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## A NEW CENTURY, 1901–1920

Britain's Queen Victoria—who also reigned over much of Africa, Asia, and the rest of the globe—died at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although she was a monarch in her own right and not politically dependent on her husband, Prince Albert of Germany, she encouraged a cult of domesticity that centered on him and their nine children. Victorianism had great influence in America during her long reign, from 1837 to 1901, and her passing signaled the passing of restrictions on female life implied by “Victorianism.”

The queen asked to meet Susan B. Anthony when both women were late in life, but the monarch never officially supported political equality for women in the way that she had taken a firm stand against slavery. That and other crimes against humanity—such as India's burning of widows and Chinese foot-binding that left women unable to walk—declined in colonies under her influence. Yet Victoria never spoke out on the vote for women or even the reform of English law that discriminated against her fellow females.

The first decade of the twentieth century, in fact, saw much feminist regression in the United States, as there were no victories for the vote in any state for fifteen years, between Idaho in 1896 and California in 1911. In Florida the women's movement of the 1890s dissipated, as no Floridian emerged to replace Ella Chamberlain's leadership.

National leaders did not even try: the Reverend Doctor Anna Howard Shaw—who had degrees in both medicine and theology—owned a winter home at Florence Villa, near Lakeland, and Susan B. Anthony visited her there in what turned out to be the last full winter of her life, in 1903–1904, but

STATES/TERRITORIES WHERE WOMEN WON FULL VOTING RIGHTS PRIOR TO THE NINETEENTH AMENDMENT IN 1920

| Year | State/Territory   | Notes   |
|------|-------------------|---|
| 1869 | Wyoming Territory | won on first attempt                            |
| 1870 | Utah Territory    | Congress repealed in 1887; re-won in 1890       |
| 1883 | Washington        | lost in 1887 court case; re-won in 1910         |
| 1893 | Colorado          | won on first attempt                            |
| 1896 | Idaho             | won on first attempt                            |
| 1911 | California        | after losing campaign in 1896                   |
| 1912 | Arizona           | won on first attempt                            |
| 1912 | Kansas            | after three losses, the first in 1867           |
| 1912 | Oregon            | after six losing campaigns, beginning in 1884   |
| 1913 | Alaska Territory  | won on first attempt                            |
| 1914 | Montana           | won on first attempt                            |
| 1914 | Nevada            | won on first attempt                            |
| 1917 | New York          | after losing in 1915                            |
| 1918 | Michigan          | after three losing campaigns, the first in 1871 |
| 1918 | Oklahoma          | third campaign; high barriers                   |
| 1918 | South Dakota      | after five losing campaigns, beginning in 1890  |

For more information on these and other states, see Doris Weatherford, *Women in American Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly press, 2012).

there is no evidence that these international feminists used their opportunity to try to reorganize Florida's feminists. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) held its 1903 convention in New Orleans—just its second one in the South—but although women from other southern states attended, it appears that no Floridian did.

Instead, the society editor of the *Tampa Tribune*, Louise Frances Dodge, went to New Orleans for Mardi Gras and imported that idea. The first Gasparilla parade (and a month of associated parties) was in 1904; now more

## GLOBAL EXPANSION OF FULL VOTING RIGHTS

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Nation</i>                                |
|-------------|--|
| 1881        | Isle of Man (British territory)              |
| 1893        | New Zealand                                  |
| 1893        | South Australia                              |
| 1899        | Western Australia                            |
| 1902        | all Australia                                |
| 1906        | Finland                                      |
| 1907        | Norway                                       |
| 1915        | Denmark                                      |
| 1915        | Iceland                                      |
| 1917        | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Russia) |
| 1918        | All Canadian provinces except Quebec         |
| 1918        | Great Britain                                |
| 1918        | Austria                                      |
| 1918        | Ireland                                      |
| 1918        | Poland                                       |
| 1919        | Germany                                      |
| 1919        | Luxembourg                                   |
| 1919        | Holland                                      |
| 1920        | United States                                |

### **International Meetings**

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Location</i>                                       | <i>Leaders/Issues</i>                    |
|-------------|---|--|
| 1878        | Paris   | Julia Ward Howe; Theodore Stanton        |
| 1883        | Liverpool   | Susan B. Anthony; Elizabeth Cady Stanton |
| 1888        | Washington  | May Wright Sewall, Indianapolis          |
| 1893        | Chicago   | Bertha Honore Palmer, Sarasota resident* |
| 1899        | London  | Countess of Aberdeen                     |
| 1902        | Washington  | Clara Barton                             |
| 1904        | Berlin  | Mary Church Terrell                      |
| 1906        | Copenhagen  | Carrie Chapman Catt                      |
| 1908        | Amsterdam   | debate on British militants              |
| 1909        | London  | debate on British militants              |
| 1911        | Stockholm   | Rev. Dr. Anna Howard Shaw                |
| 1913        | Budapest  | Hungarian Rosika Schwimmer               |
| 1914        | World War I begins, ending international organization |  |

*Note:* \* See chapter 5.

than a century old, the Tampa parade attracts a half-million people every winter. Instead of improved legal or economic status, women appeared to value the pageantry of beauty queens.

Other nations led the way for feminism. Indeed, one of America's most accomplished women may have been better known abroad than at home: Mary Church Terrell, an African American who lived in Washington, D.C., was the hit at the meeting of the 1904 International Woman Suffrage Alliance in Berlin. She delivered her speech in flawless English, German, and French. International meetings would continue on a regular basis until World War I ended them, but women elsewhere were more successful at winning voting rights than in America.

California finally turned the tide in 1911, when women there won the vote in a very close, very sophisticated campaign. That brought revitalization elsewhere, and Jacksonville women began rebuilding Florida's movement in 1912. Some thirty women met on June 15 at the home of Mrs. Herbert Anderson and formed the Equal Franchise League. The president was Katherine Livingstone Eagan; the vice president was Roselle C. Cooley, and Frances Anderson was secretary. They were sufficiently connected to prosperous men that Heard National Bank gave them space for an office—yet the cause remained so controversial that neither the Chamber of Commerce nor the Jacksonville Woman's Club would rent them space for larger meetings.

The NAWSA sent one of its excellent organizers, Lavinia Engle, to northeast Florida, and in February 1913 women in Lake Helen began the Political Equality Club, with Mrs. S. A. Armstrong as president and Irene Adams as secretary. Two weeks later the Equal Suffrage League of Orlando formed at the home of Mrs. J. C. Patterson. Rev. Mary Augusta Safford, a Unitarian minister who had arrived from Iowa in 1905, was elected president. (She is not to be confused with Dr. Mary Safford of Tarpon Springs, discussed in the previous chapter.)

The Orlando group took immediate political action. According to NAWSA reporter Alice G. Kollock:

The Mayor issued a notice that all freeholders [property tax payers] must register for the sewerage bond election by the 9th, and a few suffragists saw their opportunity. Very secretly and hurriedly . . . Miss Emma Hainer and Mrs. Helen Starbuck gathered together several women who owned valuable property and they went to the city clerk's office and announced that they had come . . . to register. . . . [They were

told] that they law did not permit women to register. This they knew, but their action caused a discussion of the question and disclosed a widespread belief that women should have the right to vote.<sup>1</sup>

The national scene changed the next month, when feminists held their first parade in the nation's capital. This also was an imported idea: British feminists had been holding street demonstrations for years—and militants even drew attention to the issue by starting fires in mailboxes and damaging the property of their opponents in Parliament. Some young American women had participated while studying abroad, and Alice Paul in particular brought the ideas home. Presidential inaugurations were in March then, and they scheduled a parade the day prior to President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration.

Such marches had been held in New York and other cities by 1913 but not in the capital. Because Washington police had no experience with female protestors, too many assumed that any woman so brazen as to take to the streets could be treated the same way that police routinely treated prostitutes. The result of this police attitude was that many men jeered and physically assaulted women. In the end the police chief lost his job, while feminists gained admirers for their courage.

Floridians followed up the very next month, when Montana's Jeannette Rankin spoke to the legislature. Just a few years later, in 1916, she would be the first woman elected to Congress, but in 1913 she was employed by the NAWSA. Jacksonville's Roselle Cooley wrote of Rankin's April appearance in the still-extant Old Capitol building in Tallahassee:

The House of Representatives decided to hear us in a Committee of the Whole, at an evening session. In this case, it meant the whole House, the whole Senate, and the whole town. Seats, aisles, the steps of the Speaker's rostrum were filled, windows had people sitting in them and in the hall, as far as one could see, people were standing on chairs to hear the first call for the rights of women ever uttered in the Capitol of Florida.<sup>2</sup>

The crowd behaved well, and no one heckled. Two other women spoke in addition to Cooley, Safford, and Rankin. The *Tampa Tribune* got Safford's name wrong, calling her "Dr. R. C. Safford of Orlando," and gave no first name for the Montana visitor, saying only "Miss Rankin." The *Jacksonville Times-Union* muffed even that, calling her "Miss Ruskin." Its reporter did

take care, though, to detail that she “was dressed in a panner draped gown of lavender charmouse, leghorn hat and white plume.”

Legislators made no response until May 2, when Representative W. A. MacWilliams of St. Johns County used his parliamentary skills to bring a resolution to the floor. It lost 26–39, but as the disappointed women were leaving for their homes, Senator Fred Cone of Lake City urged them to stay. He was the Senate leader, and he told Cooley, “If you will come into the Senate, we will show those men [in the House] how to treat ladies.”<sup>3</sup>

The *Tallahassee Democrat* enthused: “The prominent Florida women who are making a brilliant fight . . . for woman suffrage, this morning sprang a decided surprise . . . by challenging . . . [senators] to a joint debate.” The paper printed the women’s detailed proposal and added its own bit of goading: if the senators refused, it editorialized, it “will not be the first time that a man ‘beat it’ when so challenged.”

The debate occurred the next day, although without the formal conditions the women had proposed. The relevant Senate committee voted to recommend the enfranchisement bill, but finally, after more waiting and more filibustering, on May 28, the question was tabled with a floor tally of 16–15. Senate records indicate that James E. Calkins of Fernandina, who had been a supporter, switched to opposition on the last roll call. Although Senate Leader Cone had put their bill on the special calendar and advised the women on the process, they nonetheless lost, Cooley said, to “the corporation members and the whiskey men.”<sup>4</sup>

Several members used less candid and more confused language to explain away their records. Representative W. J. Epperson of Levy County began explicating his negative position by saying that he was actually positive:

I am in favor of women voting on moral, temperance, and educational questions, also being allowed to become members of School Boards . . . but I am opposed to giving women the full ballot, as it would draw them down from the high pedestal upon which Southern men have placed them. To stand with men at the polls . . . would possibly lower their morals.<sup>5</sup>

Unconcerned about their morality, women continued to organize. At a three-day meeting in early November, they formed the Florida Equal Suffrage Association and elected Rev. Safford as president. The first vice president was Mrs. C. J. Huber of Webster, while Ella Chamberlain, who had returned to Tampa, was second vice president. Caroline Brevard, an

unmarried woman from a prominent Tallahassee family, was third vice president, and the corresponding secretary was Miss Elizabeth Askew, a Tampa banker. Other officers included Miss Frances B. Anderson, Jacksonville; Mrs. Anna Andrus, Miami; and Mrs. John Schnarr and Mrs. J. M. Thayer, both of Orlando.

The legislature met only in odd-numbered years, and women devoted 1914 to building membership. Some fourteen hundred people attended a Jacksonville rally, and new chapters began from Miami to Pensacola. Many were in towns that are small now, but were important then: among them were Milton, Pine Castle, Winter Park, and Zellwood. Perhaps the most striking aspect of 1914 activity, though, was the formation of a Men's Equal Suffrage League, with Orlando's Mayor E. F. Sperry as president.

Kate Gordon, a nationally known suffragist from New Orleans, spoke in Jacksonville that year, while the Orlando group had a float in the winter parade and collected petitions for the vote at a fair. In Pensacola women had a booth at a tri-county fair, and Pensacola also hosted the 1914 state convention. Delegates were told to emphasize getting pledges of support from that year's congressional candidates, and "most of the leagues," Alice Kollack added, "formed classes to study history and the duties of citizenship."<sup>6</sup>

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The legislature met again in 1915—and women won a significant if subtle victory that year. The era was prosperous, and many new towns were forming on the lower portion of the east coast. The Indian River County town of Fellsmere had a population eight times larger than that of Palm Beach in 1915, when Fellsmere's founders sent the paperwork for incorporation to that year's legislature. Because women had played a strong formative role, the municipal charter included them as voters: legislators did not notice, and they authorized the charter along with dozens of other local bills that traditionally are not debated. With their vote in municipal elections authorized, the very first Florida woman to cast a ballot was Fellsmere's Mrs. Zena M. Drier.

Other municipalities followed, and the Glades County town of Moore Haven would elect Marian Newhall Horowitz O'Brien as mayor in 1917—just two years after the Fellsmere precedent. Born to a wealthy Philadelphia family, she inherited Glades County land and was a young widow when she moved there to develop it. After marrying John O'Brien, she added cre-