

<https://www.aauw.org/2013/02/28/jail-picketing-and-resolutions-aauw-and-suffrage/>

Jail, Picketing, and Resolutions: AAUW and Suffrage

February 28, 2013

This weekend marks 100 years since the Woman Suffrage Parade, when women marched in Washington, D.C., demanding the right to vote. In honor of the occasion, AAUW is opening our doors on Saturday, March 2, for a number of events. [Learn more.](#)

The Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), the predecessor of AAUW, was founded in 1881 to enhance women's educational opportunities during a time when it was not common for women to pursue higher education. One topic of frequent discussion at early meetings was the civic and moral responsibility of the educated woman to create a better society.

Some ACA members considered suffrage an integral part of a woman's ability to carry out this responsibility. Mary Woolley, president of Mount Holyoke College and later president of AAUW, wrote that "it is impossible to consider the question of civic responsibility without reference to the question of woman suffrage. For those of us who have come slowly, perhaps, but convincingly to the affirmative side, converted by the irresistible logic of the situation, the emphasis is no longer upon 'rights' but 'duty'" (*ACA Journal*, January 1914).

At the turn of the 20th century, many members did not want the ACA to address the issue of suffrage — not because they opposed it in principle but for fear that it was outside the scope of the newly formed organization's purpose, which was to improve women's educational opportunities. At the annual convention in Philadelphia in 1914, a resolution in support of studying the issue of women's suffrage came up for debate. And the following resolution passed:

"In view of the broad policy of the Association towards all interests vitally affecting the education of women, and in the belief that the question of suffrage is one which deserves the serious study of college women, be it Resolved that the branches be requested to undertake such a study as an academic question; to investigate the status and working of suffrage; and to return delegates, instructed to vote on the resolution endorsing suffrage, which will be presented at the next biennial meeting; and further, that in the call for this meeting the branches be reminded that this question will be presented."

This call to study was not atypical of the organization in its early years, since the group was hesitant to get involved in "external" issues. After the branches had researched the issue for a year, the organization seemed ready to cast its ballots for or against the issue. In 1915, the ACA met in San Francisco. The suffrage resolution passed by a vote of 247-19.

"Recognizing that under our government, education in both its academic and social aspects is controlled by the electors, be it Resolved that we, as a body of college women, dedicated to the promotion of education and desirous of furthering our ability for usefulness, favor suffrage for women."

Although the ACA was not directly involved in the suffrage movement, many ACA members were active suffragists. The following are just a few.



Maud Wood Park

Maud Wood Park, member of the ACA's Washington, D.C., branch, graduated from Radcliffe College in 1898. She was one of the few suffragists among Radcliffe graduates and was one of the few younger women in the National American Woman Suffrage Association. To get more young women involved, Park formed the College Equal Suffrage League in 1900, along with Inez Milholland. Park's visits to colleges around the country led to the subsequent creation of the National College Equal Suffrage Association. After the 19th Amendment was passed in 1920, Park became the first president of the newly created League of Women Voters.

Lorena King Fairbank

Lorena King Fairbank, who was a member of the ACA and AAUW for more than 60 years, graduated from the University of Chicago in 1899. She was a member of the delegation led by ACA founder Marion Talbot to the annual meeting in St. Louis in 1904. Fairbank joined ACA at that event. She became involved in the suffrage movement when the Dakota Territory became two states and the new constitution denied women the right to vote. She established the South Dakota Division of AAUW and also several branches in the state. She moved to the nation's capital in 1944 and continued her membership in the Washington, D.C., branch.



Anna Kelton Wiley

Anna Kelton Wiley was the wife of Harvey Wiley, the father of the Pure Food and Drug Act. Anna Kelton Wiley was a member of the National Woman's Party and lobbied and picketed for the vote. Along with fellow suffragist Rheta Childe Dorr, Anna Kelton Wiley led a delegation of women to meet with President Woodrow Wilson. On November 10, 1917, she was arrested and jailed for five days for picketing the White House.

Katharine Houghton Hepburn

Katharine Houghton Hepburn, mother of actress Katharine Hepburn, was an ardent suffragist and head of the Connecticut Woman's Suffrage Association. Katharine Houghton Hepburn was a part of the 1913 delegation that traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet with President Woodrow Wilson about the question of suffrage. Inspired by the arrests of her fellow activists, Katharine Houghton Hepburn joined the National Woman's Party. Her actress daughter recalled that, as a child, she accompanied her mother to suffragist demonstrations. The elder Hepburn was scheduled to speak at the ACA convention in 1914 on the subject of "commercialized vice" (such as prostitution) but quickly dropped the subject and used the time instead to speak about the women's suffrage movement.



By: [Suzanne Gould](#) | Issue: [Community](#) | Tags: [AAUW History](#) [Activism](#) [Voting and Elections](#) | February 28, 2013

See the next page for the bio of Edna Fischel Gellhorn, an important St. Louisian involved in the suffrage movement who was also an early and active member of the AAUW St. Louis Branch.

<http://archon.wulib.wustl.edu/index.php?p=collections/findingaid&id=195>

From: Edna Gellhorn Papers (WUA00118), 1850-1970 | WUA University Archives

Historical Note

Mrs. Edna Fischel Gellhorn, a St. Louis civic leader and widow of Dr. George Gellhorn, internationally known gynecologist of the medical faculty of Washington University, was born in St. Louis December 18, 1878, and in her community betterment activities had followed in the steps of her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Washington E. Fischel. She attended Mary Institute. She was graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 1900, served as lifetime president of her class, and was an elected trustee of the college.



She was active in the women's suffrage movement and in 1920 became a founder and first vice president of the National League of Women Voters. She also served on the national League's board and as president of the St. Louis and Missouri Leagues. Mrs. Gellhorn helped form and worked actively in the United Nations Association, the National Municipal League, and the American Association of University Women. During World War I, she served as regional director of the food rationing programs. She was also a Civil Service Commissioner, and had worked vigorously to achieve the merit system and other moves to improve public services. She had served on the St. Louis Board of Children's Guardians and on the Board of the St. Louis Urban League. Reforms which she actively worked to achieve were the Missouri minimum wage law, improved educational facilities, elimination of child labor and improved election laws. She was one of the founders of John Burroughs School and was the first president of the College Club. In 1968, Washington University created the Edna Fischel Gellhorn Professorship of Public Affairs, a chair endowed by admirers.

At age 79, she was selected as Woman of Achievement by the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Edna Gellhorn died September 24, 1970 at the age of 92.

Notes from the Editor, Ellen Irons:

Edna Gellhorn's involvement in AAUW and its predecessor organization, Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) is frequently omitted from the history books. She was President during the period 1901 – 1903 (under the name of the College Club of St. Louis). She continued as an active member of the St. Louis Branch for many years and contributed greatly to its successes. *The Archives of Edna Gellhorn's papers at Washington University, St. Louis MO, contain a folder devoted to her work with AAUW.*

See also: <https://stlouis-mo.aauw.net/about/history/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edna_Fischel_Gellhorn; <https://missouriwomen.org/2010/10/24/edna-gellhorn/>
<http://www.brynmawr.edu/library/exhibits/suffrage/nawsaAlums.html#goldenlane>