

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

"Women Get the Vote"

Carroll County Times article for 10 September 1995

by Jay A. Graybeal

The ratification of the 19th Amendment in August 1920, which gave women the vote, was the second of two successful reform movements in the World War I era. A year earlier the 18th Amendment had begun the era of Prohibition. The August 20, 1920 issue of the Westminster Democratic Advocate newspaper carried a front page story about the end of the "Fight for Suffrage."

NEARLY 27,000,000 WOMEN WILL HAVE RIGHT TO VOTE THIS FALL - REGISTRATION IN CARROLL COUNTY WILL BE SEPTEMBER 28 AND OCTOBER 5, ABOUT 350,000 WOMEN IN MARYLAND CAN VOTE We congratulate the fair "suffs" on their victory in having the Tennessee Legislature to ratify the Suffrage amendment. Since the ratification various charges of bribery have circulated against anti-suffragist and the regulars, which is usually the case after victory.

The Supervisors of elections in every county of the State will meet and make every mechanical process of registration and voting to the end so that the women voters will not be subjected to any annoyance and delay.

About 405,200 women in Maryland over 21 years of age will be able to vote this fall, it is estimated. From reports a number of women in this city have announced their intentions not to register. All white women should register as the colored will take this opportunity. The days of registration in Carroll county are September 28 and October 5.

The biggest obstacle confronting the Supervisors of Election is the county poll books. It seems that the county will be put to the expense of furnishing new books as the old poll books are filled to running over on certain letters. If time is too short to secure new books why then they will have to arrange pages after each letter until new books can be secured and the names transcribed.

Nearly 10,000,000 additional women will be enfranchised, at least half of them in States now regarded by professional politicians as doubtful. More than 16,000,000 women already hold the right to vote for President under State laws, but only 7,000,000 were entitled to vote for members of the Federal Senate and House of Representatives.

Moreover, the suffrage amendment confers upon women the right to hold office. Under the measure, they enjoy the same privileges as men, and it need not be surprising if women in increasing numbers, aspire to seats in both branches of Congress or even aspire, in time, to the Presidency and Vice-Presidency of the United States.

In the South, something like 4,000,000 Negro women are enfranchised and until or unless the Southern States find means of barring them, many more thousands of them will be found voting, than is the case now with Negro men. In most Southern States men of the Negro race have been disenfranchised in great numbers by "grandfather" clauses in the State Constitutions, by educational and other test.

But it is not in the South that national interest will center with woman's suffrage going into effect by constitutional mandate. Not more than one or two of those States, if any will be rendered doubtful as between the national parties, it is assumed. But it is by no means certain that the States of the East and

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Middle West will not be profoundly affected politically by extending suffrage to women, thereby increasing approximately 100 per cent their voting population.

Leaders of both parties are quite aware of this and for weeks the two Presidential nominees and the two groups of managers have busied themselves in behalf of suffrage, each seeking to make capital out of the situation. Governor Cox has been the more ardent advocate perhaps of ratification and certainly Democratic leaders generally have been more enthusiastic about it, feeling that if the Democratic State of Tennessee should provide the thirty-six vote the Democratic party at large would profit more in the coming election.

The States in which women will vote for the first time in November if the amendment is finally proclaimed, where their balloting will be greatest interest are Maryland, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio and West Virginia. As previously shown, the vote of the women in the South this year probably will have little effect upon the national politics on that section.

It was estimated that in the nine doubtful States just listed the number of women above 21 years of age are as follows: Maryland, 405,200; Connecticut, 368,644; Delaware, 64,286; Massachusetts, 1,181,933; New Hampshire, 148,909; New Jersey, 810,324; New Mexico, 80,467; Ohio, 1,538,175, and West Virginia, 313,465.

In addition to these nine States women will vote for the first time for members of the Federal House and Senate in 10 other doubtful States Illinois, Nebraska, Tennessee, Rhode Island, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Wisconsin and Kentucky.

Including Tennessee, the States which have ratified to date are; Wisconsin, Michigan, Kansas, Ohio, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Texas, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Montana, Nebraska, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Utah, California, Maine, North and South Dakota, Colorado, Rhode Island, Kentucky, Oregon, Indiana, Wyoming, Nevada, New Jersey, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and West Virginia.

Those which rejected ratification are: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and Louisiana. The States which have not acted are: Connecticut, Vermont and Florida. North Carolina Senate has postponed action until January.

The extension of voting rights to women swelled the ranks of American voters in local, state and national elections. The impact of local women voters in the 1920 elections will be the subject of a future column.

Photo Caption: Miss Mary B. Shellman of Westminster wore this Just Government League sash proclaiming "VOTES FOR WOMEN" during the years leading up to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Following the ratification of the 19th Amendment, Carroll County women registered to vote and quickly became involved in local politics. Historical Society of Carroll County Collection, gift of Rev. Paul Reese, 1941.