

CAMBRIDGE
SUFFRAGE
HISTORY



CAMBRIDGE SUFFRAGE HISTORY

A long march for suffrage.



Margaret Fuller was born in Cambridge in 1810. By her late teens, she was considered a prodigy and equal or superior in intelligence to her male friends. As an adult she hosted “Conversations” for men and women on topics that ranged from women’s rights to philosophy. She joined Ralph Waldo Emerson in editing and writing for the Transcendentalist journal, *The Dial* from 1840-1842. It was in this publication that she wrote an article about women’s rights titled, “The Great Lawsuit,” which she would go on to expand into a book a few years later.

In 1844, she moved to NYC to write for the *New York Tribune*. Her book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* was published in 1845. She traveled to Europe as the *Tribune*’s foreign correspondent, the first woman to hold such a role. She died in a shipwreck off the coast of NY in July 1850 just as she was returning to life in the U.S. Her husband and infant also perished. It was hoped that she would be a leader in the equal rights and suffrage movements but her life was tragically cut short.



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Harriet A. Jacobs (1813-1897) was born into slavery in Edenton, NC. She escaped her sexually abusive owner in 1835 and lived in hiding for seven years. In 1842 she escaped to the north. She eventually was able to secure freedom for her children and herself. Her autobiography, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, was published in 1861 and brought her fame.

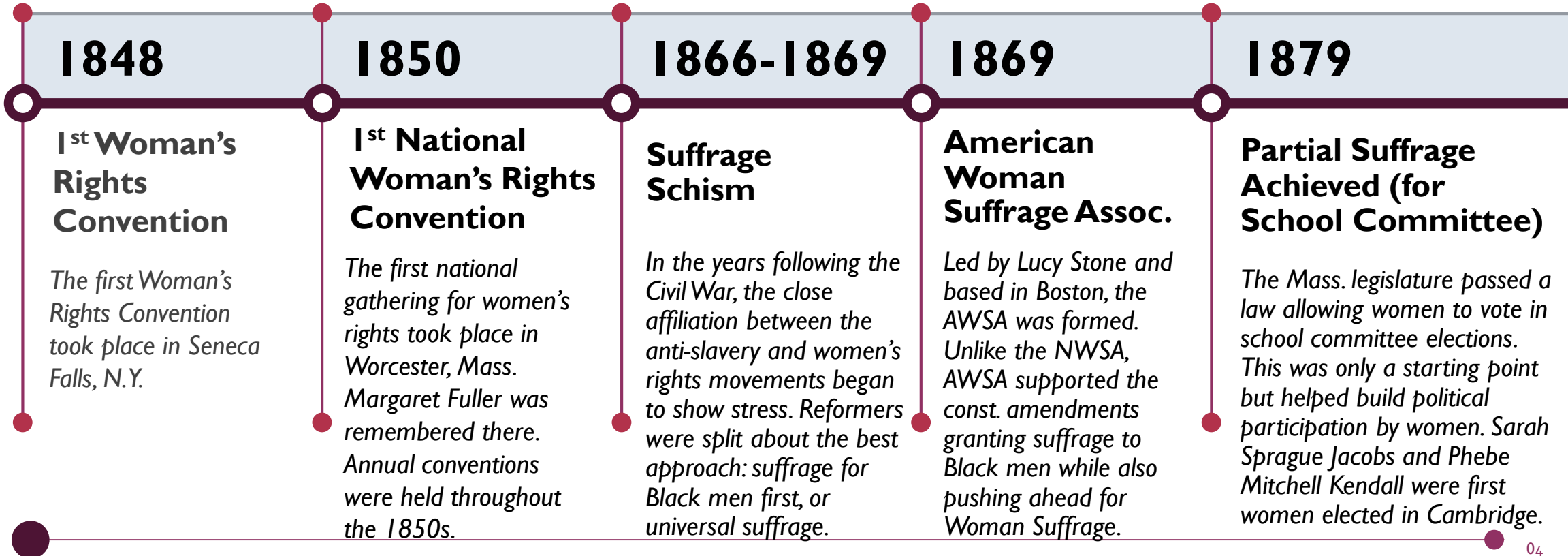
During the Civil War, Jacobs met with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the Women's National Loyal League and was elected to its executive committee. She and her daughter **Louisa M. Jacobs** (1833-1917), worked to care for and educate black refugees and orphans in Alexandria and Savannah. Louisa briefly lectured on suffrage for the American Equal Rights Association. Stanton and Anthony left out the contributions of both Harriet and Louisa in their published history of the woman suffrage movement.

Harriet worked briefly in Boston as clerk for the newly formed New England Women's Club. She lived in Cambridge from 1869-1877. Here she operated a boarding house, first at 10 Trowbridge Street and then her home at the corner of Mt. Auburn and Story streets.



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“Women Depositing Their Ballots
at the Police Court Polls”
Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper,
Dec. 20, 1879

These early women voters for the
Cambridge School Committee are
shown here taking their new civic
duty seriously despite being
badgered by male canvassers.



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Phebe Mitchell Kendall (1828-1907) and **Sarah Sprague Jacobs** (1813-1902) were elected to the Cambridge School Committee in 1879.

Phebe Mitchell Kendall, pictured left, writer and biographer of her sister, astronomer Maria Mitchell. Kendall served on the School Committee for fourteen years.

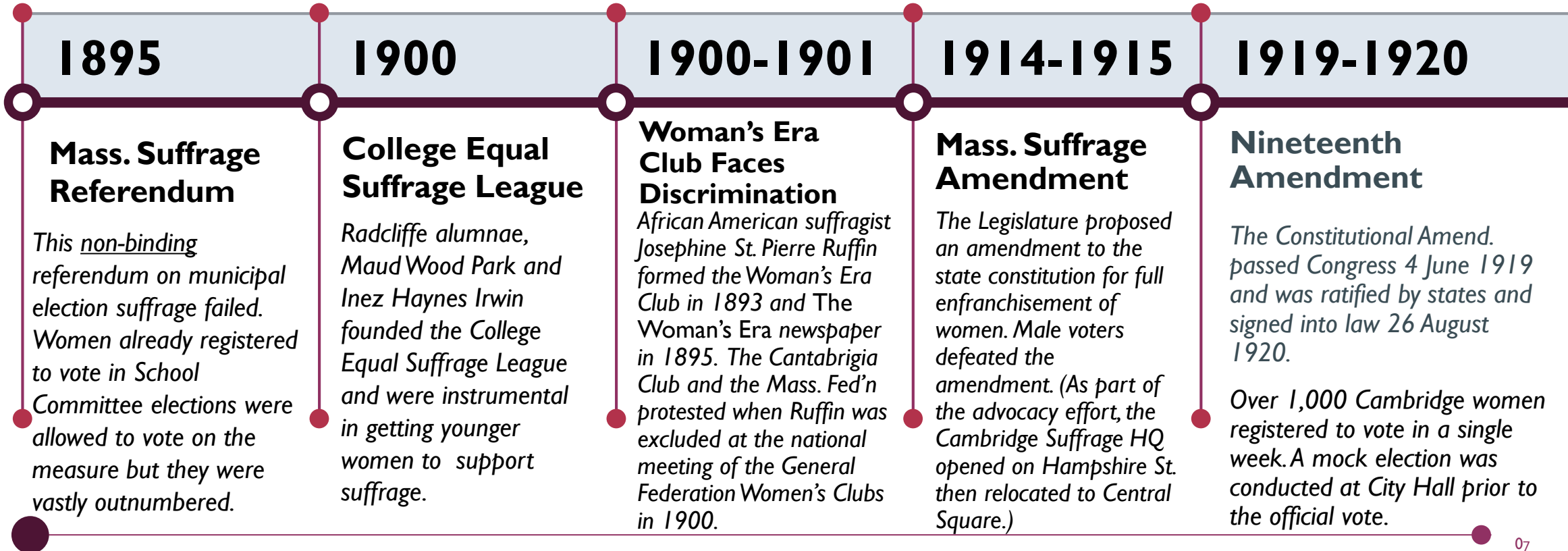
Sarah Jacobs transcribed, edited, and published 17th century Cambridge records. These resources continue to assist historians today.

Credit: Maria Mitchell Association



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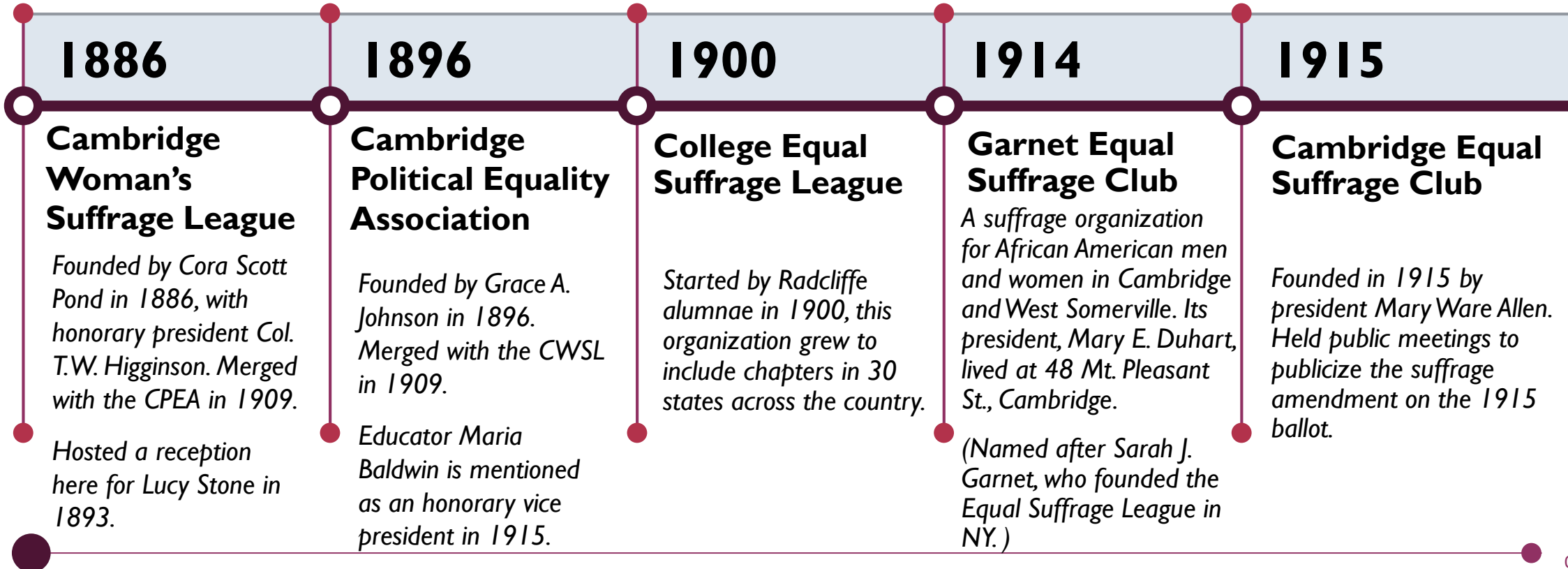
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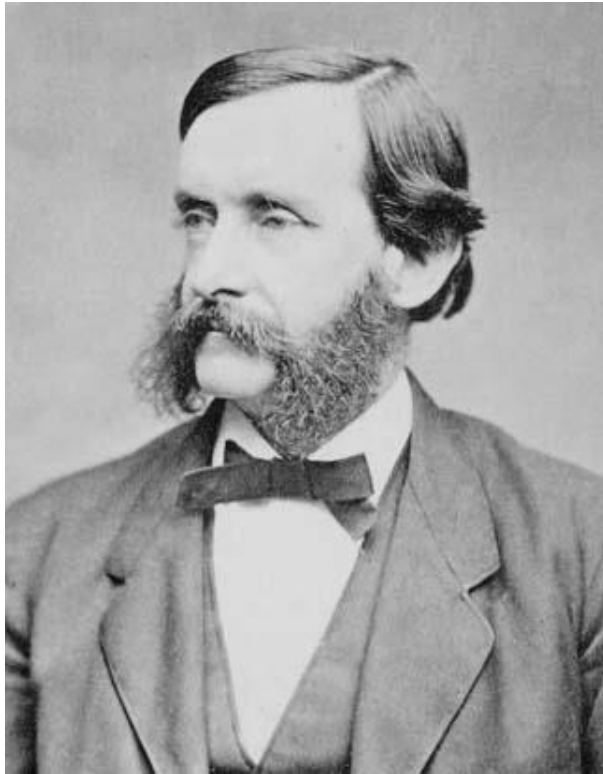
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Men were suffragists too!

Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823-1911) was one of many prominent male supporters of woman suffrage. He was a Unitarian minister, ardent abolitionist, and colonel of the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, the first federally authorized black regiment in the Civil War. Higginson continued to be an activist after the Civil War. He was a founding member of the American Woman Suffrage Association and an editor of the *Woman's Journal*. Higginson was appointed the Honorary President of the Cambridge Woman's Suffrage League, founded in 1886.

Note: The Harvard Men's League for Woman Suffrage was established in 1911 by six students. The League hosted several important speakers in Cambridge including Emmeline Pankhurst, a famous English suffragette. Harvard College would not allow her to speak on campus, so the League rented out Brattle Hall for the standing room only event.



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—The Committee on Woman Suffrage gave a hearing in the Green Room, at the State House, last Thursday morning, at which Mrs. **Margaret W. Campbell** of this place was heard. She said that because women have not rebelled, men think that they will forever hold their peace, but this is a mistake. They have been silent because the degradation is imposed upon them by those whom they love. She made an eloquent plea for the right to vote and said that she thought it was high time to bring some moral element into society.

Cambridge Chronicle, 22 Feb. 1879

Margaret West Norton Campbell was born in Maine in 1827. She married John B. Campbell and they had three children. Margaret became interested in the woman suffrage movement after reading the proceedings of the first National Woman's Rights Convention.

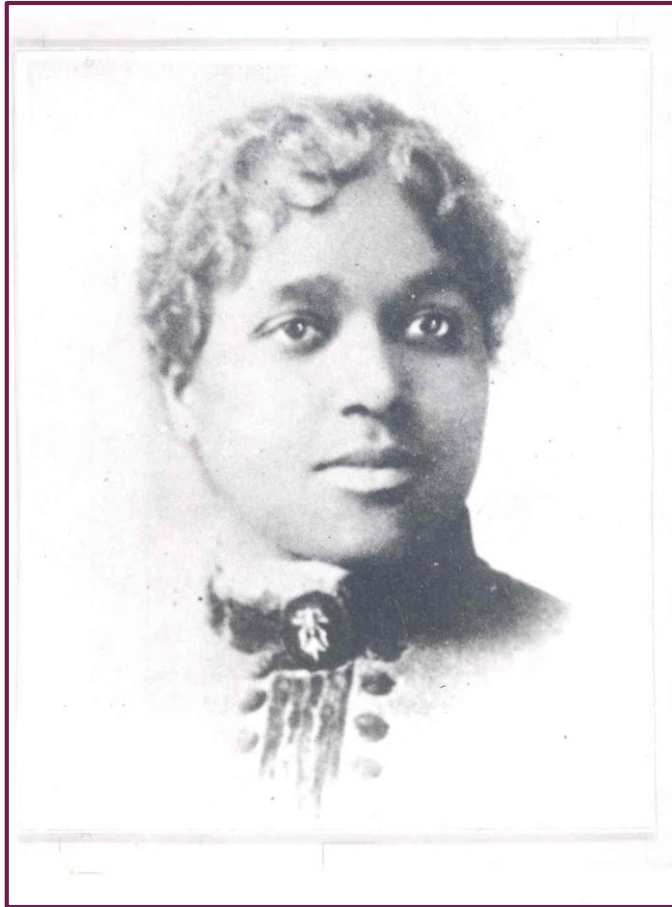
The couple led an itinerant life passing back and forth between New England, Iowa, and Illinois. She worked for the Mass. Woman Suffrage Association and then the American Woman Suffrage Association. She spent most of the 1870s and 1880s lecturing in the western states in support of state suffrage campaigns. She corresponded with Lucy Stone about her progress.

For a brief time, Margaret and John lived in North Cambridge on Lambert Avenue. The Cambridge newspapers reported on her local lectures and her extensive travels. Margaret W. Campbell died in Joliet, Illinois in 1908.



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Maria Louise Baldwin was born in Cambridge in 1856. She graduated from Cambridge High School in 1874 and the Cambridge Teachers' Training School the following year. Though not initially offered a job in Cambridge, she was hired in 1882 as a teacher at the Agassiz Grammar School on Sacramento Street. Seven years later, she was appointed principal, the first black woman to be appointed as a school principal in Massachusetts. In 1916, when a new, larger building was built, she was appointed master of the school--also a first.

She worked with Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and Florida Ruffin Ridley to found the Woman's Era Club, a Black woman's club in Boston that also published the *Woman's Era* journal. She was a member of the Cantabrigia Club. Both she and Ruffin wrote pro-suffrage articles in the NAACP's journal, *The Crisis*.



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Alice Stone Blackwell was born in 1857 to the renowned suffragist Lucy Stone and Henry Browne Blackwell. Her family moved to Boston at the age of ten. She graduated from Boston University in 1881 and took a job in the offices of the paper established by her mother, the *Woman's Journal*. From 1887-1905, she edited and distributed the *Woman's Column*, a periodical collection of suffrage news articles. She was an instrumental in facilitating the 1890 merger of the two national suffrage organizations into the National American Women's Suffrage Assoc. In 1930, she published a biography of her mother entitled: *Lucy Stone, Pioneer in Women's Rights*. Although she spent much of her life in Dorchester, she moved to Cambridge in 1936 where she lived until her death fourteen years later.



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Hannah M. Todd Carret (1857-1944) was born in Lynn, Mass. She attended Symonds' Kindergarten Training School and worked as a matron at the Brookline Day Nursery in the 1880s. She married James R. Carret in 1895. Before moving to Cambridge they lived in Lexington where she served three terms on the school committee. They lived at 10 Bellevue Avenue, 114 Upland Road, and 6 Frost Street in Cambridge between 1912-1925.

Hannah was a member of the Cambridge Woman Suffrage Party (founded 1912) and was elected president of the Party in 1913. She helped to organize the Cambridge delegation to the May 2, 1914 suffrage parade in Boston.

She was the first woman appointed to the Board of Prison Commissioners. Governor Foss selected her for this position. Twenty years earlier she had become the first woman probation officer in the country, and reportedly in the world, a post she served for three years.

Both her mother and sister shared her interest in woman suffrage.



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1906 Niagara Movement Conference in Harper's Ferry, VA.

Gertrude Wright Morgan was born in Springfield, Ill. in 1861. Springfield integrated its schools in 1874 and she was the first black student to attend the high school, where she graduated third in her class. She moved to St. Louis, Missouri to begin a teaching career. She rose to assistant vice principal of the high school there. In 1897, she married Clement G. Morgan and they moved to Cambridge soon after. Both Clement and Gertrude were involved in the Niagara Movement and the establishment of the NAACP. They hosted prominent citizens and civil rights leaders in their home at 265 Prospect Street.

Gertrude was active in the suffrage movement, representing her ward on a committee for better city government. She was president of the Woman's Era Club and member of the board of the Harriet Tubman House. In 1922, Governor Channing Cox appointed her to represent Massachusetts at the dedication of the Frederick Douglass house museum in Washington, D.C. She died in Cambridge in 1931.



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Mary Eliza Smith Duhart (1869-1939) was born in Connecticut. In 1895 she married Thomas H. Duhart, a chef employed in clubs and hotels in the Boston area. They lived in several locations in Cambridge including 48 Mt. Pleasant Street and 14 Pleasant Street.

Duhart was the president of the Garnet Equal Suffrage Club, an African American suffrage association for men and women. In 1914, she was elected to be a delegate to the Progressive Party's state convention at Faneuil Hall along with another African American woman from Cambridge, Mary J. Austin of 16 Mead Street.

Duhart was a delegate in 1915 to the northeastern Convention of Colored Women's Clubs in Philadelphia. Joining her in the Cambridge delegation were Mrs. Clement G. (Gertrude Wright) Morgan, Mrs. Gertrude L. Cromwell, Mrs. C. E. Bond, Mrs. Edith F. Slade and Mrs. Clarence Adams.

Photo courtesy of the New Bedford Historical Society



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Grace Allen Fitch Johnson was born in Indiana in 1871. She worked as a librarian before marrying Lewis Jerome Johnson in 1893. They moved to Cambridge in 1894. She served as a president of the Cambridge Political Equality Association from 1899-1916. In 1912, she was one of three Massachusetts women delegates to the Progressive Party's national convention. In 1912 to 1914, she was president of the Cambridge Public Schools Association. Johnson became interested in the League of Nations and in September of 1926 she went to Geneva to attend the commissions, council, and assembly of the League of Nations. In 1940, she represented Massachusetts before the Woman's Centennial Congress and after the Second World War, she supported the United Nations.



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Maud Wood Park was born in Boston in 1871. She worked as a teacher before attending Radcliffe College. She became interested in suffrage during college, but found that there was little support for it among the Radcliffe administration or her fellow students. At age 29 she attended the National American Woman Suffrage Association and was dismayed by the lack of attendance by other young women. Together with another Radcliffe alumna, Inez Haynes Gillmore, she founded the College Equal Suffrage League. She traveled the country speaking about suffrage and encouraging new chapters to form. The organization eventually had chapters in 30 states.

Park was the lead lobbyist for NAWWSA in the years leading up to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. She helped found the Mass. League of Women Voters and was the first president of the national League of Women Voters. In 1943, she donated her papers to Radcliffe and the collection grew to become the Schlesinger Library.



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MRS. MARION BOOTH KELLEY,
A Prominent Suffrage Worker.

Marion Booth Smith Kelley (1872-1946) was born in Pennsylvania. She was educated at the Quaker Friends School in Philadelphia. She taught school and lectured in Pennsylvania and New Jersey before marrying J. Foster Kelley in 1908, this being her second marriage. By 1909 she was enrolled at Boston University as a special student.

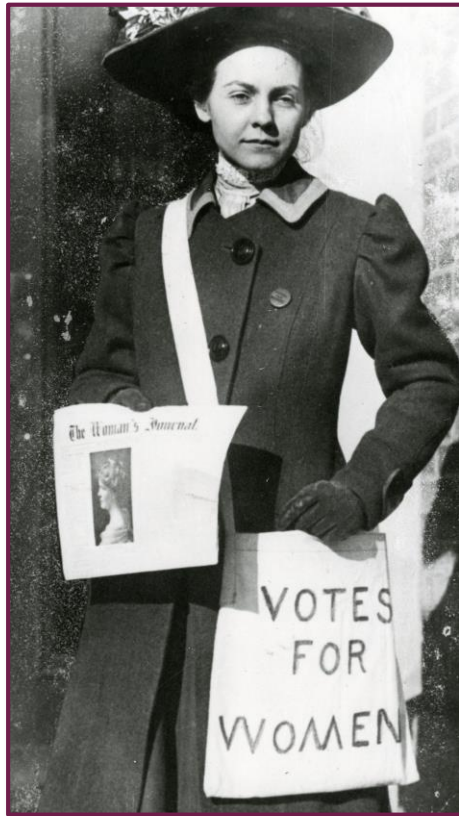
She lectured for the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association, often debating Anti-Suffrage speakers.

She was described in the Cambridge papers as, “A cool, convincing, easy talker she is a distinctly womanly woman who believes that women can help men secure the right kind of government...”

Before 1920, Kelley moved from Cambridge to New York City, where she continued her work for the suffrage cause.

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Florence Hope Luscomb was born in Lowell in 1887. Her mother, Hannah Knox Luscomb, was a feminist and had a love of politics. Hannah was active in the woman suffrage movement, and took a five year old Florence to hear Susan B. Anthony speak. This was the start of long advocacy career.

Luscomb graduated from MIT in 1909 with a B.S. in Architecture, being among the first women there to receive the degree. In 1918 she left architecture to pursue suffrage work full time. She worked for the Boston Equal Suffrage Association, sold copies of the *Woman's Journal* on Boston Common, and gave speeches on suffrage throughout New England.

After 1920, she found full-time work in various socially concerned organizations. She remained an activist for causes she believed in her whole life. She lived in several places in Cambridge including, toward the end of her life, in a co-op at 37 Pleasant Street with much younger housemates.



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Ruth Veletta Jones was born in Cambridgeport in September 1895 to John James Jones and Sydonia White Jones. Ruth learned from her aunts that she was a grand niece of Frederick Douglass through her grandmother, Hardenia Banks White. The Jones family lived on Village , Pleasant and Tremont streets in Cambridgeport then moved to West Somerville. Ruth graduated from Somerville High School in 1915 and pursued college studies at B.U. , majoring in business. The family returned to Cambridge and settled at 7 Yerxa Road where Ruth would live the rest of her life.

Jones was among the first women to register to vote in September 1920. She was one of fourteen surviving women voters of the 1920 election who were recognized on the 70th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment. During World War II, Jones was trained in canteen work as a cadet in the Cambridge Auxiliary of the Massachusetts Women's Defense Corps.

Jones worked for many years at the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals as a telephone operator and clerk. She also volunteered as a ballot counter in Cambridge for 36 years and was a member of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. She died at age 100 in 1996.



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There are many more Cambridge suffragists to include:

- Mary Ware Allen
- Mary P. C. Billings
- Sarah Bull
- Frances Kellogg Curtis
- Susan G. Walker Fitzgerald
- Alice Spencer Geddes Lloyd
- Alice Longfellow
- Edna Lawrence Spencer
- Florence Lee Whitman



MRS. EMMELINE PANKHURST

MRS. PANKHURST SPEAKS TO HARVARD STUDENTS

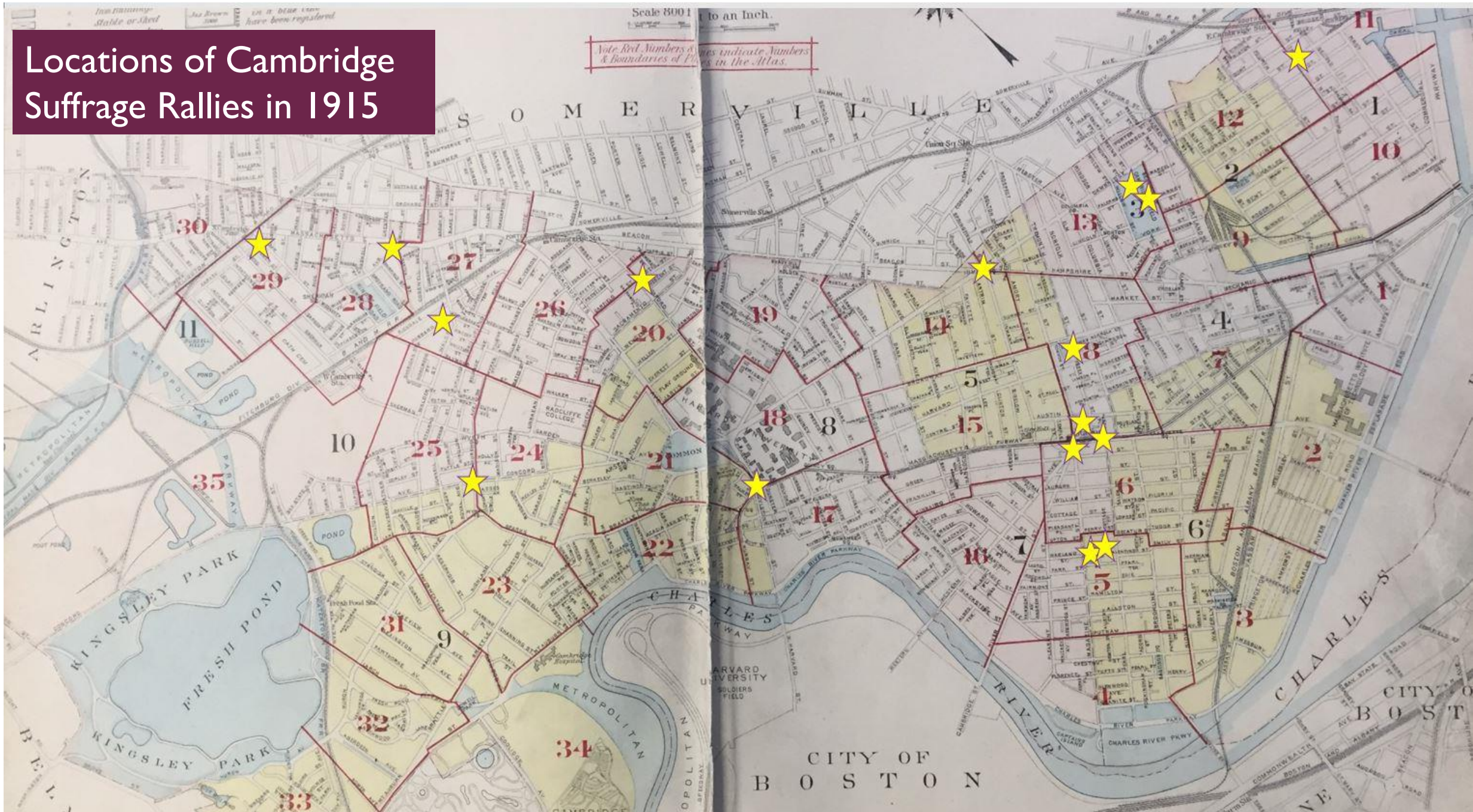
Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the noted English suffragist leader and mother of the gifted young woman, Sylvia Pankhurst, who was heard in Cambridge a year ago, addressed an audience that filled Brattle hall to the extreme limits Wednesday afternoon. Hundreds were turned away, and hundreds more forced their way through the crowds to get within hearing distance. Standing room was at a premium. The lecture was supposedly for Harvard students, but Radcliffe, of

course, was included, and a large portion of its fair membership was in evidence, standing and sitting. At least one-third of the audience was women.

Disappointed students strove in vain to gain admittance, ladders being raised to windows in an effort to get inside. The student body that was inside was divided as to interest, a goodly part being there to get what fun and amusement might develop, with the remainder displaying a genuine attention to the subject of the lecture.

CAMBRIDGE
CHRONICLE,
9 DECEMBER 1911

Locations of Cambridge Suffrage Rallies in 1915



SUFFRAGE RESOLUTION PASSES CITY COUNCIL WITH FIVE DISSENTERS

Vote on Councilor Hogan's Resolve Is 9 to 5, With One Member Absent — Committee Reports Favorably and Question Is Not Discussed — Routine Business, Early Adjournment



Judging from the previous meeting, it was expected that there would be a contest at Tuesday's session of the city council over the question of the resolution offered by Mr. Hogan, placing the council on record as favoring the federal amendment for equal suffrage. On the contrary, however, not a word was said either pro or con. The committee reported in favor of the adoption of the resolve and the action took favorable action by a vote of 9 to 5, with one member absent. A small budget of routine business was transacted and the council adjourned not much later than 9 o'clock.



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What happened after 1920?

- League of Women Voters established from suffrage organizations.
- Women running for elected office; examples include Florence Lee Whitman, the first woman elected to the City Council (1925-1927) and Pearl Katz Wise, City Council (1955-1963). More common were ward and committees and elected delegates to party conventions.
- Registration issues (Many hundreds of names were dropped from registration lists. Women who changed their names at time of marriage may have been especially likely to be dropped from the rolls.)
- Was there disenfranchisement in Cambridge? Were the registration purges intended to discourage voting? There were \$2 poll taxes until the early 1960s. This area needs more research.

