

# The PACIFIC MONTHLY



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## How Washington Women Regained the Ballot

By C. H. Baily

ONE of the shrewdest politicians in the Pacific Northwest, not many weeks ago, was studying, ward by ward, and precinct by precinct, the returns of a remarkable election in Seattle at which many thousands of women cast ballots. This politician knew the campaign work that had been done in each precinct and ward, and knew the class of voters there-in.

For nearly two hours he poured over the figures. At the end of that time he tilted back his hat, turned to a number of his friends and quietly said:

"The women paid no attention whatever to the news-

papers, to campaign literature, or to what our workers said to them. They went out, studied the situation for themselves, and voted as they pleased. The old-line politician is as dead as a door nail. The women have revolutionized politics."

And in Washington, the last of the five States that so far have granted equal rights to women, they have broken all political traditions and, for better or for worse, have taken the situation in their own hands. From all indications they intend to keep the situation in their own hands and to keep on revolutionizing.

California will vote on suffrage in Oc-



MRS. EMMA SMITH DEVOE, PRESIDENT OF THE WASHINGTON EQUAL SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION.

Able and tactful leader of the strenuous suffrage campaign of 1910.



A WASHINGTON WOMEN'S POLITICAL RALLY, HELD DURING THE GILL RECALL CAMPAIGN. IT OVERFLOWED TWO THEATERS IN SEATTLE: THE GRAND OPERA HOUSE AND THE SEATTLE THEATRE.

tober of this year. Oregon, Nevada and Kansas will vote on it in 1912. Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming and Washington already have suffrage, the women of the last-named State having more powers than those of the other four suffrage States. If California, Oregon, Nevada and Kansas give the right of franchise to women, it is a practical certainty that a new era will dawn in the political life of the West, if not in the United States as a whole. Half a million or more women voters, organized or unorganized, will be able to do things that will make the whole country sit up and take notice.

The first big test of women's power in municipal politics on the Pacific Coast came in Seattle last February, three months after equal suffrage was granted to the women of Washington. In Seattle, without any semblance of organization, and basing their fight directly on the clean-city idea, the women went to the polls and recalled Mayor Hiram

Charles Gill, a politician of many years standing, who was as strongly entrenched behind an organization as any mayor Seattle ever had. In place of Mr. Gill the women elected a man pledged to a "closed town" and to reform.

Four or five weeks later the women (some 23,000 of them were on the books as registered voters) started in to relegate to private life every member of the old Seattle city council not identified with reform, and to substitute therefor nine councilmen-at-large who would stand under the reform platform of the recall mayor. Out of sixty-eight candidates for nomination and election, representing all sorts and degrees of political timber, the women finally elected nine men of their own choosing, and did n't allow a single "ring" candidate, or a single "corporation candidate," or a single "liquor candidate" to get a chance at a seat in the councilmanic body. In other words, within the space of little more than a month, the women "fired" one mayor,

elected another, chose their own legislative body and showed politicians that advertising, and organization, and paid workers cut not the slightest figure with women when women decide to insurgre. One month later the women of Tacoma, on a moral issue, recalled Mayor A. V. Fawcett and appropriated to themselves the balance of power in that city. All these results, as the returns show, were brought about through the woman vote. And they accepted their honors modestly, failed to "crow" over the men, but firmly and politely announced that hereafter, for ever and ever, they intended to keep "right on the job" politically.

So whether suffrage is right or wrong; whether or not the women of Tacoma and Seattle were misled regarding the character and policies of the men against whom they worked; whether suffrage will make or "break" a State; whether women are or are not legally and morally entitled to the ballot, does not in the slightest degree affect the fact that, in

the two most notable instances of women participating as voters in municipal elections, they took what they believed to be the honest course, made campaigns that would put to shame any a trained politician and got exactly what they went out to get.

No man can predict whether Oregon, California, Nevada or Kansas will enfranchise women as a result of the campaigns now under way. Whether or not you believe in suffrage, one thing is certain; the very best element of both sexes in the five States that already have suffrage publicly profess to believe thoroughly in it. The same element of the people who are fighting "ring" politics all over the West are boosting for suffrage, and as long as the people are insurging against "ring" politics, so long will suffrage be a live and a vital issue.

It was in the early eighties that the first suffrage agitation started in the sparsely-settled Washington Territory. Came then Mrs. Abigail Scott Duniway,



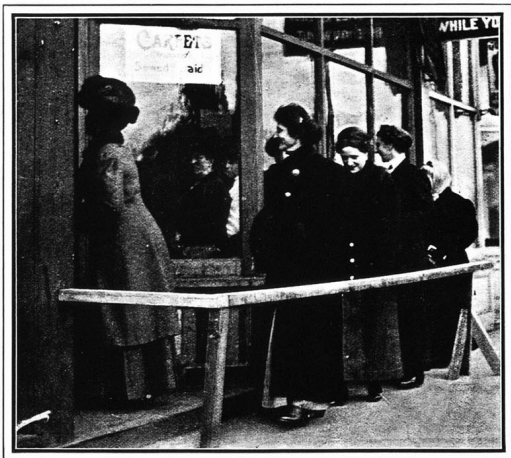
PRETTY "COLLEGE SUFFRAGE LEAGUE" GIRLS PASTING UP "VOTES FOR WOMEN" POSTERS. TEN THOUSAND SUCH POSTERS WERE DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE STATE DURING THE SUFFRAGE CAMPAIGN.

of Portland, sister of the late Harvey W. Scott, editor of *The Oregonian*, with the late Susan B. Anthony, of Rochester, N. Y., to Puget Sound, preaching the gospel of equal rights. There were few women in the Territory—white women who would be entitled to the ballot. Washington towns, in common with all frontier settlements, were morally careless and the laws of decency were far more honored in the breach than in the observance. That town boasting the most squaw dance halls and public gambling places was the town that boasted the most transient trade. But at the same time, when Mrs. Duniway and Miss Anthony began spreading their suffrage propaganda, there was a strong sentiment among the pioneers for less consumption of liquor and the elimination

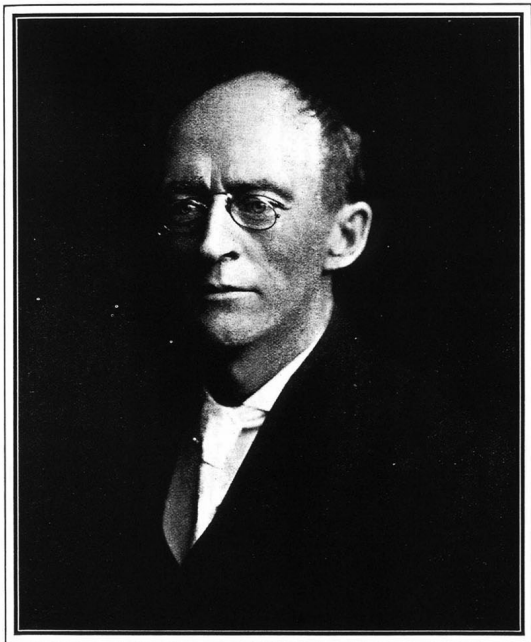
of gambling and the squaw dance hall.

Largely owing to the efforts of Mrs. Duniway in interviewing members of the legislature, that body in 1883 passed a suffrage law. At that time there were four federal judges in the Territory. These four judges also comprised the territorial supreme court. After the suffrage law was passed two separate decisions were handed down by these judges to the effect that the suffrage law was valid and would stick.

Grover Cleveland was elected President in 1884. His leanings were strongly anti-suffrage. Two of his Washington appointments to federal judgeships were George Turner and Rufus Langdon. Both were Democrats. The judicial benches then were filled by two Democrats and two Republicans, the Republi-



SEATTLE WOMEN GOING TO THE POLLS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR LIVES, AT THE GILL RECALL ELECTION. THE WOMEN, BY 6,000 VOTES, RECALLED MAYOR GILL.



HIRAM CHARLES GILL, MAYOR OF SEATTLE, RECALLED THROUGH WOMEN'S VOTES.

cans being Judges John P. Hoyt and Roger S. Greene. Both are still living and are now residents of Seattle. Both were advocates of equal rights for women. It might here be mentioned that Judge Greene is on record as saying that, in 1887 and 1888, when women had the right to vote in Washington, he never

before or since saw the law better enforced or political conditions more healthful.

Right here enters the "heavy man" of the plot, Harry Morgan, Tacoma's boss gambler. To obtain gambling concessions in Tacoma at that time one had first to approach Mr. Morgan very humbly

and enter into a gentleman's agreement relative to a division of the spoils. When Mr. Morgan in the fullness of time, passed to reward, it is of record that, on the day of his funeral, not a rattle wheel clicked on Puget Sound, and the cortege that followed the Morgan hearse was the greatest ever seen in Western Washington. Which, perhaps, proves that Mr. Morgan was possessed of virtues not so conspicuous to us at this distance.

One of Mr. Morgan's virtues appeared to be loyalty to his friends and co-workers. It so happened that one of his lieutenants committed some indiscretion that the police of Tacoma could not overlook. The lieutenant was arrested, tried by a jury on which women sat, and finally sent to the penitentiary.

Mr. Morgan naturally was incensed. He started out to see about it. That lieutenant was no good in jail. Therefore that lieutenant must get out of jail. But how? Attack the legality of the suffrage law, of course. If suffrage was illegal that trial jury was illegal and the gates of the penitentiary would yawn and allow the Morgan henchmen to walk out.

In 1887 Morgan, before Judge John P. Hoyt, attacked the validity of the suffrage act. He asked for a writ of habeas corpus. Judge Hoyt previously had written a decision declaring valid the suffrage act. He refused the writ and Morgan appealed to the supreme court.

Judge Hoyt, under the law, could not pass on the matter on appeal. This left the decision in the hands of Judges

Turner, Langdon and Greene. The first two ruled the law invalid on the grounds of defective title. Judge Greene was ill. He asked time to write a dissenting opinion, but before he could prepare it the majority opinion was published and the women found themselves voteless.

It might here be noted that the validity of nineteen other laws passed by the same legislature and "entitled" the same way, never were attacked, and four years later, after Washington became a State, the supreme court unanimously reversed the Turner-Langdon decision.

The legislature of 1888 then was in session. Its members were elected partially through women's ballots. It promptly passed another suffrage law and for a time all was well. President Cleveland was then in his second term. The Territorial supreme court had been increased to five members.

In the spring of 1888 the votes of all the women of the Territory who journeyed to the polls were accepted with one exception—that was the ballot of

Nevada Bloomer, of Spokane. Mrs. Bloomer brought a \$5000 damage suit against the election official, one Todd, who refused to receive her vote. Federal Judge Turner resigned from the bench and took Todd's case. In the lower court Mrs. Bloomer lost. She appealed to the Territorial supreme court.

In this court Judge Jones wrote a decision to the effect that when Congress passed the act organizing the Territory and giving the legislature the power to enfranchise any person it saw fit, it really



MISS ADELLA M. PARKER, PRESIDENT OF THE WASHINGTON COLLEGE SUFFRAGE LEAGUE, WHICH "FATHERED" THE SEATTLE RECALL LAW.



MRS. MAY ARKWRIGHT HUTTON, OF SPOKANE,  
PRESIDENT OF THE WASHINGTON POLITICAL  
EQUALITY LEAGUE.

conferred the right to enfranchise only male persons. Judge Jones died the next day, but his decision did n't, and once more the women were voteless.

Then came up the matter of Statehood. Before women could reassert what they believed to be their rights—before another election was held—the bill was passed admitting the State into the Union, and the constitutional convention, in which women had no voice, was called. It is asserted that the political leaders pledged themselves to write equal suffrage into the constitution. They did n't do it. An amendment submitted to the men voters only was defeated by what the women assert was a "trick" ballot.

In 1896 the State went for Bryan and a Populist legislature stepped into office. A suffrage campaign was opened and the legislature put a suffrage amendment up to a vote of the people in November, 1898. The Spanish-American war was closing, the Alaska gold rush was on, the reactionary wave following Populism was

at its height, the suffrage campaign, in spite of the tremendous amount of work put into it by Mrs. Homer M. Hill, of Seattle, who then led the movement, was far from strenuous and the amendment lost by about 9000 votes. For ten years the women made no serious effort to again win the ballot in the State.

But if the women were not doing any heavy campaigning for suffrage, they were politically busy, just the same, along other lines. The recall of Mayor Gill is a coincidence, inasmuch as the recall law was read into the city charter largely through the efforts of a woman, five years previously, or long before Mr. Gill was thought of as Mayor.

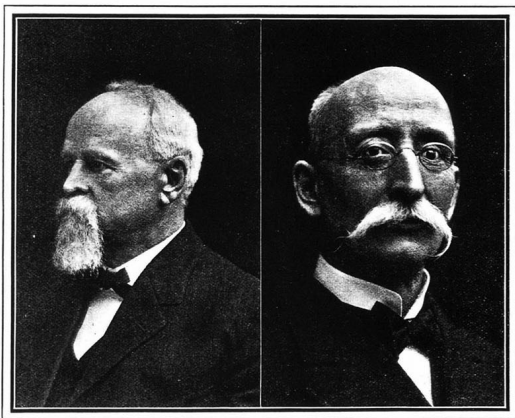
Miss Adella M. Parker, teacher of civics in a Seattle high school, a graduate of the law school of the University of Washington, president of the College Suffrage League, and for years a strenuous and militant worker for municipal good government, drafted the recall law, had petitions printed at her own expense, got many hundreds of signatures



MRS. HOMER M. HILL, PRESIDENT OF THE WASHINGTON EQUAL FRANCHISE SOCIETY.

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

could be persuaded to submit a constitutional amendment to the people, but the women decided to "start something" anyway, and on the spot a campaign fund was opened with \$1,000 pledged. Then the women began a whirlwind suffrage campaign, but at the same time a campaign not lacking in dignity—except in spots.



JUDGE JOHN P. HOYT AND JUDGE ROGER S. GREENE, WHO, AS FEDERAL JUDGES IN WASHINGTON'S TERRITORIAL DAYS, MADE A HARD BUT UNSUCCESSFUL FIGHT TO PREVENT THE SUFFRAGE LAW FROM BEING DECLARED INVALID.

"fathered" the initiative and referendum law that was read into the city charter before she even had a vote on the matter.

The state convention of the Washington Equal Suffrage Association was held in Seattle, June, 1908. Mrs. Emma Smith DeVoe, salaried State organizer of the National Suffrage Association, and other prominent delegates to the convention proposed that a legislative campaign be started for suffrage. At that time nobody believed the legislature

Campaign headquarters were established in the office of Dr. Cora Smith Eaton, in Seattle. Miss Adella Parker took up a militant publicity scheme that, for months, worked wonders. An established publicity bureau—composed of men—was engaged on a salary, the salary being paid by monthly contributions by the State suffrage society, the King County society and twenty women. Miss Parker drilled into line for monthly donations. Every newspaper in the State was bombarded daily, weekly and



monthly with suffrage news, stories and editorials. If every man, woman and child in the State did not know a suffrage campaign was on, it was only because they did not read the papers. Miss Margaret Bayne, of Seattle, had for two years been carrying on an educational suffrage publicity bureau, and this had done much to pave the way for the whirlwind press campaign that followed.

In the meantime a monster petition was being prepared for the legislature, and this was headed by the signatures of men. The petitions were to some extent arranged according to legislative districts. Some 10,000 names were affixed to petitions and these were sent to individual members of the legislature instead of forwarding them to the State law-making body in a bunch.

While the petitions were being sent in, lobby headquarters were established in Olympia, the State capital, with Mrs. Emma Smith DeVoe, president of the Washington Equal Suffrage Association, in charge, and relays of women from all parts of the State journeyed to Olympia to work. Some of the best known women of the State took turns lobbying. Among these were Mrs. Homer M. Hill, Mrs. May Arkwright Hutton, Mrs. Edward P. Fick, Mrs. Edith DeLong Jar-mouth, Mrs. Leonia W. Brown, Dr. Maude Parker, Dr. Sarah Kendall, Mrs. Ellen S. Leckenby, Mrs. Bessie Isaacs Savage, Helen, Louise, Gertrude and Lucy Kangley, Miss Adella M. Parker, Miss Mary Quigley, Miss Mary G. O'Meara, Miss Florentine Schage, Miss Margaret O'Meara, Miss Mary A. D. Brennan, Miss Mary Kelley, Miss Irene Walin, Mrs. George A. Smith, Mrs. E. M. Riniger, Mrs. Cora Melotte and a score of other women of equal prominence in the suffrage movement.

The legislative fight put up was a wonder. Senators and representatives daily received letters by the dozen asking their support to the movement. No representative in Olympia but was buttonholed half a dozen times a day and urged to work for "the cause." New women lobbyists, enthusiastic and untiring, constantly were arriving. The women themselves acknowledge that the House

passed the bill January 29, 1909, because the members literally were talked into doing it in self-defense—and because the belief was that the Senate would kill it.

But if the House had any such idea, the House was badly mistaken. If the representatives had been bothered, the senators knew not a minute's peace, and on February 23 it, too, passed the bill and called the people to vote on the matter November, 1910. Perhaps the Senate thought the people would do the killing. If so, it, too, was very badly mistaken.

From that time forward there was not, in Washington, one idle moment for any woman who believed in suffrage. They went out to get the votes of men and they made up their minds they would get them or know the reason why. A dozen different organizations for the promotion of votes for women sprang up. When news was dull these organizations started quarrels among themselves—and promptly told the newspapers all about them. Women who had been bosom friends for years quarreled—and didn't tell the papers about it. Many women who were good friends a year and a half ago do not now speak as they pass by, as a result of that campaign.

A suffrage cook-book was published to furnish a campaign fund. A suffrage campaign organ, printed monthly, was started and flourished for many months. Tons of literature were distributed. On posters, dead and gone statesmen, like Lincoln and Garrison, had their views on equal suffrage tacked up in public places by pretty Washington girls of the College Suffrage League. The publicity bureau was kept working overtime and, because of the constant bickerings that developed in the suffrage ranks, the news sent out was eagerly snapped up by editors. In addition to the publicity bureau, women in every county wrote suffrage news regularly for their county papers. Several big dailies allowed women at intervals to edit suffrage pages, and one or two got out suffrage editions.

A poll-list canvass was made in many precincts of the State, and almost every voter was personally solicited to vote for suffrage. Martha Gruening, of Phila-

delphia, came on to tell the labor unions of the struggles of the girls in the shirt-waist strike, and Minnie J. Reynolds, of New York City, campaigned on both sides of the mountains. Relays of college girls gave concerts interspersed with suffrage speeches and practically every city and town was "covered" by campaign orators.

The total amount of money expended during the campaign will never be accurately known. While the bulk of it was spent through three State organizations, hundreds of women—and men—expended small, and sometimes large, amounts on their own initiative, and many of the independent clubs made large expenditures. One small club sent a letter to every voter in two counties—Whatcom and Skagit—and these counties carried almost three to one. Another independent club got out 50,000 pieces of literature. In an eastern county one woman wrote, published and mailed a leaflet to every voter in three counties, and all over the State these devoted labors were duplicated.

The Washington Equal Suffrage Association made the largest expenditures. It distributed a little less than \$1,800 a year for the two years prior to the final campaign, and in the last sixteen months, it spent more than \$4,600, making a total of more than \$8,000.

Organized only eleven months, the Washington Political Equality League spent about \$3,500. The Washington Equal Franchise Society, during the four months of its life, spent about \$1,500.

Of the \$13,000 used by the three State organizations during the eighteen months preceding the vote, about \$2,500 was contributed by friends of "the cause" outside the State, chiefly from New York and New England. Nearly all the rest of the fund, with one or two exceptions, was contributed in small sums by the suffragists and their friends. Few contributions exceeded \$100. Some were as low as twenty-five cents. The labor unions and the granges of the State contributed about \$1,000.

The biggest excitement of the campaign came during the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, when the National suffragists held their annual convention

in Seattle in July, 1909. The convention delegates came as the guests of the Seattle suffragists and these paid all the expenses. Mrs. Emma Smith DeVoe was then not only salaried State organizer for the "National" in Washington, but was president of the Washington Equal Suffrage Association.

This State association, which held its annual convention the same week as the National, refused, on technical grounds, to seat a Spokane delegation. In retaliation the Spokane women protested against the seating of the Washington delegation in the National gathering, and the National association "went back of the returns," and refused the State association, its hostesses, a voice in the convention. The National organization would get no medal, by the way, for popularity in Washington today.

Mrs. DeVoe stuck by her State society and was promptly "fired" by the National body and her salary as State organizer cut off. At the convention there were many tears shed and close friends became enemies. The whole State laughed—but the whole State read of suffrage with renewed interest, just the same. At the final vote, Washington men cast 52,299 ballots for suffrage and 26,676 against it. The amendment was adopted November 8, 1910.

Seattle was the first city to receive the full effect of suffrage. An organization called the Public Welfare League had been working up a petition for the recall of Mayor Gill, who was accused of condoning gambling, and whose attitude on the handling of the social evil did not agree with the views of many citizens of the city.

Up to the time women were allowed to register preparatory to voting, the Public Welfare League had found it impossible to obtain sufficient signatures to the recall petitions. From the final results of the election it seems safe to say that a majority of the men of the city did not want Mayor Gill recalled. When the women began registering it was different. They signed petitions as fast as they registered, and it was the women's signatures to the petitions that made the recall possible.

During the recall campaign the women

conducted, not a campaign of speech-making, as they later did at the recall of Mayor Fawcett, of Tacoma, but a campaign of personal work. Gill lost the election by a trifle more than 6,000 votes—women's votes. The result was that the "segregated-vice" plan, in operation in Seattle for twenty years (with but a few months' interval while John F. Miller was mayor), was abolished. The vote was cast almost entirely on moral issues.

The campaign a month later, however, was even more significant of what women can do in municipal politics when they make up their minds to get busy.

A recent charter amendment had abolished the old system of ward councilmen, substituting for a council of eighteen members—fourteen from wards and four at large—nine members, all at large and drawing \$3,000 a year apiece. There were, as before mentioned, sixty-eight candidates. They represented everything from saloon to church interests. Every member of the old council was a candidate for re-election.

The women did not vote as their husbands and their fathers and their brothers always had voted in Seattle. They went out and hustled information about candidates, without bothering the men about it. They were active participants in a "Quiz Congress," to which every candidate for office was invited and questioned about his political beliefs and his real attitude regarding certain reforms. Out of 23,000 registered voters among women, the final results showed that not fifteen per cent voted according to the way male electors would ordinarily have voted in the City of Seattle. They elected a council composed of practically the same class of men and each man pledged to certain reforms that appeal primarily to women. The recall and the council-

manic elections were, trained politicians declare, the most remarkable ever held in the United States.

In Tacoma during the Fawcett recall campaign in April, the women went on the stump for and against both Mr. Fawcett and his opponent, Mr. Seymour. Fawcett was opposed by many of them because he had been married four times. Seymour was opposed by many of them because he had not been married until he was forty-eight years old. The women were the bitterest orators in the campaign. But the real issue in Tacoma was the same as it was in Seattle: Fawcett was believed to favor an open town and the liquor interests, and the women voted against him—that is, a majority of them did. It is said that Fawcett actually was opposed to any open-town administration, but that is beside the question. The women were led to believe he was too liberal, in spite of the anti-treating ordinance he previously put through and which brought to Tacoma some fame.

In Seattle, in Tacoma, in Portland, in San Francisco, in Los Angeles—in practically every city of the West, the women are far more broad-minded regarding governmental policies than are their sisters of the East. But certain it is that in the two cities first named the women already have demonstrated that they will insist upon clean government. It is reasonable to assume that they will insist upon it everywhere they may be given the right to vote. In the face of recent demonstration, it also is safe to assume that they will vote according to their own convictions and not according to anybody's else. It is clear that the West now is facing a new political era, particularly in municipal affairs, for the suffrage agitation is bound to continue and results from it are bound to come.

Editor's Note.—The recall of Mayor Gill and subsequent municipal affairs in Seattle involve a series of events so interesting that an article will be devoted to them in the August issue.

