

VESTING WOMEN WITH THE VOTE:  
THE TIMING OF THE FEDERAL AMENDMENT FOR WOMAN SUFFRAGE

A Thesis by

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I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in History.

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Robin Henry, Committee Chair

We have read this thesis  
and recommend its acceptance:

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Doris Chang, Committee Member

## DEDICATION

In memory of my grandparents,  
James and Barbara Farrell

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I owe a debt of gratitude to my thesis advisor, Robin Henry, for guiding me through the diverse literature on women's history. My readings with her kindled an enlightened understanding of American political culture. I also hold in very high esteem George Dehner, a devoted educator, who, during the course of my graduate studies, has affected me intellectually on a profound level. I also wish to extend my gratitude to Doris Chang for her positive interest in an unorthodox argument as well as for her keen insight and kind support.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to determine the catalyst for the enactment of the Nineteenth Amendment. A ‘top-down’ approach to women’s political history – an unconventional interpretation of woman suffrage from the vantage point of the government within the context of American political culture – illumined women’s enfranchisement. In order to ascertain the premise of American political culture, this research incorporated a vast temporal scope: investigating the political ideology that informed American constitutionalism was integral to discovering the reason why, ultimately, the federal government bestowed unto women the franchise.

The decisions of the executive and legislative branches reflected the ideology inherent in the U.S. Constitution. The framers not only incorporated many of the rights found in the British common law and in Magna Carta, but also the vested rights premise found in feudalism. Reciprocity of rights and obligations between the government and the citizenry enabled government protection: a citizen had to prove his civic worth in order to earn the privilege of the franchise. This value system resonated throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In sum, because of the simultaneous historical occurrences of a diplomatic suffrage leader, Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, her active membership in the Committee on Women’s Defense Work of the Council of National Defense during the Great War, and a president, Woodrow Wilson, who was amenable to Catt’s methodology, women were enfranchised because of their invaluable contributions to the war effort. In this way, women’s war service proved their civic capacity to government officials which enhanced their standing for the franchise. Primary source materials from Wilson, government officials, and top military brass attest to this finding.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>HWS</i>	History of Woman Suffrage
<i>LWSA</i>	Life And Work Of Susan B. Anthony
<i>NAWSA</i>	National American Woman Suffrage Association
<i>NWP</i>	National Woman's Party
<i>PWW</i>	Papers of Woodrow Wilson

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The enactment of the Nineteenth Amendment is worthy of historical analysis because the right to the franchise, to date, is women's only constitutional protection. Indeed, the government's position on the franchise, as to whether it was a right, or rather a privilege, is symptomatic of how that government incorporated the citizenry into political society. In order to understand the meaning of the franchise in the American republic it is incumbent upon the historian first to elucidate the etymology of the term, 'franchise.' This Middle English word originated from the old French, *fraunchise*. According to the *Middle English Dictionary*, this word had myriad connotations; however, the interpretive implications of *fraunchise* resonated over the centuries into the Early Republic. While the archetypal definition was "freedom (as opposed to servitude), the social status of a freeman (whether by birth or manumission)," and a concomitant definition was "the right to land," scholars discerned that, specifically, the electoral franchise, as in the election of a mayor, was a privilege, thus, by implication, it was not a right.<sup>1</sup>

During the history of the United States, the government and its citizenry wrestled over this right versus privilege dichotomy as to the nature of the franchise. While government policy makers perpetuated feudalistic common law, which they premised on American constitutionalism, the citizenry clung to a misguided understanding of John Locke's doctrine of natural law. This battle of ideas manifested itself among congressional legislators and the woman suffrage movement respectively. The historian Nancy Isenberg, who wrote *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (1998), is a leading light in my examination of the woman suffrage amendment, which I analyze holistically. I did not grapple with a myopic interpretation

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<sup>1</sup>Hans Kurath, ed., *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1953), 865, 866. Kurath quotes the Middle English text from which he derives his interpretations.

of the passage of this amendment; I chose instead to consider the basic political and cultural context of the nation in order to fathom the particular sequence of events that led to women's enfranchisement in 1920. Isenberg astutely observes how the two time-honored documents of the American republic informed the disparate premises of the activists and the government. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, in order to declare a change in the locus of sovereignty, in light of Locke's natural rights doctrine in his *Two Treatises*; later that century, the framers wrote the Constitution within the context of a privileged rights political culture wherein the citizenry must prove a vested stake in society in order to attain constitutional rights. Isenberg then illumines a second women's rights movement during the nineteenth century: while the commonly known Seneca Falls movement premised their claim to the vote upon the philosophy behind the Declaration of Independence, Paulina Wright Davis' 1850 Worcester Convention premised its ideology on that of the Constitution. Davis argued that in order to win the vote, women must obtain a quid pro quo relationship with the state: women must prove their vested stake in society, for that is how men earned their constitutional rights, by means of their civic capacity, such as by their landownership, taxpayer capacity, public works, or military service. Implicitly, perpetuating a claim to the vote premised on natural rights would prove to be a fruitless endeavor; such a claim would fall on deaf ears.<sup>2</sup>

I apply Isenberg's antebellum analysis of suffrage activism to that of Wilson's wartime administration. I argue that women earned the right to the vote because they had displayed their civic capacity during a time of national urgency: women won the franchise as a reward for their

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<sup>2</sup>Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); John Locke, *Two Treatises Of Government, With Supplement, Patriarcha By Robert Filmer*, The Hafner Library Classics, no. 2, with intro. Thomas I. Cook (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1947); and Kathleen S. Sullivan, *Constitutional Context: Women and Rights Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America*, The Johns Hopkins Series In Constitutional Thought, eds. Sanford Levinson and Jeffrey K. Tulis (Balitmore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

war services. Upon President Woodrow Wilson's declaration of war against Germany in April 1917, shrewd suffrage activism, via Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association [NAWSA], raised the consciousness of the executive and legislative branches of government as to women's invaluable war services, such as nursing near the battle zone and as substitute labor for the domestic production of food and ammunition, not only for American soldiers in France but also for domestic sustenance and economic survival. Both the military top brass as well as the Department of Labor underscored the need for including women in the war effort. Also as a member of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense, Carrie Catt initiated to Wilson the idea of woman suffrage as a war measure; because of Catt and her colleagues in NAWSA, Wilson incrementally attenuated his antisuffrage inclinations and eventually responded to her cordial but persistent exhortations with the endorsement of the federal amendment to congressional and state legislators. Wilson continued to advocate for suffrage as a reward even after the Armistice in November 1918. The Great War served as a crucible for testing the reciprocal rights and obligations value system of the American political culture: in return for women's sacrifices to bolster the fortitude of the nation in war, the government granted women the privilege of the franchise.<sup>3</sup>

Conversely, I argue against the notion that women won the vote because of the militant suffragism that Alice Paul, leader of the National Woman's Party [NWP], espoused. Wilson did not act in response to the NWP's natural rights ideology nor its methodology of picketing in front of the White House. Wilson was a torch-bearer for Magna Carta and the common law, both of which formed the foundation of American constitutionalism; moreover, he was a resolute

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<sup>3</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*; Arthur S. Link, ed. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966-); House Committee on Rules, *Creating A Committee On Woman Suffrage In The House Of Representatives: Hearings On H.R. Res. 12*, 65<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess., 1917; Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War*, vol. 1 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1931); and Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women And The World War* (New York: D. Appleton And Company, 1918).

and independent decision-maker, it was not his nature to succumb to his adversaries. Instead, Catt was the driving force behind Wilson's metamorphosis: she implemented the rhetoric that Wilson would accept. To Wilson, a plan to endorse an amendment to the Constitution that would augment women's civil rights would be born out of the best interest of the government. As with feudalistic society in Medieval England, wherein the barons defended the sovereign's realm with military might in times of war in return for grants of land from the sovereign, Wilson vested women's war services with the vote (albeit via legislators' acquiescence) because women proved their civic capacity to the government as citizens. As Isenberg elucidates, Paulina Wright Davis, a century earlier, had advised women to obtain a political relationship with the state; in this manner, women would earn the privilege of the vote.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this qualitative study is to evaluate how the concept of woman suffrage was realized among the electorate and elected officials; hence the methodology for this thesis is women's political history. Yet I apply this methodology unconventionally because I approach women's enfranchisement from a 'top-down' vantage point. Historically speaking, the government bestowed unto women the franchise: women did not obtain the vote from the government solely because of their staunch solidarity – their activism is inconsequential sans government receptivity. Hence my study stresses the political culture of American government, as derived from the British common law, in regards to citizenship and the accrued rights thereof. Nonetheless, I analyze the *Weltanschauung* of the natural rights faction of the woman suffrage

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<sup>4</sup>Link, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*; Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government In The United States*, Columbia University Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908); St. George Tucker, *Blackstone's Commentaries, With Notes Of Reference To The Constitution And Laws Of The Federal Government Of The United States And Of The Commonwealth Of Virginia* (Philadelphia: William Birch Young & Abraham Small, 1803; reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969); Sally Hunter Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Woman Suffrage Movement," *Political Science Quarterly* 98 (Winter 1983-84); Linda G. Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party, 1912-1920* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1991); Christine A. Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage To Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928*, The American Social Experience Series, gen. ed. James Kirby Martin, et al., no. 5 (New York: New York University Press, 1986); and Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*.

movement in juxtaposition to the privileged rights culture of the government in order to ascertain the effectual method for constitutional change. Why government gave women the vote is the guiding question in my thesis.

I convey my thesis chronologically, with a vast temporal scope from 1215 Magna Carta to the 1920 Nineteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. As I mentioned earlier, I show how the vestiges of the common law resonated throughout the centuries and informed American political culture, via American constitutionalism. I begin my argument in Chapter II with the Historiography. I allot an entire chapter to the literature on this subject because the interpretation of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment is not only fraught with disagreement but also I find it necessary to analyze how it is skewed heavily toward the subject of women's history and not presidential history. Wilson took pride in the passage of the federal amendment for woman suffrage, yet Wilson historians egregiously overlook, or pay only minimal attention to, this historical amendment to the Constitution. From among the historians of women's history, I attempt to provide a representative sample from the spectrum of interpretations on the passage of woman suffrage. They vary from pro-NWP to pro-NAWSA standpoints, to 'top-down' standpoints that placed the passage of woman suffrage in context of the war, to the passage of woman suffrage in the context of the Progressive Era during which the suffrage movement in general agitated for the franchise based on women's moral superiority. I concur with the premises of the following authors: the 'top-down' analyses of David Morgan and the co-authorship of Christine A. Lunardini and Thomas J. Knock, as well as the political biography of Catt by Robert Booth Fowler; however, I find their respective arguments to be incomplete. My argument not only emphasizes the Catt and Wilson partnership for the passage of woman suffrage, but also I stress how women's war service expedited women's enfranchisement. This

gainful reciprocity between the citizenry and the government occurred because it was congruent with the common law-based American political culture. Hence my argument coincides nicely with that of traditional presidential histories on Wilson.

In Chapter III, “Qualifying the Vote: Early and American U.S. Political Culture,” I begin by assessing the qualifications for the franchise among the male citizenry. In this chapter, I go into considerable detail as to the degree to which Magna Carta and the British common law was transported into American constitutionalism. At the same time, I observe that the early Americans actually found little room for the natural rights of man, or the common bond of humanity, in the forming of the federal and state constitutions. Although the Americans of the Early Republic humored themselves as distinct from their erstwhile parent country, they nonetheless borrowed heavily from feudalism. In the Early Republic one had to be a tax-paying landholder in order to gain the privilege of the vote. By the time of Jacksonian America, public works and military service replaced the landownership requisite; yet, nonetheless, these new qualifiers still entail obligatory renderings to the nation in return for their enfranchisement, which ran counter to the natural rights argument that the right to the vote was already inherent in one’s status as citizen. I use an 1803 annotated version of the British common law by the early American jurist and professor, St. George Tucker, specifically his review of Blackstone’s *Commentaries*, in its application to American constitutionalism. With this text I analyze the practice of coverture as it applied to married women, by which they suffered a ‘civil death.’ By referring to Linda K. Kerber’s *No Constitutional Rights To Be Ladies* (1998), and Nancy Isenberg’s *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (1998), I assess the degree to which women were alienated from the political sphere. They derived no political protection from the state, hence Paulina Wright Davis, in her 1850 woman’s rights convention, urged women to form

a political relationship with the state, or to prove their own civic capacity, in order to win the vote.

In Chapter IV, I progress from an examination of the qualifiers for the vote to a discussion of the vacuity of citizenship itself in “Discordant Voices: From the Civil War to the Early Twentieth Century.” During this era the two schools of thought, that of natural rights and that of privileged rights, clashed over the method for obtaining rights as citizens. Indeed, citizens perpetuating the natural rights school of thought averred that qualifiers for the vote were unjust: the right to the vote was already inherent among the citizenry. Although women had displayed their civic capacity during the Civil War both as incognita soldiers as well as nurses, the suffrage movement did not draw upon this fact in their debates with legislators over woman suffrage. Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were adamant about obtaining the vote based on their common bond with humanity and not on a qualifier. I examine the U.S. Supreme Court case *Minor v. Happersett* (1874) as the official litmus test of women’s civil and political status. Chief Justice Waite ruled that, based on his examination on the history of American constitutionalism, women did not have the right to the vote according to the Fourteenth Amendment. In this chapter, I include a journal article by Dudley O. McGovney in the *Columbia Law Review* (1911) that deliberated on the lexicon that the framers implemented: the Early Americans, in their references to the inhabitants of North America, merely substituted the odious word ‘subject’ with the more palatable label ‘citizen.’ This shift in terminology explains the meaningless nature of citizenship, by which the franchise was not concomitant with citizen status, in nineteenth-century America. Additionally, in this chapter, I include Woodrow Wilson’s early political writings and how they reflect his ‘top-down’ position on the government and the citizenry. Soon after the 1879 congressional deliberation on universal suffrage, a time of



agitation for the franchise based on natural rights, Wilson divulged his espousal of the privileged rights school of thought during his academic career as a student, and later that century, his antipathy toward the higher education of women, despite his professorial position at Bryn Mawr.

In the final chapter of my argument, Chapter V, “Catt, The Dea Ex Machina: The Great War,” which is a narration of the sequence of the events leading to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, I examine the nuanced integration of the diplomatic faction of the woman suffrage movement, NAWSA, into the Wilson administration. First, however, I begin with Wilson’s governorship of New Jersey and discuss his position against woman suffrage. I also deliberate on his stance on states’ rights and the doctrine of separation of powers, by referring to Ronald J. Pestritto, *Woodrow Wilson And The Roots of Modern Liberalism* (2005). These issues came to the fore when Wilson converted to woman suffrage during his wartime presidency and prodded congressional and state legislators to pass the federal amendment. Arthur S. Link’s multivolume *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* documents Wilson’s gradual conversion to woman suffrage as a war measure via correspondence with Catt and the NAWSA; Ida Clyde Clarke’s *American Women And The World War* (1918) explained how the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense organized the nation’s women into war service. Carrie Catt, president of the NAWSA as well as a member of the Women’s Committee, and Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, Catt’s predecessor in the NAWSA and chairman of the Women’s Committee, cleverly planned a double-barreled approach to woman suffrage by actively proving their civic capacity by means of their war services as qualification for women’s right to vote, both to the executive branch and to congressional legislators.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORIOGRAPHY

A survey of the literature pertaining to the events leading up to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment reveals striking differences of interpretations among historians. Yet the historiography itself is peculiar on a more profound level: although the passage of this amendment theoretically incorporates both presidential history and women's history, in practice, an inquiry into the constitutional right for woman suffrage consistently falls under the heading of the latter. Presidential historians of Thomas Woodrow Wilson pay scant attention to this historically momentous event, if indeed they address woman suffrage at all, in their evaluations of this wartime president.<sup>5</sup> Apparently, these authors did not take the words of the renowned historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr. (1888-1965) to heart. Long ago, during the Roaring Twenties, Schlesinger, Sr. had excoriated historians,

An examination of the standard histories of the United States and of the history textbooks in use in our schools raises the pertinent question whether women have ever made any contributions to American national progress that are worthy of record. If silence of the historians is to mean anything, it would appear that one-half of our population have been negligible factors in our country's history . . . any consideration of woman's part in American history must include the protracted struggle of the sex for larger rights and opportunities, a story that in itself is one of the noblest chapters in the history of American democracy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Indeed, even James Kerney, Wilson's Director of Information in 1918, wrote a glowing biography of Wilson in 1926 that contains scant reference to the woman suffrage movement. Please refer to James Kerney, *The Political Education of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: The Century Co., 1926), 138-139; Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson And The Progressive Era, 1910-1917*, The New American Nation Series, eds. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), 59-60; August Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991), 234, 413, 456-457, 528, 605; Kendrick A. Clements, *The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson*, American Presidency Series, gen. eds. Donald R. McCoy, Clifford S. Griffin, and Homer E. Socolofsky (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1992), x, 17, 158-159; Louis Auchincloss, *Woodrow Wilson*, The Penguin Lives Series, gen. ed. James Atlas (New York: A Lipper/Viking Book, 2000), 128pp., no reference to woman suffrage or the Nineteenth Amendment; and H.W. Brands, *Woodrow Wilson*, The American Presidents, gen. ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 133.

<sup>6</sup>Arthur Meier Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints in American History* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1922 (copyright page), 1926 (title page)), 126, 127. Women's historian Eleanor Flexner cites this quote in 1975 to support her criticism of traditional historians for their meager references to the Nineteenth Amendment. Please refer

Schlesinger, Sr. had chastised historians for failing to uphold the historical memory of the nation because they omitted the woman suffrage movement from their narratives. Yet these historians have paid little heed to the exhortations of their esteemed predecessor.

Schlesinger, Sr. included in his 1922 monograph, *New Viewpoints In American History*, a chapter entitled, “The Role Of Women In American History.” As a second-generation New Historian, Schlesinger, Sr., who was enthusiastic about the “renaissance of American historical writing,” held a nuanced position on objectivity.<sup>7</sup> Although he believed in the primacy of objectivity as requisite among historians, according to the historiographer Peter Novick, Schlesinger Sr. “disavow[ed] the older view of objectivity as attainable via the ‘blank slate.’” Schlesinger acknowledged that this idea had to be abandoned, and that it would be desirable if historians’ assumptions and criteria of selection were ‘drag[ged] into the open.’<sup>8</sup> In *New Viewpoints*, Schlesinger, Sr. offers an explanation as to the omission of women’s endeavors and accomplishments in traditional history books, “It should not be forgotten that all of our great historians have been men and were likely therefore to be influenced by a *sex* [italics of Schlesinger, Sr.] interpretation of history all the more potent because unconscious.”<sup>9</sup> Thence he astutely elucidates how the dearth of historiographical literature on women in the public sphere perpetuated their lack of constitutional rights. He pointedly asserted, “Historians have generally ignored woman as a positive influence in American history and have usually omitted even any mention of her struggle for sex equality.”<sup>10</sup> In consequence,

the pall of silence which historians have allowed to rest over their [women’s] services

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to Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman’s Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1959, revised edition 1975), x, x-xi.

<sup>7</sup>Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints*, vii.

<sup>8</sup>Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*, Ideas In Context, eds. Richard Rorty, J.B. Schneewind, Quentin Skinner, and Wolf Lepenies, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 179, 180.

<sup>9</sup>Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints*, 126.

<sup>10</sup>Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints*, 158

and achievements may possibly constitute the chief reason why the women have been so slow in gaining equal rights with the men in this the greatest democracy in the world. The men of the nation have, perhaps not unnaturally, felt disinclined to endow with equality a class of persons who, *so far as they knew* [italics mine], had never proved their fitness for public service and leadership in the past history of the country.<sup>11</sup>

Schlesinger, Sr.'s last statement supports the premise of my argument that citizens earn constitutional rights on a quid pro quo basis.

Schlesinger, Sr. had found only one historical monograph of merit that pertains to women's history since the beginning of Wilson's administration: Charles A. Beard, who was Schlesinger Sr.'s former teacher and a fellow New Historian, and co-author William C. Bagley wrote *The History of the American People* (1918). Beard and Bagley's examination of the suffrage movement during the Wilson administration was sparse; however, they attributed the 1918 passage of woman suffrage in the House to the success of the New York referendum. They cite an additional factor as well – a personal endorsement during the House vote: Beard and Bagley stated, "President Wilson, at last, having used his influence in its favor."<sup>12</sup> To continue, Schlesinger, Sr. lamented the dearth of literature on women's accomplishments, "It is unthinkable that this neglect should continue in the new era of historical writing ushered in by the adoption of the nineteenth amendment."<sup>13</sup> Although Schlesinger, Sr. provided fine historiographical insight at the introduction of his own chapter, "The Role Of Women," his narrative, spanning from the colonial era to the twentieth century, is a non-analytical recitation of women's achievements. Perhaps his sole purpose in reciting a lengthy list of women's civic-minded sacrifices was to prove to his colleagues of the value of women as historical agents;

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<sup>11</sup>Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints*, 126-127.

<sup>12</sup>Charles A. Beard and William C. Bagley, *The History Of The American People*, Special Edition For Army Educational Commission, American Expeditionary Forces (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918), 586. Beard had earlier championed the Congressional Union and derided Wilson because he would not endorse the federal amendment (Wilson's endorsement of New York state woman suffrage predated his endorsement of the federal amendment in January 1918). See Charles Beard, "The Woman's Party," *The New Republic* VII (July 29, 1916): 329-331.

<sup>13</sup>Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints*, 158.

however, his impatient attempts to praise women rendered a disjointed perception of the events for the reader. Regarding the federal suffrage amendment, first, he sets forth two contradictory premises in his chapter: implicitly he espouses the privileged rights philosophy in his historiographical analysis before he lauds the natural rights philosophy of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's and Susan B. Anthony's nineteenth-century women's movement. He cites the denied admission of women to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention as the impetus for future militancy in the women's rights movement. Second, he haphazardly attributes the passage of woman suffrage on the state level (as of 1913 and onward) to the militant actions of the federally-minded Congressional Union, the predecessor to the militant National Woman's Party, after a brief reference to the diplomatic Carrie Chapman Catt. Then, according to Schlesinger, Sr., members of Congress found "partisan advantages" from their new constituents and thereby passed the federal amendment.<sup>14</sup> He briefly addressed Wilson after this point: Wilson's "special message" propelled the amendment's ratification.<sup>15</sup> Schlesinger, Sr. implicitly cites women's war work, on which he described in detail, as secondary to militancy in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Schlesinger, Sr. offered a fractured albeit well-intentioned interpretation of the passage of woman suffrage. His narrative pertaining to woman suffrage during Wilson's administration probably reflects inaccessibility, at that time, to the necessary evidentiary documents, such as the personal papers of Woodrow Wilson, not to mention analyses of the war-time suffrage movement itself, despite the level of their bias. Indeed, the National American Woman Suffrage Association's [NAWSA's] last two volumes of *The History of Woman Suffrage*, the temporal scope of which covered 1900-1920, were not in print until 1922. *The History*, which spans from

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<sup>14</sup>Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints*, 155.

<sup>15</sup>Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints*, 155.

1848 to 1920 in six volumes, is a chronicle of the women's rights movement as edited by its leaders, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, then later by the NAWSA. Hence this edited collection of both internal and external records and reports is a documentary history of the main faction of the suffrage movement. Yet this source is an inherently problematic reference material because it simultaneously serves as a primary and a secondary source. The editors served as historical interpreters in rendering *History*, yet they, in turn, acted as historical agents as well for they too were actors in their political contest for the franchise. Indeed, the editors of the first volume, published in 1881, admittedly proclaim of their account, "there is an interest in history written from a subjective point of view, that may compensate the reader in this case for any seeming egotism or partiality he may discover. As an autobiography is more interesting than a sketch by another, so is history written by its actors, as in both cases we get nearer the soul of the subject."<sup>16</sup> Historians who examined the Nineteenth Amendment after its passage have had the added advantage of credibility as impartial interpreters of history: post factum analyses, as secondary sources, prevent historians from unduly glorifying themselves within their historical interpretations and post factum analyses bar them from rendering corrupted primary source material. Nonetheless, these editors did provide a service in their organized containment of these records – disparate records of which could have been, indeed, lost to history. To continue, Schlesinger, Sr., as a second-generation New Historian, his interest lay not in traditional presidential histories. Nevertheless Schlesinger, Sr. made invaluable contributions to the history of woman suffrage. Not only did he make historiographical history, so to speak, as possibly the first historian to broach the topic of the passage of the federal suffrage amendment, he also brought to the fore the ramifications of

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<sup>16</sup>Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., vol. 1, *History of Woman Suffrage* (New York: Fowler & Wells, Publishers, 1881; reprint, New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 8 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

historiographical silence on the constitutional rights of the citizenry. To Schlesinger, Sr., historians bear the civic-minded obligation to fairly represent the subjects of their study. He wanted his colleagues and successors to carry on the torch of including women's accomplishments in their histories both for democratic and academic reasons. Furthermore, he believed in the democracy *of academia*: he professed, "all citizens of the republic should learn what historians have to say about the past of their country."<sup>17</sup>

Yet the token paltry and anecdotal references of the presidential historians on woman suffrage fail to uphold Schlesinger's legacy. Presidential historians of today can not plead inaccessibility of sources: the suffrage movement was not only a well publicized and highly controversial issue, but also Wilson's papers which document his endorsement of women's enfranchisement are accessible in printed form and are edited by the conservative historian Arthur S. Link. Indeed, as shown in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, this Progressive era as well as wartime president urged the passage of woman suffrage before the House of Representatives in 1919 for another particular reason than as a compensatory measure: "I, for one, covet for our country the distinction of being among the first to act in a great reform."<sup>18</sup> Wilson wanted recognition for this achievement; however, presidential historians do not expound on the pride that Wilson hoped to gain by means of this enactment. So the question remains as to why presidential historians would eschew the study of an amendment to the Constitution, a change in the sacred founding document of this country, which occurred during his administration.

Two presidential historians, August Heckscher and Kendrick A. Clements, venture an interpretation of the events leading to the passage of the suffrage amendment. Their spare and misleading narratives on the subject at least offer an attempt to convey the events in context of

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<sup>17</sup>Schlesinger, [Sr.], *New Viewpoints*, viii.

<sup>18</sup>Wilson's Special Message to Congress, 20 May 1919, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols., eds. Arthur S. Link et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966-), 59:296, 289-297 (hereinafter cited as *PWW*).

the time, contrary to those of Kerney, Link, Auchincloss, and Brands.<sup>19</sup> Categorized under “women’s issues” in the index, in 1991, Heckscher nebulously notes Wilson’s conversion to woman suffrage; the president saw “Women’s right to vote . . . as a dynamic force in keeping with the widespread social and political liberation he expected the war to bring.”<sup>20</sup> Heckscher assures the reader that Wilson changed his position on suffrage before the militants’ picketing of the White House. Indeed, “Wilson was quietly continuing his pressure on Congress” despite their presence.<sup>21</sup> In his narrative, Heckscher does not include Catt of the NAWSA as a historical agent. In 1992, Clements also does not reference Catt either; however, unlike Heckscher, Clements presents a specific impetus for Wilson’s official endorsement of the federal suffrage amendment. Wilson sought to reward women’s paid employment in the war industries with the vote, also despite the presence of the picketing militants.<sup>22</sup> Clements offers the most lucid interpretation of events among the presidential historians; he premises his argument on the privileged rights philosophy of earning a constitutional right.

Historians of women’s history have allocated more attention to Wilson’s perspective of the Anthony amendment (the federal amendment for woman suffrage) than the presidential historians have apportioned; nonetheless, in their analyses, women’s historians inevitably gravitate toward the vistas of the leaders of the women’s movement. Moreover, specialization in this field of history renders the topic of woman suffrage as problematic teaching material in standard history courses. Consequently public school students do not have the opportunity to envision the history behind this constitutional amendment. Thus Schlesinger, Sr., in light of the

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<sup>19</sup>Louis Auchincloss, an attorney who did not complete his undergraduate studies, apparently makes no evaluation of the federal suffrage amendment. He wrote *Woodrow Wilson* sans table of contents and index; his pages do not yield references to woman suffrage.

<sup>20</sup>Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson*, 456-457.

<sup>21</sup>Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson*, 457.

<sup>22</sup>Clements, *The Presidency of Woodrow Wilson*, 158-159.



beginning paragraph of his chapter, “The Role Of Women,” might have had mixed feelings about this de facto compartmentalization of women’s history. I contend that women gained suffrage as a reward for their war efforts, as shown in Wilson’s own papers. Consequently, my examination, which I place in the context of the political culture of the government – a political culture that emphasized the expectation of a quid pro quo relationship between the government and its citizenry – nicely augments the accounts of Wilson’s war-time endeavors in traditional history texts and in presidential histories on Wilson. In this setting, women gave of themselves despite their gender and they sought the same constitutional right that men have had. Nevertheless, it is the women’s historian, not the presidential historian, who endeavors to strive for a meaningful interpretation of the events that lead to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

Another world war had come and gone until we see the next full-fledged historical interpretation of the passage of this amendment. Historians commonly herald Eleanor Flexner’s narrative, *Century of Struggle: The Woman’s Rights Movement in the United States*, first published in 1959, as the inaugural source of modern literature for the suffrage movement. Flexner (1908-1995) had a familial connection to suffrage activism. As implied in her title, the scope of her monograph is the century leading up to the enactment of the Nineteenth Amendment. Flexner’s primary focus is on the suffrage movement; however, she allots considerable attention to women’s education, career opportunities, and union organizations, all of which render her opus a comprehensive source on American women’s rights history. Upon reflection in 1975, as stated in her preface, Flexner notes that she wrote her narrative during a time that was devoid of the consciousness-raising issues, such as discrimination of women in the workplace, which became prominent in the women’s liberation movement a decade later.

Flexner discovered her own source of inspiration: a biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Created Equal* (1940), by Alma Lutz, moved Flexner to write this monograph on the history of the women's rights movement.<sup>23</sup>

Flexner aptly bases her narrative on records from women of all races and socio-economic backgrounds. She obtained primary source material mostly from women's archival collections. She capably evaluates these sources. Her careful critique of the multivolume *The History of the Woman Suffrage Movement*, which she otherwise employs as a major source for her research, acknowledges that this source is prone to bias and error. Having cited Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr.'s critique of historians' remissness of the achievements of women in history, Flexner justifies her use of this source, in reference to its authors, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda J. Gage, by stating that "no scholar has done better up to now."<sup>24</sup> To continue, she finds that the literature of the two methodologically opposed Progressive era suffragist organizations, the NAWSA and the militant National Woman's Party [NWP], "all suffer from serious bias."<sup>25</sup> Flexner cites a 1943 letter from the former NAWSA president, Carrie Chapman Catt, "I am inclined to think that the suffragists, who have written their own history, have not always known all the facts at the time of writing and perhaps they have not been free enough from prejudice to tell the whole truth."<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, Flexner had the good fortune of personally garnering the opinions of some of the leading lights from the suffrage movement, two of whom were the former NWP leader Alice Paul as well as Doris Stevens.

One possible drawback with Flexner's sources is that they are one-sided – she places too much weight on the women's perspectives: at least during the years prior to women's full

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<sup>23</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 350. See Alma Lutz, *Create Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York: The John Day Company, 1940).

<sup>24</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 349.

<sup>25</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 349.

<sup>26</sup>Carrie Chapman Catt, as cited in Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 350.

enfranchisement, she infrequently cites direct primary source material from men (and most notably from Woodrow Wilson). By 1920, the vote for woman suffrage was still predominately contingent upon male legislators and officials; the Tennessee state officials, Governor Albert H. Roberts, Representative Seth Walker, and Representative Harry Burn, were key players in the outcome of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Instead of citing legislative proceedings or personal manuscripts, Flexner references the *Baltimore Sun* to support the crux of her monograph.

Although *Century of Struggle* is a chronological narrative of the suffrage movement, Flexner uses a deductive approach to her study. Unlike an inductive methodology, by which the author intends the reader to draw his or her own conclusions based on an exhaustive compilation of evidence, Flexner glories in the cause for women's enfranchisement and presupposes a natural rights premise, based on Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Seneca Falls Convention, to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. While Flexner delights in incorporating every nugget of research which renders her opus a very intriguing read, she has one unifying theme. Flexner argues that women obtained political and professional advancement because they harnessed their power by means of political organization.

Sporadic voices of egalitarian sentiment sprouted from women in the early nineteenth century that propounded women's intellectual capabilities. Yet according to Flexner women's entry into the public sphere did not gain momentum until they affiliated with the nascent antislavery movement, the American Anti-Slavery Society. Women's humanitarian concern for the slave propelled them to speak publicly and against the peculiar institution. Because of their social reform endeavors, these women developed skills to form auxiliary labor organizations in order to further women's rights in the workplace, such as with the Lowell Female Labor Reform

Association, an auxiliary of the New England Workingmen's Association. By the Civil War, not only did women continue to channel humanitarian endeavors in the public sphere, they were finally able to form their own organizations to carry out their missions. The redoubtable suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony organized the National Woman's Loyal League in order to obtain a million signatures on a petition for the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Flexner argues, "Perhaps one of the most far-reaching effects of the League's work was to accustom the women themselves to the value of organization as a means to accomplish their ends."<sup>27</sup>

This methodological transformation stood the test of time a half century later. Although Flexner attributes the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the invaluable efforts of both the NAWSA and the NWP, she particularly praises the leadership qualities of the NAWSA president, Carrie Chapman Catt. Not only does Flexner allude to Catt (as well as to Paul) as a "professional organizer," but also she places Catt on par with Anthony and Stanton.<sup>28</sup> In reference to the regional divisiveness among suffragists on whether to win suffrage on the state or federal level, in 1916, Catt had the insight to see the suffrage issue as, according to Flexner,

a *political* [italics of Flexner] one, which could only be resolved by political action, and that an effective striking force could only be achieved by welding together seemingly disparate elements. She had the statesmanlike vision to conceive of a plan of action in which each group could play a constructive role and help achieve the desired goal.<sup>29</sup>

Contrary to Schlesinger, Sr., Flexner gives subtle hints that militancy was not necessarily the most effective method to amend the Constitution. While she (as well as Catt) credits the NWP for its galvanizing effect on Congress, from 1913 to 1917, to consider the federal suffrage amendment, Flexner finds that "attention has too often been concentrated on the phase of the

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<sup>27</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 112.

<sup>28</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 283.

<sup>29</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 284.

Union's [Congressional Union's] activity which began in 1917, when Alice Paul's organization went over to 'militant' tactics adapted from British suffragettes."<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Flexner delicately admonishes Paul's methods:

It in no way detracts from the value of the work accomplished by Miss Paul and her associates from 1913 through 1916 to say that it was fortunate, for the United States and for its women, that they were not the sole group that was working for suffrage from 1916 to 1920, and that Miss Paul's way was no longer the only effective way in which women could work to win the vote.<sup>31</sup>

In doing so, Flexner maintained objectivity, albeit with courteous literary style, regardless of her own interaction with Paul. So Flexner evaluates the degree of civic participation of both leaders: Catt's method of political organization was the key to winning the vote.

As for Wilson's perspective of the federal suffrage amendment during his administration, Flexner provides some insight not only into his own incremental conversion to woman suffrage but also his concern for political expediency. In September 1918, Wilson's Secretary of Treasury William G. McAdoo urged Wilson to address the Senate in favor of the federal suffrage amendment on the 30<sup>th</sup>, the day before the Senate was to vote on the bill. McAdoo did not believe that Wilson's rhetoric would sway the Senate to pass the bill; however, he believed that Wilson's speech would impress upon the public to elect Senators who would support woman suffrage. Wilson addressed the Senate to urge the passage of the bill as a war measure. Although the bill failed to pass the Senate by only two votes, Flexner had cast a short-sighted and somber tone on this outcome. Additionally, she provided a meager narration of the November Senatorial elections: Flexner gave a few cryptic sentences regarding the NAWSA's

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<sup>30</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 279.

<sup>31</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 285.

and the NWP's campaigns to defeat the re-election of anti-suffrage Senators. So she did not hold the position that suffrage as a war measure propelled the enactment of this amendment.<sup>32</sup>

Diverging from a narrative account of the suffrage movement, Aileen S. Kraditor wrote *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (1965). In order to discern the ideological premise of the woman suffrage movement, Kraditor's purpose is to investigate the ideological positions of re-elected leaders (to ensure their representative standing within the movement), between 1890 and 1918, of the NAWSA as well as of the NWP. Indeed, Kraditor finds that "the woman suffrage movement had no official ideology."<sup>33</sup> Yet the scope of her study rests on "white, native-born, middle-class women for the right to participate more fully in the public affairs of a society the basic structure of which they accepted."<sup>34</sup> Within this defined group of suffragists Kraditor sought out differences in the "significance of their movement and the strategy and tactics they ought to pursue."<sup>35</sup> According to Kraditor, the movement divided into the NAWSA and the Congressional Union [CU] only over the pragmatics of obtaining suffrage, whether by state amendments or by federal amendment: "in general the attitudes toward other ideological issues that existed among members of the NAWSA existed within the CU too."<sup>36</sup>

Kraditor clearly expounds on the disparate ideological arguments in her chapter, "Two Types of Suffragist Argument." These two arguments, justice versus expediency, adhere to temporal, not organizational, circumstances. Elizabeth Cady Stanton of the NAWSA espoused the justice argument, premised on the common humanity of men and women, in her *Suffrage a Natural Right* in 1894 while the suffragists during Wilson's administration propounded their

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<sup>32</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 320-324.

<sup>33</sup>Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), vii.

<sup>34</sup>Kraditor, *The Ideas*, x.

<sup>35</sup>Kraditor, *The Ideas*, x.

<sup>36</sup>Kraditor, *The Ideas*, xi.

moral superiority that Kraditor labels as ‘expediency.’ Kraditor straightforwardly describes these suffragists’ Weltanschauung, “political equality would be good for woman, but woman would also be good for government; the development of this proposition dominated their propaganda from about the turn of the century until victory crowned their efforts twenty years later.”<sup>37</sup> This worldview was born out of government’s metamorphosis from “a restrainer of men’s interference with one another’s rights and [into] a social welfare agency.”<sup>38</sup> Progressive era women suffragists had sought the vote in order to expedite the moral uplift of society; contrary to the natural rights philosophy, these suffragists noted “the ways in which they differed from men, and therefore had the *duty* [italics of Kraditor] to contribute their special skills and experience to government.”<sup>39</sup>

Kraditor contributes significantly to the literature via her interpretation of the ideologies of the suffrage movement. Yet Kraditor does not form a position as to the specific catalyst for the passage of the amendment; although, implicitly, the suffragists’ expediency argument alone propelled its passage. In her chapter, “Politics and Suffragist Tactics,” she only notes the NAWSA’s criticism of the NWP’s tactics during Wilson’s presidency: Catt not only believed that Paul’s confrontational tactics would alienate the woman suffrage sympathizers, Catt also believed that “the suffrage cause would be debased by tying it to political expediency.”<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Kraditor’s thesis does not inform this chapter. According to her preface, the ideological differences of justice versus expediency transcend the organizational divergence, yet the reader does not see how the NAWSA and the NWP channeled these ideologies via their suffrage rhetoric and activities. Perhaps if Kraditor had extended the temporal scope of her

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<sup>37</sup>Kraditor, *The Ideas*, 45, 56.

<sup>38</sup>Kraditor, *The Ideas*, 66.

<sup>39</sup>Kraditor, *The Ideas*, 66.

<sup>40</sup>Kraditor, *The Ideas*, 242-245, 245.

monograph beyond the Progressive Era and included an analysis of the impact of the Great War on women, suffragists, and the leaders of the suffrage movement, she could have formed a more cohesive argument.

David Morgan wrote *Suffragists And Democrats: The Politics of Woman Suffrage in America* (1972). Noting the passing of the fiftieth anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment, Morgan is not satisfied with the historiography of the woman suffrage movement thus far.<sup>41</sup> He complains that little research has been accomplished on woman suffrage at the state and local level and that the interpretations presented are from the perspective of the suffragists generally exclusive of the reactions of the politicians. Morgan cites the shortcomings of the historiography, “We have, then, both unresearched areas and sometimes unreflective approaches to the subject.”<sup>42</sup> Morgan defines the parameters of his self-described case study: with the temporal scope from 1916 (an election year) to 1920, Morgan intends to evaluate the interplay among the Suffrage Movement, Woodrow Wilson, the campaigns at the state level, Congress, and the states considering ratification.<sup>43</sup> Preceding this scope Morgan provides analyses on the influence of the common law on women’s legal status by citing Blackstone, the evolution of women’s education, and an examination of the turn of the century labor force. Yet Morgan defines the purpose of his monograph, “The study is, then, concerned with Woman Suffrage when it had entered the national arena and was involving factions within and between parties. In short, we are concerned with the question when it had become a source of political dispute among national politicians.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>David Morgan, *Suffragists And Democrats: The Politics of Woman Suffrage in America* (n.p.: Michigan State University Press, 1972), 1-2. Morgan refers to Flexner, Kraditor, as well as Arthur Sinclair’s 1965 general history of woman suffrage, *The Better Half: The Emancipation of American Women*.

<sup>42</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists*, 2.

<sup>43</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists*, 2.

<sup>44</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists*, 2.



Morgan sides with Catt's leadership over that of Paul's in the decision to support U.S. entry into the war. While the NWP withheld its support, "Mrs. Catt, at the head of the National [the NAWSA], made no such tactical error: the war effort must be used to demonstrate the full capacity of women and justify their demands for political participation."<sup>45</sup> Yet Morgan observes that politicians and party officials were apprehensive of gaining the female electorate: there was "no firm evidence that women would not provide both millions of highly volatile, cause-prone voters and large numbers of apathetic, apolitical voters. Volatility on the one hand and apathy on the other were, and continued to be, *betes-noires* for most politicians."<sup>46</sup> Morgan's assessment of the political arena that pertained to the woman suffrage issue nonetheless leaves his analysis of Wilson incomplete. In 1917, enfranchised women Democrats, who learned of the maltreatment of the militant prisoners, informed Wilson that they would act to secure his eventual removal from office. Morgan surmises that Wilson must have found this revelation "peculiarly unnerving."<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless, Morgan reports that Wilson, soon afterwards, assured Catt that he would "do what he could for the amendment."<sup>48</sup> Morgan does not explain this seemingly counterproductive action; moreover, according to Morgan, Wilson was not ready to promote woman suffrage as a war measure at that time.

Yet Morgan's monograph provides balance to the literature on woman suffrage by offering an analysis of the political ramifications of the struggle for the federal amendment. He researched manuscripts of the NAWSA, the NWP, Wilson, and of Congressmen at the Library of Congress. His other sources include congressional hearings, main-stream newspapers, as well as articles by the relativist historian Charles A. Beard.

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<sup>45</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists*, 118.

<sup>46</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists*, 180.

<sup>47</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists*, 120.

<sup>48</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists*, 121.

Almost ten years later Christine A. Lunardini and Thomas J. Knock co-authored a journal article, which stresses Wilson's active role in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, by means of their extensive research of Arthur S. Link's *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. In "Woodrow Wilson and Woman Suffrage: A New Look," Lunardini and Knock find fault with Progressive era historians and historians of women's history for neglecting to provide a thorough analysis of Wilson's pivotal contribution to woman suffrage.<sup>49</sup> Lunardini and Knock cite Flexner's monograph as "the best narrative of its kind" even though she did not adequately examine Wilson's papers.<sup>50</sup> Where Morgan places too much weight on "southern congressional objections to enfranchising black women" and "fails to acknowledge Wilson's accomplishments as a suffrage advocate," and Kraditor's monograph was "notable but equally incomplete," Lunardini and Knock contend, "an examination of Wilson's role illustrates the crucial nature of active presidential lobbying and brings to light a significant aspect, hitherto unexplored, of the political dynamics involved in the passage of the amendment in both houses of Congress, as well as ratification by the states."<sup>51</sup>

Not only do Lunardini and Knock display Wilson's complete, albeit incremental, conversion to woman suffrage, by way of states' rights, by the time of his presidency, they also clearly explain the NAWSA's internal dispute over methodology, whether to campaign for an amendment on the state or federal level, as well as the Congressional Committee's confrontational plan to strike "the party in power" (the Democrats), and the subsequent splintering of the Congressional Union, later to be the militant NWP, from the NAWSA. Both organizations saw Wilson as the integral force in the passage of the federal suffrage amendment.

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<sup>49</sup>Christine A. Lunardini and Thomas J. Knock, "Woodrow Wilson and Woman Suffrage: A New Look," *Political Science Quarterly* 95 (Winter 1980-81): 655-656. Lunardini and Knock earned their doctorates in 1981 and 1982 respectively.

<sup>50</sup>Lunardini and Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 655-656.

<sup>51</sup>Lunardini and Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 656.

Indeed these authors depict the dichotomous influence on Wilson of the two suffrage parties.

Lunardini and Knock portray Catt of the NAWSA as the more effectual player than Paul of the NWP. When both organizations acted upon their own plans for suffrage on the federal level in 1915,

Paul, with the threat of electoral reprisal, intended to force him to support the amendment. Catt, with personal diplomacy, sought to educate him and enlist his support . . . As the suffragists' demands increased during 1916, Wilson could make further concessions, however haltingly, in response to Catt's gentle persuasion, without giving the appearance of succumbing to Paul's pressure tactics . . . Thus, when Catt requested that the Democrats write a suffrage plank into their national platform, Wilson readily complied.<sup>52</sup>

The authors agree with Catt, who co-authored with Nettie Rogers Shuler their 1926 *Woman Suffrage and Politics*, in that Wilson's genuine and complete conversion to woman suffrage resulted from "the combined efforts of all suffragists, suffrage advocacy had gradually acquired legitimacy within the administration."<sup>53</sup> Wilson, along with several members of his cabinet, voted for woman suffrage in the various 1915 state referenda.

After examining Wilson's 1916 re-election and U.S. entry into the war against Germany on April 6, 1917, Lunardini and Knock stress the importance of women's war efforts and Wilson's eventual endorsement of the federal suffrage amendment as a war measure. Yet, curiously, Lunardini and Knock overlook Catt's initial idea, as shown in Link's *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, for Wilson to endorse woman suffrage as a war measure. Not included in this journal article, Catt had written to Wilson on May 7<sup>th</sup>, shortly after the Selective Services Act, "We hoped that our willingness to serve our country even only half armed would appeal to the men with whom you and me must deal with in Congress as good and sufficient reason for our enfranchisement – possibly as a war measure."<sup>54</sup> Wilson responded the next day that he did not

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<sup>52</sup>Lunardini and Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 661.

<sup>53</sup>Lunardini and Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 662.

<sup>54</sup>Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt to Wilson, 7 May 1917, *PWW*, 42:237.

believe Congress would be receptive to considering the federal amendment because they were preoccupied with the war.<sup>55</sup> By studying Wilson's measured conversion to woman suffrage, one could see that Wilson was generally contemplative in his deliberations to new ideas; not surprisingly, he was at first reluctant to endorse suffrage as a war measure. Nonetheless, the idea resonated with him over time. Yet the authors attribute Wilson's serious consideration of woman suffrage as a war emergency measure on a July 18 meeting with J.A.H. Hopkins, the chairman of the New Jersey Progressive Party, whose wife recently had been arrested for picketing. Wilson asked Hopkins for suggestions on how to resolve this dilemma; Mr. Hopkins urged Wilson to expedite the passage of the Anthony amendment. By September, Chairman Pou of the House Woman Suffrage Committee, which, in May, Gardener of NAWSA urged Wilson to establish, happily stated that he would examine the woman suffrage amendment after the preceding war emergency measures were to be resolved.<sup>56</sup> In sum, the authors hastily credit the picketers.

Nevertheless, Lunardini and Knock elucidate Wilson's oratory skills in his dogged attempts at persuading congressmen, government officials, and the electorate to approve of the passage of the federal suffrage amendment. As recompense for women's war efforts, Wilson heroically praised their contributions in an open letter, addressed to Catt, to the Senate on June 7, 1918,

The services of women during this supreme crisis of the world's history have been of the most signal usefulness and distinction. The war could not have been fought without them, nor its sacrifices endured. It is high time that some part of our debt of gratitude to them should be acknowledged and paid, and the only acknowledgement they ask is their admission to the suffrage. Can we justly refuse it?<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Wilson to Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt, second letter, 8 May 1917, *PWW*, 42:241.

<sup>56</sup>Lunardini and Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 664-665.

<sup>57</sup>Wilson, as cited in Lunardini and Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 667.

The authors ascribe the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to Wilson's invaluable exertions toward woman suffrage: "he secured the decisive votes in the House in 1918, the decisive vote in the Senate in 1919, and the decisive state vote during the ratification process in 1920."<sup>58</sup>

Interestingly, at this stage in the historiography, the spotlight on Wilson in turn ignites the debate over the effectiveness of the two rival woman suffrage organizations, the NAWSA and the NWP. The Lunardini and Knock journal article provoked a rebuttal three years later from Sally Hunter Graham in "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Woman Suffrage Movement." While Graham argues against Flexner, who believes Wilson's inactivity toward woman suffrage was born out of "benign neglect," Graham also contradicts Lunardini and Knock's position that Wilson had genuinely converted to woman suffrage.<sup>59</sup> Instead, according to Graham, Wilson officially endorsed woman suffrage in order to placate the militant NWP whose actions were a source of discomfiture for the president. Graham's sources include the memoirs of former NWP militants, a militant suffragist publication, several mainstream newspapers, and the Woodrow Wilson Papers, as well as those of his cabinet members, at the Library of Congress. Noticeably lacking are sources generated by the NAWSA.

Graham's article is similar to Lunardini and Knock's in that Graham acknowledges the pivotal role that Wilson held in order to expedite the passage of the federal suffrage amendment. Yet Graham focuses on Alice Paul's influence on the president and thereby tells 'the other side of the story.' To reiterate, Paul "believed that the president's support was vital to the suffrage movement's objectives, and that political pressure was the only method that would ensure his support."<sup>60</sup> The militants plied their political actions in order to coerce Wilson into endorsing

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<sup>58</sup>Lunardini and Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 671.

<sup>59</sup>Sally Hunter Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Woman Suffrage Movement," *Political Science Quarterly* 98 (Winter 1983-84): 665. Graham earned her doctorate in 1988.

<sup>60</sup>Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul," 666-667.

woman suffrage. Moreover, the NWP derided the idea of proposing suffrage as a war measure. Citing Doris Stevens's *Jailed for Freedom*, Graham relays a militant's pithy remarks on this measure, "We will not bargain with our country for our services . . . We will not say to our government: 'give us the vote and we will nurse your soldiers,' but we will insist on suffrage now."<sup>61</sup>

According to Graham, the imprisoned picketers' hunger strike in November 1917 was the impetus for Wilson's direct actions toward ensuring woman suffrage. Embarrassed by the public's consternation of the prisoners' treatment, as well as Wilson's apparent disregard for the federal suffrage amendment, the Wilson administration allegedly sent an envoy, David Lawrence, a journalist, to bargain with the imprisoned Paul. Graham describes this supposed bargain, "Lawrence reportedly asked Paul if she would agree to abandon the picketing in exchange for a guarantee from the administration that the suffrage amendment would pass through Congress by 1919."<sup>62</sup> Graham cites an editorial in the *Milwaukee Leader* as well as Stevens' *Jailed for Freedom* as her sources. Although Graham admits that David Lawrence "denied that he was an emissary from the president," she notes that Alice Paul was released from prison a week later and that Wilson endorsed the amendment on January 9, 1918, the day before the amendment passed that House. Graham then attacks Lunardini and Knock for their "flawed" interpretation of events and concludes, "Alice Paul's tactics placed Wilson in an untenable position. The president, in order to maintain at least the appearance of integrity and consistency, made a political rather than a principled decision to support the woman suffrage amendment."<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>An NWP official, as cited in Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul," 667. Doris Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom* (Freeport, NY: Books For Libraries Press, 1971, c.1920).

<sup>62</sup>Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul," 678.

<sup>63</sup>Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul," 678, 679.

Graham draws a hasty conclusion despite the precarious nature of her evidence: another factor came into play during the November 1917 to January 1918 time frame that she excludes from her analysis. On November 27, 1917 the day before Paul's prison sentence was commuted (according to Graham), Royal Meeker of the Bureau of Labor Statistics alerted Wilson as to the compromised domestic labor supply because of men's enlistment in the military. Meeker saw a need to substitute women for men in the domestic industries and urged Wilson to expedite a new labor policy.<sup>64</sup>

These two dueling journal articles bear provocative interpretations of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. A portrayal of the ideological undercurrents, however, such as that of natural rights or privileged rights, that may have informed the actions of the players would enhance the authors' arguments and provide depth to their analytical narrations. Nonetheless, because of their narrow temporal scope, Lunardini and Knock and Graham deliver poignant versions of these controversial historical events.

In 1986 Robert Booth Fowler wrote *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician*. He does not intend to dispute his colleagues' interpretations on woman suffrage and he cites Flexner, Kraditor, and Morgan for supplemental information in his biography of Catt's political career. Yet Fowler observes that when he wrote this monograph, during "the renewed feminist movement," academia has largely ignored her redoubtable endeavors within the suffrage movement and in the League of Women Voters.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, Fowler bestows upon Catt the accolade as "one of the most able politicians in American history"<sup>66</sup>

He predominately bases his research on primary sources: among these sources, the collections at the Library of Congress, the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, and the

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<sup>64</sup>Royal Meeker to Wilson, 27 November 1917, *PWW*, 45:132, 133, 133n.1.

<sup>65</sup>Robert Booth Fowler, *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), xi.

<sup>66</sup>Fowler, *Carrie Catt*, xi.

Sophia Smith Library at Smith College proved invaluable. With these sources, Fowler primarily places Catt in the context of Progressive Era reform. To no one's astonishment, he finds that Catt's "favorite politician was fellow-reformer Woodrow Wilson."<sup>67</sup> Fowler illumines the extent of Catt's loyalty to Wilson. In order to mitigate the impact of NWP militant tactics, Catt clandestinely informed "[officials at] the White House of planned embarrassments to Wilson, which her friends in the Woman's Party leaked to her."<sup>68</sup> In regards to the impact of the Great War on the suffrage movement, Fowler notes that Catt's official about-face on her heretofore pacifism displayed wise political opportunism for woman suffrage. He examines Catt's own personal rationale for this seemingly duplicitous political positioning: as a realist, "She never had any interest in a politics of purity in an impure world."<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the women's war effort would enhance their prestige among top government officials.<sup>70</sup> A clever strategist, "Catt sought to foster the impression that women, while they gave their service freely, nonetheless deserved something in return, and that something, of course, was the vote."<sup>71</sup> Fowler cites the June 1918 edition of *Woman Citizen* as to these exhortations of suffrage as a war measure. Based on Fowler's admiration of Catt's political maneuverings, one could infer that Fowler espouses a privileged rights ideology, or the gaining of a constitutional right based on a quid pro quo relationship with the state.

Ironically, as a political analysis, Fowler allots minimal attention to Wilson. Catt's value as an effective leader for woman suffrage was contingent on Wilson's receptivity to her ideas. Nonetheless, Fowler's *Carrie Catt* is a sound and able rendering of her abilities as a politician.

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<sup>67</sup>Fowler, *Carrie Catt*, 95.

<sup>68</sup>Fowler, *Carrie Catt*, 151.

<sup>69</sup>Fowler, *Carrie Catt*, 142.

<sup>70</sup>Fowler, *Carrie Catt*, 141.

<sup>71</sup>Fowler, *Carrie Catt*, 142.



In that same year, 1986, Christine A. Lunardini re-enters the historiography on the woman suffrage movement as an Alice Paul apologist with her *From Equal Suffrage To Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928*. In her monograph, incongruities are inherent not only because of the scholarly support that she obtained for her analysis, but also because she contradicts the aforementioned journal article that she co-authored. Although Lunardini now has a pro-militancy stand-point on the historical issue of women's endeavors for enfranchisement, her doctoral advisor was the conservative Arthur S. Link, the general editor for *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, with whom she admits that she "did not always see eye to eye . . . [but he] allowed [her] to tell the story [her] way."<sup>72</sup> In her journal article Lunardini (and Knock) argues that Wilson and the NAWSA played a pivotal role in the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.<sup>73</sup> This stance is diametrically opposed to her argument four years hence. Although Lunardini lists the journal article in her Bibliography, she neither explains, nor alludes to, the rationale for her drastic change of position in the historiography of woman suffrage. Her unaccounted for shifty nature may be suspect in the eyes of the reader.

Nevertheless, *From Equal Suffrage* has substantive merit, as with her step-by-step explanation of the separation of the Congressional Union from the NAWSA, as well as bibliographic merit despite her misleading title; her subtitle more accurately defines the scope of her monograph. In reference to the main title, equal suffrage was not enacted until 1920, yet she begins her analysis in 1910 (in accordance with her textual material). Additionally, the presentation of her material is temporally unbalanced: she accords discussion on equal rights only in her last chapter. To continue, Lunardini holds a seemingly paradoxical argument: while

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<sup>72</sup>Christine A. Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage To Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928*, The American Social Experience Series, gen. ed. James Kirby Martin, no. 5 (New York: New York University Press, 1986), x.

<sup>73</sup>Lunardini and Knock, "Woodrow Wilson," 656, 664-665.

a methodological transformation within the suffrage movement, militancy, facilitated the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, long-term ideological disparities within the women's movement, that of the maternalistic social feminists versus that of the gender egalitarian radical feminists of the NWP, impeded the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Nevertheless, Lunardini attributes the success of the former amendment to the leadership of the militant NWP. Lunardini champions Alice Paul by contradicting Flexner's stance on the militants, in which she "accorded [Paul] minimal credit for advancing suffrage."<sup>74</sup>

Lunardini appears to stress the importance of the integrity of a well-formed and dynamic suffrage movement, which formed during the nineteenth century at the exclusion of peripheral social and political issues, in order to bring about legislative change. Of the suffrage movement during the Wilson administration, Lunardini asserts, "it is necessary to look beyond the circumstance of time;" the war measure had a negligible bearing on women's enfranchisement. Wilson ultimately responded to Paul's pressure tactics albeit via the more congenial NAWSA.<sup>75</sup> This interpretation contradicts that of Flexner who implied that Catt's suggestion to Wilson of suffrage as a war measure displayed astute political leadership skills on her part. All the same, Lunardini adheres to the natural rights philosophy of the suffrage movement along with Flexner, as espoused in *The History of Woman Suffrage*.

In 1991 Linda G. Ford wrote *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party, 1912-1920*. Ford states the objective for her monograph which is based on her dissertation: "the purpose of my research was to find out how and why American suffrage militancy developed to the point of government arrests, and to discover who the jailed American

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<sup>74</sup>Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage*, xv.

<sup>75</sup>Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage*, xiv.

militants were.”<sup>76</sup> Ford collects and organizes data on the militants and their activities as found in the Appendices. She uses the papers of the National Woman’s Party, available on microfilm, as an important source of records. “This information gives new insight into NWP organizational detail, militant philosophy, leadership strategies, and the personal experience of 168 militant feminists. It proves an invaluable mine of information as a critical starting point on the militant NWP.”<sup>77</sup> Ford offers a word of caution, however. She alerts the reader of the compromised evidentiary status of this encapsulated collection, “It should be noted that Alice Paul [1885-1977] did go through the NWP papers and remove what she thought might be hurtful or offensive before they were microfilmed.”<sup>78</sup> According to Ford, the NWP microfilmed the collection in 1979.<sup>79</sup> Ford buries this cryptic statement in a footnote found in the first chapter after the preface. Apparently she did not corroborate the material found in this microfilm with the original collection, if it indeed was extant. To continue, in addition to her research at the archival repositories of women’s collections as well as of the microform edition of the Papers of Woodrow Wilson (Library of Congress), personal and telephone interviews with former militants and written correspondences with suffragists and their families provide inestimable insight into the militant suffrage movement. Despite these prizeworthy oral and written reminiscences, her material in aggregate is unbalanced; for example, although she researches the papers of a separate suffrage organization, the Women’s Social and Political Union, noticeably lacking is the NAWSA collection located at the Library of Congress. Indeed, Ford lists neither the Lunardini and Knock journal article nor Fowler’s political biography of Catt in the bibliography. Because Ford intends to dispute the argument that women won suffrage as a reward for their war-time

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<sup>76</sup>Linda G. Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman’s Party, 1912-1920* (Lanham, NY: University Press of America, 1991), xi.

<sup>77</sup>Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels*, xi.

<sup>78</sup>Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels*, 11-12, n.18.

<sup>79</sup>Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels*, xi.

services, as she initially implies in her preface, she should present the ideas of the proponent of that argument, Carrie Chapman Catt, president of the NAWSA. Her unbalanced sources, including her casual stance on the compromised selection of contents found in the microfilm of the NWP records, are suspect to the reader: the reader questions the objective intentions of the author.

Ford notes that Flexner, Kraditor, and Lunardini (*From Equal Suffrage*) address women's militancy during the suffrage campaigns; however, "no in-depth study of militancy or the jailed militants themselves has been done."<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, Ford cites material from the earlier pro-militant source on the interpretation of woman suffrage, *From Equal Suffrage*, for supplemental information to describe the worldview of the spirited "new suffragists" of the Progressive Era. Yet Ford intends to show that the militants gained the vote by means of non-violent civil disobedience and not as a reward for women's war efforts. Ford caustically argues,

In light of NWP activism, it is ludicrous to argue simply that Wilson 'gave' women the vote 'for their war services.' As E.P. Thompson has written regarding (male) workers, women in history are still often seen as passive; 'the degree to which they contributed, by conscious efforts, to the making of history' is omitted. No one gave more 'conscious effort' to a political fight than NWP militants.<sup>81</sup>

Ford is correct insofar as traditional histories tend to exclude analyses of women's endeavors and accomplishments: as examined earlier with Schlesinger, Sr., the historiographical exclusion of women is not indicative of women's inactivity. Yet Ford obfuscates historians for historical agents. The historian H.W. Brands, author of *Woodrow Wilson* (2003), does not recognize women's privileged right to the enfranchisement based on their war efforts; however, the personal papers of Woodrow Wilson prove otherwise. Although Wilson himself was a historian,

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<sup>80</sup>Ford, xi.

<sup>81</sup>Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels*, 246; E.P. Thompson, as cited in Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels*, 246. British historian E.P. Thompson wrote the 1964 *The Making of the English Working Class*. Please refer to historiographer Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*.

as president he acted as a historical agent in reference to the contemporaneous woman suffrage movement.

Recently, in 2004, Carolyn Summers Vacca wrote *A Reform Against Nature: Woman Suffrage and the Rethinking of American Citizenship, 1840-1920*. Similar to Kraditor's 1965 *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement*, Vacca intends to find changes in the ideology of the suffrage movement; however, in contrast to Kraditor, Vacca sees that the change in ideology from justice to expediency was manifest before the Civil War. Upon investigating "the public debates of the suffrage campaign," Vacca finds that by 1880, "the shift of the suffragist argument from 'rights talk' to ascriptive notions of citizenship had a profound effect on the suffrage debate and played an important role in wider debates over the character of American citizenship."<sup>82</sup> By 'ascriptive notions,' Vacca refers to the special characteristics inherent in women, such as women's moral superiority, which, according to Vacca, both suffragists and anti-suffragists used to support their respective arguments. In fact, as of the 1870s, the anti-suffragists' argument as to the unsuitability of women for the franchise overpowered the natural rights argument. In rebuttal, suffragists proffered the ascriptive qualities of women that would, on the other hand, serve as a boon to society. Yet in doing so, suffragists diverged from the common humanity argument of women and implicitly acknowledged that women were indeed inherently different from men in character. By 1890, the NAWSA had subscribed to the ascriptive argument for woman suffrage over the natural rights argument.

During the years leading up to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, in her chapter, "Whose Victory?," Vacca sympathizes with the NWP as the lone torch-bearer for the natural rights ideology while she criticizes Catt for mirror-imaging the anti-suffragists' ascriptive

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<sup>82</sup>Carolyn Summers Vacca, *A Reform Against Nature: Woman Suffrage and the Rethinking of American Citizenship, 1840-1920*, American University Studies, Series IX, History, Vol. 200 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 1. Vacca, *A Reform*, 1.

standards against enfranchisement. Although Vacca credits both the NWP and the NAWSA for the passage of the federal suffrage amendment through Congress in 1919, Catt's ascriptive standards for citizenship in effect caused debilitating ramifications on the post-suffrage political culture. Anti-suffragists took into account "the inherent nature of the voter [and] the voter's character."<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, "their denial that political participation was an inherent right of every citizen was widely adopted."<sup>84</sup> Vacca cites a secondary source for a supposedly self-incriminating quote from Catt in 1931: according to Vacca, Catt admits, "that the vote was not a right and that [to quote Catt] 'no citizen of the United States held it because it was a right.'"<sup>85</sup>

So Vacca places the twentieth-century suffrage movement strictly in the context of the reform-minded Progressive era. Not only does she eschew the impact that the Great War had on women's political status but also she examines a political subculture to the exclusion of the political culture of the American polity itself. An examination of the premise of the U.S. Constitution would reveal that the citizenry obtained constitutional rights, as privileges from the government, upon their vested stake in society. Catt's aforementioned quote may have reflected her newly arrived tenet that the franchise was a privilege and not a right. A vested stake in society, which women had proved during the war and thereby won the privilege of the vote, was contingent upon the actions of the citizen, not upon the moral superiority or the common humanity of the citizen which qualified for, respectively, an ascriptive or natural rights claim to the vote. Additionally, Vacca does not specify Catt's particular ascriptive standards for the franchise during the Wilson administration.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Vacca, *A Reform*, 124.

<sup>84</sup>Vacca, *A Reform*, 124.

<sup>85</sup>Vacca, *A Reform*, 124; Catt, as cited in Vacca, *A Reform*, 124. Vacca cites her quote from Jane Jerome Camhi, *Women Against Women* (1994).

<sup>86</sup>Vacca, *A Reform*, 105-125.

Vacca lacks literature that is pertinent to her topic. Susan Marshall's 1997 *Splintered Sisterhood: Gender and Class in the Campaign against Woman Suffrage* is a path breaking approach to the anti-suffrage movement which had ulterior motives for its fight to keep women disfranchised. As for the ante-bellum suffrage movement, Nancy Isenberg's 1998 *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* provides an analysis on the natural rights versus privileged rights ideological positions among suffragists in the obtainment of constitutional rights. Vacca bases her nineteenth-century analysis of the suffrage movement on Stanton and Anthony's perpetuation of the natural rights ideology and does not consider the other ideologically minded women's conventions that espoused a quid pro quo relationship with the state, which included a vested stake in society. As for primary source material, Vacca notably excludes E.P. Hurlbut's 1845 *Essays On Human Rights And Their Political Guarantees*. Hurlbut was a New York jurist who advocated for women's right to the franchise not only because of their civic competency but also because of their inherent moral superiority. Hurlbut's argument would have supported Vacca's ascriptive standards theory. As a resident of New York herself, she should have been familiar with this leader of women's rights.

An overview of the historiography reveals the various arguments and approaches toward the events leading up to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Common among all of these historians, with the exception of the Lunardini and Knock journal article, is the lack of extensive analysis of Wilson's perspective of and role in its passage. Wilson had done the 'heavy lifting' in persuasively urging legislators and state officials to pass this amendment; his personal papers attest to this fact. Nonetheless, the historians who placed the winning of woman suffrage in the context of the war provide the clearest arguments, as with Morgan, the co-authorship of Lunardini and Knock, and Fowler. However, the historians who interpret the passage of the

Nineteenth Amendment in favor of the militants draw on an unbalanced selection of sources. Despite these various assessments, all of these historians of women's history have contributed to the historiography by providing their unique interpretations of suffragists' endeavors toward obtaining the franchise. Wilson scholars, however, merely offer anecdotal allusions to the suffrage movement. Moreover, curiously, they do not refer the reader to women's historians who do expound on the events leading to the passage of the federal amendment. In sum, while Wilson historians scarcely address the passage of this amendment, with Clements providing the most able interpretation of woman suffrage, historians of women's history generally do not credit Wilson's attentiveness to the suffrage movement. Thus the historiography renders the study of the Nineteenth Amendment as obscure and peripheral to American History.

My thesis, however, places the Nineteenth Amendment as the common denominator in both presidential and women's history. By applying a holistic approach to this study, I evaluate the history of women's civil and political standing in the context of America's common law political culture. Federal and state legislatures have perpetuated the time-honored feudalistic notion of the reciprocal rights and obligations that spurred a heroic vitality that was manifest in the state. Federal and state governments, in practice, did not succumb to idyllic utopias of the natural rights of man. Such noble visions belonged to the philosophers, dissenters of society, and political movements. While the Nineteenth Amendment, the federal right for women to the franchise, is self-evidently a part of women's history, this study is in part a presidential history in that Wilson, not only as protector and defender of the Constitution, but also as commander in chief of the army and navy, rewarded women with the vote for their war efforts. With this special position of power he appreciated women's military endeavors in the war zone and on the home front (thus he was in a position to prize the privileged rights school of thought). Because



he was particularly impressed with their proven civic capacity, Wilson made an honorable compromise of executive authority by over-stepping his boundaries as president and urged legislators to pass the amendment. The use of Link's *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* is egregiously lacking in both presidential and women's histories in regard to the suffrage amendment. With this evidentiary material we see Wilson ignore Paul's natural rights argument and espouse Catt's vested rights argument in his endorsement of the amendment. Catt was the *deus ex machina* who brought to Wilson's attention women's contributions to the war effort. She was the mastermind in winning the vote for women. Catt molded the argument for suffrage to fit Wilson's *Weltanschauung* of reciprocal rights and obligations, who, in turn, goaded state and federal legislators to pass the amendment. Indeed, they were a dynamic duo. With this heretofore neglected primary source my intent is to demystify the whirlwind of events and vistas that impelled the enactment of the only constitutional right for women.

## CHAPTER III

### QUALIFYING THE VOTE: EARLY AND ANTEBELLUM U.S. POLITICAL CULTURE

In order to understand how a war-time campaign for woman suffrage was successful, one must first fathom the premises of American political culture. British common law, of feudal origin, informed eighteenth-century American constitutionalism, both state and federal.

Although feudalism was intricately hierarchical, the founding fathers used the common law as the template for building the New Republic. Indeed, according to Kathleen S. Sullivan,

the members of the Revolutionary War generation were likely to refer to the common law as the ‘birthright of our liberty.’ They dated the rights of man to the Magna Carta, the charter between King John and his lords in 1215. The jury trial, due process, equal protection, and protection from ex post facto laws and bills of attainder can be found in the common law and the ‘ancient constitution.’<sup>87</sup>

J. C. Holt proclaimed Magna Carta as “the first English Statute” and explains its timeless influence on constitutional government,

Magna Carta owed its longevity to its coincidence as a grant of liberties with a particular stage in the development of the royal courts, a stage which led barons into accepting and amending the procedures and administration of the law, and justices, administrators and clerks into taking baronial demands seriously by clarifying, amending, or adding to them.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>Kathleen S. Sullivan, *Constitutional Context: Women and Rights Discourse in Nineteenth-Century America*, The Johns Hopkins Series In Constitutional Thought, eds. Sanford Levinson and Jeffrey K. Tulis (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 21. Interestingly, one of the party members of Magna Carta was a woman, Jocelyn of Bath and Glastonbury, as mentioned in the Preamble.

<sup>88</sup>J.C. Holt, *Magna Carta And Medieval Government*, Studies Presented To The International Commission For The History Of Representative And Parliamentary Opinion (London: The Hambledon Press, 1985), 289. Holt, 305. Barons served as ‘middle men’ between the sovereign and vassals of the lowest order. These “lords of inferior districts” had a dual function: they held domestic courts, “for doing speedy and effectual justice to all tenants” and thereby served as “peers of the king’s court.” Please refer to St. George Tucker, vol. III, *Blackstone’s Commentaries, With Notes Of Reference To The Constitution And Laws Of The Federal Government Of The United States And Of The Commonwealth Of Virginia* (Philadelphia: William Birch Young & Abraham Small, 1803; reprint, New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1969), 54 (page citations are to the reprint edition; please refer to the respective upper left and upper right corners of the text, as well as to the subsequent page order to which I refer). St. George Tucker was a professor of law at the University of William and Mary as well as a judge of the general court of Virginia.

Magna Carta and the common law have been revered as instruments to protect civil rights; however, one must recognize the limited and nuanced implications of eighteenth-century constitutionalism in the Early Republic.

Lockean ideals of natural rights informed Thomas Jefferson's 1776 Declaration of Independence; however, the 1789 Constitution was premised on vested rights.<sup>89</sup> These vested rights accrued to citizens who assumed a stake in society. For example, citizens who invested in property earned privileges, as with the right to vote. Furthermore, the context of the Declaration of Independence differed from that of the 1789 Constitution: while the former was an expression of intent to shift the locus of governmental power, the latter was a statement of laws that formed the new government. The ensuing decades, from the Early Republic throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, were fraught with disputes over claims to citizenship and rights thereof, based either on natural or privileged rights, among the elected officials, citizens, and subjects of the American Republic.<sup>90</sup> Government officials, who were protectors of the Constitution, promulgated the vested rights premise thereby overriding dissenting natural rights claims to the state. Hence constitutional rights ultimately were contingent on civic responsibility. As will be seen in Chapter V, Wilson successfully endorsed suffrage as a reward based on women's vested stake in society – their home front and overseas contributions to the war effort earned them the privileged right to vote.

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<sup>89</sup>John Locke, *Two Treatises Of Government, With A Supplement, Patriarcha, By Robert Filmer*, The Hafner Library Classics, ed. and with an introduction by Thomas I. Cook, no. 2 (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1947), 222-228. Locke's chapter, "Of Tyranny," discusses the demarcation between law and tyranny, see page 224, no. 202. Cook states that Locke was defending monarchical systems insofar as the monarch did not interfere with the natural rights of men, who all held equal rights. See pages ix and xviii.

<sup>90</sup>Sullivan, 74; Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America*, Gender and American Culture, ed. Linda K. Kerber and Nell Irvin Painter (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 34, 35.

Promulgators and espousers of the common law demanded that the fully vested citizenry should fulfill their civic obligations. Again, this maxim dates back to England's feudalistic era.<sup>91</sup> The great jurist, Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780), asserted the importance of learning the history of English feudalism, dating back to the Norman Conquest in 1066, when William the Conqueror awarded his soldiers with this newly acquired land, in order to understand English constitutional law.<sup>92</sup> He described the Norman tradition of the lord and vassal (tenant) symbiotic relationship of Medieval England:

The grand and fundamental maxim of all feodal tenure is this; that all lands were originally granted out by the sovereign, and are, therefore, holden, either mediately or immediately, of the crown. The grantor was called the proprietor, or *lord*; being he who retained the dominion or ultimate property of the feud or fee: and the grantee, who had the use and possession, according to the terms of the grant, was stiled the feudatory or *vasal*, which was only another name for the tenant or holder of the lands. . . .

When the tenant had thus professed himself to be the man of his superior or lord [upon act of homage], the next consideration was concerning *service*, which, as such, he was bound to render, in recompense for the land that he held. This, in pure, proper, and original feuds, was only twofold; to follow, or to do *suit* to, the lord in his courts in time of peace; and in his armies or warlike retinue, when necessity called him to the field.<sup>93</sup>

To uphold their allegiance to their respective lords, the duties of the vassals included jury service, for their fellow tenants, as well as military service to protect the land from subsequent foreign invasions. Analogous to the lord and vassal relationship was that of the king and baron: the direct beneficiaries of the sovereign held a reciprocal obligation to the crown: barons owed not only their council "in the king's presence and under the direction of his grand justiciary" but also their military services to the king in time of war, "in proportion to the quantity of land."<sup>94</sup> Conversely, one could argue that if the barons or tenants did not render their services to the king or lords, these inferior subjects could not hold land. The nature of this symbiotic relationship is

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<sup>91</sup>In the next chapter, I mention two senators during America's Reconstruction Era who used this argument to discourage woman suffrage.

<sup>92</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. III, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 47, 48, 49.

<sup>93</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. III, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 52, 54.

<sup>94</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. III, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 54, 55.

analogous to that found in eighteenth-century American constitutionalism. Although St. George Tucker, who was a professor of law at the University of William And Mary in 1803, as well as a judge in the state of Virginia, asserted that the founding fathers intended to eradicate the vestiges of feudal society, he noted that Revolutionary War veterans could claim land in Virginia for their military service.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, the important point to consider is that the principle of reciprocal rights and obligations of the sovereign and his subjects resounded into the Early Republic. Moreover, if a subject wished to be tried by a jury of his peers and not judged by the sole arbitration of one superior lord, then he must have the requisite land tenure – land for which he must render civil and military services to his immediate lord.

Historians have examined the degree to which feudalism and the common law have informed American Constitutionalism. Donald S. Lutz observes that the early Americans cherry-picked from the common law the values to incorporate into their uniquely own state and federal constitutions. “They chose in accordance with their own tradition and did not simply write the common law wholesale into their constitutions. . . . The United States Constitution would reflect the consistent but partial appropriation of the common law that became traditional in the colonists’ documents.”<sup>96</sup> Lutz enumerates the rights that the framers borrowed from Magna Carta and into the Bill of Rights.

The ten amendments that form the Bill of Rights contain twenty-seven separate rights. Six of these rights, or about 20 percent, were first stated in Magna Carta. Twenty-one, or about 75 percent, were first found in colonial documents written before the 1689 English Bill of Rights. All but one (the Ninth Amendment) could be found in several of the state constitutions written between 1776 and 1787.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. III, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 44 (first page); on the contrary, Sullivan avers that “the early American did not reject these feudal origins (*Constitutional Context*, p. 21).” St. George Tucker, vol. III, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, Appendix, Note A, p.7, no. 5.

<sup>96</sup>Donald S. Lutz, “The Idealism of Early Constitutionalism,” in *Major Problems in American Constitutional History; Volume I: The Colonial Era Through Reconstruction, Documents And Essays*, ed. Kermit L. Hall, Major Problems In American History Series, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath And Company, 1992), 60.

<sup>97</sup>Lutz, “The Idealism of Early Constitutionalism,” 59.

The tenets of the Bill of Rights include the values of “a well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of the state,” or national security, as stated in the second amendment and the right to a jury trial as stated in the in the sixth and seventh amendments.<sup>98</sup> These values harken back to feudalistic times. Civic obligations and rights were concomitant to land holdings in both Medieval England and the New Republic. Logically, the obligation of land ownership in early America was rendering taxes which thereby enfranchised the citizen.

To illuminate the nuanced role of the common law itself after the implementation of the federal constitution, however, is crucial to note. The constitutional historians, Alfred H. Kelley and Winfred A. Harbison, discussed the doctrine of vested rights. At the beginning of the New Republic, the federal judiciary used the common law to override state legislation on property rights.<sup>99</sup> Yet staunch antifederalist sentiment, in relation to this protraction of federal power, was the precursor to an 1812 Supreme Court ruling, *United States v. Hudson* (1812), which states that, according to Kelley and Harbison, “there was no criminal common law of the United States, nor any civil common law enabling individuals, to bring actions in the absence of statutory provisions.”<sup>100</sup> These two historians claim that, by that time, a natural rights premise of the doctrine of vested rights replaced the common law that was used to protect private property. According to Kelley and Harbison, the Americans of the New Republic held that “the individual’s right to be secure in his possession of private property” was born of natural rights.<sup>101</sup> Yet this same principle is found in Magna Carta: for example, “No constable or any other of our officials shall take anyone’s corn or other chattels unless he immediately pays cash for them or

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<sup>98</sup>U.S. Constitution, amend. 2.

<sup>99</sup>Alfred H. Kelley and Winfred A. Harbison, *The American Constitution: Its Origins and Development* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1948), 191, 193, 194.

<sup>100</sup>Kelley and Harbison, *The American Constitution*, 194.

<sup>101</sup>Kelley and Harbison, *The American Constitution*, 194.

can postpone payment with the agreement of the seller.”<sup>102</sup> The common law and natural rights doctrine apparently overlapped at this juncture – the protection of property; however, these historians did not elaborate beyond this one common denominator.<sup>103</sup> So, apparently for political reasons, the common law that the government used to protect property rights gave way to the euphemism of the vested rights doctrine. Kelley and Harbison defined the new terminology, “According to the Federalist doctrine of vested rights, it was the duty of the courts to declare invalid statutes considered violative of existing property rights, not necessarily by virtue of any specific provision in the federal or state constitution but rather on the grounds that such statutes violated the fundamental nature of all constitutional government.”<sup>104</sup> The federal judiciary held the trump card with this doctrine. Furthermore, the federal constitution states that “this Constitution . . . shall be the supreme law of the land.”<sup>105</sup> Referring back to Sullivan’s evaluation of the founding of the New Republic, the framers predominately employed measures from the common law to form the basis of a new federal constitution. In sum, the judiciary explicitly rendered outstanding common laws as invalid; however, it was the principles of the common law, in the guise of the doctrine of vested rights, which resonated over the decades.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>The twenty-eighth enumeration in Magna Carta; see J.C. Dickinson, trans., *The Great Charter: A Translation With An Introduction And Notes*, Historical Association General Series no. 31 (London [?]: Routledge and Kegan Paul for the Historical Association, 1955; reprint, 1962), 23.

<sup>103</sup>Isaac Kramnick examines the revisionist approaches of the influence of Locke’s natural rights theory in the New Republic. Kramnick agrees with the revisionists in that Locke “deserves this de-emphasis (p. 98).” See Issac Kramnick, “John Locke and Liberal Constitutionalism,” in *Major Problems in American Constitutional History; Volume I: The Colonial Era Through Reconstruction, Documents and Essays*, ed. Kermit Hall, Major Problems in American History Series, ed. Thomas G. Paterson (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath And Company, 1992), 97-114. Lutz asserts that Coke and Blackstone partially informed Locke’s ideas. See Lutz, “The Idealism of Early Constitutionalism,” 60.

<sup>104</sup>Kelley and Harbison, *The American Constitution*, 194.

<sup>105</sup>U.S. Constitution, art. 6.

<sup>106</sup>At least two examples serve to justify this statement. Supreme Court Justice Roger Brooke Taney employed the doctrine of vested rights in his notorious ruling on the 1857 Dred Scott case wherein John A. Sandford was legally able to keep his property. Indeed, as underscored in this case, slaves were deemed property, both within the United States as well as in the territories, thereby implicitly upholding the value of privileged rights, much to the uproar of the natural rights activists. See Kelley and Harbison, *The American Constitution*, 384-387. Blackstone stated that slavery was constitutional in England for only two years before the respective statute was repealed. See St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 424. Secondly, Massachusetts Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw

Indeed, the doctrine of vested rights only reinforced the property rights of the citizenry. So the Constitution, in light of the doctrine of vested rights, protected civil rights by protecting property rights. One could argue that the governments benefited from this protection: state governments accrued taxes from these holdings. The land holdings of the citizenry served as investments for the government; it was in the best interest of the government to protect the citizenry's property rights.

Early nineteenth-century professor and general court judge of Virginia, St. George Tucker, who extensively annotated Blackstone's *Commentaries*, organized 'rights' into four types – natural, social, civil, and political – all of which were present within and under the national government. In doing so, he appropriated the concise definition of the term 'right' from the illustrious Doctor Samuel Johnson, paraphrased as, "that which justly belongs to one; or, a just claim."<sup>107</sup> In order to hold civil rights, one must be "a member of the body politic or state."<sup>108</sup> St. George Tucker then sets forth a priority of values, "the right of electing, and being elected to, any public office or trust, may be considered the most important of these rights."<sup>109</sup> Women (those of whom were not slaves) had natural rights, as in "the right of self-preservation," and social rights, as in the right for government "protection from injury."<sup>110</sup> But they did not, however, hold civil rights in the state of Virginia.<sup>111</sup> Hence, women were not members of the

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held that, in *Fisher v. McGirr* (1854), a case concerning vested rights, Magna Carta informed the state's due process clause in Article XII of the Massachusetts's Declaration of Rights. See Leonard W. Levy, *The Law Of The Commonwealth And Chief Justice Shaw* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 283, 286-287, 288.

<sup>107</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 145 (first page).

<sup>108</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 145 (second page).

<sup>109</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 145 (third page).

<sup>110</sup>St. George Tucker referenced Locke in his discussion on natural rights.

<sup>111</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 145 (first page), 145 (second page). He noted that, unlike in Great Britain, American women did not hold political rights, or "hold the reigns of government (p. 145, second page)."



state.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, the states had the upper-hand in qualifying the franchise, to which the framers referred in the federal constitution: “The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several States, and the electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State Legislature.”<sup>113</sup> So the highest standards of each state served this requirement. Admitting that not all members of the body politic were equal, St. George Tucker recounted the qualifications for a Virginian to vote for a U.S. congressman or a Virginia state legislator, only “the possessors of a freehold-estate in lands, of a certain value, are (in general) qualified.”<sup>114</sup> This primacy on land-ownership displays the requisite for the citizenry to hold a vested stake in society in order to enjoy the right of the franchise; St. George Tucker implies that natural rights alone did not suffice.

During James Madison’s second term in office as President, in July 16, 1816, Thomas Jefferson, one of the framers of the Constitution, considered other criteria for the right to vote during his retirement. Jefferson responded to a pamphlet from a leader of the Virginia constitutional reform movement, Samuel Kercheval, regarding his concern about unequal representation under the 1776 Virginia Constitution between the eastern and western regions of the state.<sup>115</sup> In Jefferson’s response, he formulates provisions for equal representation. First, Jefferson critiques the then current status of the state’s electoral patterns. “In the legislature, the House of Representatives is chosen by less than half the people, and not at all in proportion to

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<sup>112</sup>The historian Nancy Isenberg discusses the realization, within one faction of the women’s movement, of the need for women to obtain a quid pro quo relationship with the state in order to gain the right to vote, as I will show later in this chapter.

<sup>113</sup>U.S. Constitution, art. 1, sec. 2.

<sup>114</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 145 (fourth page).

<sup>115</sup>Thomas Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval, Monticello, July 12, 1816, in Peter S. Onuf, ed., *Thomas Jefferson, An Anthology* (St. James, NY: Brandywine Press, 1999), 235-240.

those who do choose.”<sup>116</sup> In one of his remedies Jefferson suggested, “Let every man who fights or pays, exercise his just and equal right in their election. . . . Let the executive [state governor] be chosen in the same way.”<sup>117</sup> Labeling this remedy as “general suffrage,” he implies that a new constitutional convention could forgo the property requirement and instead place citizens’ military services and tax payer capacity as qualifiers for the franchise.<sup>118</sup> Yet these qualifiers for “general suffrage” not only ensured the gender of the voter, but also the worthiness of these voters, which Jefferson implicitly deemed as not solely reliant on their common humanity alone.<sup>119</sup>

During New York’s constitutional convention of 1821, the drafters reassessed suffrage requirements as well; suffrage, and not property ownership, eventually became “the primary way to protect rights.”<sup>120</sup> Formally, during the New Republic, land ownership was an indicator of the independence needed to engage in politics.<sup>121</sup> Yet the 1821 convention members determined that tax payer capacity, military service, and “working on public projects . . . gave the individual a stake in society similar to a freehold.”<sup>122</sup> Concurrent with the “era of the common man” a few years hence wherein electoral requirements were falling by the wayside, the historian Nancy Isenberg avers the time-honored obligations of fully vested men: “risk and sacrifice continued to define citizenship throughout the antebellum period.”<sup>123</sup> Although property qualifications

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<sup>116</sup>Jefferson to Kercheval, in Onuf, ed., *Thomas Jefferson*, 235.

<sup>117</sup>Jefferson to Kercheval, in Onuf, ed., *Thomas Jefferson*, 236.

<sup>118</sup>Jefferson to Kercheval, in Onuf, ed., *Thomas Jefferson*, 238.

<sup>119</sup>Isenberg reflects, “it can be assumed that a women’s convention would have shocked if not mortified both Jefferson and Adams (*Sex and Citizenship*, 16).”

<sup>120</sup>Daniel J. Hulsebosch, *Constituting Empire: New York and the Transformation of Constitutionalism in the Atlantic World, 1664-1830*, Studies In Legal History, eds., Thomas A. Green, Hendrik Hartog, and Daniel Ernst (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 264.

<sup>121</sup>Hulsebosch, *Constituting Empire*, 263. Hulsebosch cites the *Debates of the Convention*.

<sup>122</sup>Hulsebosch, *Constituting Empire*, 264.

<sup>123</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 7.

eventually yielded to civic service as the prime factor in gaining civil rights, the franchise nonetheless remained a privileged right.

The political status of women, up until the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, which granted them compromised citizenship, had been enigmatic for neither property holdings nor tax payments (on property holdings) entitled them to the vote, barring the rare exception. Isenberg notes that the state of New Jersey enfranchised single, propertied women from 1776 to 1807.<sup>124</sup> To undergird the state's constitution, a Supreme Court case, *Kempe's Lessee v. Kennedy et al.* (1809), acknowledged that "single women have been allowed to vote, because the law supposes them to have wills of their own."<sup>125</sup> In general, however, women did not have the right to vote. Edward Christian, an Englishman who contributed to St. George Tucker's annotations of Blackstone's *Commentaries*, found the taxation without representation of single, propertied women as illogical: "there seems at present no substantial reason why single women should be denied this privilege [of the vote]."<sup>126</sup> As single women, their status as citizens itself was highly precarious; as married women, they were deemed civilly dead to the nation. Coverture was their legal death knell.<sup>127</sup> Isenberg sums up women's status as "subjects, not citizens."<sup>128</sup>

Men underwent a civil death when they were either ousted from the land or became monks: indeed, Blackstone compared novice monks to "dying men."<sup>129</sup> Blackstone did not accidentally juxtapose these two situations. He held a measured contempt for the "popish clergy" who

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<sup>124</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 24.

<sup>125</sup>The sense of the word 'will' here is not clear, whether the Supreme Court was referring to women's mental or legal capacity, or both, as Isenberg seems to imply. U.S. Supreme Court ruling, as cited in Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 24, 217n. 49.

<sup>126</sup>Edward Christian, as cited in St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 445 (second page), Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 217n. 49.

<sup>127</sup>Isenberg contrasts New Jersey law with that of Massachusetts, Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 36, 7.

<sup>128</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 7.

<sup>129</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone's Commentaries*, 131, 132.

“claimed an exemption from the duties of civil life and the commands of the temporal magistrate.”<sup>130</sup> Likewise, Blackstone, in a vindictive manner, averred, “the genius of the English laws would not suffer those persons to enjoy the benefits of society, who secluded themselves from it, and refused to submit to its regulations.”<sup>131</sup> Hence this formidable jurist of the common law, as seen in “Of The Rights Of Persons: Of The Absolute Rights Of Individuals,” demanded that the citizenry fulfill their civic obligations if they wanted to enjoy their rights.<sup>132</sup>

Later in the volume, Blackstone considered “the rights and duties in *private* [italics of Blackstone] economical relations.”<sup>133</sup> The “great relations of private life” were “master and servant,” “husband and wife,” and “parent and child.”<sup>134</sup> This organizational grouping implies an inherent hierarchical distribution of power within the institution of marriage according to the common law, and perhaps was indicative of Blackstone’s own Weltanschauung as well. While he examined the concept of coverture, he discussed the automatic civil death of women upon marriage, in “Of The Rights Of Persons: Of Husband and Wife.”<sup>135</sup> Because coverture has thwarted married women’s full citizenship well into nineteenth-century America, it is crucial to know the text of, and fully comprehend, this fundamental condition of women.

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and *cover* [italics here and hereinafter of Blackstone] she performs every thing; and is therefore called in our law-french a *feme-covert*, *foemina viro co-operta*; is said to be *covert baron*, or under the protection and influence of her husband, her *baron*, or lord; and her condition during her marriage is called her *coverture*. Upon this principle, of an union of person in husband and wife, depend almost all the legal rights, duties, and disabilities, that either of them acquire by the marriage.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>130</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 131.

<sup>131</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 132.

<sup>132</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 121-145.

<sup>133</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 422.

<sup>134</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 422.

<sup>135</sup>St. George Tucker, 433 vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, (first page)-445 (second page).

<sup>136</sup>St. George Tucker, 441 vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, (second page).

Married women did not have a “separate existence” from her husband. She could not sue or be sued nor, generally, be a party to a contract.<sup>137</sup> Additionally, concerning that important qualifier that was needed to obtain the right to vote, married women did not have the legal capacity to own property.<sup>138</sup> The ramifications of murdering one’s spouse, serving as an extreme example, clearly depict the dichotomous political positioning within the marriage. A woman who murdered her husband was guilty of treason for she “but throws off all subjection to the authority of her husband. . . . [she suffered] the same punishment as if she had killed the king.”<sup>139</sup>

Coverture had immediate implications in American constitutionalism on all levels of government. Sullivan references her colleagues on this aspect of the common law:

Although the common law is part of private law, with its protection of property rights and domestic relations, the public law depended on it. William Novak has pointed out that American governance cannot be understood by looking only at the Constitution itself, because the constitutional order was maintained by more than the terms of the document. Massachusetts Justice Lemuel Shaw saw the U.S. Constitution as pertaining only to political rights, whereas of civil rights and social relations were left to the states to be taken care of by the common-law social relations.<sup>140</sup>

While Blackstone abhorred derelict men of civic duties, he condoned the tidy containment of civilly dead persons, who were placed under the rule of civically virtuous citizens; these citizens, in turn, decorously served as representatives of the sovereign.<sup>141</sup> In this particular ‘private relation,’ Blackstone took solace in the expectation that the legally dead person would dutifully serve her own ‘lord.’ To Blackstone, obligations were concomitant to benefits, whether they were immediate to, or remote from, the state. This was a value of the common law that permeated through American political culture.

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<sup>137</sup>St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 442, 443, 443 (second page), 444.

<sup>138</sup>Sullivan, *Constitutional Context*, 2.

<sup>139</sup>This was an annotation. Edward Christian, who was an Englishman, may have provided this particular annotation for St. George Tucker. See Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 217n. 49.

<sup>140</sup>Sullivan, *Constitutional Context*, 2. Sullivan references Leonard W. Levy as well. See footnote number 24.

<sup>141</sup>The civilly dead were not accountable to “some felonies, and other inferior crimes.” See St. George Tucker, vol. II, *Blackstone’s Commentaries*, 444.

Considering that the federal government has not enacted an equal rights amendment to date, it is worth noting the present divisive issue, indeed among women, of their legal responsibilities to the state. This issue elucidates another facet of the rule of coverture, for inherent in such an amendment is the reciprocity of rights from and obligations to the state. The historian Linda K. Kerber deliberates on the gendered obligations of citizenship and the concept of *femmes covert* in her 1998 monograph, *No Constitutional Rights To Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship*. Kerber finds fault with the resolute stand of the Eagle Forum, a conservative organization that opposed an equal rights amendment, wherein Kathleen Teague denies that women do not have an obligation to the state for military service.<sup>142</sup> In a congressional hearing before the Armed Services Committee, Teague argues that women's duties belong in the home and to the family; she continues, "our young women have a constitutional right to be treated like American ladies. . . Our daughters should not be deprived of rights which every American woman has enjoyed since our country was born."<sup>143</sup> To Teague, in light of the rule of coverture, an absence of an obligation equals a right. Yet Kerber, upon re-examination of this rule, critiques Teague's cherry-picked assimilation of these rights. Kerber evaluates women's lack of recourse to state political support:

As long as married women were understood to owe virtually all their obligation to their husbands they could make no claims of rights against the political community. The *feme covert* [italics here and hereinafter of Kerber], the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court had been told in 1805, had 'no *political* relation to the *state* any more than an alien.' The system of coverture filtered the claims of married women through their husbands.<sup>144</sup>

So married women were aliens to the state, and, of course, aliens did not have constitutional rights. Kerber continues her deliberation, "American political theorists recoiled from making

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<sup>142</sup> Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights To Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 286, 287.

<sup>143</sup> Kathleen Teague in 1980, as cited Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights*, 378n. 245, 287.

<sup>144</sup> Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights*, 305.

voting – the most explicit gesture of consent – a federally protected right or an obligation of citizenship. This hesitancy helped in large measure to sustain the gendered construction of the American citizen.”<sup>145</sup> Isenberg concurs with Kerber regarding women’s exclusion from the political community, “through coverture, married women were divested of their private rights, especially the right of property, which was considered one of the most crucial rights to be protected by law. Women were not entitled to full protection, because they were excluded from the consenting community.”<sup>146</sup> While married women were free from obligations to the state, in turn, these women did not accrue the rights of protection from the state. So Teague made her statement in error; married women did not have the political standing to draw on the state for protection, as in the protection from rendering military service. To take this logic to its full conclusion, the implication is that the government could not override a husband’s coercion of his wife to register for the draft.<sup>147</sup> On the other hand, she would be liable for the draft under an equal rights amendment anyway. Hence Blackstone’s respect for the covertly dead.

The rule of coverture informed a distinctly gendered society. The nineteenth-century French author Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) first propounded the concept of the metaphorical sphere in his multivolume *Democracy in America* circa 1840. He observed American society’s dictatorial regard toward married women of the Jacksonian Era: “the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes [her] within the narrow circle of domestic interests and duties and forbids her to step beyond it.”<sup>148</sup> Kerber explains: “In this sentence he provided the physical image (the circle) and the interpretation (that it was a limiting boundary on choices) that would

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<sup>145</sup>Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights*, 305.

<sup>146</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 29.

<sup>147</sup>Perhaps this hypothetical example of husbands’ coercive power over their wives is not so far-fetched: in antebellum New York state, husbands could, legally, ‘hire-out’ their wives and pocket their wages. Woman’s Rights Convention, *Woman’s Rights Conventions, Seneca Falls & Rochester, 1848* (New York: Robert J. Johnston, Printer, 1870; reprint, Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 15.

<sup>148</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, as cited in Linda K. Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” *The Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988): 10.

continue to characterize the metaphor.”<sup>149</sup> De Tocqueville’s concept of the sphere became commonplace in the nineteenth century. In the next century, post Second World War historians have perpetuated the use of this metaphorical sphere in their analyses of women’s history. Yet recent historiographical analysis denies the objectivity of the sphere as a reliable measuring stick. Kerber is critical of the use of this trope as a historiographical tool: the doctrine of separate spheres, which presupposes a study of the Caucasian race, is a static model that historians indiscriminately use as “an ideology *imposed* [italics here and hereinafter of Kerber] on women, a culture *created* by women, [and] a set of boundaries *expected to be observed* by women.”<sup>150</sup> Kerber claims that Tocqueville’s sphere is misleading: “To continue to use the language of separate spheres is to deny the reciprocity between gender and society, and to impose a static model on dynamic relationships.”<sup>151</sup> She charges historians not to use this “distinctly geographical” trope and revert to a more narrative method of interpreting history.<sup>152</sup>

Kerber’s judgment of the use of the sphere in general is sound; however, because of the rule of coverture, one cannot deny its applicability specifically to New Republic and Antebellum nuclear families. Tocqueville seemed astonished as he related his observations of American gendered society: “In no country has such constant care been taken as in America to trace two clearly distinct lines of action for the two sexes, and to make them keep pace one with the other, but in two pathways which are always different. American women never manage the outward concerns of the family, or conduct business, or take part in political life.”<sup>153</sup> Tocqueville did not

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<sup>149</sup>Kerber, “Separate Spheres,” 10.

<sup>150</sup>Kerber, “Separate Spheres,” 17.

<sup>151</sup>Kerber, “Separate Spheres,” 38.

<sup>152</sup>Kerber, “Separate Spheres,” 39.

<sup>153</sup>Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Henry Reeve, ed. with an introduction by Henry Steele Commager (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 400.



discern agitation for civil rights among these sequestered women.<sup>154</sup> Yet if they had wanted to engage in the public sphere, women, especially femmes coverts, would have to cross a great divide.

In the antebellum era, those women who demanded their civil rights had to consider the basis for which they could claim their civil standing. While some women's rights activists believed that women's common bond of humanity with men should suffice for the obtainment of all rights associated with citizenship, other women's rights activists made the astute observation that they lived in a political culture that was based on duty and not humanity. The latter executed their platform accordingly.

Isenberg wrote her path-breaking analysis of this faction of the nineteenth-century women's movement with her examination of women's civil status in *Sex & Citizenship in Antebellum America* (1998). Isenberg presents an impressive array of primary and secondary sources, such as *The Proceedings of the Women's Rights Convention, held at Worcester, October 23d & 24<sup>th</sup>, 1850*, which Eleanor Flexner does not cite.<sup>155</sup> Isenberg intends to "to change how scholars understand the origin of the women's right movement in America."<sup>156</sup> In doing so, instead of merely demonstrating how women fought for their enfranchisement, she shows the complexity of the activists' view point: "The orientation of antebellum feminists was premised on a sophisticated theoretical model that could explain citizenship, the public sphere, and the constitutional limitations that evolved in the nineteenth century that curtailed women's rights to

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<sup>154</sup>De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 401. Women's rights activist Paulina Wright Davis proclaimed that rights agitation was prevalent during church services in 1831. See Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 5.

<sup>155</sup>Historians commonly herald Eleanor Flexner's narrative, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (1959; revised edition 1975) as the inaugural source of modern literature for the suffrage movement. Eleanor Flexner (1908-1995), who based her account of the nineteenth-century women's movement on, with a careful critique of, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *History Of Woman Suffrage*, argued that women obtained political and professional advancement because they harnessed their collective power by means of political organization. She particularly praised Carrie Chapman Catt's organizational skills. Flexner briefly references the 1850 Worcester Convention, see p. 81.

<sup>156</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, xviii.

due process, redress, self-protection, and civil liberty, and rights within the home, church, and state.”<sup>157</sup> To continue, Isenberg alerts the reader that these women “entered political struggles over legal ideals and cultural beliefs peculiar to the antebellum period.”<sup>158</sup> Women held a highly uncertain political position in society: women were subjects, not citizens, and entered into a “civil death” upon marriage.<sup>159</sup> Activists identified with the ramifications of the federal government policy and actions, such as through the rhetoric of conquest of the Mexican War. Activists, those adherents to the privileged rights philosophy of earning the right to vote, displayed keen foresight: they knew that women, who were members of a “disabled caste,” must first “acquire a relationship with the state, a quid pro quo relationship that acknowledged their civil standing in return for civil support.”<sup>160</sup> So understanding the implications of citizenship, by which Isenberg references the common law, is integral to her examination.

Isenberg pulled the rug out from under her colleagues by critiquing a basic standby in primary source material of the historians of women’s history, Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *The History of Women Suffrage*. Isenberg considers the reliability of *History* as dubious not only because of its religious overtones but also it erroneously accords the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, with the accompanying Declaration of Sentiments, as the founding site of the suffrage movement. Flexner appropriated *History* as axiomatic of the suffrage movement; in turn, later historians regard *Century of Struggle*, too, as axiomatic. To counter Stanton, Isenberg shows that there were subsequent women’s right conventions that were premised on a different philosophy than that of natural rights, as with the Worcester Convention of 1850, which upheld a

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<sup>157</sup> Isenberg refers to these activists as feminists; however, the historian Nancy Cott would argue against using this term in this temporal context. Please refer to Nancy F. Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (1987). Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, xiii.

<sup>158</sup> Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, xiii.

<sup>159</sup> Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 7.

<sup>160</sup> “As a disabled caste, women were divested of the right to vote, and they remained disenfranchised because the Constitution protected the vote as a vested right of men.” See Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 35. Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 39.

privileged philosophy based on the 1789 Constitution. Adherents of this convention knew that they needed to prove a vested stake in society in order to earn the right to vote. To continue with her argument, Isenberg refutes Ellen Carol Dubois's evaluation of the suffrage movement as well.<sup>161</sup> DuBois, at first, accords the Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton meeting at the 1840 World Antislavery Convention and the formation of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention as the catalysts for the suffrage movement; however, Isenberg discerns that DuBois becomes half-hearted about the genesis of the movement as her text progresses. Isenberg criticizes DuBois's eventual change of interpretation: "DuBois' rejection of Mott and antebellum feminism is hardly a satisfactory solution for explaining the early movement."<sup>162</sup> Isenberg then proceeds to introduce the nineteenth-century activist Paulina Wright Davis who wrote her account of the suffrage movement in 1871. Isenberg accords the 1850 Worcester Convention as the more influential of the two women's rights conventions, that it was the harbinger of the *national* women's rights movement, and places 1831 as the watershed year for the birth of the suffrage movement.<sup>163</sup> Isenberg shows that Davis's account is antithetical to that of DuBois, who argues that the suffrage movement gained momentum after it dissolved its bond with the abolitionists. Furthermore, Isenberg contends that Stanton had agreed to include Davis's rendering of the suffrage movement in *History*, yet in 1881 she deliberately changed her mind and declared that the 1840 date should be used instead for this volume.<sup>164</sup>

Although the historian Kathleen S. Sullivan does not address the privileged rights school of the nineteenth-century women's movement, nor does she reference Isenberg in her introductory

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<sup>161</sup>The historian Ellen Carol DuBois wrote *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence Of An Independent Women's Movement In America* (1978). DuBois proclaims that abolitionist movement was the impetus for the women's movement, which gained momentum during the Reconstruction Era when the two organizationally entwined movements (the former abolitionists as radical Republican sympathizers) divided along separate paths of civil rights agitation.

<sup>162</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 5.

<sup>163</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 5; see footnote number 73.

<sup>164</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 6.

chapter, she provides an interesting analysis of the effect of the married women's property acts, by which married women could enjoy sole ownership of her property, on the rule of coverture. Sullivan believes, however, that these acts were not meant to, and they did not, emancipate women from coverture. Instead, the purpose of these acts was to safeguard property from married men's creditors, during the 1830s. In 1848, as a coincidence to the Seneca Falls Convention, the New York property acts were intended to prevent sons-in-law from drawing on their wives inheritance. Sullivan asserts that these reasons ran counter to the women's movements' erroneous assumption that the married women's property acts were intended to liberate women. She cites the *History Of Woman Suffrage* to exemplify these activists' misguided presumption. As stated in the *History*, "This was the death-blow to the old Blackstone code for married women in this country, and ever since legislation has been slowly, but steadily, advancing toward her complete equality."<sup>165</sup> The *History* incorporates a response from a senator in the 1847 New York constitutional convention which supports Sullivan's argument. The Hon. George Geddes stated that this act was to protect the financial well-being of a peer's wife and of Geddes's own daughter.<sup>166</sup> Geddes's recounted the debates:

The measure was so radical, so extreme, that even its friends had doubts; but the moment any important amendment was offered, up rose the whole question of woman's proper place in society, in the family, and everywhere. We all felt that the laws regulating married women's, as well as married men's rights, demanded careful revision and adaptation to our times and to our civilization. But no such revision could be perfected then, nor has it been since. We meant to strike a hard blow, and if possible shake the old system of laws to their foundations, and leave it to other times and wiser councils to perfect a new system.<sup>167</sup>

Additionally, Geddes mentioned a convention member who was an avid proponent of the common law rule on coverture, for which he made persuasive arguments. In sum, the purpose of

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<sup>165</sup>Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., *History Of Woman Suffrage, Volume 1, 1848-1861* (New York: Fowler & Wells, Publishers, 1881; reprint, Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 64. Sullivan cites this quote on page 70 in *Constitutional Context*.

<sup>166</sup>The Hon. George Geddes was a state senator at the time of the constitutional convention.

<sup>167</sup>Geddes, as cited in Stanton, vol. 1, *History Of Woman Suffrage*, 65.

the married women's property acts was not congruent with the natural rights premise of the Seneca Falls activists; instead, these acts were meant to protect vested stakes in society.

Proponents of natural rights, many of whom were abolitionists, held that men and women deserved the franchise because both were fundamentally equal, that they both shared a common bond of humanity, and that men and women had the same mental capacity. Their arguments abounded with moralism and the Deity. Sara Grimke (1792-1873) was an abolitionist who expounded on the innate equality of the genders. She did not directly discuss women's specific political rights, or lack thereof; however, one can infer that she believed that men and women should be citizens of equal standing. Grimke wrote a letter, entitled "The Original Equality of Woman," to Mary S. Parker of the Boston Anti-Slavery Society. Grimke makes biblical references in her argument, men and women "were both made in the image of God; dominion was given to both over every other creature, but not over each other. Created in perfect equality, they were expected to exercise the vicegerence intrusted to them by their Maker, in harmony and love."<sup>168</sup> In a later letter Grimke evaluated women's mental capacity, "intellect is not sexed . . . strength of mind is not sexed."<sup>169</sup> Another prominent writer, Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), writing with religious overtones, also professed an equality of rights under the chapter heading, "Educate Men And Women As Souls:"

Had Christendom but been true to its standard, while accommodating its modes of operation to the calls of successive times, Woman would now have not only equal *power* with Man, – for of that omnipotent nature will never suffer her to be defrauded, – but a chartered power, too fully recognized to be abused. . . . Let him trust her entirely, and give her every privilege already acquired for himself, – elective franchise, tenure of property, liberty to speak in

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<sup>168</sup>Sarah M. Grimke to Mary S. Parker, Amesbury, 7<sup>th</sup> Mo. 11<sup>th</sup>, 1837, *Letters On The Equality Of The Sexes And The Condition Of Woman, Addressed To Mary S. Parker, President Of The Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (originally published 1838; New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), 4-5.

<sup>169</sup>Grimke to Parker, Brookline, 8<sup>th</sup> Mo. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1837, *Letters*, 60.

public assemblies, &c.<sup>170</sup>

Another advocate for the political rights of women, E.P. Hurlbut, who was a “counselor at law” in New York City, proclaimed that women had both the competence and the mental capacity for the right to the franchise.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, he found that women had special attributes that would benefit governance. “Government emanates from the moral nature of mankind – that the laws have a moral origin and aim. Now the moral force which is aggregated in the social state proceeds as much from women’s sentiments as man’s; her moral endowments being, perhaps, proportionately greater than his own.”<sup>172</sup>

A juxtaposition of the narratives of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and of the 1850 Worcester Convention provides the reader gainful insight into the differing ideologies of the women’s rights movement. The activists at Stanton’s convention premised their claims on the Lockean ideals of natural rights as expressed in the Declaration of Independence; indeed, the convention members adopted their own ‘Declaration of Sentiments’ thus propounding the equality of men and women.<sup>173</sup> Moreover, the vote was a “sacred right,” implying that this right was not contingent on one’s own actions.<sup>174</sup> Again, the members enriched the language of the *Proceedings and Report* of the convention with sententious moralism. “Resolved, therefore, That, being invested by the Creator with the same capabilities, and the same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of woman, equally with

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<sup>170</sup>Margaret Fuller Ossoli, *Women In The Nineteenth Century, And Kindred Papers Relating To The Sphere, Condition, And Duties Of Woman*, ed. Arthur B. Fuller, with an introduction by Horace Greeley (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1874; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), 336. Arthur B. Fuller, her brother, wrote the Preface in the year 1855, thereby dating the Margaret Fuller’s essays in the Antebellum time-period.

<sup>171</sup>Isenberg refers to him as a judge; Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 25.

<sup>172</sup>E.P. Hurlbut, *Essays On Human Rights And Their Political Guarantees* (New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1845; reprint, Littleton, Co: Fred B. Rothman Publications, 1996, 1999), 117. Hurlbut was very sympathetic to women’s condition under the rule of coverture: he lamented that upon marriage, women entered a “legal tomb.” See p. 148.

<sup>173</sup>Woman’s Rights Convention, *Woman’s Rights Conventions, Seneca Falls & Rochester, 1848* (New York: Robert J. Johnston, Printer, 1870; reprint, New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 5.

<sup>174</sup>Woman’s Rights Convention, *Woman’s Rights Conventions*, 4.

man, to promote every righteous cause, by very righteous means; and especially in regard to the great subjects of morals and religion.”<sup>175</sup> The Weltanschauung of the privileged rights school of thought at the Worcester Convention is contrastable to that of the natural rights school of thought at Seneca Falls. While the latter was static, the former entails active engagement in the public sphere. On October 23, 1850, during the morning session of the convention, Paulina Wright Davis boldly affirmed a maxim, “Who would be free, themselves must strike the first blow.”<sup>176</sup> Davis continued, “for this rule of barbarism there is much justification, that although every human being is naturally entitled to every right of the race, the enjoyment and administration of all rights require such culture and conditions in their subjects as usually lead him to claim and struggle for them.”<sup>177</sup> She seemed to find that the deliberation on political rights claims based on “common humanity” and “equal justice,” which would include a discussion on emancipation from the rule of coverture, as food for hackneyed rhetoric. Rather, she illuminated a fresh approach as to the obtainment of political rights,

It is one thing to issue a declaration of rights or a declaration of wrong to the world, but quite another thing wisely and happily to commend the subject to the world’s acceptance, and so to secure the desired reformation. Every element of success is, in its own place and degree, equally important; but the very starting point is the adjustment of the reformer to his work, and next after that is the adjustment of his work to those conditions of the times which he seeks to influence.<sup>178</sup>

During the waning years of the New Republic, state constitutional conventions began to revise the qualifications for the franchise. Although the drafters of (and contributors to) the conventions no longer deemed property as the sole requisite qualification, they still, nonetheless, held to a vested rights philosophy toward the government protection of the citizenry. If a citizen

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<sup>175</sup>Woman’s Rights Convention, *Woman’s Rights Conventions*, 4.

<sup>176</sup>McClymer, John F., *This High and Holy Moment: The First National Woman’s Rights Convention, Worcester, 1850* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999), 77.

<sup>177</sup>McClymer, *This High and Holy Moment*, 77.

<sup>178</sup>McClymer, *This High and Holy Moment*, 75-76, 80.

wanted enfranchisement, he had to prove his worthiness by contributing to the public weal. The faction of the society that espoused a natural rights premise for the vote and for government protection of rights was of little consequence to state legislatures. Pamela Wright Davis knew that women's rights activists had to acculturate to the political culture of their common-law based government, by proving their civic capacity, in order to tap into government protection.



## CHAPER IV

### DISCORDANT VOICES: FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Two antipathetic schools of thought regarding the right to vote officially came to the fore during the Gilded Age. The natural rights suffrage movement contested against the privileged rights political culture of federal and state governments. Indeed, government officials and the citizenry clashed over the terminology itself as to the holding of the franchise – was it a right or a privilege? Women had proved their civic capacity during the Civil War by means of incognito military enlistment and as auxiliary aides in the fields, such as nurses. Yet while the years of the Civil War were devoid of a suffrage movement, activists for women’s rights during the post-bellum years, curiously enough, did not effectively cite these women’s efforts as a bona fide claim to the vote. Consequently, legislators, many of whom were sticklers to the tethering of bullets with ballots, did not consider women worthy of the franchise. The official litmus test of woman’s civil and political status, the deliberations in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Minor v. Happersett* (1874), ultimately indicated that state and federal governments did not view women as valuable to the state: based on the history of American constitutionalism, Chief Justice Waite (1816 -1888) interpreted the nebulous wording of the Fourteenth Amendment, in the aftermath of the Civil War, in women’s disfavor. Yet the two ideological camps remained grudgingly steadfast, and thereby discordant, for they did not fully recognize the premises of each others’ arguments in their disparate definitions of citizenship. For the suffrage movement, to be a citizen without rights was both perplexing and unconstitutional. Meanwhile, in the midst over the 1879 debates on universal suffrage, the argument for which was premised on natural rights, we see a young Woodrow Wilson form a political ideology that was attuned instead to the

privileged rights school of thought. A pragmatist, he bore little patience for the application of natural rights to the operations of government. Moreover, as shown in his early writings on governance, both personal and professional, Wilson had revealed elitists inclinations: he saw universal suffrage as a bane to the nation because it accorded the benighted masses a voice in government. Wilson held that the government should bestow civil rights only to erudite male citizens.

The women's rights movement temporarily changed their course of direction at the beginning of the Civil War: they chose to hold their usual activities in abeyance in order to work wholly toward the emancipation of the slaves.<sup>179</sup> After the war, however, government officials and conservative citizens proffered the age-old standard for the public to consider. A consideration in the debate over women's enfranchisement included the question as whether the right to vote should obligate the voter to military service.<sup>180</sup> A not uncommon argument during the Gilded Age was that "the ballot is the inseparable concomitant of the bayonet. . . To introduce woman at the polls is to enroll her in the militia."<sup>181</sup>

This argument did not go unchallenged. In 1871 the suffragist Tennie C. Clafin published *Constitutional Equality: A Right of Woman*. Clafin discussed the controversial question of whether to link military service to the right to vote in her chapter, "Will Women Accept the Consequences of Equality?"<sup>182</sup> She believed that she spoke for all women when she stated plainly, "Well, we have no objection."<sup>183</sup> Clafin did work through this rationale by saying that if

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<sup>179</sup>Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, eds., vol. 1, *History of Woman Suffrage* (New York: Fowler & Wells, Publishers, 1881; reprint, New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969), 747 (hereinafter cited as *HWS*).

<sup>180</sup>Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights To Be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill & Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1998), 243-246.

<sup>181</sup>Senator Justin Smith Morrill, 1875, as cited in Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights*, 366 n.70.

<sup>182</sup>Tennie C. Clafin, *Constitutional Equality: A Right of Woman* (New York: Woodhull, Clafin & Co., 1871), 44-46.

<sup>183</sup>Clafin, *Constitutional Equality*, 44.

only combatants should vote, then noncombatant men should not have that right.<sup>184</sup> Early in the Gilded Age, prominent men and women both believed that some sort of patriotic obligation should be inherent in the franchise. The argument to link military service to women's enfranchisement was based on the fact that emancipated African-American men fought in the Civil War. A few male politicians and editors felt that African-American men earned the right to vote because they had made that ultimate sacrifice in war, unlike the "public tea-drinking" women suffragists.<sup>185</sup>

Yet women soldiers who served in male guises during the Civil War apparently were a well known fact by this time. Published accounts of disguised women soldiers were popular choices of literature for the reading public. The national director of the United States Sanitary Commission during the war, Mary Ashton Rice Livermore (1820-1905), published her memoir of her service in 1892. Livermore had personal contact with female soldiers. She did not know the exact number of women who served as soldiers; however, she disputed an approximate figure, that of nearly four hundred, as a gross underestimate.<sup>186</sup> Although she was a suffragist, her stance on the military service obligation was symbolic of the shift toward positioning women as peace advocates.<sup>187</sup> "Such service was not the noblest that women rendered the country during its four years' struggle for life, and no one can regret that these soldier women were exceptional and rare. It is better to heal a wound than to make one."<sup>188</sup>

Yet ten years earlier the editors of the *History of Woman Suffrage*, two of the more notable of whom were Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, honored women soldiers in their

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<sup>184</sup>Clafin, *Constitutional Equality*, 44-45.

<sup>185</sup>Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights*, 243-244; editors of the *New York World*, as cited in Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights*, 243.

<sup>186</sup>Mary Livermore, *My Story Of The War: A Woman's Narrative Of Four Years Personal Experience*, "cheap edition" – minus the illustrative plates (Hartford: A.D. Worthington And Company, 1892), 119-120 (page citations are to the illustrated edition).

<sup>187</sup>Kerber, *No Constitutional Rights*, 86-87.

<sup>188</sup>Livermore, *My Story*, 120.

chapter, “Woman’s Patriotism In The War.”<sup>189</sup> They gleaned newspaper reports of heroic women soldiers and provided a lengthy essay citing these accounts. Moreover, the editors explained singular instances in which Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis offered promotions to women who proved themselves on the battlefield. Stanton and Anthony believed that the Civil War was a catalyst for political change for women. The ideal was that “woman shall stand by man’s side his recognized equal in rights as she now is in duties.”<sup>190</sup>

Sara Emma Edmonds published her active role in the Civil War in *Memoirs Of A Soldier, Nurse And Spy: A Woman’s Adventures In The Union Army*. She fought in some of the major battles of the war as “Franklin Thompson.” The publisher to the 1865 edition, which sold 175, 000 copies, stated that her male guise that she implemented in order to fight in the War of the Rebellion was from the “most praiseworthy patriotism.” Nonetheless Edmonds’s intent was to entertain the reader despite the fact that her account has been considered more or less a true rendering.<sup>191</sup>

General George West published his interpretive account of the diary of “Charles Hatfield,” the former Mrs. E.J. Guerin, with her permission, after 1885. West had already known of her male guise when they served together as Unionists in the Civil War. In his account, he explained the battle experiences of the “brave young heroine” and her promotion to Lieutenant Hatfield.<sup>192</sup>

Observers and chroniclers of the war also made special note of the phenomenon of female soldiers. Frank Moore published in 1866 *Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice* which included women’s incognita military service and Frazar Kirkland, who wrote *The*

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<sup>189</sup>Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 1-89.

<sup>190</sup>Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 23, 18-23.

<sup>191</sup>Sara Emma Edmonds, *Memoirs Of A Soldier, Nurse And Spy: A Woman’s Adventure In The Union Army* (originally *Nurse and Spy in the Union Army*), with an introduction by Elizabeth D. Leonard (Hartford, CT: Williams, 1865; reprint, DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999), xiii-xxviii.

<sup>192</sup>George West, “Mountain Charley: A Sequel,” in *Mountain Charley*, E.J. Guerin, new ed., with an introduction by Fred W. Mazzulla and William Kostka (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), x-xii, 79-112.

*Pictorial Book of Anecdotes and Incidents of the War of the Rebellion*, published in the same year, mentioned that there were frequent reports of the “valorous deeds of females fighting in the ranks.”<sup>193</sup> Thus published narratives of women soldiers disabused the public from the presumption that only men rendered combatant military service.

Yet the post-bellum woman suffrage movement did not base their claim to the vote on women’s valorous endeavors in the field. In light of Livermore’s aforementioned stand on women as advocates for peace, women’s rights activists probably did not want to portray themselves as warriors. If so, this stance is indicative of their inflexible approach toward legislative change. The editors of the second volume of *History Of Woman Suffrage*, which was published in 1882, did, in fact, see the link between military service and the franchise.<sup>194</sup> In doing so, they compared women’s war efforts to that of the African-American men on the battlefield. In their comparison, Stanton, Anthony, and Gage revealed their beliefs that society ultimately should value women’s moral nature over their physical courage; these editors portrayed women as primarily as healers and nurturers because of their medical services in the field.

Can it be that statesmen in the nineteenth century believe that they who sacrifice human lives in bloody wars do more for the sum of human happiness and development than they who try to save the multitude and teach them how to live? . . . But if on the battle-field woman must prove her right to justice and equality, history abundantly sets forth her claims; the records of her brave deeds mark every page of fact and fiction, of poetry and prose. . . . If moral power has any value in the balance with physical force, surely the women of this republic, by their self-sacrifice and patriotism, their courage ’mid danger, their endurance ’mid suffering, have rightly earned a voice in the laws they are compelled to obey, in the Government they are taxed to support; some personal consideration as citizens as well as the black man in the “Union blue.”<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>193</sup>Frank Moore, *Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice* (Hartford: S.S. Scranton, 1866), 17-19; Frazar Kirkland [R.M. Devens], *The Pictorial Book of Anecdotes and Incidents of the War of the Rebellion, Civil, Military, Naval, and Domestic . . . : With Famous Words and Deeds of Woman, Sanitary and Hospital Scenes, Prison Experiences . . .* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Publishing Co., 1866), 173.

<sup>194</sup>Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 88-89.

<sup>195</sup>Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 89.

During the Antebellum era, a common argument among suffragists was that women were co-equals to men.<sup>196</sup> The aforementioned statement, wherein Stanton, Anthony, and Gage claimed the right to the vote based on women's nature as effective nurturers, seems to be the precursor of what the historian Carolyn Summers Vacca terms the 'expediency arguments.' Vacca observes an actual metamorphosis in the suffragists' worldview by the Reconstruction era. She argues that they modified their position for woman suffrage "on the good that women could do with the vote, based on the qualities she possessed."<sup>197</sup> The historian Aileen S. Kraditor also finds that the suffrage movement based their right to the franchise on expediency; however, the movement did not espouse the expediency argument until the twenty-first century. More importantly, she finds that the suffragists always have held to the natural rights argument in juxtaposition to their claim that woman suffrage would be ameliorative to the state.<sup>198</sup> My findings show that both the natural rights argument and the expediency argument were manifest in suffragists' statements toward legislators during the Gilded Age.

Federal legislatures, and some state legislatures, in their deliberations on woman suffrage, ultimately were not receptive to women's inherently beneficent nature or their common bond of humanity with men. The legislators' most loquacious argument for the franchise was that suffrage was contingent on the citizen's war service. Yet Stanton and Anthony's arguments for the inclusion of woman suffrage in the Fourteenth Amendment, for including woman suffrage in the proposed Territory of Pembina, and for a sixteenth amendment that specifically would grant

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<sup>196</sup>Antebellum woman suffragists used the term 'co-equality' to define the nature of men and women as being, simultaneously, "the same and different;" these activists claimed co-sovereignty between the genders based on their interpretation of the creation story. Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), xviii, 11.

<sup>197</sup>Carolyn Summer Vacca, *A Reform Against Nature: Woman Suffrage and the Rethinking of American Citizenship, 1840-1920*, American University Studies, Series IX, History, vol. 200 (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 71.

<sup>198</sup>Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965) 44-45.

women the franchise, elucidated their lion-hearted contentions for universal enfranchisement as an act of justice.

The suffrage movement resumed its activism shortly after the Civil War. In 1866, after unsuccessfully petitioning Congress, Stanton and Anthony wrote an address to both houses of congress in order to ensure the inclusion of woman suffrage in the text of the proposed Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>199</sup> By premising their argument on natural rights theory, they proclaimed,

The only tenable ground of representation is universal suffrage, as it is only through universal suffrage that the principle of 'equal rights to all' can be realized. All prohibitions based on race, color, sex, property or education are violations of the republican idea; and the various qualifications now proposed are but so many plausible pretexts to debar new classes from the ballot-box.<sup>200</sup>

At the same time, while they asserted that women were taxpayers, they overlooked women's recent war efforts to justify their enfranchisement; in fact, they did not specifically reference the Civil War by name after they enumerated the list of national hardships endured from the Seven Years' War to the Revolutionary War.<sup>201</sup> Yet their pointed defense as taxpayers illumines their view on citizenship. They saw disfranchisement as an injustice in a republican government. The rights of citizenship were not to be merely measured, and rewarded, according to his or her contributions to society. Indeed, during a meeting of the American Equal Rights Association on May 9, 1867, Stanton averred that suffrage should not be "a gift from society;" rather, she displayed constancy in her argument for universal suffrage, "we hold the talisman by which to show the right of all classes to the ballot, to remove every obstacle, to answer every objection, to

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<sup>199</sup>Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 97-101. Senator Henderson of New York presented the petition. While acknowledging the sacred right to petition government, he held that the common law of marriage (and he implied that women generally marry) rendered women as subservient to their husbands' political ideas and actions. Henderson said that "the good of society demands this unity for purposes of social order (p. 98);" "An Address To Congress," as cited in Ida Husted Harper, *The Life And Work Of Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 2 (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1898), 968-971 (hereinafter cited as *LWSA*).

<sup>200</sup>Harper, vol. 2, *LWSA*, 970.

<sup>201</sup>Harper, vol. 2, *LWSA*, 970-971.

point out the tyranny of every qualification to the free exercise of this sacred right.”<sup>202</sup> She countered social and political hierarchy: to impose qualifications for the franchise would ensure the oppression of the unqualified. Despite Stanton and Anthony’s exhortations, the editors of the *History of Woman Suffrage* lamented that “only nine Senators voted in favor of woman’s enfranchisement.”<sup>203</sup>

Nevertheless, the benefit of gaining constitutional rights premised on the natural rights of citizenship probably held Anthony’s tongue when prompted with the idea of the military service qualification at the 1867 New York Constitutional Convention.<sup>204</sup> Horace Greeley was a member of the committee to deliberate on measures to incorporate woman suffrage in the New York Constitution.<sup>205</sup> On June 27, 1867, after Anthony addressed the committee, Horace Greeley questioned Anthony, “Miss Anthony, you know that the ballot and the bullet go together. If you vote, are you ready to fight?”<sup>206</sup> Anthony quipped, “Yes, Mr. Greeley, just as you fought in the late war – at the point of a goose-quill!”<sup>207</sup> By catching Greeley in an act of hypocrisy and thereby shedding light on the double-edged nature of this standard, that, conversely, non-combatant men should not have the right to vote, Anthony held the high ground. Yet she did not retaliate by referencing women’s valor in the Civil War as proof of their civic capacity. Instead, she immediately resorted to the natural rights argument for the franchise. One could surmise that Stanton and Anthony knew that they could have obtained the franchise based

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<sup>202</sup> Woman’s rights activists formed this organization in May 1866 to promote both woman suffrage and suffrage rights for African-Americans. Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence Of An Independent Women’s Movement In America, 1848-1869* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978, 1999), 63-66; Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 185.

<sup>203</sup> Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 582.

<sup>204</sup> The aftermath of the Civil War was not the impetus for the scheduling of this convention. According to the state’s 1846 constitutional convention, a new convention was to be held every twenty years. Ernest Henry Breuer, *Constitutional Developments in New York, 1777-1958*, New York State Library, Bibliography Bulletin 82 (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1958), 33.

<sup>205</sup> Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 282.

<sup>206</sup> Horace Greeley, as cited in Harper, vol. 1, *LWSA*, 278.

<sup>207</sup> Anthony, as cited in Harper, vol. 1, *LWSA*, 278. Women did not obtain the right to vote until after a New York state referendum in 1917.



on women's war efforts during the Civil War; however, they believed that this defense would have sold women short, in the long run, of full equal rights, because military service, indeed, fulfilled this political cultural qualification.<sup>208</sup> In any event, to carry this logic to the extreme, a military service qualification could perpetuate a military dictatorship.

Vacca presents the viewpoint of the mid-nineteenth century women's movement when these activists demanded their rights as citizens, "Suffragists' early arguments drew heavily upon classical liberal philosophy emphasizing securing natural rights. In this context, women individually derived the franchise from their status as citizens, and suffragists presented their cause as an effort to secure and protect *the vote as a right that was already theirs* [italics mine], not as an attempt to acquire new rights."<sup>209</sup> Yet for the entrenched torch-bearers of the common law, even after the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, constitutional protections were not automatically inherent among the citizenry. An argument against the rights terminology of the franchise came to the fore during a hearing in the Senate to devise a constitution for the territory of Pembina.<sup>210</sup>

On May 28, 1874, Senator A.A. Sargent of California proposed that women should have the right to the franchise, as well as to hold office, in the proposed territory.<sup>211</sup> Asserting that what is not constitutional for the states could not be constitutional for the territories, he premised his argument on Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment, wherein, "All persons born or naturalized

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<sup>208</sup>Vacca argues that women have not gained equal constitutional rights with men in the twentieth century because women won federal enfranchisement based on ascriptive characteristics, such as women's supposed superior moral nature. According to Vacca this precedent prevented the government from recognizing women's inherent natural rights as republican citizens. See *A Reform Against Nature*, p. 7, 127-129.

<sup>209</sup>Vacca, *A Reform*, 128.

<sup>210</sup>Pembina is a town in the north-east corner of North Dakota, near the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. North Dakota, which became a state in 1889, was part of the Dakota Territory, which was created in 1861. In an 1882 and an 1886 railroad map of the Dakota Territory, there was, apparently, an area of land called Pembina (that included the town of Pembina) but I could not discern the actual delineations for a separate territory. These maps are under public domain and can be found on the Web site for historic maps, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/maps/southdakota>. However, the historian Eleanor Flexner states that Pembina Territory was indeed established in 1874. See Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, p. 372 n.22.

<sup>211</sup>Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 545.

in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.”<sup>212</sup> Sargent added that “it can not be contended successfully that a woman is not a person.”<sup>213</sup> Moreover, he cited the successful implementation of woman suffrage in the territory of Wyoming, where he claimed that women’s enfranchisement has rendered Wyoming as “one of the most orderly [territories] in the Union.”<sup>214</sup> In opposition to the proposal, Senator Thomas F. Bayard of Delaware bluntly instructed his colleagues on the configuration of a constitutional right.

Suffrage is a political franchise; it is in not a right; because the word “right” is used in reference to voting in the XIV. Amendment to the Constitution, that does not make it a right. It is in the very nature of government a political privilege confided, according to the exigency, the expediency, by the wisdom of those who control the government, to a certain class. . . . Voting is no right; its is a privilege granted, a franchise which is granted to certain classes, more or less extended according to the supposed expediency which shall control the minds of those who frame the constitution of government for a people. There is no wrong done, so far as the abnegation of a right is involved, by denying this to certain classes of a community, whether on account of age or sex or any other supposed causes of disqualification. In this country the whole foundation of our institutions has been that the male sex when arrived at years of supposed discretion alone should take part in the political control of the country.<sup>215</sup>

This pithy statement is diametrically opposed to Stanton and Anthony’s natural rights premise; Bayard labeled suffrage as a privilege and not a right, and that class hierarchy made for an expedient society. Not everyone held these tenets; Senator Stewart clamored for women’s enfranchisement:

It is necessary for women, if they are to be protected in society and not to be the prey of man, that they shall have the ballot to protect themselves. It is the only thing in a free government that can protect any one; and whether it is a natural right or an artificial right it is nonsense to discuss. It is a necessary right; it is necessary to freedom; it is necessary to equal rights; it is necessary to protection; it is necessary for every class to have the ballot if

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<sup>212</sup>U.S. Constitution, amend. 14, sec. 1.

<sup>213</sup>Senator A.A. Sargent, as cited in Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 546.

<sup>214</sup>Senator A.A. Sargent, as cited in Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 547.

<sup>215</sup>Senator Thomas F. Bayard, as cited in Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 576-577.

we are to have our square deal.<sup>216</sup>

Stewart apparently was too impatient to quibble over terminology. Yet because of his reference to equal rights, Stewart implied a natural rights premise despite his dismissal of labeling the argument as such. Moreover, his leveling sentiment resembled that of Stanton and Anthony. Nonetheless, however, the senate ultimately rejected the inclusion of woman suffrage in Pembina Territory with nineteen ‘yeas’ and twenty-seven ‘nays.’ This debate over whether the franchise was a natural right or a privileged right is indicative of the diametrically opposed schools of thought that co-existed during that era. The privileged rights ideology presupposed a hierarchical, ‘top-down,’ vantage point of the government. According to Bayard, government deemed it necessary to deal out “privileges” only to the most competent members of society. This rationale clashed with the underlying sentiment, among the activists, of the common bond of humanity, by which the citizenry automatically held the right to vote. To the natural rights idealists, the external artifices of society were irrelevant.

That year, 1874, was a momentous year for the evaluation of women’s political status. Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite ruled, in the U.S. Supreme Court case *Minor v. Happersett* during the October term, that women did not have the constitutional right to vote under the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>217</sup> The author Bruce R. Trimble, writing in 1938, believed this case to be “the first, if not the only time, the Supreme Court ever attempted a definition of citizenship.”<sup>218</sup> A brief background of this case is as follows. Mrs. Virginia Minor attempted to vote “for electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, and for a representative

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<sup>216</sup>Senator Stewart, as cited in Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 580.

<sup>217</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 162-178.

<sup>218</sup>Bruce R. Trimble, *Chief Justice Waite: Defender of the Public Interest* (n.p.: Princeton University Press, 1938; reissued, New York: Russell & Russell, a division of Atheneum Publishers, Inc., 1970), 161.

in Congress, and for other officers” on October 15, 1872 in the state of Missouri.<sup>219</sup> The registrar of voters, Reese Happersett, refused to register Minor as a voter in accordance to the Missouri state constitution: only men could vote. Having lost her suit “in one of the inferior State courts of Missouri,” she appealed to the Supreme Court.<sup>220</sup> Virginia Minor’s husband, Francis Minor, an attorney, represented Virginia. He argued that Virginia was not only a citizen but also that the state of Missouri could not constitutionally abrogate her claim to the franchise, in reference to the “privileges and immunities” of citizenship.<sup>221</sup> To begin, the Chief Justice answered the first argument in the affirmative, “There is no doubt that women may be citizens.”<sup>222</sup> In fact, Waite assured the plaintiff that the Constitution never had dictated the terms for citizen status. Waite delves into political philosophy when he explained that a nation is nonexistent without its “association of persons for the promotion of their general welfare.”<sup>223</sup> Waite continued with his logic; reminiscent of the reciprocal system between sovereign and subject found in feudalism, Waite gave the analogy:

Each one of the persons associated becomes a member of the nation formed by the association. He owes it allegiance and is entitled to its protection. Allegiance and protection are, in this connection, reciprocal obligations. The one is compensation for the other; allegiance for protection and protection for allegiance.<sup>224</sup>

Although used interchangeably, the label, ‘citizen,’ was a more politically correct label than ‘subject,’ which implied membership in a monarchical system, as an ‘inhabitant.’ Nonetheless,

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<sup>219</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 163.

<sup>220</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 163-164; Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman’s Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959; revised, 1975), 172.

<sup>221</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 164.

<sup>222</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 165.

<sup>223</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 165-166.

<sup>224</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 166.

Waite clearly, albeit bleakly, evaluated the substance of citizenship: it connoted a “membership of a nation, *and nothing more* [italics mine].”<sup>225</sup>

To explain the vacuity of citizenship, Dudley O. McGovney, of Tulane University, wrote, in 1911, a lucid article for the *Columbia Law Review* with the self-explanatory title, “American Citizenship. Part I. Definitional.” He wrote this article in response to state justice J. Milburn’s statement in *Buckley v. McDonald* (1906). Milburn grappled with a definition of citizenship: he found the deliberations on citizenship of the federal Supreme Court “confusing.” Exasperated, Milburn stated, “I hesitate to express an opinion at this time, as to what constitutes citizenship.”<sup>226</sup> In his article, McGovney effectively dispelled “that confusion in regard to citizenship and alienage which every public lawyer meets and dreads.”<sup>227</sup> To begin, he reviewed the four “concepts” within a political society: they were “nationality, alienage, subjection and citizenship.”<sup>228</sup> For German-speaking peoples in the middle ages as well as for the nineteenth-century French, the term citizenship implied privilege and distinction. Yet the English held to a different class structure. McGovney argued that, because the American revolutionists replaced the hateful word “subject,” because of its inherent monarchical implications, with the word “citizen,” the term citizenship did not suggest concomitant privileges. In turn, the concept “subject,” itself, in English law, merely meant “one subject to the jurisdiction, one in a condition of subjection to the state.” Moreover, at least at the time of this article, England did not recognize the term “citizen.” The inhabitants were either deemed subjects or aliens. Also, McGovney’s use of the word “national” resembles that of Chief Justice Waite’s use of the word. Albeit employed within the context of international law, the concept “national” had very similar

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<sup>225</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 166.

<sup>226</sup>State justice J. Milburn, as cited in Dudley O. McGovney, “American Citizenship. Part I. Definitional,” *Columbia Law Review* 11 (March 1911): 231. J. Milburn, as cited in McGovney, 231.

<sup>227</sup>McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 231.

<sup>228</sup>McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 231.

implications to that of “subject” – a “national” only meant that that person “belongs to a particular state.”<sup>229</sup>

McGovney examined in detail early American constitutions as well as U.S. peace treaties with Great Britain and Prussia in order to discern the nuanced meanings of citizen, subject, and national. The concept of citizen was peculiar to the U.S.<sup>230</sup>

That the framers of our Constitution must have used “citizen” as the exact equivalent of the modern “national” is abundantly proved by contemporary public and official usage. It must be remembered that in English law the expression “subject of the king” had this identical connotation and that the word “citizen” was used nowhere outside of America from 1776 to 1787 in legal language, in the sense either of “national” or of a specifically privileged class of nationals.<sup>231</sup>

McGovney evaluated the lexicon from the colonial era to the Early Republic:

[Regarding the thirteen colonies] it is impossible to run through these constitutions noting the interchangeableness of “subject” and “citizen” without concluding that in the thought of that era, they were equivalent. Hence we must conclude that “citizen” meant merely “national,” for that was the sole meaning of “subject,” in this relation. In the constitutions framed between 1789 and 1820 the term “citizen” completely supplanted “subject.”<sup>232</sup>

It is clear that American political culture borrowed the hierarchical political class structure, albeit with a palatable lexicon, from common law Great Britain. The federal and state governments did not spontaneously endow the so-called “citizenry” with privileges. So there was a disconnect between citizenship and the privileges accrued to it: a citizen had to prove his worthiness to the government before it granted the citizen privileges, such as the vote.

The treaties that McGovney cited had nicely shown the juxtaposition of citizen and subject status in international relations. He cited the peace treaty with Great Britain, 1782-1783: “There

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<sup>229</sup>However, the concept of “subject” seemed to imply a measure of allegiance, unlike the concept of “national.” As for the concept of “alien,” also used in international law, it described the status of a person who had left the territorial confines of his own state. The status of foreign dignitaries was an exception to the rule: although technically aliens, they were accorded with special privileges. In a sense, the concepts of “alien” and “national” represented opposite sides of the same coin.

<sup>230</sup>McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 231-236.

<sup>231</sup>McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 236.

<sup>232</sup>McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 236-237.

shall be a firm and perpetual peace between His Britannic Majesty and the said States, and between the subjects of the one and the citizens of the other.”<sup>233</sup> In a similar vein, he referenced a 1785 commerce treaty with Prussia: “There shall be a firm peace . . . between His Majesty, the King of Prussia, his heirs, successors, and subjects, on the one part, and the United States of America and their citizens on the other.”<sup>234</sup> McGovney analyzed the lexicon, “One term is appropriate to a monarchy, the other to a republic, but beyond this, subject and citizen have the same meaning.” He reasoned,

If the negotiators or ratifiers suspected that there was or might be a class of Americans who were subjects but not citizens the more general term<sup>235</sup> would have been used in settling our international relations. It would be most strange to declare a peace between the subjects of these monarchs on the one hand and the citizens of the United States, on the other, said peace not to extend, however, to the mere subjects of the United States.<sup>236</sup>

Indeed, in the latter treaty, note that Prussia enumerated the various class distinctions, “heirs, successors, and subjects;” the United States only listed, “citizens.” Hence McGovney drew the conclusion: “The direct evidence from the language of the constitutions and the treaties is supported by the inferences necessarily drawn from the absence from the Constitution of the United States of any definition of ‘citizen’ and of any rules defining who were to be ‘citizens.’”<sup>237</sup>

In his discussion of the Dred Scott case and his brief reference to *Minor v. Happersett*, McGovney averred,

The Constitution did not create the status of citizenship by conferring upon citizens certain constitutional rights. . . . No person or class of persons can enjoy the status of citizenship without the consent of the nation, or those organs authorized to give consent, *that consent may be given without qualifications* [italics mine]. If a nation saw fit to incorporate the free negro into our citizenship without the full privileges of other citizens no one could

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<sup>233</sup>Peace treaty with Great Britain, 1782-1783, excerpt, as cited in McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 240.

<sup>234</sup>Commerce treaty with Prussia, 1785, excerpt, as cited in McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 240.

<sup>235</sup>By “general term” McGovney meant “nationals” (p. 240).

<sup>236</sup>McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 240.

<sup>237</sup>McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 240.

complain.<sup>238</sup>

Thus McGovney was partial to a hierarchical, top-down, vantage point, that is, from the government to the citizenry. Clearly he was not an advocate for natural rights, by which the citizen inherently held the right to the franchise. Note that, by the privileged rights school of thought, only the government, on its own terms, could consent to bestow citizenship on the inhabitant. In contrast, advocates of the natural rights school of thought contended that consent was the decision of the inhabitant. If that person consented to be governed, then he should accrue the full rights and privileges of citizenship. During the congressional debates over whether to include woman suffrage in Pembina Territory, Mr. Merrimon claimed that women consented to be governed, even without the ballot, because “they have given for nearly a century their highest moral sanction to [the government].”<sup>239</sup> But apparently, according to McGovney, this consent was irrelevant. McGovney elucidated the paradoxical status of citizenship that was peculiar to the United States, that a person legitimately could be a citizen without rights, as in the case of female citizens. Furthermore, the status of citizenship, along with the much sought after privileges, were under the domain of the government to give.

To resume the discussion of Waite’s decision, women were indeed citizens. In fact, as members of a nation, they always had been citizens. Waite underscored this point. After he resolved that issue, he presented the important question of the case, “whether all citizens are necessarily voters.” He proceeded to determine if the Constitution specifically referenced whether the franchise was one of the privileges and immunities of citizenship. His argument in interpreting the law in women’s disfavor was that, indeed, it was not explicitly stated as such. Waite first examined the state constitutions to determine whether “suffrage was co-extensive

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<sup>238</sup>McGovney, “American Citizenship,” 246.

<sup>239</sup>Mr. Merrimon, as cited in Stanton, vol. 2, *HWS*, 553.



with citizenship . . . [wherein] all citizens were permitted to vote” by the time of the 1789 Constitution.<sup>240</sup> He found that it was not; all states had qualifications for the franchise. Waite declared:

In this condition of the law in respect to suffrage in the several States it cannot for a moment be doubted that if it had been intended to make all citizens of the United States voters, the framers of the Constitution would not have left it to implication. So important a change in the condition of citizenship as it actually existed, if intended, would have been expressly declared.<sup>241</sup>

If all citizens were to have the right to vote, the Constitution would have plainly stated that fact. Waite then illumined the privileged rights school of thought of the framers; the franchise was a right that the government “granted.” Again, this manner of the obtainment of rights was diametrically opposed to that of the natural rights idealists: the citizen did not receive this right from the government, it was already manifest in citizenship status. Waite interpreted the letter of the Constitution and the spirit of the framers as antithetical to the natural rights philosophy of citizenship. The burden was on the citizen to prove that he had the right to vote.<sup>242</sup> As for the Fourteenth Amendment, it “did not add to the privileges and immunities of a citizen. It simply furnished an additional guaranty for the protection of such as he already had.”<sup>243</sup>

Chief Justice Waite was apologetic but disciplined about his ruling. He underscored that it was his mission to interpret the laws, not to formulate them. “If the law is wrong, it ought to be changed; but the power for that is not with us . . . No argument as to women’s need of suffrage can be considered. We can only act upon her rights as they exist. It is not for us to look at the hardship of withholding. Our duty is at an end if we find it is within the power of a State to

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<sup>240</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 170, 171, 172.

<sup>241</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 173.

<sup>242</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 176.

<sup>243</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 171.

withhold.”<sup>244</sup> The author C. Peter Magrath shows that Waite personally was sympathetic to women’s rights. He believed that equal work deserved equal pay and, in 1876, had endeavored to allow women attorneys at the Supreme Court bar. Nevertheless, as a judge, he interpreted constitutional law narrowly.<sup>245</sup>

A little less than two years after Waite’s ruling, Senator A.A. Sargent, the selfsame senator who introduced the idea of woman suffrage in the debate over its inclusion in the Pembina Territory, presented a joint resolution to amend the Constitution to allow women the right to vote. The wording of this proposal, otherwise known as the “Anthony Amendment,” would have served as the Sixteenth Amendment; instead, it eventually became the Nineteenth Amendment about forty years later: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”<sup>246</sup> The Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections allowed members of the National Woman Suffrage Association, which formed in 1869, to present speeches before the committee to urge the passage of the proposed amendment on January 11 and 12, 1878.<sup>247</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton spoke at this hearing. She began with an indirect reference to Waite’s ruling: “we believe that our constitution, fairly interpreted, already secures to the humblest individual all the rights, privileges and immunities of American citizens.”<sup>248</sup> Nonetheless, she recognized that specific legislation was necessary in

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<sup>244</sup>*Minor v. Happersett*, 21 Wallace, 178.

<sup>245</sup>C. Peter Magrath, *Morrison R. Waite: The Triumph of Character* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963), 119. Congress passed legislation allowing women attorneys at the Supreme Court bar in 1879 (119 n.20).

<sup>246</sup>Stanton, vol. 3, *HWS*, 75; Flexner, 176. The editors of *HWS* referred to Sargent as “our champion in the Senate (p. 75).”

<sup>247</sup>This committee was established in 1871. It transformed into the Committee on Rules and Administration in 1946 under the Legislation Reorganization Act. See David T. Canon, Garrison Nelson, and Charles Stewart III, *Committees In The U.S. Congress 1789-1946; volume 2; Senate Standing Committees* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002), 253. The Equal Rights Association was the predecessor to the National Woman Suffrage Association, which in turn, was the predecessor to the National American Woman Suffrage Association, which formed in 1890. See Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 154-155, 243.

<sup>248</sup>Elizabeth Cady Stanton, speaking for the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *A Sixteenth Amendment: Arguments on Prohibiting The Several States From Disfranchising United States Citizens On Account Of Sex*, 45<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sess., 11 and 12 January 1878, 4.

order to accord women this measure. Moreover, while Waite saw the glass half empty, Stanton saw the glass half full. Stanton's defense was that the Constitution did not explicitly deny the franchise to certain citizens. Furthermore, Stanton did not revere the Constitution like she did the Declaration of Independence. Regarding the federal Constitution, she proclaimed,

Our national life does not date from that instrument. The constitution is not the original declaration of rights. It was not framed until eleven years after our existence as a nation, nor fully ratified until nearly fourteen years after the inauguration of our national independence. . . . The Declaration of [sic] Independence struck a blow at every existent form of government by making the individual the source of all power.<sup>249</sup>

Thus, according to Stanton, the Declaration of Independence rendered the common law premises of American constitutionalism null and void. This document negated all qualifiers to the franchise. The disqualification of the franchise based on gender was, according to her, like a bill of attainder. Additionally, another brief argument was that, with the widespread corruption in government, women would command a positive moral influence. Again, however, she excluded another defense that would have served the movement well: she did not reference women's participation in the war effort during the Civil War.<sup>250</sup>

The majority of the Committee on Privileges and Elections voted against the resolution on June 14, 1878. Senator Bainbridge Wadleigh of New Hampshire submitted a terse report of their deliberations.

If adopted, it will make several millions of female voters, totally inexperienced in political affairs quite generally dependent upon the other sex, all incapable of performing military duty and without the power to enforce the laws which their numerical strength may enable them to make, and comparatively very few of whom wish to assume the irksome and responsible political duties which this measure thrusts upon them.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup>Stanton, before the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *A Sixteenth Amendment*, 8.

<sup>250</sup>Stanton, before the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *A Sixteenth Amendment*, 4-17.

<sup>251</sup>Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *Report [To accompany bill S. Res. 12]: The Committee on Privileges and Elections, to whom was referred the resolution (S. Res. 12) proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and certain petitions for and remonstrances against the same*, report prepared by Mr. Wadleigh, 45<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2d sess., 1878, Report No. 523, 1. This document is located on the Internet: Library of Congress. Votes for Women: Selections from the Nation American Women Suffrage Association. <http://memory.loc.gov> (accessed October 9, 2007).

Wadleigh stated that Congress received petitions bearing about 30,000 signatures; however, he surmised that this relatively small number of signers gave their names under the pressure of the suffrage movement activists.<sup>252</sup> To be sure, his military service requirement could be seen as a scare tactic because the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments did not require this obligation from male voters.

Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts presented the minority report on February 1, 1879.<sup>253</sup> He was one of three dissenters. By referencing the Declaration of Independence and state bills of rights, he claimed that all men not only hold equal rights, but also, with these documents, universal suffrage should prevail. He was an idealist, asserting that “natural justice” was validated by a century of “popular conviction.”<sup>254</sup> With revolutionary fervor, he clamored:

Either the doctrines of the Declaration of Independence and the bills of rights are true, or government must rest on no principle of right whatever, but its powers may be lawfully taken by force and held by force by any person or class who have the strength to do it, and who persuade themselves that their rule is for the public interest. Either these doctrines are true, or you can give no reason for your own possession of the suffrage.<sup>255</sup>

Additionally, Hoar addressed Wadleigh’s arguments against woman suffrage. Hoar did not fathom the purpose of the military service obligation in the common law political culture. He believed that his adversaries demanded military service from enfranchised citizens because the fulfillment of this duty ensured sound judgment at the polls.<sup>256</sup> He did not see that the legislative branch bestowed unto soldiers the franchise because the government deemed these worthy citizens as valuable members of the nation; the government gave privileges commensurate with

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<sup>252</sup>Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *Report*, 1.

<sup>253</sup>Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *Woman Suffrage in the U.S. Senate, 1879: Argument for a Sixteenth Amendment*, 45<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1 February 1879, 1-6. This document is located on the Internet. Library of Congress. Votes for Women: Selections from the National American Woman Suffrage Association. <http://memory.loc.gov> (accessed October 9, 2007).

<sup>254</sup>Senator Hoar, as cited in the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *Woman Suffrage*, 1, 2, 6.

<sup>255</sup>Senator Hoar, as cited in the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *Woman Suffrage*, 2.

<sup>256</sup>Senator Hoar, as cited in the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, *Woman Suffrage*, 4-5.

the civic capacity of the citizen. His argument serves as an example on how the natural rights ideologists did not grasp the premise of the privileged rights ideologists.

Because Senator Hoar alluded to revolutionary measures in order to secure universal suffrage, it would be prudent to corroborate the premise of his argument with that of Locke. Executive and legislative corruption is the subject material in John Locke's *Two Treatises Of Civil Government* (1690). The political scientist, Thomas I. Cook, assents that Locke was "the real father of the doctrine of individual rights," however, although Locke opposed despotic rule, he nevertheless adhered to the idea of a benign monarchy that ruled a people who consented to be governed.<sup>257</sup> In his time-honored chapter, "Of Tyranny," Locke held that the abuse of power, whereby the ruler maltreated the people "with arbitrary and irregular commands," was cause for displacement.<sup>258</sup> Yet Locke's tenets of natural rights and revolution may not be applicable to the discontents of a republican form of government; in comparison, seemingly unfair qualifications for the franchise may not be just cause for a revolution. On the other hand, in "The Dissolution of Government," he referred to non-monarchical forms of government. With respect to legislative assemblies, Locke asserted that the people were not obliged to respect laws that were legislated unfairly: "When any one or more shall take upon them to make laws, whom the people have not appointed to do so, they make laws without authority, which the people are not therefore bound to obey; by which means they come again to be out of subjection and may constitute to themselves a new legislative as they think best."<sup>259</sup> Thus, the disaffected subjects would no longer be under the jurisdiction of a malefasant state, and, with the "consent and

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<sup>257</sup>John Locke, *Two Treatises Of Government, With A Supplement, Patriarcha By Robert Filmer*, The Hafner Library Classics, no. 2, ed. with intro. Thomas I. Cook (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1947), ix, xviii.

<sup>258</sup>Locke, *Two Treatises*, 224.

<sup>259</sup>Locke, *Two Treatises*, 230.

appointment of the people,” could form a new government.<sup>260</sup> Applying this standard to American constitutionalism is enigmatic, however. Federal and state constitutions have vested the elected with the power to represent persons who did not have the power to appoint. Thus it would be problematic for Senator Hoar to cite Locke as justification to overthrow legislative government: Locke excoriated the abuse of power itself, as found in the legislative assembly, as it can be found in the monarch.

During the time of the debates over the introduction of the Anthony Amendment and of universal suffrage, Thomas Woodrow Wilson formed an enduring position on the privilege of the franchise. With regard to his background, Wilson was born in Virginia in 1856 and grew up in Georgia and “the Carolinas.” According to his biographer James Kerney, who was also his Director of Information in 1918, Wilson was “always thoroughly Southern in sentiment, and naturally adhered to the Calvinist philosophy.”<sup>261</sup> He went to Princeton in 1875 where he took interest in history and political science. In a diary entry on June 19, 1876, Wilson bitterly pondered, “The American *Republic* will in my opinion never celebrate another Centennial. At least under its present Constitution and laws. Universal Suffrage is at the foundation of every evil in this country.”<sup>262</sup> In his 1878 editorial in *The Princetonian*, Wilson gave a reason as to his opposition to universal suffrage. In sum, he did not trust the general citizen to vote intelligently.

Without the higher, broader, richer education which [educational institutions] afford, liberal institutions, political freedom, universal suffrage would be, one and all, the worst mockery of freedom, the sorest curse of humanity. Unless that part of man which alone makes him noble, and which distinguishes him from the beast of the field – his mind, his soul – be developed, and thus raised nearer to the likeness of divinity, he is, of all animals, the most

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<sup>260</sup>Locke, *Two Treatises*, 230.

<sup>261</sup>James Kerney, *The Political Education Of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: The Century Co., 1926), 4.

<sup>262</sup>Diary entry, 19 June 1876, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols., eds. Arthur S. Link et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966-), 1:143 (hereinafter cited as *PWW*).

dangerous.<sup>263</sup>

Yet while he disparaged the idea of granting every person the franchise, he accorded it little value in the operations of governance, which would explain his minimal references to enfranchisement in the canon of his works. In 1879, his essay, “Cabinet Government in the United States,” which was published in *International Review*, he wrote in response to the public’s falling esteem in the government:

Both State and National legislatures are looked upon with nervous suspicion, and we hail an adjournment of Congress as a temporary immunity from danger. In casting about for the chief cause of the admitted evil, many persons have convinced themselves that it is to be found in the principle of universal suffrage. . . . But while it is indisputably true that universal suffrage is a constant element of weakness, and exposes us to many dangers which we might otherwise escape, its operation does not suffice alone to explain these evils. Those who make this the scapegoat of all our national grievances have made too superficial an analysis of the abuses about which they so loudly complain.

What is the real cause of this solicitude and doubt? It is, in our opinion, to be found in the absorption of all power by a legislature which is practically irresponsible for its acts.<sup>264</sup>

While Wilson believed that it would behoove representative government to “purge the constituencies of their ignorant elements,” this sorting of the wheat from the chaff was relatively unimportant.<sup>265</sup>

After attending law school at the University of Virginia in 1882 Wilson briefly practiced law. Disillusioned with the chicaneries of his peers in the legal profession, Wilson concluded that practicing law was incongruous with his developing aspirations for a dual career in politics and academics. So he began his graduate program in history and political science at Johns Hopkins University in 1883. Although he was a published author on governance and earned a fellowship at the university whilst he was a graduate student, Wilson chose not to pursue a doctorate at that time; a decision born out of his willful and independent-minded regard for

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<sup>263</sup>Five Editorials in *The Princetonian*, 10 January 1878, *PWW*, 1:336.

<sup>264</sup>A Political Essay, Aug. 1879, *PWW*, 1:493-494.

<sup>265</sup>Wilson credited the political scientist Dr. Woolsey for this suggestion. A Political Essay, Aug. 1879, *PWW*, 1:494.

studying, as remarked by the meticulous biographer George C. Osborn, “according to his own tastes and choosing” and not for “the necessary reading for a Ph.D.”<sup>266</sup> Afterwards he taught at a women’s college, Bryn Mawr, as well as at Johns Hopkins and Wesleyan. While at Bryn Mawr, Wilson seriously reconsidered the practical value of a Ph.D. in order to further his career; Johns Hopkins awarded Wilson his doctorate in 1886. In 1890 he taught jurisprudence at Princeton University and eventually became its president.<sup>267</sup>

An analysis of his teaching position at a Bryn Mawr elucidates his position on women’s rights. Upon his acceptance of his teaching post at the newly instituted women’s college, Wilson delighted in the opportunity of organizing the incipient stages of the history and political science departments. Nonetheless, his acceptance was not without misgivings. This juncture in life induced a spate of antipathy towards women who tread outside their own relegated sphere.

Osborn assessed Wilson’s stance on this issue:

His southern provincialism with its chivalrous and romantic attitude towards women kept him from having any sympathy with the movement to extend higher education to them. He recognized, as he wrote his fiancée, that he was on the losing side of the issue. “The question of the higher education of women,” he said, “is certain to be settled in the affirmative, in this country at least, whether my sympathy be enlisted or not.”<sup>268</sup>

Another biographer, Henry Wilkinson Bragdon, illumines Wilson’s nuanced evaluation of women’s intelligence while he was teaching at Bryn Mawr. Bragdon quoted an alumna, “He seemed to regard his students not as of a *lower* sort of intelligence, but as of a *different* sort from himself.”<sup>269</sup> Juxtaposing his fear of universal suffrage in the hands of the uneducated masses with his opposition toward women’s higher education reveals Wilson’s abhorrence to the idea of

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<sup>266</sup>George C. Osborn, *Woodrow Wilson: The Early Years* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 51, 100, 103, 108, 119, 125.

<sup>267</sup>Osborn, *Woodrow Wilson*, 154-155; Kerney, *The Political Education*, 3-5.

<sup>268</sup>Osborn, *Woodrow Wilson*, 147; Wilson, as cited in Osborn, *Woodrow Wilson*, 147.

<sup>269</sup>A Bryn Mawr alumna, as cited in Henry Wilkinson Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1967), 151.



women participating in the public sphere. In any event, in the context of the political world, Wilson was an elitist.

Wilson's monographs reflected his elitist inclinations: he analyzed the operations of the elected and appointed officials with scant reference to the vantage point of the citizenry. The wide gulf between the citizenry and the government officials in his books is telling of his view on the people's role in the decision-making process on policy. During his professorial career, Wilson wrote several works on U.S government and history.<sup>270</sup> They were conservative in scope and clearly written. One text book, *State And Federal Governments Of The United States: A Brief Manual for Schools and Colleges* (1889), was the most instructive of all concerning the role of the franchise in American constitutionalism; however, it was not a profound illustration. What is important to note is his constant reference to suffrage as a "privilege."<sup>271</sup> In a later work, *Constitutional Government in the United States*, Wilson came across as a person who preferred to converse on concrete issues and not on nebulous idealisms. He lauded Magna Carta because it was an instrument to protect the rights that the barons at Runnymede already held. Wilson saw the imprint of this great document of common law in the Bill of Rights and praised it for its "business-like phrases." Wilson continued with an interesting juxtaposition of the individual rights of man in natural law with the obligations of the individual in a government premised on vested-rights, by almost obfuscating the two:

No doubt a great deal of nonsense has been talked about the inalienable rights of the individual . . . Such theories are never 'law,' no matter what the name or the formal authority of the document in which they were embodied. Only that is 'law' which can be executed, and the abstract rights of man are singularly difficult of execution. None the less, vague talk

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<sup>270</sup>Wilson's monographs include: *Congressional Government: A Study in American Politics* (originally published in 1885); *State and Federal Governments of the United States: A Brief Manual for Schools and Colleges* (1889); *Division and Reunion, 1829-1889* (1895); *History of the American People* (1902); and *Constitutional Governments of the United States* (1908).

<sup>271</sup>Woodrow Wilson, *The State And Federal Governments Of The United States: A Brief Manual for Schools and Colleges* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., Publishers, 1889). 58-59.

and ineffectual theory though there be, the individual is indisputably the original, the first fact of liberty. . . . Our definition of liberty is that it is the best practicable adjustment between the powers of the government and the privileges of the individual; and liberty is the object of constitutional government. . . .Nothing in connection with the development of constitutional government is more remarkable . . . than the way in which it has exalted him, but at the same time thrown him upon his own resources, as if it honored him enough to release him from leading strings and trust him to see and seek his own rights.<sup>272</sup>

Wilson stated that “liberty is individual, not communal.”<sup>273</sup> Thus a citizen’s political or civil status was unique to the individual and his endeavors; liberty did not pass on to him from an intermediary, such as the community. Additionally, the government granted freedom as a facilitator of individual progress. With Wilson’s value of individual resourcefulness, one could foresee that he would be amenable, ten years hence, to awarding women with the vote for their war efforts.

Both woman suffragists and conservative government officials were steadfast with neither side seeking common ground. Stanton and Anthony of the women’s movement chose not to champion women’s war work because they refused to concede a system of qualifications for the franchise which the suffragists deemed tyrannical to impose. Thus they did not assert their proven civic capacity, their vested stake in society, to government officials. At the same time, legislators would not vest women with the vote because, they argue, women did not display civic capacity, such as soldiers in the military. Furthermore, although Wilson believed that only the educated citizenry should vote, Wilson was opposed to the higher education of women, thus rendering him adverse to woman suffrage. Education channeled the citizenry toward effective participation in the governance of society; Wilson did not want to offer women this opportunity into the political realm. After women secured their own citizenship, which, apparently they always had held, albeit officially the meaning of which was akin to subjection within a

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<sup>272</sup>Woodrow Wilson, *Constitutional Government In The United States*, Columbia University Lectures (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), 7, 8, 16, 18.

<sup>273</sup>Wilson, *Constitutional Government*, 18.

monarchy, they endeavored to secure a right that, because of their own incorporation of the natural rights theory, they considered as already theirs to enjoy. However, this right turned out not a right but rather a privilege. Congress deliberated on the Anthony Amendment several times over the remainder of the nineteenth century. The constellation of a suffrage movement, the enormity of a war, and an astute advocate after the turn of the century would break the tired pattern of heedless disputations that heretofore gained momentum.

## CHAPTER V

### CATT, THE DEA EX MACHINA: THE GREAT WAR

In order to fully understand the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, one must place the agitation for woman suffrage in the context of the war. Some historians either stop short of the Great War and place woman suffrage in the context of the Progressive Era, or aver that timing was, indeed, irrelevant. Other historians reference the war as a tangential concern to the suffrage movement but cite Woodrow Wilson's war measure as either an ineffective or an implausible factor for women's enfranchisement. Yet other historians, who contend that the war was a boon for the suffrage movement, place an inordinate amount of emphasis on one member of the partnership for political justice at the expense of the other member: they either cite Wilson or Carrie Chapman Catt as the main player in the passage of this amendment.<sup>274</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate Catt's skillful leadership as well as Wilson's weighty influence on Congress to effect the passage of the federal suffrage amendment: I place this partnership within the context of the Great War, with an emphasis on the essential war services of women.<sup>275</sup> I find that, within the context of this war, the American people and military officials alike saw women

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<sup>274</sup>For literature on woman suffrage in the context of the Progressive Era, see Aileen Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement* (1965); Carolyn Summers Vacca, *A Reform Against Nature: Woman Suffrage and the Rethinking of American Citizenship, 1840-1920* (2004). For literature on the timing of the woman suffrage amendment as irrelevant to its passage, see Christine A. Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage To Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928* (1986). For scholarship concerning the ineffectiveness of suffrage as a war measure, see Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (1959, revised 1975). For literature on the war measure as an implausible explanation for the passage of the federal amendment, see Linda G. Ford, *Iron-Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party, 1912-1920* (1991); Sally Hunter Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Woman Suffrage Movement," *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 1983-84). For literature on Woodrow Wilson as the main player in the passage of the federal amendment, see Christine A. Lunardini and Thomas J. Knock, "Woodrow Wilson and Woman Suffrage: A New Look," *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 1980-81). For literature on Carrie Catt as the main player in the passage of the federal amendment, see Robert Booth Fowler, *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician* (1986).

<sup>275</sup>While David Morgan recognizes Catt's wise decision to encourage women to engage in war service in order to demonstrate their political capacity (see *Suffragists And Democrats: The Politics of Woman Suffrage in America* (1972)), I intend to go into greater depth as to the effect that women's contributions to the war effort had on government officials as well as on public opinion.

in war as heroines, thereby challenging the old notion of “true womanhood;” however, as in the case of nurses, both in the military and in the Red Cross, to agitate for woman suffrage while serving for their country would have had ignoble connotations.<sup>276</sup> At the same time, because of the militant suffragists’ natural rights ideology and their stalwart single-minded approach to political justice, they refused to engage in war service in order to justify their enfranchisement. My findings show that Wilson did not respond to the suffrage militants. Yet Catt, of the NAWSA, cleverly harnessed suffrage advocacy as well as women’s patriotic war service in order to encourage Wilson, a common law apologist, to endorse the amendment. Despite her astute political endeavors, however, woman suffrage would not have materialized without Wilson’s vigorous and whole-hearted endorsement. Conversely, Mary Katzenstein rightly questions, “The U.S. Congress may have passed the suffrage amendment in part to undergird the war effort; but would it have done so in the absence of an organized women’s movement?”<sup>277</sup> By employing a ‘top-down’ analytical approach, this chapter positions woman suffrage from the viewpoint of Wilson and other government officials along with that of the prehensile suffrage leader, Catt; by assuming a pivotal role in the passage of this constitutional amendment, Catt, in turn, saw woman suffrage from the viewpoint of the federal government. Furthermore, her double-barreled strategy of personally convincing Wilson to aggressively promote woman suffrage as well as her own simultaneous engagement in the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense as well as her presentations in congressional hearings secured control of the executive and legislative branches in her favor.

Wilson’s use, as president, of the states’ rights defense in his discourses with suffragists demands an evaluation of his position on woman suffrage and states’ rights during his

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<sup>276</sup>Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151-174. Walter cites the “virtues” of true womanhood as “piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity (p. 152).”

<sup>277</sup>Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, “Feminism and the Meaning of the Vote,” *Signs* 10 (1984): 11.

governorship of New Jersey.<sup>278</sup> Additionally, his eventual endorsement of woman suffrage directly toward congressional legislators necessitates an examination of his stance on the doctrine of separation of powers as well. To begin, as governor, Wilson did not endorse woman suffrage. Privately, he was opposed to it, but publicly, he was politely evasive. On June 20, 1911, Wilson wrote a letter to the poet and editor Witter Bynner in response to his question on Wilson's stance on woman suffrage. Wilson stated, "I must say very frankly that my personal judgment is strongly against it. I believe that the social changes it would involve would not justify the gains that would be accomplished by it."<sup>279</sup> Later that year, in the state of New York, the Woman Suffrage Party decorated Wilson with a sash. A few months later, the chairperson of the Woman Suffrage Party, Edith M. Whitmore, wrote to Wilson requesting that he state his position on woman suffrage. Also, if he did, would he announce it publicly? Additionally, Whitmore brought up the vexing dilemma, during Wilson's campaign for presidency, whether women who vote in one state could vote in another state where its constitution did not support woman suffrage, thereby alluding to the issue of states' rights.<sup>280</sup> Wilson responded, indicating that he wrestled with this issue, "Allow me to acknowledge with real appreciation your letter of January 31 in which you put me a very difficult question. I can only say that my own mind is in the midst of the debate which it involves. I do not feel that I am ready utter any confident judgment as yet about it. I am honestly trying to work my way toward a just conclusion."<sup>281</sup> In April at a public meeting with Pittsburghers, Wilson again responded to a suffragist's request

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<sup>278</sup>Wilson was elected Governor of New Jersey in 1910. Previously, he had been president at Princeton University since 1902. Arthur S. Link cites Wilson's administrative quarrels over the control of the graduate school as an impetus to his embarkation into the world of politics. See Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson And The Progressive Era, 1910-1917*, The New American Nation Series, eds. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1954), 8, 9.

<sup>279</sup>Woodrow Wilson to Witter Bynner, 20 June 1911, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols. eds. Arthur S. Link et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966-), 23:160 (hereinafter cited as *PWW*).

<sup>280</sup>Edith M. Whitmore to Wilson, 31 January 1912, *PWW*, 24:100.

<sup>281</sup>Wilson to Edith M. Whitmore, 8 February 1912, *PWW*, 24:140.

that he state his position on woman suffrage. Similarly, Wilson evasively stated, “[Woman suffrage] is a big question and I am only about half way through it. My mind works somewhat slowly and on this subject and I really have not come to any conclusion.”<sup>282</sup> His campaign for the presidency may have contributed to his halting public stance on woman suffrage. Although he was a man of strong moral integrity, he nonetheless was an “unabashed disciple” of political expediency.<sup>283</sup>

Wilson’s endorsement of woman suffrage intersected with matters of states’ rights and the doctrine of the separation of powers. Although Wilson was explicitly aware of his unseemly transcendence through the separation of powers in his later endorsement of woman suffrage, the political scientist Ronald J. Pestritto believes that Wilson found this doctrine to be obsolete. Although Pestritto does not address the woman suffrage movement, he states that the separation of powers doctrine, according to Wilson’s academic analyses on government, thwarted “the people’s will.”<sup>284</sup> Delving back to Wilson’s early writings, Pestritto continues with his illumination of Wilson’s proposed structure of the federal government: he called for

some form of cabinet government to be instituted in the United States – a form of government where a national legislature depends upon majority public opinion and the executive branch depends upon sustained support in the legislature. The key feature of such a system is that there is no separation between the legislative and the executive branches – in fact, the leaders of the legislative branch also serve in the cabinet as leaders of the executive branch.<sup>285</sup>

So Wilson’s direct influence on congressional legislators for woman suffrage later during his presidency was not contrary to an otherwise valued tenet of the separation of powers doctrine. In

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<sup>282</sup>A News Report About Wilson’s Arrival in Pittsburgh (printed in the *Pittsburgh Post* April 11, 1912), 11 April 1912, *PWW*, 24:315.

<sup>283</sup>See *PWW*, 19:331 on loyalty and 20:332 on “spiritual punishment.” A Religious Address at McCormick Theological Seminary, 2 November 1909, *PWW*, 19:476.

<sup>284</sup>Ronald J. Pestritto, *Woodrow Wilson and the Roots of Modern Liberalism*, American Intellectual Culture, eds. Jean Bethke Elshtain, Ted. V. McAllister, and Wilfred M. McClay, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005), 123.

<sup>285</sup>Pestritto, *Woodrow Wilson*, 124-125.

fact, Wilson believed that the citizenry viewed the executive branch as more representative of the creed of the people than the legislative branch. By referencing Wilson's then recent monograph, *Constitutional Government* (1908), Pestritto exclaims, "Wilson reasoned that it was impossible for Congress to establish a sufficient connection with the public will. In turning to the popular leadership of the president, Wilson explained that 'the House seems to have missed . . . the right to be [the nation's] principal spokesman in affairs.'"<sup>286</sup> Indeed, my findings show that Wilson did not eschew the NAWSA: during the Great War, he did not advise these suffragists to communicate with the legislators directly. Additionally, during the latter part of, and after, the Great War, Wilson persistently endorsed woman suffrage, on behalf of the NAWSA, before a hesitant Congress. Thus Wilson served as an effectual intermediary before the legislative branch.

In an address to the state governors of the nation, Wilson expressed, in an argument against a centralized government wherein the states would find "safety and prosperity," his support for states' rights because of the states' varied terrains and natural resources. He compared the states to kingdoms, for which "uniform laws would intolerably embarrass them. Their affairs are not alike, and cannot be made so by compulsion of law."<sup>287</sup> Furthermore, Wilson believed that "self-government" fostered independence and self-sufficiency. He depicted the states as if they were individual persons in a free republic, "They are forced to contrive their own salvation, to depend upon their own sagacity and initiative, to develop their own lives by their own means."<sup>288</sup> Laws pertaining to matters of economics may justify state self-government; however, geographical and topographical distinctions among the states are irrelevant to women's political rights. Moreover, woman suffrage would enable one-half of the citizenry to realize its own independence. Thus

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<sup>286</sup>Pestritto, *Woodrow Wilson*, 167.

<sup>287</sup>An Address to the Conference of Governors in Frankfort, Kentucky, 29 November 1910, *PWW*, 22:105.

<sup>288</sup>An Address to the Conference of Governors in Frankfort, Kentucky, 29 November 1910, *PWW*, 22:105.



Wilson's particular reasons for states' rights rendered this argument as disingenuous in his defense against woman suffrage during his presidency.

Yet Pestritto argues that during Wilson's presidency, the former governor, by implementing Progressive era values, facilitated legislation that shifted the locus of power away from the states and toward the national government. This type of legislation included, among other legislative acts, what became the Sixteenth Amendment, the Underwood-Simmons Tariff (1913), otherwise known as the national income tax, and the Child Labor Tax Act (1916). According to Pestritto, Wilson deemed the national income tax as a more honest means of taxing the people than by obliquely increasing the price of consumer items.<sup>289</sup> So Wilson already had displayed a pattern of centralizing legislation that expedited social progress. One could conclude that, in general, Wilson wanted to centralize concerns of social and political integrity, but left laws pertaining to regional natural resources to the states. Again, this type of legislative policy rendered his states' rights defense against woman suffrage as dubious.

Another subject to consider during his governorship, as a precursor to his presidency, is Wilson's indomitable will. The intrepid nature of his character would obviate a flinching submission to any perceived effrontery, as with the suffrage militants. In a letter to his friend, Mary Allen Peck, Wilson took pride in his steadfast personality, "I am a man's man, and exasperate even men by confident opinions of my own. I am, at any rate, now fully authenticated as a man by the number of enemies that I have."<sup>290</sup> At a campaign speech for the governorship later that year, Wilson boldly stated, "I come of a Scotch-Irish stock that cannot help fighting to save its life. I always think I am right, and although I try to be courteous to the

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<sup>289</sup>Pestritto, *Woodrow Wilson*, 259-262.

<sup>290</sup>Wilson to Mary Allen Hubert Peck, 20 February 1910, *PWW*, 20:150.

men I differ from, I am always sure that they are wrong.”<sup>291</sup> The historian Arthur S. Link critiqued Wilson’s excessively stalwart nature as an aberration in Wilson’s character. In reference to his handling of the controversy over the administration of a new graduate school at Princeton University, wherein he lost the battle over its control, Link found that Wilson had an “unfailing habit of converting differences over issues into bitter personal quarrels, [a] proud and unyielding stubbornness, and [an] inability to work with the opposition.”<sup>292</sup> Wilson was not easily defeated. Whether the aforementioned characteristics were admirable or detestable, they rendered Wilson as amenable to Catt’s tactful approach toward his consideration of woman suffrage; the methodology of the suffrage militants, on the other hand, would not propel his endorsement of this constitutional amendment.

At the beginning of Wilson’s presidency (1913-1921), the national suffrage movement grappled with its own internal dissension. The suffrage movement during the Progressive era, similar to that of the Gilded Age, was bitterly divided over the method of obtaining women’s enfranchisement. The two main rival suffrage organizations were the NAWSA and the National Woman’s Party (formerly the Congressional Union). As reported by the historian Flexner, severe bias rendered the suffragists’ records as reliably problematic. In 1943, Catt admitted to the potentially non-evidentiary status of the official histories of the suffragists. Flexner quotes Catt, “I am inclined to think that the suffragists, who have written their own history, have not always known all the facts at the time of writing and perhaps they have not been free enough from prejudice to tell the whole truth.”<sup>293</sup> Consequently, the reader could accord Flexner’s narrative a measure of objectivity because of her careful evaluation of these primary sources.

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<sup>291</sup>A Campaign Speech in Woodbury, New Jersey, 10 October 1910, *PWW*, 21:250.

<sup>292</sup>Link, *Woodrow Wilson And The Progressive Era, 1910-1917*, 9.

<sup>293</sup>Catt, as cited in Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman’s Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959, rev. ed. 1975), 350.

After decades of the NAWSA plodding along in order to win suffrage at the state level, Alice Paul, while she was a member of the NAWSA, galvanized the movement with her aggressive tactics and ideology that she had personally acquired from the women suffragists in Great Britain.<sup>294</sup> In April 1913, she energetically rejuvenated the idea of winning women full enfranchisement by means of a federal amendment. When Dr. Anna Howard Shaw was president of the NAWSA, Paul formed an internal organization, the Congressional Union; however, Paul's strategy of singular pressure on the executive and legislative branches to obtain enfranchisement alienated the NAWSA in 1914, ultimately leading to Paul's termination of her position. The Congressional Union, along with Alice Paul, disengaged from the NAWSA as a separate entity. The Congressional Union was the predecessor to the National Woman's Party [NWP], established 1916, and adopted militant tactics in 1917 against the executive branch and its respective political party in order to win suffrage. Flexner credits the Congressional Union for the beginning stages of activity in the legislative branch on the suffrage amendment.<sup>295</sup>

There is an argument that the ideology of the suffrage movement also shifted in different directions. While the NWP tenaciously held to the idea that the franchise was a natural right,

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<sup>294</sup>E. Sylvia Pankhurst, daughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, the leader of the British militant suffrage movement, the Women's Social and Political Union, formed in 1903, wrote *The Suffragette: The History Of The Women's Militant Suffrage Movement, 1905-1910* (1911). In her narrative, Pankhurst recited an incident where Alice Paul participated in an unannounced political demonstration (which entailed the violent act of smashing a window) for woman suffrage at a banquet for the Lord Mayor. She, along with her cohort, Amelia Brown, was sent to prison to do hard labor where they both were force-fed. See pages 459-460. Yet suffragists in the U.S. used non-violent means of raising political awareness. According to a contemporary author, Mary Winsor, Chairman of the Pennsylvania Congressional Committee of the NAWSA, stated that the method of agitation reflected the treatment by the men of the country. In Great Britain, "the militant movement is like a slave insurrection" and there was "the pressure to keep [the suffragists] down." In contrast, "In America there is a spirit of justice and friendliness toward women." See Mary Winsor, "The Militant Suffrage Movement," *The Annals: Women In Public Life*, American Academy Of Political And Social Science, LVI (November 1914), 135, 136. The militant suffragists continued to use non-violent tactics during the Great War. Ford argues that the American militants believed that they were morally superior to men in terms of women's anti-violent nature. See Linda G. Ford, *Iron Jawed Angels: The Suffrage Militancy of the National Woman's Party* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 5, 246.

<sup>295</sup>Pleaser refer to chapters 20 and 21 in Flexner, *Century of Struggle*; Christine A. Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage To Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928* (New York: New York University Press, 1986), 49, 87, 88. See Ford for information on American suffragist militant ideology and methodology.

Carolyn Summers Vacca claims that the NAWSA, especially under Catt's leadership, had based the vote on ascriptive standards, or women's moral superiority.<sup>296</sup> Yet, on the contrary, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, president of the NAWSA (1904-1915), professed a natural rights philosophy.

I am personally convinced that the enfranchisement of women should be considered from the standpoint of justice and logic alone. . . . Many women feel that the greatest good they can do with the ballot is to abolish commercialized vice, to prevent child labor, or to make effective their protest against war. This is perhaps true. We all agree that these evils must be abolished, and that women, unenfranchised, have not and will not be able to abolish them. But the evils themselves and the desire of women to right them do not constitute the reason women should be enfranchised. The reason would remain even though all the evils I have named, or could name, should be abolished at once.<sup>297</sup>

Thus, according to Shaw, the franchise should not be premised on women's moral superiority.

In fact, contemporary cynicism of women's high moral nature is extant. William H. Allen, the director of the Bureau of Municipal Research and National Training School for Public Service, who wrote *Woman's Part In Government, Whether She Votes Or Not* (1911), stated,

For many ages women have found it pleasing, as men have found it successful, to have extravagant things said about woman's moral superiority. So it is taken for granted in almost all talks about woman's suffrage that woman will, of course either look at government questions from a higher moral altitude or else lose what Senator Root calls 'the sweet and noble influence of her character.'<sup>298</sup>

Allen proffered the question as to whether women were corruptible. As a realist, he quipped,

"rarely when people are looking."<sup>299</sup> However, speaking as a government official, he reasoned,

"Whether women are more or less corrupt than men is irrelevant so far as government is concerned, for 'good' governors will look for efficient, sound policy and adequate results and not

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<sup>296</sup>Vacca, *A Reform*, 7, 105-110.

<sup>297</sup>Anna Howard Shaw, "Equal Suffrage – A Problem Of Political Justice," *The Annals: Women In Public Life*, American Academy Of Political And Social Science, LVI (November 1914), 94, 97.

<sup>298</sup>William H. Allen, *Woman's Part In Government, Whether She Votes Or Not* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1911), 18.

<sup>299</sup>Allen, *Woman's Part In Government*, 19.

for corruption.”<sup>300</sup> The government did not take into consideration the moral integrity of the citizen when giving the privilege of the vote.

Yet, at the same time, Allen recognized women’s strength. Another question that he proffered was whether “women could bear arms.” His response was, “why not.”<sup>301</sup> He presciently supported his stance,

The bravest man that ever lived would run away from a woman, whether she had arms or not, rather than face an open conflict. It is surprising that so much time is spent on discussing so hypothetical a situation as that this country should be so pressed for soldiers as to wish women to bear arms. Anyway, most men would rather go to war than be left behind to do the hard work that women must do when taking the place of arms bearers.<sup>302</sup>

Perhaps his position was emblematic of government’s assessment of women. In this light, women could contribute to the good of the country, as in a time of emergency. To the government, women’s strength manifested itself concretely, as with nursing, whereby Allen praised their industry, “women nurses work harder than men doctors; the most disagreeable, hardest jobs in most offices are done by women.”<sup>303</sup> The government appreciated women’s war service in 1917 and 1918; meanwhile, however, it is crucial to see the change in the government’s consideration of woman suffrage in time of war as compared to the years leading up to Wilson’s formal declaration of war. The element of demonstrated patriotism enhanced their civic capacity.

Carrie Chapman Catt, nee Clinton Lane, was born in 1859 in Ripon, Wisconsin and moved to Charles City, Iowa when she was seven. Her family did not seem to have a strong religious affiliation. As a precocious youth she had displayed interest not only in women’s rights but also in biological science. After high school she went to Oread Collegiate Institute (headed by Eli

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<sup>300</sup> Allen, *Woman’s Part In Government*, 19.

<sup>301</sup> Allen, *Woman’s Part In Government*, 16.

<sup>302</sup> Allen, *Woman’s Part In Government*, 17.

<sup>303</sup> Allen, *Woman’s Part In Government*, 16-17.

Thayer) in Worcester, Massachusetts and later obtained her B.S. in the General Science Course for Women at Iowa State Agricultural College.<sup>304</sup> Although her background differs from that of Wilson, they were both nearly the same age and obtained advanced levels of education. In fact, her bi-partisanship and lack of religious indoctrination probably made her more amenable than Alice Paul, a staunch anti-Democrat during the war and a Quaker who headed her own newly formed political party, the National Woman's Party, to Wilson's single-minded approach to his own administration.<sup>305</sup>

Carrie Chapman Catt assumed the presidency of the NAWSA in 1915. In 1916, growing disenchanted with the state-by-state approach to woman suffrage, as proposed on the Democratic platform, Catt decided upon a serious pursuit of the federal amendment as well. Yet in contrast to Paul's methods, Catt's approach was to woo the president in a cordial manner. Winning Wilson over to woman suffrage, was, according to Flexner's narrative of Catt, ". . . a matter of time and tactics, and that he must on no account be personally antagonized or challenged on this issue. . . . Above all, she kept the door of communication between the National [NAWSA] and the White House open."<sup>306</sup> Ironically, each organization's position on the role of women in the war effort was diametrically opposite of their methodology for gaining enfranchisement. Flexner relates of the NAWSA leader, "Realist that she was, Mrs. Catt knew that the ability of suffragists to plead their cause successfully would depend in some measure on whether they too had joined the national war effort. . . . Not so the Woman's Party."<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>304</sup>Jacqueline Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life* (New York: Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1987), 4-7,

<sup>305</sup>Irwin, a historian, knew Paul personally. Inez Hayes Irwin, *The Story of Alice Paul and The National Woman's Party* (Fairfax, VA: Delinger's Publishers, LTD, 1977), 7, 152, 177.

<sup>306</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 288, 289.

<sup>307</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 294, additionally, please refer to chapters 20 and 21.

Wilson's approach to woman suffrage changed over time. Several months before Wilson decided to make domestic and military preparations for war, he had met with "a Delegation of Democratic Women" on January 6, 1915. They had wanted him to support an "equal suffrage amendment" which the House of Representatives would vote on in six days. He commended the delegations work toward suffrage; however, he stated that he believed this issue should be left to the states. "It is a long standing and deeply matured conviction on my part, and therefore, I would be without excuse to my own constitutional principles if I lent my support to this very important movement for an amendment to the Constitution of the United States."<sup>308</sup> The amendment did not pass the House: with 378 voting, there were 174 yeas and 204 nays.<sup>309</sup>

Wilson followed his credo, however, when he traveled to his home state of New Jersey to vote for woman suffrage on October 19, 1915. Catt observed, "the higher class of men of both parties espoused suffrage."<sup>310</sup> Morgan believes that Wilson voted for suffrage because he "was concerned with his re-election."<sup>311</sup> All the same, Democratic anti-suffrage men and women successfully worked against a favorable vote for suffrage in the state of New Jersey.<sup>312</sup>

The next summer, Wilson wrote to the Jane Jefferson Club of Colorado, which was "the first woman's Democratic voters organization in America."<sup>313</sup> This letter, which was printed in the *New York Times*, expressed his desire not to entangle the country into war. At the same time, he delved into the subject that "the old notion . . . that suffrage and service go hand in hand is a sound one, and women may appeal to it, though it has long been invoked against them."<sup>314</sup> He

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<sup>308</sup>Wilson's Remarks to a Delegation of Democratic Women, 6 January 1915, *PWW*, 32:22.

<sup>309</sup>Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler, *Woman Suffrage And Politics: The Inner Story Of The Suffrage Movement* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), 496.

<sup>310</sup>Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage*, 292.

<sup>311</sup>David Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats: The Politics of Woman Suffrage in America* (n.p.: Michigan State University Press, 1972), 81.

<sup>312</sup>Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage*, 292.

<sup>313</sup>Wilson to the Jane Jefferson Club of Colorado, 7 August 1916, *PWW*, 37:536-537.

<sup>314</sup>Wilson to the Jane Jefferson Club of Colorado, 7 August 1916, *PWW*, 37:536-537.

pointed out the arduous tasks that women have been undergoing in Europe after he stated, “The war in Europe has forever set at rest the notion that nations depend in times of stress wholly upon their men.”<sup>315</sup> One could see the incipient transformation of Wilson’s belief in endorsing a federal amendment because of women’s patriotic contributions to the war effort, despite his expressions against endorsing it.

On April 6, 1917, Wilson formally entered into the war against Germany. Ten days later he gave a speech, “The American People Must Support The War.”<sup>316</sup> He appealed to the country’s civilians that they must do their part on the domestic front; “the things without which mere fighting would be fruitless.”<sup>317</sup> These things include producing large quantities of food, manufacturing ships, mining for coal, and working the looms to make clothes for the soldiers. Wilson asserted that “the men and women who devote their thought and their energy to these things will be serving their country.”<sup>318</sup> So Wilson acknowledged the important part women would play in all facets of the war effort. Wilson discussed an “Army bill” with the Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, Representative Dent, the next day.<sup>319</sup>

On April 21 the Council of National Defense created the Woman’s Committee. The council made the following statement:

Realizing the inestimable value of woman’s contribution to the national effort under modern war conditions, the Council of National Defense has appointed a committee of women of national prominence to consider and advise how the assistance of the women of America may be made available in the prosecution of the war. These women are appointed as individuals regardless of any organizations with which they may be associated. The body will be known as the Committee on Women’s Defense Work.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>315</sup>Wilson to the Jane Jefferson Club of Colorado, 7 August 1916, *PWW*, 37:536-537.

<sup>316</sup>Albert Bushnell Hart, ed., *Selected Addresses And Public Papers Of Woodrow Wilson*, with an introduction by Albert Bushnell Hart (New York: Boni & Liveright, Inc., 1918), 197-201.

<sup>317</sup>Hart, ed., *Selected Addresses*, 197-201.

<sup>318</sup>Hart, ed., *Selected Addresses*, 197-201.

<sup>319</sup>From the Diary of Thomas W. Brahany, presidential assistant, 17 April 1917, *PWW*, 42:91.

<sup>320</sup>Council of National Defense, as cited in Ida Clyde Clarke, *American Women And The World War* (New York: D. Appleton And Company, 1918). under “Chapter II: The Woman’s Committee Created,” <http://www.gwpda.org/wwi-www/Clarke/Clarke00TC.htm#contents> (accessed October 30, 2007). George Creel of



The Council, established by Congress in 1916, was comprised of the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of Labor. This council appointed Dr. Anna Howard Shaw as chairman and Carrie Chapman Catt as a member of the Women's Committee (Committee of Women's Defense Work).<sup>321</sup> This committee mobilized the women of the nation, primarily through the myriad women's organizations such as The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, The National Women's Trade Union League, and even the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, for patriotic service by assigning a chairman for each contiguous state, as well as for the District of Columbia. Although the Women's Committee followed Great Britain's and France's example of registering as many women as possible for war service, in order to ascertain the number of both qualified and unqualified (lacking in special skills) women for the war effort, the Committee emphasized that women's registration was voluntary – women would not be drafted.<sup>322</sup> Nevertheless, the women of the nation held a strong sense of service and unity; these disparate organizations “cheerfully put themselves under the direction of The Woman's Committee.”<sup>323</sup>

The Selective Services Act passed through Congress in May. Catt wrote to Wilson on May 7<sup>th</sup> to request that he endorse the federal amendment in order to boost women's morale in their war service. She wrestled with imposing this request on him during a time of war, “. . . however much we feel that it would add to our enthusiasm and usefulness during the war to be equipped with the ballot before we are placed on the firing line. We hoped that our willingness to serve our

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the Committee of Public Information and Mrs. Clara Sears Taylor, Director of the Division of Women's War Work, contributed to the writing of this publication.

<sup>321</sup>Although, privately, Catt was a pacifist, she knew that women's war service would enhance women's standing in gaining the franchise. See Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 140-141.

<sup>322</sup>Clarke, *American Women*, under “Chapter IV: Registration.”

<sup>323</sup>Clarke, *American Women*, under “Chapter II: The Woman's Committee Created.”

country even only half armed would appeal to the men with whom you and we must deal in Congress as good and sufficient reason for our enfranchisement – possibly as a war measure.”<sup>324</sup> Wilson responded the next day that he did not believe Congress would be receptive to considering the federal amendment because they were preoccupied with the war.<sup>325</sup> However, the important point is that Catt initiated to Wilson the idea of suffrage as a reward or compensation for women’s contributions to the war effort. Catt attempted to fit woman suffrage into the schema of wartime government, for war measures were of top priority in Congress. Congressman Pat Harrison, a member of the House Committee on Rules, reminded Congressman Edward T. Taylor of Montana of the program implemented in the Democratic Caucus, “that we would not pass any legislation except that recommended by the President of the United States as war measures during this Congress.”<sup>326</sup> Enfranchisement as a reward is antithetical to Ford’s interpretation that the Nineteenth Amendment passed because of suffrage militancy. To be sure, the National Woman’s Party “quite pointedly took no stand on the war issue” and would not contribute to the war effort.<sup>327</sup>

On May 14, 1917, however, Wilson met with a delegation of “Woman’s,” along with other “liberal Parties,” regarding the federal amendment; they proclaimed that this amendment should be considered in Congress as part of the war program.<sup>328</sup> A week later, in a May 7<sup>th</sup> letter to Wilson, Catt emphasized that the National Woman’s Party, and not the NAWSA, were to meet

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<sup>324</sup>Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt to Wilson, 7 May 1917, *PWW*, 42:237.

<sup>325</sup>Wilson to Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt, second letter, 8 May 1917 *PWW*, 42:241.

<sup>326</sup>House Committee on Rules, *Creating A Committee On Woman Suffrage In The House Of Representatives: Hearings on H.R. Res. 12*, 65<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess., 1917, text-fiche, 8.

<sup>327</sup>Barbara Steinson, *American Women’s Activism In World War I*, Modern American History: A Garland Series, ed. Frank Seidel (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982), 241; Sally Hunter Graham, “Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul, and the Woman Suffrage Movement,” *Political Science Quarterly* 95 (Winter 1980-81): 667.

<sup>328</sup>Ray Stannard Baker, ed., *Woodrow Wilson: Life And Letters*, vol. 6 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946), 67. Baker was a journalist during Wilson’s administration. Please refer to H.W. Brands’ *Woodrow Wilson* (2003).

with him in this delegation.<sup>329</sup> Catt did not join in this delegation because she did not want to associate with the militants.<sup>330</sup> Wilson responded to the attending delegation that even though it was an inopportune time to consider their request, in light of the war he would reappraise the woman suffrage movement.<sup>331</sup>

Yet on May 14<sup>th</sup> Wilson wrote a letter to Edward William Pou, Chairman of the Rules Committee, stating that he would approve of a Committee on Woman Suffrage in the House of Representatives. He wrote to Pou upon the request of Helen Hamilton Gardener, who wrote to Wilson on behalf of Catt. According to Gardener, this committee would give women a certain place “in the House of Representatives to which they may go freely with their problems and their pleas.”<sup>332</sup> Wilson underscored to Pou that Wilson’s involvement is “none of my business” but asserted that he believed “it would be a very wise act of public policy, and also an act of fairness to the best women who are engaged in the cause of woman suffrage.”<sup>333</sup>

The Committee on Rules considered the formation of a Committee on Woman Suffrage on May 18, 1917. Chairman Pou structured the one hour hearing into three parts: The NAWSA and the NWP were each allotted twenty minutes to speak in behalf of the proposed committee. The remaining twenty minutes was allotted to Congressman John E. Raker of California who presented House Resolution 12 as well as petitions from congressional members who were in favor of implementing the proposed committee. Raker argued that because the Committee on the Judiciary had been “overburdened,” it has not been able to give the issue of woman suffrage a proper hearing, for Raker averred, “the denial of the hearing is a denial of the right.” He found that woman suffrage was “of sufficient importance to merit the most painstaking and careful

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<sup>329</sup>Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt to Wilson, 7 May 1917, *PWW*, 42:237.

<sup>330</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 118.

<sup>331</sup>Baker, ed., vol. 6, *Woodrow Wilson*, 67.

<sup>332</sup>Helen Hamilton Gardener to Wilson, 10 May 1917, *PWW*, 42:269-270.

<sup>333</sup>Wilson to Edward William Pou, 14 May 1917, *PWW*, 42:293.

consideration.” He yielded time to Jeanette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress, who argued that the state-by-state approach to campaigning for woman suffrage was not efficacious. Each state had its own legislative time-table; for example, New Mexico only held a constitutional convention every twenty-five years. She argued that a U.S. congressional committee on woman suffrage needed to weigh these special considerations of state versus federal constitutional change in light of the various state impediments to constitutional amendments. Next, the NAWSA presented their arguments. Maud Wood Park read a letter from Catt, who could not attend because of her work on the Women’s Committee. Park mentioned that four of the nine members of the Women’s Committee were members of the NAWSA. Catt, in her letter, dated April 10, 1917 and addressed to Champ Clark, the speaker of the House of Representatives, impressed upon him that disfranchisement has had a demoralizing effect on women’s civic spiritedness, especially in wartime.

Our Republic stands upon the threshold of what may prove the severest test of loyalty and endurance our country has ever had. It needs its women: and they are ready – as fearless, as willing, as able, as loyal as any women of the world.

. . . You will realize that our women will feel a less exalted patriotism, a less unselfish spirit of devotion, a less spontaneous desire to serve if they are forced to carry a conviction that the monarchies of the world have been more just to their women citizens than this Republic has been to us.<sup>334</sup>

Catt is absent from the hearings because of prior engagements mobilizing women in the war effort; this absence served to alert the legislators of the connection between woman suffrage and women’s war service. By occupying this dual role as a civil rights leader and as a war activity organizer, Catt effectively conveys to Congress the civic value of women’s services. Helen Hamilton Gardener read a letter, dated May 18, 1917 to the Committee on Rules, from Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, Catt’s predecessor in the NAWSA and chairman of the Women’s Committee. In this letter, Shaw asked for reciprocity. While women suffragists devoted their energy toward the

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<sup>334</sup>Catt, as stated in the House Committee on Rules, *Creating a Committee on Woman Suffrage*, 12.

war effort, Shaw felt it was incumbent upon the legislature to accommodate their requests for this special committee. “We want to respond, whole-heartedly, to our Nation’s call. We can do this far more fully, far more happily, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, if you show at the same time a willingness to meet our needs in so far as they may be met by this single bit of legislative machinery, a Committee on Woman Suffrage in the House of Representatives such as we have in the Senate.”<sup>335</sup> These suffragists underscored the value of their civic capacity in time of war thereby proving their worthiness for the franchise. The creation of the Woman Suffrage Committee would be a promising advance toward woman suffrage; in this way, the government could eventually vest women with the vote in order to secure women’s full-spirited devotion to the vitality of the nation in time of war. Curiously, contrary to its stance on women’s involvement in the war effort, the National Woman’s Party also cited, in this instance, women’s war service as a justification to the franchise; however, the NWP had shown women in a more resigned light: Maud Younger stated, “the sufferings of war fall heavily upon women.” Additionally, while the NAWSA was willing to approach legislative change with a measured but sure pace, Younger divulged the NWP’s impatience with the legislative process and demanded immediate passage of the federal amendment.<sup>336</sup>

A month after the hearings, Gardener wrote Wilson again requesting that he speak with Representatives Glass and Heflin who might be adverse to this measure. She pointed out that not allowing this measure for women would reflect poorly on the ideals of the Democratic Party in relation to America’s aims in the war. She asked Wilson to “add the powerful weight of your influence in securing either cooperation or silence from one or both.”<sup>337</sup> Wilson obliged and

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<sup>335</sup>Shaw, as cited in the House Committee on Rules, *Creating A Committee On Woman Suffrage*, 13-14.

<sup>336</sup>Maud Younger, as cited in the House Committee on Rules, *Creating A Committee On Woman Suffrage*, 17. Younger was not “interested in any mere vote which might come from the suffrage committee (p.17).”

<sup>337</sup>Helen Hamilton Gardener to Wilson, 10 June 1917, *PWW*, 42:474, 475.

wrote to Heflin again requesting that he “and others in Congress who feel like [him] would consent to the constitution of a special committee.”<sup>338</sup> On September 24, the House voted 180 to 107 in favor of establishing the committee.<sup>339</sup> So Wilson was not yet ready to endorse the federal amendment; however, he was accommodating to the NAWSA’s requests toward organizing this congressional committee.

Wilson’s gradual change of mind toward suffrage may have partly resulted from his acknowledgment of women who aided the military during the Civil War as well. On May 12, 1917, Wilson gave a speech at the Red Cross Building which was dedicated to women who cared for wounded soldiers during the Civil War. In his speech he drew attention to the need for donations to the Red Cross for U.S. involvement in the Great War. Wilson compared the enormity of the latter war to the smaller scale war a half-century ago.<sup>340</sup>

Because women were not combatants in the Great War, the military only sought women who had technical skills. The Army and the Navy each had the Nurse Corps. In the Navy, women also served as technicians: they were “radio electricians, drafters, fingerprint experts, translators, camouflage designers, and recruiters . . . [they] assembled torpedos [sic] . . . [they] worked with intelligence units.”<sup>341</sup> According to De Pauw, women in the Navy and the Marines (exclusive of the Nurse Corps) had complete military status.<sup>342</sup> The military preferred skilled women over unskilled men to fill these positions. In November, General Pershing of the U.S. Army recruited women without permission – to ensure that he would obtain female and not male recruits (hence unfortunately the precarious status of these women when they filed for veteran’s

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<sup>338</sup>Wilson to James Thomas Heflin, 13 June 1917, *PWW*, 42:497.

<sup>339</sup>Editors’ discursive note to the letter from Edward William Pou to Wilson, 17 May 1917, *PWW*, 42:321n.1.

<sup>340</sup>Hart, ed., *Selected Addresses*, 202-204.

<sup>341</sup>Linda Grant De Pauw, *Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women In War From Prehistory To The Present* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 225-228.

<sup>342</sup>On the contrary, Colonel Palmer stated that the Army Nurse Corps was “strictly in the Army.” See Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War*, vol. 1 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1931), 318.

benefits.) He ‘recruited’ a small number of qualified women switchboard operators who were fluent in French for the Signal Corps – they served in the war zone. After the Armistice, the military and the public greatly praised them for their work.<sup>343</sup>

Public morale was integral to the war effort as well. Wilson’s executive order of April 14, 1917 established the Committee of Public Information, for which George Creel was chairman. In his report to the President on June 1, 1919, Creel stated the mission of this committee,

The primary purpose was to drive home the absolute justice of America’s cause, the absolute selflessness of America’s aims.

Realizing that public opinion as a vital part of the national defense, a mighty force in the national attack, our task was to devise machinery with which to make the fight for loyalty and unity at home, and for the friendship and understanding of the neutral nations of the world.<sup>344</sup>

One aspect of the dissemination of “educational and informational” publicity was the mobilization of artists, from whom the committee obtained 1,438 drawings.<sup>345</sup> This Committee created two divisions which may have ultimately promoted woman suffrage: the Division of Women’s War Work, with Clara Sears Taylor as director, on November 1, 1917 and the Division of Pictorial Publicity, created on April 17, 1917, with the artist Charles Dana Gibson as chairman. As for the Division of Women’s War Work, with the goal of “informing and energizing the women of the country, keeping in touch with the various women’s groups, sending out material, and giving impetus to all movements connected with the work of American women in the war,” the division furnished 250 pictures to periodicals across the nation of “women actively engaged in war work.”<sup>346</sup> The Division of Pictorial Publicity emphasized “building the morale, arousing the spiritual forces of the Nation, and stimulating the war will of

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<sup>343</sup>De Pauw, *Battle Cries*, 225-228.

<sup>344</sup>United States. Committee on Public Information. *The Creel Report: Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information, 1917:1918:1919*, Civil Liberties in American History, ed. Leonard W. Levy (1920; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 1.

<sup>345</sup>United States. Committee on Public Information, *The Creel Report*, 1, 3.

<sup>346</sup>United States. Committee on Public Information, *The Creel Report*, 75-76, 76.

the people.”<sup>347</sup> The Committee placed high importance on this division, for it demanded “the *best posters ever drawn* [italics of Creel].”<sup>348</sup> General Pershing, who, as aforementioned, took the liberty of independently recruiting specially-skilled women, cabled for the services of this division, although the Report does not indicate the particular pictures drawn thereof.<sup>349</sup> As shown in Figure 1, the November 10, 1917 issue of *Brooklyn Magazine* contains a picture that depicts a sympathetic Uncle Sam, whose arm sleeve states ‘Public Opinion,’ telling a young and eager Red Cross Nurse, whose arm sleeve states ‘American Womanhood,’ “If You Are Good Enough For War You Are Good Enough to Vote.”<sup>350</sup> The artist William C. Morris (1874-1940), who is most notable for his political cartoons, drew this picture.<sup>351</sup> Unfortunately, Creel’s Report does not mention Morris as a contributing artist nor does it address woman suffrage as a war measure; however, the aforementioned circumstances surrounding the theme and timing of the publication of this picture does point toward Morris as an artist working for Creel’s Committee. Moreover, as shown in Wilson’s presidential papers, Creel sympathized with the woman suffrage movement and advocated for the NAWSA. Furthermore, recognizing the ubiquity of cartoons in the media, the Committee did create the Bureau of Cartoons on May 28, 1918, “to mobilize and direct the scattered cartoon power of the country for constructive war work,” which transmitted

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<sup>347</sup>United States. Committee on Public Information, *The Creel Report*, 40.

<sup>348</sup>United States. Committee of Public Information, *The Creel Report*, 40.

<sup>349</sup>United States. Committee of Public Information, *The Creel Report*, 43.

<sup>350</sup>This drawing, which was published in *Brooklyn Magazine* and is held at the Library of Congress, mysteriously bears a stamp of the Archives of Contemporary History and Journalism in Munich. The Committee held offices worldwide (see Creel’s Report) and perhaps the Germans obtained this drawing, on the war front, or by espionage, as American internal propaganda. Additionally, the representation of a Red Cross nurse may have been of particular interest to the Germans because, on October 13, 1915, the German Military Court sentenced an English Red Cross nurse, Edith Cavell, to execution because she allegedly aided the transport of English and Belgium men into Holland. “[Her execution] engendered greater indignation throughout the world than any atrocity except the sinking of the *Lusitania*.” See George J. Hecht, ed., *The War in Cartoons*, The Garland Library of War and Peace, with and introduction by Charles Chatfield (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1971), 30.

<sup>351</sup>Morris drew cartoons for national newspapers and magazines during the first half of the twentieth century. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt praised Morris for his work. I found biographical information on Morris in the finding aid of his collection on the Web site of The University of New Mexico, University Libraries, Center for Southwest Research, “Inventory of the W.C. Morris Papers, 1904-1948,” <http://rmoa.unm.edu/docviewer.php?docID=nmulmss280bc.xml> (accessed October 23, 2007).



cartoons to various government departments, one of which was the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense.



Figure 1. A drawing of a Red Cross Nurse and Uncle Sam, 1917.  
This illustration depicts the civic value of women's war service.<sup>352</sup>

<sup>352</sup>William C. Morris, *If You Are Good Enough For War You Are Good Enough to Vote*, printed in *Brooklyn Magazine*, November 10, 1917, reproduced from the collections of the Library of Congress.

Military officers found that women's most valuable war service was nursing. Colonel Frederick Palmer, who served on the Western Front during the war, compiled the personal papers of the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, and interpreted them into narrative form. Palmer particularly extolled the Army Nurse Corps, with Dora E. Thompson as superintendent. Palmer referred to Army nurses as a disciplined, elite group of women, 800 of whom were sent to France before General Pershing of the Army had arrived. These Army nurses worked at British hospitals and rendered their services to the fallen soldiers at the Passchendale battle.<sup>353</sup> Palmer did not reserve his praise only for the Army Nurse Corps: he gave accolades to all women who contributed to the war effort. With reference to Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and the Women's Division of the Council of National Defense, and the Woman's War Work Division of the Committee on Public Information, Palmer championed women's rights by stating, "If the importance of temperance for the soldiers had been a factor in the Congress's passing the Prohibition Act, so *women's part in the War had won the final battle for woman suffrage* [italics mine]."<sup>354</sup> Even Baker proffered his political stand when he presented a speech to the NAWSA, during which he said that the political positioning of the genders had metamorphosed since 1789, "[This country] cannot speak of itself as a democracy unless all the men and women who live under the administration of that government and those institutions are recognized and represented in the Government."<sup>355</sup> As shown in Figure 2, a photograph of the Women's Committee, which included Baker's wife, the NAWSA suffrage leaders Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt sat at the forefront which was telling of their formidable position in

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<sup>353</sup>Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War*, vol. I (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1931), 318-320.

<sup>354</sup>Palmer, vol. 2, *Newton D. Baker*, 34.

<sup>355</sup>Baker, as cited in Palmer, vol. 2, *Newton D. Baker*, 34, 35.

their fight for woman suffrage. To continue, Baker averred the dependency of the nation on women's war service,

If all the women in America were to stop tonight doing the things that they are doing, and making the sacrifices and contributions they are making toward the conduct of this war, we should have to withdraw from the War. We should at least have to withdraw until we could bring about the entire reorganization of our social and industrial structure.<sup>356</sup>

Nonetheless, Palmer espoused a gendered division of labor. "To speak of woman's work in the War is to speak of her as doing men's work of all kinds except in combat. Welfare work was her shining role. If it took her to France, then she became heroic, and envied by her sisters."<sup>357</sup> Note that women in or near the heat of the battle were deemed heroines, despite the fact that they did not wield the rifle. Yet Palmer praised all manner of women's war work and regarded them with inclusive sentiment, "The woman at the lathe, the woman making shells or gas masks, or in any one of a hundred unaccustomed occupations, just the woman of toil – she was the dough-girl of our part of the war."<sup>358</sup> The Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, exhorted, "all of our women must do their part if this war is to be brought to a successful conclusion."<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>356</sup>Baker, as cited in Palmer, vol. 2, *Newton D. Baker*, 35.

<sup>357</sup>Palmer, vol. 2, *Newton D. Baker*, 35.

<sup>358</sup>Palmer, vol. 2, *Newton D. Baker*, 36.

<sup>359</sup>Daniels, as cited in Clarke, *American Women*, under "Chapter 1: Introductory."



WOMAN'S COMMITTEE, COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

*Left to right:* Miss Maude Wetmore, Mrs. J. E. Cowles, Miss Ida M. Tarbell, Mrs. Stanley McCormick, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, Mrs. Newton D. Baker, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, Mrs. J. R. Lamar, Mrs. Philip N. Moore.

Figure 2. A photo of the Woman's Committee, Council of National Defense, c. 1917. Note that NAWSA suffrage leaders Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt sat at the forefront.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>360</sup>Photograph, "Woman's Committee, Council Of National Defense," in Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War*, vol. 2 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1931), on the page after 34.

The twenty-first Annual Convention of the American Nurses' Association was held on May 7-11, 1918 at The Hotel Hollenden in Cleveland, Ohio. The speakers debated over the role of nurses during the war. Communicable diseases, such as influenza, were spreading because of the congestion of laborers working at industrial plants that manufactured war-time materials. The subject of pervasive influenza engendered the debate over whether to send nurses to France or to keep them on the domestic front as public health nurses. While the President of the National Organization of Public Health Nursing, Mary Beard, R.N., sided with the new policy of the War Council of the Red Cross to keep public health nurses at home, Lieutenant Colonel Winford H. Smith, played tug-of-war with Beard when he exclaimed, "In the present emergency, we are faced with the necessity of supplying nursing care to our soldiers, and it must be supplied at no matter what the sacrifice. . . . The nurses already in the service are doing splendid work and cannot be praised too highly."<sup>361</sup> In fact, Lieutenant Colonel Smith stated that the military would need another 30, 000 nurses through 1919.<sup>362</sup>

Service born out of patriotism is almost as important as the nurses' skills or training itself. The Superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps, Dora E. Thompson, R.N., exhorted, "Nurses should enter the service imbued with the idea of giving themselves up absolutely to the service with a real desire to do their very best. . . . there has never been any reason to doubt the patriotism of our nurses."<sup>363</sup> Nursing embodied the idea of womanhood (as seen in Figure 1.). Jane E. Delano, R.N., Director of the Department of Nursing, the American Red Cross, perpetuated the idea of gendered boundaries even on the war front, "[Nurses] represent the womanhood of this country in the service of the soldiers, and that it is for the womanhood of the

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<sup>361</sup>"Proceedings of the Twenty-First Annual Convention of the American Nurses' Association," *The American Journal of Nursing* 18 (August 1918): 967-968; Lieutenant Colonel Smith, as cited in "Proceedings," *The American Journal of Nursing*, 980.

<sup>362</sup>"Proceedings, *The American Journal of Nursing*, 983.

<sup>363</sup>Thompson, cited in "Proceedings," *The American Journal of Nursing*, 1060.

country to stand back of it.”<sup>364</sup> Nonetheless, patriotism applied to both genders. Delano stated, in tribute to the Red Cross nurses who died in Europe since 1914, “I feel that it is a great honor to give your life for your country, if you give it in service.”<sup>365</sup> Mary A. Nutting, R.N., Chairman of the Committee on Nursing, of the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, told of the role public opinion played as to whether a qualified nurse would go to France or remain in the U.S. as a public health nurse. Serving in France was the more glorious course to follow and the public held the same standard to able-bodied women as they did to able-bodied men: women were expected to courageously serve abroad. For a qualified nurse to serve on the home-front was almost perceived as an act of cowardice. Nutting suggested that nurses, for whom their superiors determined that they would serve their country better at home as public health nurses than in France, should wear a chevron on their arm sleeves as an indicator of their wish to otherwise serve abroad. Nutting assured the retained nurses, “If you wear the chevron it explains why you are not on the front. All the country is looking to you with the greatest possible affection and with the greatest possible confidence.”<sup>366</sup> Indeed, in 1914, at the New York harbor, “tugs, merchantmen, and battle ships alike saluted” a Red Cross ship which held 150 nurses bound for Europe.<sup>367</sup>

Finally, the American Nurses Association, The National League of Nursing Education and the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, as their first resolution, urged Wilson to pass the woman suffrage amendment. However, they premised this resolution not on their war service but on natural rights theory.

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<sup>364</sup>Delano, as cited in “Proceedings,” *The American Journal of Nursing*, 1066.

<sup>365</sup>Delano, as cited in “Proceedings,” *The American Journal of Nursing*, 1072, 1073.

<sup>366</sup>Nutting, as cited in “Proceedings,” *The American Journal of Nursing*, 1076. The Committee on Nursing was created on June 24, 1917. The purpose of this committee was to increase the number of nurses in civil hospitals as well as to assist the Red Cross in recruiting additional nurses for the military (p. 1077).

<sup>367</sup>Delano, as cited in “Proceedings,” *The American Journal of Nursing*, 1065.

Resolved, That a message be sent to the President of the United States, urging him to use his powers of leadership in behalf of the women of the country, by bringing the members of the National Legislature to a realization that a democracy cannot consistently discriminate between the man and woman citizen, and asking him to see that the right to vote be granted to women.<sup>368</sup>

Woman suffrage was not a common argument during the Convention, if the topic was discussed at all. Again, actively agitating for suffrage whilst they contributed to the war effort would have conveyed ignobility on the part of the nurses. They did not want to appear that they served out of anticipation for any reward. Rather, they served solely out of pride and patriotism for their country. Catt, who acted remotely from the nursing divisions, was in a better position to endeavor toward the passage of the federal amendment, by citing women's patriotic war service. In sum, women had secured a quid pro quo relationship with the state, a relationship that acknowledged women's civic capacity.

The Woman Suffrage Party of New York (an affiliation of the NAWSA) visited Wilson in October and asked him to urge New York voters to vote for women's full enfranchisement on Election Day.<sup>369</sup> Voter concern for the war itself had overshadowed the concern for suffrage. This delegation wanted Wilson to explain to the voters that the two were inseparable. The spokeswoman for the delegation, Vira Boarman Whitehouse, stated that the women of New York

are ready to give – they are now giving – the very support to this country which has led the statesmen of our Allies to declare that the war could not be carried on without such active support on the part of the women. It is recognized that under these new conditions Woman Suffrage has become not only a question of justice, but one of expediency. . . . This is the experience of our allies who have been in the war almost three years longer than we.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>368</sup>“Proceedings,” *The American Journal of Nursing*, 1097.

<sup>369</sup>Catt founded and assumed leadership of the New York State Woman Suffrage Party of New York in 1915. See Robert Booth Fowler, *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 28-29.

<sup>370</sup>An Address to the President by Vira Boarman Whitehouse, 25 October, 1917, *PWW*, 44:441.



This passage illustrates how women could benefit civically when living in a nation during a time of national emergency, contingent upon the effective advocacy of an influential leader.

Wilson agreed with the delegation and replied to the male voters of New York, “. . . just because we are quickened by the questions of this war, we ought to be quickened to give this question of woman suffrage our immediate consideration.”<sup>371</sup> He noted that the nation recently had been “depending upon the women . . . for suggestions of service, which have been rendered in abundance and with distinction and originality.”<sup>372</sup> This situation serves as another example of how Wilson is reminded of the need to endorse the federal amendment based on women’s contributions to the war effort.

Women obtained full enfranchisement in New York by an “immense majority.”<sup>373</sup> The suffragists believed that this victory eventually led the way to the passage of the federal amendment in the U.S. Congress. Moreover, they also believed that they won this majority in New York because of their contribution to the war effort. Not only was Wilson’s speech an influence on the male voters of New York, but also “the actual conscription of all women over sixteen years of age by the Governor, proved that not only were women capable of war service but liable for it.”<sup>374</sup>

The NAWSA made significant strides in the advancement of the right to vote since the military preparedness measures; by 1918 women won full enfranchisement in New York and in six additional states women obtained federal enfranchisement.<sup>375</sup> Yet from 1913 to 1919, the militant suffrage movement – the National Woman’s Party – aimed to make itself a thorn in

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<sup>371</sup>A Reply from Wilson, 25 October 1917, *PWW*, 44:442.

<sup>372</sup>A Reply from Wilson, 25 October 1917, *PWW*, 44:442.

<sup>373</sup>Ida Husted Harper, vol. 5, *History of Woman Suffrage* (1922; reprint, New York: Arno & The New York Times, 1969), xxiii (hereinafter cited as *HWS*).

<sup>374</sup>Harper, vol. 5, *HWS*, 737.

<sup>375</sup>Doris Weatherford, *A History of the American Suffragist Movement*, with a forward by Geraldine Ferraro (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1998), 249.

Wilson's side. The NWP was "the first organized militant political action in America."<sup>376</sup> Instead of using diplomacy, they picketed in front of the White House in order to force him to officially endorse the federal amendment. Wilson stated in a personal letter, "I fear that what these ladies are doing is doing [sic] a very great deal of damage to the cause they are trying to promote. That they are deeply mistaken I believe the whole country thinks, but that should not lead us to irregular action ourselves."<sup>377</sup> In a November 9<sup>th</sup> letter to Wilson, the director of the Committee on Public Information, George Creel, advised the President against meeting with the militant suffragists to discuss the federal amendment. "May I advise against such an audience and if you agree with me will you suggest form of refusal. Mrs. Catt and Dr. Shaw [Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, former president of the NAWSA] speak for equal suffrage in the nation, and the Congressional Union [also known as the National Woman's Party] is without standing and deserves no recognition."<sup>378</sup> This statement signifies the trust that the Wilson administration had developed with the NAWSA, a diplomatic and accommodating organization. Wilson followed Creel's advice. Creel's statement could also signify a political power struggle between the parties. While the NAWSA was bipartisan,<sup>379</sup> the militant suffragists sided against the Democrats. Doris Stevens, a militant suffragist prisoner who later wrote *Jailed for Freedom*, included a chapter, "Republican Congress Passes Amendment."<sup>380</sup> In this chapter she stated, ". . . our attack upon the party in power, which happened to be President Wilson's party, had been the most decisive factor in stimulating the opposition party to espouse our side."<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>376</sup>Doris Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1920; reprint, Salem, NH: Ayer Company, Publishers, Inc., 1990), vii (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>377</sup>Wilson to Dee Richardson, a concerned federal civil servant who wrote to cabinet members frequently, 25 July 1917, *PWW*, 43:272, 273.

<sup>378</sup>George Creel to Wilson, with Enclosure, 9 November 1917, *PWW*, 44:551.

<sup>379</sup>Morgan, *Suffragists and Democrats*, 90.

<sup>380</sup>Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 341-343.

<sup>381</sup>Stevens, *Jailed for Freedom*, 342.

Yet according to the commissioner of the District of Columbia, Louis Brownlow, Wilson was adamant about not imprisoning the picketers. He wanted them to have as little publicity as possible. Nonetheless, the other members of the administration wanted the picketers arrested because, especially in reference to one occasion, they were deliberately embarrassing the President when he was receiving ambassadors from the Allied powers; the suffrage militants displayed a “Kaiser Wilson” banner near the White House.<sup>382</sup> Brownlow arrested them on July 15, 1917. According to Brownlow, “Mr. Wilson was highly indignant. He told me that we had made a fearful blunder, that we never ought to have indulged these women in their desire for arrest and martyrdom, and that he had pardoned them and wanted that to end it.”<sup>383</sup> Brownlow continued to dispute Wilson as to his policy. Brownlow asserted that as commissioner he had to take responsibility for controlling the continuous activities of the picketers. After defending his reasons, Brownlow wrote of Wilson, “There were a few seconds of silence and then the President said, with more sorrow than anger in his voice, ‘The blood be on your head!’”<sup>384</sup> According to a November 9 report of the prisoners by William Gwynn Gardiner, an attorney and a commissioner for the District of Columbia, while Alice Paul was in the District Jail, she claimed that she was a political prisoner. In order to maintain international recognition as a political prisoner, she had to go on a hunger strike. Yet Wilson did not appear to be apprehensive about the contents of this report.<sup>385</sup> Brownlow recorded that the NWP believed that its methods led to federal enfranchisement. Yet Brownlow claimed, “I am equally convinced that they are wrong and that women were given the vote because of the wise and

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<sup>382</sup>Louis Brownlow, *A Passion For Anonymity, second half* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 77-79.

<sup>383</sup>Brownlow, *A Passion For Anonymity*, 77-79.

<sup>384</sup>Brownlow, *A Passion For Anonymity*, 77-79.

<sup>385</sup>Wilson to Joseph Patrick Tumulty, Wilson’s private secretary, with Enclosure, circa 10 November 1917, *PWW*, 44:559-561, 562n.1; Enclosure: letter from William Gwynn Gardiner, 9 November 1917, *PWW*, 44:559-561, 562n.1.

statesmanlike leadership of Mrs. Catt, Dr. Shaw, Mrs. Park, Mrs. Gardener, and other leaders of the National American Woman's Suffrage Association."<sup>386</sup>

According to Sally Hunter Graham, Alice Paul made a bargain with David Lawrence, assumed to be a White House envoy, in the third week of November, to end the picketing if Congress would pass the federal amendment by 1919. She was released from prison on November 28, 1917. In January, Wilson officially announced his support for the federal amendment.<sup>387</sup> Graham implies that Wilson announced this endorsement as a direct result of this supposed bargain. The genuineness of this meeting was controvertible. Minnie Bronson, General Secretary of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, read of this occurrence in a socialist periodical, the December 18, 1917 *Milwaukee Leader*. Bronson then "publicly questioned the truth of" Maud Younger's narration of the meeting based on Wilson's disavowal thereof. Yet Bronson eventually accepted the credibility of Paul's and Lawrence's supposed interaction when the House voted in favor of the federal amendment in January, which was coincidentally bargained for in the alleged meeting. Consequently, on January 25, 1918, Bronson wrote a letter of recantation to Paul.<sup>388</sup> Although this letter does not authenticate this meeting between Paul and Lawrence, it is possible that an official in Wilson's administration (not Wilson himself), who knew that the House would vote in favor of the federal amendment despite the militancy, sent an envoy to bargain with Paul in order to placate the militants in the meantime. Indeed, other issues of national importance demanded women's enfranchisement.

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<sup>386</sup>Brownlow, *A Passion For Anonymity*, 81-82.

<sup>387</sup>Graham, "Woodrow Wilson, Alice Paul," 677-678.

<sup>388</sup>Minnie Bronson, Washington, D.C., to Alice Paul, Washington, D.C., 25 January 1918, on microfilm in the National Woman's Party Papers: The Suffrage Years, 1913-1920, Reel 56, item 0310. The National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, as stated in its letterhead, was "against Woman Suffrage, Feminism and Socialism." *The New York Times*, on January 26, 1918, reported that Bronson had labeled the "Alice Paul story" as a "canard" but had recently apologized to Paul and accepted the story as genuine.

Economic issues came to the fore that may have been a factor in prompting Wilson to officially endorse the federal amendment. Royal Meeker of the Bureau of Labor Statistics wrote to Wilson regarding the state of labor economics particularly in relation to the war effort, on November 27. He found it crucial to investigate the “extent and possibilities of the substitution of female labor for male labor in our principle industries.”<sup>389</sup> He had been receiving questions from the general public as to policy on replacing men with women – businesses had been complaining about the low availability of labor. Meeker asserts, “The labor of fighting the Germans face to face is no whit more important than any other labor in the great industry of beating the Germans, though it is undoubtedly more dangerous. . . I feel if we are to win this war we must lay down a definite labor policy immediately and adhere to it rigorously.”<sup>390</sup> This dilemma underscored the critical need for women’s services in the war effort – again this would prompt the issue of the federal amendment for woman suffrage. Yet Wilson did not act upon Meeker’s advice in his usual timely manner. He discussed Meeker’s letter to the Secretary of Labor, William B. Wilson, on January 10, 1918, upon his return from a trip.<sup>391</sup> President Wilson already gave his announcement of his endorsement on the preceding day.

Also, intervening addresses by the members of the NAWSA during House congressional hearings swayed Wilson to endorse woman suffrage. On January 9, Wilson met with “Democratic members of the Suffrage Committee of the House of Representatives.”<sup>392</sup> They discussed the suffrage question. Then Wilson wrote out a statement, ultimately to be given to the press. The language represented his usual style of not appearing aggressively manipulative of

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<sup>389</sup>Royal Meeker to Wilson, 27 November 1917, *PWW*, 45:132, 133.

<sup>390</sup>Royal Meeker to Wilson, 27 November 1917, *PWW*, 45:132, 133, 133n.1.

<sup>391</sup>Editors’ discursive note to the correspondence from Royal Meeker to Wilson, 27 November 1917, *PWW*, 45:134n.3.

<sup>392</sup>A statement “written from Washington” that was printed in the January 10, 1918 *New York Times*, 9 January 1918, *PWW*, 45:545n.1. This suffrage committee had been implemented by means of the NAWSA’s request to Wilson in May 1917.

congressional affairs. It read, “when we sought his advice he very frankly and earnestly advised us to vote for the amendment as an act of right and justice to the women of the country and of the world.”<sup>393</sup> The next day Jeanette Rankin, the first female representative in Congress, began the debate in the House of Representatives to pass the amendment (the date for the vote was determined in December.)<sup>394</sup> It passed with 274 ayes and 136 nays; it passed with an extremely narrow margin – by one vote. It only passed because five representatives who were ill had shown up to vote despite their physical pain.<sup>395</sup>

These hearings before the House Suffrage Committee occurred from January 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>396</sup> Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, as honorary president of the NAWSA, addressed this committee by primarily referencing women’s war service. To deflect the popular accusation that suffragists had German sympathies, Dr. Shaw reasoned that Wilson and the other Department members would not have bestowed upon the NAWSA the opportunity to organize women’s war services, with Dr. Shaw as the Chairman of the Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense, if these government officials did not hold the NAWSA’s patriotism in high esteem. In fact, Dr. Shaw saw woman suffrage and war service as indivisible. Dr. Shaw eloquently stated in her last address before a congressional committee:<sup>397</sup>

To fail to ask for the suffrage amendment at this time would be treason to the fundamental cause for which we, as a nation, have entered a war. President Wilson has declared that “we are at war because of that which is dearest to our hearts – democracy; that those who submit to authority shall have a voice in the Government.” If this is the basic reason for entering the war, then for those of us who have striven for this amendment and for our freedom and democracy to yield today, to withdraw from the battle, would be to desert the men in the trenches and leave them to fight alone across the sea not only for democracy for the world but also for our own country. . . . The time of reconstruction will come and when it comes

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<sup>393</sup>Baker, ed., vol. 6, *Woodrow Wilson*, 458.

<sup>394</sup>Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 148. Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage*, 320.

<sup>395</sup>Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt*, 148.

<sup>396</sup>Harper reprinted excerpts of these hearings in vol. 5 of *HWS*. Members of the NWP addressed the committee, but their arguments are absent in *HWS*.

<sup>397</sup>Dr. Anna Howard Shaw died in 1919.

many women will have to be both father and mother to fatherless children, and these mothers and their children will have no representatives in this Government unless it is through the mothers who have given everything that it might be saved and democracy might be secured.<sup>398</sup>

This statement is reminiscent of feudalistic society wherein there was a direct tie between the holding of land and the obligation to fight on behalf of the king. Catt had made a strong argument for woman suffrage as well by citing a similar situation in Great Britain. She mentioned her experience during the beginning stages of the war when she listened to Mr. Asquith speak in the House of Commons. He had proclaimed his position against woman suffrage because women knew little about warfare. As the war progressed, however, he humbly arrived at the conclusion that Great Britain needed to draw on every reserve of energy in the war effort. Both men and women proffered their war services; consequently, he became an avid proponent of woman suffrage. Dr. Shaw and Catt's arguments harken back to Paulina Wright Davis's exhortation toward women to obtain a quid pro relationship with the state in order to win the franchise. Additionally, as with Davis, Catt saw the vote as protection of citizen status. By undergirding the NAWSA's standing, the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker and the Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels sent letters to this congressional committee urging the passage of woman suffrage. Furthermore, Catt, in spite of the anti-suffragists, challenged the chairman of the committee, John E. Raker of California, to request that Wilson state his position on woman suffrage. She was very confident that Wilson would respond favorably; after asking this task of the chairman, "it was apparent that she knew of Mr. Wilson's complete change of opinion and his intention to support the amendment. On January 9 Mr. Raker and eleven other members of

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<sup>398</sup>Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, as cited in Harper, vol. 5, *HWS*, 579.

the Lower House held a conference with the President and he urged the submission of the amendment.”<sup>399</sup>

Wilson sent a message to the French Union for Woman Suffrage, via Catt, on June 7, 1918. He stated, “The war could not have been fought without them, or its sacrifices endured. It is high time that some part of our debt of gratitude to them should be acknowledged and paid, and the only acknowledgement they ask is their admission to the suffrage. . . .”<sup>400</sup> Again, this statement spells plainly his developing position on suffrage as a reward for women’s war efforts as well as his trust in Catt in conveying this conviction.

On September 25, Creel suggested that Wilson give a speech before the Senate to endorse the federal amendment for the October 1 Senate vote. Creel stated, “I feel deeply that the passage of this Amendment is a war necessity for it will release the minds and energies of thousands of women for war work and war enthusiasm.”<sup>401</sup> Additionally, Creel divulged, “I feel deeply also that it is necessary to have the Administration receive full credit for its consistently courageous and friendly attitude.”<sup>402</sup> Probably in order to placate the Republicans, in Wilson’s address, he stated, “there is and can be no party issue involved in it.”<sup>403</sup> Perhaps Creel wanted the Administration to receive the credit in order to divert the public’s attention away from the suffrage militants as well as to point out the Democratic Party’s espousal of the federal suffrage amendment.

On September 29, Catt wrote to Wilson. She was concerned that a few Senators did not view suffrage as a war measure. Catt exclaimed, “Our country is asking women to give their all,

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<sup>399</sup>Harper, vol. 5, *HWS*, 583. Information on these congressional hearings is found in vol. 5 of *HWS*.

<sup>400</sup>Baker, ed., vol. 7, *Woodrow Wilson*, 199.

<sup>401</sup>George Creel to Wilson, first letter, 25 September 1918, *PWW*, 51:117-118.

<sup>402</sup>George Creel to Wilson, first letter, 25 September 1918, *PWW*, 51:118.

<sup>403</sup>Wilson’s Address to the Senate, 30 September 1918, *PWW*, 51:158.



and upon their voluntary and free offering may depend the outcome of the war.”<sup>404</sup> Catt related a conversation she had with a woman working in the Ordnance Department. The woman viewed suffrage as a war measure “Because it is an incentive to better and more work.”<sup>405</sup>

The next day Wilson gave a speech to the Senate. Probably in reference to the suffrage militants, in order to deny that he was not succumbing to their pressure tactics, he pointedly stressed that “the voices of foolish and intemperate agitators do not reach me at all.”<sup>406</sup> To continue, he eloquently states:

We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right? This war could not have been fought, either by the other nations engaged or by America, if it had not been for the services of the women, – services rendered in every sphere, – not merely in the fields of effort in which we have been accustomed to see them work, but wherever men have worked and upon the very skirts and edges of the battle itself. . . .

I propose it as I would propose to admit soldiers to the suffrage, the men fighting in the field of our liberties and the liberties of the world, were they excluded.<sup>407</sup>

Unfortunately the amendment did not pass the Senate; there were 62 yeas, “including pairs,” and 34 nays.<sup>408</sup> Yet “those suffragists who knew just what the President was doing knew that he was not only sincere but using the full extent of his influence with his party.”<sup>409</sup>

November 11, 1918 was Armistice Day, the end of the Great War. Yet Wilson continued to advocate for woman suffrage, not only as a reward for women’s services in the war effort, but also with party survival in mind. On November 29, 1918 Wilson wrote to Senator John Sharp Williams. Wilson observed, “. . . our party is the party that is preventing the adoption of the Federal Amendment. . . . I am going to take the liberty of asking you if you think that it is at all possible for you to lend your aid to the passage of the amendment. . . . the matter is one of great

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<sup>404</sup>Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt to Wilson, 29 September 1918, *PWW*, 51:155, 156, 157.

<sup>405</sup>Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt to Wilson, 29 September 1918, *PWW*, 51:155, 156, 157.

<sup>406</sup>Wilson’s Address to the Senate, 30 September 1918, *PWW*, 51:158, 159, 160, 161.

<sup>407</sup>Wilson’s Address to the Senate, 30 September 1918, *PWW*, 51:159, 160.

<sup>408</sup>Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage*, 496.

<sup>409</sup>Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage*, 325, 326.

anxiety to me.”<sup>410</sup> Wilson continued to commend women in the war effort. In the State of the Union Address on December 2, 1918, Wilson stated, “Their contribution to the great result is beyond appraisal. . . . The least tribute we can pay them is to make them the equals of men in political rights as they have proved themselves their equals . . . .”<sup>411</sup> Wilson praises, and wishes to reward, what would have been called unfeminine by nineteenth-century standards, women’s participatory activities in the public realm.

Still there seemed to have been a race between the two major parties as to which party could outvote the other party on the suffrage amendment. On January 11, 1919, Wilson’s secretary, Joseph Patrick Tumulty, informed the President, “Best information Moses of New Hampshire will vote for suffrage. This makes one Democratic vote all the more necessary.”<sup>412</sup> Wilson had been becoming increasingly distressed over the precarious status of the proposed federal amendment. The day before the February 10, 1919 vote in the Senate, Wilson sent a telegram to Lee Slater Overman and Senator Williams, “I hope that you will pardon me if I again express my deep anxiety about the vote on the Suffrage Amendment. It assumes a more important aspect every day, and the fortunes of our party are of such consequence at this particular turn in the world’s events that I take great liberty of again urging upon you favorable action.”<sup>413</sup> Nonetheless, the amendment did not pass the Senate.<sup>414</sup> Yet the amendment did pass the House and Senate in May and June of that year respectively.<sup>415</sup> In a message to Congress on May 20, 1919, a day before the vote in the House of Representatives, Wilson expressed, “I, for one, covet

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<sup>410</sup>Wilson to John Sharp Williams, 29 November 1918, *PWW*, 53:244.

<sup>411</sup>Wilson’s Annual Message on the State of the Union, 2 December 1918, *PWW*, 53:277.

<sup>412</sup>Joseph Patrick Tumulty to Wilson, 11 January, 1919, 1A.M., *PWW*, 53:717.

<sup>413</sup>Wilson to Lee Slater Overman, 9 February 1919, *PWW*, 55:37.

<sup>414</sup>Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage*, 496.

<sup>415</sup>Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage*, 496.

for our country the distinction of being among the first to act in a great reform.”<sup>416</sup> So Wilson continued to endorse the federal amendment even after the Armistice on November 11, 1918.

Not only did he endorse the federal amendment in Congress, he contacted the state governors and state legislators to urge its ratification, actions contrary to his stance in the 1916 election year during which he would not make “such an extraordinarily humble bow to expediency.”<sup>417</sup> On July 15, 1919, Wilson sent a telegram to Hugh Manson Dorsey, the Governor of Georgia, stating that “I believe that it is absolutely essential to the political future of the country that this Amendment should be passed, and absolutely essential to the fortunes of the Democratic Party that it should play a leading part in the support of this great reform.”<sup>418</sup> On September 2, 1919, Wilson sent a telegram to James Campbell Cantrill, a Democratic Congressman from Kentucky, calling upon the State Convention to include a plank to vote on woman suffrage. Wilson asserted, “It would serve mankind and the party by doing so.”<sup>419</sup> After recovering from his stroke, Wilson congratulated Catt for the eventual transformation of NAWSA into the League of Women Voters “to carry on the development of good citizenship and real democracy.”<sup>420</sup> An editorial comment in *The Papers Of Woodrow Wilson* speculates that Wilson’s “fervor” probably was born out of New Jersey’s ratification of the federal amendment.<sup>421</sup>

Analyzing the personalities of the leading political and social leaders is integral to understanding the course of events that led to suffrage. Brownlow offered his own insight in his autobiography, “. . . the fact that the President worked so cordially and intimately with the

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<sup>416</sup>Wilson’s Special Message to Congress, 20 May 1919, *PWW*, 59:296, 289-297.

<sup>417</sup>Wilson to Ellen Duane Davis, 5 August 1916, *PWW*, 37:529.

<sup>418</sup>Wilson to Hugh Manson Dorsey, 15 July 1919, *PWW*, 61:480, 481.

<sup>419</sup>Wilson to James Campbell Cantrill, 2 September 1919, *PWW*, 62:615.

<sup>420</sup>Wilson to Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt, 10 February 1920, *PWW*, 64:396.

<sup>421</sup>Wilson to Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt, 10 February 1920, *PWW*, 64:396, 396n.1.

leaders of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Dr. Shaw, Mrs. Catt, Mrs. Park, and Mrs. Gardener, infuriated the leaders of the Woman's party – Miss Paul and others. Miss Paul . . . had developed an appetite for jails and hunger strikes.”<sup>422</sup> For Catt, as president of the NAWSA, to maintain a cordial communication with Wilson during the suffrage movement shows perceptiveness and tact on her part. In a letter addressed to Catt on May 8, 1917, Wilson began, “You are always thoughtful and considerate, and I greatly value your generous attitude.”<sup>423</sup> In this instance, he was probably referring to Catt's request to endorse the federal amendment while she was also expressing an understanding that discussion over this matter might be inopportune at that time considering the imminent demands of planning for U.S. entry into the war. Wilson, who responded in a timely manner, agreed it was an inopportune time, but his tone was friendly, responsive, and polite. He held similar feelings toward other members of the NAWSA. Wilson paid a tribute to the late Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, former president of the NAWSA, on August 8, 1919, “When the war came, I saw her in action and she won my sincere admiration and homage.”<sup>424</sup> In contrast, Wilson's biographer, Kerney, in his penultimate chapter entitled “Party Disaster” describes Wilson's approach to his administrative affairs.

With the coming of increased power, he had walled himself in and completely departed from the old practice of common counsel. He was utterly deficient in gregarious instinct. “I rarely consult anybody,” he said in an interview with Ida Tarbell published in “*Collier's*” on October 28, 1916. Thus isolated, he found it easy to convince himself that he had devised the correct pattern of human behavior, and that those who differed with him were “blind and ignorant.” He had no patience with that part of the historical record that would seem to show that any progress that humanity has made through the ages has been painful and slow, and that progress of any permanent kind never comes at a gallop. No other leadership than his was permitted during his eight years in the White House. He had early made it plain that

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<sup>422</sup>Brownlow, *A Passion For Anonymity*, 76.

<sup>423</sup>Wilson to Carrie Clinton Lane Chapman Catt, second letter, 8 May 1917, *PWW*, 42:241.

<sup>424</sup>Wilson to Justina Leavitt Wilson, corresponding secretary at NAWSA, 8 August 1919, *PWW*, 62:225, 225n.1.

he was to do the guiding.<sup>425</sup>

After the war, the Democratic Party was concerned about the next presidential election. Wilson had suffered a near fatal cerebral stroke on October 4, 1919 and was not able to respond to his administrative duties for a period of time.<sup>426</sup> His wife, Mrs. Edith Wilson, despite her personal position against woman suffrage, nonetheless continued Wilson's work on the ratification of the federal amendment that passed Congress earlier that summer.<sup>427</sup> Wilson's neurologist, Dr. Francis C. Dercum, strongly advised Edith to serve as Wilson's intermediary during his convalescence. Dercum urged Edith to shield from Wilson affairs of state as much as possible, until he recovered. Edith determined which matters the various executive departments could resolve independently and which matters she deemed only the President should evaluate. In her memoirs, Edith asserted, "I, myself, never made a single decision regarding the disposition of public affairs. The only decision that was mine was what was important and what was not, and the *very* important decision of when to present matters to my husband."<sup>428</sup> Yet Kerney, who paid scant attention to the suffrage movement in his biography, said of Wilson, "his failure to follow through with a definite post-war domestic program, mired the Democracy."<sup>429</sup> The Republicans successfully instigated a war of propaganda toward the next presidential election. "There was never a political campaign more heavily laden with exaggeration. War-weary, and equally weary of the wrangling over peace, the voters swallowed the misstatements . . . and Cox [the 1920 Democratic presidential candidate] . . . was defeated by an electoral majority of 277

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<sup>425</sup>James Kerney, *The Political Education Of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: The Century Co., 1926), 452.

<sup>426</sup>Kerney, *The Political Education*, 429, 433.

<sup>427</sup>Anne M. Benjamin, *A History Of The Anti-Suffrage Movement In The United States From 1895 to 1920* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991), 224.

<sup>428</sup>Edith Bolling Wilson, *My Memoir* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1938, 1939), 288, 289.

<sup>429</sup>Kerney, *The Political Education*, 450-465, 450.

and a popular majority of more than seven millions.”<sup>430</sup> Governor James Cox of Ohio supported the federal amendment.<sup>431</sup>

The last months before the thirty-sixth state’s ratification of the amendment were rife with contention between the suffragists and the anti-suffragists. Anti-suffragist organizations had met in Tennessee. They warned the voting public that suffrage would “. . . add the undesirable, corrupt, and job hunting female politician to the ranks of the male . . .”<sup>432</sup> According to the Tennessee state constitution, the governor did not have the power to assemble the legislature. To the anti-suffragists’ dismay, however, Governor Albert Houston Roberts did so on July 17, 1920. The president of the Tennessee Division of the Southern Women’s League for the Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, Miss Josephine Pearson, exclaimed, “Mrs. Catt arrived. . . . Extra called session (sic) imminently by the Governor, our forces notified to gather at once.”<sup>433</sup> (The National Woman’s Party was present as well,<sup>434</sup> but the author Anne M. Benjamin does not indicate concern on the part of the anti-suffragists toward the National Woman’s Party.) The Democratic Party was contestable terrain between the suffragists and the anti-suffragists. Both Mrs. James S. Pinckard, president of the Southern Women’s League for the Rejection of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, who was also the grand niece of John C. Calhoun, and Catt sent correspondences to the Democratic presidential candidate, Governor James Cox of Ohio, in order to safeguard their respective political positions. While Mrs. Pinckard wanted to obviate the ratification of the woman suffrage amendment so as “to save the soul of the Democratic party and the White Civilization of Eleven Democratic States”<sup>435</sup> Catt was warning Cox about

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<sup>430</sup>Kerney, *The Political Education*, 457.

<sup>431</sup>Benjamin, *A History Of The Anti-Suffrage Movement*, 312, 313.

<sup>432</sup>‘protest,’ as cited in Benjamin, *A History Of The Anti-Suffrage Movement*, 310.

<sup>433</sup>Miss Josephine Pearson, as cited in Benjamin, *A History Of The Anti-Suffrage Movement*, 311.

<sup>434</sup>Flexner, *A Century of Struggle*, 335.

<sup>435</sup>Mrs. James S. Pinckard, as cited in Benjamin, *A History Of The Anti-Suffrage Movement*, 312.

“outsiders” who were actively working against ratification.<sup>436</sup> The state Senate ratified the amendment on August 13, 1920. On that day, Wilson sent a telegram to Seth M. Walker, the speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives, requesting that the state House “concur” with the amendment.<sup>437</sup> Walker sent a telegram the next day chastising Wilson for his intrusion, “You were too great to ask it and I do not believe that the men of Tennessee will surrender honest convictions for political expediency or harmony.”<sup>438</sup> Nonetheless, on August 18, the amendment passed the state House by a vote of fifty to forty-six. On August 19, Governor Roberts sent a telegram to Wilson requesting he send to the state legislature a “congratulatory message” to ennoble the suffragists because Roberts wanted “to prevent reconsideration of vote of ratification.”<sup>439</sup> Walker was not able to garner enough support for a re-vote. Still, soon afterwards, anti-suffragists prevented Governor Roberts from certifying the ratification. Yet on August 24, the state Supreme Court nullified the order of the lower court, thus allowing Roberts to finally certify the ratification.<sup>440</sup> On August 26, 1920, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the Proclamation.<sup>441</sup> Catt helped to ensure the safe standing of the Nineteenth Amendment in February 1922 “when the United States Supreme Court handed down the second of two decisions upholding the Nineteenth Amendment against further challenge.”<sup>442</sup>

So women gained the right to vote because they sought it during a time of war. These two factors combined were indispensable: the suffrage movement suspended women’s rights activism during the Civil War because the suffragists focused solely on the war effort. By the Great War, however, women’s war efforts were rewarded with their enfranchisement by means

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<sup>436</sup>Catt, as cited in Benjamin, *A History Of The Anti-Suffrage Movement*, 312.

<sup>437</sup>Wilson to Seth M. Walker, 13 August 1920, *PWW*, 66:30, 30n.1.

<sup>438</sup>Seth M. Walker to Wilson, 14 August 1920, *PWW*, 66:35.

<sup>439</sup>Albert Houston Roberts to Wilson, 19 August 1920, *PWW*, 66:54, 54n.1.

<sup>440</sup>Albert Houston Roberts to Wilson, 19 August 1920, *PWW*, 66:54, 54n.1.

<sup>441</sup>Catt and Shuler, *Woman Suffrage*, 455.

<sup>442</sup>Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, 337.

of a diplomatic and effective suffrage movement on the part of the NAWSA. The executive and legislative branches determined, with the conscientious prodding of the suffragists, that women were indeed capable of having a vested stake in society; women deserved the privilege of the vote. Conversely, without the aggravating impact of a war, women probably could not have proven a strength in civic capacity that would be worthy of the vote. Yet in this context, the militant actions of the NWP did not display a vested stake in society: on the contrary, their intent was to be as burdensome as possible. In contrast, Catt nicely articulated the connection between woman suffrage and the economic and political necessities of the women's war effort to an increasingly receptive wartime president. Isenberg's discussion of antebellum citizenship corresponds to that of the early twentieth century: in alignment with the 1789 Constitution which recognizes enfranchisement as a vested right, wartime recognition of the civic capacity for military service, or service in the war effort, behooved the "disabled caste" to act accordingly – to obtain a political relationship with the state.<sup>443</sup> In addition, the administration's need to keep the Democratic Party in power became another motive for Wilson to vigorously endorse the federal amendment, particularly after the war. Although Wilson's eventual endorsement of the federal amendment was in part opportunistic, the language of his speeches and letters, in light of his scrupulous regard for his own integrity, suggest a genuine change of moral conviction toward woman suffrage.

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<sup>443</sup>Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship*, 35; Please refer to Isenberg, *Sex & Citizenship in Antebellum America* (1998).



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

So women won the vote because they proved their civic capacity in time of war. The government recognized women's civic capacity because the nation needed their war services for the successful execution of the war. Simultaneously, the suffrage movement, via the NAWSA, continued to endeavor toward the passage of the federal amendment. Catt's politely persistent requests toward Wilson to endorse the amendment were effective because they impressed upon the president the need for suffrage as a reward for women's war services. As an entrenched advocate of the common law, which, in the lexicon of American constitutionalism, entailed the reciprocity of rights and obligations between the state and the citizenry, Wilson grew to be receptive to the argument for suffrage as a reward. Catt's shrewd packaging of woman suffrage in pragmatic terms proved to be the key to winning this constitutional right. Catt put into practice Paulina Wright Davis' urgings, as expressed a century earlier, that in order to break free of the rule of coverture women had to obtain a quid pro quo relationship with the state. By this method women would obtain the franchise, yet as a privilege and not as a right, because the natural rights school of thought did not inform American constitutionalism. Although the Reconstruction Amendments abolished qualifications for the franchise, such as war service or public service, the vestiges of feudalistic common law still affected American political culture into the early twentieth century. Woman would not have won the vote with an argument that was premised only on their common bond of humanity with men.

Yet the salient conclusion in the discussion of my argument is a concurrence with Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr.'s critique of traditional historians' omission of women's contributions to the public weal and the resulting lack of constitutional rights accorded to women. The NAWSA's

participation in the Committee on Women's Defense Work of the Council of National Defense, and the intricately organized operations of women's war work that formed underneath this committee, proved women's civic capacity to be equal to that of men, barring combat. Military top brass, federal department officials, and the president revered women's war service. Catt and Shaw took control of the Committee on Women's Defense Work of the Council of National Defense and steered the course for woman suffrage during the Great War. They had simultaneously endeavored toward women's rights and helped the country to wage war successfully. They had proven to military top brass and to Wilson, both as President and as the Commander in Chief of the Army and the Navy, of women's valiant civic capacity. This double-barreled approach toward the passage of the federal amendment for woman suffrage won women the vote. Catt quintessentially incorporated into her leadership both suffrage activism and war service; both were needed simultaneously for women's federal enfranchisement. Yet even women's historians partial to the NAWSA do not sufficiently examine the ingenious leadership of the Women's Committee during the Great War.<sup>444</sup> In any event, if traditional historians were to incorporate women's public services, war services, and accomplishments in their texts, legislatures would then recognize that women must hold constitutional rights commensurate with women's proven capacity as citizens.

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<sup>444</sup>See David Morgan, *Suffragists And Democrats: The Politics of Woman Suffrage in America* (n.p.: Michigan State University Press, 1972); Christine A. Lunardini and Thomas J. Knock, "Woodrow Wilson and Woman Suffrage: A New Look," *Political Science Quarterly* 95 (Winter 1980-81): 665; Robert Booth Fowler, *Carrie Catt: Feminist Politician* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986); 93, 140; Jacqueline Van Voris, *Carrie Chapman Catt: A Public Life* (New York: The Feminist Press at The City University of New York, 1987), 140, 141, 248 n.20.

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