



We Have a Vision: Nashville Women from the Centennial to Suffrage

Kate Kirkman, Anne Dallas Dudley,
Kate Burch Warner, and Frankie Pierce

Underwritten by:



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FOUNDATION

July 17, 2020 - January 13, 2021
Nashville Parthenon

nashvilleparthenon.com

Introduction

Expositions and world fairs were popular entertainments and economic engines throughout Europe and America during the late 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries. The suggestion of an exposition to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Tennessee's admission to the Union was first proposed in 1892, but the idea languished until commercial interests in Nashville recognized that such a fair could boost the economy of the region and promote the image of Tennessee as a progressive state. They sought the support of counties throughout the state beginning in 1894 and eventually the Centennial Company was formed to oversee all aspects of the fair.

Women of Tennessee saw the Centennial Exposition as an opportunity to showcase their accomplishments and expand the definition of womanhood by demonstrating the capabilities of modern women beyond the strictly domestic sphere.

Following the example of the women involved in Chicago's World Columbian Exposition of 1893, the Woman's Department petitioned the Centennial Company for permission to run their department independently, electing their own officers, appointing committees across the state, and managing their own finances. They then hired a woman architect, Sara Ward Conley, and began raising money. One of their most successful fundraising ventures was a woman's edition of the *Nashville American* and the *Knoxville Tribune* written and edited solely by women, with the funds realized from sales going directly to the Woman's Department.

The Woman's Building was the first of the fair's many buildings to be completed and its governing board established an ambitious program of speakers and gatherings to educate, entertain, and challenge fair attendees throughout the six months of the Exposition. Among the many topics that people across the country were grappling with in the 1890s, the right of women to vote was prominent. Women on both

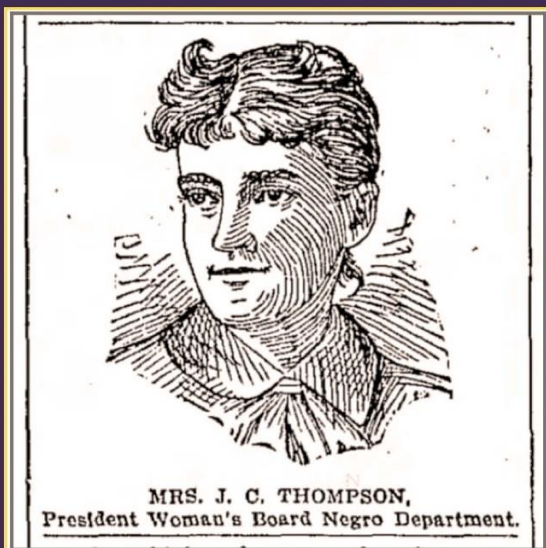


Susan B. Anthony (February 15, 1820–March 13, 1906) was an activist, reformer, teacher, lecturer, and key spokesperson for the woman suffrage and women's rights movements of the 19th century. Image courtesy of Getty Images

sides of this and other issues worked together during the Exposition and when the fair ended, they were reluctant to abandon the opportunity to do good work for their community by dispersing and so formed the Centennial Club in 1905 as the first women's civic club in Nashville. All its members, like the governing board of the Woman's Building, were white.

African American women were also organized at the Centennial Exposition and worked to make their portion of the Negro Building a compelling showcase for the civic and domestic accomplishments of women. Memphis women, for example, emphasized their standing in middle class society with exhibits of embroidery, fine arts, and fashion. The National Association of Colored Women's conference, at their meeting during the Exposition, adopted resolutions opposing Jim Crow laws, rapists, and lynching, and supporting reforms to the convict lease system. These women, too, found themselves unable to relinquish the power of collective action following the successful Exposition and began to form clubs and societies for social change.

By the 1910s, the pressure to give women the vote was reaching a climax and women in Nashville organized annual parades in 1914, 1915, and 1916 which began near the state capitol and culminated at the Parthenon in Centennial Park. African American suffragist Frankie Pierce spoke on the floor of the Tennessee State House in May, 1920. And in August of 1920 Tennessee became the final state necessary to ratify the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote.



This illustration of African-American leader Mrs. J. C. Thompson was published in the *Nashville American* on May 1, 1897—opening day of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition.

Katherine Thompson Kirkman

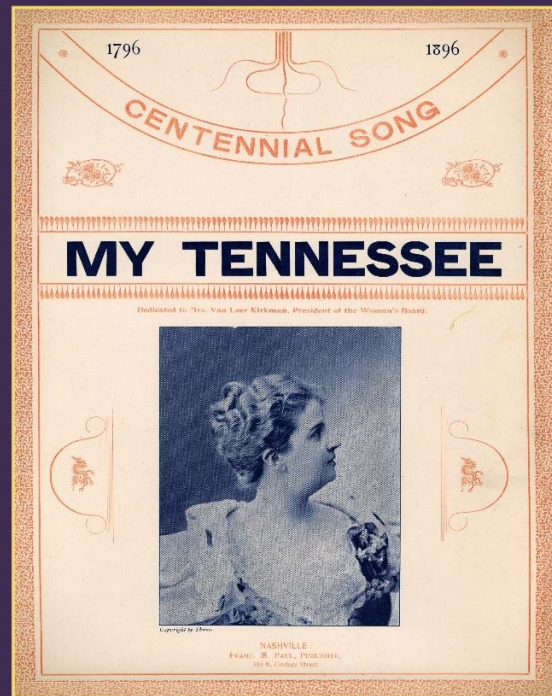
(1864-1926)

Kate Thompson was born in Memphis and educated at St. Mary's School for Girls and Fairmount College in Monteagle. She finished her education in Paris and traveled extensively in Europe. In 1886 she married Van Leer Kirkman, a wealthy Nashville widower, and they built a grand house called Oak Hill on Franklin Pike just south of town. Their property is now the home of the First Presbyterian Church and Oak Hill School. The new Mrs. Kirkman became a leader in Nashville society and newspapers often reported on her beauty, education, and fashion.

Both Kirkmans were deeply involved in the Tennessee Centennial Exposition: Van Leer as First Vice President of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition Company and Kate as President of the Woman's Board. Her election to the position was not without controversy. Kate Burch Warner vied with her for the position but withdrew her name after a "spirited discussion" about proxy votes which some of the women considered illegal. In her acceptance speech, Kirkman "expressed the hope that harmony would prevail."

Although the Woman's Department and its building at the fair—which exhibited primarily objects created by women—aimed to present a unified image of progressive womanhood, they were not united in their beliefs about how that progress should express itself.

Among the women organizing and running the department were ardent suffragists as well as those who thought a woman could best transform society through the

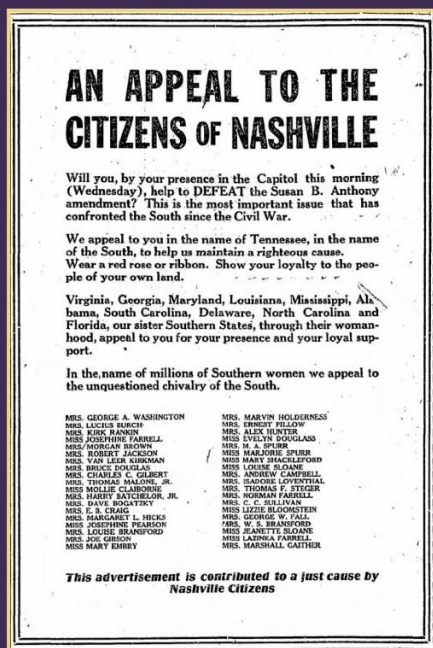


This sheet music from the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition features Kate Kirkman's portrait as President of the Woman's Board. The song, "My Tennessee" is dedicated to her married name, Mrs. Van Leer Kirkman. Image courtesy of David Facing

power of her influence in the home. Kirkman, in her opening day address at the Woman's Building on May 3rd said, "If we are ever to attain the highest ideals of civilization, it must be by the persistent and united efforts of man and woman each toiling in their own God-appointed sphere." And then she defined "woman's work" as "anything and everything that may be necessary to preserve the sanctity of the home and the freedom of the state."

Kirkman's vague definition of woman's work was very politic; it left it up to each listener to interpret what preserving the sanctity of the home or the freedom of the state might mean. And it left an opening for conversations, both pro and con, on many national issues that directly concerned women: not only suffrage, but temperance, labor laws, and education.

Following her husband's death in 1911, Kirkman resumed her leadership activities as the Circulation Manager for the Woman's Edition of the *Nashville Banner* and hostess for various receptions. In 1916 she became a founding member of the Tennessee chapter of the National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage. Even after the landmark vote ratifying the 19th amendment, Kirkman was a part of the "Red Rose Brigade" that continued to press for reversal of the law. However, during World War I Kirkman joined committees working with the Red Cross and, along with other women, put aside political differences to aid her country.



This anti-suffrage advertisement was published in the *Nashville Tennessean* on August 18, 1920, the day of the historic suffrage vote by the Tennessee House of Representatives. Mrs. Van Leer (Kate) Kirkman is listed seventh from the top of the left hand column.

Wool and velvet coat

c. 1895

This coat, made of dull green, napped and fulled wool with black velveteen (cotton base, silk pile) standup collar and Juliet sleeves, belonged to Kate Kirkman. It is elaborately decorated with passementerie made of silk-covered cotton cording sewn on in columns of a repetitious looping pattern and hanging from the coat.

The sleeve style was popular in the second half of the 1890s and it is likely that Kirkman wore the coat to events leading up to and following the Exposition.

Courtesy of the Finucane and Buntin families





The Woman's Building 1897

According to Historian Herman Justi, a primary mission of the Woman's Department of the Tennessee Centennial was the promotion of "higher education and broader culture, to enlarge the sphere of woman's activity and influence." To that end, their headquarters and exhibit space, known as the Woman's Building, became a forum for social issues, including suffrage. The dialogues begun there continued beyond the close of the Exposition. *Image courtesy of David Ewing*



Main Hall



Chicago Room



Colonial Room



Georgia Studio



Hermitage Room



Assembly Room



Chattanooga Room



Decorative Art Room



Library



Mount Vernon Room



New York Room



Parlor

A Gallery of Woman's Building Interior Photos 1897

These photographs give a glimpse of some of the elaborate rooms of the Woman's Building, each decorated and managed by a group of women from a different county, city, or state. These images were originally published in a delicate string-bound souvenir book produced by the Brandon Printing of Nashville. *Image courtesy of David Ewing*



**Sarah Ward Conley,
June Rose c. 1896**

This pastel of an idealized young woman is the work of Sarah Ward Conley, architect of the Woman's Building at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition. It was exhibited in the entry hall of the Woman's Building just above the entrance to the library as seen in the image below from the *Art Album of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition*. An oval portrait of Kate Kirkman is nearby on the column to the front and left of the entrance. *Collection of the Parthenon*





Photograph

This original matted print of a teenage Kate Kirkman is from the late 1870s and was made by the C.C. Giers Company. Giers is noted for portraits of famous individuals, including Ulysses S. Grant, Jesse James, and abolitionist Frederick Douglass. L2020.03.01 *Courtesy of the Finucane and Buntin families*



Tennessee Centennial. NEGRO DEPARTMENT.

OPENS MAY 1, 1897, AND
CONTINUES SIX MONTHS.

WOMAN'S BOARD.

MRS. J. C. THOMPSON,

President.

MISS NANNIE E. PERKINS,

Recording Secretary.

MRS. J. C. YATE, 1ST. VICE-PRESIDENT,
MRS. W. TOLBERT, 2ND. VICE-PRESIDENT,
MRS. W. S. THOMPSON, 3RD. VICE-PRESIDENT,
MRS. ELLA HANLEY, KNOXVILLE, 4TH VICE-PRESIDENT,
MISS LAURA B. HOBSON, CHERRINGTON SECRETARY.

MRS. J. S. LOVELL, CHATTANOOGA, 5TH VICE-PRESIDENT,
MRS. J. IRA WATSON, 6TH VICE-PRESIDENT,
MRS. LIZZIE E. ROBINSON, JACKSON, 7TH VICE-PRESIDENT,
MRS. N. H. KEY, TREASURER.

Chairmen of Committees:

Fine Art and Decoration,
Mrs. H. C. Gibson.
Horticulture,
Mrs. William C. Evans.
Patents and Inventions,
Mrs. John H. Adams.
Nursery,
Mrs. George Bowman.
Woman's Congresses and Lectures,
Mrs. A. W. Woods.
Ways and Means,
Mrs. G. A. Henderson.
Reception,
Mrs. R. C. Easley.
Music,
Mrs. A. B. Carter.
Education,
Mrs. V. W. Broughton,
Memphis.
Salesroom Committee,
Mrs. S. C. Porter.
Domestic Science,
Mrs. Frank Miller.
Library,
Mrs. J. M. Turpin.
Amusement,
Mrs. James A. Davis.
Dress reform,
Mrs. Leonard Houston.

Nashville, Tenn. Jan. 9, 1897

#501 W. Lincoln St.,

Mrs. Chas. Hendley:-

Dear Madam,

We hope you will canvas
Huntsville and get as many exhibits

as you can. Your work is highly recommended
to us by Prof. D. W. Byrd. We feel that if you
can serve your commission will be a success.

Hoping to hear from you at
once. I remain yours truly,

Miss Laura B. Hobson.

TENNESSEE CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION.

OPENS MAY 1, '97, AND CONTINUES SIX MONTHS.

Woman's Board.

NEGRO DEPARTMENT.

NASHVILLE, TENN.

Mrs. Chas. Hendley
of Pres. A. H. McKinney,
Central Ala. Academy, Huntsville.

Letter and envelope

This envelope and letter dated January 9, 1897, is from Laura B. Hobson of Nashville to Mrs. Charles Hendley of Huntsville, Alabama. Seeking support for the Tennessee Centennial Negro Department Woman's Board, Mrs. Hobson writes "We hope you will canvas {sic} Huntsville and get as many exhibits as you can. Your work is highly recommended by Prof. D. W. Byrd. We feel that if you can serve your commission will be a success." L2011.01.75 Courtesy of David Ewing



Silver Spoon

Spoons were popular souvenirs at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition. This example by the B. H. Stief Company of Nashville features the Woman's Building with the portrait of Woman's Board President Kate Kirkman at the top of the handle. 2020.09.01 *Gift of William Hollings*



Paperweight

Souvenir glass paperweights were sold in an assortment of shapes and styles at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition. This rectangular version contains a photograph of the Woman's Building. L2017.01.44 *Courtesy of David Ewing*



Calendar, Tennessee Centennial International Exposition

This 1897 calendar presents one Exposition building per month. April 1897 features the Woman's Building and a prophetic quote attributed to the Victorian Poet Laureate Alfred, Lord Tennyson: "The woman's cause is the man's; They rise and sink together..." L2011.01.11 *Courtesy of David Ewing*



Stereograph

An early form of three-dimensional photographs, stereographs required a special viewer and were used for education and entertainment in the late nineteenth century. This example shows the elaborate stairway foyer of the Woman's Building. L2020.01.05 *Courtesy of David Ewing*



Souvenir Pin

With colors related to women's suffrage, this pin was possibly an expression of support for the movement. According to historian Herman Justi, pro-suffrage groups held meetings at the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, including the Equal Suffrage Convocation on May 12-14, 1897. L2011.01.22 *Courtesy of David Ewing*



Sheet Music, "Tennessee Centennial Prize March"

This musical souvenir of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition was published by a Memphis music store. "Dedicated By Permission" to Woman's Board President Kate Kirkman, the cover features an idealized version of the Exposition grounds.

L2020.08.01 *Courtesy of David Ewing*



THE QUEEN OF THE FETE.—There was one day that will never be forgotten by any woman who was present, either as a participant or as a spectator, and that was Kate Kirkman Day, September 30. The day was full of events, but the great floral parade was the most gorgeous of all, and the brightest feature of the day. No such scene was ever before witnessed in Nashville. Here we have a picture of Mrs. Kirkman in her victoria covered with violets, her handsome baby boy, Wayne, by her side, and her floral tributes piled in front of her.

Book, Art Album of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition

This 1898 collection of Exposition highlights featured photography by brothers William Gustav and Andrew Joseph Thuss, and was published by the Marshall & Bruce Printing Company. Among the images is Kate Kirkman posing in her carriage at a floral parade held in her honor. 2019.02.01 *Gift of Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation*

Kate Burch Warner

(1851-1923)

Aged sixty-nine at the time of the ratification of the woman suffrage amendment, Kate Burch Warner was among the oldest of the leadership of the Tennessee suffragists. Though she was born in Chattanooga, she spent most of her life in Nashville. The daughter of John C. Burch, who was the editor and publisher of the *Nashville American* and Secretary of the United States Senate for two years, she attended Vassar College. Kate Burch married Leslie Warner, a member of a well-to-do family who were active in mining and the development of electrical power companies across the state.

The Warners enjoyed traveling and collected items of historical interest and decorative art along the way. They were generous in loaning objects from their collection to displays at the Centennial Exposition in the Woman's Building and the History Building. She was active in the preparation and organizing of the Woman's Department and sought the Presidency but was defeated by Kate Kirkman.

Following her husband's death in 1909, she became more active in women's clubs, serving as an officer of the Nashville Art Association and the Woman's Board and Council. Kate Warner and Kate Kirkman represented the Centennial Club, where they were both members, at the largest cooperative meeting of local club women in 1911. That same year, the Nashville Equal Suffrage League was organized. Although she was not a charter member, Warner joined the organization soon after it was founded and quickly became an active member



Kate Burch Warner as seen in the 1902 book *Some Representative Women of Tennessee* by Annie Somers Gilchrist. Image courtesy of David Ewing

MAY DAY SUFFRAGE PAGEANT

TODAY

Centennial Park 4 P. M.

—SPEAKERS—

MRS. LESLIE WARNER

—AND—

MRS. SOLON JACOBS

TERPSICHOREAN PAGEANT

—BY—

Celia Grady Reddy's Pupils

Music Admission Free

Uptown Parade, With Three Bands, 2:30 P. M.

This advertisement for a suffrage themed musical event was published in the *Nashville Tennessean* on May 13, 1916—one day after the famous suffrage march to Centennial Park. Among the speakers is Kate Burch Warner, appearing under her married name of Mrs. Leslie Warner.

and eventually its president. When she was asked to become president of one of Tennessee's two suffrage associations, she accepted the position only after the boards of the two competing groups agreed to merge. She was known for her organizational skills and realized that the suffrage cause would have more strength with one united organization.

In the second half of the 1910s, yearly suffrage demonstrations and parades drew local and national attention. Although Anne Dallas Dudley led the May 12, 1916, parade from the state capitol to the Parthenon in Centennial Park, it was Kate Warner who gave the keynote address. Articulate, persuasive, and diplomatic, she was Governor A. H. Roberts' choice to lead the Ratification Committee.

The parades were paused while the U.S. was involved in World War I and many women, including Kate Kirkman, Kate Warner, Frankie Pierce, and Anne Dallas Dudley put aside their different positions on suffrage to work together for patriotic causes. From Red Cross committees to branches of the Tennessee Committee of the National Council of Defense, they led and organized diverse women in support of the country.

After ratification Warner devoted much of her attention to Christ Episcopal Church and the Daughters of the American Revolution. At the end of her life she was praised for having "one of the most outstanding careers in civic and domestic life ever achieved by a Tennessee woman."



May Day Suffrage March May 13, 1916

In May of 1914, 1915, and 1916 supporters of women's suffrage paraded from downtown to Centennial Park in cars and buggies, on horseback, and on foot. At the parade's end there were speeches from the steps of the Parthenon, along with entertainment of various kinds. Participants were encouraged to wear cotton, which was viewed as a patriotic fabric because cotton was a major crop in the United States. *Image courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives*

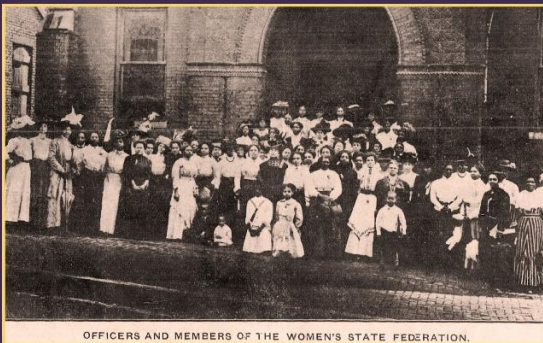
Juno Frankie Pierce

(c. 1864-1954)

J. Frankie Pierce was an activist who devoted her adult life to improving the lives of African Americans in Nashville. Born shortly before the end of the Civil War to Nellie Seay, an enslaved but educated mother, and a freedman, she received an education at John G. McKee Freedman's School and Roger Williams University in Nashville. For a brief period she taught at the Bellevue School, a public school for black children, before marrying Clement J. Pierce and moving to Paris, Texas.

After her husband's death Pierce returned to Nashville and renewed her work for education. African American women organized through churches and social clubs to work for various causes, among them better schools, childcare, and settlement houses. Pierce worked with Nettie Langston Napier to convince the board of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) to hold its first annual meeting in Nashville during the Centennial Exposition. Pierce was the President of the Negro Women's Reconstruction League, founded the City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, and was a member of the Blue Triangle League, a branch of the YWCA that was opened for black women and girls.

During World War I, African American women joined white women in patriotic endeavors such as the Council of National Defense and the Red Cross to raise money through war bonds and tackle such issues as food conservation, home gardening, and child welfare. Frankie Pierce was named Corresponding Secretary of the "colored branch of the woman's committee of the Council of National Defense." In a 1918 article headlined "United War Work Drive" the *Nashville Tennessean* stated, "Mrs. Frankie Pierce, who is well versed along all lines, was of valuable service and inspired the people of various communities." And in the same year an article in the *Nashville Globe* said that she "has a fascinating power of mind, is a gifted writer and a fluent speaker."



OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF THE WOMEN'S STATE FEDERATION.
In June 1910, Frankie Pierce became a founding member of the Federation of Women's Clubs of Tennessee, an African-American organization dedicated to "everything that will have a tendency to improve the moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social life of the race."



J. Frankie Pierce, c. 1925. Pierce helped to get 2,500 black women to vote in the 1919 Nashville municipal elections, the city's first election in which black women were eligible to vote. Image courtesy of First Baptist Church Capitol Hill

In the spring of 1919, in an effort to forestall the amendment allowing women to vote nationally, Tennessee lawmakers gave women limited voting rights: they were permitted to vote in municipal elections and for presidential electors; they could not vote for governor, state representatives, congressmen, or senators. Pierce and Dr. Mattie Coleman organized voter registration drives to encourage African American women to vote; together they registered more than two thousand voters.

The cooperative work of white and African American women during the war had produced a mutual respect and a willingness to work together to gain full suffrage for women. Catherine Kenny, an ardent suffragist from Nashville, invited Mrs. Pierce to speak at the May 1920 state suffrage convention in the house chamber of the Tennessee capitol. When asked what black women would do with the vote, Pierce replied, "We will stand by the white women.... We are asking only one thing - a square deal."

Pierce's important contribution to Tennessee's ratification of the 19th amendment was acknowledged in 2019 with the opening of Frankie Pierce Park in downtown Nashville.

Linen eyelet dress c. 1910s

This off-white linen dress originally dated to the first decade of the 20th century and would have been characterized as a monobosom, or pigeon-breasted, afternoon dress. Alterations that decreased the width and length of the bosom area and shortened the skirt length updated it in the following decade.

The elegant and expensive fabric is hand-stitched linen eyelet trimmed with machine-made lace that imitates Cluny lace. The dress belonged to Kate Kirkman. She could have worn it to a tea in the first decade of the 1900s in its first incarnation and later, in its updated form, to a rally opposing the 19th Amendment.
Courtesy of the Finucane and Buntin families

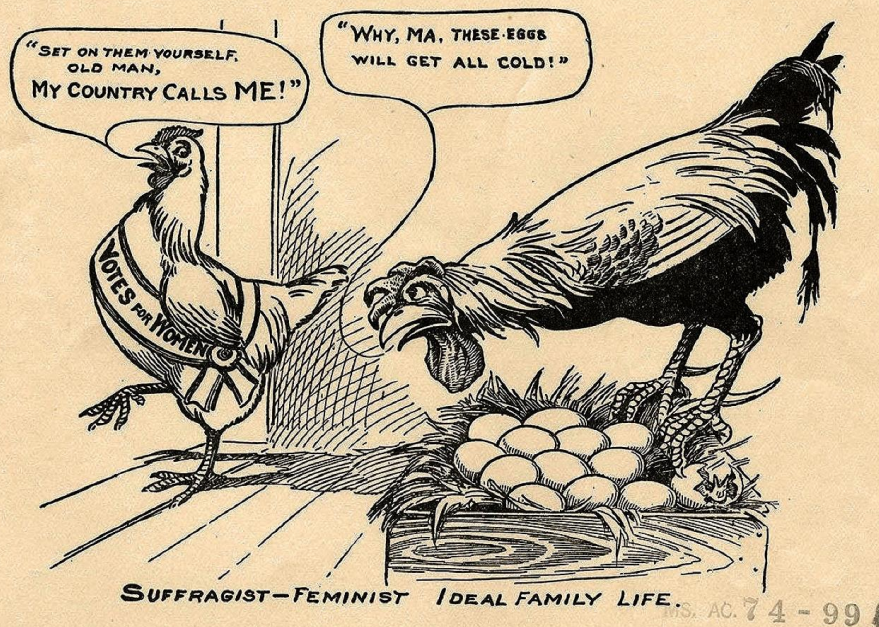




Political Cartoon – “With My Compliments, Madam”
Publishers World August 20, 1920

Newspapers all over the country took note that Tennessee’s vote on August 18, 1920, was the final one necessary to make voting legal for women. This cartoon personifies the state as a Southern gentleman, hat off, handing the ballot to a representative of all women. *Image courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives*

America When Femininized



The More a Politician Allows Himself to be Henpecked
The More Henpecking We Will Have in Politics.

A Vote for Federal Suffrage is a Vote for Organized Female
Nagging Forever.

"American pep which was the result of a masculine dominated country will soon be a thing of the past. With the collapse of the male ascendancy in this country we can look forward to a nation of degeneration. The suppression of sex will ultimately have its harvest in decadence, a phenomenon already beginning. The effect of the social revolution on American character will be to make "sissies" of American men—a process already well under way."—Dr. William J. Hickson, Chicago University.

WOMAN SUFFRAGE denatures both men and women; it masculinizes women and femininizes men. The history of ancient civilization has proven that a weakening of the man power of nations has been but a pre-runner of decadence in civilization.

Will you stand for this? Prove that you will not by voting to Reject the Federal Woman Suffrage Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

**SOUTHERN WOMAN'S LEAGUE FOR REJECTION OF THE
SUSAN B. ANTHONY AMENDMENT**

WE SERVE THAT OUR STATES MAY LIVE, AND LIVING, PRESERVE THE UNION

Brandon-Nashville

Anti-Suffrage Broadside – "America When Feminized" 1920

Opponents of women's suffrage went to great lengths to portray the ruin of society and family life if the 19th Amendment passed. Cartoons such as this one poked fun at both men and women, insisting that men would be "henpecked" and women would be "nagging forever." *Image courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives*

Anne Dallas Dudley

(1876-1955)

Anne Dallas, daughter of a socially prominent Nashville family, became a leader in Tennessee and the nation in the cause for women's voting rights. Married to Guilford Dudley, one of the founders of the Life and Casualty Insurance Company, she was the mother of two children when she became involved in suffrage. She was described by those who knew her as "beautiful, strikingly beautiful" with a certain charm and graciousness that were effective in counteracting the opposition to suffrage.

As a young matron she became involved in the temperance movement, a social movement against the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Its proponents saw alcohol as a destructive force in families and marriages, a contributor to poverty, and detrimental to health. Through her activism in the cause of prohibition she became convinced that one of the most important changes necessary to the improvement of society was giving women the right to vote.

Although the social circles in which she moved frowned upon the idea of women voting, Dudley was committed to equal suffrage and worked tirelessly to bring it about. A charter member of the Nashville Equal Suffrage League, she was elected president of the Tennessee Equal Suffrage Association and then served as an officer for the National American Woman Suffrage Association.



Anne Dallas Dudley (Mrs. Guilford Dudley) with her children as seen in the 1912 publication *Illustrated Sketches of Tennessee Women*. Images of Dudley and her children were used to counter stereotypes of suffragists as mannish and anti-family.

Image courtesy of the Tennessee Historical Society



Anne Dallas Dudley, c. 1913. Image courtesy of David Eising

As the decade of the 1910s progressed, she helped organize annual suffrage parades, leading them from near the state capitol to Centennial Park. In 1914 the Mayor gave the city a half-holiday for the parade, marking Nashville as "perhaps the only city in the South and one of the few in the country to get official recognition of the day." Her speech from the steps of the Parthenon at the parade's conclusion addressed a crowd of 2,000 people.

Many of the women who worked for the right to vote were stereotyped as mannish, childless radicals who were attempting to destroy the American family. Dudley's two children were frequently present with their mother in photographs supporting suffrage. A photograph of Mrs. Dudley reading to her two children was widely circulated with suffrage publicity materials. These images were a deliberate effort by the suffragists to counteract the negative portrayal of women supporting suffrage.

Dudley helped bring the convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association to Nashville in 1914. As a national officer, she spoke before Congressional committees and traveled across the United States urging the passage of the amendment. Articulate and quotable, Dudley spoke at the 1920 Democratic national convention in San Francisco as the first woman delegate-at-large. In that speech she said, "This is a government of, by, and for the people and only the law denies that women are people."

Thanks to the work of Anne Dallas Dudley and many other women, both prominent and unknown, the Tennessee legislature, by one vote, ratified the 19th amendment on August 18, 1920. Tennessee's ratification was the 36th and final one necessary for the amendment to become law.



“Suffrage Scenes At The Capitol When The Senate Ratified Aug. 13th” *Tennessean Special Section* August 29, 1920

Although the paper got the date wrong, the sentiment of celebration is exactly right in this montage published in the *Tennessean* 11 days after the Tennessee State Legislature’s historic vote to ratify the 19th Amendment. Two photos below the image of the senate chamber illustrate the fact that women put aside political differences in the effort to achieve this important victory for all women. *Image courtesy Tennessee State Library and Archives*

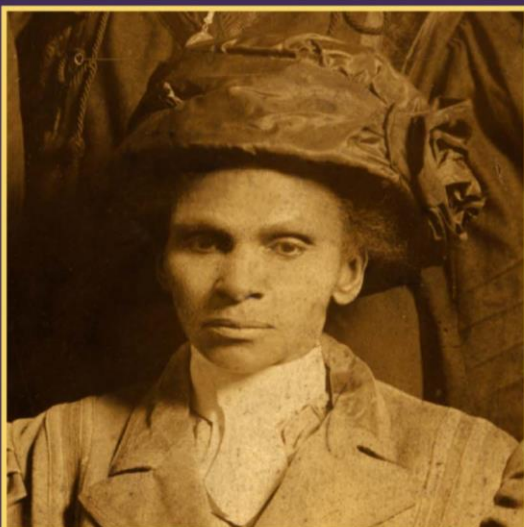
THIS IS TO CERTIFY that Isabella Ewing
of the 4 District, Davidson County, Tennessee, was
duly registered on the 12 day of Oct, 1920, Registration
Number 2442; color colored; sex Female; residence Hermiston
2442; and is entitled to vote when otherwise qualified, twenty days after the
issuance of this certificate, *provided there is no change of residence before offering to vote*, in all
elections in said District for a period of two years from August 21, 1919, the close of the general reg-
istration.

DAVIDSON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS:

J. S. Colwell, Chmn.
H. M. Carr, Secy.
Harry A. Luck

Alpernigh
F. B. Hays
Registrars.

WILLIAMS PRINTING COMPANY, NASHVILLE



Isabella Ewing

Voter Registration Card 1920

Isabella Ewing, great-grandmother of historian and collector David Ewing, registered to vote in the first presidential election held after the 19th Amendment passed. Although the Davidson County vote was 65% for Democratic candidate, James M. Cox, the Republican candidate Warren G. Harding won the statewide vote by three percentage points. *Images courtesy of David Ewing*



Ballot box 1900s

This metal ballot box from the first half of the 20th century was possibly used in Nashville. To prohibit fraud, it has four padlocks – each working from a different key. According to the *Nashville Tennessean*, Davidson County had fourteen districts and twenty-five wards at the time of the 1920 presidential election.

Courtesy of David Ewing

We have a vision

—a vision of a time when
a woman's home will be
the whole wide world,
her children all those
whose feet are bare,
and her sisters all those
who need a helping hand:

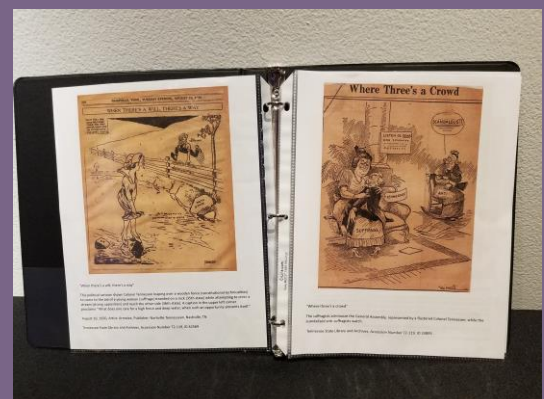
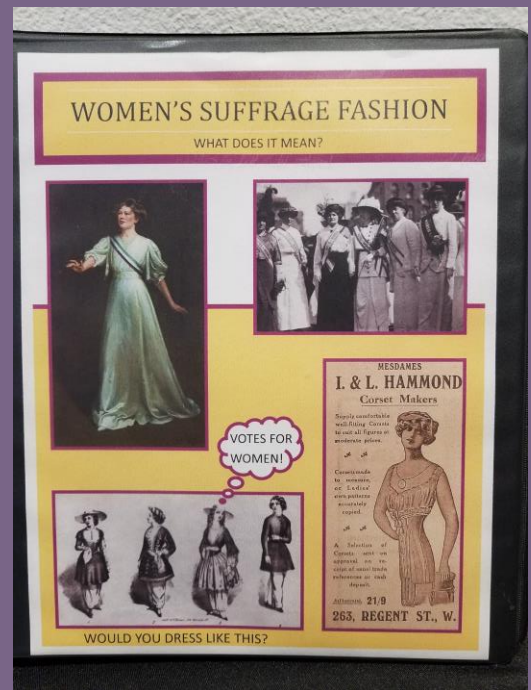
a vision of a new
knighthood, of a new
chivalry when men
will fight not only
for women but for
the rights of women.

-Anne Dallas Dudley

Play the Part

Suffragists and anti-suffragists were drawn in cartoons with iconic outfits, and were known for wearing yellow or red roses to symbolize their cause. Today, your fashion choices can show your thoughts about important topics.

- Learn about suffrage and anti-suffrage ideas connected to Centennial Park.
- Explore the outfits worn by Kate Kirkman, chair of the Woman's Board, from 1897 through the 1920s.
- Create your own suffrage look.



Kate Kirkman's Flag Dress

This dress, made to resemble a flag, belonged to Kate Thompson Kirkman, President of the Woman's Department of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition.



Kate Kirkman, c.1896

Expositions were popular entertainments and economic engines during more than a century, reaching their peak in the latter half of the 19th century. When Tennesseans decided to celebrate the state's 100th birthday with an exposition, the women of Tennessee saw it as an opportunity to show what women had done and could do and to broaden the definition of "the woman's sphere."

Kirkman and her committee planned a building that showcased the accomplishments of women, including patented inventions, and a program of speakers who brought topics of national interest to the fair attendees. These topics were usually progressive and concerned social reforms, including women's suffrage, prohibition, education and child labor. There were people on both sides of every issue, but one of the great strengths of the Woman's Department's program was the opportunity to hear and participate in the discussions.

In this year of celebrating the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote, it is important to acknowledge the role of various women in years leading up to its passage. Although Kate Kirkman herself was opposed to women's suffrage, her leadership of the Woman's



The Woman's Building, c. 1896

Department at the Centennial opened this space for consideration of controversial issues, including suffrage. In the Woman's Building, women worked together to lead, instruct, and improve the lives of people in the towns and cities where they lived.



Flag Dress

The Journey of Kate Kirkman's Collection

Kate Kirkman's daughter-in-law, Hester Sinclair Kirkman, inherited a trunk of clothing, among other things, when Kate Kirkman died in 1926. Hester's husband—Kate's youngest child, Wayne—also died in 1926, and in 1933 Hester and her second husband purchased Rock Jolly Farm in Robertson County as a summer home.

The trunk, made of leather and wood with a camel back, was probably taken to Rock Jolly sometime between 1933 and 1940, where it was likely stored in the attic. Hester died in 1960 and the trunk was probably moved to a concrete henhouse around then, during some renovations to the main house.

Hester had no direct heirs at her death and she left her property to her nephews, Sinclair and William Buntin. Sinclair and his wife became the owners of Rock Jolly Farm and they and their three children, Jeffrey and John Buntin and Betty Buntin Finucane, spent many summers at the farm.

In the 1990s the trunk moved to the basement of Betty Finucane's house in Nashville; the clothing was shifted to an antique Chinese chest in 1995 where it stayed until the Finucanes moved in 2016. At that point Betty and her daughter-in-law Shannon photographed all the garments, furs, feathers, and pieces of fabric from the trunk, placed them in acid-free paper and boxes, and began to think about ways the garments could be preserved and shared with the public.

Kate Kirkman's association with the Tennessee Centennial Exposition made the Parthenon—the only remaining building from that fair—a logical place to offer these items. Kirkman's garments, spanning several periods of her life, are an entry point for modern visitors to understand life in Nashville during the last years of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th.

Flag Dress courtesy of the Finucane and Buntin families

A selection of suffrage related items can be purchased in our Museum Store.



Try some activities at home!

Parthenon Program:
Origami Suffrage Roses
www.nashvilleparthenon.com/education

Tennessee Virtual Archives:
Women's Suffrage in Tennessee
teva.contentdm.oclc.org/customizations/global/pages/collections/suffrage/suffrage.html

TN History for Kids:
Suffrage -- 36 Lessons for Tennessee's Centennial Anniversary
www.tnhistoryforkids.org/suffrage

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Many thanks:

Tennessee Arts Commission
Centennial Park Conservancy
Humanities Tennessee
Metro Parks Nashville
Sandra Schatten Foundation

Finucane and Buntin Families

David Ewing
William Hollings
Alex Sargent Capps
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