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The status of woman suffrage in Virginia 1909-1920

Betty C. Pitts

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THE STATUS OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN VIRGINIA

1909 - 1920

Seminar Report
for
Dr. F. W. Gregory
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for History 509
Master of Arts
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Betty C. Pitts
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The woman suffrage movement in Virginia, as in other parts of the nation, must be viewed within the total context of reform which pervaded in the first two decades of the twentieth century in America. The evils associated with the industrial revolution, mass immigration, and the urban crisis produced in the minds of men and women a favorable climate for sweeping sociological changes.

Despite the receptive attitudes of individual men and women, the woman suffrage movement could never have been successful without "a heroic mustering of effort...", which has never since been achieved by this same group except during a national crisis.

Because the movement's importance has only recently been of interest to unbiased historians, little work has been done on the woman suffrage cause on the state and local levels. Resource materials, which are abundant, often display an inconsistency in quality which may account for the lack of effort in this area. In spite of defects in the materials encountered by researchers, attempts to characterize in general terms the woman suffrage movement should not be discouraged.
By 1918, many Virginians familiar with the woman suffrage movement acknowledged that voting privileges for women in the United States could only be guaranteed by an amendment to the Federal Constitution. Although ultimately the enfranchisement of women came about because of a Congressional amendment, the Virginia suffrage advocates wanted to make clear the state's role in obtaining equal voting rights for women through action by the Virginia General Assembly. Therefore, from 1912 to 1918, the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia organized a campaign to educate the public and persuade members of both the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates that woman suffrage deserved urgent consideration. The leaders of the Equal Suffrage League believed that legislative action on the state level offered the most practical method of enfranchising women, a belief which was in accord with the original principles on which the organization had been based. Forgotten evidence exists which proves that ardent state legislators in Virginia frequently endeavored to enact a law which would enfranchise women, in hope of negating the necessity for an amendment to the Federal Constitution. The fallacious generalization of one historian "that by the time Congress proposed the Nineteenth Amendment, woman suffrage was as
such a regional phenomenon of the West as the white primary was of the South," demonstrates the result of historically assessing a situation without using all available facts. 7

Legislative initiative on the state level began when Hill Montague, Richmond's representative in the House of Delegates, introduced into the Virginia General Assembly the first resolution enfranchising women. On January 18, 1912, he presented petitions calling for an amendment to the state constitution to grant women the right to vote. 8 The petitions were referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, where they remained until February 5, 1912. 9 Then the Committee approved a resolution affirming the need for an amendment to the state constitution to enfranchise women, providing however that the vote should be taken in the succeeding session of the General Assembly. 10 Alden Bell, delegate from Culpeper, proposed an amendment to the resolution which would limit women's vote in elections to issues concerning taxation of property and "school matters." 11 The House of Delegates rejected Bell's amendment and then the original resolution, the vote on the latter being 12 in favor and 65 opposed. 12 Interestingly, support for the movement came from such geographically scattered areas that no single section of Virginia could claim primary leadership in the suffrage movement. 13

In the next biennial session of the General Assembly, in 1911, Hill Montague along with Delegates Chalkley, Lincoln, and Willis, all representing western Virginia counties, reintroduced the same
woman suffrage resolution. 14 Again it was referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. 15 The House vote on the bill, 13 years and 17 nays, indicates that many members refrained from publicly reaching a decision. 16 Sensing opposition in the legislature, Jessie Townsend, President of the Equal Suffrage League of Norfolk, wrote to Mr. Woodard, a state legislator, refuting his erroneous charges and expounding upon her own opinions in a rhetorical style even her opponents admired, 17 Addressing first Mr. Woodard's objectivity, Jessie Townsend urged him to consider the woman suffrage bill just as he would any other issue which concerned his constituents and not "simply as a fad of the women that will soon die out...." 18 To obliterate any notion on the part of Mr. Woodard that woman suffrage was not a serious matter among Virginia women, Mrs. Townsend stated that there were close to 1,000 members in the Virginia League and many more who offered their support by signing petitions destined for the state legislature. 19 Questioning the validity of Mr. Woodard's conviction that he would only consider granting suffrage when all women in the state desired it, the Norfolk suffragette wrote, "Was there ever any reform desired by all who it was designed to benefit? If so it would not have been needed it would have been already in action." 20 Mrs. Townsend repudiated Mr. Woodard's accusations of militancy on the part of women and reiterated the objectives of Virginia suffrage supporters to employ peaceful rather than coercive strategies. 21 In closing, she challenged the state legislator with the following remarks:
It [woman suffrage] is a thing as inevitable as was the abolition of human slavery. The only vital point for our legislators to consider now, is what place in the ranks will they occupy? Will they be the first to concede the freedom of half their people and the personal liberty that Patrick Henry pleaded for, the God-given innate inherent right of every person born, or naturalized, in these United States, to express his or her vote at the polls and thus have rightful representation in their government? Will Va. be the first of the Eastern states? Will she lead in this great modern movement against taxation without representation, as she led in the earlier one? 22

When the General Assembly convened in 1916, the woman suffrage movement in Virginia had reached new heights of power and influence. On January 21, a joint woman suffrage resolution was presented to the Committee of Privileges and Elections with an eventual rejection by the House of Delegates on February 18. 23 However, compared with the two preceding sessions, the vote reflected a narrowing margin of opposition, with 40 members favoring the resolution and 52 opposing. 24 The overall number of delegates participating in the vote greatly increased, and, of those delegates voting, 64 percent voted in favor of a woman suffrage amendment to the state constitution.

In 1918, the introduction of legislation to amend the state constitution ceased, reflecting the inevitable passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. During this biennial session, R. H. Willis, delegate representing the city of Roanoke, and E. Lee Trinkle, senator representing the counties of Giles and Wythe, presented resolutions in their respective bodies requesting Virginia's representatives in the
United States Senate to vote in favor of the Congressional amendment providing for woman suffrage. 25 Both the House and Senate resolutions never received committee confirmation and hence were neither rejected nor approved. Although little attention appears to have been given to the matter of suffrage for women, joint resolutions were passed by the House and Senate which regulated the hours of women employees and approved the admission of women to the College of William and Mary. 26

Virginia had the opportunity to ratify the Nineteenth Amendment and thus cast the decisive vote which would transform the status of the proposed amendment to law. On February 13, 1920, the General Assembly chose to reject it. 27 Later in the 1920 session, after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, a joint resolution was approved entitled "An ACT extending the right of suffrage to women; assessing a State capitation tax on certain women residents of Virginia; and prescribing the qualifications of women entitled to vote for members of the general assembly and all officers elective by the people, and the manner in which women may register and vote; also providing when this act shall take effect." 28 Mary past and present members of the General Assembly had labored since 1912 to affect this act. It might be conjectured that, with the rising sentiments in favor of woman suffrage, the outcome of this resolution would have been the same even without the passage of the Congressional amendment. A bitingly sarcastic letter received by Mrs. Jessie Tompsett from a more radical suffragette perhaps succinctly foretold the legislative outcome of woman suffrage in
Virginia as well as in other states which delayed in meeting the challenge of this issue.

I am more convinced every hour I breathe, my dear friend, that through Federal work, our goal will be won. Never thru the states, in kingdom end. Of course, the state work is all right, as it is a good background for the Federal work, but our victory in the South, will be found in Congress. It is so much easier, my dear, to convert 500 men, than millions of them. 29
The Equal Suffrage League of Virginia was founded on November 20, 1909, in the Richmond residence of Mrs. Dabney S. Crenshaw. At this meeting, Lila Meade Valentine accepted the presidency of the League, a position she retained throughout the life of the association. Influential in suffrage work both on the national and international levels, Lila Valentine made her greatest contribution by organizing the movement within Virginia. Despite repeated efforts by Mrs. Valentine to create a strong central branch in Richmond and solid associations elsewhere in the state, the Equal Suffrage League floundered in the midst of apathy and ill-defined objectives. At the height of its success, the League consisted of 115 autonomous branch organizations. A lack of coordination among branches weakened the Equal Suffrage League as a whole and requires that the basis for any analysis must consist of individual evaluations of separate organizations. In an attempt to give an overall impression of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia, annual reports of the branches for 1914 have been examined.

In a surprisingly inconsequential annual report, the Equal Suffrage League of Richmond boasted a large membership of 1,606 people; however, the prestige of this organization was based on the excellent reputation of its President, Lila Valentine, rather than mere numerical strength. In time, the fame of the Richmond League and of its leader became
Lila Valentine represented the conservative view held by most state participants in the suffrage movement that the vote for women would be insured by legislation in the Virginia General Assembly rather than in the U.S. Congress. Her fear that militant tactics on the part of some women would undermine the constructive accomplishments of others compelled Lila Valentine to pursue only the most peaceful courses of action. Mrs. Valentine's prominence in the area of women's rights is evidenced by the many tributes paid her during her lifetime and especially by the memorial marble plaque dedicated to her in 1935, after her death, which now appears in the chamber of the Virginia House of Delegates. It reads, "Lila Haude Valentine — Great in Mind and Soul, And in Service to Humanity, Leader in Virginia for the Enfranchisement of Women." Mrs. Valentine contributed to the education of Virginians on the timeliness of women suffrage. Her public speaking engagements were prolific in number. Although she did not have a formal educational background, her husband and father-in-law realized her talents for leadership and hired private tutors from the University of Virginia and the University of Richmond to aid in fulfilling her desires to learn. She excelled in the field of literature and developed able oratorical and writing skills. One author says, "She had an excellent critical sense, and her letters reflect a style that is both spontaneous and literate." Women involved in the movement throughout Virginia remembered Mrs. Valentine's visits to remote rural areas of the state and the
inspiration which she was capable of instilling in those who were
less committed to the cause. Mrs. Roberta M. Wilcox recalled,

The only thing that stands out clearly in my
mind is a visit of Mrs. D. B. Valentine,
whose lovely personality and comprehensive
grasp of her subject impressed us all...Such
a frail person on the strictest diet, subject
to terrific headaches and sleeping so poorly,
yet never refusing a call to go into the wilds
of the country and speak under the most trying
conditions. 41

Catherine Douchat of Charles City County noted, "The people here
were indifferent on the subject of woman suffrage and I was greatly
pleased by the interest Mrs. Valentine created in it by her logic
and irresistible personality." 42

The urban Equal Suffrage League of Norfolk prospered under the
direction of its president, Jessie Townsend. Unlike Lila Valentine,
she confined her activities to the Norfolk area and did not partici-
pate in public speaking campaigns throughout the state. There is
evidence in much of Mrs. Townsend's correspondence which supports the
conclusion that the Norfolk League was considered to be the strongest
in the state. In Norfolk's annual report for 1914, the number of
members is not recorded; however, it appears that the city's league
was the wealthiest in the state. 43 Mrs. Faith Horgan of Hampton
compared the Richmond and Norfolk Leagues and stated, "Your head-
quartres is of great value to us...their Headquarters are no where
as good as yours." 44 Mrs. Townsend, taking pride in the reputation
of her organization, wrote, "The Norfolk League is of contemporary age in the Virginia State League and owing to its cosmopolitan situation usually is in the advance guard. We believe we are a gateway of the South in suffrage." 45

Despite the respect shown for the Norfolk League within the state, people outside of Virginia who favored the Congressional approach ridiculed Mrs. Townsend's acceptance of her co-workers who were generally less enthusiastic about women suffrage. Minnie E. Brooke of Washington, D.C. wrote, "I am only sorry dear friend [Jessie Townsend], that a woman with your progressive spirit must still be kept down by tradition and imaginary modesty," and hinted that the women of Virginia showed that they "are not even beyond the kindergarten of suffrage." 46

A general survey of several rural and semi-rural branch leagues of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia reveals the varying degrees of strength which the movement had throughout the state. The most concise annual report for 1914 was submitted by the Bath County Equal Suffrage League. 47 The 59 members of the League were neither requested to pay "regular dues" nor attend "regular meetings." 48 In contrast to the wealthier urban branches which could afford speakers and elaborate programs, Miss Eloise Johnston, Secretary of the Bath League, stated, "This league is, with some exceptions, composed of hard-working country women, living far apart, with little time of their own, and not as yet with an adequate idea of suffrage work." 49 In a hand-written report, Mrs. Fannie King, President of
the Equal Suffrage League of Staunton, submitted praise for "the quiet personal work" conducted by the League's 53 members, which included six men. She attributed the very slowly increasing membership to the lack of an available public facility to house the meetings. As was the case with other branches of the Equal Suffrage League, the Farmville branch in its annual report complained of the large number of its members who were absent from the locality during the summer months. This resulted from the fact that many of the 25 members on roll were from the faculty of Longwood College and were therefore only active during the academic year. In the Farmville report, Roberta H. Lange, Secretary, expounded upon the League's activities including lectures and the intense study of a textbook on state and local government. She closed on a note of confidence and stated, "We can see a very marked difference in general public opinion in our town on this subject. Very many are interested and do not hesitate to say they are suffragists, who for good reasons (mainly male relatives) can not join." Mrs. R. H. Crawford, President of the Equal Suffrage League of Williamsburg, concurred with other branch leagues and observed that the League was making "slow but steady progress." Although the Williamsburg League had planned to send delegates to the state convention of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia in 1914, the members found that "home duties and lack of funds" prohibited their representation. Activities such as card parties and plays provided some of the revenue needed to sustain the local chapter.
demonstrated the inefficacy experienced by a branch which had loyal and enthusiastic members but limited financial assets. In the annual report of the Equal Suffrage League of Lynchburg, separate figures are given for active and inactive members. Although 250 persons signed enrollment cards, only 90 of these could be classed "working members." 58 Mrs. Lewis, President, expressed gratitude to the Y.M.C.A. which allowed the women of the Equal Suffrage League to use their facilities "in face of violent opposition by the local press." 59

A very sophisticated listing of subjects for lectures included "History of Political parties in relation to the franchise," "Impression of European Women in connection with Equal Suffrage," and "Status of Women in Civilized Lands." 60 Also, events such as equal suffrage meetings and teas proved successful in light of the truism that "the stomach sometimes yields to logic where the mind fails." 61 Like Danville, Lynchburg reported the vociferous opposition of the press toward suffrage, but closed by noting that "the better element of women are slowly awakening to its claims, and also the better element of men." 62

Urban as well as rural branches employed informal methods of keeping records. The fluctuation of membership within branches and the lack of time to devote to coordination and organization led those involved in the women suffrage movement to compose their notes in an inconsistent manner. Also, the scarcity of accurate and complete records reflects the failure of many to recognize the historical importance of their actions. Mrs. G.S.L. Norris recalled in 1936...
that the proceedings of the Buckingham County Equal Suffrage League were "probably destroyed when I had to move my desk, not thinking that it was worth keeping." 63 Mrs. J. S. Davenport likewise destroyed the minutes of the Tamassee County Equal Suffrage League "never dreaming they would be of any use in the future." 64 One former member of Galax's Equal Suffrage League recounted a more distressing fact that there had been no efforts to keep records of the organization's proceedings. 65
Like other woman suffrage associations on both the state and national levels, the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia encountered difficulties which weakened their efforts. Three of the four major problems facing the suffrage movement in Virginia were also common to other associations -- internal divisions within the movement, inadequate coverage in and misrepresentation by the newspapers, and organized efforts by groups founded specifically to oppose woman suffrage. The fourth major difficulty, reconciliation of woman suffrage and white supremacy, represented a problem unique in the South.

Dissension within the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia arose over the creation of a branch of the Congressional Union in Virginia. The Congressional Union, led by Alice Paul on the national scene, opposed the state approach to woman suffrage and favored a Congressional amendment. The Union also gained notoriety by advocating militant techniques for educating the public. When the Congressional Union formed a branch in Virginia, to the chagrin of Lila Valentine, it secretly used the facilities of the Equal Suffrage League in Richmond to house its administrative operations. 66 Congressional Union suffragists, using the Richmond League's office equipment
...and index files of names of the members of the Virginia League, clandestinely worked from the Headquarters in Richmond after the offices were closed on normal workdays. 67 Mrs. Valentine who adamantly disagreed with the philosophy of Alice Paul, despised the Union's surreptitious activities. "Such a proceeding we consider dishonorable in the extreme and if I had no other reason against the existence of their Union in Virginia, this very unscrupulous method of attempting their needs would constitute a strong one. I am sick at heart...." 68

Another incident involving the Congressional Union which Lila Valentine found extremely repugnant was an attempt of Alice Paul to force the Virginia Senators in Congress to announce how they intended to vote on the Congressional amendment before the vote was taken. 69 In a statement which appeared in the Richmond Evening Journal, Alice Paul informed the public that Senator Martin of Virginia would vote in favor of the amendment. 70 In reply, Martin publically denounced the amendment, emphatically denied that he would vote in favor of it, and related that he at no time had either seen or spoken to Alice Paul. 71 Senator Martin had been compelled to make a premature formal commitment. Alice Paul's coercive techniques aroused the anger of Lila Valentine, who declared her earnest intentions of working more vigorously than before to persuade both state and national representatives that the cause of women suffrage was a just one, "even now in spite of the Woman's Party meddling with and muddling the question...." 72

Despite the clamor that the Congressional Union caused, the
faction received little support among the state woman suffrage workers. In fact, many organizations within Virginia warned the Equal Suffrage League to avoid contact with the Congressional Union. Some of these organizations were the Federation of Labor, the Virginia Division of the Farmer's Educational and Cooperative Union of America, the Central Trades and Labor Council, the Machinists Union, the Plumbers Union, the Painters and Carpenters Union, the Painters and Decorators Union, the Blacksmiths Union, the Molders Union, and the Bi-County W.C.T.U. (Women's Christian Temperance Union) of Chesterfield and Henrico Counties. 73

The women of Virginia who were most active in the woman suffrage movement felt that their cause had been seriously neglected and grossly misrepresented by the state's newspapers, particularly the Richmond press. 74 The press which served a necessary educational function failed to report the successes of the women's movement in other states and nations. 75 When articles appeared in many of the state's newspapers, the reporting was often inaccurate, with editorials slanted in favor of the opposition. 76 Virginia advocates of woman suffrage criticized the newspapers' overemphasis of the militant tactics of women outside of the state and the radical conclusion often reached by Virginia journalists that the voting privilege would not be exercised when obtained. 77 S. T. Clover, President and Editor of The Journal Company, Inc., which published the Richmond Evening Journal, reaffirmed the complaints of woman suffragists. He said, "The bigoted attitude of many of my fellow editors amazes me at times." 78
sponsored letter-writing campaigns to the editors of local newspapers, urging the press to be more responsive and sympathetic. 79

In an effort to enhance the chances for all Virginia women to better understand the suffrage movement, the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia sponsored the monthly publication of a woman suffrage newspaper entitled *The Virginia Suffrage News*. 80 Alice Overby Taylor, executive secretary of the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia, edited the newspaper which was founded in October 1914. 81 *The Virginia Suffrage News* was never more than moderately successful because of the lack of subscriptions, and, in January 1915, the Richmond League had to defray the total expenses for its printing. 82 In 1915, publication of *The Virginia Suffrage News* was suspended due to Mrs. Overby's loss of profits on cotton interests in the deep South; 83 with paper shortages, high labor costs, and pressing responsibilities at home brought on by the war, the newspaper never became the instructive tool of the Virginia woman suffrage movement that had been anticipated. 84 In a memorial to Alice Taylor, upon her death in December 1918, the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia praised her "unusual blending of executive ability, poetic soul and literary talent...," which had made the short-lived *Virginia Suffrage News* a "worthwhile paper." 85

The single most effective organization of opposition encountered by the woman suffrage movement in Virginia was the Virginia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. The foundation for their opposition was based on the conviction "that women are more useful to the state when
free from political entanglements." The organization upheld the belief that the majority of women in Virginia did not desire to encumber their lives with the voting privilege which would foster a feeling of duty rather than desire to participate in the electoral system. During the period under consideration, the Virginia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage campaigned vigorously by printing numerous pamphlets and fliers which, with a sure of sensationalism, attempted to curb support for woman suffrage. The fundamental argument of the opposition was that the real reforms which were needed would not be aided by giving women the right to the ballot. The fliers emphasized that woman suffrage could in no way increase employment opportunities, raise wage scales, abolish liquor traffic, or check the rampant growth of prostitution. Besides the inability of woman suffrage to affect other reforms, enfranchising women would double the cost of holding elections. In a "yellow-journalistic" manner, the Virginia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage linked the movement with socialism. A flier entitled "DANGER! Woman's Suffrage the Vanguard of Socialism" tainted woman suffrage with anti-Christian philosophies and related that members of both movements had combined forces in a New York parade. Threatening "Danger Sirs Ahead of you. Do you not recognize the kinship? Is not this Plain enough for you?" the flier along with hundreds of other such publications were widely distributed by businesses which supported the opposition.

In the early years of the women's rights movement, woman suffrage
had been closely aligned with abolition; however, with the ascendency of woman suffrage in the South, this previous association was severed. In the South, one argument used by those men and women opposed to enfranchising women stressed the detrimental effect that woman suffrage would inflict on the concept of white supremacy. The opposition feared that the combined voting strength of Negro men and women might cancel out the white vote, especially in black-belt counties. In order to deal with the opposition's argument, southern states which held membership in the northern-based National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) demanded freedom to express racially prejudiced viewpoints without incensing their northern counterparts. The NWSA supported a "states-rights" position, thus giving each member organization the power to use arguments agreeable with sectional philosophies to further the cause of women's rights. According to Alice Kraditor, this autonomy of each state organization resulted in "freedom for Southern members to express racist views from NWSA convention platforms and freedom for Northern members to announce that the Southerners possessed the right to do so without being controverted." Many attempted to refute the claims of those who argued that woman suffrage and white supremacy were incompatible. In 1867, Henry B. Blackwell, an abolitionist from Massachusetts and husband of woman suffrage leader Lucy Stone, published an essay entitled "What the South Can Do." In the essay, Blackwell used statistics to show that the total number of white women in the South was greater than the combined number of Negro men and women. The statistical proof appeared to support the idea that giving women voting rights would guarantee the
rule of white supremacy in the South. Despite the fact that on paper this argument was valid, the realities of black-belt politics in the South caused Virginians to demand an even greater assurance that white majorities would be upheld. In letters written to Jessie Townsend in 1915, Lila Valentine urged her Norfolk associate to seek legal advice to determine the legislative manner available to disenfranchise the Negro if "the educational, poll tax, and residential qualifications prove in any black county insufficient to maintain white supremacy." Even though Mrs. Valentine felt that "all this talk about negro rule if women are enfranchised is nonsense...", she forbade Mrs. Townsend from bringing the issue before the public for debate until definite constitutional measures for keeping the Negro inferior had been drafted.
The commencement of the active participation of the United States in World War I offered woman suffrage advocates an opportunity to further their aims. They capitalized on their sacrifices at home which had been necessary to insure the triumph of democracy abroad. The Equal Suffrage League of Richmond and other state branches supported the new idea that women's efforts to secure a victory in the war merited, in return, an upgraded legal and social status for America's second-class citizens. In a resolution sent to Virginia's U.S. senators, the Equal Suffrage League of Richmond urged reconsideration of the woman suffrage question and in closing stated, "The women of Virginia trust that you will thus assist in removing them from the humiliating position of being less politically free than will be the women of the defeated countries when peace is established." 102

In another attempt to persuade Senators Martin and Swanson of Virginia that the enfranchisement of women was inevitable, Jessie Townsend employed a propaganda technique which today would appear to slightly defy propriety. In a letter to her son in the Army who was on route to France, Mrs. Townsend requested that he copy in his own hand-writing and sign a letter to Virginia's senators in Congress that she had prepared in advance. 103 The prepared letter begged for the Senator's compassion in granting the wish of a soldier destined for battle who believed that his mother deserved the right to vote. 104 Portions of the letter read:
As I am about to leave my country for service at the front I make one small request. The Woman Suffrage Bill is before the Senate. My mother in Va. is doing more than her bit to help in this war, but has not the power of the vote...My request is that you vote in favor of the Susan B. Anthony bill and place our Virginia women off as high a plane politically as the women of New York & Chicago, Canada and England... 105

The importance of the vote did not blind the suffrage workers to the real power they could wield in effecting conservation of economic resources necessitated by the war. On September 20, 1917, the Richmond Equal Suffrage League sent a list of resolutions to the city Retail Merchant's Association in which they pledged as consumers to work with businesses "to eliminate the large economic (sic waste sustained by merchant and consumers both in the unnecessary delivery of packages, and also in the much abused credit system of our town..." 106 The League offered its assistance in molding public opinion in the direction of greater "thrift" and proposed a "cash and carry" plan to eliminate the spiraling use of credit. 107
The materials available on the woman suffrage movement in Virginia are numerous, and the preceding sections of this paper are based on only a selected sampling of them. In order to substantiate a comprehensive analysis of the movement, the evaluation of a more extensive portion of the existing records would be necessary. Despite the inherent limitations of research restricted by time, several general conclusions with regard to woman suffrage in Virginia can accurately be highlighted.

The woman suffrage movement in Virginia proved to be successful in many ways. Enjoying widespread support throughout the state, the Equal Suffrage League became increasingly effective in influencing legislators to vote in favor of an amendment to the state constitution. The League succeeded in arousing the attention of men and women from diverse social and financial groupings. Despite the overall lack of leadership within the state, several outstanding Virginia women provided the initiative necessary to carry out the work of the League. Lila H. Valentine and Jessie Woodard displayed the qualities of true leadership, the former gaining national recognition for her achievements and the latter confining her efforts to the Norfolk area and creating a branch in that city which may well be the stronghold of woman suffrage in Virginia. Then faced with the problems of
quelling internal dissension, reconciling white supremacy and woman suffrage, fighting a biased press, and countering the efforts of organised opposition, the Equal Suffrage League met these challenges and, for the most part, effectively upheld their objectives.

In retrospect, the woman suffrage movement in Virginia was weakened because of ineffectual administrative operations. The size of branch leagues and the quality of their work varied from one area to another; in general, urban leagues were better organised than their rural counterparts. Branches were completely autonomous, and because of a lack of coordination, many leagues failed to keep records of their activities.
FOOTNOTES

I

3. Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle (Cambridge, 1959), x.
4. Morgan, Suff. and Dem., 2.
5. Ibid., 1.

II

9. Ibid., February 6, 1912.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Those delegates who voted in favor of the resolution and the area of the state they represented follow: W. Stanley Burt, Surry and Prince George; John W. Chalkley, Dickenson and Wise; Julian T. Christian, Mathews and Middlesex; Daniel Coleman, Norfolk (city); John O. Daniel, Fauquier and Loudoun; J. J. Greiner, Richmond (city); S. H. Lyons, Caroline; William R. Hogg, Richmond (city); du Val Radford, Bedford; A. E. Robertson, Lee; W. B. Walton, Hanover; William Watts, Roanoke (city).
15. Ibid., February 17, 1914.
16. Ibid., March 11, 1914.
17. Jessie Townsend to Mr. Woodard, December 28, 1913. It should be noted that this letter was found among Mrs. Townsend's correspondence and whether it ever reached Mr. Woodard can not be determined.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.


27. Ibid., Chap. 56, February 13, 1920.


III


31. Ibid.


36. Ibid., 29.

37. Ibid.


39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Roberta H. Wilcox to Ida H. Thompson, Bedford, Virginia, November 27, 1936. The Woman Suffrage Papers at the Virginia State Library were collected under the Works Progress Administration. The collection in Virginia was conducted by Ida H. Thompson. Besides gathering the existing papers of the movement, she wrote to many women who had been members of the Virginia Equal Suffrage League, asking them to supply any interesting details they could recall. This letter was a response to Miss Thompson's request.

42. Catherine T. Donhat to Ida H. Thompson, Charles City County, Virginia, March 1, 1937.

43. Annual Report of Equal Suffrage League of Norfolk, Virginia, 1914. In this report it is mentioned that the meetings were held at the Lynnhaven and Continental Hotels.

44. Faith W. Bérgan to Jessie Townsend, n.d.

45. Jessie Townsend to Mrs. Belmont, written on stationery of Tennessee State Library, 1914 (no month recorded).
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
74. Alice O. Taylor to Lila M. Valentine, Richmond, Virginia, March 17, 1918.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. S. T. Clover to Jessie Townsend, Richmond, Virginia, November 12, 1918.
79. Alice O. Taylor to Lila M. Valentine, Richmond, Virginia, March 17, 1918.
80. Form letter from Alice O. Taylor, Richmond, Virginia, October, 1914.
81. Ibid.
82. Lila M. Valentine to Jessie Townsend, Richmond, Virginia, January 11, 1915.
83. Ibid.
84. Memorial to Alice O. Taylor, Equal Suffrage League of Richmond, Virginia, December 29, 1919.
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87. Ibid.
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94. Ibid., 165.
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96. Ibid., 165-66.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid., 166.
99. Ibid., 168.
100. Lila M. Valentine to Jessie Townsend, Richmond, Virginia, April 10, 1915.
101. Ibid.

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102. Equal Suffrage League of Richmond to Senator Thomas S. Martin, Richmond, Virginia, November 13, 1918.
103. Jessie Townsend to her son, Norfolk, Virginia, February 2, 1918. It should be noted that this letter was found among Mrs. Townsend's correspondence and whether it ever reached her son can not be determined.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.

106. Equal Suffrage League of Richmond to Richmond Retail Merchant's Association, September 20, 1917.

107. Ibid.
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Secondary Sources:


This book is the best single volume account of the woman suffrage movement in the United States.


This book deals entirely with the woman suffrage movement in the American West.


This book offers the best treatment of the woman suffrage movement in the South; it emphasizes the conflict of woman suffrage and white supremacy.


Primary Sources:


Journals of the Senate of Virginia, 1910, 1920.

Virginia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, Miscellaneous fliers and pamphlets, Virginia State Library.

This collection of pamphlets and fliers is located in the reference room section of the Virginia State Library and contains approximately 200 items. The materials have not been catalogued or sorted.

Virginia Woman Suffrage Papers, Virginia State Library.

The Woman Suffrage Papers, located in the archives division of the Virginia State Library, contain 25,000 items, which were collected during the 1930's (WPA), under the direction of Miss Ida H. Thompson. The collection is composed mainly of the papers of the Richmond and Norfolk Equal Suffrage Leagues, with miscellaneous materials pertaining to the branch associations throughout Virginia. Of particular interest is the massive volume of correspondence of Lila Hoad Valentine and Jessie Townsend. Most letters are hand-written and legible. Also included are notebooks with minutes of meetings and lists of members, along with articles belonging to Jessie Townsend such as equal suffrage pins. The numerous newspaper clippings proved invaluable and are in need of repair. The entire collection needs sorting and cataloging before its true value to historical researchers can be determined.