta, Miss Mabel Connor was chosen president and at the conventions of 1918 in Lewiston and 1919 in Portland was re-elected. At the convention in October, 1918, having recovered somewhat from its defeat, the association voted to introduce a bill for the Presidential suffrage in the next Legislature in 1919. The Legislative Committee consisted of Mrs. Balentine, chairman; Miss Connor, Miss Bates, Mrs. Pattangall, Mrs. Cobb and

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Clarence Hale, State president of the anti-suffrage organization, issued the following: "The large majority vote cast against suffrage today must indicate, as did the great vote of Massachusetts in 1915, that the East is not in favor of the entrance of women into political life. The result should satisfy the suffragists for all time and they should now practice the principles of democracy and fairness, which they are so ready to preach, by refraining from further disputing the will of the people . . . We can now return to give our services to the State and the nation in woman's normal way."

On November 7 the "East" spoke again when the voters of New York by a majority of 102,353 gave full suffrage to women.

<sup>2</sup> Besides paying the expenses of the suffrage school, the National Association paid the salary of Mrs. Deborah Knox Livingston as campaign manager; the salary of Miss Lola Walker from February 10 to September 10; the salaries of eight other organizers who worked for varying periods and the expenses of four; for 120,000 Shafroth speeches; circularized 1,200 of the Protestant and Catholic clergy; prepared especially for Maine 125,000 baby fliers and 100,000 copies of Have You Heard? and furnished envelopes and stamps for them; 14,000 pieces of literature for advanced suffragists; 1,000 copies of Do You Know? to circularize the politicians; 400 each of thirteen different kinds of posters; 500 war measure fliers; 2,000 blue and yellow posters. The Leslie Commission contributed the services of Mrs. Geyer for press work from July 1 to September 10. This campaign cost the National Association \$10,282 and the Leslie Commission \$4,986, a total of \$15,268.—Ed.

Mrs. Guy P. Gannett, with Miss Lola Walker as executive secretary to the chairman.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION.** The State Suffrage Association and the State Woman's Christian Temperance Union always worked for woman suffrage measures in the Legislature in cordial cooperation, beginning in 1887.

1901. Suffrage bills did not come out of committee.

1903. A bill was introduced for Municipal suffrage for tax-paying women by Representative George H. Allan of Portland. The Joint Standing Committee eliminated "taxpaying" and reported a bill giving Municipal suffrage to all women. The State Suffrage Association did an enormous amount of work in behalf of this bill, sending letters to 15,000 women representing 239 cities and towns who were paying taxes on approximately \$25,000,000. Several thousand answers urging the bill were received, coming from every county and from 237 of the cities and towns. It was lost in the Senate by a tie and in the House by a vote of 110 noes, 29 ayes.

1905, 1907, 1909, no suffrage bills were reported out of committee.

1911. Four members of the Judiciary Committee made a minority report in favor of the suffrage measure and the House voted to substitute the minority report but the Senate refused to concur.

1913. A new resolve asking for submission of a suffrage amendment was drafted by George H. Allan and introduced in the Senate by Ira G. Hersey, which gave a vote of 23 ayes, 6 noes. In the House the vote was 89 ayes, 53 noes—only six more votes needed for the necessary two-thirds.

1915. A joint resolution to submit a full suffrage amendment passed the Senate by 26 ayes, 4 noes; the House vote by 88 ayes, 59 noes—ten more votes needed for the two-thirds. Introduced by Representative Lauren M. Sanborn.

1917. The resolution was adopted in the House February 21 by 112 ayes, 35 noes; unanimously adopted by the Senate February 22. In signing it the next day Governor Carl E. Milliken said to the suffrage leaders: "You have appealed to reason and not to prejudice. Your campaign has been a very fine example of

what a campaign should be." The amendment was defeated at the polls in September.

1919. In March an Act granting women the right to vote for Presidential Electors, prepared by George H. Allan, was introduced in the Senate by Guy P. Gannett of Augusta and in the House by Percival P. Baxter of Portland. The joint committee by 8 to 2 reported "ought to pass." The hearing before the Judiciary Committee was called one of the best ever held. Lewis A. Burleigh of Augusta, editor of the *Kennebec Journal*, and Professor Frank E. Woodruff of Bowdoin College made the principal speeches. Telegrams were read from U. S. Senator Fernald and Representatives Ira G. Hersey, John A. Peters and Wallace H. White, Jr., urging the passage of the bill. The "antis" were present in force and made a hard fight. They were fully answered by Mrs. Nancy M. Schoonmaker of Connecticut. An effort was made to attach a clause to the bill referring it to the voters but it was thwarted, Senator Leroy R. Folsom of Norridgewock making a strong speech against it. In the House a still more determined effort was made to secure a referendum but it did not succeed. Speeches were made by Frederick W. Hinckley, Percival F. Baxter and Elisha W. Pike, legislators, and Mrs. Katharine Reed Balentine, chairman of the Legislative Committee, and Miss Mabel Connor, president of the State Suffrage Association. On February 26 the bill passed the Senate by a vote of 25 ayes, 6 noes. On March 19 it passed the House by 85 ayes, 54 noes.

The favorable vote was obtained after six months of quiet, continuous and intensive political work by the Legislative Committee. Members of the Legislature worked for the success of the bill; the Governor supported it and the press was largely in favor.

The anti-suffragists immediately announced their proposal to bring the Presidential Suffrage Law before the voters under the initiative and referendum, upon petition of at least 10,000 legal voters filed within a specified time. The effort to secure these names lagged and without doubt would have been given up had it not been for Frank E. Mace, former State Forest Commissioner, who organized committees all over the State at the eleventh hour

and petitions bearing 12,000 signatures were filed July 3, within 90 days after the Legislature adjourned, as required. As there was doubt about the constitutionality of this referendum, the State Supreme Court, on July 9, 1919, was requested by Governor Milliken to decide. On August 6 the Court rendered its decision that the Act came within the provisions of the initiative and referendum. As the petition did not ask for a special election the Governor sent out a proclamation for the referendum to be submitted at the next general election Sept. 13, 1920. The Federal Suffrage Amendment was declared to be adopted on August 26 but there was no way in which the referendum could legally be omitted from the ballot. Therefore on September 13 the women, already having full suffrage, went to the polls to vote on getting partial suffrage and the official count showed 88,080 ayes, 30,462 noes.

**RATIFICATION.** Governor Milliken called a special session of the Legislature for November, 1919. In his message he recommended the ratification of the Federal Amendment in the strongest possible manner, saying that if only one woman in Maine wanted to vote she should have the chance. The anti-suffrage forces of the entire country were concentrated on Maine at this time to prevent ratification and it was with the greatest difficulty that a movement to postpone action until the regular session was defeated. The amendment was ratified in the Senate on November 4 by 24 ayes, 5 noes; in the House on November 5 by 72 ayes, 68 noes. After the vote was taken an attempt to reconsider was made but was unsuccessful.

The same Legislative Committee of women that had charge of the Presidential bill had charge of the ratification.

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At the annual convention of the State Suffrage Association in Portland in October, 1919, it was voted to hold a School for Citizenship at Bates College in August, 1920. Mrs. George M. Chase was made chairman of the Committee of Arrangements and the work was largely carried out by Miss Rosamond Connor, 100 women from many parts of the State attending and deriving much benefit. Mrs. Nancy M. Schoonmaker was the principal instructor. At a meeting of the association in Augusta on

November 12 it was merged into the League of Women Voters with Miss Mabel Connor as chairman.

Suffrage work in Maine was carried on for many years in the face of the greatest obstacles but there was always a small group of devoted women willing to make any sacrifice for the cause, who carried the torch until another group could take it, and every step gained was fought for. The history would be incomplete without mention of the Portland Equal Franchise League, of which Mrs. Arthur L. Bates was president, which for many years was the backbone of the State association. The list of State officers who freely gave their services is too long to publish. Among other prominent workers not already mentioned were Dr. Jennie Fuller of Hartland; Mrs. Zenas Thompson and Miss Susan Clark of Portland; Mrs. Isabel Greenwood of Farmington; Miss Anna L. Dingley and Miss Alice Frost Lord, connected with the *Lewiston Journal*.<sup>1</sup>

Among the men not mentioned elsewhere, who advocated woman suffrage in the face of criticism and with no advantage to be gained, were Judge William Penn Whitehouse and Obadiah Gardner of Augusta; Leonard A. Pierce of Portland; L. B. Dessy of Bar Harbor; E. C. Reynolds of South Portland.

<sup>1</sup> Among the active workers in the Anti-Suffrage Association were Mesdames John F. A. Merrill, Morrill Hamlin and George S. Hobbs, all of Portland; Norman L. Bassett, John F. Hill, and Charles S. Hichborn, all of Augusta; George E. Bird, Yarmouth; Miss Elizabeth McKean, Brunswick.

Among the men actively opposed were the Rev. E. E. Newbert, Benedict F. Maher, Samuel C. Manley, Charles S. Hichborn, all of Augusta; ex-Governor Oakley C. Curtis, of Portland; Governor-elect Frederick H. Parkhurst, of Bangor; U. S. Senator Hale, opposed but finally voted for the Federal Suffrage Amendment.