



# *History of Woman Suffrage*

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Edited by  
SUSAN B. ANTHONY  
and  
IDA HUSTED HARPER

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

### MARYLAND.\*

If but one State in the Union allowed woman to represent herself it should be Maryland, which was named for a woman, whose capital was named for a woman, and where in 1647 Mistress Margaret Brent, the first woman suffragist in America, demanded "place and voyce" in the Assembly as the executor and representative of her kinsman, Lord Baltimore. Her petition was denied but she must have had some gallant supporters, as the archives record that the question of her admission was hotly debated for hours. After the signal defeat of Mistress Brent, there seems to have been no demand for the ballot on the part of Maryland women for about 225 years.†

In 1870 and '71 Miss Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. Lucy Stone and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe lectured in Baltimore and there was some slight agitation of the subject.

Immediately following the national suffrage convention of 1883, in Washington, Miss Phoebe W. Couzins of Missouri addressed a large and enthusiastic audience at Sandy Spring. Soon afterwards Madame Clara Neymann of New York spoke in the same place and was cordially received. She and Mrs. Caroline Hallowell Miller were invited about this time to make addresses at Rockville. Mrs. Miller also spoke on the rights and wrongs of women at the Sandy Spring Lyceum.

\* The History is indebted for this chapter to Mrs. Mary Bentley Thomas of Ednor, who for the last nine years has been president of the State Suffrage Association.

† Miss Mary Catherine Goddard conducted the Baltimore post-office and also the only newspaper in the city, the *Maryland Journal and Commercial Advertiser*, through all the trying times of the Revolutionary War. On July 12, 1775, she published a detailed account of the battle of Bunker Hill, which had occurred on June 17, and the Declaration of the Continental Congress giving the causes and necessity for taking up arms. The first official publication of the Declaration of Independence, with the signers' names attached, was entrusted by Congress, at that time sitting in Baltimore, to Miss Goddard.

She remained in control of her paper for ten years. In 1779 she made an appeal through its columns for the destitute families of the American soldiers, and by her efforts \$25,000 were raised for their needs.

In 1889 Mrs. Miller invited some of her acquaintances to meet at her home in Sandy Spring to form a suffrage association. Thirteen men and women became members, all but one of whom belonged to the Society of Friends.\* This year Maryland was represented for the first time at the national suffrage convention by a delegate, Mrs. Sarah T. Miller. She is now superintendent of franchise in the State Woman's Christian Temperance Union, this department having been adopted in 1893.

Annual State conventions have been held since 1889 and about 300 different members have been enrolled. The membership includes many men; one public meeting was addressed by a father and daughter, and a mother and son. The officers for 1900 are: President, Mary Bentley Thomas; vice-president, Pauline W. Holme; corresponding secretary, Annie R. Lamb; recording secretary, Margaret Smythe Clarke; treasurer, Mary E. Moore; member national executive committee, Emma J. M. Funck.

The first to organize a suffrage club in Baltimore was Mrs. Sarah H. Tudor. It has now a flourishing society and many open meetings have been held with large and interested audiences.

In 1896 six members of the W. C. T. U. of Baltimore went before the registrars and demanded that their names should be placed on the polling books. Mrs. Thomas J. Boram, whose husband was one of the registrars, was spokeswoman and claimed their right to vote under the Constitution of the United States. She made a strong argument in the name of taxpaying women and of mothers but was told that the State constitution limited the suffrage to males. The other ladies were Dr. Emily G. Peterson, Miss Annie M. V. Davenport, Mrs. Jane H. Rupp, Mrs. C. Rupp and Mrs. Amanda Peterman.

Among the outside speakers who have come into the State at different times are the Rev. Anna Howard Shaw, vice-president-at-large of the National Association, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, chairman of the national organization committee, Mrs. Mary C. C. Bradford of Colorado, Miss Elizabeth Upham Yates of Maine, the Rev. Henrietta G. Moore of Ohio, Mrs. Annie L. Diggs and

\* The charter members were Caroline H., Margaret E., Sarah T., Rebecca T. and George B. Miller, Margaret B. and Mary Magruder, Ellen and Martha T. Farquhar, James P. and Jessie B. Stablu, Hannah B. Brooke and Mary E. Moore. At the second meeting a number of others became members, including the writer of this chapter.

Miss Laura A. Gregg of Kansas, Miss Helen Morris Lewis of North Carolina, Mrs. Ruth B. Havens of Washington, D. C., and Mrs. Catharine Waugh McCulloch of Chicago.

One of the first and most efficient of the workers is Mrs. Caroline Hallowell Miller, who has represented her State for many years at the national conventions and pleased the audiences with her humorous but strong addresses. Her husband, Francis Miller, a prominent lawyer, was one of the very few men in the State who advocated suffrage for women as early as 1874, when he made an appeal for the enfranchisement of the women of the District of Columbia before the House Judiciary Committee.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND LAWS:** The constitution of Maryland opens as follows:

The right of the people to participate in the Legislature is the best security of liberty and the foundation of all free government; for this purpose, elections ought to be free and frequent; and every male (!) citizen having the qualifications prescribed by the constitution ought to have the right of suffrage.

The Legislature has been petitioned to grant full suffrage to women; to raise the "age of protection" for girls, and to refrain from giving State aid to institutions of learning which do not admit women students on equal terms with men.

The Legislature of 1900 took a remarkably progressive step. An act authorizing the city of Annapolis to submit to the voters the question of issuing bonds to the amount of \$121,000, to pay off the floating indebtedness and provide a fund for permanent improvements, contained a paragraph entitling women to vote.

This bill was introduced in the Senate January 25, by Elijah Williams and was referred to the Committee on Finance. On January 31, Austin L. Crothers reported it favorably. On February 1, at the motion of Senator Williams, the bill was recommitted and on the 15th Senator Crothers again reported it favorably. On the 19th it was passed by the Senate unanimously.

The Senate Bill was presented to the House of Delegates February 20, and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means. On the 28th, Ferdinand C. Latrobe (who had been mayor of Baltimore four or five times) reported the bill favorably. On March 23 it was passed by the House, 69 yeas, one nay, the negative vote being cast by Patrick E. Finzel of Garrett County.

It is a common practice of the General Assembly to pass laws applicable only to one county or portion of a county, or to one municipality or to one special occasion, as in this instance.

As this law was a decided innovation in a very conservative community, naturally the number of women availing themselves of it for the first time was not large, and it hardly seemed worth a special Act of the Legislature, except as a progressive step. The *Baltimore Sun* of May 14 said:

Women voted in Annapolis to-day under the law permitting property owners to say if \$121,000 bonds shall be issued for street and other improvements. The novelty of their presence did not disturb the serenity of the polling-room or unnerve the ladies who were exercising their right to vote for the first time. They were calm, direct and as unruffled as though it were the usual order of things. Those who voted are of the highest social standing. They received the utmost courtesy at the polls and voted without any embarrassment whatever.

Numerous changes in the statutes have been made during the past twelve years, modifying the discriminations against married women under the old Common Law.

In 1888 it was enacted that a wife might bring action for slander in her own name and defend her own character.

The last of these improved laws went into effect in 1898, when the inheritance of property was made the same for widow and widower. Absolute control of her own estate was vested in the wife. Power was given her to make contracts and bring suit, and she alone was to be liable for her own actions.

Inequalities still exist, however, in regard to divorce and guardianship of children. The fifth ground for absolute divorce is as follows: "Where the woman before marriage has been guilty of illicit carnal intercourse with another man, the same being unknown to the husband at the time of marriage." A similar act on the part of the husband prior to the marriage does not entitle the wife to a divorce.

The father has complete control of the minor children and may appoint a guardian by will. If he die without doing so the mother becomes their natural guardian, but her control over a daughter terminates at eighteen years of age while the father's continues to twenty-one. This power of appointing a testamen-

tary guardian was created by an act of Charles II, and adopted as a part of the laws of Maryland. It gives the father power, by deed or will, to dispose of the custody and tuition of his infant children up to the age of twenty-one, or until the marriage of the daughters. It gives him custody of their persons and all their real and personal estate, not only such as comes from his family, but all they may acquire of any person soever, even from the family of the mother. The guardian is placed *in loco parentis* and his rights are generally regarded as paramount.

For non-support of the family the husband may be fined \$100 or imprisoned in the House of Correction not exceeding one year, or both, at discretion of the court. (1896.)

Wife-beaters are punished by flogging or imprisonment.

In 1899 women succeeded in having the "age of protection" for girls raised from 14 to 16 years, with penalty ranging from death to imprisonment in the penitentiary for eighteen months.

Employers are compelled to provide seats for female employes. Children under twelve can not work in factories. Women or girls may not be employed as waiters in any place of amusement.

**SUFFRAGE:** Women have no form of suffrage.

**OFFICE HOLDING:** The State librarian is a woman, who has filled the position most satisfactorily for a number of years and through her care valuable documents relating to colonial times have been saved from destruction and classified. A leading paper of Baltimore said that these had been allowed to remain in the cellar of the State House for years, and would have been ruined but for the new system of public housekeeping inaugurated by the womanly element.

Women physicians have been placed in charge of women patients at one State insane asylum.

Police matrons are employed at all the station houses in Baltimore. During the past two years women have been placed on its jail boards and on the boards of most of its charitable and reformatory institutions. By the recommendation of two mayors they have been put on the school board. They have applied for positions on the street-cleaning board but without success.

Women are doing efficient work on the jail and almshouse boards of Harford County and the school boards of Montgomery.

Women serve as notaries public.

OCCUPATIONS: In 1901 Miss Etta Maddox, a graduate of the Baltimore College of Law, was refused admission to the bar and carried her case to the Supreme Court. It was argued before the full bench and the opinion rendered by Justice C. J. McSherry, November 21. Her petition was denied on the ground that the act providing for admission to the bar uses the masculine pronouns. In this decision the general proposition was affirmed that "women are excluded from all occupations which were denied them by the English common law, except when the disability has been removed by express statutory enactment."\* It is believed that this opinion makes it illegal for women to serve as notaries public, and as a number have been serving for several years, three in Baltimore, the situation promises to be very serious, many deeds, etc., having been acknowledged before them.

EDUCATION: Through the leadership of Miss Mary E. Garrett and Dr. M. Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr College, assisted by Miss Mary Gwinn and Miss Elizabeth King (now Mrs. William Ellicott), committees of prominent women were organized in various States for raising a fund to open a Medical Department in Johns Hopkins University which should be co-educational. The trustees required an endowment of \$500,000. The committees raised \$200,000 and Miss Garrett herself added the remaining \$300,000. In 1893 this Medical College, which is not outranked in the country, was dedicated alike to men and women with absolutely no distinction in their privileges. Women are not admitted to any other department of Johns Hopkins.

Of the nine other colleges and universities two are open to women, and the Woman's College of Baltimore, which receives State aid, is for them alone. They may be graduated from the Baltimore Colleges of Law and of Dentistry. The State Colleges of Agriculture, of Medicine and of Law are closed to them. The State Normal Schools admit both sexes on equal terms.

There are 1,162 men and 3,965 women teachers in the public schools. It is impossible to obtain the average monthly salaries.

\* State Senator Jacob M. Moses presented a bill in the Legislature of 1902 to permit women to practice law, which passed, was signed by the Governor and Miss Maddox was admitted to the bar.