



Adela Parker

Quick Facts

Birth: Whitehall, Michigan

Death: April 8, 1956
Seattle, Washington

Occupation: Attorney/Journalist

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Years served: 1935-37

Office: Representative

District: 37 (King County)

Personal:

- Resided in Seattle, WA
- Married Charles Enoch Allen Bennett in 1921, he died in 1929
- Other names known as: Adella Parker, Adele Parker, Adele Parker-Bennett, Adela M. Parker
- Prior to going to law school, Adela taught political economy and civil government at Broadway High School in Seattle.
- Gave the oration at the laying of the cornerstone for Denny Hall in 1894
- Her portrait appears on the murals in the University of Washington Student Union Building.

- “I have been looking for years to find any legislation that does not affect women, from a tariff on gloves to a declaration of war. The great problems which face the human race demand the genius of both men and women to solve them. The law needs women quite as much as women need the law.” Adela Parker speaking at the National American Suffrage Convention of 1909 on College Women’s Evening.
- Mrs. M.T. B. Hanna published and edited the monthly paper, *Votes for Women*, during the last year of the suffrage campaign. Adela was one of the assistant editors of this publication.
- “Miss Adella M. Parker, teacher of civics in a Seattle high school, a graduate of the law school of the University of Washington, president of the College Suffrage League, and for years a strenuous and militant worker for municipal good government, drafted the recall law [recalling Seattle Mayor Hiram Charles Gill], had petitions printed at her own expense, got many hundreds of signatures through her own efforts, saw the petition submitted to the city council of which Mr. Gill then was president, and campaigned night and day for the adoption of the recall as a charter amendment. So it may be said that women started and finished the Seattle recall election, both before and after they had the right of suffrage. Miss Parker also “fathered” the initiative and referendum law that was read into the city charter before she even had a vote on the matter.” (Bailey, C.H.)
- On Election Day Adela reported to the *Women’s Journal* of Boston that: “It was a great victory. The women at the polls were wonderfully effective. Many young women, middle-aged women and white-haired grandmothers stood for hours handing out the little reminders. It rained—the usual gentle but very insistent kind of rain—and the men were so solicitous! They kept trying to drag us off to get our feet warm or bringing us chairs or offering to hand out our ballots while we took a rest, but the women would not leave their places until relieved by other women, even for lunch, for fear of losing a vote. The whole thing appealed to the men irresistibly. We are receiving praise from all quarters for the kind of campaign we made—no personalities, no boasting of what we would do, no promises, no meddling with other issues—just ‘Votes for Women’ straight through, because it is just and reasonable and everywhere when tried has been found expedient. (*History of Woman Suffrage*)

- After suffrage was won, Adele Parker was editor of the *Western Woman Voter* which described itself as “Published in the Interest of the Enfranchised Woman of the West.” Adela emphasized articles on politics and suffrage in Washington and other western states. A regular feature was a column entitled “As a Man Views the Situation.” It ran from 1911-1913 and was published by Greenwood Press, Westport, CT.
- Working in cooperation with the State Federation of Labor, the State Federation of Churches and Centralia defense committees she represented the Union in order to liberate the IWW members involved in the Centralia Massacre.
- In 1922 and 1923 worked as a Moscow correspondent for the International News Service

Education:

- University of Washington, law degree, 1903
- University of West Virginia, graduate work
- University of Wisconsin, graduate work

Community Service:

Affiliations:

- Seattle High School Teacher’s League, executive secretary, 1931-34
- Seattle Bar Association
- Phi Delta Delta, women’s legal society
- Phi Beta Kappa, academic honor society

Awards:

Legislative & State Service:

- Lost in the 1936 primary election

Committees: Judiciary; Memorials, chairman; Constitutional Revision; Education; Revenue and Taxation; State Library

House Bills sponsored:

(1935 session)

49-Relating to nomination of judges
Went to first reading
55-Relating to motor fuel
Went to second reading
88-Relating to civil service
Reported out of committee and died
118-Relating to licensing of pilots
Signed by Governor Martin
124-Relating to community property rights
Went to first reading
129-Relating to payment of taxes
Went to first reading
172-Relating to school teachers
Went to third reading
213-Relating to the collection of taxes
Reported out of committee and died
295-Relating to the Narrows Bridge
Signed by Governor Martin
303-Relating to elections in class A counties
Reported out of committee and died
322-Relating to an initiative
Reported out of committee and died
475-Relating to railroads
Reported out of committee and died
476-Relating to initiatives and referendums
Reported out of committee and died
513-Relating to taxation
Signed by Governor Martin

539-Relating to primary highways
Reported out of committee and died
551-Relating to the Cascade wagon road
Went to first reading
553-Relating to teachers' retirement
Went to first reading
664-Relating to right of redemption
Went to third reading
675-Relating to unicameral legislature
Reported out of committee and died
676-Relating to natural resources
Went to first reading
677-Relating to interest rates
Went to first reading
678-Relating to real estate investments
Went to first reading
687-Relating to public warrants
Went to first reading

**House Joint Memorials sponsored:
(1935 session)**

3-Relating to the use of public funds for dental care of children
Passed
4-Relating to manufacture of munitions
Passed
5-Relating to the entry of the United States into the world court
Went to third reading
21-Relating to the regional laboratory at the State College of Washington
Went to third reading
35-Relating to an old age pension
Reported out of committee and died

**House Concurrent Resolutions sponsored:
(1935 session)**

14-Relating to a joint session
Passed

**House Joint Resolutions sponsored:
(1935 session)**

10-Relating to an amendment of the Constitution of the State of Washington
Passed
15-Relating to the amendment of Section 2 of Article IV of the Constitution of the State of Washington
Reported out of committee and died
17-Relating to the salaries of members of the legislature
Reported out of committee and died
19-Relating to an amendment to Section 1 of Article VII of the state constitution
Went to third reading
26-Relating to the state constitution
Reported out of committee and died

Leadership, Positions & Appointments:

- President of the College Women's Equal Suffrage League, n.d.
- Executive Committee of the National American Women Suffrage Association, n.d.
- Executive Board of the Washington Equal Suffrage Association, n.d.
- Operated the Washington Conciliation Committee, a nominal ACLU bureau in Seattle. It had been set up to seek release of the Centralia prisoners.

Sources:

Articles:

- Bailey, C.H., "How Washington Women Regained the Ballot," *Pacific Monthly*, July 1911

- Parker, Adela M., “How Washington Women Lost the Ballot,” *Washington Women’s Cook Book*, compiled by Linda Deziah Jennings, The Washington Equal Suffrage Association, Seattle, 1909
- Rosenthal, Judith W., “Bella Weretnikow, Seattle’s First Jewish Female Attorney,” *Columbia*, Spring 2004, vol. 1
- “Miss Adele Parker, Writer, Dies,” *The Seattle Times*, April 9, 1956

Books:

- Berner, Richard C. *Seattle 1921-1940, From Boom to Bust*. Charles Press, Seattle, 1992
- Honig, Douglas and Laura Brenner. *On Freedom’s Frontier*. American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, Seattle, 1987
- Harper, Ida Husted, editor. *History of Woman Suffrage, vol.6: 1900-1920*. National American Woman Suffrage Association, New York, 1922
- *Land of the Pilgrim’s Pride, 1932-1933*. American Civil Liberties Union, June 1933

Web:

- Parker, Adela, *Western Women Voter*, Western Woman Voter Publisher Co., Seattle, 1911-1913, Women’s Studies Library, Ohio State University Libraries, microfilm collection,
<http://library.ohio-state.edu/search/o?2140496>